

## **India Afghanistan development partnership**

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India and Afghanistan shares cultures, values, traditions and even borders from centuries. The origins of their relations is prevailed in history. However, the ties between both countries took a significant turn, since the independence of India in 1950. The creation of Pakistan and emerged a buffer between the two countries and laid a vital impact on the relationship between India and Afghanistan. The direct link had broken, but the tie remains intact. The two nations recognised their ancient ties through the treaty of friendship on 4 January 1951<sup>1</sup>. It sought mutual co-operation and strengthened peace and cordial relations between both countries.

However, the Soviet invasion in 1979, was another turning point. Afghanistan had become an epicentre of the proxy war between two superpowers, US and USSR. India policy in a dilemma, soviet were great friend of India, and so as Afghan people. India was fewer to peaceful, independence and sovereign Afghanistan, and was working to the peaceful withdrawal of the Soviet forces. However, the situation in Afghanistan was very critical. Contrary, soviets were also under pressure to withdraw its forces, mounting domestic and international pressure came to an end with the Geneva accord, which laid the foundations of the Soviet troop's withdrawal. The Geneva accord authorised by the four parties. First agreement signed between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The second agreement was the grantee of the first agreement, which acknowledged by the two superpowers. However, the agreement was not explicit to the framework of the new government; it was a fragile agreement. Nevertheless, the withdrawal of the soviet tropes created a power vacuum in Afghanistan; the government did not have resources to sustain without the help of the Soviet. The government could not survive against the mujahideen unity, which had ample support of the USA, Saudi Arabi and Pakistan alliance. After this power struggle mujahideen took power in 1991<sup>2</sup>. Bahrudeen Rabbani became the leader of that government.

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<sup>1</sup>Treaty of friendship between the government of India and the royal government of Afghanistan in 1951.

<sup>2</sup>Paliwal, Avinash. "My Enemy's Enemy." Noida: HarperCollins Publishers, 2017. Pp. 73-74

Therefore, the mujahideen government could not end the war. Further, a struggle began between the mujahideen groups for graving power. Some Pakistan sponsored groups called the Taliban emerged significant forces; the word Taliban is an origin of an Arabic word 'Talib' means "student". They brutally attacked the civilian and women. India foreign policy was in a predicament. India tried to make friendly relations and provided limited humanitarian assistance to the mujahideen government. Even though mujahideen were taking Pakistan help in the war against soviet and they had a vital role in the removal of the Soviet forces. Though the Indian policy of Afghanistan faced a new crisis in 1996 when the mujahideen government fall and the Taliban took control of Kabul. India encountered difficulty to continue its operations. It shut the embassy and another consulate from Afghanistan. Although, it continued its aid and medical assistance program in the areas which were under the control of the United Front, or northern alliance. They were some older mujahideen leaders, fighting against the Taliban with the help of outside powers<sup>3</sup>.

### **Indian engagement with Afghanistan after 9/11**

The USA and allied forces started the operation enduring freedom after the terrorist attack on the USA. Taliban regime could not sustain much longer in front of allied forces and collapse in 2001. It was an opportunity for India. India welcomed the process of the Interim Authority under the Bonn Agreement of 2001. The Agreement signed by the governing council and based on promises to develop and stabile post-Taliban Afghanistan through the democratic process. India was also a significant stakeholder of the peace and stability of Afghanistan. So India started its development program. India's priority was to provide support to the new government in all sectors, such as political, social, commercial, capacity development. India government embraced this immediate moment and up-grade its embassy in 2002 in Kabul<sup>4</sup>.

Afghanistan extensively required infrastructure development programme. Due to the civil war and later, the Taliban's regime economy had collapsed. No one wanted to come in Afghnsitan. Countries had entered a dark age. Services such as hospitals, education institutions, transportation, electricity, police system, telecommunications, had shuttered; nearly all the professionals and business people had left the country; There was an urgency of reconstruction and capacity building programs. India shared its experience

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid

<sup>4</sup>Agreement on Provisional Arrangements in Afghanistan,  
<http://www.afhangovernment.com/AfghanAgreementBonn.htm>.

with the new government and enthused about helping Afghan people. All projects have been serving the purpose of strengthening the government of Afghanistan and encourage social, economic and political development of the Afghan citizens. India's support is crucial to develop stability, peace and prosperity of the country, former Afghanistan president Hamid Karzai applauded India's assistance and development program<sup>5</sup>. Till now, India has donated 2 billion US dollar for reconstruction and development activity in Afghanistan. India is the fifth-largest donor of Afghanistan. India's assistance splits into two-part, humanitarian assistance and assistance for development projects. The assistance is a widespread impact and covering all sectors and every part of the country. As a result of its development activities, India is the most popular country in Afghanistan. International community also has appreciated development program.

