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Our Vision:

In the beginning all people were one nation (Holy Qur'an, 2:213)
Throughout human history, peace has always been the 'primary state' and war the 'accidental state'. Peace is beautiful, compassionate and constructive, while war is fearsome, merciless and destructive. Unfortunately, despite this, war has been one of 20th century's most major problems, and has proved to be the symbol of the beginning of the 21st century. As portrayed by the contemporary history of international relations, particularly in the Middle East and Central Asia, war is not the solution, nor is it constructive or helpful in solving problems; rather, it causes problems and is the root of the continuation of violence, instability and insecurity.

War is not the solution to the differences between governments and nations. Only with peace which is based on justice, i.e. '*Just Peace*', can we reach a stable and permanent solution to our differences. Diplomacy and constructive dialogue which take into consideration the rights of both parties, is the only path to establishing '*Just Peace*', stability and world security. Our aim is to change international relations with the active participation of nations on the basis of '*Just Peace*'.

Let there be a group among you who will invite others to good.
(Holy Qur'an, 3:104)

We, as part of the international network of intellectuals, are able to play an important and constructive role in the establishment of mutual understanding, of dialogue and in the reduction and amelioration of global problems. Our intention is to provide solutions and means for the positive and just cooperation of nations with each other, and to reach this end independent of governments, through a realistic understanding of nations and governments from each other, and through clear, truthful and constructive dialogue.

The Principles of Establishing 'Just Peace':

1. Establishing justice between the countries of the South and the North.
2. Mutual respect between different nations and different governments.
3. Respecting and considering the valid interests of all parties which have a vested interest in any given conflict.
4. Thinking globally and acting against extreme nationalism.
5. Realistic understanding of the realities of the world.
6. Upholding and respecting human rights and the principles of democracy.
7. Accepting and moving towards the destruction of weapons of mass destruction throughout the world/on a global scale

Our priorities in the current situation are to analyse the issues and problems of conflict-zones such as those of the Middle East, the Persian Gulf and Central Asia.

Our tools for aiding in the establishment of world peace are:

1. Inviting and facilitating for intellectuals from different parts of the world to engage in dialogue with each other.
2. Dialogue between intellectuals and international organizations.
3. Preparing the groundwork for dialogue between on the basis of mutual respect between opposing governments.
4. Organising international scientific conferences dealing with regional and global issues.
5. Publishing scientific research work on peace studies in the form of books and journals.
6. Providing education internationally on the culture of dialogue, understanding, compromise, justice, freedom and spirituality.

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The relationship between poverty and violence in Afghanistan

Nabiollah Ebrahimi
International Peace Studies Centre

Abstract

The main goal of this paper is to analyze the relationship between poverty and the spread of violence in Afghanistan. In this discussion, poverty means a lack or deficiency of required resources according to specific conditions of each society that can be manifested in different social, political, and economic dimensions. Studies that have been conducted indicate that poverty in Afghanistan is an outcome of various consequences including inattention to and violation of human rights, widespread abuse of authority in the system of government, intense military conflicts, and extreme natural conditions and geographical position of the country. This article seeks to explain and analyze the reasons for the contemporary condition of poverty and violence in Afghanistan. This inquiry affirms that the roots of violence in Afghanistan are the result of both "material poverty" and "ideational poverty" in this country.

Keywords: Poverty, Afghanistan, Taliban, Violence, Ideational Poverty.

Introduction

Considering the widespread increase of violence in Afghanistan, it is necessary to investigate the economic and social roots of this challenging problematic. This study seeks to recognize the main reasons for the growing of fundamental and systematic violence in Afghanistan. The relationship between poverty and militancy in Afghanistan appears to be a two-way reciprocal interactive one, considering that increasing either increase and intensifies the other. However, it is critical to acknowledge that poverty alone cannot give rise to an increase in militancy and conflict. In addition to poverty, violence-prone cultural, social and political conditions are necessary for people to join militancy and militant groups like the Taliban.

After September 11, 2001 and the fall of the Taliban regime, much international efforts have been coordinated to reduce poverty in Afghanistan. However, researches that have been conducted in post-Taliban Afghanistan, do not observe a significant reduction of poverty that might in effect improve the lack of centralized political and economic infrastructures. Researchers have proposed a number of solutions to combat poverty and violence, the most important of which are reform and reconstruction of social, political, and economic infrastructures, raising public consciousness and awareness, and ensuring legal implementation of rights.

