

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



November 07, 2016

Juvenile Delinquents must be Treated Appropriately

Youngsters within a society are the backbone of the society. Their strength, potential and their positive energies can benefit the society to a great extent. The whole future and destiny of a nation depends on them. Their optimistic attitude towards the prevailing socio-political conditions and their motivation to play a distinctive and impacting role can uplift the morale of the society and provides it the stamina to stand against the social and political problems. On the other hand, if they are pessimistic and have negative outlook towards the society and social issues, they are bound to invite troubles and difficulties. Their non-conformity towards social norms, values and law and order may result in delinquency and may make them fall in the quagmire of crimes for their whole lives. In such cases, they may not only destroy their own lives but the life of the society as a whole.

It is important for a society to treat the children and youngster in a proper way. It is mostly the social conditions that decide the social roles and responsibilities of the youngsters. If a society is a well-developed society, it would definitely provide better opportunities for the youngsters to become positive part of the society but if it is underdeveloped and has many social problems, it is bound to influence the youngsters in a negative manner as the opportunities for the youngster to play a constructive role would be limited and they would be pushed towards miseries and crimes.

It is because of lack of attention and proper opportunities that juvenile delinquency is a major problem in our country Afghanistan. The socio-political and socio-economic scenario in the country have been very much vulnerable for the youth. The opportunities for getting education, particularly higher education are limited and the employment opportunities are scarce. Poverty, on the other hand, has incapacitated the youngsters to pursue education and careers of their choice. Most of them do not have clear idea about their roles and responsibilities and neither are they sure of their future. Therefore, most of them saunter aimlessly in society instead of becoming a part of a larger whole.

The circumstances are further deteriorated by the continued wave of insecurity and terrorism. Though there have been certain improvements made since the installation of so-called democratic government, juvenile delinquency keeps on hampering in the process of improvement.

Apart from the traditional crimes like mugging, rape, robbery and murder, youth in the country are dominantly caught in the web of terrorism. There are many fresh recruits in different terrorist groups who serve as potential cadre for such evil organizations and presently they have been serving as the man power for suicide bombings. In many of the cases of suicide bombings that have taken place in different parts of the country, the bombers have been youngsters. Moreover, there have been many youngsters involved in the smuggling and production of drugs in the country that has been a dominant evil for us.

To add fuel to the fire, there is scarcity of special courts or special juvenile training and rehabilitation centers where delinquents can be treated, trained or guided. If they are caught in their crimes they are put in the same prisons as adults and treated in the same manner as adults. Therefore, this does not only violate their rights but also diminishes their chances of improving themselves.

Highlighting a similar issue, the Independent Human Rights Commission on Saturday, November 5, said that more than 150 children and teenagers are imprisoned in Bagram prison on charges of anti-national and foreign security crimes. Abdullah Abid, child rights protection officer of the commission said that the children and teenagers should be freed and should be sent to juvenile training centers. He also said in his statement, "Children's special courts, which are required by law, are in six provinces but the children's cases are assessed by other courts and this is a violation of children's rights." Meanwhile, Ministry of Justice said they have no plans to transfer the prisoners from Bagram to juvenile training centers in Kabul because they are kept separate from adult prisoners in Bagram.

It is important to note that juvenile training centers should be based on modern guidance and training techniques. Only keeping the youngster separate from the adults does not solve the issue; therefore, the issue should be dealt in a more logical and scientific manner.

The unchecked juvenile delinquency in the country really points at serious concerns for the future of the country. Necessary measures must be introduced by the government in this regard to curb the situation appropriately and as per the scientific approach towards the solution. Separate confinements and severe punishments alone cannot guarantee a crimeless society and in the case of juvenile delinquency the matter gets even more complicated. Special considerations, special laws and special treatment must be in place to deal with the cases of juvenile delinquency otherwise the circumstances may get worse rather than getting any better.



Solutions to Administrative Corruption

By Mohammad Zahir Akbari

Administrative Corruption, as a biggest challenge after war, is the main hurdle to the wellbeing, stability and tranquility in Afghanistan. Billions of dollars in development and reconstruction assistance were poured into the country, but did not transform the lives of Afghans as much as expected; they all wasted because of this very headache. Over 40 percent of Afghans still live below the poverty line, and Afghanistan remains to be among the world's most underdeveloped countries. Lawlessness, insecurity and Unemployment have reached an unprecedented level, pressing many young Afghans to flee the country every year.

