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Insufficient Health Facilities

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One of the major problems in Afghanistan is the lack of sufficient and proper health facilities. Because of decades of instability and wars, the country has not been able to develop much in this sector. Recently, there have been certain claims by different authorities that the health facilities have improved, but the ground realities show a different picture. A large portion of Afghan population still does not receive convenient and timely medical treatment. No consistent efforts are being made; some of the efforts that are made seem to be based on short-term basis. Project based approach has only given temporary solace to the people, and has spoiled donors money to a large extent. Poor people of Afghanistan, mostly those who live in remote areas, do not get any attention and there are many cases wherein people die of the diseases that can be cured easily.

Even President Ashraf Ghani agrees to fact that the endeavors being made in health sector are not sufficient. Expressing his views in a meeting on Wednesday, Jan 13, with officials of Ministry of Public Health, he said that there were still no proper standards for employing health specialists and contracts for offering health services continued while problems persisted. President Ghani, therefore, advised that the government and foreign health organisations should mainly focus on providing best healthcare services to the people. He also added that there should be accountability and proper standards in employing health specialists and MoPH should strengthen its assessments, evaluation, guidelines and the reward and punishment system. He also suggested that the Afghan government and international partners should jointly seek alternative ways for improving health services in Afghanistan because all Afghans demanded a positive and high healthcare quality services.

It is really tragic to note that the number of people dying because of curable diseases in our country is more than the people who die because of terrorists activities. Minor diseases that could be cured easily become a matter of life and death for the people because of unavailability of proper services. Our media and our concerned authorities mostly highlight the issue of terrorism and extremism but they fail to focus more attention on the issue that is more basic and more urgent.

People mostly choose to go the neighboring countries for serious health problems. There are many people who visit Pakistan and India every year for better medical facilities. This may be convenient for the ones who are financially strong and they can afford, but the ones who cannot afford going other countries remain untreated and mostly neglected. It is really tragic for them as their own country cannot provide them even their basic rights.

Though there are government hospitals as well in the country, the quality of services provided by government hospitals is really very low, their number is not sufficient and they are not established in most of the remote areas; therefore, most of the people do not have access to them. On the other hand private hospitals have been established that can, in no way, be afforded by the people who do not have enough money to pay for their food.

Such a scenario is really dreadful and there should be serious efforts to deal with the situation. Short term projects will never solve the health issues in Afghanistan. Afghan government and the supporting nations must pursue long-term strategies to handle the issue, if they want to help the people of Afghanistan.

At the same time, corruption and loose control, regarding the quality of medicine that is sold in the country, is another major issue, which is responsible for further debilitating the health of the people instead of supporting them during their ill health.

Previously an investigation by Independent Media Consortium (IMC) Productions, showed that though millions of dollars had been poured into the health sector, there were many Afghans who had their nearest health center at a distance of three days and unfortunately two-thirds of pharmacies did not have professional staff.

Such a scenario is really dreadful and worth special attention; moreover, only lip service would do no good to change the scenario. Therefore, the authoritative people must take necessary measures and must curb the situation as the issue is very delicate and it is related to the lives of the people. Carelessness in this regard is a type of indirect murder.