

Gender equality has become one of the most important social issues in the globe. With the start of the #MeToo trend, the problems that women are confronted with in their daily lives are taking place in the media and the social discussions. Controversy about gender equality and how to achieve it are common issues in today's world, whether it is sexual harassment or gender pay gap.

However, these controversies take place around women's rights in developed nations, whereas the women facing famine are less focused on in developing countries. Famine creates an intolerable situation for those who are faced with it, and women are unfairly affected by the burden of famine.

In the following chapters, you will embark upon a journey of self-exploration that the writer experience in her way to be a leader of the world's biggest charitable foundations. This journey includes the common troubles that women suffer on a regular basis. Even though her foundations and others have their strong roots, a long way needs to be gone, still.

The core of the women's entitlement is access to family planning

In 2000, upon founding the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the writer and her husband considered broadening access to medical care and decreasing famine all around the globe as an aim for themselves. One of the fields they concentrated on is to provide kids in developing countries with costless vaccinations.

The writer had numerous discussions with women, during a trip at a vaccination drive of the institution, to Malawi, Africa, who had taken their kids from remote places to get vaccinated. There was, however, a subject rather than vaccinations that frequently arose during these discussions. Many of the women were worried about another type of drug— female contraception. Many of them complained, “what would be the difference, even if their kids got vaccinated?” If the women in famine were doomed to have a lot of kids, how could they assist their families?

The worries of these women are directly related to access info on the topic. For instance, in 2012, in 69 of the most impoverished countries of the world, 260 million females were taking

contraceptive pills. However, in the same countries, more than 200 million females wished to take contraceptive pills without having access to them.

The advantages of rising access to contraceptive pills are obvious. For instance, a continuing study dating back to the 1970s in Bangladesh, only fifty percent of the women in villages took contraceptive pills. Twenty years after the start of the project, the mothers who had access to contraceptive pills and their kids were healthier. Also, their families had a better status and the kids had the chance to go to school.

These advantages arise from that when women can decide when to have a child, they can plan their careers and education better. They can also raise their kids better and this leads to a possible better generation. Contraception often helps to break the vicious cycle of famine for poorer families.

Access to contraceptives helps women and their families to be entitled all around the globe. This is the case even in the United States, where women are allowed to have access to free contraceptives by the Affordable Care Act. The ACA and comparable legislation for unintended pregnancy led in a 30-year low. Unfortunately, by reversing legislation, the present administration is trying to abolish much of this advancement, reducing financing family planning institutions and encouraging abstinence-only sex education. This is not a move in the correct way, because for entitling females, contraception is probably the most significant innovation in history.

The core of entitling females is understanding the link between famine and reproductive health

Starting from the universal vaccination drive, the year of 1990, when the writer's foundation was finally involved, the number of children deaths from lack of vaccinations decreased by half.

Since 1990, the universal vaccination drive, in which the writer's foundation participated, reduced the number of infant deaths from not having vaccinations by fifty percent. Unfortunately, it is not possible to tell the same success tale about the infant mortalities globally. Indeed, nearly half of the kids who lose their lives below the age of five die within

one month after birth. All in all, 3 million babies die each year, most of them in distant, poor regions where sanctuary services and medical experts are missing.

The writer and her husband chose to do something about this issue. In 2003, they created a partnership with an Indian team to train community health employees as part of their worldwide drive to decrease infant mortality. They then sent them to operate in poor neighborhoods like Shivgarh, a distant village in Uttar Pradesh, India's second poorest county where each year 300,000 newborn fatalities happen.

The writer encountered a six-year-old kid who had been saved by the action after visiting Shivgarh in 2010. Only after a month the action started, he was born. His mom had fainted during the birth and the child had stopped moving, so the family called to see if she could assist in Ruchi, the new community health worker.

After they arrive, Ruchi realized that the baby was turning blue because he had a very low body temperature, so she told her aunt to put him on her skin so that he would be warmer. However, the aunt didn't want to touch him because she thought that the baby was cursed by an evil spirit.

Although an upper-caste woman like Ruchi might get ridiculed by adopting a lower-caste child, she chose to fly in the presence of tradition to save the life of the child. Then, the baby started to move and cry again. All he needed was a little physical connection with a human – he was not cursed by an evil spirit. The words spread to neighbor villages like wildfire about how Ruchi saved the baby's lives with skin-to-skin care. Women started to understand that by merely altering their behaviors during childbirth, an extremely powerful prospect, they could save lives.

This story demonstrates that, in order to assist poor communities, one must first comprehend the taboos and stigmas frequently found in their societies. However, by first-hand showing the villagers how to harness the strength of methods such as skin-to-skin care with babies, Shivgarh's infant mortality rate was reduced by half by the Community Health Initiative in 18 months.

