

World Environmental Health Day: The Effect of Environmental Health on Women

By Madeline Ley

The [International Federation of Environmental Health \(IFEH\)](#) celebrates World Environmental Health Day on September 26. This year's theme is "Strengthening Environmental Health Systems for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals." Adopted by the United Nations in 2015, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a universal call to action to end poverty, reduce inequality, improve education and health, protect the environment, and achieve peace, security, and prosperity now and for future generations. The 17 SDGs are interlinked, meaning changes in one SDG affect another, and experts and policymakers should view and advance the goals with a social, economic, and environmental lens.

Significant intersections exist between gender, climate change, and environmental health. In many countries, women carry the largest responsibility in gathering food, water, and energy sources. They make up almost half of the world's farmers and [the majority of income-earning women in the least developed countries work in the agricultural sector](#). Women are disproportionately affected and displaced by [Environment cont. pg. 4]

Current State of Afghanistan: one year after the Taliban takeover

By Anuthmi Waas

A little over a year ago, on August 15th, 2021, the Taliban entered the capital of Afghanistan and took control of the country. During this, the Taliban had stated that women and girls would still be able to work and study. However, these claims that the Taliban made over a year ago were criticized by many. And unfortunately, the Taliban has not upheld this claim. Instead, many women in Afghanistan lack access to an education, a job, and autonomy over their bodies.

During the Taliban's takeover, they initially stated that women would not be restricted from primary or secondary education. Since then, the Taliban has banned girls in grades 7-12 from attending school and receiving an education. Girls in Afghanistan not only lack equal access to education as their male counterparts, but a lack of a secondary education impacts the rest of their lives. Afghanistan is now the

only country where girls are banned from attending high school.

Women have also been severely restricted and barred from doing many jobs. The Taliban has imposed that there is a limited type of job that women may do, which are jobs men cannot do. The Taliban also abolished women from power seats- being a part of the cabinet, a judge, or a lawyer. They abolished the Ministry of Women's Affairs and removed women from participating or having a say politically. Many of these women judges and lawyers who could not continue their jobs are now replaced by Taliban who has no legal training. The devastating restriction of jobs affects women and all those around them, especially in politics, as women now have nearly no voice.

Additionally, the Taliban has imposed many rules on women in their private lives. Women are required to wear a [Afghanistan cont. pg. 6]

Women in Education:

Why do women hold a majority of primary and secondary education teaching jobs, yet are often a minority in higher education positions?

By Athena Tsialas

In late August and early September, classes are in session all across the United States. A big part of making that happen are the staff and faculty that work in schools. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, about 76 percent of public school teachers are women. However, this overwhelming majority of women in teaching professions wasn't always present. Prior to the mid 1800s, teaching was like many other fields at that time: male dominated. In 1880, efforts were made to expand public schooling across the country. At that time, many men left teaching positions for new jobs with higher salaries. Women did not have the same ability to pursue these higher paying positions and were, instead, encouraged to fill in the public school teaching positions.

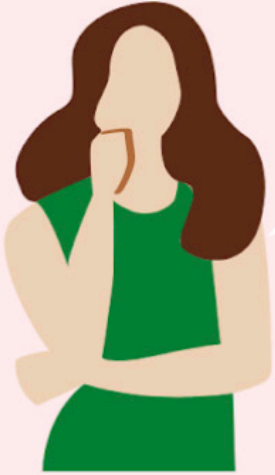
While this opportunity for women to join the workforce was generally progressive, there were still many downfalls. For example, public school teaching positions often had minimal wages and women were usually paid much less than their male

colleagues. Not only that but, as time went on women's success as teachers became associated with a motherly instinct and gentleness that they possessed. This restricted women from entering other fields and invigorated stereotypes claiming that women could only succeed in nurturing careers. Even today, about 97 percent of early childhood educators are women (Center for American Progress). Despite the fact that these fields are in demand and critical to the development of children, early childhood education and public school teaching are generally the lowest paying positions within education. According to studies from Berkeley's Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, median wages in these fields fall under what is classified as a livable wage in 40 states. On the contrary, the highest paid positions in education are usually within academia. In the United States, 45 percent of all professors are women. Moreover, women only make up 26 percent of tenured professors at these universities (Brookings Institute, 2016). This minority

is not due to a lack of degree qualifications as women make up the majority of undergraduate and graduate students. Sadly though, women often face obstacles on the road to professor that are uncommon for men. In some cases, women feel that there is little support for them within this field and find that the academia environment caters to male professors. Gender biases often contribute to women getting recommended less for full professorship. Moreover, women of color in this field suffer even more setbacks due to both gender and racial bias that can exist in these settings. Despite this, one of the most significant struggles for female professors is maternal leave. Many female professors report that when returning from maternal leave they find little guidance which can make staying in this field difficult. In the future, higher education institutions must work on creating an environment that supports female professors in order to grant women an equal chance within higher education.

