

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



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Sports Can Change our Society

Sports have always played an important role in the lives of individuals and societies. They are not only a part of entertainment but, at the same time, an important reason for better health conditions. Moreover, they are also an opportunity for different nations of the world to make themselves known to the world and earn pride by achieving great performances. Today, there are many nations of the world that are recognized because of the particular sports they have performed in. In addition, the players who have won distinctions in different games are mostly recognized along with the names of their countries.

Sports are also very much helpful in developing social interactions and strengthening them to a great extent. The most important thing that it teaches to the sportsmen is the team work. The players, being parts of different teams, learn to manage social interactions and relations and start mastering the very basic rule of the society, which is social interdependence. On the other hand sports are also very much helpful in strengthening the ties among the nations. Two nations competing in a game can have better understanding of each other's culture and tradition, which can help in bringing the nations closer to each other.

Sports can also be helpful in keeping the members of a society away from the negative activities. They have always been considered as useful tools in reducing the use of drugs, crimes and other unconstructive activities. There are different sports events throughout the world that attract people to a great extent, bring them together and at the same time provide a huge amount of entertainment. Different nations of the world have different types of sports that are particular to those nations; however, there are certain games that have international status and many nations of the world enjoy playing them.

In Afghanistan, as well, there are different types of sports that are played by the people in different parts of the country. Instability and disorder, however, influenced the growth of the sports in the country. Nonetheless, since the downfall of Taliban and establishment of a so-called democratic government efforts regarding the promotion of sports have intensified. And, there are certain games, in which Afghans have shown great talent and they have achieved international recognition. Among them Football, cricket and Taekwondo are the noteworthy ones.

Afghan football team won the South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Championship 2013 for the first time by beating India. The cricket team on the other hand qualified for World Cup Cricket 2015 and it has also qualified for T20 World Cup 2016 and Afghan Taekwondo hero, Rohullah Nekpa, won bronze medal in 2012 Summer Olympics.

Keeping in mind the preparations and the facilities that the Afghan sportsmen get, it is really encouraging to see such great achievements by Afghan sportsmen. Afghan government requires doing more so as to facilitate different sportsmen in their respective fields. The sportsmen of the other countries enjoy all sorts of facilities that are required; therefore, they are able to show their distinction in different games.

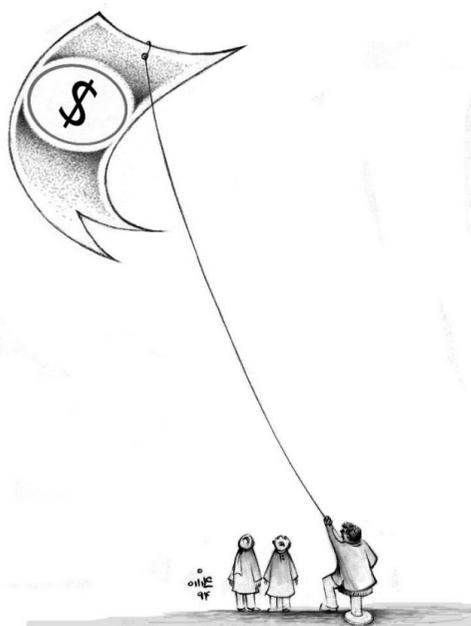
On the other hand, our sportsmen also require support from the people. The love and support of the people fill the hearts of the players with motivation and determination and, therefore, they are able to perform at their best.

Afghanistan is largely suffering from the influence of war, instability and disorder. The enemies of the nation have nothing else to offer except bloodshed and tyranny. The people are totally fed up of the situation and they want entertainment and amusement. And, they can achieve all these only through sports.

Recently, it has been observed that what the politicians have not been able to achieve, what the sportsmen have been able to acquire. They have brought the down-trodden people of Afghanistan a ray of hope and a realization of the fact that the Afghans are capable of performing well in all fields of life. Politics has only brought rifts within the people and has divided them on ethnic lines, but the games have saved their unity and their honor.

It is really important for the authorities in Afghanistan to understand that the games and sportsmen have a higher role than just playing games; therefore, they should be given due attention and they should be provided with the facilities so that they are able to compete with other nations of the world. They have proved that having less facilities and opportunities they are able to perform very well, so if they are given facilities they will really polish their abilities and will be able to perform extraordinarily on international level.

