

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



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Fighting Poverty is Crucial

The most dominant social problem in Afghanistan is poverty. Most of the people have limited economic resources and their standard of living is low. The people have been deprived of modern facilities in education, health, communication and sufficient food. Such people are worried due to lack of income resources and they are unable to fulfill their needs to live alive parallel to their fellow human beings. In this age of competition they feel deprived of their rights and inferiority complex prevails upon them. They feel shy in sitting with the well-off families. They cannot easily get into marital relation with the families that are better than them economically.

Poverty, though itself is a great problem, is also the root cause of many other social problems as well. Many children are unable to get education due to this problem. Millions of children every year prefer to earn instead of education because of economic problems.

Terrorism is also a product of poverty. Terrorists trap young children and poor youths by giving lots of money and train them to become terrorists to destabilize the country. And, crime and social evils are produced under the umbrella of poverty. People commit crime due to poverty. Many other social evils are also generated because of it. It also hampers economic and social growth of country which disturbs the whole nation.

Poverty also creates beggars in the society. Most of the beggars opt for begging due to poverty. It can be observed that in Afghan society, it has become an organized way of earning easy money. Beggars have now formed groups that are involved in distribution of drugs, stealing, transferring information, kidnapping and even prostitution.

It can be easily observed that mostly poor are the victims of addiction like heroin, alcohol, marijuana etc. These kinds of people are usually found on the footpaths and under the bridges, in the most pathetic conditions. They are not aware of themselves, their lives and their families. They also engage in small crimes like stealing small items that they can sell to buy their drugs. They are in fact unable to follow the norms and values of society, which are luxury for them.

Poverty prevails because Afghan authorities are unable to focus and dedicate efforts for extracting economic resources from the natural environment. Afghan land has hills, mountains, rivers and a large amount of minerals underneath, but unfortunately they are not being used properly. Moreover, the assistance and support that arrived in the country were never spent for improving the living condition of the people and fighting poverty. Therefore, most of them were misused and did not achieve their target.

Another important reason of poverty is unemployment. There are many young and educated people in the country who do not get the chance of finding proper jobs for them. Both the government and private sector have limited number of positions available for the youth; therefore, many of them after completing their tiring education can only wish for a position of their choice. Many of them even opt to do the tasks that are not related to the field of their study, yet the job market is limited.

Even for the people who do not have education, the work opportunities are not sufficient and therefore they are living from hand to mouth. They mostly depend on daily labor and if they do not get any work for some days consecutively they have to starve along with their families.

The government, therefore, needs to eradicate unemployment first. People should be given job opportunities so that they are able to feed themselves and their families and do not become a burden on the country and ultimately on the government. Moreover, there should be efforts to enhance incentives for menial work as well so that the youth who are educated and shy away from such work must be motivated to get involved and start earning.

Those who are poor and mostly those who are beggars may be given technical education. In this way, their potential will be utilized in the best way. For this purpose, there can be special training institutions. Moreover, such a policy can also be useful for the ones who are addicted to drugs. Government can construct rehabilitation centers equipped with facilities for technical education so that the addicts after leaving the centers can start their own work and be positive members of the society.

Importance and benefits of education and literacy may be conveyed to the people because education enables individuals to get better jobs in society. A special project may be started for the rural area because illiteracy is more in rural areas. Women form a large portion of the population in Afghanistan. However, only few among them are well-educated or employed. They should be given technical and vocational skills, so that they could start some work at their home. In this way, they can remain in the house and productively utilize free time.

We, Asian Youth, Are The Future

By SUN Xi

Exclusive for the Daily Outlook

Professor Kishore Mahbubani, Dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore and a Top Global Thinker, wisely says, "Europe represents the past, America represents the present, Asia represents the future."

Indeed, most Asian people have such confidence. According to a latest online survey among 18,235 internet users from 17 countries, five Asian countries China (41%) Indonesia (23%), Saudi Arabia (16%), Thailand (11%) and United Arab Emirates (10%) are the top optimistic societies, who think the world is generally getting better.

Such confidence in a better future is likely backed by an unignorable fact: Asia is Rising. Here are some simple but astonishing facts.

First, Asia's share of the world GDP in real US\$ purchasing power parity (PPP) has risen steadily, from 23.2% in 1990 to 38.8% in 2014, and it is forecasted to expand to nearly 45% by 2025. In PPP terms, Asia has been the home for three of the world's four largest economies, China, Japan and India. More accurately speaking, Asia is not simply rising, but just resurging to its historic leadership, because for 18 of the past 20 centuries Asia continuously contributed for over half of the world economy.

