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## Preface

Afghanistan has historical relations with India which have had its ups and downs throughout history. In the last years of Karzai's presidency, bilateral relations between the countries were warmer but after the formation of National Unity Government (NUG) the bilateral relations entered into a new phase.

Afghan Chief Executive Officer Dr. Abdullah Abdullah met senior Indian officials including Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and discussed various issues during his four-day visit to India last week. He also participated in the counter-terrorism conference and an economical meeting. The Afghan government is seeking warmer relations with India and meanwhile it is also trying to maintain balance in its relations with India and Pakistan.

In the first part of the weekly analysis, you would read CSRS analysis about the background of the Afghan-Indian relations, Karzai's relations with India during his presidency and also the NUG's relations with India.

In the second part of the weekly analysis, we have tried to analyze the increasing violence against women in Afghanistan. Recently, we heard the news of violence against women in various parts of the country. However, the Afghan government and International Community have made lots of efforts and have spent a large amount of money under 'improving women's life', but it appears that these efforts and money were spent in vain. What challenges do women face? And what can be done to improve their lives? These are questions, which would be analyzed in the second part of weekly analysis.

You would read in detail about these subjects in this issue of the weekly analysis put together by the Editorial Board of the Center for Strategic and Regional Studies.

## Kabul-Delhi Ties and the Afghan CEO's visit to India



Afghanistan has long historical relations with India. At the time of Hamid Karzai's Presidency in Afghanistan, the relations between the two countries were so good; however, after the formation of the National Unity Government (NUG), these relations were deteriorated for a few months but due to the bilateral visits paid by the senior official of both sides these relations once again begun to improve.

Dr. Abdullah the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Afghanistan arrives in India on his four-day visit on 31 January 2016. During his stay in India, Dr. Abdullah met Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Indian Minister of External Affairs Sushma Swaraj and Indian National Security Advisor Ajit Doval. He also participated in the counter-terrorism conference held in Jaipur aiming for further cooperation to tackle terrorism in the region and in addition he also attended an economic conference organized over Chabahar Port.

In this issue of the Weekly Analysis, we have analyzed the background of the relations between Afghanistan and India, the bilateral ties during Karzai's presidency and after the formation of the NUG and the impact of Afghan CEO's visit to India over the present and future of the bilateral ties is also discussed.

### **The Historical Background of Afghan-Indian Relations**

Afghanistan and India have had close and friendly ties throughout the history due to travels of merchants to each other's countries. In the first half of the twentieth century, when India got Independence from Great Britain, Afghanistan quickly recognized its independence and later sent its first ambassador Najeebullah Khan to India in 1949.

During the Cold War, both countries didn't become a member of capitalist or communist blocks and instead they along with some other countries formed a “non-alignment movement” but after the soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the relations between the two nations (not governments) became deteriorated. While during Afghan Civil War, Indian involvements in Afghanistan were rather more of interventionist in nature. ; And when the Taliban regime collapsed and instead Karzai's government was established, the bilateral relations between the two countries once again revived.

### **Kabul-Delhi Ties during Karzai's Presidency**

Afghanistan and India have long-standing historical, political, economic and cultural relations. Although, the bilateral relations have also experienced ups and downs in the past years, but in the modern history of Afghanistan, the relation between the two countries were rather warm, except during the Taliban regime.

During the Taliban regime, diplomatic relations between Afghanistan and India were broken but when Hamid Karzai came to power and the Northern alliance was vastly represented in the "Interim Government of Afghanistan", the diplomatic relation with "New Delhi" was once again became warmed.

In the Karzai Administration, the relations between the two countries were improved but in the second term of his presidency the relations between the two countries were much better than compared to his first term as in 13 years of his rule in Afghanistan. Karzai has had 14 official visits to India; however, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had also come to Afghanistan in 2005 and put the foundation of the new building of the Afghan parliament.

In order to improve and close relations, Indian Consulates were established in Herat, Kandahar and Mazar-e Sharif. On the basis of a Trade Agreement with Afghanistan, the Indian customs duty on Afghan exports was reduced and partially removed.

Since 2001, India, as the sixth largest donor to Afghanistan, has spent \$2 billion for economy, security and building infrastructures in Afghanistan. India constructed "Zaranj-Dellaram Highway" in Karzai's presidency (2009) which connects Afghanistan through Iran to India and the construction of Salma Dam and the new building of Afghan Parliament were also commenced in the same period. India also won the contract of Hajigak iron-ore in Afghanistan; thousands of civil and military Afghans went to India for educations and training, India signed the strategic agreement with Afghanistan in 2011 to promote further relations between the countries, the agreement was signed on the basis of the provisions of the friendship agreement between the two countries in 4 January 1950. The implementation of this agreement will increase India's role in security and economy in Afghanistan.

