



The contribution of social policies in the dramatic development of gender equity in Asian Countries and the factors now causing an increase in poverty rates and the number of poor, especially in South Asia

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Since countries situation in Asia are very diverse in term of the progress of gender equity and poverty level as well as social, economic and cultural setting, I would like to invite my colleagues that came from the same region to enrich my presentation.



Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

- ★ The region's overall performance in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment has been mixed.
- ★ more than three quarters of countries in the region are “on track” in narrowing gender gaps in educational enrollments (Goal 3/Target 4). Many of the countries are clearly “off track” in reducing maternal mortality (Goal 5/Target 6).



Gender equity and equality also have been advances in several areas over the past 20 years. However:

1. Gender gaps persist in access to education and quality health care, employment and business opportunities, political participation and decision making, personal security, and access to justice.
2. MDGs progress reports of several countries in the region note much slower rates of progress in rural areas, among ethnic minorities and disadvantaged castes, and among displaced people and migrants.
3. Women are likely to have much lower levels of education, wage employment, and participation in national politics



Equality & Equity Between Men and Women

- ★ A matter of fundamental rights
- ★ All countries are parties to the CEDAW, and equality between the sexes
- ★ However, there are still gaps in these frameworks and weaknesses in enforcement.



Constitutions and Laws on Gender Equality

- ★ Malaysia has had a domestic violence law in place since 1994. The Republic of Korea has already corrected over 770 laws and regulations. In Nepal, amendments to 137 discriminatory laws have been drafted and are pending approval.
- ★ Indonesia had amended its National Constitution (UUD 1945) to include women rights. Ratified the Convention on the Political Rights for Women with Law Number 68/1958 and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women with Law No 7/1984.



Women and Education

- ★ Compulsory education without discrimination between boys and girls has demonstrated to the increasing of net enrollment ratio of girls in primary and secondary school.
- ★ The Philippines and Indonesia launched the scholarships for education and training specifically for women. Cambodia is introducing night school programs.
- ★ The Vietnam gov, collaborating with the Vietnam Women's Union, launched a community- based literacy and post literacy program targeting ethnic minority women.
- ★ India's "Education for Women's Empowerment", launched in 1987



In economy and employment sector

- ★ Small credit for women such as in Indonesia and Bangladesh significantly contributed to the family welfare as well as employment opportunities for women.
- ★ Most countries in the region have labor laws and regulations in place that support the core labor standards of the International Labor Organization, workplace safety, maternity leave and other employment issues relevant to women



To increase participation of women

- ✦ In political and decision making processes in executive, judiciary bodies and legislative, some countries in the region have the affirmative actions through the endorsement of laws and regulation.
- ✦ For example, Indonesia in 2002, Law No. 31 on Political Parties was enacted followed by Law No. 12/2003 on the Election of Members to the House of Representatives, the Regional Representative Council and the Regional House of Representatives. Both laws clearly mandate a quota of 30 for women in political parties.
- ✦ As a cross-sectoral issue, gender equality and women's empowerment are addressed in national development plans, poverty reduction strategies, expenditure frameworks and budgets in many countries in the region through the Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting (GRPB).



Economic growth policies by the South Asia governments

- ★ Have not been able to ensure broad based participation of the poor in the growth process
- ★ Since women have lower access to education, health and productive resources, poverty, and gender inequality form a vicious cycle that pushes millions of women and girls into a trap of constant denial of rights, deprivation and discrimination.
- ★ Rural poverty remains high and in some South Asian countries such as Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, rural poverty has in fact gone up in recent decade.



Pro-poor Policies

- ★ Many efforts have been done by governments in the region to narrow the gender gap especially in the level of regulations and policies. The challenges now are to implement those regulations and policies into actions.
- ★ Pro-poor policies do not undermine growth but in fact reinforce growth. Pro-poor governance can be used as a powerful tool to reduce poverty by providing an enabling environment for growth and by empowering people through building up their physical and human assets.



Thanks for U'r Attention