If sports are promoted properly, they have the potential to divert the attentions of the people towards positive activities and will be able to keep them away from the social evils that Afghanistan is facing nowadays; the evils like terrorism and drugs.



The Vulnerability of Afghan Women

By Hujjatullah Zia

Constitutionally, only competent courts have the authority to prosecute a suspect or criminal. The Constitution of Afghanistan states in article 25 as, "Innocence is the original state. The accused shall be innocent until proven guilty by the order of an authoritative court." Therefore, desert court has no legal basis and it is considered crime in the eye of law.

Reportedly, an angry mob lynched a 19-year-old girl, Rukhshana, about a couple of weeks ago in Ghor province for eloping with the man of her choice. Rukhshana was forced to live her whole life under the same roof with an undesired man - a traditional custom which holds sway in Afghanistan. After turning her suitor down and eloping, a number of turbaned men arrested and stoned her in cold blood. The Taliban are said to be behind the incident.

Members of the Afghan parliament's Women's Affairs Commission condemned the issue and urged the legal and judicial bodies to bring the perpetrators to justice. "Two incidents happened during the past three months in the country.

The first case was the public lashing of a woman in a government controlled area. The government judge ordered the lashing verdict and the second tragedy is the stoning of Rukhshana," commission member Ruqia Nayel is quoted as saying.

Violence against women is widely practiced in the patriarchal system of Afghanistan. Although, there have been improvements regarding women's rights within the last decade, nonetheless, a number of women fall victim to social and domestic violence with impunity - mainly in the Taliban dominated areas where women are left at the mercy of desert court: one is punished without the verdict of an authoritative court, fair trial or legal judgment or sentenced to death for committing a misdemeanor or petty offense which is less punishable by law.

Women are changed into scapegoat in remote areas. I remember vividly the miserable story of a rape victim in Daikundi Province. Shakila, a teenage school girl who was living in Korga village, always had to pass by her neighbors' houses on her way to school. One morning, she was waylaid and sexually assaulted by an octogenarian in her neighborhood. The man did this to avenge his wife's rape many years ago by the father of the same girl. Although, Shakila's father had been tried and held in detention for a long period, for his crime, the old man still kept his animosity.

Following the incident, Shakila's father turned lunatic holding his daughter's hand and taking her from door to door to raise his voice. He was smoldering with strong pain and boiling anger and talking with a lump in his throat about what was done to his innocent daughter. Of course, his words could not articulate his burning emotions. He was trembling with pain and rage, talking to

whoever passed him. Whenever Shakila's father was talking about the incident, she was keeping her distance, standing still and hanging her head. Can you imagine the headache felt by her mother?

Women's freedom is curtailed to a large extent. Men and women are entitled to exercise their rights to freedom equally and, constitutionally, the state is supposed to protect their liberty. Article 24 asserts, "Liberty is the natural right of human beings. This right has no limits unless affecting others freedoms as well as the public interest, which shall be regulated by law. Liberty and human dignity are inviolable.

The state shall respect and protect liberty as well as human dignity." This article also points out that one can enjoy his/her liberty within limits i.e. it must not restrict the freedom of the rest.

Based on a source, many risk factors increase the chance of Afghan women experiencing domestic violence. Some of these include being in a forced, underage, or polygamous marriage, living in rural communities or communities with greater Taliban control, and the presence of strict gender role perceptions. Factors that decrease the chance of domestic violence include employment of spouses, consensual marriage, literacy of both men and women, living in urban communities, enjoying economic stability, and perceived satisfactory gender relations.

According to women's rights advocates, a deteriorating economy and growing insecurity have contributed to the rise in reported incidents. They also point to evidence that laws aimed at protecting women have proven notoriously hard to implement.

The erosion of religious values, absence of humanity and decline of moral standards are the great tragedies in our individual and collective life.

The current violence taking place against women demonstrates our patriarchal structure. In some villages, since traditional culture has been handed down from one generation to the next, it is deemed sacred whether it is void of ethical code or religious values. Women are considered inferior and their natural rights and dignity are trampled upon - while they are endowed with inviolable rights and held in high esteem in Islamic Sharia. In short, a number of traditional practices are contrary to religious law and Afghanistan's Constitution.

