

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



November 21, 2017

Universal Children's Day

Yesterday, November 20, was celebrated as Universal Children's Day around the world. The basic objective of the day is to advocate, promote and celebrate children's rights and encourage dialogues and actions that will build a better world for children. The day is celebrated on November 20 because it was on the same day in 1959 when the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. It was also on the same day in 1989, when the UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This year the theme of the day was "It's a #KidsTakeOver" and United Nations International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) invited children from around the world taking over key roles in media, politics, business, sport and entertainment to voice their support for millions of their peers who are unschooled, unprotected and uprooted on 20th November.

The day was also celebrated in Afghanistan. Several media organizations gave children the opportunity to take over segments of their programming. RTA, TV24, Shamsad, TOLO, BBC and Radio Free Europe as well as Pajhwok news agency and the Killid media group all participated in the celebration. UNICEF, in its statement declared: "Here in Afghanistan, it is very important to give children a voice because they are a very big part of this country's young society. However, girls and boys in Afghanistan are largely invisible as citizens and we need to give them the chance to speak up. Today is a day for children to 'take over' and speak with their own voices. And we must listen." It is really vital that the voices of the children should be heard, their issues should be understood and, most importantly, there must be efforts to solve the issues that they face.

The prevailing instability in Afghanistan is influencing all the sections of the society to a large extent, but the weaker sections of the society; especially, children are the ones who fall easy preys in such situation. The violent incidents have not only been carried out by the terrorists, rather there are certain other issues of violence against children that are carried out by the society, as a whole, and for that the habitual inconsideration and sick mentality of the common men are responsible.

Many children, because of improper birth or because of lack of health facilities and insufficient nutrition either die in the very beginning of their lives or able to drag on their lives with certain physical deformities and serious diseases. Most of the children of the society are not able to have access to education, either because of the financial problems or the traditional hatred of the parents for modern schooling system.

The girls in this regard suffer even to more extreme levels. Moreover, the children who do not get a chance to be admitted in school are then sent out for labor so that they can prove to be a helping hand for their parents and, in the process, they are left at the mercy of the social evils.

Child labors are exposed to crimes and maltreatment to a risky extent, especially the ones who are employed by shop-owners, mechanics and small firms. They are even put to violent treatment by their employers on pity matters. Further, another concerning factor regarding the plight of the children in Afghanistan is the growing number of child beggars.

Families, stricken with intense poverty, do not hesitate even to send their children for begging. Apart from that, there are professional beggars who utilize the helpless children for the begging purposes.

The children are even abducted for the same purpose. The phenomenon of violence against children is multifaceted. It involves recruitment of children by the terrorist groups.

The recruitment that is carried out by militant groups is mostly for carrying out suicide attacks through them, who because of their immaturity or because of the intense pressure do not understand the incentive nature of their actions.

There have been many incidents of suicide attacks in various parts of the country, wherein the attacker were below 16 years of age. Apart from that the children are also welcomed by the militant groups with the intention to have a cadre that they can train in accordance to their own will, within their training camps.

Recruitment of the children by the terrorists will result in violence against children and their abuse. The attitude of a trained militant clearly depicts the fact that the training sessions in their training camps do involve severe kind of violence and maltreatment. Another type of violence includes the killing and maiming of the children because of the conflict-related violence. The security of the children against all sort of violence, their proper nourishment and their character development are the most important considerations to contemplate on, if the government is serious to safeguard the rights of the children.

The same children are going to be the builders of future; their proper care should be ascertained through every possible means. Apart from the government the members of the society can also play a tremendous role in diminishing violence against the children and uplifting their morale.



The Weak Points of Afghanistan's Higher Education

By Mustafa Ahmadi

In the world where all proceed toward progress and development, one cannot underestimate the role of educational institutions since level of higher education and dynamic system of education and training are the cornerstone of development around the globe. Throughout the history, education has been the backbone of human societies and the role of education extends with each passing day. Currently, educating the public is known as an element of sustainable development.

All countries allocate the bulk of their income to educational development. In fact, education is a fundamental base of human societies. As a result, all negative factors and roots which weaken this base should be figured out and eliminated.

Teaching is one of the elements that will be highly effective in educational system. That is to say, teaching plays an effective role in the efficiency of educational system. One can claim with full confidence that in Afghanistan, this factor puts an adverse effect on educational institutions. In addition to traditional teaching materials, especially in some government universities, no appropriate teaching method is applied. It comes as applying various teaching methods and considering the needs of students, teaching-learning process will encourage students to learn better. In charge of educational institutions should seek to utilize the most updated educational sources and text books besides appropriate educational facilities.

On the other hand, students also ought to pursue active learning. In brief, they are not only supposed to learn theories, but also go deeper to the issues and apply their information in educational institutions.

The next effective factor, a negative one, for teaching manpower is exhaustion, which is called educational exhaustion and will disrupt learning. Exhaustion is the state of mental boredom and an unnecessary excitation that will lead to students' disinterest. If this trend continues, it will result in inefficiency of educational system. There are many factors, including hope for employment and learning, which influence educational exhaustion.

The psychological aspect of mankind will play a pivotal role in one's development. In a society, the more educational programs and objectives uphold the value and significance of students, the less educational exhaustion will emerge. It should be noted that some educational centers do not only not struggle for the enrichment of students but also repress their hope and motivation that will generate educational exhaustion.

The main reasons behind decreasing students' motivation are corruption in educational system and in employment,

limitation in educational departments, and unemployment. These issues will shatter students' hope and lead to educational exhaustion.

