

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



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Strength in Economy Ensures Political Constancy

Economy plays a vital role in development and progress of a country. Without sound economy it is a figment of imagination to think about order and stability in other fields of life. It can be observed in today's world that the countries with stable economies are dominant in various areas, the most important of which is politics. The international political arena is basically overshadowed by giant economies. Just consider the level of influence that the developed countries, like USA, UK and China have in contemporary international politics. Politics is the game of power and power erupts from money, while money is generated through a proper economic infrastructure. In the international politics power may relate to different sorts of influences that may affect various decisions in international relations.

Whether it is conflict or agreement, diplomacy or war, international organizations or national policies, power has a decisive role. And, that power rests with the countries that have large GDPs and great businesses. Therefore, it is easy to see the world powers having strong influence and say in different diplomatic undertakings and conflicts and wars in international political order. In fact, the current political order is designed by the most dominant economies among the developed nations of the world. The current political order, wherein capitalism and democracy have joined hands and reign most parts of the world is not very different from what the gigantic capitalist economies want them to be. A thorough study of economy and politics will reveal that economy is the root of a political system. For example, when human societies mostly had agriculturalist economies, there were no democracies and the political systems were based on monarchy and landlordism. However, as the societies evolved to industrialized economies there was a shift towards democracy. Thus, economy to a great extent decides the form and nature of the political system and, therefore, instable economy gives rise to instable political order and stable ones gives birth to stable political systems.

It can also be observed that the societies where the people are mostly poor and do not have the facilities of life, there are more chances of political upheavals. The discontented people, suffering from destitution would ultimately strive to overthrow the political order and would never respect such a system. Resultantly, it can be said that the societies that are economically instable are more prone to revolutions, disturbances and chaos. The third world countries can be observed in this regard. As the people are poor, do not have basic requirements of life and suffer from unemployment, they are more vulnerable to be the cause of instability. And, that is why we find them to be more attracted towards rebellions, crimes, terrorism and thus instability. Afghanistan is one of the countries where economic instability has given birth to political instability. As there is no stable economic infrastructure, the country's democratic structure has shaky foundations. In Afghanistan insecurity has been influencing the economic life to a large extent. Both national and international businessmen are not readily willing to invest in all the sectors and they do not see positive prospects of their businesses. As insecurity has been overwhelmingly influencing the country, the development in the basic infra-structure has been meager.

The doubts and uncertainties of the Afghan market have made the international investors to think thousand times before they take an initiative to start their businesses in the country. Though there are great opportunities in Afghanistan and the country is blessed with different types of mineral and other natural resources, the economic infra-structure has not been able to get enough attention.

Apart from that there are other factors as well that have been influencing the economic system of Afghanistan. The insufficient and unfavorable business environment is also one of the issues affecting Afghan economy. There have to be strong business laws governing the society and controlling the business. The laws should not only safeguard the rights of investors and businessmen but also make sure that the competition within the system is maintained on strong and fair footings. The evils like monopoly based on unfair competition must be tackled with properly and there should be strong bodies that control the prices within the markets, which at the present are non-existent and the businessmen are fixing the rates on their own. This has given rise to a political system that, on the exterior, is called as democratic but in reality is an ad-hoc arrangement that has no strong foundation. Afghan economy, therefore, require structured development towards a capitalist society.

And in this regard, businesses can play a vital role. If within a system there are consistent investments and different businesses, the system is on a track towards development and prosperity. Since the very inception of human society, human beings have required businesses so as to have their requirements fulfilled. Throughout human history, businesses have taken different forms and characteristics and today have reached to a very advanced form. From the barter system to today's advanced era when the businesses are taking place online, there has been a series of different practices, but the vitality of the business has never been lost. Having developed its economic infrastructure based on capitalism or free market economy marked with stability, Afghanistan's political system can continue its journey towards a truly democratic country dominated by stability.



Marriage and Cultural Traditions

By Fatima Faizi

Getting married is a milestone in one's life. Marriage, from social perspective, is a sustainable and purposeful bond between two persons (male and female). Getting married is an optional issue and based on one's willingness; however, the sociality of mankind is crucial in this decision-making. The sophisticated interaction of human beings with their surroundings relates marriage with cultural, social, economic and even political issues. In addition to satisfying the carnal and emotional desires of mankind, marriage, which is a universal norm, will also organize social, cultural and economic needs. The fact that when one will feel having a life-partner differs from person to person.

A number of individuals will feel a strong need to get married during their teenage life period, whereas some others will take step in this regard in their middle age. In traditional societies, these decisions will be taken by families and parents - who claim the rights of selecting life-partners for their sons and daughters. The age for getting married has mounted in societies where traditions are eroded.