Second, Asia's share of global merchandise trade has grown from 14% in 1948 to around 32% in 2014, with its exports growing three times faster than the rest of the world over the past decades. Between 2011 and 2014, Asia did more than any other region to lift merchandise export volume growth.

Now, China has been the largest trading nation in the world in terms of imports and exports, since overtaking the US in 2013.

Third, 60% of the world population in Asia (4.4 billion) creates the largest market. Asia is projected to be the second largest contributor after Africa to future global population growth, adding 0.9 billion people between 2015 and 2050. Ageing population will be a big challenge for Asia, but meanwhile its current 500 million middle class is projected to triple to 1.75 billion in 2020, a huge momentum for Asia's future development.

Of Course, there is no question that despite of huge growth potential, Asia is facing several critical shortcomings in achieving a more comprehensive and sustainable development.

First, Asia lacks a universal image, the economic, political and social disparities among Asian countries are huge; Second, Asia lacks unified and strong leadership, it is nearly impossible to form a strong regional union in the near future; Last but not the least, Asia lacks general consensus on universal values, especially human rights and democracy.

However, our "Asian Dream" will not end up as a mirage but eventually will turn into a reality. Hope for a better Asia comes from our Asian youth, especially those born after the 1980s.

First, there has been less hatred among young Asians. War always results in tremendous trauma and the hatred after war can last several generations. Asia suffered lots of wars in the history and there have also been bilateral conflicts within Asia after the 1980s. Even today, Asia is still not entirely peaceful.

Nevertheless, very few Asian youth have personally participated in those conflicts or directly confronted their Asian counterparts on battlefields. Asian youth blessedly do not have irreconcilable enmity with one another. This certainly helps create a valuable foundation for building trust and cooperation among them.

Second, Asian youth share a similar vision of peace and development. In this new era, war is a sunset business and going out of fashion. Instead, peace and development have become mainstream global objectives. Most Asian nations are keen to build peaceful societies which focus on economic development. Even in war-torn Iraq and Afghanistan, youth are searching for peace. The key to a peaceful Iraq was educating and enfranchising Iraqi youth, said the Centre for International Conflict Resolution at Columbia University. In 2013, a youth organization called Afghan Voices renamed "Scud Hill", a symbol of Afghanistan's violent past, "Peace Hill".

China and India, the world's fastest-growing economies and the largest developing countries, have over 60 per cent of Asia's population. Most importantly, both countries account for the majority of Asian youth. Moreover, most Chinese youth were born after the reform and opening up from 1978, while a large proportion of Indian youth were born after their country's economic liberalization beginning in the 1990s. Chinese and Indian youth are more interested in doing business than entangling in conflicts. Their preferred vision for peace and development will help strengthen the foundation for a more peaceful Asia. Last but not least, Asian youth cherish the value of mutual understanding and cooperation. They are the generation growing up with the Internet. In Asia, there are over a billion netizens and most are increasingly open-minded and actively involved young people in online communities. Information technology has made young Asians better connected than previous generations. Mutual learning and exchanges have also helped young Asians better understand one another. For instance, China had only 1,381 foreign students in 1980. By 2015, the number had surged over 280 times to 397,635 with 60.4 per cent of them from Asia. At the National University of Singapore, the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy was established in 2004 to "inspire leaders, improve lives and help transform Asia". Since then, it has fostered thousands of young Asian officials who are likely to seek win-win cooperation rather than zero-sum competitions with their Asian peers in the future. Young Asians have grown up with booming intra-regional trade and investment. Free trade agreements (FTAs) were largely absent in Asia until the 1990s. But between January 2000 and April 2013, Asia's concluded FTAs jumped from three to 76. The Asean-China Free Trade Area is the largest free trade area in terms of its coverage, with over 1.9 billion people in it. Such fast-growing regional trade and investment dependency will encourage young Asians to pursue closer cooperation with one another.

There is a Chinese maxim, "A youth is to be regarded with respect (hou sheng ke wei)", in the Wisdom of Confucius. Young people are without doubt the hope for a better future.

Even Deng Xiaoping, best known as the general designer of China's reform and opening up, said in 1978: "Our generation is not wise enough to find common language on this question (the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands dispute). Our next generation will certainly be wiser. They will certainly find a solution acceptable to all."

Although we young Asians may not be any wiser than older generations, we definitely share a much more common consensus over the goals of peace and development. More critically, we are determined to deliver such goals through more creative solutions and win-win cooperation.