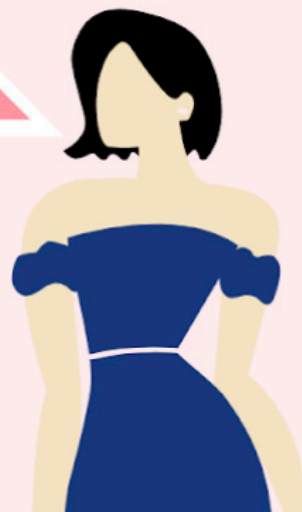
Dear FE...

By: Anuthmi Waas



Does a feminist have to be female?

Feminism is defined as "the advocacy of women's rights on the basis of the equality of the sexes." Therefore, anyone who advocates for equal rights pertaining to one's sex can be a feminist, regardless of gender or how one may identify. However, while anyone can be a feminist, it is also important for people in power, or who have historically had more power and rights than women, to simply listen to those who are oppressed: anyone who doesn't benefit from the patriarchy.



[Environment cont. from pg. 1] climate change and as the primary caretakers of children and family members, their risk and stress levels during natural disasters increase. In Miami, FL, [The Women's Fund](#) has a Heat Awareness and Health campaign, highlighting how exposure to heat for pregnant people has been linked to premature birth, low birth weight, and even stillbirth and that pregnant people are more vulnerable to heat stress. Rises in temperatures further exacerbate the risk of [maternal mortality faced by women of color in the U.S.](#): Black, American Indian, and Alaska Native mothers die at two to three times the rate of white mothers from pregnancy-related causes. Globally, [numerous women are on the front lines of the climate crisis](#), developing creative and sustainable

solutions to promote environmental health.

[The Feminist Action for Climate Justice \(FACJ\) coalition](#), “is a global, innovative, multistakeholder partnership mobilizing governments, civil society, youth-led organizations, international organizations, philanthropy and the private sector,” and centers women and girls on climate change mitigation strategies. The FACJ calls for increasing financing for gender-just climate solutions for women and girls at grassroots levels, increasing the presence of girls and women in decision-making processes and leadership positions throughout climate and environmental governance, building resilience to climate and disaster risks for women and girls, and increasing the collection of data as it relates to gender and

the environment. In 2021, during the Advancing Gender Equality in Climate Action meeting (part of the 2021 UN Climate Change Conference, also referred to as COP26), countries like Bolivia, Canada, Ecuador, Germany, the US, Nigeria, Sweden, and the UK committed to [ambitious steps and initiatives to ensure gender-responsive climate action](#) and improved women's leadership. This progress demonstrates the power forming coalitions has on mobilizing governments, civil society, international organizations, and the private sector to commit to promoting gender-responsive climate action and other critical issues that benefit the well-being of everyone. Gender equality and environmental health are mutually and equally necessary for each other's progress.

VOICES OF THE ACTION COALITION LEADERS



My **#ActForEqual** is enabling women and girls in all diversity to lead a just transition to an inclusive, circular and regenerative economy.

JOANITA BABIRYE

Co-Founder & Team Lead, Girls For Climate Action

FEMINIST ACTION FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE



Photo: Joanita Babirye

India's Supreme Court Widens Definition of 'Family':

The court declared that same-sex parents, single parents and blended families deserve equal treatment

This is a piece from The New York Times. You can find the [original article here.](#)

India's Supreme Court has ruled that family benefits under the law must be extended to blended families, same-sex couples and other households the court considers "atypical," widening its definition of family. It is the latest in a series of court decisions to challenge the country's conservative mores, and it could have major implications for the rights of women and gay people.

The court ruled in favor of Deepika Singh, a nurse whose employer, a government medical institute in northern India, had denied her application for maternity leave after she gave birth because she had already taken leave to care for her husband's children from a previous marriage.

"The concept of a 'family' both in the law and in society is that it consists of a single, unchanging unit with a mother and a father (who remain constant over time) and their children," the two-judge bench said in the decision, which was made earlier this month and published this week.

"This assumption ignores," said D.Y. Chandrachud, the justice who wrote the order, "the fact that many families do not conform to this expectation."

The justice wrote that "family" could be defined by various configurations of adults occupying the roles of primary caretakers

with both biological and nonbiological children.

