

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



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Minorities' Rights Must be Recognized

Every human command equal respect and fair treatment based on sacred bond humanity grants and democracy ascertains this provision. Democracy protects and promotes of human rights -it guarantees equal rights to all citizens irrespective of their cast, sect and religion. Nonetheless, in this piece of land, there are several prejudicial and discriminatory cases reported with religious minorities being subjected to ill-treatment, fundamental rights suspended and are coerced to migration, leading to impairment of universally accepted system of governance. One of the greatest outcomes of democracy is the protection and promotion of human rights. Contrary to the said provisions a practice of wide division is noticed in our society on variant grounds. While a pluralistic society pleads different ethnic and religious groups living together with harmony and bond of fraternity. The division of man being on variant grounds be, religious, sectarian or ethnic, never meant to serve their exodus or butchery is what come in our day to day observation. Owing a traditional outlook to life and obsessed with tradition and religious practices the masses strive hard to produce a society in which a single version of religious interpretation ruling without the plights of minorities kept in contemplation, is worked out. Afghanistan's constitutions contain large number of Islamic provisions. It is good trend the constitution should owe such provisions that make Muslims practice Islamic teachings. Though, such provisions do not find application on religious minorities, yet the stately religion cast more or less impacts on minorities. It is mostly recommended that state should not interfere in religious affair of its masses -given that modern states do not owe a religion. In substitution it should facilitate every citizen practice his religion with absolute freedom. Consequently, the dream of a real democracy melted away amid hazy cloud of frustration.

Hindus in Afghanistan are undergoing through a similar anguish. The main problem the religious minorities are passing through is social discrimination. The Madrasas in particular and schools in general are supplied with syllabus that contains prejudicial contents -it certainly poisoned the mindset of upcoming generation. Having read derogatory remarks against religious minorities, the intolerance begotten is not unexpected. This discriminatory attitude observed is not only witnessed in streets but also in institutions and public offices. Being subdued by such discriminations many Sikhs and Hindus were either forced to sell their land or had it openly seized by armed warlords. This very stance has led to a blow in social isolation of these minorities.

Formerly a report surfaced that highlighted the sufferings of minorities Sikhs and Hindus in particular. It was cautioned that Afghanistan's once-thriving Sikh community is dwindling fast as many choose to leave the country of their birth to escape what they say is growing intolerance and discrimination. Once boasting as many as 100,000 members in the 1990s, Afghanistan's Sikh population, according to community leaders, has dwindled to an estimated 2,500. The reason for the exodus: endemic societal discrimination in the majority Muslim country and the illegal seizure of Sikh homes, businesses, houses of worship and even cemeteries.

Community figures and analysts believe that intolerance for non-Muslims has grown as constant violence and upheaval has made Afghans wary of those they perceive as outsiders - both native Sikhs and Hindus are widely regarded as foreigners, more readily identified as Indians and Pakistanis. If social biases and religious discrimination continue unchecked, it not only tarnishes the image of Afghanistan but also harms our image as pluralistic society. The constitution already contains some biased clauses, creating impediment for religious minorities -the denial of right to representation intensifies their plights.

Misery does not end here but the attempt in 2013 by former Afghan president Hamid Karzai to reserve parliamentary seats for Sikhs and Hindus was rejected by lawmakers who feared other minorities would make demands. Following that a delegation of minorities set a sitting with former president, letting him know their concerns and problems. The minority leaders presented their demands and briefed him on problems facing the two communities. They urged the president to help the minorities regain their properties and religious sites usurped by powerful individuals. They were assured with guarantees to execute some changes -nonetheless without making ground fertile for this harmonious change the change can not be met.

It was later seen the president came up with immediate but surprising rejection of single minority reserved parliamentary seat for Sikh and Hindu communities. However, subsequent to several mass demonstration registered by minorities made the president to reverse his decision. We should learn it; inhabiting in state the minorities equally own the right to free exercise of ballot and choosing a legitimate candidate who could efficiently represent them in the state. In modern democracies this very value is enshrined in constitution -contrarily our constitution is based on unground and irrational doctrines that hardly find application in modern states. It is very right time we have to make decisions to pursue rational discourse by constituting laws that grant the citizens equal importance or law that discriminates at them.

