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Women's Education in Ethiopia is Affecting Food Security

Boring. Dull. Annoying. Stupid. Inconvenient. This fact is not ever going to be useful again! These are all phrases heard at high schools in the United States on a daily basis. Numerous children in other countries who do not have the opportunity to attend school would jump at the chance. Furthermore, mothers want the best for their children, however, the lack of education for women, the deficiency of an educated population about food safety production and consumption, and the paucity of gender equality contribute to the shortage of safe and healthy nourishment.

A developing country, like Ethiopia, is defined as having limited industrialization or economic gain, rapid population growth, and insufficient capital growth, which is classified as literacy and healthcare. In Ethiopia, the average number of children a woman will have in her lifetime is around five (CIA, 2019). This is causing the population to increase at a rapid rate. Whereas, in many countries, women are tasked with raising the family, in Ethiopia women are the main workforce, which is causing a large amount of the residents to be malnourished. Compounding this issue, many females are not given the opportunity to get an education and assist in ending the problems of food scarcity. Less than half of the female populace is literate (CIA, 2019), and an uneducated workforce does not allow for many technological improvements to be made.

Women in Ethiopia make up about half of the entire population (CIA, 2019). With a large society of malnourished people, there are many mouths to feed. The key to starting this process is to increase the education and healthcare of women. Currently there are about 17,000 hospitals in Ethiopia providing healthcare services, however, the healthcare is not available to the population living in the rural sectors which is where the majority of the population reside (Department of Commerce International Trade Administration, 2018). The healthcare systems are currently serving the population of people able to access the healthcare facilities, however, the majority are not able to have access. In order to help address this matter, there could be some different solutions such as a moving hospital that could move its location to provide service to more people.

In every country, there are restrictions that will regulate what goes in and out of the country. For some countries, it helps to provide safety to the citizens. In Ethiopia, the fare being produced has numerous regulations on it in order to help to maintain the safety of the food going in and out of the country. The regulations govern the production, labeling, and distribution of the sustenance (Department of Commerce International Trade Administration, 2018). The regulations in place remain something influencing the health of the people because it affects the food that they are producing in the fields as well as the food they are eating. The food in the fields is normally what they eat, however, it is the demand in other countries forcing them grow what they do in each field. This is continually affecting the food consumption of the people living in the cities and rural sectors.

Unfortunately, the education system in Ethiopia is set up in such a way that many do not have the opportunity to go to school. If they do, they will not make it very far because of the personal security and economic challenges being faced (Lynch, 2018). According to an article entitled

“Education” “...approximately one-third of second graders were non-readers and approximately half scored zero on a comprehension test” (Sauers, 2018). Looking comarititively at data from the United States reading date for the fourth graders it can be seen, in 2017 the percent of children nationwide above the basic reading level is 68 percent (The Nation’s Report Card, 2017). The second graders in Ethiopia were not on track to being able to achieve these results. The current education systems in Ethiopia are inadequate, and there is not enough space for all of the people who want to go and it is not available for the people who can not afford this luxury (Scholaro pro, 2018).

The education of young children is free at the first level of education. In rural communities, there is a large partition between the rich and the poor. About half of the female population who began primary school never make it to grade five (Lynch, 2018). After the first level, there is middle education which is held accountable for teaching science and social studies to the students without being liable for teaching the students about math and English (Scholaro pro, 2018).

The subjects they are failing to teach their students are necessary components to developing technology that would advance their culture and communications, therefore helping the development of the country. Math and English are very important subjects for women to learn because they can help a woman be able to manage finances. Learning English is helpful because it is important if populations ever want to read something such as a contract. Both of these skills are very important because they can allow a woman to have an opportunity to buy a property, participate in decision-making processes, or be a part of the government. These skills are crucial because they could be the difference between having a job and being jobless for many.

Without being educated about math, many women are unable to make sensible decisions regarding money; thus, many people are forced to live where it is the least expensive and this is normally in rural areas, therefore, families do not have access to safe water (CIA, 2019). By not having reliable, safe water, it is affecting agriculture and people’s wellness. The plants being grown require water, but the water given to the plants is very harmful, the plants then absorb the harmful toxins, then the plants are consumed by the population. Throughout the country the drinking water is improving slightly, over half of the population has a water source improving in quality. However, slightly less than half of the population has water not being improved; in the rural communities where most agriculture is done is where most hazardous water is located (CIA, 2019).

Ethiopia has identified some of its main issues and it is looking to other countries for assistance with funding to help address these issues. Ethiopia has requested foreign aid from the United States in the form of 203.87 million dollars, to help address the health, economic development, democracy, human rights, and other concerns. The main dilemma they are trying to address is the health of citizens. 75 percent of the requested funds are going to support the health (Department of State, 2019). Funding that was sent in 2019 helped the country to create effective malaria vaccines, treatment plans, created more effective maternity plans and routine immunization (Department of State, 2019). This money has allowed many people to be able to be safer from diseases plaguing them. Historically without the knowledge of how to prevent the diseases many died and this kept their population lower.

Foreign aid from countries not battling with the same issues is a big help however, an excess amount of help and money will make the country become reliant on the help. Instead what countries can do is to give Ethiopia a hand-up. This means a country will give them a limited

amount of help such as a specific amount of money each year and help and teach them to use them in the most effective manner and step back. This would allow the country to work hard on its own. A problem that may come up is Ethiopia turning to other countries, however, in order to stop this have the other countries also offer limited resources.

