İslam Dünyasında kabile kültürü altında ezilen kadın

How tribal culture crushes women in Islamic world

Harun Yahya

Tribal culture has been central to the fabric of the Middle East and Islamic societies for centuries, if not for thousands of years. Although many North African, Arabian and Central Asian societies seem to have adopted modern values, the mentality of tribalism has never been truly abolished and it continues to profoundly affect daily life.

The ruling classes of many Middle Eastern countries today are usually under the control of certain tribal families, kept largely in place with the support of their tribes and clans.

Therefore, it would be a grave mistake to consider tribalism as a thing of the past solely particular to feudalism.

"The highly tribal societies of Yemen, Afghanistan and Libya are clear-cut embodiments of this rule. In other countries, such as Pakistan, Kenya and South Sudan, clans vie with the central government in strategic battles of will," says Rick Dockrill, a writer working for the US Secretary of Defense, pointing out the structure of the ruling groups in today's Islamic world.

Status, identities, tasks and other concepts relating to individuals in these societies are deeply affected by the values, rules, conditions and principles of the tribes that were built up over courses of centuries.

No doubt the grossly distorted values and rules of the tribal culture take its highest toll on women. Women and girls are often subjected to forced genital mutilation by their families under the pretense of protecting their chastity. In forced marriages, they are treated like the slave of their husbands.

Not even allowed to go on shopping without their husbands' consent, constant domestic violence becomes almost a routine. They are not allowed to drive, do not have the right to vote or be elected, and are kept away from education and business life.

These rules are nothing but bogus principles and traditions made up to protect and further the interests of the patriarchal mentality dominant in tribal cultures, and to appease the inferiority complex and jealousy so often seen in these settings.

Inevitably, this nonsense in time turns into social and "religious" conventions, and sometimes even becomes laws.

Regrettably, the Islamic world is largely dominated by this primitive and backward frame of mind, yet the ugly picture created by the mentality in question is utterly attributed to Islam and the Koran.

This shameful scene in the Islamic world recently came to the forefront of the international agenda once again with the Oscar-winning movie, *A Girl in the River*.

The documentary highlighted the real life story of Saba (alias) from Pakistan, where every year more than 1,000 so-called "honor killings" are committed and most of the time the culprits get away with their crimes.

Saba was asked by her family to marry someone she didn't want, when she refused, she was sweet-talked into her father's car, after which her father and uncle viciously beat her and shot her in the head. Miraculously, she survived.

Due to this tribal culture prevalent in Islamic countries, an honor killing is committed every 10 minutes. Those who claim to protect their family's honor in the name of religion do not hesitate to commit murder, one of the biggest sins in Islam.

This clearly demonstrates that the tribal character has nothing to do with the essence of religion and the fear of God.

Scaring people to death in the name of Islam, which is denounced in the Koran as a tradition of the pagans (Hud 54), is another example of cognitive dissonance encountered in the Islamic world.

The Global Gender Gap Report, published annually by the World Economic Forum, quantifies the magnitude of gender gaps calculated on countries. The report seeks to measure the relative gaps between women and men across four key areas: health, education, economics and politics.

In the 2010 report, only a few Muslim countries were able to make it to the first 100 out of a total of 136 countries assessed and most countries at the bottom of the list were Muslim.

Maybe worse, the list of countries, save for two, were also Muslim countries. These countries, in ascending order, were as follows: Yemen, Pakistan, Syria, Chad, Morocco, Lebanon, Mali, Egypt, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Mauritania and Turkey.

Even China, where every year one million baby girls are killed as soon as they are born, and India, where every 20 minutes a woman is raped, ranked higher.

Shazia Wasti Ali, former special assistant to the Pakistani Prime Minister and president of The Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology, describes the wretched position of women in the Islamic world due to ignorance. "Most women are poor, illiterate, malnourished and deprived of their rights.

Thirty to a percent of them have to struggle on a daily basis to stay alive. [...] They marry at the age of 11 and look 60 when they are only 30. These women cannot read the Koran or any other book. They worship according to what they are trained. Their literacy rate is less than zero-third of that of the men."

Misogyny and isolating women from fully participating in modern-day life is one of the greatest reasons behind the laggard and backward state of the Middle East and the Islamic world as well as accounting for their stagnancy in progress and innovation in general.