Those who seek to strengthen their economy tend to get married later, which might be worthy since a fully grown person will select his/her life-partner with open view. But postponing married life to an unnecessary time will result in emotional and mental harm. So, getting married should take place neither too soon nor too late.

It goes without saying that false custom will be an obstacle before the social and sacred issue of marriage, which is deeply-rooted in people's cultural life. Culture is embodied in each and every thing, including religious and irreligious matters. In other words, culture will rule every angle of life and custom/tradition is one of its elements. Custom is handed down from one generation to the next, bearing symbolic and particular significance, rooted in the past, and divided into the positive and negative.

To view it from international and human rights perspectives, negative custom will violate human rights. Indeed, custom of marriage differs from place to place and there are negative and positive traditions. Negative custom will lead to horrible consequence and irreparable loss in a society.

To view the negative traditions of marriage in Afghanistan, where men have upper hand, many traditions - including polygamy and forced and under-aged marriages - will harm women more than men. It is worth saying that such traditions will not only harm women but also men and even families. Traditions are practiced upon in strict way in Afghanistan and affected the life of many people creating great hurdles. Since,

many are committed to observe traditions, changing them will be really difficult. But acculturation is possible so that the negative traditions change into positive ones.

Forced marriages are one of the challenging issues in Afghanistan and inflicted great sufferings upon the society and families. Based on the tradition that parents should be entitled to select life-partners for their children, the teenage boys and girls tend to disobey their parents and this will result in chagrin and discontent. Secondly, the financial aspect of marriage is also a problem. For example, some families will agree in terms of their children's marriages without involving their sons or daughters.

They even agree to exchange their daughters to get rid of the financial problem. Such kinds of marriages resulted in serious arguments, every once in a while, within families and embittered their life. Giving "baad" (giving one's daughter without her willing to victim's family so as to reciprocate the sexual crime of her brother) is believed to be one of the worst kinds of tradition. This is mostly taken place between two families with the aim of settling an argument or preventing one from taking revenge.

This type of marriage will embitter life for the girl since the victim's family will treat the girl out of revenge and will even torture her. Hence, this is another reason behind domestic violence and, in many cases, spark off more tension between families.

There are many negative traditions that can be the subject of vast researches. The influential factors are: economic issue, religious beliefs, the society's attitude towards women, and misconception of marriage. These are the main factors of creating false and negative traditions that have constituted serious problems vis-à-vis marriages and people are their daily casualties, that is, slicing nose, murder, violence, escape, self-immolation, divorce, and immigration are the consequence of such traditions. This is the patriarchal view that place suffering over women, i.e., women are more vulnerable for their particular stance in the society. In getting married, women usually lack the right to choose their life-partners. Moreover, the tradition of "baad" or the exchanges of girls for financial problems reflect women's inability in the society.

In short, the traditions of selling women, which is rife in some parts of the country, or under-aged marriage will leave women more vulnerable than men. Giving birth in early age increases the mortality rate among mothers and will pose serious mental and physical threat to women. The solution to reform these traditions needs to be figured out.

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It's Time to Reform the IMF and the World Bank



By Paola Subacchi

This autumn, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank will hold their annual conference. It can't be business as usual.

To remain legitimate, effective, and accountable, the Bretton Woods institutions, established in the very different world of 1944, must align representation with countries' relative economic weight and systemic importance. What about a scenario where emerging economies, led by China, decide to replace, rather than reshape, today's institutions?

Already, China has spearheaded the creation of two multilateral development banks - the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the New Development Bank. China's initiatives have fewer resources than the World Bank, but they are big enough to finance significant infrastructure projects.

In addition, regional facilities have been put together to provide support at times of financial distress. The Chiang Mai Initiative pools the foreign-exchange reserves of the ASEAN+3 countries - approximately \$240 billion. And BRICS countries can rely on a Contingency Reserve Arrangement of approximately \$100 billion. These facilities would help with occasional liquidity crunches rather than offering a more extensive finan-

cial safety net which remains the IMF's prerogative. But this facility can be expanded if necessary.

To respond to the need to reform the Bretton Woods institutions an "Eminent Persons Group on Global Financial Governance" was set up last April.

This group is to make recommendations on reforming the world economy's institutional structure, but it has only until next year's IMF/World Bank conference to build a firm consensus.

Any attempt to reform the global economic order might clash with the US's rethinking of its own involvement in world affairs.

Trump has made clear his distaste for multilateral institutions, and he has been explicit that the US should no longer bankroll the provision of global public goods. An attack on financial multilateralism would deal a massive blow to the global economic order. But partial US disengagement need not spell disaster. A year is probably not long enough to deal with the disruption that a reluctant hegemon may create, but it might reveal the scale of that disruption, and the capability of other stakeholders to adapt. (Courtesy Project Syndicate)

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