Here, poverty is a condition in which the individual or society is denied the necessary means of subsistence for a minimum standard of living. Since poverty can have different meanings, “necessary means of subsistence” might include material resources like food, health and medical care or social status, political power, and the opportunity to develop meaningful relations with other members of society. A such, the difference in income or assets as an indicator of poverty is evaluated in material terms and as well as a conceptual determination of poverty grounded on unfair distribution or absent of power-based resources (i.e. presence of power-based inequalities).

Definition of Poverty and its Various Types

Poverty may be a religious practice that is adopted individually as a necessary practice to elevate one's spirit. As such, the Buddhist religion and Brahma distinguish poverty as a crucial voluntary practice to withdraw from worldly matters. Many different causes leading to poverty have been recognized. There is no unique definition of poverty, but a number of very important factors contributing to poverty include material, economic, political, and social factors.

The Material Factor

Contributing factors leading to poverty might be material and they can be effective in different manners. Natural factors such as climatic conditions or the surrounding environment in combination with geographical factors have a considerable impact on enforcing poverty. Geographical factors mentioned above can be access to fertile land, fresh water, minerals, sources of energy and other natural resources which can all contribute to poverty in various degrees. Presence or absence of resources like mountains, deserts, deep-water rivers or shores can be both limiting and enforcing poverty in society. The climatic conditions can have a significant impact on agricultural products and animal husbandry industry. Medical conditions that are consequences of poverty can also exacerbate and perpetuate the effects of poverty. For example, the absence of critical nutritional elements such as iodine and iron in the daily diet leads to deficiencies that can adversely affect brain development and this can in turn affect a great number of people living under poverty. Diseases such as AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis are more prevalent among developing nations that are suffering from permanent poverty.¹

The Economic Factor

There are several definitions of poverty from the economic perspective. In the first definition, poverty is situation that prevents the process of financing investment. Further, other definitions include the inability to find employment with a sufficient income, the state of being

unemployed, and employment with a low-wage income. Many people believe that globalization can have different impacts on poverty. The majority of critics who are known to belong to the left of the spectrum, claim that globalization leads to economic abuses by rich countries. That is to say, in the process of globalization the developed countries take advantage of developing countries. These abuses occur by paying lower wages to developing countries' workers, by excessive use of developing countries' land, and by developed countries' abuse of their superior power without providing a comparable competition or production opportunity to developing countries.²

There are also people who believe that restrictions of free-trade lead to more poverty. They argue that this happens especially when economic policies of interventionist governments greatly finances and supports agriculture sector leading to poverty in developing countries. This group of neo-liberals, for example note that almost half of European Union's budget is directed to government aid in the agricultural sector. In 2005, Japan allocated \$47 billion to agriculture sector in form of government financial support; this was almost four times greater than the whole foreign aid of Japan for developing countries. Likewise, United States of America designated \$3.9 billion of its government funding of agriculture to the cotton farming; this sum of aid alone is three times greater than the entire USAID budget allocated to 500 million Africans. Such assistance, increase the price for consumers, increases competition as well as quality in developing countries; this in turn creates large barriers in competition for the developing countries.³

The Political Factor

Political factors influencing poverty include: absence of rule or implementation of law, absence of democracy, lack of those infrastructures that are often responsibilities of a functioning state, and lack of transparency and effective communication between government and citizens which prevents citizens' participation in politics. Government corruption can also lead to poverty as citizens cannot benefit from tax-payers' money or financial assistances of international organizations.⁴ Population growth and lack of access to methods of

population control can lead to poverty as well. Also, social conditions or legal status can exacerbate poverty. Historical factors such as imperialism, colonialism, capitalism, communism, fascism, totalitarianism and socialism are all recognized as different aspects of poverty.

The Social Factor

Many social factors can lead to poverty; lack of freedom in a society is one of them. Wider social class gaps that can potentially adversely affect citizens' participation in both economic and political activities is another social factor that contributes to poverty. Lack of social integration that can disturb and hinder political participation and advancement of effective social pragmatic groups to high-level policy and this in turn affects poverty. War including civil wars and wars of mass destruction can completely destroy the economy and cast all the people involved in the war off to the poverty margin. Another controversial phenomenon affecting poverty is that of brain drain which is the emigration of a society's educational elite for the purposes of finding employment from developing countries to developed countries.⁵

Some of the most important social impacts of poverty are increased risk of political violence such as terrorism, war, mass murder, homelessness, increase in crime, decline in literacy rates, social segregation of classes, lower population density from migration, rise in discrimination, reduction of consumption and decreased life expectancy.⁶

