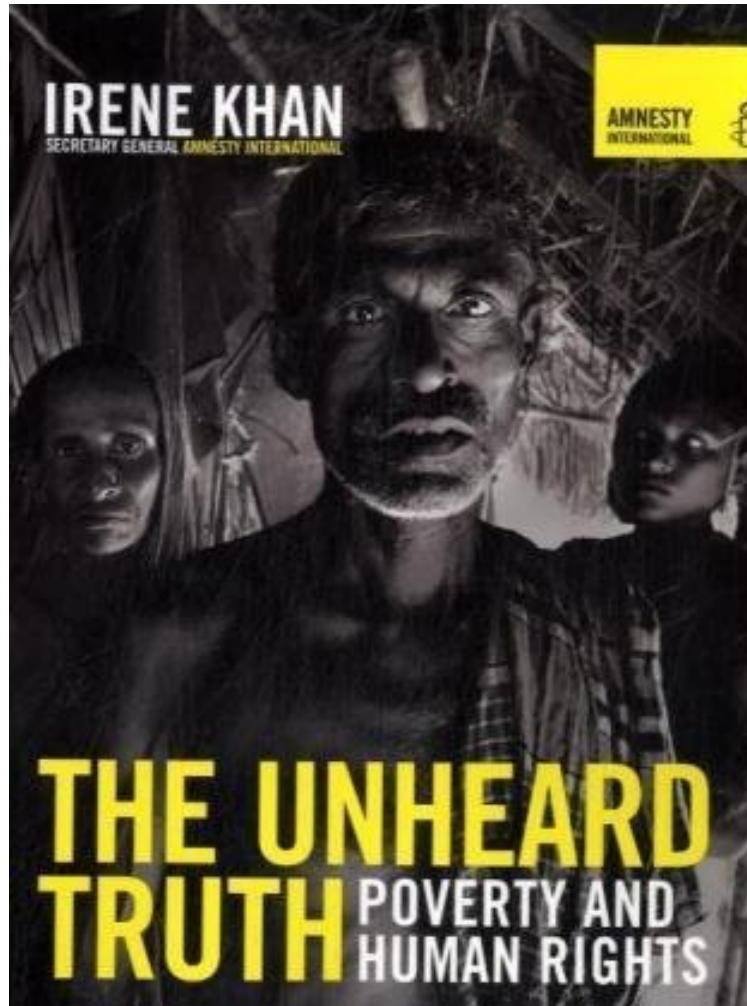


(Download) The Unheard Truth: Poverty and Human Rights

The Unheard Truth: Poverty and Human Rights

Irene Khan

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Irene Khan : The Unheard Truth: Poverty and Human Rights before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Unheard Truth: Poverty and Human Rights:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Useful study of world poverty By William Podmore Irene Khan, Secretary General of Amnesty International, has written a fine book on what she rightly calls 'poverty, the world's worst human rights crisis'. She points out that the inequities in the world today are greater than those in apartheid South Africa, and they are growing. The number of those suffering hunger has risen steadily since 2000. In 2008, rising food prices pushed 100 million people back down into poverty, and the economic crisis has forced another 50 million into poverty. One billion people go to bed hungry every night. China now spends less than 1 per cent of its GDP on health care, ranking it 156th of 196 UN member states. 30 million more Chinese people were illiterate in 2005 than in 2000. The richest 10 per cent of China's people get 30 times the income of the poorest 10 per cent. In India, 42 per cent of