A subject needing to be addressed is the lack of education, about the nutrients people are eating. Ethiopia currently has around 17,000 healthcare facilities providing service, most of these, however, are located in urban locations (Department of Commerce International Trade Administration, 2018). In order to address this issue, the healthcare services should require sessions when someone goes in for care teaching about what food needs to be consumed in order to get the most nutrients out of the food. This would address the lack of nutrition is leading to a population of women, children, and men, who are not being fed enough. The benefits of having this solution implemented would encourage consumption of the right types of food during a meal. This may also change what the farmers are producing which would help to provide the right nutrients to the people consuming the goods of the farmer. Education the population about the right types of food will help the country to focus on the development of the technology.

In order to help to address the issue of malnourishment, in addition to educating the citizens when they come in for an appointment, the United States or other non- third world countries can help to increase the amount of healthy food is in the diet consumed by many in the country. Healthcare facilities could help to provide microgreen seeds and a system that would allow the people of a village or family to grow and consume microgreens. Vitamin E, vitamin C, and other vitamins are crucial to help the body to function. Microgreens help to provide about five times the amount of essential vitamins than the same plant that is fully developed (Bliss, 2014). Microgreens take about two weeks to be completely ready for consumption and this would allow for food to be ready at more times with less of a growing season (Johnny's Selected Seeds, 2019). Foreign aid could help out in this process because they could help to provide the soil that is used to grow the seeds and also help to buy seeds. By doing this, other countries would be offering them a limited amount of seeds and teaching them how to grow them correctly. This would allow them to grow these systems and spread it around the country, therefore, providing enough to be self-managed after the countries give the initial amount of resources to help get started.

A problem currently being addressed is the reading rate of children and teens in Ethiopia. Without the ability to read and write the country is going to struggle to make large technological advances, because they are less likely to be able to incorporate the current technology into everyday life. A group of supporters is implementing a program called "Reading for Ethiopia's Achievement" is addressing the reading skills being worked on in primary schools as well as giving reading material that will give girls the opportunity to read in clubs generating an atmosphere of learning (Lynch, 2018). This will positively affect the reading rates, when the reading rates increase it will change agriculture so there will be less manual labor being done. Furthermore, there in the initiative called "Feed the Future" which is teaching women about how to make decisions regarding agricultural production, and how to use the land, water, and how to control the income of the food being exported (Lynch, 2018). This initiative would help to improve the farming inputs and help to have families earn more money, and get more out of the sustenance being produced. In order to make these programs more effective the local people who know about the topic should go back home and teach about it. For the "Feed the Future" initiative they could use the knowledge about farming and they could give them brochures that explain it with pictures. This would allow the population that is not able to read to understand and create more effective farms.

Currently, many countries do not see it to be a priority that they need to help other countries. They do not see it as a priority to help other countries because there are issues that need to be solved within the country in which they reside. In order to help the government to understand that it is important to help other countries, the people within schools and nongovernmental agencies could help to get the word out about what it is really like in other countries. The citizens of the United States and other countries would be able to let the government see how the money that they are going is helping others, “As a result of U.S. assistance, Ethiopians will continue advancing regional security; gaining access to better healthcare and education; improving food security; and advancing prospects for better livelihoods” (Department of State, 2019). Posting this on social media and running fundraisers at stores could help to gain the money they use to make a difference, as well as showing the government people are willing to help people who are in harder situations than us. Working as a global community will help to create solutions for many different countries. The world’s economy is focused on the give and take of many different countries and it is hard for one country to be able to sustain themselves without the help of other countries. Working together will help to get many different views on a topic as well creating the resources to find the best solutions.

Ethiopia is facing a very scary reality, disease. They are at risk of HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis (TB), Malaria, and other such diseases presenting a life-threatening risk (Department of Commerce International Trade Administration, 2018). Without the basic science education many people do not understand how disease spread and what they are. The lack of safe water also helps the disease spread. The communities in Ethiopia are unable to stop the spread easily because they lack the education about how to stay healthy. Women are able to make a big difference, especially when they have the education and knowledge about how to solve a problem or make a change in a community. Without the proper health education the women of Ethiopia are unable to teach their community to avoid these diseases.

In order to help to treat those who have been diagnosed or those who have the disease and are not aware of the fact, the ministry of health is working on creating an electronic health information system. This system would capture data about the communities, it would use the data to improve the performance of health care. This system is designed to meet the needs of urban communities as well as agrarian and pastoralist communities (Department of Commerce International Trade Administration, 2018). This technology called eCHIS would allow healthcare professionals to view the data to serve better the patrons. By educating the professionals regarding the trends of the population, it would help to teach them what the population needs to know in order to avoid an increase seen the overall health of the population.

Governments around the world could help to increase the aforementioned topic to help save more people by creating disease profiles and helping to find the most cost-effective solution to fighting and curing the disease of the entire population. Governments could also help to persuade the leaders in the country to pass laws which would require the citizens to get vaccinated from the most common diseases such as HIV/AIDS, TB, Malaria that plague the population. This would provide the citizens more time to focus on other issues and they would be able to spend more time educating and building the society they live in.

Ethiopia is lacking an educated population of women, this concern is affecting many different aspects of food security. Issues affecting this is health care, gender inequality, and the lack of safe

production and consumption. After looking at all of these issues the genuine solution involves programs such as “Reading for Ethiopia’s Achievement” and “Feed the Future” (Lynch, 2018), implementing growing more nutritious foods, eCHIS, and adding teaching about healthy choices when going into a healthcare facility. Ethiopia is not a doomed country, with the help of education, Ethiopia can change the way that their country operates and maintain many lives.

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