

Written By Shamszai

Peace centers within the villages

A nice building has been constructed among muddy houses in Khwaja Gian village of Mirbacha Kot district of Kabul province where lots of villagers usually come together and have discussions. Indeed, it is a social center constructed by NSP/MRRD at a cost of AFN 1,200,000 (Equivalent to \$24000). However, the villagers proudly call it peace center.



Says Haji Khwaja Noor Saeed, an influential elder of the village: "In the beginning, it was a social center. However, it converted to peace center after CDC members could manage to sort out an interpersonal dispute which nearly resulted in numerous casualties of the rivalries."

According to some villagers, Khwaja Gian village comprises 343 families and has a history of 700 years. The building of a shrine in the middle of the village really confirms and proves this history. There was no particular site for ceremonies in the village before. Presently, not only ceremonies are held in this center, but also numerous disputes are being solved here.

Haji Syed Muhammad, the CDC member said: "Besides, social gatherings, CDC members come together in this building twice a month and discuss both development procedures and the resolution of disputes. Sometimes illiteracy trainings are held for both men and women in this center which really has a positive impact on our society."

Two other social centers have also been built by MRRD in Mirbacha Kot district of Kabul province. One of them is in Guzar and the other one is in Srail Khwaja. Inasmuch as these centers play a positive role in creating solidarity and harmony amongst villagers, they usually prioritize the construction of them.

According to Haji Noor Saeed, three decades of civil strife has brought about numerous oppositions among people. It really created hostilities among brothers as well among neighbors. It is a matter of fact that people weren't content with their life before. In fact, people will be encouraged to participate in rural development which leads towards unity and prosperity if such centers are built in each village in future."

Another added benefit of these social centers is that sometimes women come together in these centers and make discussions about their problems.

Says Miss. Bibi Gul a resident of Mirbacha Kot district: "According to Afghan traditional values, women are not allowed to go to neighbors' houses to seek information or attend some health and education trainings. If such social centers are constructed in the villages, women can easily take part in training workshops and other social gatherings."

According to villagers' demands, the MRRD has managed to construct 670 social centers in 116 districts of 28 provinces so far at a cost of \$ 9894635 which benefit 124047 people directly and 692885 people indirectly. According to some villagers, some positive changes have been made in their life; however, they don't say that their problems have entirely been resolved. If the number of these social centers increases within the villages, it will help the government have good achievements. On other hand, there would be a considerable progress in the rural development process as a result of conducting regular gatherings and discussions in these social centers.

According to some experts, in addition to other promotions, an exclusive attention should be paid to mental promotion in the countries that are in the stage of promotion after civil wars. If people do not promote mentally, some barriers would be created in the development process of their countries. Afghanistan is also one of the countries that has already been stabilized following a long civil war. There is no doubt that the development process would further increase in Afghanistan if Afghans are trained well and are given the right to determine.