females over the age of 6 have never attended school. Ms Khan shows how countries need the universal provision of essential services, including, for example, abortion: South Africa's deaths from abortion complications fell by 90 per cent after it was legalised in 1994. In a brilliant chapter on the need for housing, she points out, "the market on its own has failed to provide affordable and accessible homes to all sectors of society ... Global housing debates tend to accept that only market-based solutions to the global housing crisis will prevail (despite such approaches arguably being the cause of the crisis in the first place!)" The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights states, "The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions." The USA has not ratified this Covenant; China has not ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Ms Khan argues against the false notion that there are two distinct kinds of freedom - positive (economic, social and cultural) and negative (civil and political), imposing positive and negative obligations on states. As she observes, "Building an effective court system to ensure fair trials is as positive an obligation as building schools to fulfil the right to universal primary education." And, "As regards cost, most human rights require resources. Maintaining a fair and effective judicial system requires significant public investment. Without it many civil and political rights would be impossible to fulfil. Cost should not be a determinant of human rights." But, as she notes, "All sides are placing high levels of trust in the market to deliver rights - despite the global economic crisis exposing the fallacy of such an approach" and points out that voluntary codes, like the UN Global Compact, have led to no significant change in the behaviour of companies or governments'. Yet she finishes by just vaguely advising the richer countries to 'do much more - in their trade and investment policies, in tackling the companies, banks and arms dealers ...' 6 of 8 people found the following review helpful. 963 million people go to sleep with empty stomachs. By Abu L Arab The statistics on poverty are staggering. People know that others are starving somewhere on this planet but have power to do nothing except shake their heads. People starve on one side of the world while the majority of people on the other side are full with some being obese and requiring surgery to remove the excess fat. The author of this book, Irene Khan, together with Amnesty International believes that poverty is a denial of human rights. How are the two connected? Every man, woman, and child on Earth has the right to shelter and food and if they are not getting those two and a few other things, then they are being denied their human rights. The author gives many examples of countries denying their people human rights. We go from South America to the Sub Saharan Africa and we read terrible stories of people suffering. On page 178, we read about the story of the country Chad where 80% of the people live below the poverty line. They were given millions of dollars to build an oil pipeline and the money was supposed to go to the poor people of Chad. Instead, 30 million dollars was used to buy weapons and the rest was embezzled by the President Idriss Deby-whom Forbes magazine called a pig- and his government. This led to the people- who are called rebels and terrorists by the government- rising up in anger and it has led to fighting and destruction that has left tens of thousands of people homeless, refugees, or dead. Earlier in the book, we read about another nation- this one a liberal democracy- Israel, which has placed 500 military checkpoints on using roads in the occupied territory. The previous sentence sounds strange and it should because their should not be a democracy that is unjust to those whom it considers minorities. Yet the facts are true and the book states on page 77 that 80 % of the people of Gaza depend on humanitarian aid for their survival. The people there are like prisoners in their own country, unable to trade or make contact with the outside world; their means of survival as well as the Palestinians in the West Bank are limited. Khan goes on to say that "attacks on civilians and infrastructure are not collateral damage but a deliberate strategy to terrorize and uproot populations and occupy lands." And when the population gets frustrated and does anything to resist the brutal system they are in, guess what the government of Israel will call those people. Poverty is just the end of a long line of corruption and injustice. There is enough food in the world to feed every human on it with 3 decent meals a day. The problem is that we have unequal distribution of resources. A few people enjoy the best food while the majority of the people are in the dark and are powerless to do anything about their corrupt leaders. Civil societies will never be strong enough to ensure that the voices of the people are heard and respected. The only solution is a system or way of life that ensures everyone must contribute to the poor and there is only one system in the world that can carry out this plan. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. "The Unheard Truth - Poverty and Human Rights" By Marcia G. Yerman October 17th was the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. However, a one-day a year acknowledgement doesn't suffice. The Unheard Truth - Poverty and Human Rights, a book by Irene Khan, advocates for awareness about what she sees as the indisputable link between the title's two components. Khan states flatly, "Poverty is the world's worst human rights crisis." As the first woman, Muslim, and Asian to take over the reins of leadership as Amnesty International Secretary General (2001-2009), Khan has plenty of accolades and on-the-ground experience. She spent twenty years at the United Nations as the High Commissioner for Refugees, is a graduate of Harvard Law School, and was named as one of the 100 Most Influential Asians in the United Kingdom. The book features a foreword by Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations (1997-2006) who speaks to the plight of approximately 3 billion people who live in poverty and "are unable to meet their daily needs for adequate shelter, food, health care, clean water, or education for their children." Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland and United Nations High Commissioner for Human rights (1997-2002) writes in a blurb, "Poverty