Afghanistan and the Phenomenon of Poverty

One of the countries struggling with the phenomenon of poverty is Afghanistan. Majority of Afghans have limited opportunity to overcome poverty and live with human dignity and honor. Fifty percent of Afghans live in poverty and life expectancy among Afghans is at least twenty years less than neighboring countries. In these arduous conditions, with the difficulties of social, political and economic conditions of Afghanistan only 28.7% of the country's population is

literate. Unfortunately, like many developing countries, the plight of poverty has its greatest impact on women and children. In this society, one in five children die before the age of five and every three minutes there is a perinatal death when women die due to complications of giving child birth and delivery.⁷

The main reason that families force their children to work instead of placing them at school is poverty; it is poverty at work when Afghans marry off their children at a young age. According to UNICEF, over 30% of primary school students are working during school and these child workers are often the only source of income for their families. The absence of sufficient educational opportunities leads to a lack of future professional opportunities and reduces the chance of receiving a higher income with a better job. This unfortunate process of poverty affecting education of young Afghans is pointing to a more serious concern about lack of sufficient government policies to diversify economic and employment opportunities. On the other hand, some social norms severely limit some Afghans' choices in economic activities. This limitation is evident when Afghan women choose to work in public spaces, for example. Majority of Afghan Women are only responsible for the care of their children, domestic and housework and do not have any association with or knowledge of the economy of the family and thus these Afghan women do not have any real choices.⁸

Furthermore, Afghanistan is prone to natural disasters. Earthquakes have occurred repeatedly in northern parts of the country and this has often led to devastating destructions. In addition, severe drought has affected nearly six million people, especially in southern and eastern regions of this country. Other general risks include various agricultural pests, worms, locusts, and grasshoppers that inhabit and grow in regions with hot climate, dust and sand storms. In the year 1980, general estimations show that over nineteen thousand Afghans were killed in natural disasters and these disasters affected the lives of 7.5 million people in the same year. Research conducted by Afghanistan Information Management Services (AIMS) shows a high rate of people living under poverty. This research indicates that lower than standard wages, lack of sufficient income, lack of employment and business

opportunities, severe health problems and poor underlying health-care infrastructure have all added to the hardships Afghan people endure. However, although these natural disasters and difficulties have added to many misfortunes of Afghan people, they have also been raising international attention. This international attention is indeed vital since the most significant of Afghanistan's problems are immediate and personal experience of structural hardships such as poverty, general incapacity, and weak control over natural resources.⁹ One has to take into account that Afghanistan has been going through twenty three years of war and civil conflicts that has almost completely collapsed government and regional structures responsible for the management of natural resources.¹⁰

With the increasing spread of conflict and violence, poverty has become a serious issue greatly affecting Afghanistan in recent years. For example, in recent years with armed conflict heightening violence against women has increased. Those Afghan women who choose to participate in social and public affairs have been harassed and abused, in some cases they were even killed. Another critical violation of human rights is the sexual assault and rape of women. This criminal atrocity has been occurring in all different parts of Afghanistan. However, cultural forces such as the tradition of maintaining and defending family honor, assure that families conceal the truth if sexual offenses are carried against female relatives. Research shows that the perpetrators of these sexual assaults are often granted arbitrary immunity from any disciplinary punishment and consequences of their crimes as they are associates of relatives of the victims, have revenge motives, or are connected to power networks of power-chiefs who are superiors to the law and enjoy exemption from arrest or social condemnation. Lack of fair and clear laws in this case has aggravated the severity of the condition of women and sexual assault victims. It is apparent that as result of armed conflict and growing insecurity, lawlessness and crime continue and more women and children are at risk.¹¹

Poverty in Post-Taliban Era

After the fall of the Taliban in October 2001, positive transformations started to occur in Afghanistan. More than three million students and thirty thousand female teachers returned to school. The networks of television and radio began broadcasting cultural programs like music and movies (during the Taliban rule, music, film, and similar arts were banned in Afghanistan). This process of lessening restrictions was a growing hope for prosperity of the media sector.

