

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



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## Family Planning is Planned Parenthood

For any country, it is always important to keep the number of people in check as per the resources of the country. And, the countries that are able to keep a proper balance between the growth in population and the resources in hand, they have better chances of making social development and progress.

On the other hand, however, it requires a long-term planning with an effective and an efficient organization on the country level to make the people conscious about the rapid growth of population and to change their old values about the family and marriage. In the western countries and in some of the neighboring countries such organized programs like family planning are going on for better planning of population and resources. According to the prevailing conditions, family planning is the only remedy which can help people as well as the government to lead a prosperous and richer life in better ways.

The concept of family planning is not clear for a layman. Family planning does not imply the absence of children or sterilization, but it is only a low rate or reproduction and nothing unnatural or inhuman. Taking into consideration the prevailing deteriorating conditions of the country and masses as a whole, family planning can be one of the main solutions. Family planning can be an effective measure to check the rapid growth of population and provide a happy life both for the parents and children. Family planning is nothing but planned parenthood, i.e., reproduction of the children with a reasonable interval between the first and the second baby without affecting the health of the mother and socio-economic stability of the family unit. The number of children in the family should be according to its resources and it should not be too large to make proper socialization and education of the children difficult for the parents.

It is vital to understand that high population growth exerts pressure on national efforts for future economic growth and development and simultaneously diverts resources from productive uses to more consumption and creates greater demand for more and more civic amenities. Therefore, it is important to adopt a comprehensive national policy to deal with the situation of rapid growth of population so that both the nation and the individuals benefit from it.

Population planning is certainly beneficial to the families with low income, less literacy, already too many children and such other disturbing socio-economic characteristics. In all parts of the world including urban and rural people, economic reasons for adopting family planning seem to be more convincing in comparison to the other advantages in support of planning. For example, the head of the rural family is faced with the problem of dividing up his small holding of land among his large number of children. While in a poor family, it is obvious that each new baby increases the burden on parents.

Among those in somewhat higher economic circumstances, interest naturally develops for a better life and education for the children. In cities, household appliances and other comforts are desired. All these facilities are difficult or impossible to attain for a large family except in families enjoying the highest economic status. The same kind of effects can be seen for the nation as a whole.

Then there are many health benefits as well that are attached to family planning. The women who are benefitting from this sort of planning tend to have better health. Enough time period during the two consecutive babies supports women in gaining enough energy. Then it should also be taken note of that there are higher chances of mortality in case of females during the child bearing period.

Repeated pregnancies break down the health of women, weaken them and result in their deaths. The women are more likely to die during child birth if they have more babies. And it is more dangerous if they are older in age and give birth to babies.

Moreover, frequent births deteriorate the health of the babies as well. Insufficient diet for the mother and babies effect the health of the babies to a large extent. The health of the father is also affected negatively due to overwork as he struggles to support a large family.

On the other hand, sick and unhealthy babies disturb the peace of mind of the fathers as well.

Therefore, it is essential that the families must adopt proper family planning so as to save their lives from different sorts of trouble and give birth and nourish the children who can be positive members of the society. Few may suggest that family planning is not acceptable in Islam but they fail to understand that Islam is the most recent religion of the world. It not only takes care of the spiritual side of man but also guides him regarding his relations in the world with his fellow humans. Islam demands from Muslims to be wise and take actions that should assist them to spend easy and blissful lives, free of difficulties and sins.



## Attack is the Best Means of Defense

By Hujjatullah Zia

The sense of disappointment will increase with escalated insurgency and message of pessimism. Breaking the peace deadlock and minimizing the casualties remain unanswered issues despite being debated hotly. Civilians suffer amidst violence since terrorist networks have intensified their operations in the region, mainly in Afghanistan. The bleeding never stops. Public air is filled with fear and hatred as the hackneyed words of "murder" and "destruction" make the daily headlines in national and international newspapers.