It is a paramount significance to increase women's access to all grades of education.

Gary, a co-worker, was carrying out seminars on family planning in Kanpur, India, in which the poor citizens were one of the lowest castes' representatives. Their wealth revolved around searching for valuables to sell in the trash. It can be said that Kanpur is like a garbage dump.

A ten-year-old local girl, Sona, asked him if she could also have a teacher from the foundation, meanwhile, the local people were thankful for Gary's vision on family planning. Girls like Sona made the writer understand that regardless of how much contraception females can get, poor societies cannot get rid of the cycle of famine. The cycle will go on as it is and girls like Sona will end up searching the garbage as her parents do, without a good education.

This is the reason why educating girls is key to entitling women. It not only leads to greater literacy and salaries it also decreases premarital sex chances and helps with family planning. Women who are educated know well about nourishment, vaccination and other health aspects of children. Moreover, education is the award that continues to give, and girls of educated mothers are twice as probable to go to school themselves.

Unfortunately, over 130 million girls around the world are not attending school. Also, even though the number is dropping, there is a lot to do about secondary education. For instance, in nations like Afghanistan, only 30% of women attend high school, compared with 70% of boys. In low-salary nations, only 55 girls enter tertiary education for every 100 boys who do the same.

The reasons behind these numbers are complicated, however, there is one overarching issue that continues to emerge – the need to depend on child labor to bring famine to an end.

Some ingenious projects have emerged to address this issue. For instance, in Mexico, a program named Oportunidades, or "opportunities," encouraged parents who counted on the labor of their kids started to enroll them to school. In order to do this, they paid families the quantity of lost labor productivity so that their kids could go to college. Because girls were

less probable to participate, they paid more for their families. All in all, girls who were registered to Oportunidades were 20% more probable than those not attending school, and the program has reached 6 million families.

The burden of unpaid work frequently prevents females from going after their goals.

In work life, even educated females face numerous obstacles. However, that does not mean only in traditional workplaces – the gender inequality in unpaid jobs are just as unfair as the gender salary gap.

Whether it is taking care of children, cooking or running errands, women do more unpaid work than men. These inequalities are obviously reflected by the info. For instance, in India, women do 6 hours of unpaid labor in a day, while men do 1 hour of it. Even in the United States, women do 4 hours of unpaid work on average, but men only do 2.5 hours.

All this shows that if you calculate the numbers, women participate in an average of 7 years more of unpaid work than men over their lives, and this is the amount of time to finish both a bachelor's and master's degree.

There are positive impacts of efforts to reverse this inequity. This is usually the case because women decrease their unpaid work and boost their paid work. Even decreasing the number of working hours of unpaid women workers from five to three hours a day increases women's participation rate by around 20% in the world of paid work. Also, paid work contributes to women in terms of their education and career in life. Overcoming the inequity aids to entitle women greatly.

Economist Diane Elson has developed a useful structure to assist in reducing the gender gap in unpaid work. The three Rs are the name of this structure, standing for reducing, recognize and redistribute. Namely, municipalities have to accept unpaid work as a labor and include it in the statistics of labor, first. Meanwhile, the amount of time that unpaid work needs by making technology more accessible needs to be decreased, by using washing machines or breast pumps. Lastly, men and women should equally overtake the work that cannot be done with the help of technology.

While gender inequalities in unpaid work in the poorer areas of the world are big issues, they are among the richest member of the society as well. For instance, the writer talked about the inequality in parent work by giving the example of her husband bringing their daughter to school and taking her back home every day. Bill proposed to give a hand, and this started a vicious cycle in the school community. Other fathers started to drive their children to school.

Child marriage is among the most disempowering issue that holds women back.

The writer realized, at a dinner party of Dutch Princess Mabel van Oranje, that the horror of child marriage was strictly related to her institutions' aims in family planning and baby/mother health. She learned that child brides have almost no chance to have access to contraceptives. Also, the reasons for the death of 15 to 19 year-old-girls. She was more horrified to learn that the number one reason for the death of 15-19-year-old girls is giving birth.

Child brides are a common issue. Approximately, 14 million children's marriages took place in 2012 and a third of girls in developing countries got married before they are 18. More scandalously, almost 10% of the girls got married before the age of 15.

Girls Not Brides, the organization of Princess Mabel, aims at stopping child marriage by eliminating the social and economic encouragement that initially causes it to occur. And of course, one of the main driving forces behind child marriage is famine. The family of a girl will have better-living conditions when she gets married in return for money – and the family will have one less child that they will take care of.

Despite these reasons, the toll taken on the life of girl by child marriage is absolutely tragic. In poorer societies, girls are often stripped of their families and friends and transported to neighboring villages where they have no social ties. And from that point on, all housework, cleaning, cooking, and pregnancy are supposed to be taken care of by the girls. Overall, child marriage is one of the most disempowering experiences a girl can go through.

