China's Rural Development — A Model for Afghanistan

By: Hujatullah Zia

China officials are making concerted efforts to build a modern, prosperous, thriving poverty alleviation and to transform the countryside. All the Chinese enjoy the fruit of their country's development and relish a fulfilled life. Presently, cultural sites and attracting foreign and domestic tourists are one of the major factors behind the economic development of China. Having a trip to Jincheng, in the southeast of Shanxi province, along with a delegation from South and Southeast Asia, I have been highly impressed by the historical sites and economic development of this city.

Jincheng, which is home to 2.3 milllion people, is known as an international garden city, a national landscape garden city and a city of strong cultural heritage.

China has relocated a large number of households in some villages in Jincheng city and created them for them. For example, we visited the Huangcheng village, which is home to 351 households and 917 people. The house owner was relocated to a new home in the aftermath of the government's redevelopment project, which was changed into tourist spot by the local government. Following the relocation project, the village could attract more tourists and a large number of the residents of the village. In short, every resident is employed, every house is turned into a hotel, and every cent is earned. The per capita income is 50,000 yuan in this village. Today, there are 22 enterprises in Huangcheng village, with the total assets of 8 billion yuan and close to 6,000 employees. There are also three major industrial sectors, which include mining, tourism, and metal industries. The tourism and metal industries are the key transformation industries. The village is able to achieve the annual sales value of 2 billion yuan and pay taxes of 400 million yuan.

To view this province from the historical perspective, Shanxi is replete with “the birthplace of the 5,000-year-old civilization” for numerous archeological sites. The culture and civilization of which tourism, pharmaceutical factories are also a source of income for the residents of the village. In short, every resident is employed, very house is turned into a hotel, and every cent is earned. The per capita income is 50,000 yuan in this village.

In the Case of Afghanistan:

The quest to promote participatory democracy and to make participation an important principle in the governance of public affairs has been an important theme in debates on governance in Afghanistan. Because of this, and in recognition of protracted struggles for democratic reforms, article 50 in Afghanistan’s constitution has included democracy and participation of the people among the values and principles of governance, which bind all state organs and institutions as well as state officials. In assessing the quality of democracy in Afghanistan, there are questions whether successive government officials have consistently upheld the rule of law, allowed citizens to freely elect their leaders, and whether or not people have been making political choices without hindrance. Thus, translating democracy into practice means to develop the potential of constituencies and accountability to citizens.

Civic freedom is the right to engage in public life in an open and free atmosphere. The 2004 constitution provides for a free press from the past, it charts the path for a new beginning in many ways. It balances presidential powers, creates a new structure of government where powers are shared, and also indicates the direction where people effectively participate in the governance of the country. There is a big change in some villages in China.

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