The US commander in Afghanistan Army General John Nicholson said in February that he needs several thousand more international troops to break a stalemate with the Taliban. On the other hand, as the US President Donald Trump weighs sending more soldiers to Afghanistan, a top US intelligent officer has said that the security situation in Afghanistan will further deteriorate even if there is a modest increase in military support for the country. "The intelligence community assesses that the political and security situation in Afghanistan will almost certainly deteriorate through 2018, even with a modest increase in (the) military assistance by the United States and its partners," Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats is cited as saying.

More than 220 US soldiers have been killed and over 20,000 were wounded within sixteen years of war in Afghanistan, but without a tangible result. In this stage, there are conflicting ideas about mitigating insurgency in Afghanistan. The security deteriorated as the military role of the US troops reduced to advisory role. Feeling this vacuum, US officials seek to resume the military role through sending more soldiers in Afghanistan. Despite this fact, there is still a sense of doubt if it breaks the deadlock.

I have written in my last commentary that warring factions hardly ever fight to cherish an ideology. For instance, a suicide bomber attacked an elite Afghan militia force and killed more than a dozen in eastern part of country on Saturday – the first day of Holy Month of Ramadan. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack.

Similarly, the Taliban's attack at an Afghan Army outpost on Friday reportedly killed and wounded 20 soldiers. The deadly attacks in the first day of holy month of Ramadan and on Afghan soldiers in a mosque in Mazar-e-Sharif last month reveal the fact that the Taliban are not fighting for ideology but out of barbarity.

A trend of heavy casualties among the Afghan security forces seems to be continuing this year, after record losses last year: more than 6,000 killed and more than 12,000 wounded in a

largely defensive effort. The situation has alarmed the American-led NATO coalition, which has about 13,000 troops here to support and train the Afghan forces.

Gen. John W. Nicholson has requested an additional few thousand troops to help the mission. Not even the American surge of forces starting in 2009, involving more than 100,000 troops, was able to end the insurgency.

Now, analysts believe the proposed troop increase would, at best, help prevent the Taliban from gaining further initiative and send the message that negotiation would be the only way out of the long war here.

Warring factions, mainly the Taliban, keep on killing combatants and noncombatants in the worst possible way. The peace process constantly met failure and there was no bona fide intention for peace since the Taliban did not cease their attacks. Their nonstop and indiscriminate killings are really heartbreaking for Afghan nation.

Streams of blood were shed and countless number of people were killed or wounded, however, the insurgency continues unabated. In other words, the large sacrifices vis-à-vis counterinsurgency seems to be futile. When our blood is spilt and people's rights and freedoms are violated without fruition, peace will be a pyric victory for Afghan nation.

It is most likely that the last gleam of hope is also declining with escalated insurgency and high graph of casualties. The hot debates and conferences yet to find out a panacea for this chronic problem. Perhaps, there are two main reasons behind counterinsurgency failure. First, there is no concrete solution to this issue. All ways have been tried such as military deal and peace process, both came to a stalemate.

The second reason is that political pundits might have suggested concrete solution but there is not strong determination to combat insurgency. On the one hand, political barriers will hamper the counterinsurgency, but on the other hand whistle blowers will dismantle the peace process.

Therefore, both military deal and peace process have come to deadlock. There seems no other option except for these two, is there?

Now the US and Afghan forces seek to resume the military deal strongly, since there is no third option.

I have always suggested strong military deal for counterinsurgency. Afghan officials will have to organize several offensive attacks, rather than defensive ones, to mitigate insurgency. More importantly, national unity among officials and their commitment to nation are the preliminary conditions for combating terrorism with strong will. Otherwise, the same trend will continue, don't you think so?

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## Afghanistan's Economy, Financial Restriction and Sustainable Mobility

By Tawasoley Gharjistani

The fiscal year of 1395 economic report, which is released twice in a year by the World Bank, has been published this month. This report contains two main points: first, report about economic changes in the second half of 1395 fiscal year with long-term and international viewpoints. Second, a deep analysis about Afghanistan's economy. This report is highly significant for Afghan people, mainly high decision makers in economic affairs, private sectors and economic experts.