With this confidence in a better future, our "Asian Dream" will not just remain a dream.

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Why Corruption Matters

By William J. Burns and Michael Mullen

Pope Francis has called corruption "the gangrene of a people." US Secretary of State John Kerry has labeled it a "radicalizer," because it "destroys faith in legitimate authority." And British Prime Minister David Cameron has described it as "one of the greatest enemies of progress in our time." Corruption, put simply, is the abuse of public office for personal gain. As leaders increasingly recognize, it is a menace to development, human dignity, and global security. At the anti-corruption summit in London on May 12, world leaders - together with representatives from business and civil society - will have a critical opportunity to act on this recognition. Corruption is decried across cultures and throughout history. It has existed as long as government has; but, like other crimes, it has grown increasingly sophisticated over the last several decades, with devastating effects on the wellbeing and dignity of countless innocent citizens.

For starters, corruption cripples prospects for development. When, say, public-procurement fraud is rampant, or royalties for natural resources are stolen at the source, or the private sector is monopolized by a narrow network of cronies, populations are unable to realize their potential.

But corruption also has another, less-recognized impact. As citizens watch their leaders enrich themselves at the expense of the population, they become increasingly frustrated and angry - sentiments that can lead to civil unrest and violent conflict.

Many current international security crises are rooted in this dynamic. Indignation at the high-handed behavior of a corrupt police officer helped to drive a Tunisian fruit seller to set himself on fire in 2010, touching off revolutions across the Arab world. Protesters demanded that specific ministers be arrested and put on trial, and they called for the return of pilfered assets - demands that were rarely met.

In places where government officials enjoy (and often flaunt) their enrichment and impunity, extremist movements - including the Taliban, Boko Haram, and the Islamic State - exploit citizens' outrage. The only way to restore public integrity, these groups assert, is by means of a rigidly applied code of personal conduct. With no viable recourse - and no avenue for peaceful appeal - such language has grown increasingly persuasive.

It is clear that corruption must be combated. What is less clear is how to do it. In a world of competing demands, corrupt governments may seem to serve vital purposes. One deploys soldiers to the fight against terrorism; another provides critical energy supplies or access to raw materials. Leaders must inevitably contend with difficult tradeoffs.

To determine the best approach in each specific case, governments must analyze the problem more effectively, which means improving the collection of intelligence and data. As security expert Sarah Chayes argues in *Against Corruption*, the volume of essays that the British government will publish

to accompany the summit, corruption today is structured practice. It is the work of sophisticated networks, not unlike organized crime (with which corrupt agents are often integrated). Governments must study these activities and their consequences the same way they study transnational criminal or terrorist organizations.

Armed with such assessments, donor countries must structure assistance in a way that mitigates corruption risks. Military or development assistance is not apolitical. Programs must be tailored to ensure that funds are not captured by kleptocratic elites. This means that anti-corruption efforts can no longer be shunted off to under-resourced specialists; they must be central to the planning of major development initiatives or the sale of costly weapons systems. Recipient governments must understand that funding will dry up if they continue to squander or steal it.

In fact, corruption and its implications must inform the way Western officials interact with their counterparts in the developing world. The departments that we spent our careers serving - the US State Department and the US Department of Defense - set great store by building relationships. Diplomats depend on these relationships to advance their national interests, and professional ties between military officers are sometimes the only channels that weather political storms. But diplomats and military brass alike should be willing to take a step back when appropriate, condition their interactions, and make use of available leverage - even at the risk of a counterpart's wrath.

But, as recent revelations about purveyors of shell companies or bribery by intermediaries demonstrate, much of the real leverage is to be found at home - in the domestic financial and property industries, in public relations and law firms that burnish kleptocrats' images, and in universities that educate corrupt officials' children and solicit their donations. The application of the US Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act to indict officers of FIFA, soccer's international governing body, shows how focusing on Western service providers can curb corruption among foreign officials.

Another important tool in the fight against corruption will be technological innovation, which can reduce opportunities for wrongdoing, empower citizens to highlight illegal practices, and enhance government transparency and accountability. Strides have already been made in a number of areas, from electronic voter registration to electronic payments for civil servants. While technology is no panacea, when paired with wise policy reforms, it can make a meaningful contribution to the fight for good governance.

None of these suggestions will be easy to implement. But, to address many of the crises currently besetting the world, a strong focus on combating corruption is vital. Our hope is that the upcoming conference in London demonstrates the unity of purpose and commitment to action that is so badly needed. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

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