Corruption is the outcome of various factors in Afghanistan and its consequences are also widespread in the country. When corruption is expanded and tolerated, a special moral atmosphere will be created in which violation of primary moral principals will be considered accepted culture. As a result, the culture of lawlessness becomes a kind of law. On the other hand possibility of misusing administration authorities and achieving personal interests will make the occasion that administrative officials will feel secure from any kind of punishment and become confident that having money and relations with powerful groups will deliver them from punishment under the laws. Impacts and outcome of this feel of immunity will be decrease in respect to the Constitution, decrease in sound opportunity for improvement of individuals, association and organizations and finally decrease in community development, stopping of development and end of development process in the country.

Despite existence of administrative reform programs and battle against corruption which lots of attempt has been done still the problem of corruption has not been solved. The question which is raised here is why? The reason is not lack of laws, because it is clear that specifically on the issue of administrative and financial affairs to prevent misuse of incomes and resources of the government, offices and procedures of monitoring and control are a lot that even sometimes causes lag in conducting the programs. Still corruption and misuses are a major part administrative system. So we should search the main reasons of corruption more broadly in Cultural, social, economical, political and administrative factors.

In fact, Afghanistan is in a situation that state is unable to provide a comprehensive and general program to cover political, economical and security aspects; it is responsibility of community elites and research institutions to take part and decrease distrust of people on the government by providing a political, economical and social strategy. It is also duty of international community and supporter of reform to work together and lead Afghan community toward democracy considering values of belief, and valued social costumes and provides more support for the government to be reformed. It should be mentioned here that War creates corruption. During the war police

and security forces who are responsible to detect corruption, are busy with war so crime detection and arrest of criminals are not done accurately. On the other hand, during war a big amount of government's budget is being spent on weapon and war expenses. This money can be used for prosperity of people and employees of government. So by end of the war, a major factor of corruption which is bribery and embezzlement can be removed.

Most of the government personnel get the lowest salary comparing to the regional and international country while they are the breadwinner of large families. Indeed, the salaries they receive are not possible to cover the very basic needs let alone to compare with other countries.

Since social, political and economical conditions are different from one community to others, for example condition and ground for reform are different in liberal and communist states compared to Islamic states therefore it is essential to find an applicable model for administrative reform in Afghanistan considering its condition.

Public awareness programs for people and public administration staff through media, judicial and justice institutions and public administration, can also be a solution. Hiring educated, experienced and honest people without political consideration by leading officials in various positions of the administration is also effective on prevention of corruption. Administration capacity building to organize public services in all levels of administration will also be helpful to prevent corruption. Produce and cultivation of narcotics are creating corruption, by preventing cultivation and production of narcotics a factor of corruption will be removed. Increase in duty supervision, control and reporting in all sections of administration up to high ranking officials, can be another solution to remove corruption. To cope with corruption in Afghanistan, national impetus is necessary (by government and public), until people and government are not working together to prevent corruption, corruption will not be removed.

Transparency in administration is highly required, work of all institutions should be supervised by High Office of Oversight & Anti Corruption on a monthly basis and appropriate actions should be taken. Existence of law and offices of anti corruption are not enough, laws should be implemented so all employees believe that if they commit corruption, they will be punished. Experience has shown that anti-corruption campaign will come to fruition when the top-bottom approach is adopted, meaning that the upper reaches of the government should be targeted first, but it is very sad to say that the contrary is true in Afghanistan. As part of its symbolic efforts, the government has tried some of its low-level, unaffiliated personnel on corruption charges, while those behind major corruption cases are senior government officials.

Mohammad Zahir Akbari is the newly emerging writer of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan. He can be reached at mohammadzahirakbari@gmail.com

America's Race to the Ballot's Bottom

By Elizabeth Drew

Hillary Clinton's US presidential campaign has been torn between trying to secure the largest possible victory for the candidate herself and explicitly helping fellow Democratic gubernatorial and legislative candidates further down the ballot. It's an open question whether Clinton could do more for down-ballot candidates by winning decisively - so that the enthusiasm trickles down - or by expending time and money to help those candidates individually. The Clinton camp has decided to pursue both strategies. With just a week left before the election, the presidential candidates are crisscrossing the country: whereas Republican nominee Donald Trump is struggling to cobble together the 270 Electoral College votes needed to win, Clinton is trying to lock up as large a victory - in both the popular vote and the Electoral College - as possible.

Just a week ago, Clinton seemed to be heading toward an overwhelming victory. But on October 28, FBI Director James Comey sent a letter to Congress announcing that he was reopening the investigation into Clinton's use of a private email server when she was Secretary of State. The reason? Thousands of emails had been discovered on the laptop of the estranged husband of Clinton's closest assistant, Huma Abedin, during a separate inquiry into his own activities. (No, this isn't a movie plot.)