Found out about all these issues, the writer got inspired to take action, therefore she made a pact with Tostan, an organization dealing with the empowerment of women in West Africa.

Instead of telling Westerners how to act in developing nations, Tostan tries to promote debates of altering local traditions from within. In a program carried out in Senegal, educated coordinators are sent to villages to discuss, by organizing seminars, the perfect future that the villagers can see for themselves.

Over time, the villagers have noticed the adverse impacts of child marriage on girls in their societies. They did not want this to continue in the future. Overall, Tostan was highly effective - 8,500 communities they worked in promised to put an end to child marriages.

In the agriculture world, women are being kept back, and the implications are harsh.

While most individuals in developed nations depend on food stores, the scenario in other places is quite distinct. Not only are hundreds of millions of individuals growing food to survive, but the information also demonstrates that 70% of the world's poorest individuals are farming tiny parcels of soil to sell food to make ends meet.

For more than ten years, the writer's institution has addressed these experienced issues by 70% of people. They have created inroads into decreasing malnutrition and famine by broadening access to better plants and holding workshops on more effective farming methods. The writer met Patricia, a farmer who sought to enhance her crop yield to enable her kids to go to school, during a visit to Malawi in 2015. However, the cards were stacked against her – females were unable to inherit the property in Malawi, which means that unlike male farmers, she had to lease the land she farmed on. Also, many females are not responsible for controlling their family's spending. Therefore, if women need extra farming supplies for their yield, their husbands get to decide whether they can have them.

Fortunately, Patricia and her husband participated in a program teaching farming method and the significance of gender balance in agriculture, CARE Pathways. Patricia and her husband participated in a family budgeting activity during one of the sessions, discussing how they could invest their cash in the best way in producing more outcomes.

Participating in this program changed Patricia's life, as she told the writer. Her husband started to accept Patricia's wishes for superior farming equipment, also, the program helped

her to get better seeds, which allowed her to get bigger yields. These seeds not only quadrupled her crop yield but also enabled her to send her kids to school with extra money. Moreover, by giving them better seeds, she helped to entitle other females in society.

However, Patricia isn't lonely. A study carried out in 2011 demonstrated that women who are farmers in developing countries generate approximately 30% fewer crops than males, despite being skilled at the same level. Women could get the same crop yield as men if they were provided with better equipment for farming, the study indicated. The resulting food surplus could lift out of food famine 150 million individuals.

Various workplaces are not only entitling females – they are creating more empathic and united communities.

The writer spent most of her life at Microsoft, she has put a lot of effort into addressing gender inequity in the sector she knows best – technology.

Although Microsoft has appreciated variety, when she worked there in the 1990s, the extra ambitious and often aggressive culture of the business had a very male aspect. Microsoft has undergone a cultural change, partly owing to the cultural modifications that the writer led while leading a squad of 1,700 individuals during her leadership at the firm. She urged her staff to be frank about their errors and to communicate their shortcomings.

Microsoft has led to big leaps in building workplace variety, whereas the same thing cannot be said for many other firms in the sector. This is especially upsetting as the technology sector presently has a big role in the establishment of societies in the future. And if it's mostly males who make the big tech choices, this implies that future societies are likely to be stacked in favor of males.

There are a lot of rationales for excluding females from tech. One reason is that programming has moved from being seen as a female-friendly secretarial work to a more male-friendly complicated vocation. For example, 35% of IT graduates were women when the writer graduated from college in 1987. Today that percentage has dropped to 19%.

Another rationale for females being belittled in technology is that only 2% of risk capitalist shareholders are females. Besides, only 2% of venture capital is invested in women-based

foundations. That's why the writer chose to begin investing in venture capital funds led by women.

One of these is Aspect Ventures, which invests only in women's or people with different colors. This is not merely because of charity, but since the writer understands that females and individuals of different color have distinct backgrounds than white males and are therefore able to define distinct issues and possible alternatives that can then be supported by risk capital.

Diversification is, after all, the main element of a healthy work environment or community. If one group has more authority than the other, choices that represent their own interests will be taken. Merely diversified nations that entitle females to the same degree as males can make the best choices about how mankind as a unity can move forward into the future.

Book Review of The Moment of Lift: How Empowering Women Changes the World by Melinda Gates

Although the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation did not initially intend to concentrate on gender problems, it understood that famine reduction and increased access to medical care are precisely related to entitling females. The writer found that the company can only attain its objectives by entitling females. However, women all over the globe confront several problems, especially those living in famine.

Whether it's child marriage or not having a chance to have contraceptives, poor females face problems that are sometimes life or death issues. Also, although some developments have been made in both developing and developed countries, a long way remains to go until females have the same chances and possibilities as males do.

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