The only way for the salvation of the Islamic world — and Muslim women — is to abandon these primitive, bigoted and dark tribal values, condemned in the Koran as "the religion of the ignorance" and "the fierce zealotry of tribalism".

This can be done by going back to the core of the Koran, which "breaks the chains and lifts heavy burdens".

Unless this profound change in thinking is realized, superficial measures and practices will inevitably fail to provide a real and meaningful solution.

The writer has authored books on Islam.

Defusing the tensions in the South China Sea

Kayyum Zou

The year 2016 is the Year of the Monkey in accordance with the Lunar Calendar. Monkey is characterized as intelligent, but also volatile.

While the Chinese were about to celebrate their new year in early February, the Americans may check closely if USS Carl Vinson sails into the territorial sea of the China-controlled Paracel Islands to assert the "freedom of navigation" just one week before the Chinese New Year.

This provocative military exercise made many believe that 2016 is a year of turbulence, at least in the South China Sea.

Since 2013, the US has gradually moved itself to the forefront with regard to the South China Sea issue and is now currently tied with the claimants, particularly the Philippines and Vietnam vis-à-vis China.

On the one hand, it has reinforced its actual military presence in the South China Sea by not only sending more warships and military aircraft there, but also signing the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement to regain the military bases in the Philippines.

On the other hand, the US has launched a lawfare against China by aiding the Philippines to initiate arbitration proceedings in The Hague, believing that the victory of a lawfare is as significant as that of an actual warfare.

For that reason, Americans have been deeply involved in the arbitration case, and the case itself may reasonably become part of the Asia-Pacific Rebalancing Strategy to contain a rising China.

Very recently, the US invited the top leaders of all 10 ASEAN members to California with an attempt to formulate a united front against China.

Thus with the shift of the American policy from neutral to proactive, the tensions in the South China Sea have been unprecedentedly escalated, even to a dangerous level of possible armed conflict or war.

As all the countries adjacent to the South China Sea are developing countries, peace and stability are essential for economic development and human prosperity in the region.

For that purpose, 10 ASEAN countries and China successfully signed the landmark document — Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) — in November 2002 so as to manage the South China Sea crisis.

Though a political document, it contains many international legal norms and principles enunciated in the Charter of the UN, the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia that the countries concerned should abide by.

In addition, the parties to the DOC pledged to resolve their disputes through negotiation and consultation.

As pressing, while ASEAN countries and China implement the DOC by launching a series of joint acts like as a means to defuse tensions and to build mutual confidence, they are negotiating a legally binding Code of Conduct (COC) for the South China Sea.

Singapore expressed its willingness to take the lead role in formulating the COC and the whole process is on the right track.

Related to the negotiation of the COC, one of the key questions that pose to the ASEAN countries and China is: Do you have the capacity as well as confidence to manage the crisis and eventually turn the dispute in the South China Sea by yourselves or you must rely on the intervention including military intervention from external powers?

When you are sure that you have such capacity and confidence to deal with the South China Sea issue, then there is absolutely no need to introduce external (military) intervention.

On most occasions, external military intervention only brings chaos and human tragedy as shown in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The recent frequent and intensive military demonstration by the US in the South China Sea is a real threat to regional peace and security.

Several years ago Indonesia and Malaysia widely rejected the Regional Maritime Security Initiative put forward by the US attempting to militarize the Malacca Straits.

Now it is the time for ASEAN countries and China to seriously consider the issue on how to demilitarize the South China Sea as one of the top priorities when they are negotiating the COC.

In this regard, some useful elements can be borrowed from the Antarctic Treaty, a most successful example in the world for peace and non-militarization.

It is recalled that in the 10 principles of the first Bandung Conference held in 1955, the Asian and African countries affirmed that the use of arrangements of collective defense to serve any particular interests of the big powers should be eliminated and the destiny of the region should be in the hands of the countries in the region.

Only with such a conviction, the tensions in the South China Sea could be gradually defused and lasting peace and stability could be maintained.

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For Asia-Pacific, it's time to shine in global anti-hunger effort

José Graziano da Silva

Whenever I visit the Asia-Pacific region I am impressed by its dynamism and the many successes its people have achieved, not least of which was meeting the goal of halving the proportion of hungry people in the region under the just-concluded Millennium Development Goals (MDG) effort.