### **Small Development Projects**

These are small scale projects funded by the Indian government and carry out with the help of the Afghan government, and non-government organisations. More than two hundred projects have completed under the first two-phase, included with public health, education, and infrastructure in all provinces of Afghanistan; These small scale projects have yielded a broad impact on Afghan society. Local communities are directly involved in these projects; various projects has been providing livelihood, protecting and preserving local culture, helping women empowerment in Afghanistan. Ninety more small development project has started under the third phase<sup>6</sup>.

#### **Development of Trade and Transit**

#### **Bilateral**

trade between India and Afghanistan has been a historical phenomenon. Despite the border's difficulty, the trade has been booming. The Bilateral trade has reached \$ 683 million for 2013-2014 and \$ 684 million for 2014-2015. The Strategic Partnership Agreement also help to increase investment and trade between them. India is an emerging economy and booming market. India can provide a reliable market for Afghan products. To encouraging the Afghans trader, Indian government has decided to give fifty to hundred per cent tariff concession on most of the Afghan imported goods. In 2011, the India government removed primary customs duty from all the Afghan products under SAFTA (South Asian free trade agreement). Afghanistan also got benefit from this removal; it has

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<sup>5</sup><http://www.eoi.gov.in/kabul/?0354?000>

<sup>6</sup>Annual report 2009/10 mea.gov.in published by, policy planning and research division, ministry of external affairs, New Delhi.

become Saarc member in 2001<sup>7</sup>. The only land route to Afghanistan is through Pakistan. There is vast potential to grow trade if the Wagah-Attari route opened. It is faster and economically viable. Although it is complicated to open this route because of hostile relations between India and Pakistan. Pakistan remains ambiguous about India's Afghan policy. It deems a threat to its strategic, political and economic interest. Even it has not given access to humanitarian assistance from India. Despite Pakistan and Afghanistan have an agreement (APPTA) for giving access to goods through their land, Pakistan policy remains the same. Furthermore, Afghanistan president Ashraf Ghani has spoken publically.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, India has been seeking another trade route which is via Bander Abbas, Iran<sup>9</sup>. India is also developing Chabahar port, Iran. It has invested \$ 85 million to restore this port.<sup>10</sup> The three countries, India, Iran and Afghanistan, have also signed an agreement to build a rail and road link from Chabahar (Iran) to Afghanistan border. Indian border road organisation (BRO) has already developed road from Delaram to Zaranj. The road will connect chabahar port through major Afghanistan cities, as Herat and Kandahar<sup>11</sup>. The Project will ease Afghanistan to connect with the world and reduce the Pakistan leverage. Furthermore, the route will develop trade relations with landlocked Central Asian countries. The development of chabahar port is also beneficial for Indo-Iranian relations. It will develop to Afghanistan as gateway of central Asia. These countries are prosperous with natural resources. It will help to make secure and stable Afghanistan as well as provide energy to India's economy. However, present, the development of the Chabahar port is blurred because USA sanctions on Iran<sup>12</sup>. India is also working third options, to trade through air cargo. However, it is costly. It is uncertain how long it will sustain.

### **Partnership in the field of Agriculture**

Afghanistan is agriculture-based country, 23 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP) comes from Agriculture, and it is the main occupation of the majority of people, 44 per cent population has been working under this sector. The sector is facing many problems

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<sup>7</sup>Sawhney, R K, ArunSahgal and GurmeetKanwal. "Afghanistan: A Role for India". New Delhi: KW Publisher Pvt Ltd, 2011. Pp. 176

<sup>8</sup><https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Pakistans-pettiness-is-strangling-Indo-Afghan-trade/articleshow/54342707.cms>

<sup>9</sup><https://www.reuters.com/article/iran-shipping/sanctions-blowback-crippling-irans-shipping-trade-idUSL5E7MT2BY20111201>

<sup>10</sup><http://www.hindustantimes.com/india/india-iran-afghanistan-sign-chabahar-port-agreement/story-2EytbKZe06zeC1pR8WSuAO.html>

<sup>11</sup>Sawhney, R K, ArunSahgal and GurmeetKanwal. "Afghanistan: A Role for India". New Delhi: KW Publisher Pvt Ltd, 2011. Pp. 177