It is worth noting that the prevalent notorious detrimental state can not be reversed unless laws confirmatory to safeguarding human rights are formulated and implemented indiscriminately. In doing so we can only safe our unyielding face and let the world believe we support and promote every citizen equally found and treated before the law.

The Inevitability of Institutions

By Dilawar Sherzai

The incapacity of human beings to live alone on their own has made them live in the form of groups. The interdependence of human beings has made them interact and communicate with one another and has brought them closer. This phenomenon has led to the formation of societies, wherein people live with cooperation and assistance of fellow beings. Aristotle had rightly observed, "Man is a social animal." He cannot be otherwise; therefore, there have been collective efforts in order to guarantee survival and to excel in life.

There are different forms of collective efforts in human society - the society itself being the largest of such endeavors; they may include groups, syndicates, organizations, associations, institutions, religions and many others. They can either be intentional or unintentional. The intentional ones are created by the members for a particular purpose and have definite structure and other attributes which are intentionally designed; they can also be called as formal ones, while the unintentional ones are informal, and mostly formed as the result of general social interaction and behavior.

Sociology calls most of these collective efforts as institutions; like, the institutions in sociology include family, marriage, sports, and even religion. The basic requirement for an institution, as per sociological definitions, is that the collective effort should be directed towards a common goal, and the nature of this goal may differ from institution to institution; like they may be formed for educational, economic, social, religious, recreational or political purposes.

In the modern world of ours the institutions have a very imperative role to play. The more human beings have become organized in their endeavors, the more they have been institutionalized. The institutions have assisted human beings in myriads of ways. It is because of the institutions that human beings have been able to achieve great milestones, which if had been strived for individually, could never have been achieved. The modern countries of the world have well-developed institutions that have been supporting them to a great extent.

The institutions, that are well-managed, multiply the human capacities and energy and converge them to a focal point. Therefore, the achievement of incentives becomes much feasible. It is through the condition of the institution and their mutual interaction that the nature of a society is judged to a certain extent. The economist, sociologists and political scientists in the modern world study the role and the interaction of the institutions thoroughly to understand the prevailing and the upcoming scenario in their disciplines.

Institutions basically multiplied in the European countries after the Industrial Revolution. The growing demands of the industries and their scope of work and effect gave rise to so many institutions. Further, it was not possible for individuals to control the large industries, economic organizations and political platform without collective efforts. With the rise of Capitalism in Europe the number of private companies and businesses had large strides and further added to the number of institutions existing in the society.

Today, the European countries and America are dominantly occupied by private and public institutions of various kinds. But the evolution of the institutions in Europe has not been very smooth. Every now and then, there have been critics who have vehemently

opposed the institutions and their roles in the society. The earlier institutions, which lacked the modern theories of management suffered from serious drawbacks. One of the most dominant critics of the institutions of earlier Europe was Charles Dickens - the well-known English Novelist.

He through his novels, like Oliver Twist and Hard Times tried to depict the ugly influences of institutions on human character. Though it is hard to sustain the same sort of criticism for the modern institutions, there have been serious discussions regarding competition between institutions and individuals, and the influences of institutions on individuals and vice versa. There are critics who believe that the institutions are responsible for deteriorating an individual's character and seizing his liberty.

On the other hand there are critics who believe that institutions are meant to condition human behavior so that it must not go against the political and social arrangements in the society. They are basically meant to counter revolutions and turn individuals in to docile beings, who accept every rule and regulation without much opposition and maintain the status quo which goes in the favor of the ruling elite. In fact, there have been such institutions and there are many at the moment that can really spoil human character and ultimately corrupt human societies, but the importance of well-managed and well-designed institutions can never be neglected and must not be neglected in the countries that believe in collective human efforts. Mostly the democratic countries have the tendency to accept the institutions and nourish them to a great extent and that has been one of the reasons of their success in their social, political and economic lives.

As far as countries like Afghanistan are concerned, the institutions here have not been able to develop in the modern sense of the word. Being dominantly tribal, these countries have their institutions under the control of few individuals. The land lords, tribal and religious leaders hijack the institutions for their own self-centered purposes and institutions do nothing more than serving their demands. That is exactly what is going on in our country. The tribal leaders have the complete authority, which they mostly inherit from their ancestors.