"These manifestations of love and of families may not be typical, but they are as real as their traditional counterparts," he wrote. "Such atypical manifestations of the family unit are equally deserving not only of protection under law, but also of the benefits available under social welfare legislation."

Akshay Verma, a lawyer who argued Ms. Singh's case, said the order had greatly "opened the scope" of parental benefits. The Supreme Court's judgment is final, but its enforcement abilities are limited, leaving open the question of how much immediate practical effect this order may have, particularly in more conservative parts of India. Moreover, many family matters are decided out of court.

Nonetheless, the ruling was hailed as a milestone in the march toward equality for women and India's L.G.B.T.Q. community in a country where family issues – including custody of children – often pit unmarried parents against extended families in lengthy legal battles in family court.

In a landmark ruling in 2014, the court recognized transgender people as a third gender deserving equal access to legal protections and social welfare benefits.

The Supreme Court decriminalized homosexuality in 2018, over-

turning one of the world's oldest bans on consensual gay sex.

In September, the court opened the door for women to pursue military careers at the highest levels, and in May, it ordered the police to respect the right for women to engage in prostitution. Since the groundbreaking ruling on homosexuality, activists have been petitioning courts to legalize gay marriage, and to extend the benefits of marriage to same-sex domestic partnerships, as well as to allow same-sex couples to foster and adopt children.

That effort has bumped up against a complex approach to accommodating India's religious diversity.

In India, marriage is governed by a set of religious, personal laws, which date to the colonial era and vary among faiths, and by a secular law called the Special Marriage Act. Both define marriage as a union of a man and a woman. Legalizing same-sex marriage would require an overhaul of India's legal system, the government of India has said.

In a Delhi High Court case last year, the government staunchly opposed such a change, arguing that it would cause "complete havoc with the delicate balance of personal laws in the country." The Supreme Court ruling announced this week gives the petitioners in the Delhi High Court case grounds for trying their case again, legal experts said.

[Afghanistan cont. from pg. 1] full Islamic hijab and thoroughly cover their faces outside. Women also cannot leave home unless necessary, cannot travel distances without a chaperone, and are often turned away when they are unchaperoned, even when trying to access essential services.

These heavy restrictions on women and girls in Afghanistan restrict women and all they are capable of learning and achieving. By denying women



the right to an education or the ability to hold a job, the Taliban are making it, so women are unequal to men. Furthermore, by imposing upon the private lives of women, the Taliban are entirely controlling Afghanistan women.

O.M.G. this is still okay?

By Olivia Martin-Johnson

This Love Essex ad from 2014 portrays a sexist comparison of an attempt to appeal to both men and women. We see in the graphic that there is a difference in how Essex addresses the two groups of audience. On the left, men are told that it is SMART to not litter, while on the right, women are told that it is PRETTY. In other words, men should be good community members because they are “smart,” but ladies should behave conscientiously because they are “pretty.”

This ad was immediately met with ridicule.

“This ad campaign is both sexist and derogatory, especially to women,” Natalie Collins argues in her petition against Essex. “This is not a commercial ad campaign. It is a local authority campaign and,

as such, falls under a responsibility to equality and diversity. It is of great concern that complaints from local residents were not taken seriously in 2014 when the campaign was first used, or that responses to local residents further perpetuated stereotypes and prejudices about women and men. Now it has been not only repeated, but expanded for 2015.”

Over 100 people signed this petition. As one supporter put it: “The value of women is not in whether they are PRETTY or not. The value of men is not in whether they are SMART (in either meaning of the word: well-presented or clever). This campaign is belittling to both sexes.”



ADS ON SALE

Feminism Explained is selling advertisements which are placed at the end of each volume. Half page advertisements will be \$20 and full pages will be \$40. Email femexplained@gmail.com to purchase or inquire about advertisements.

About Feminism Explained

Feminism Explained (F.E.) is a monthly newsletter. Its intent is addressing the negative connotations associated with the word 'feminism'. In today's society, it is somewhat common to hear people say they do not believe in feminism due to its "radical ideology." As feminists, we know this not to be true. Feminism is not radical, nor is it dangerous. Feminism is simply the desire for equality amongst the genders.

What you can expect: F.E. Monthly newsletter will include interviews with women in high power positions. These women will be speaking about obstacles they faced, if any, to get to their positions. They will share the hardships they endured and how their present position continues to demonstrate the ongoing struggles many women must face to have influential places in society. F.E. will include statistics, providing facts and examples of gender inequality locally, nationally, and internationally. F.E. will also feature historical events, reminding us how our ancestors fought to allow modern women to function as we do today. Our newsletter will highlight initiatives taken on by women and the positive difference we can make in the world.

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