

T13P02 / Gender Inequality and Public Policy in Asian Societies

Topic : T13 / Gender, Diversity and Public Policy

Chair : Arunoday Bajpai (Agra College Agra, Dr BRA University, Agra (India))

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Gender inequality continues to be a major challenge before the public policy makers in all societies. In recent times, the issue of gender inequality received international attention in 1970s with the organization of the first World Conference on Women in 1974 in Mexico and adoption of the UN Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1979. These initiatives spurred the policy interventions at the national level to address the issue of gender inequality in Asian countries also. The policy approaches to gender equality ranged from welfareism in 1950s and 1960s, Women in Development (WID) in early 1970s, Women and Development (WAD) in second half of 1970s and Gender and Development (GAD) in 1990s. The Women Empowerment is the most strategic element of GAD approach. In order to accelerate and coordinate the global efforts for women empowerment, the United Nations General Assembly created a new entity 'UN Women' in 2010. The Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, adopted during the fourth world conference on women in Beijing in 1995 is considered the key global policy document on gender equality.

The unlocking of half of the human resources is crucial for the success of democracy and development in Asian societies. The global and national policy interventions in the field of women equality have gone hand in hand for last five decades. The public policies addressing gender issues in Asian societies have suffered formalism and poor implementation due to deep rooted socio-cultural biases, lack of skill and literacy, economic independence and awareness. The gap between the declared objective and policy outcome are on higher side in gender related policies, because policies failed to address the required attitudinal and cultural change in the society. It needs to be reiterated that the sex (male/female) is a biological category, whereas gender is a socio-cultural category, which assigns inferior role and position for women in society. The gender issues crucial for policy domain in Asian societies are education, health, skill and employment, participation in decision making at various levels, domestic violence, environmental concerns, various forms of discrimination within and outside family and so on. In this background, the panel on 'Gender Inequality and Public Policy in Asian Societies' is proposed to realize the following objectives:

1. To examine the various policy approaches relevant for public policies on gender equality in Asia.
2. To analyze the status of engendering of public policies in contemporary Asian societies.
3. To understand the socio-cultural context of Asian societies as an operational environment for public policies on gender equality.
4. To suggest measures and innovative practices to improve the formulation and implementation of public policies on gender issues in Asian countries.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Scholars are invited to contribute research papers in the panel titled 'Gender Inequality and Public Policy in Asian Societies', which has following sub-themes:

- Theoretical understanding of contemporary policy approaches to gender equality with focus on Women Empowerment.
- Gender Budgeting as policy tool for gender equality in Asian societies.
- Socio-cultural context and gender policies in Asian societies.
- Participation of women in the formulation and implementation of gender policies.
- Civil Society Organizations (CSO) and gender policies.
- Bridging the gap between targets and outcomes in gender policies.
- Information Technology and effective implementation of gender policies.
- Innovation and improvement in gender policy process in Asian societies

The papers with field experience and comparative perspective between different social settings will be encouraged.

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Session 1

Friday, June 30th 10:30 to 12:30 (Block B 4 - 1)

Discussants

Smita Mitra

Nemi Chand Goliaya (PGGCG-42 Panjab University Chandigarh, India)

Gender Equality in Japan :Internal Policy Processes and Impact and Foreign Implications

joyce gelb (CUNY NY)

Naoko Kumagai (International University of Japan)

This paper will examine an apparent disjunction between a poor record of efforts to deal with gender equality domestically in Japan and a foreign policy record which appears to present a more positive view toward assisting women, primarily in developing nations. The latter policies are present in the ODA, or Official Development Assistance program. Japan is one of the five largest donors of such policy in the world. Does a gap exist in Japan between domestic and foreign policy related to women and what are the explanations?

Women's inequality in Japan has been referred to as reflecting a "glass" or even more impermeable "steel" ceiling. This paper will assess the significance of "Womonomics" enunciated by Prime Minister Abe in 2014. It initially set a goal of women in every sector of 30%. Soon after this target was significantly modified - to 15% in the private and 7% in the public sector. He also promised to cut the long hours of work and increase day care access and paternity leave. This paper will analyze the progress made to date with regard to these goals, reflecting also on prior policies passed including the Equal Opportunity Employment Law (1985) and Gender Equality Law (1999). Japan apparently continues to occupy low rankings on most indices measuring international gender equality. The paper will analyze negative and positive assessments of progress, relying on government data, journalistic reports, interviews with public officials and women activists and the like.