The third factor that puts an adverse effect on educational system is educational negligence, which is debated hotly by researchers and called a bad habit. Ill-fatedly, this issue exists on a large scale in the society. Educational negligence means unnecessarily delaying tasks without a proper reason till it generates depression and excitation for you. Lack of clear objectives and long-term programs by students are significant reasons behind educational negligence as well as exhaustion. In such a case, the role of internet is undeniable. In other words, the role of internet is very crucial in the context of cultural, social, educational, and economic development. Development without internet seems next to impossible in modern world and its especial quality multiplies the users' interest. Students at different level of age need to use internet. But if this technology is not used systematically or based on a purpose, it will necessarily lead to educational negligence. In our society, the extension of social media wastes a great amount of the time of users, mainly university students. Ultimately, this leads to kind of addiction and results in educational negligence.

The last but not the least which is effective in training manpower in a society is appropriate feeding. Due to unmitigated poverty and unemployment, it is paid less attention in our society. Appropriate feeding is very important in many developed countries since lack of feeding will decrease the level of students' learning. The wrong menu prevailing in our country will create physical and mental illness for students. It will put an adverse effect on the process of their learning.

At a macro level, an efficient educational structure with strategic programs is necessary. Since the main responsibility of an educational system is flourishing the talent of individuals and offering useful manpower to the society, lack of a strategic and long-term program will be a blow to the society. Unfortunately, our educational system is weak and corrupt.

This issue is noticed in schools and private and governmental universities. Within past years, no significant changes have been taken in this respect. Hence, the government will have to reform the educational system and create a strategic program to meet the society's need. In this case, human resources will grow stronger. The more fundamental reform takes place for resolving students' issues, the more swiftly a society will develop.

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Civilians Suffer amidst War

By Hujjatullah Zia

Human rights violation constantly makes global headline. People's rights are violated in some ways or the other, especially on the basis of their racial and religious backgrounds. On the one hand, the escalated militancy have catalyzed human rights violation, but on the other hand, disregarding the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) left people's rights to life and liberty at stake.

The fundamental rights of men, women, and children are trampled upon without a tinge of guilt. Human rights violators turn a close eye not only to international instruments but also to ethical code and religious tenets. They show no respect to people's fundamental rights - i.e. their rights to life, freedom, and property. Scores of people lose their lives in conflicts.

That is to say, both sides of war disregard the rights of individuals and pursue their political aims at the cost of women and children's life.

Reports say that at least 716 cases of rights violations - extrajudicial killing, physical assault, arbitrary detention, forced displacement, torture and violations of press freedom - were committed against civilians in Yemen last month. A total of 115 civilians were killed in October, according to Geneva-based SAM organization. The group also reported 140 new cases of arbitrary detention in October, in addition to the thousands of civilians who were already being held by Houthi rebels and loyalists to Yemen's former president, Ali Abdullah Saleh. Calling it a "gross violations" of IHL, SAM condemned all the incidents in its report.

"[SAM] urges the UN and humanitarian organizations to provide immediate aid to the displaced civilians in Taiz and to work on lifting the blockade ... immediately and without conditions," the group noted, urging the Saudi-led coalition to "avoid targeting civilians and to review its rules of combat in accordance with the international laws and conventions".

It is said that at least 10,000 people have been killed in the Yemen conflict, and seven million are in dire need of food assistance.

During the conflicts, children remain highly vulnerable. The alliance, assembled by Saudi Arabia in 2015, was added to the UN chief's annual list of shame for killing and maiming 683 children and for 38 verified attacks on schools and hospitals during 2016. The blacklist also named the Houthi rebel group - also shamed last year - as being responsible for the killing or maiming of 414 children. In total, the document highlights the killing of

502 Yemeni children. It also says that 838 children were wounded in 2016.

In Syria, a resurgence of deadly attacks by pro-government forces in so-called de-escalation zones, including a triple airstrike on a busy marketplace, killed more than 50 people. In recent months, airstrikes by the Syrian government or Russia have hit schools, hospitals and homes in Idlib and in the Damascus suburbs of Eastern Ghouta, another de-escalation zone, where the United Nations says 400,000 residents are trapped and where one in four children are at risk of malnutrition.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban and the loyalists to self-styled Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) spill the blood of soldiers and civilians. They target people anywhere, including masques while worshipping. The militants never respect IHL or religious tenets despite operating under the sacred term of religion. Last year, the civilian fatalities were the highest since the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan began recording them in 2009, according to SIGAR. That count found conflict-related civilian casualties in Afghanistan rose to 11,418 in 2016, including 3,498 killed and 7,920 wounded. In the current year, Afghans soldiers and civilians also sustained heavy casualties as a result of the Taliban's intensified attacks.

To consider the above reports about human fatalities, one will conclude that people's life has turned cheap and IHL is violated flagrantly. Countless of people are murdered without being involved in conflict. They lose their lives either in government or terrorist attacks.

To safeguard the rights of people, the international community will have to take action against countries or influential figures who are engaged in human rights violations. Moreover, the countries have to stop indiscriminate bombardment.

They must respect IHL and do not target civilians and non-governmental buildings. Indeed, it is the worst-case scenario to see that civilians are targeted by both sides - i.e. governments and rebels.

To sum up, the rights of civilians and soldiers who are detained or wounded are violated without regard to IHL. Furthermore, non-governmental buildings - including residential houses, schools, universities, and hospitals - are largely attacked.

It is hoped that people will be able to exercise their rights freely in all parts of the world and all individuals and parties respect their human rights. It is also hoped that war and violence will come to end in near future.

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