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Afghan drug addict desires rehabilitation, recovery

by Abdul Halem

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"Everyone hates us. We have been rejected by nears and dears. No one in the family likes to talk with us and we have been isolated from society," a drug addict who identified himself by only one name Asif said.

Attired in tattered clothes and begging for alms on a road in Kabul, Asif murmured that "injustice in society" has thrown him away and government's "little attention to hospitalize" has spoiled his life.

Revealing his ordeal, the trembling Asif said that he had in the past worked for customs office in the western Herat province but since his return from neighboring country Iran in 2007, he could not find a regular job and reasonable income. "Continued failure to properly feed my children and bear their school expenses had made me headache and to get rid of the nuisance I resorted to smoking hashish and later to heroin," the drug addicted Asif told Xinhua, adding using heroin has gradually destroyed his life and put him on gradual death.

Providing information on his life, the addict man said he is married and a father of three children, a son and two daughters. "I like my wife and my children, but unfortunately I can't help them. They also like me, they are taking care of me, they cry for me, they want me to stay at home and live with them," the shaking Asif further told Xinhua, saying he is shying for his failure to support them.

About his nightmare, the murky Asif said he has been living under Pul-e-Sokhta (burned bridge), a reference to the dirty place of Kabul's polluted stream where dozens of addicts have been living in open. "At the beginning we were around 10 people used to live under Pul-e-Sokhta but today dozens of people addicted to drug are languishing there," Asif went to say. He also added that the number of addicted people goes up at night although police sometimes round them up for medical treatment.

When asked to comment about the source of income and drug supplies, the weak and shaky Asif said "We earn money through stealing, pick pocketing and begging. Powerful people driving Land Cruiser vehicles almost on daily basis supplying heroin in small pockets to us and after fleecing our pockets go home," Asif further said.

However, Asif who claimed to be a educated person was repented of his act, saying he liked his personality to be restored, he wants the government to hospitalize him and others suffering from addiction. "In fact, I don't like to be an addict and isolated from family and society, but the endemic war and unfriendly conditions such as extreme poverty and unemployment has plunged me and others into the drug hell," Asif said. "My earnest desire from the government is to take us to the hospitals, to the rehabilitation centers and to help us to recover from shameful life," Asif further said.

He also warned that overlooking the drug addicts would add to the "army of addicts and beggars" in the country that is already facing multi-faceted problems.

Asif also claimed that twice he had been taken to drug rehabilitation center in the past but due to ill-treatment and poor attention, he hasn't recovered.

More than 1 million people including men, women and even children have reportedly been suffering from drug addiction in Afghanistan, and the number seems rising as poppy plantation goes unchecked.

Poppy cultivation has surged in Afghanistan as the level of poppy cultivation was registered 209,000 hectares in 2013 against 154,000 hectares in 2012, thus putting Afghanistan as the largest supplier of the raw material used in manufacturing heroin in the world, a report of the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC) released in November said.