The new provisional government began to rebuild and repair much of Afghanistan's institutions and economic structures. In addition, one of the most important political achievements of the post-Taliban era was the draft and approval of the new constitution of Afghanistan in June 2004. In November of the same year the presidential election was held and Afghan people using their share of political freedom for the first time after decades, elected Hamid Karzai as their president (7). In fact, the mere defeat and expelling of Taliban from Afghanistan caused the previously low economic indicators to improve and Afghans were now outside the lowest possible level of econopolitical standing. Bonn Agreement was inaugurated in December 200, promising a new start for Afghanistan with the aim of achieving effective and lasting peace. However, eight years after the Bonn Agreement economical conditions are still challenging considering that for every three Afghans one is living under poverty and is unable to provide for the minimum requirements of life. More so, the rest of the country is living under inadequate conditions as well. Those Afghans who are not considered poor are living slightly above the poverty line making them vulnerable to any potential disastrous events.¹² According to a February 2005, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report Afghanistan ranks 175th of 177 nations on the Human Poverty Index (HPI).¹³

In fact, all development indicators demonstrate that all this effort to eradicate or reduce poverty has had little impact on the lives of Afghans. According to statistics provided, Afghanistan ranks second when it comes to maternal mortality in the world. Only 23% of Afghans have access to drinking water. 24% of Afghanistan's

population above fifteen years of age is literate. Afghanistan's statistical numbers when it comes to development indicators in comparison with neighboring countries are very low. In the year 2009, for example, maternal mortality numbers in Afghanistan was about 1600 deaths in 100,000 women going through labor, a number that is five times more than that of Pakistan and fifty times more than that of Uzbekistan.¹⁴ Although it is not possible to provide exact statistics of unemployment, roughly speaking, 40% of the twenty five million people that reside in Afghanistan are unemployed and 5 million of them are living below the poverty line.¹⁵

After several years of efforts towards establishing sustainable economic development and billions of dollars in cost and expenditure, the question still remains that why has the level of poverty been so high in Afghanistan? To answer this question one should look at the economic, political, and social factors that explain the current condition of this country.

Sociopolitical and Economic Grounds

There are root causes in the structural weakness of Afghanistan's government that interfere with establishing a centrally unified political and legal power. As a result of these weaknesses, corruption remains in society, particularly in the administrative systems. Bribery, cronyism, nepotism, racial discrimination, segregation, and embezzlement are among the most common forms of corruption in public institutions of Afghanistan. This situation has been created because of government's incapacity and inability to establish cooperating ties and attract agencies providing development funds as well as other forms of international support. The absence of a healthy economy and the government's dependence on foreign aid has reduced its ability to effectively monitor the problem of poverty. More so, in Afghanistan there is a lack of institutional capacity and technology to constantly monitor the poverty situation. On the other hand, the incapacity of executive branch of the government to implement necessary means of collecting taxes from small industries and businesses, agricultural producers, and owners of capital makes the government economically

fragile and incapable of competing with private sector. This means that the government is unable to in provide comparable incomes to government employees.

It is worth mentioning that, although the new government of Afghanistan taxes a number of businesses in major cities, this in inconsistent high taxation of newly formed businesses could greatly threaten economic prosperity and growth, especially when accompanied with bribing of government authorities and corruption.

Indeed, one can say that consolidation of political power of the state or government control over the perpetrators of war or drugs lords can really be considered as a war against poverty. A great number of analytical or journalistic articles indicate that the government particularly attempts to maintain military power and political control in rural Afghanistan as it considers the perpetrators of armed conflict and drug traffickers as its rivals for state power. In addition, Afghanistan is the major producers of opium in the whole world. The problem of opium cultivation in rural areas is the major obstacle in development of a stable peaceful society.

Cultivation of plants that are used as substances of abuse has impacted a very significant and purposeful part of Afghanistan's agriculture. In fact, 85% of Afghanistan's population is dependent on the agricultural sector. Large-scale cultivation of plants used as narcotics prevents and hinders farmers' motivations for growing legally permissible products. Mohammad Hanif Atmar, the Rural Rehabilitation and Development minister states that an economy that is so dependent on drug cultivation and trade, brings to bear a variety of negative consequences on the security and the stability of the nation .On the other hand, the process of drug industry affecting Afghanistan's agriculture, reduce the country's ability to produce agricultural foods and increases foreign aid dependence.¹⁶

All these explanations and Afghanistan's development indicators show that poverty reduction policies of the government have had little impact on the lives of Afghans. Therefore, Afghan people, taking into account

their own particular situation often use different mechanisms to cope with these hardships including emigration, money borrowing, solicitation, and panhandling. Unemployment and poverty has caused migration of many young Afghans to neighboring countries such as Iran and Pakistan. The large number of visa applicants who go through the process of obtaining a visa from consular services of Iran and Pakistan is an indicator of poor conditions of life in Afghanistan.