Why can women not access of Work-Life Balance policy: Focusing on a Male-Centered Organization and Gender Discrimination

HWAYEON KIM (Center for Public Human Resource Development, SKKU)

Sung Min Park (Sunkyunkwan University)

In recent years, despite the increasing social participation of high quality women's human resources, there are still many problems in utilization of women's human resources. In fact, according to an article published by the Economist Weekly Economist in 2016, Korea's glass ceiling index among the OECD countries was the lowest for four consecutive years, and it has been shown that women are being discriminated against in the whole personnel such as employment, wage, and promotion. This is because women have traditionally played a role of housework and caring in the Korean society, and even though the age has changed, the male-oriented organizational culture and the unequal adult ceremony still dominate the organizational culture. Especially, the Confucian ideology which was the long cultural base of Korean society clearly distinguishes these sex roles. In this culture, men were able to work freely out of housework, and since women have to carry out both work and family roles while attending the workplace, they often face work-family conflicts, and many excellent women's human resources are severed and returned to housewives. In addition, even within the organization, the gaze on women workers has also led to the assumption that they cannot concentrate solely on "work" because of their family work, and this unequal perception has also created a great discrimination against women's employment, promotion, and wages.

The Korean government recognizes this problem and has recently implemented a policy that actively supports the balance of work and life, such as flexible work arrangements, child care facilities, child care support, and so on,

so that female workers can freely expand their capabilities within the organization. However, many organizations still seem to be failing to take advantage of these systems. Despite the fact that many public and private organizations have developed various WLB(Work-Life Balance) policies, the low utilization rate is due to concerns that they may be noticeable in using the system or may be a negative factor in managing their career in the future.

This study will analyze empirically with the research question of does the male-centered organizational culture of Korean organizational societies and the gender discrimination experience of female workers influence the utilization of WLB policy? With the analysis, this study tried to think about strategies that can complement the policy imperfections so that the WLB policy does not fall into the policy that is unfamiliar and the female managers break the glass ceiling and become a stepping stone policy to stand side by side with male managers.

Muslim Women Political Representation in Pseudo Democracies

Faiza EL-HIGZI (University of Queensland Australia)

In the process of State-building, Islamic majority population countries have gone through significant changes as a result of democratization, globalization and economic liberalization. In terms of formal transformation, in-principle gender equality statements and intent are present in constitutional principles and institutional structures. This intent was in full display when all Islamic countries ratified the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Call for Action on Women's participation in decision making. Since then many countries adopted political gender quota measures and the number of women in Parliaments increased significantly from an average of 5 percent in 1997 to 17 percent in 2016[1]. Despite this increase progress on women's issues under Family Law remain slow and at best mixed. Family Law in Islamic countries limits women's rights on personal issues such as divorce, custody, land titles and polygamy. In Malaysia[2], amendments to the Family Law in 2005 removed rights that women previously enjoyed. In Morocco[3], an intervention by the King reformed the mudawama – Personal Status Code – improving women rights on personal matters and paving the way for women Parliamentarians to pursue and achieve further legislative reform. These mixed outcomes raise questions about the intersection of formal transformation, traditional policy making and state-society exchanges. In particular it raises questions about women parliamentarians' substantive representation considering socio-cultural and political contexts that influence public policies on gender equality. Volpi[4] concept of a pseudo-democracy in Muslim countries as the stalemate between democratic doctrines, social practices and institutional mechanisms (2004:1061) provides an analytical framework to examine women parliamentarians substantive representation at a policy level by asking a simple question: where do gender policy reform ideas - in this case Family Law reform in Malaysia and Morocco - come from, how do they emerge and why; and who progresses them. The role of non-government actors, Islamic groups and development agenda emerge as enablers and can inform policy reform, yet can be counteracted by critical actors.

Keywords: Muslim women, pseudo democracy, gender, representation, Family Law, Morocco, Malaysia, mudawama, Shari'ah , Islamic countries

(words 342)

[1] International Parliamentary Unit (2016). Women in National Parliaments, archives of national data; 2016 www.ipu.org/wmn-e/arc/classif010616.htm

[2] Maznah Mohamad (1998) Feminism and Islamic Family Law Reforms in Malaysia: How Much and to What Extent?, Asian Journal of Women's Studies, 4:1, 8-32,

[3] Sadiqi F & Emmaji M (2011); Introduction: Contextualising Women's Agency in the MENA region; in Women in the Middle East and North Africa, Agents of Change; ed Fatima Sadiqi and Moha Emmaji; UCLA Centre for Middle East Development ; Routledge

[4] Frederic Volpi (2004):Pseudo Democracy in Muslim World. Third World Quarterly, Vol 25 (6) :1061-1078

CONTEXTUALIZED ANALYSIS OF A CENTRALLY SOPNSORED SCHEME FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS IN INDIA

Renu Kapila (Punjabi University, Patiala -Punjab. (India))