### **Kabul-Delhi Ties During the National Unity Government**

Ashraf Ghani had announced his foreign policy doctrine in his election manifesto (Tahawol Wa Tadawom) (Change and Continuity), and when he was sworn in as the President of Afghanistan, he insisted on this foreign policy and still is pursuing it.

However, India was in Ghani's fourth circle of foreign policy (Asia), but now and then, he iterates India to be in the first circle of his foreign policy (neighbors) and has declared the relations with India as valuable.

Ashraf Ghani made his first visit to India in May 2015. Later, the Afghan National Security Advisor Hanif Atmar visited India in February in the same year and then Hekmat Khalil Karzai went to India to discuss the implementation of the strategic agreement between the two countries.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi made his first visit to Kabul in late 2015 to inaugurate the building of the new Afghan Parliament. India has spent \$220 million in construction of the building for new Afghan parliament and \$300M for Salma hydroelectric dam.

Although, due to Ghani's risky outreach to Pakistan, the Afghan-Indian relations were deteriorated but after the visits of senior officials of the two countries from Afghanistan and India the relations were improved.

### **Abdullah's recent visit to India**

This is the second time that Chief Executive Officer visits India, earlier in March 2015 Dr. Abdullah Abdullah had a visit to India which was rather a non-official trip but he also met some senior officials in the country including Indian Vice President.

Due to the meetings with Indian senior officials including Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Indian Minister of External Affairs, Sushma Swaraj and the Indian National Security Advisor Ajit Doval. The recent visit of the Chief Executive Officer is more valuable than his former visit to India. The issues discussed in the meeting of Dr. Abdullah with Indian senior officials were focused on three key points:

- The implementation of the Strategic Agreement between Kabul and Delhi.
- Cooperation between Afghanistan, India and Iran over Chabahar port.
- Inking the political and economic agreements between the two countries.

In his meetings with Indian officials, Dr. Abdullah stressed on the implementation of the Strategic Agreement between Afghanistan and India and said that, in this regard, Afghanistan is prepared. (However India has previously tried to put the Chabahar port in use but due to the broken relations between USA and Iran, the USA pressured India to stop efforts in this regard.) The pressure by US was due to

the deteriorated relation of the country with Iran over the Atomic programs of Iran. Afghan Chief Executive Officer in his meetings with Indian officials wanted to speed up the works over Chabahar port and he said that he hopes that Iran, Afghanistan and India will cooperate in this regard with each other.

During this trip, two political and economic agreements were also signed between Kabul and Delhi. The first provides visa-free travels for Diplomats, and the other agreement was about the expansion of trade between the countries, the visa-free travel for diplomats is an achievement of this trip and it is the sign of better relations between the two countries.

India is concerned about the vast role of Pakistan in Afghanistan's issues and after the initiation of the quadrilateral peace talks with the innovation of Pakistan, these concerns were increased; the Afghan government now wants to eliminate or reduce these concerns.

### **Balance in relations with India and Pakistan**

Keeping balance in the relations with India and Pakistan has always been a difficult task to perform in foreign relations of the country. From 2001 to 2009 Afghanistan had maintained better relation with both countries. When the Taliban aggravated their military operations, it put deep impacts over the foreign policy of Karzai and doubts over Pakistan's ambitions were increased and thus Afghanistan had approached to India. The intervention of the US in the Afghan Presidential Elections in 2009 also effected Afghan foreign policy.

Afghan government asked for military cooperation of India in 2013 and specially the demand for purchasing heavy weapons from India. However, India's response to this request was negative but still the relations were good between the countries.

After the formation of the National Unity Government (NUG), the Afghan foreign policy was changed and thus Ashraf Ghani approached Pakistan to achieve its assistance in the Afghan peace process. One of the important steps held by Ashraf Ghani was to postpone the request for purchasing heavy weapons. That was the reason behind the cold relations between Afghanistan and India, but when

Afghanistan became disappointed from the insincere cooperation of Pakistan in the peace process, he tried to improve his relations with India, then.

On 27 April 2015, Ashraf Ghani went on his first visit to India and reduced the mistrust between the two countries. And beside the other achievements of his visit, the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi also accepted previous requests of the Afghanistan about the heavy weapons and asked Ghani to provide India a list of the Military needs of Afghanistan. This visit of Ashraf Ghani was also considered as he wanted to put pressure on Pakistan. Later in Hanif Atmar's visit to India, the handing over of four military M-25 helicopters was announced; Narendra Modi's visit to Afghanistan was also deemed as an alarm for Pakistan.

However, the relation of Afghanistan is now better with both India and Pakistan but due to the past experience, we know that this balance in the relations will not last longer. The Afghan government has failed to maintain balance in the relations with Pakistan and India in the past one and a half decade, the relation with the two countries has always been used to put pressure on each other.

