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Economists: Young leaders can break political culture **[Tribune Report](#)**

The country needs to develop fresh leadership from the new generation to break the traditional political culture, in a bid to achieve sustainable development and reduce inequality between the rich and the poor, economists said yesterday.

They also put emphasis on a flawless organisation that could raise a strong voice against corruption, injustice, suppression, oppression and other anomalies in the society.

The economists were speaking at a public lecture by Prof Haider A Khan on “Egalitarian Development: A strategy for Bangladesh in the 21st century,” arranged by the Brac University at the capital’s Brac Inn.

Haider, who is widely recognised for his expertise on social accounting matrix-based economic modelling, is a professor of economics at the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver.

“New leadership with knowledge and efficiency might be borne one day for establishing peoples’ rights.

“A flawless organisation and civil society’s role are also important to wage movement for the welfare of the people,” said Prof Haider – whose areas of research include poverty and inequality, environment, foreign aid, trade and investment, as well as economy-wide modelling.

“Unless we can find credible means to change the political culture within which we function, and affect the attitudes, values and indulgences of our political elite, the viability of democracy will be doubtful,” the professor added.

With this mind, he posed some questions for the development and democracy in Bangladesh.

“How to offer security of life, liberty, personal property of citizens and property of corporate bodies in the civil society and the state? How to ensure that justice is done and that the situation does not deteriorate into cycles of political retribution and revenge?”

“How to establish and preserve the integrity of the electoral process?
How to make the parliamentary process effective? How to ensure optimal social investment for infrastructure, industrial and overall human development? How to make the bureau-cracy, the armed forces and police accountable?”

Prof Haider also laid importance on empowering people and making local government more effective in delivering services, controlling corruption and greed systematically by strengthening an independent judiciary and enforcement, and reducing poverty through overall human and sustainable development so that the poor can participate meaningfully in the overall development process.

He said there is much talk of good governance by the World Bank and various other organisations. “Undoubtedly, good governance is necessary. But the challenge for a poor country like Bangladesh is to focus on concrete aspects of good political and economic governance.”

Although, much remains to be done, the orientation of those politically aware among the new generation in Bangladesh towards social justice, improving infrastructure, protecting energy and other natural resources, and reducing foreign dependence – are definitely steps in the right direction, said Haider.

Building up a core of younger leaders and expanding the existing bands of patriotic and dedicated cadres for nation building will isolate the anti-people elements in our society and help build the Sonar Bangla that millions of patriotic Banglaees fought for during our liberation struggle, the teacher from Denver said.

The professor also pointed out: “Difference between Bangladesh and East Asia in distributional policies is the poor performance of Bangladesh in providing egalitarian access to human capital. This has proved to be an obstacle to the improvement of the productivity of the poor.”

Eminent economist Prof MM Akash said the country’s power structure needs to be broken down for the inclusive and sustainable growth.

Vice-Chancellor of Brac University Syed Saad Andaleeb – who conducted the programme – recommended for fixing some areas including governance, corruption, infrastructure and freedom of speech.

- See more at: <http://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/2015/feb/20/economists-young-leaders-can-break-political-culture#sthash.EcfMBrzb.dpuf>