

# **YOUNG** **HUMAN RIGHTS** **REPORTER** **OF THE YEAR**

**I am tortured. I am starved. I am a woman.**

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*Young Human Rights Reporter Winner 2013 (Lower Secondary Category)*

I am tortured. I am starved. I am terrorised. I am not treated fairly. I am the victim of rape. I am on the receiving end of violence. I am forced into doing things that I don't want to do. I am discriminated against. I am forced to give birth to HIV infected children. My name's Abena and I am a woman. This young woman is one of the millions who are discriminated against daily purely for being female.

Even though women do two-thirds of the world's work, they receive merely 10% of the world's income and own 1% of the means of production. This is due to gender inequality. If a woman in poverty falls pregnant in Kenya, she is not offered the option of an abortion. Instead she is forced to give birth to a child that was conceived against her will. This is due to gender inequality.

In the majority of democracy of the world, women are a minority in parliament. Around the world, only 20% of national parliamentary seats are occupied by women. This has improved over the years but is still less than a quarter. This is due to gender inequality.

In the UK every child, regardless of their gender, is entitled to an education. Sadly, this is not the case in Afghanistan. Of the 4.2 million Afghan children not getting an education, Unicef estimates that 65% are girls and most live in rural districts. Many Afghan families will only permit their daughters to attend all-girl schools and others believe it is unnecessary for girls to be educated at all.

In the UK a lot of students don't realise how important an education is and take it for granted whereas on the other side of the world, a child of the same age longs for an education. Lack of education for girls isn't a gender inequality problem that we have in the UK however in poorer or developing countries, such as Afghanistan, it is a much more common issue.

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Action desperately needs to be taken for women everywhere to be able to make their own decisions, achieve their dreams and simply to be able to control what happens to their own bodies. Why should being born female put you at an automatic disadvantage? The answer is – it shouldn't! Women should be proud to be women and not have to live in a world where they are discriminated against.

Each and every human being, regardless of their gender, race or religion, should be treated equally and own the rights to control their own life. To ensure that women don't have to endure these barbaric acts any longer, gender inequality needs to be a thing of the past, not the future.