Poverty and Talibanism

Most of those who join Taliban insurgents are usually young, illiterate, unemployed tribal people. According to one of the Taliban members, soldiers who are employed by Taliban receive a monthly sum of \$400 for their services while the members of government troops are paid only \$200 a month as their regular income. Taliban pay \$500 in cash as a reward to any individual or group who attacks the responsible authorities of any government outpost.¹⁷

For every NATO soldier killed, the Taliban insurgents give \$2372 bounty to the killer. It is said that the financial sources of Taliban revenue are protection rackets, Taliban imposed taxes on poppy growers, and financial contributions and donations from Taliban support bases in Pakistan and some Persian Gulf states. To put things in perspective, to this day 213 NATO soldiers have been killed in Afghanistan summing to the amount of Rs.42.6 million Pakistani rupees or \$5200 American dollars of bounty that Taliban has paid. The insurgents use hit-and-run tactics of assassination against passing patrols and convoys and afterwards employ informants, or use the medical reports, media and local people to confirm the death of NATO soldiers. As their bounty policy goes, individuals will get rewards from Taliban in exchange for capturing any equipment. For example, a gun is worth \$1000 in rewards, every time an individual brings one to the Taliban. According to a commander in the province of Ghazni, this \$1000 is a considerable sum of money for Afghans. The Taliban are making an effort to increase the money they pay as bounty in order to increase the number of people willing to join their group.¹⁸

Government and the international community are aware of the fact that they can target the economy of this spread of Taliban violence. They can deal with this issue by creating employment opportunities for the insurgents. They need to bring all those living under poverty, under institutional welfare support systems since it is those who are unemployed and living under poor economic conditions that consequently join violent groups and insurgents. However, most Taliban commanders deny financial incentive motivating individuals to join the group and they say that we do not fight for money or power, we are fighting to put an end to government corruption, fight foreign invaders out of the country, and return to the religious Sharia laws.

At the same time, the head of one of the NGOs active in Afghanistan believes that only ten percent of Taliban insurgents are fighting on the basis of their faith and 60%- 70% of them join the Taliban due to financial needs. Some join the Taliban to hold arms because their outrage and dissatisfaction at the current conditions of their country is aggravated by the abuses of U.S. troops or local government forces and officials. Some people join the Taliban because they think that the insurgents are able to maintain local security. As a matter of fact, inadequate performances of corrupt and ineffective officials are driving people towards the Taliban.¹⁹

Increased Taliban armed conflicts and violence has worsened the living conditions of underprivileged Afghans, particularly those living in suburbs of the country. This chronic condition of poverty and commanders abusing power when it comes to the opium cultivation and trade industry has increased the willingness of insurgents to fight against the government. This in turn, has made it simple for many of the rebels and outlaws to stay under the protective umbrella of Taliban, fight the government, and hide their face in order escape punishment. This process of criminals joining the Taliban has made the living environment of Afghans very insecure and unsafe and has thus increased Afghan people's vulnerability.²⁰

On the above account, one can conclude that poverty can potentially lead to a sense of social aversion and drive more people to join terrorist

groups. Many of the academic literature on the subject of violence argue that poverty makes the occurrence of political coup d'état and civil war more likely. It is reasonable to argue that the increase desires of many unprivileged individuals to join terrorism goes hand in hand with poor economic conditions.²¹

To this day, evidence emphasizes that countries with low economic development, high unemployment, low percentage of economic growth, high income inequality and a high percentage of food poverty are more inclined to show higher tendencies towards terrorism. In other words, terrorist as a category mostly includes unprivileged individuals with lower levels of education and higher levels of unemployment in poor countries. A significant relationship exists between poverty and terrorism. Inequality and poverty accelerates terrorist tendencies and violent terrorist aggressions often accompany poverty and are connected to the overall level of poverty in the world.²²

The United Nations believes that American government's constant neglect of its commitments to reduce global poverty has enforced processes that have given rise to poor and weak nations that are themselves a suitable ground for the growth and activity of what is considered to be terrorism and terrorists. In addition, UN points out that American government is aware of the key role poverty plays in constructing terrorism in countries like Afghanistan; however, this government has failed to achieve or act towards the goals of reducing global poverty in order to seeks the betterment of living standards. This is the main reason the war against terrorism will never succeed, unless America is willing to overcome poverty.²³

Therefore, today Afghanistan is situated between two discourses of poverty and violence. The encounter of the two discourses requires understanding and awareness of the causes of spreading of poverty and violence. The reasons set forth above argue for such an understanding (20). This analysis conveys that poverty is both the cause and an accompanying consequence of armed conflict. However, the important question is whether material poverty is the only underlying reason of

violence or are there other factors effective in the construction and continuity of violence?