### **The Future of Kabul-Delhi Ties**

Based on the NUG's foreign policy, if someone study the Kabul-Delhi ties, s/he will find out that the relation between the two countries are recently improved compared to the first few months of its formation. On the other hand, India's position is improving among the world's countries and on the other hand India has some mutual interests with Afghanistan, thus the relations between the two countries have begun to improve.

Besides that, India has doubled its assistance to Afghanistan and thus, it has invented to keep Afghanistan stand with India for a long period; however, if positive changes were occurred in Pak-Afghan relations, the outcomes would be different.

Since the relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan have not have any noticeable achievement, such a change will require decades to reduce mistrust and suspicion in the relations, thus India does not need to be concerned about its relations with Afghanistan.



## Situation of Women in Afghanistan; Reasons behind Violence and the way forward



The Afghan Ministry of Women Affairs said that it has recorded almost 4 thousand cases of violence against women in the current year. If in this regard we consider the past years statistics, the recorded cases of violence against women is on the fall; however, some violence-related tragic events also happened in the recent years that have caused this issue to be considered as a serious problem in the country.

On the other hand, the Afghan woman, affected by the Western Civilization and due to uncontrolled freedom and misinterpretation of Islam, is becoming scapegoat. Therefore, positive and negative intemperance positions made both sides to be sensitive and the Afghan woman is being sacrificed.

The situation of women in the world, comparison of them with Afghanistan, is Afghan woman being sacrificed by positive and negative intemperance? And eventually, what are the basic reasons behind and the solutions for violence against women in the country? They all are being analyzed below.

## **Violence against Women in the World**

The problem of violence against women is not limited to a region or a country, but this phenomenon is everywhere, especially it is widely present in the Western world. For example, only in 2013, about 13 million women were physically abused and 3.7 million others faced sexual aggression in the European Union.<sup>1</sup>

Also, every 9 seconds in the US. A woman is assaulted or beaten. On average, near 20 women per minute are physically abused. 1 In 5 women and 1 in 7 men have been victims of sexual abuse in their life time.<sup>2</sup> According to a report by the FBI, 79770 rape cases were recorded in 2013 only.<sup>3</sup>

The reason behind the abovementioned statistics is to show that violence against women is not limited to a region, but women are facing problems in the west also; however, presenting these statistics does not mean to become silent about violence against women in the country.

## **Afghan Women; a Victim of ultra-liberalism and ultra-conservatism!**

Afghanistan is a traditional and religious society and most of its people are illiterate and they are unaware of women rights in Islam. Therefore, women are excluded from their natural and Islamic rights, even it is considered a “shameful action” and “taunt” if women ask for their legacy!

In the Afghan society, another liberal extremist reaction came to ground against the current extreme situation, which has made the Afghan woman to enter in an alien situation other than their values, traditions and natural situation and made “the woman, stranger to their society” to upraise against her society. Instead they work for peace, the negatively impacted the voice of the defenders of the women

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<sup>1</sup> See online: [http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-vaw-survey-main-results-apr14\\_en.pdf](http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-vaw-survey-main-results-apr14_en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> See the statistics of American national coalition against domestic violence in the link below:  
<http://www.ncadv.org/learn/statistics>

<sup>3</sup> See the details for statistics of rape issue in the official website of FBI:  
[https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2013/crime-in-the-u.s.-2013/tables/1tabledatadeoverviewpdf/table\\_1\\_crime\\_in\\_the\\_united\\_states\\_by\\_volume\\_and\\_rate\\_per\\_100000\\_inhabitants\\_1994-2013.xls](https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2013/crime-in-the-u.s.-2013/tables/1tabledatadeoverviewpdf/table_1_crime_in_the_united_states_by_volume_and_rate_per_100000_inhabitants_1994-2013.xls)

rights who were struggling in order for their voice to be heard; hence a lot of people in the country are suspicious about their efforts.

Until now, the Afghan woman is yet to be provided with her rights the Islam has given her; on the other side, liberal circles try to alienate Afghan woman from her society and natural situation. Both of the situations are pernicious for Afghan woman and she should be taken out from this whirlpool.

### **Violence against Women in Afghanistan**

There was violence against women in Afghanistan in the past; but there was not a system for recording these cases and a lot of these cases were kept hidden. Of course, the cases of violence against women are being enlightened and recorded by counter-violence administrations, laws and media.

