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In-class Exercise (Individual task)

From the World Bank VDO Expert - Discuss the issues females face during the COVID-19 crisis.

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/video/2020/05/22/why-are-women-and-girls-threatened-by-coronavirus>

(1) Do you agree that “This pandemic will reverse the progress toward gender equality”? Why?

Agree

There are several evidences to support the fact that this pandemic is not gender neutral and reverses progress toward gender equality as either men and women or boys and girls are affected differently. While males are more likely to die from COVID-19, females are facing unique threats from pandemic not only in terms of biology and physiology but also in terms of social and economic role.

There are 2 important issues in health sector. First, more women than men around the globe are in the frontline of healthcare profession working as nurses and doctors. Next, the pandemic puts tremendous pressure on systems causing services to be stretched and capacity to be thin.

In terms of education, girls do not return to school after the pandemic. School closures and economic necessity cause boys and girls to drop out. Based on the previous crises, however, boys return to school quicker while some girls just do not return due to joining the labor market or being responsible for household activities. Plus, boys have greater access to internet and learning material causing girls to have lower learning opportunity.

In the United State, the situation when there are greater differential impacts on women than men in terms of economics is called “She-cession”. She-cession occurs because the jobs in the sectors where women predominate are first and hardest hit : higher unemployment and lack of income and ability to cope. Moreover, women predominate in informal employment. As a result, the problem is that those women do not have fringe benefits including social protection, health insurance, unemployment compensation, and so on. Consequently, gender inequality occurs.

(2) Using a country as an example, explain what policies the government of that country has implemented to address this problem.

Using Thailand as an example, women-led enterprises and businesses are negatively affected by the pandemic so do those informal female workers. It is clear that financial support needs to target hard-hit women-led enterprises and businesses in feminized sectors, and women working in informal sectors equally by providing subsidized and state-backed loans, tax, or security payment deferrals and exemptions. As a result, Thai government implements insurance policy in the form of income replacement measures to replace part or all of their income. Not only does the policy help those women who are facing difficulty, but it also helps many Thai people who are negatively affected by the ongoing pandemic.