<sup>12</sup>Yadav, Vikash and Conrad & Barwa. "Relation control: India's Grand strategy in Afghanistan and Pakistan." Indian Review (April- June 2011): 93- 125

like drug production at large scale, low productivity of crop, limited irrigation resources, low productive land, the old technique of cultivation, the deficit of quality seed, lack of market access, limited storage facilities, and limited trade with other countries<sup>13</sup>. Only 15 per cent of the surface area is agricultural land in Afghanistan. The cultivated land is also deficient production. Drug cultivation is another big problem with Afghanistan. It is the largest producer of opium. The country produces 95% of global drug. Taliban uses drug cultivation for its survival, buy the weapon, and payment to their soldiers for fight war with Afghan army.<sup>14</sup>

India might assist Afghanistan in the field of agriculture and help to reduce drug farming. As India has vast experience and developed techniques, Afghanistan can take advantage of Indian experience. Even so, India has been working in this field to train Afghan Agriculture officials about cooperative farming, India is also providing Agriculture machinery and equipment. The scholarship programme started by India council of Agriculture Research (ICAR). India government has been accommodating six hundred and fourteen slots to Afghan Agriculture officials under this scheme by the ministry of external affair<sup>15</sup>. India and Afghanistan are working to increase storage capacity for agriculture and fruit products. Till now five thousand ton volume has built, an additional nine thousand ton cold storage capacity has also been developed in Kandahar provinces by India with the help of the Afghan government<sup>16</sup>.

In the field of irrigation, construction of Salma dam in Herat province the most significant project built by India. The work had started in 2004; the estimated cost was \$300 million. The project has served to increase the irrigation facility in Herat province, now the 75000 hectares of land irrigated from this dam. It has also improved the drinking water supply to the Chisti-e-Sharif province. Moreover, it is also generating 42 megawatts electricity, which is lighting 250,000 homes throughout Afghanistan. The Prime Minister of India Narinder Modi called it "Friendship Project". He said, "it is a symbol of our friendship and would usher in hope, light up homes, nourish the fertile fields of Heart and bring prosperity to the people of the region".<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Sawhney, R K, ArunSahgal and GurmeetKanwal. "Afghanistan: A Role for India". New Delhi: KW Publisher Pvt Ltd,2011. Pp. 180,

<sup>14</sup><http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-21548230>,  
<http://www.afghanistans.com/Information/Economy/Agriculture.htm>

<sup>15</sup>Annual report 2009/10 mea.gov.in published by, policy planning and research division, ministry of external affairs, New Delhi.

<sup>16</sup>Annual report 20011/12 mea.gov.in published by, policy planning and research division, ministry of external affairs, New Delhi.

<sup>17</sup><http://www.financialexpress.com/economy/salma-dam-inaugurated-by-pm-modi-one-of-indias-most-expensive-infrastructure-projects-in-Afghanistan/273789>

### **Infrastructure development**

Salma Dam is not only project although the development projects have spread throughout several fields, such as energy development, water, telecommunication, health, rural, road and rail. These projects are providing a livelihood to the local's, and accelerating communication. Zaranj to Delaram is a shining example of India's commitment to the Afghan people, built by BRO (an Indian department of Border Road Organization) at the cost of 600 crore Indian rupees. The project has lessened the journey twelve-hour to two hours from Delaram to Zaranj.<sup>18</sup> The constructions of transmission line and substations of 220 KV had completed in 2009. The electrical transmissions line from pul-e-khumri to Kabul is an essential project. The project connects the transmission line with Uzbekistan; both countries can get electricity from other if need.<sup>19</sup> The Afghan government has been establishing a telecommunication network and telephone services throughout the country with the help of India. The networks of the telecommunication have spent all 34 provinces. In 2001, only 1 per cent of Afghan people had telephone access, but now 70 per cent have access to cell phone.<sup>20</sup>

### **Humanitarian assistance**

India is the fifth-largest donor country in Afghanistan and the first in the south Asian region. The Indian government has granted \$ 2 billion in assistance for development projects in Afghanistan. The considerable part of this assistance is for humanitarian projects and activities. With this financial support. Afghanistan has been struggling with civil war since the 1980s; children are affected by the civil war. Afghanistan is the most undernutrition country in the world, according to the Unicef report 2017, 9.5 per cent are facing acute malnutrition problem due to the lower quality of food and lower breastfeeding.<sup>21</sup> India has been helping reduce malnutrition, providing high protein biscuit nearly 2 million Afghan children under the world food organisation programme. The Initiative is helping two, increasing school inrolment and reducing malnutrition. India has gifted 250,000 tons of wheat to Afghanistan. The first shipment reached through chabahar port in 2017.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Annual report 2012/13 mea.gov.in published by, policy planning and research division, ministry of external affairs, New Delhi.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid

<sup>20</sup>Ibid

<sup>21</sup><https://www.unicef.org/afghanistan/nutrition>

<sup>22</sup>Annual report 2017/18 mea.gov.in published by, policy planning and research division, ministry of external affairs  
New Delhi.

