

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



May 22, 2017

Embracing Diversity

Living in a diverse society is always a challenge. This challenge becomes more difficult to tackle when there are conflicts within such a society. In some cases, these conflicts may last for several decades and bring nothing else to the society, except misery and destruction. Therefore, it is important to learn the ways of living in diversity.

In order to live with cooperation in a diverse society it is necessary to develop respect and tolerance for others. Without these factors it would be very difficult to tighten the social bonds. The diverse societies have inhabitants from different cultural, historical, religious, ethnic or sectarian backgrounds.

Such societies, though have the advantage of being diverse and culturally rich, are very much vulnerable to conflicts as well. As there are groups of people with different ideologies and practices there are possibilities that they there may be frequent clashes and disturbances. Therefore, it is necessary in such societies that different groups should accept one another's existence.

The tolerance for others can be best developed by realizing the fact that others have their reasons to be what they are. They have their own backgrounds and values and their own practices that have developed within them through their distinct history. However, human beings are not able to do so in so many cases. They, in fact, become the victims of extreme ethnocentrism.

They observe and understand others in their own perspectives and try to judge them as per their own values, which does not give proper and just result. They have their analysis and understanding based on their own frame of reference, which is bound to be biased as they do not care for the objective truths.

The biased and ethno-centric approach towards others is bound to result in clashes and chaos. Such a scenario is really very much detrimental and can be utilized by others for their personal benefits. History approves the fact that the heterogeneous societies that have had clashes among their different groups were dominated by others who have not only strengthened those clashes through political means but have in fact pursued their own motives. In short, the societies that have such clashes are politically utilized by others and they suffer great loss as a result.

It is, therefore, essential for heterogeneous societies to develop a culture of co-existence. A sense of belongingness to a large body; may be a feeling for attachment to some national feelings, can solve the issue to a certain level. Binding themselves to national levels, the heterogeneous groups in the society may give up their trivial matters and start thinking in broader perspective.

They have to be taught to understand that it is only through collective efforts that they can make their survival possible in today's society. Their collective efforts can turn into a synergy that will provide them the possibilities of facing the overgrowing challenges of life with success and dignity.

Afghanistan is also one of the societies that are heterogeneous to a certain extent. There are people from different ethnic groups who have their sub-cultures. Though they have embellished Afghan society with variety but at the same time there have been instances when these groups have had clashes among one another. These clashes resulted in civil wars and influenced Afghan society negatively to a great extent. The other countries that had their interests in Afghan society used these clashes for their political purposes and further added fuel to the fire.

However, today Afghan society is standing in a different position. It is in a process of developing a peaceful life for its people. At this crucial juncture, it is really necessary that Afghan society must stand united and face challenges as a strong nation. It must not let the differences among different groups to dominate their national integration. The younger generation can play a tremendous role in this regard. They are educated and they have already experienced the consequences of decades of instability and wars; therefore, they can better decide which way to opt - coexistence or no existence. It was said by famous English philosopher, Bertrand Russell, "It's coexistence or no existence."

If Afghan people need to guarantee their national integration in the times to come when they will be tested by the challenges as the international forces are in the process of withdrawal from the country, they need to learn to hold each other's hands tightly and try to help each other in nation building.

They have to understand that the different groups in the country are basically different parts of the same body and without the support of any of them it would not be able to make the body complete and make it work and function properly.

Otherwise, the socio-political circumstance may prove to be very much cruel and they may blow away, like light straws, all those who are divided.



The Flagrant Violation of Children's Rights

By Hujjatullah Zia

Children remain vulnerable not only in Afghanistan but around the globe. Their rights are violated to a great extent. They have been exploited in industries, movies, public places and homes. Their physical inability has left them prone to social ills, moral turpitude and violence. Their life and liberty are not safeguarded and the voices regarding violence against children fall on deaf ears. Violation of humanitarian law is a serious issue, mainly in war-torn countries where children are killed in cold blood. According to a report released by the UN, within the first four months of the current year, about 283 children were killed and 704 were wounded in Afghanistan, which is said to be the highest recorded number of child casualties.

This is a 21 percent increase in child deaths compared to the same period in 2016.

Subsequently, UNAMA has urged warring parties to prioritize the protection of children as the 2017 fighting season continues by taking all necessary precautions to reduce harm to civilians during fighting.

Children's recruitment by the Taliban is also a matter of great concern. It is said that the Taliban recruit the children mostly from the poor families and support them financially in return. Moreover, children easily succumb to the Taliban's indoctrination and fall for their bogus claims since they have not reached mental maturity.

They are brainwashed in dark basements of madrasahs and kept out of touch.

International humanitarian law, or the laws of war, prohibits the recruitment or use of children under 15 by parties to a conflict. "Conscripting or enlisting children under the age of fifteen years into armed forces or groups or using them to participate actively in hostilities" is a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), to which Afghanistan belongs.

Those who commit, order, assist, or have command responsibility for war crimes are subject to prosecution by the ICC or national courts. More than 13 million children are being denied an education due to conflicts in the Middle East, the UN has said earlier, warning "the hopes of a generation" would be dashed if they cannot return to classrooms. In a report on the impact of conflict on education in six countries and territories across the region, the UN's children fund UNICEF said more than 8,850 schools were no longer usable due to violence.

To consider Syria, the war victims who take refuge, along

with their children, to foreign countries to breathe in a climate void of violence and bloodshed and flee militants' murderous acts and toxic ideology, succumb to death on a large scale. The children, especially the female teens, bear the brunt of war in Middle East.

As a result, a considerable number of underage females fell victim to systematic rape perpetrated by IS group. Hence, it is not only the issue of education but they suffer manifold problems created by radical elements.