The report generally contains three parts: current challenges regarding economic activities, the development of economic situation (15 percent increase in revenue and increase in GDP growth from 1.1% in 1394 to 2.2% in the solar year of 1395), and improvement in economic and financial activities. All the three parts will be expressed shortly.

### Part 1 - Challenges

There are several reasons behind decline in economic activities, investment and people's confidence:

#### A-The deteriorated security situation

The escalated insecurity and insurgency in different parts of the country has put an adverse effect on people's activities, living and business. The abduction of investors or their relatives is another barrier before economic activities and private entrepreneurs.

#### B-Lack of Balance between Economic and Population Growth

The report suggests that economic growth has been slower than population growth in the fiscal year of 1395. For instance, the population growth has been 3 per cent, while the economic growth was 2.2 per cent in 1395 - this means that per capita income declined which will result in extreme poverty and lack of welfare.

#### C-Limitation in Financial Resources:

Limitation or lack of financial resources is one of the main challenges in country's economy. Currently, the state's financial resources are based on three sources: tax-resources, non-tax resources (mines, rental property and government's real estate) and foreign aids. All these sources have their own challenges and getting rid of them need long-term strategy and mid-term and long-term work-plan. Although the government's income is growing via tax, there is still much to be done. The evolution in the country's financial sector is ambiguous according to the World Bank.

#### D-Repatriation of Refugees:

More than 800,000 refugees repatriated in 1395 and the number of internally displaced people have increased as a result of conflicts, which is a great challenge in the realm of economy. It is likely that the number of internally displaced people and refugees will increase in 1396 and create a setback before the government's struggles made to facilitate them.

#### Part 2: Relative Improvement of Economic Situation

The domestic economy (production) are composed of three

parts: (1) GDP/agriculture and livestock (2) Industry (3) Services. The report by the World Bank suggests that economic growth was doubled in 1394 comparing to 1394. That is to say, the rate of economic growth was 1.1 per cent in 1394 whereas it has reached 2.2 per cent in 1395. The report further estimates that the economic growth will reach 2.6 per cent in 1396 - it shows progress in financial state. The level of domestic revenue increased about 15 per cent in the fiscal year of 1395, which shows an increase of 5 per cent above that year's budget target. Within the two last years, there had been a considerable improvement in revenue collection and it is in contrast with 1394 - when revenues fell dramatically. The level of revenue collection is relatively lower than 10.5 per cent in comparison with the GDP rate. The government's income is estimated to reach 10.8 per cent GDP in the fiscal year of 1396.

Considering the report, it is likely that Afghanistan's economic growth will gradually reach 3.6 per cent up to 1399 (2020). However, this improvement depends on obtaining safe ground for economic growth such as better security situation, political stability and successful implementation of international continued assistance.

Economic growth in the fiscal year of 1395 as a result of improvement in agriculture is an important point in the report. The current statistics show that 78% workforce are engaged in agriculture. The ground for growth in agricultural sector seems safer in the country. The cheap and hardworking workforce, arable land in different parts of country and flowing and underground water are the factors that will facilitate growth in GDP.

#### Part 3 - Economic Motivating Factor

The report suggests, in its third part, how to provide economic motivating factor despite financial restrictions. Officials seek to catalyze financial growth so as to prevent from its slow process. Providing motivating factor on the one hand, and preventing the continued economic weakness on the other hand, is a real challenge. Afghanistan's financial resources are limited and the potential of increasing government's expanses or decreasing tax seems next to impossible. To overcome this challenge, the government should take more initiative with the aim of promoting the effect of financial expanses on economic growth. The World Bank suggests the following items in this regard:

First: promoting the attraction of high-quality forces in the government will raise the quality and speed of investment.

Second: adopting and implementing policies, which leads to the development of competition in the banking and construction markets, will encourage the small and medium companies in the labor market.

Third: Policies to expand fiscal space consisting of a series of actions for the integration of internal resources and effective use of available funds will provide more resources.

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