Medical and health care is another priority area where the Indian government is serving Afghan people. It has established 23 local clinics in various provinces. Indira Gandhi Institute is one of the most excellent childcare institute in Afghanistan. It was set up at the time of King Zahir Shah. The hospital was renamed as Indira Gandhi institute of child health care hospital by the government of Afghanistan in 1985 to tribute former prime minister ms. Indira Gandhi after her death. The hospital had opened during the civil war. Although the assistance was not adequate to continue its comprehensive utility. Although, after the collapse of the Taliban regime, India resumed its assistance, supplying equipment and medicines to the hospital, the doctor and paramedics are trained by India, under the capacity building programme. The hospital is a notable effort for Afghanistan; now, it has been treating 3 lakh children annually<sup>23</sup>.

### **Vocational training**

Despite all these programmes, the government of India is also engaging in a vocational training programme. The programme is helping vulnerable sections of society. The vocational training centre has setup in 2005 in Begh-e-Zanana, Kabul. The centre has been aiding Afghan women through SEWA (the most significant Indian self-employed women association). Most of the women are war widow and illiterate. The centre is accommodating to develop skills of garment making, embroidery, nursery plantation, management, and accounts to Afghan women. Women separates into three groups upon their interest and skills<sup>24</sup>.

. Women and children had the most affected and faced cruelties at the time of the Taliban; women were not allowed to go out. The programme like that giving them an opportunity and hope for a better future, it is the first step to make them economically and socially independent.

### **Partnership in the Field of Education**

Education is a pillar of society. It backs to the transformation of society. At the period of civil war and after, the school infrastructure had destroyed, professionals had left the country. The education system of the country had broken. There was no formal education system. However, the situation has significantly changed after the fall of Taliban regime since 2001. Presently almost 6 million students have been attending school. India's priority is a stable and Independent Afghanistan, and the purpose can not fulfil without

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<sup>23</sup>Annual report 2009/10 mea.gov.in published by, policy planning and research division, ministry of external affairs  
New Delhi.

<sup>24</sup>Ghosh, Anwasha. "A Leap Forward." New Delhi: KW Publishers Pvt Ltd, 2011. Pp. 58-59

encouraging people to take education. India is contributing 24% of its assistance in the field of education. It is to building schools and training teachers, computers, books, dress, as well as feed for the school-going children. Education system of Afghanistan divided into three parts the primary, secondary, and higher education. India has been supporting in every sector.<sup>25</sup> India starts 500 scholarships program for the martyr soldiers's children annually. In the field of higher education, India government announced the scholarship programme in 2005. India government is also granting 1000 scholarship for graduate and undergraduate students through ICSSR. The scheme is helping Afghan youth regardless of any discriminations based on gender, religions and ethnicity. The programme will continue until 2020. The scholarship has provided all deserving candidate. India has announced scholarship for Afghan government servants through ITEC (The Indian Technical and economic cooperation programme). This scheme provided 500 slots annually for Afghan public servants, in any of Indian professional institute of their choice. India also begins Capacity development programme for diplomats, civil servants, doctors, teachers, and press reporters.<sup>26</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The partnership between India and Afghanistan is very crucial for the stability security of war turn country, as well as for the whole region. India's approach is identical that it will remain soft power status in Afghanistan, and serve Afghan people through its development program. The Capacity development programme is helping local communities and empowering youths, women and vulnerable sections of the society. The assistance has a significant impact on the Afghanistan society vocations programme for women have been making them self dependent, helping them to make independent decisions and encouraging other women to do so. India programme for the scholarship for student for accruing higher education from Indian universities. The capacity development programme is helping the skill of teacher, doctors, business people, bureaucrats. It is helping the Afghan to establish secure and stable government and help them to deal with administrations problems.

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid. Pp. Pp. 58-59

<sup>26</sup>Ghosh, Anwasha. "A Leap Forward." New Delhi: KW Publishers Pvt Ltd, 2011. 48-49