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## Elections, Money and Corruption

December 23, 2013

Though the election campaign has not fully heated up as many months are remaining but the reports and eye-witnessed observations about the implementation of illegal practices in order to win the favor of voters is on sharp rise and this has created such an atmosphere when the entire process of elections has become loathsome. According to the reports, presidential candidates are using large amount of money to buy the loyalty of voters in different parts of the country. In this setup, the money is provided to the influential tribal chief of the area who then forces the people of the area to vote for the candidate.

This practice is on sharp rise and would affect the transparency of the elections. Same unfair and illegal practices were used by the candidates in last presidential elections and the end result was a great mess and confusion for the public. At the same time, it is also a matter of great concern that these candidates have huge piles of money to spend for their campaign and they have not declared the sources of this income.

It is the duty of election commission to investigate the legal income of the candidates and decide if they have enough money to run for the elections and the candidates are also legally bound to declare the sources of their income. But it is also a fact that the huge spending by the candidates would bring a new wave of economic activities in the country that is suffering hard to sustain itself due to the shrinkage of economic activities resulting from the dilemma for not finalizing the BSA deal between the governments of Afghanistan and the US. The reports of government support for some specific candidates is also in the air and if these reports were found to be correct, the entire process of elections would be meaningless. The responsibility of Independent

Election Commission increases in order to make sure that the government machinery should not be used for the promotion of any electoral candidate.

In the elections of 2009, there were many allegations of rigging and unfair practices in the election that made the entire process a bit doubtful and the result of election was not confirmed even after many days. Similarly, some practices like multiple-voting by a single voter, use of below-standard ink, mistakes in the electoral lists and the disappearance of ballot boxes were all against the standards of fair elections. It is hoped that, in upcoming election, government authorities and organs would assist the independent election commission to conduct these elections in the most transparent manner so that true spirit of democracy should be upheld and the choice of masses should be respected.

It is also necessary that the election commission should be given complete authority to perform its functions with all the freedom and justice. As the time of election is approaching, the need to make all the preparations on time by the Independent Election Commission is emphasized and if the preparations were made on time and the elections were held transparently, the stability of the country would further be strengthened and sufferings of people would be greatly decreased.