The NUG's inability or unwillingness to respond to these challenges has profound implications for both its legitimacy and the future of the post-Taliban political order. In the Asia Foundation's 2015 Survey of the Afghan People, citizens who believed the country was going in the right direction declined to 37 per cent from 55 percent in 2014. After insecurity, worsening economic conditions were cited as the main reason for such pessimism.

It is aptly said that "it never rains but it pours". Afghanistan's challenges also come in large packages and the NUG is wrestling with many crises.

To tackle the issues, there are a lot to be done: First, the officials and political parties will have to cultivate trust among themselves - which will also be instrumental in bridging the gap between state and nation.

Secondly, the setbacks in the government's machinery which hamper the political reforms i.e. administrative corruptions, bribery, lack of law enforcement, etc. must be eradicated and corrupt figures are to be pursued and prosecuted. Thirdly, stronger strategy to counter insurgency is to be adopted to tackle terrorism and protect the life and liberty of the nation.

It is an undeniable fact that children's rights are violated flagrantly both in national and international levels. Despite this fact, there is little done in this regard. Child casualties, pornography, labor and recruitment will outrage the conscience of mankind around the world.

Children's life is extremely cheap in war-torn countries. They are exploited mentally, physically and sexually. This challenging issue should be tackled both by states and international community.

Governments must criminalize children's exploitation and apply the state's rule to end their sufferings. Moreover, the world should campaign against child exploitation and casualties. Exploiting children is highly outrageous and the rise in the graph of their casualty is horrible.

Hujjatullah Zia is the permanent writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at zia_hujjat@yahoo.com

The Aspects and Structures of Reforming in Judicial Institutions

By Zia Danish

Afghan government and international community underline the law enforcement and justice for providing utopia. Implementing law is considered the mainstay of a strong strategy for protecting the citizens' rights. The state has also prepared the draft of national plan for judicial reform which has been confirmed by the Supreme Council of the Rule of Law and Fight against Corruption and supposed to be submitted to the cabinet for approval and to judicial institutions for enforcement.

The objectives of national plan for judicial reform

Effective service delivery to citizens in accordance with the country's law; citizens' access to justice and the protection of their fundamental rights and constitutional liberties; rule of law and fight against crime including corruption; ensuring the meritocracy; increasing the vocational capacity of judicial staff and access to facilities and modern electronic equipment; adopting mechanism for reforming and strengthening the capacity of the judicial sector; and spreading awareness for citizens about their rights and obligations.

The aspects of judicial reform program

For providing judicial services to the citizens, the government has considered comprehensive reforming programs. Currently, the country's judicial institutions seek to bring fundamental changes in various fields which will be viewed shortly.

1- Capacity building

The judicial institutions seek to boost the capacity in three categories for improving judicial services.

A-Employing professional and expert individuals

Within the two past years, the government has employed a number of professional and committed individuals with the aim of strengthening and updating technical knowledge, boosting administrative capacities, increasing and extending the qualitative and quantitative levels of judicial services.

B-Developing and strengthening vocational trainings

Empowering and updating Judges, Attorneys and other staffs of judicial institutions professionally is the priority of this sector. Therefore, several different kinds of programs have been implemented for boosting the capacities of the mentioned groups at home and foreign countries and also Department of Vocational Training Institute has been established in the attorney general apartment.

C-Structural reforms, strengthening and developing office equipment

It is believed that providing appropriate judicial services depends on revising the structures of these institutions and updating and improving the equipment and technology. That is to say, modernizing the administrative system, approving regulations and procedures - which help us develop working affairs - and providing modern facilities and equipment will develop capacity.

The President specifically underlines access to technology

and promotion of human resource capacity. Hence, the continued struggles of the in charges of these institutions go on so as to achieve greater success by the technical and financial support of the international community.

2) Transparency and combating corruption

With the aim of implementing counter-corruption in judicial system, which is emphasized by the President, a number of different activities are carried out to overcome the challenges through following mechanisms:

A-Reviewing laws and simplifying work steps

The texts of laws, regulations and bills are complicated and complex and slow the normal process of works and leads to unreal realization and interpretations. So, high steps are taken for simplifying the work steps and struggles are still in progress in this regard.

B-The integrity of affiliated institutions

In order to fight corruption, specific institutions dealing with the phenomenon known as the Judicial and Justice Center for Fighting Corruption has been established. This has catalyzed and improved fight against corruption.

C-Department of monitoring justice

This department, which is in the formation of Supreme Court, finds out administrative corruption through different activities and prosecutes the perpetrators. Currently, hundreds of judicial staffs in different levels have been put in trial.

D-Considering the security of courts and judges

Implementing law and justice depends on guarding judges and courts, which has been paid appropriate attention. Improving the ability of the guards of judges and extending the scope of their activities to all provinces is also the responsibility of justice and judicial sector.

E-Promoting supervision over judicial performances

Investigating the probable violation of staff of judicial organizations across the country is a top priority of the institutions. The activities of responsible organizations will be investigated normally as a result of this mechanism. Moreover, the violation of staffs will be found out and dealt with. Now the penalty system in judicial institutions are paid serious attention.

F-Considering the infrastructures

There is an all-out effort to build the infrastructures required for creating and providing the sector so as to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of judicial sector. Having the required infrastructures will increase the work speed, the staff's satisfaction and the fruit of their works and finally lead to the public satisfaction.

The President has also ordered the ministry of finance to support the judicial system in providing financial resources so that all infrastructures of judicial sector could be established up to next year.

Zia Danish is the permanent writer of the Daily Afghanistan Ma. He can be reached at thedailyafghanistan@yahoo.com



Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Moh. Reza Huwaida

Vice-Chairman: Kazim Ali Gulzari

Email: outlookafghanistan@gmail.com

Phone: 0093 (799) 005019/777-005019

www.outlookafghanistan.net



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