My learning on the side event - "Reaching the last mile how digital technologies build women's resilience and empowerment"

Pakistan : Is it in a state of dilemma!?

At 11:30 pm on 3/13/2023, after "TOWNHALL MEETING OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL ANTÓNIO GUTERRES, I proceeded to attend the event sponsored by the Islamic Development Bank – "Reaching the last mile how digital technologies build women's resilience and empowerment". This event particularly interested me as Pakistan is a neighboring country to India and it has been vulnerable to the wrath of climate change, poor economy in terms of gender equality and corruption in all possible areas. All in all, their collapsing economy was very devasting.

Conference Room A

The event begun with a sad truth that Pakistan is in the state of vulnerability. Women and children are left vulnerable because of the poor health sector. Female doctors end up leaving their field for marriage. They have the highest maternal mortality rate which is about 68%, next to Afghanistan. Edu cast is platform which is trying to get female doctors back to their profession. E-docs from London had helped them before covid and Stanford University helpful to train many e-doctors in Pakistan. Minister of health was connected to this project to decrease disease burden from hospitals.

Last year, during the flood relief, 1200 e-docs were connected. The married women were able to attend their patients during their convenient times so that they are at home, connected to their

families as well as their education is not wasted. In e-health systems, technology is used as tool for empowerment especially in tele-health systems where there are challenges to be addressed.

Next speaker, Alexandra Robinson spoke on the GBV prevention wherein women could access crisis prevention. Companies and Venture Capitalists should come forward to invest in technology to get transformed results and to achieve zero maternal mortality. In humanitarian settings: cash and voucher assistance for survivors should be provided and for GBV and Information Management System (which is already implemented in 28 countries) should be implemented. Data Privacy should be given importance: if a woman is suffering from violence, her personal data should not be used for malicious activities – Even though there is increased reliance on technology, data management is extremely important. She ended her speech by saying a Feminist tech is a 3-legged stool: Safety, Privacy and Security. Even one comment in twitter can perpetuate very easily – we must understand what we are dealing with and help protect, support women.

Next speaker Joanna spoke on how gender gap can lead to unreadiness in digital technology in financial base. Women now have lower digital literacy skills and this makes them vulnerable. We should highlight the importance of education in girls and women. Private sector actors tend to make business decisions for women, there should be gender diversity in design theme. If women problems need to be solved, then 'Women' should be part of the design theme and they should be on the table not behind the scene activities. Thus, addressing the issue at policy level.

Now, in countries like Yemen, Syria, Afghanistan, and Palestine – there are women e-doctors in the region and the project 'Mother and Child' telecentre is run to protect their rights to basic human care. All in all, data security is an issue and to tackle this, antivirus is been installed to protect them from hackers. Female patients are being examined by female doctors which protects women's privacy – doctors' and patients' as well.

This event ended at 12:45 pm and then I proceeded for lunch.

- *Priyanka Prem Kumar, UIMF Member*