Comey's announcement triggered an uproar, but it hasn't so far had a notable impact on the race. The Clinton campaign has not given up even on winning states that have long been considered Republican strongholds, such as Arizona, Georgia, and Utah. And Trump, despite feeling invigorated by the discovery, has continued to pursue states, such as New Mexico, that would do him little good in the Electoral College count. But Trump, new to politics, fancies himself a great political strategist. Trump has few political allies to help him out, while Clinton's many surrogates include her husband, former President Bill Clinton; President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama, the breakout star of this election; and Vice President Joe Biden and Clinton's vice-presidential running mate, Tim Kaine. Two stars of the left, Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders, have also campaigned for Clinton; if she wins, they will call in the debt both in policy terms and on appointees.

Meanwhile, Clinton has appeared with Democratic Senate candidates who are challenging incumbent Republicans, including Katie McGinty, who is running to oust Senator Pat Toomey in Pennsylvania; Governor Maggie Hassan, who hopes to topple Senator Kelly Ayotte in New Hampshire; and Deborah Ross, who is mounting a strong challenge to Senator Richard Burr in North Carolina. The Clinton campaign has poured money into several Senate, House of Representatives, gubernatorial, and even state-legislature races, and Clinton field workers and volunteers have been encouraged to help down-ballot candidates in contentious races. Obama, for his part, recently recorded a series of video endorsements for Democrats running for the Senate, the House, and state legislatures. Numerous pundits say that the FBI announcement will help Republicans down-ballot, but that's pure speculation.

If Clinton wins the White House and many Republican incumbents are swept out of office, the US will have had a "wave" election. But we likely won't know if this is happening until the last minute. In the 1980 wave election, when Ronald Reagan and the Republican ticket overwhelmed President Jimmy Carter and toppled several liberal Democrats in the Senate, the presidential race was nearly tied until the final weekend.

Even if the Democrats retake the Senate in a wave, the honeymoon won't last long. In two years, another third of the Senate will be up for reelection, and far more Democrats than Republicans will have to defend their seats - a reversal of the situation this year.

Of course, the Clinton campaign isn't just being charitable by helping down-ballot candidates. Her administration will be far better off with more Democrats in Congress. The Democrats are still widely expected to retake the Senate, though not the House, where they would need to flip an unlikely 30 Republican seats. (Most House seats are gerrymandered, with district boundaries manipulated to benefit the incumbent party.) But even if the Democrats do regain a majority in the 100-member Senate, Republicans will still be able to hold the threat of a filibuster - which requires 60 votes to break - over Clinton's legislative proposals and nominations to the executive branch and Supreme Court.

There's another important reason for the Clinton campaign and its high-profile surrogates to help down-ballot Democrats. Both parties want to strengthen their hold on as many state-level offices as possible, because the party that controls a state's governorship and at least one of its legislative chamber gets to oversee how congressional districts are drawn (which happens every ten years). How districts are drawn affects the partisan makeup of the House, and therefore the fate of federal legislation. (Only the Senate votes on presidential nominations.) The states are also where the parties can build their bench of potential future federal officeholders. The Republicans figured out the importance of state-level politics long before the Democrats, and they have built a much stronger foundation in the states than the Democrats have. For example, even though Obama carried Ohio in the last two elections, its current congressional delegation is 75% Republican.

The US election is now a volatile affair. No one knows what might pop up next to shake up the race, but it is sensible to assume that something will. At the very least, the WikiLeaks disclosures will presumably continue, though, despite being somewhat embarrassing to the Clintons, they haven't revealed corruption by the Clinton Foundation or improprieties in how Hillary Clinton conducted policy as Secretary of State. By the time Comey sent his letter, several million Americans had already cast their ballots. We cannot know how the various disclosures will affect turnout between now and Election Day. What we do know is that, ultimately, nothing that has or might happen makes Trump better suited for the presidency than Clinton. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

Elizabeth Drew is a regular contributor to The New York Review of Books and the author, most recently, of Washington Journal: Reporting Watergate and Richard Nixon's Downfall.

Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Dr. Hussain Yasa
Vice-Chairman: Kazim Ali Gulzari
Email: outlookafghanistan@gmail.com
Phone: 0093 (799) 005019/777-005019
www.outlookafghanistan.net

افغانستان
The Daily Afghanistan

The views and opinions expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not reflect the views or opinions of the Daily Outlook Afghanistan.