A separate ministry became established for women in 2001 after the new system under the supervision of the Bonn Conference formed in Afghanistan, and Seema Samar was the first minister for the Ministry of Women Affairs. Besides that, the share of women increased in the new system compared to the past regimes and Afghanistan is even forerunner from a lot of western countries in this regard. For example, the share of women in present Wolesi Jirga and Meshrano Jirga is more than it is in France, Pakistan, India, Japan and Russia.<sup>4</sup> There share is also increased in education, government and ministries compared to the past.

Despite this situation, 5939 women recorded their violence-related complaints with the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) from 1391 (2011-2012)-1393 (2014-2015), of which the most of them (2159) were recorded in 1392 (2012-2013) and the least of them (1750) were recorded in 1391 (2011-2012). (See the Figure-1)

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<sup>4</sup> See the statistics of inter-parliamentary union in the link below:  
<http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

**Figure-1: Violence-related complaints recorded by AIHRC (1391-1394)**

Year	Recorded Complaints related to violence against Women
1394	-
1393	<b>2026</b>
1392	<b>2159</b>
1391	<b>1750</b>

*Source: AIHRC*

The recorded cases of violence against women were on the rise from 1391 to 1393, and they were at their highest level in 1392; however, this decreased year-by-year and it is now in its lowest level in 1394 (See Figure-2)

**Figure-2: The recorded cases of violence against women in the whole country (1391-1394)**

Year	The recorded cases of violence against women in the whole country
1394	<b>4000<sup>5</sup></b>
1393	<b>4873</b>
1392	<b>6611</b>
1391	<b>5701</b>

*Source: AIHRC*

<sup>5</sup> The statistics of past three months are not included in these statistics

On the other hand, if we consider the statistics related to women rape, these statistics increase year-by-year. 109 cases of rape were recorded in 1391; in the case, this number increased by 139 in 1392 and 179 in 1393.

Hence, the cases of violence against women increased in the country, a law tackling violence against women had been made in 2009, then. This law, instead of being useful, divided the country and made the voice raised for defending women rights “suspicious”, that lest there would the West’s hands behind these efforts. A number of articles in this law are clearly against Islam. Therefore, this law was rejected by the Afghan parliament, then.

### **The Tragic Incidents of Violence against Women**

Some of the cases related to violence against women were so tragic. These are the incidents that took place in big cities or public places and are widely covered by media, specifically by social media. Some of the incidents covered by media are as following:

On March 19 2015, Farkhunda, 27, was savagely murdered, in front of police, by a rampaging mob after she was falsely accused of burning Quran. It was later determined that Farkhunda had not burned the Quran and the claims were baseless and this issue has wide reaction on national and international level.

On 28 January 2016, a man chopped off his 20-years old wife’s nose in Northern Faryab province. Several similar incidents are happened and covered by media as well. Besides, so harsh and tragic incidents than that are also happened in remote areas, which are not heard by the nation and are not covered by the media too.

The government is yet to take an effective step to prevent violence against women in the remote areas. There is a belief in the country that the government and the international community, despite not tackling the issue, has encouraged women to promiscuity and due to this, it paves the way for extremism. In this regards, there are also various criticisms on some programs of the media.

## Reasons behind Violence against Women

The main factors behind violence against women in the country are as following:

- **Unawareness of people about Women Rights in Islam:** most of the countrymen are unaware of the rights and position of women Islam has given to them. Due to this, the Afghan society is involved in violence against women from one hand, and from the other hand, it makes laws under the banner of defending women rights that is contrary to the Islamic prescriptions, and provokes harsh reaction in the community.
- **Ignorance or lack of Knowledge:** the most dangerous incidents of violence against women are happened in rural and remote areas and they are so tragic. Most of these incidents took place due to ignorance.
- **Impact of Alien Culture:** From 2001, due to the uncontrolled freedom of media, the alien culture is being promoted in the country and it still has had very negative impacts on our community. It is due to this strange culture that the rate of divorce is increasing, women are being abused in the streets and the cases of rape are also on the rise. Such incidents even also took place with relatives and children.

## How to Prevent Violence against Women?

- **Public Awareness:** raising public awareness regarding women rights and their position in the society through TV, radio and other means.
- **Education:** whatever the level of education increases in rural and remote areas, that much the incidents of violence against women decreases.
- **Role of Ullema (Religious Scholars):** Ullema can play a key role in decreasing violence against women. Ullema should make people aware of women rights as accordance to Islamic prescriptions and they should encourage them to treat women well. Besides that, it should describe the position of Islam and Afghan Culture regarding violence (including rape, abusing women on roads and streets and etc.), also.

- **Decreasing Corruption in Judiciary System:** a lot of abusers of women rights are being liberated by judiciary organs in exchange for bribery and corruption. If the level of corruption is decreased in the judiciary organs, it is possible that the harsh crimes of violence would somehow decrease.

The End

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**Note:** Please let us know your feedback and suggestions for the improvement of Weekly analysis.