is the world's worst human rights crisis and this book make a powerful statement about not only why but how we can turn the tide."Khan's contention is that poverty is a human rights issue, and therefore defending those rights must be at the core of efforts to end poverty. Recognized human rights abuses include "discrimination, state repression, corruption, insecurity, and violence."In ten chapters Khan breaks down issues ranging from "The Right to Safe Motherhood" to employing the path of "legal empowerment to end poverty." Disenfranchised groups including the Roma communities of Europe, indigenous populations, and women are pointed to by Khan as those whose concerns are ignored by governmental authorities.Khan qualifies this marginalization as being based on gender, race, language, and caste. A United Nations sponsored commission found that tens of millions of people lacked a legal identity. Khan believes that the state fails poor people, and maintains that they are affected in far greater numbers by police brutality and corruption, in the courts and educational system, and through gender violence.Referencing an example of the latter, she examines the plight of the women of Ciudad Jurez, who gravitate to the urban setting of factory life to escape the crushing poverty of their rural environs. Hundreds of young women have been raped and murdered while returning from their jobs or night school. Despite their economic contributions, as women of limited financial means they have no power or political capital. Therefore, no substantial police work was done on their deaths and disappearances.The figures on world poverty are daunting. Currently, over 1 billion people inhabit slums. In 2030, this number will double. Khan quotes the World Bank assertion that those earning under two dollars per day are considered "poor," and those earning less than \$1.25 per day are in "extreme poverty." Based on those statistics, 2 billion people are poor and 1 billion people live in extreme poverty.Throughout the book Khan addresses the disconnect between the mind-set of numerous economists and the human rights point of view. She does not believe that material benefits equate to political power, nor does she recognize economic growth, as a response to poverty, as the magic bullet. She quotes Nobel Peace Prize recipient (2000) Professor Muhammad Yunus who states, "Because poverty denies people any semblance of control over their destiny, it is the ultimate denial of human rights." Yunus, a Bangladeshi banker and economist, developed microcredit as a vehicle to empower the poor.Khan emphasizes that economic solutions alone cannot end poverty. By way of example she explains, "Building new schools doesn't guarantee that girls will have the same access to education as boys." With access to food, shelter, clean water, health care, and education being defined as basic human rights, working to defend these rights will expedite the fight to end poverty. Khan illustrates the societal structure as a pyramid. It starts at the bottom with an individual's domestic situation and builds upwards to community, employer, and then to government. Khan points to legal empowerment and defines how laws that are supposed to protect can in fact be a "source of oppression."The book ties in with Amnesty International's global campaign, "Demand Dignity," which calls for ending the human rights violations that "drive and deepen poverty." The Demand Dignity initiative was launched in June 2009 in the slums of Kenya, with the goal of ending forced evictions. Three months later, it focused on maternal mortality in Sierra Leone.Khan is a champion of women's rights, and is consistently sensitive to a gender perspective. She includes a full chapter on maternal mortality, seeing it not solely as a health problem, but reframing it as "reflecting the powerlessness of women." She notes that violence against women is central to the experience of poverty.Fittingly, Khan dedicates her book to the women of Bangladesh "whose courageous struggle for equality and dignity inspires, encourages, and energizes me."This review originally appeared on cultureID.

A powerful argument by the secretary general of Amnesty International that poverty is not just an economic problem but a global human-rights violation. In our rapidly globalizing age with economic growth occurring in almost every corner of the world, it is easy to forget that more than one billion people still live on less than one dollar a day. Poverty is the worst human-rights crisis in the world today, denying billions of people their most basic rights. In a bracing argument enriched by compelling photographs from across the world, Amnesty International Secretary General Irene Khan makes the case that poverty remains a global epidemic because we continue to define it as an economic problem whose only solution is foreign aid and investment. Khan calls for a reevaluation of this longstanding assumption and turns us toward confronting poverty as a human-rights violation. Empowering the poor with basic rights of security is our only chance for eradicating poverty and giving freedom and dignity to those who have never experienced it.35 photos

From Publishers WeeklyImportant, potentially transformative ideas are nearly lost in this noble but botched treatise by Khan, secretary general of Amnesty International. Describing poverty as the world's worst human rights crisis, the author refutes the view that economic growth alone can address the problem, arguing that corruption, disenfranchisement and other ills perpetuate poverty even as a country's GDP rises. Shifting her focus to the United Nations, she reveals how the organization's antiquated human rights and antipoverty approaches still heavily influenced by cold war ideological battles impede the causes they are intended to assist. Unfortunately, readers must wade through the book's tedious first half to reach these insights; Khan squanders space and her audience's patience reporting truisms like poor people often have inadequate shelter, that they lack food and often go to bed hungry and that war and genocide impoverish their victims. Not only do these unnecessary sections obscure Khan's very valuable messages, but

they read more like a textbook than the work of a leading expert in her field. Photos. (Oct.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. Khans inquiry into poverty and human rights issues is scrupulously sourced with copious endnotes and statistics to back up every assertion, but it truly excels when Khan provides personal stories that hit harder than numbers.... In concise, well-ordered chapters, Khan brings massive social problems down to a manageable size. A significant and unflinching analysis of a terribly (and tragically) important area of study. - Colleen Mondor, BooklistKahn writes clearly and concisely, taking time to define what human rights are and why they matter and frequently illustrating her points with moving stories and vivid examples from around the world. She attempts to be impartial in her analysis and is critical not only of institutions like the World Bank but also of Amnesty International's own work in the past.... Well written and easily accessible, this is recommended for all human rights advocates, especially those interested in reducing poverty globally. - Library JournalAbout the AuthorIrene Khan, as the first woman and first Asian secretary general of Amnesty International, has brought a strong focus to socioeconomic rights and violence against women around the world. She lives with her husband and daughter in London.