The same attitude has even crept into our public and social institutions. Even the political institutions which claim to function in a democratic system are dominated by the individuals. The political parties do not establish their motto in collaboration with the common members of the party rather they are established by few leaders in their cozy abodes. Though the government claims that it has been formed through the votes of the people, it hardly represents the people as a whole. It just fulfills the egocentric demands of the few who are on the top. The true democracy demands that the political institutions should be run on the principles of providing maximum good to the largest number of people who are a part of it, but our institutions are just on the contrary.

It should be carefully noted that we would not be able to make achievements towards a modern, democratic and better society unless we strengthen our institutions, and make them free from individual dominance based on tribal norms and values. An institution should always be given priority over an individual as far as the greater good of large number of people is guaranteed.

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Taliban Confused and Nervous

By Manish Rai

Exclusive for the Daily Outlook Afghanistan

The Taliban carried out many deadly remarkably vicious attacks in Kabul in recent days which claimed many innocent lives. These attacks may be an apparent attempt by the Taliban leaders to portray unity, boost the morale of the cadres and to show that the jihad against government forces and their foreign backers continues despite internal chaos. The Taliban has been in turmoil since it confirmed that its leader Mullah Omar, long hidden from the public eye, was dead. The death of Mullah Omar takes away the main centre of gravity in the jihadi movement that competes with Islamic State it's now rival. Taliban since its inception enjoyed monopoly of being only jihadist group but now it faces a tough competition from Islamic State. Many analysts believe Mullah Omar's death poses an existential crisis for the Afghan Taliban potentially presaging a splintering of the movement as the Islamic State group gains a toehold among insurgents enthralled by its battlefield prowess. The group has suffered a string of recent defections to Islamic State, with some insurgents voicing disaffection with the current new leader Mullah Mansoor which is not at all as charismatic like- Mullah Omar. So now Taliban is feeling unsecured in lack of unifying leader like Omar. So to unify the movement and cadres these deadly attacks were carried out in Afghan capital.

Mullah Omar's death was a "huge boon" for the local branch of IS, which a Pentagon report in June said is in an initial exploratory phase in Afghanistan. Taliban are afraid of the potential rise of the Islamic State militant group in Afghanistan as they know it will rise on the cost of Taliban only if they fail to project unity they will soon become irrelevant. The Taliban and IS do not share much ideological ground. The Taliban is focused on creating an Islamic state in Afghanistan with defined borders, while ISIS is seeking to create a borderless mega-state spanning entire continents. So they both have conflicting interest and can not survive simultaneously in the same area. Taliban realises the importance of being united or else face existence that's why they are realigning themselves.

The man who replaced Omar, Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansoor, was Omar's deputy and has been effectively leading the Taliban since Omar's death, and perhaps before that. His selection seems to suggest that the Haqqani Network, a faction that has gradually become powerful enough to rival the Quetta Shura within the Taliban, was willing to compromise on leadership, rather than pressing for Omar's son, whom the Haqqanis were rumoured to favour.

The two deputies to Mansoor, however, are one of the leaders of the Haqqani Network and a former Taliban judge who is said to be close to the Haqqanis. That signals a kind of grand compromise between the Quetta Shura and the Haqqanis, who've struggled for dominance over the years. The most logical conclusion is that both the Quetta Shura and the Haqqanis have concluded that, at this moment, projecting Taliban unity is much more important than their squabbling. Further strengthening this interpretation is that the announcement seems to have been made in haste to gain much control, which follow immediately on the public acknowledgment of Omar's death. But another important faction among the Taliban consisting of Mullah Zakir, Mullah Yakooob (Mullah Omar eldest son), and Mullah Manan opposed this realignment of Mullah Mansoor group and Haqqani network. So the air is still not clear over the issue of new leadership so Mullah Mansoor the new leader is under pressure to deliver and boost the morale of loyal cadres which is being done by carrying out recent attacks.

The Taliban want to avoid a situation in which, having won their long war against the U.S. and its Afghan regime, they have to fight another civil war against an Islamic State offshoot for control of the country. Hence new Taliban leadership wants to project themselves hard on the battlefield and negotiate with the position of strength in the peace talks. But Taliban has to rethink about this strategy as with so much civilians casualties' Afghan government will be in intense pressure from the civil society to stop all peace talks with the group and announced a full-fledged military operation against Taliban. In that scenario equations for Taliban will change drastically.

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