Since the Ulema Council plays a fundamental role in the community, it will have to condemn the violence against women and raise the public awareness of women's rights and dignity from the religion's perspective.

In other words, the clergy should carry out their responsibility and religious obligations concerning the issue. Their guidance will mitigate the pain and anguish widely suffered by Afghan women.

It is mullahs to ameliorate moral and cultural deviances in an Islamic community.

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Ground Forces can Only Wipe Out Islamic State

By Manish Rai

Exclusive for the Daily Outlook

Islamic State again has proved its striking capability beyond Iraq and. Recently the so-called soldiers of the caliphate appear to have demonstrated a chilling reach, with terrorist attacks against Russia, Lebanon and France. The seemingly synchronized assaults that turned Paris into a war zone came just days after a bombing targeted Beirut district controlled by Iran's ally, Hezbollah, and a Russian passenger jet was downed over Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. The rapid succession of strikes, all claimed by the Islamic State, suggested that the regional war is taking the shape of a global nature. The skill and determination of IS leaders and fighters, organizational size and its demonstrated lethality distinguish it from other terrorist groups. So the potential global threat poses by the Islamic State will be different and very high in magnitude than once posed by al-Qaeda. But one biggest irony is that still after the air campaign launched by the world super powers against Islamic State it is still deadlier to carry out attacks far from its strongholds in Middle-East.

Despite thousands of U.S. airstrikes in Iraq and Syria that are reported to have killed about 10,000 Islamic State fighters, the group continues to replenish its forces. Intelligence analysts have estimated that almost 30,000 foreign militants from more than 100 countries have entered Iraq and Syria since 2011, with the Islamic State gaining about 1,000 fighters a month.

A very important component is missing in all this anti IS strategy which is absence of any effective ground forces against Islamic State. No amount of airstrikes can ever fully obliterated the hated Islamist fanatics because even the very extensive air campaigns will still leave enough residual force, leadership, and safe-haven, to allow ISIS to reconstitute and reorganise itself. American forces have been bombing Islamic State targets for more than a year without significant progress. Now joined in those efforts by Russia as well but have thus far been unable to seriously degrade the capability of those violent fanatics. It was argued that US air campaign aimed at "Containing" IS and to stop its expansion. But a strategy that only disrupts or contain

without defeating or destroying ISIS has no prospect for a successful outcome.

ISIS is a serious enemy with significant skill as light infantry. Aerial bombing is a conventional modern counter-state strategy. It is the least efficient and least decisive strategy, even more so against the Islamic State in 2015 than against Germany in 1945. The Islamic State is not dependent on heavy industry or urban infrastructure which if targeted by the bombing will affect its fighting capabilities.

Air strikes alone are indecisive without a ground campaign to flush the terrorists/insurgents out of their hiding places and to contain them for separation from ordinary civilians. There is a need of an integrated strategy, including an air campaign and commitment of ground troops. Its being long argued that local militias or groups which opposes IS can be used on ground against Islamic State. But it's a hard fact that no group has a strength to take on IS in direct confrontation.

Even the Kurdish militia's like- PKK and YPG which got battlefield success against Islamic State in limited arena are unwilling to battle IS on large scale and on multiple fronts. Kurdish militia's has a uni-focal approach to safeguard their strongholds from IS and consolidate their positions.

To defeat the Islamic State and contain ISIS fighters, the ground campaign would need to be led by first-tier Western armies, would need to be of a scale equivalent to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, and would need the cooperation of Iraq and Syria neighbours, so that Iraq's and Syria's borders can be closed, otherwise ISIS fighters would escape to other states.

This cooperation would need to include not just Western "allies" Kurds and Turkey, but at least tacit cooperation from Western "enemies" Syria, Iran and Russia. Without a Western-led invasion, ISIS will dominate its current territory indefinitely, in yet another lingering civil war, in yet another failed states, with yet more contagion to other states. Consolidating its territory over years if not decades and will use this consolidated territory as a launch pad for attacking Western interest all across the region and even on global scale.

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