Ideational Poverty and Fundamental Violence

Amarty Sen, who has been writing on the subject of violence, sought critical analysis to explain violence in the world today. He believes that there are two main approaches to the issue of armed conflict and violence: the civilizational approach and the political economy approach.

The Clash of Civilizations Approach

This is from Samuel Huntington's theory and explains that when different civilizations with religions, particular signs and signifiers, philosophical principles, and various histories of genesis come together in encounter they tend to clash with one another and as a result of this process, violence occurs. This subsequent violence departs from an identitarian divergence and is a result of lack of consistency of awareness in cultural communities.

The Political Economy Approach

This approach claims that violence today is a phenomenon that is an aftereffect of poverty and inequality. Presenting evidence that in countries like Afghanistan, Sudan and Somalia socioeconomic inequalities have lead to bloody riots or general violence. This approach generally concludes that eradicating poverty is the best way to end violence. Sen critiques this economist approach and states that the claim that poverty is responsible for violence is an oversimplification and co-jointing these factors to show that violence is a resultant of poverty is too big of a universal economic reductionist view of the problem. Sen problematizes this reductionism and states that there are many other factors, such as “political, social and cultural circumstances” that play a role in constructing violence.

In order to critique this universalization, Sen uses two regions as examples in his article: Calcutta and South Africa. Calcutta, one of the poorest cities in the world, has one of the lowest crime and violence rates. In contrast to Calcutta is South Africa that although doing much better economically, it has high rates of crime and violence. This shows that economic and material factors alone cannot lead to violence and social, political and cultural factors are the major causes of violent crimes in South Africa. Sen concludes that neither the cultural, political, and economic factor (ideational poverty) nor the material approach is adequate on its own to explain the causes of violence and that these factors must be taken into account collectively.²⁴

Along Sen's argument, Safiya Aftab in an article entitled "Poverty and Militancy" examines the intersection between poverty, fundamentalism and growth of militancy. She argues that generally speaking, militant organizations do consist of poor people with lower incomes. If the cultural, social, and political conditions are favoring violent trends, poverty is a significant factor leading toward violence. This is how a multitude of conditions lead those young unemployed people who are dissatisfied with their living conditions to join militant organizations.²⁵ In case of Afghanistan recent analysis of the current situation shows that the rough economic and social conditions has made poverty a leading contributing factor in channelizing people towards violence.

Concluding Remarks

From a political perspective, the war against poverty is often a social goal and many governments such as that of Afghanistan appoint many sectors and institutions as responsible for the fight against poverty. Governments like Afghanistan also receive development funds and support from international and nongovernmental organizations in hope of moving in a direction that reducing poverty and improving social, political, and economic structures eradicates circumstances and conditions that conduce violence.

Strengthening the discourse of peace in Afghanistan is only possible through effective human development. Instituting a higher level of social security in Afghanistan can produce this discourse. To challenge a culture of militancy, Afghanistan must invest in raising social and cultural awareness in the society. It is vital that those living under poverty and those who suffered the most from violent armed conflicts be reintegrated in the society and employment and livelihood opportunities be returned to them.

Human rights activists and international partners of Afghanistan can also help with preparation and implementation of development programs aimed at raising awareness and building culture. This campaign of awareness should especially target religious and community leaders on the subject of women's rights and women's current status, legal reforms that ensure equal rights for men and women, creating a competent judicial systems, implementing the government's commitment to fair rule when it comes to women, and ensuring prosecution of aggressors. It is meaningful that the causes of conflict and armed violence are worsening the poverty problem in Afghanistan. All that said, the dialectical relationship between poverty and violence cannot be ignored since conflict and violence lead to worsening of poverty conditions and as such poverty becomes a resultant of violence. However, poverty cannot be due to violence alone and one should consider social, political, and economic factors and inequalities, to be able to have an ideational analysis of poverty (ideational poverty).

Various solutions have been proposed to fight against poverty and violence. To end on that note, some of these solutions are: reform of the social, political, and economic infrastructures, preparation and implementation of programs that seek to eradicate corruption as well we administration and government abuses, increasing public awareness, quick-response systems of action to reduce people's vulnerability to natural disasters, legal reforms aimed at ensuring equal rights for men and women, trying to implement the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), respect for human rights and rule of law, establishment of social security and economic development program is to reduce poverty.

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