Now, the new successor to the MDGs — the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) — has set the bar higher, pledging the complete eradication of hunger and major improvements to nutrition as targets.

Globally, the will is there and, with the energy that countries in Asia and the Pacific have shown in recent years, the region can again play a leadership role in this bold effort.

But it's not time to take an easy lap, not just yet. Successes haven't been even and with 490 million people across Asia and the Pacific still suffering from undernutrition — nearly 63 percent of the world's people in the world — the battle is far from over.

Indeed, the road to a Zero Hunger world will not be an easy one and the challenges — here in the region and across the planet — are as many as they are complex.

For one, we'll need to produce more — and more nutritious — food to feed a rapidly growing world population projected to top 9 billion people by 2050. (Asia is expected to account for more of this growth.) Doing so, we'll have to take better care of the environment — using more resource-saving practices with greater care, doing less damage to Mother Earth.

Meanwhile climate change and the increasing frequency of natural disasters — which affect this region more than any other — are creating great uncertainty.

This will make farming even riskier, especially for family farmers — without the recent droughts in Thailand and Cambodia and heavy flooding in Myanmar.

And other new challenges have emerged. For instance, as diets change across the region, nutrition is emerging as a new challenge in its own right.

The Pacific Islands, where over 60 percent of the population is at least 10 kilos overweight, offer the extreme example.

But these are others across the entire Asia-Pacific region, some 56 million children under five are overweight. (Paradoxically, at the same time the rate of stunting is rising in several countries in the region it is over forty percent.)

These are among the key challenges that national policy makers are responsible for their countries' food security are wrestling with this week as they gather in Bangkok, Malaysia, for FAO's Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific.

I am confident that together, pooling their knowledge and sharing a common commitment to join action, they will help chart the region advance down the pathway to Zero Hunger.

We already have some clear ideas of how cross-cutting challenges facing Asia and the Pacific persist mainly because a lack of purchasing power, or limits to physical access to food, and the economic coverage of social protection programs.

Some Asian countries have made significant efforts in developing and strengthening such systems, but more is required. The expansion of social protection systems is, particularly for poorest and most vulnerable, is fundamental.

Also key, as mentioned, is paying close attention to the nutritional quality of the food we're producing. Producing more food, while important, is not the sole answer. We must feed people well.

Family farmers need to be much more integrated into food systems. So far, they haven't fully benefited from rapid economic growth in the region and the resulting surge in demand for higher-value food products.

These empowerments are fully connected players in food value chains, they'll be able to boost their output, increase their incomes, and so, pave the way for rural economic growth.

Additionally, we must continue to innovate, trying out new tactics such as the Blue Growth approach to fisheries and aquaculture, being widely embraced across the Asia-Pacific.

Future successes in food production will require creativity — and more research and development.

The region has the academic talent to find these solutions, provided governments invest in public goods and create an enabling environment to encourage the private sector to also chip in.

Past successes and progress in Asia and the Pacific bode well for the future. With the Green Revolution the region achieved tremendous increases in food and agricultural production and emancipated hundreds of millions of people from poverty and hunger.

Asia and the Pacific has shown that with human ingenuity and hard work, nothing is impossible. Working together, the region can and will be an international leader in the SDG-era push to finally eradicate hunger and malnutrition, once and for all.

The writer is director-general of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

Kadının modern yaşamdan bu derece soyutlanması, **Ortadoğu** ve **İslam** dünyasının bugünkü geri kalmışlığının, gelişim ve üretkenliğe kapalı olmasının en temel nedenlerindendir. **İslam** aleminin ve **Müslüman kadının** kurtuluşu için yegane **çözüm**, Kuran'da "***soy-koruyuculuk***", "***ataların dini***" gibi tanımlarla dikkat çekilen **kabile kültürünün ilkel, vahşi, tutucu ve karanlık** boyutundan sıyrılarak bu kültürün "***zincirlerini kıran ve ağır yüklerini indiren***" Kuran'ın özüne dönmektir. Bu köklü **zihniyet değişikliği** sağlanmadıkça yüzeysel **önlem ve uygulamalar** hiçbir zaman gerçek **çözüm** getirmeyecektir.

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