Adolescent girls form an extremely important and vulnerable segment of society. The value of the UN slogan of World Population Day 11th July in 2016 “investing in teenage girls” is crucial in any society not only for the adolescent girls but for the whole world due to their role in shaping the health and well being of the present as well as future generations. Unfortunately, in many Asian countries like India, the discrimination against girls begins even before their birth. By the time they reach adolescence, deprivation of proper nutrition, health care and education get further aggravated by gender discrimination - both at the household and the community level. It

results in malnutrition, poor health status, high female mortality rate exacerbated by taboos and ignorance of their health needs. It is heartening that after sustained efforts at international and national levels, this problem has reached the policy agenda and Indian government developed various programmes for proper nutrition and health education for the adolescent girls. But given gender's broader social and cultural roots and its effect, merely initiating a scheme may not work. Therefore, it is relevant to have a contextualized analysis of public policies and schemes designed for empowering girls. The main objective of this paper is to analyze the influence of socio-cultural factors on the implementation of a prominent centrally sponsored scheme namely Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (SABLA) of the Indian government, providing supplementary nutrition ration and health education to girls of 11-18 years. The locale of the study is the north-western state of Punjab which, paradoxically, has a pervasive gender bias despite high levels of economic growth and per capita income. The present study has tapped both primary and secondary sources of data from the beneficiaries and the officials related with this scheme. A serious gap was found between the objectives and performance of this scheme. In addition to inadequate infrastructure, irregular supply and distribution of supplementary nutrition ration, insufficient availability of health supplements, over-burdened workers at the grassroots level, there was serious lack of community co-operation coupled with deep-rooted socio-cultural biases and superstitions embedded in various practices. The adolescent girls remained vulnerable to malnutrition in our patriarchal society obsessed with sons. Some positive indicators regarding the girls' health status were found too. Overall, it was sad to find that the government measure to tackle malnutrition among adolescent girls is mostly going down the drain. Undoubtedly, addressing the special nutrition needs of adolescent girls is certainly a welcome step towards breaking the vicious cycle of intergenerational malnutrition and persistent diseases but an attitudinal and cultural change in the society is a pre-requisite to ensure its successful implementation and utilization of the services provided. Without undermining the importance of good infrastructure, adequate funds and well-paid staff, it is emphasized that public policies should utilize innovative strategies from social research to address altering the social bias against girls to be really effective.

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Session 2

Friday, June 30th 13:45 to 15:45 (Block B 4 - 1)

Discussants

Renu Kapila (Punjabi University, Patiala -Punjab. (India))

Smita Mitra

Gender Inequality and Pension Reform in Kazakhstan

Saltanat Janenova (Nazarbayev University)

Elena Maltseva (University of Windsor)

In 2013 Kazakhstan has experienced an unprecedented collective action by the female non-government organisations against a new pension reform which introduced increase of the retirement age for women from 58 to 63 as well as nationalisation of pension funds. The official reasons for pursuing a new pension reform were to decrease a gender gap in accumulating pension funds by enabling Kazakhstani women work longer and save more funds; as well as improve efficiency of the pension system. This paper aims to explore the underlying reasons for heated protests by the gender activists caused by the new pension reform; assess effectiveness of this policy on reducing gender inequality; and identify the need for further reforms, especially in regards to the provision of effective old-age income support for females, and to extract lessons from the Kazakhstani experience about policy implementation in the context of limited female representation in governance. The paper argues that pension reform has failed to successfully address the gender gap facing women in Kazakhstan and build an effective and socially just old-age security system. Combination of factors such as limited female representation in governance; gender salary gap; ineffective policies in providing child-care support for working females as well as gender stereotypes about the roles of women and men in the society together with the new pension policy prescribing an increase in the retirement age for women have undermined the capacity of the Kazakhstani government to provide socially just old-age pension security to its citizens. The paper is based on extensive research conducted in Kazakhstan, including a series of interviews with the leading experts on the Kazakhstani pension reform, and a comprehensive review of scholarly literature on the 1998 and 2013 pension reforms.

An Assessment of the Impact of GAD Programs on Retention Intentions of Female Uniformed Personnel of the Philippine Navy

Michelle Castillo (University of the Philippines Diliman)

Recent years saw the increasing participation of women in the traditionally male-dominated profession of arms. Although warfare has been traditionally equated with the province of men, the agenda of gender equality continues to gain stronger grounds with legal and societal forces paving the way for more women to enter the military. The institution has undergone various changes in its identity, culture, and structure as a consequence.

This is particularly true for the Armed Forces of the Philippines. Several laws and statutes mandate and support the entry of women in the Philippine military. In 2011, the country launched its National Action Plan on Women, Peace & Security in support to the United Nations Security Council Resolution No. 1325 and 1820.

Yet, despite the increasing number of women entering the AFP, no comprehensive assessment on the effectiveness of the policies addressing women empowerment and protection in this institution has been done. One may observe the persistence of a glass ceiling in certain key positions in the AFP, the continuous prevalence of gender discrimination, and incidence of sexually-related violence and harassment. While policies have been in place to support their participation, the culture of gender discrimination persists and yet women still continue to join and serve in the AFP.

The research study fills this gap by evaluating the effect of the level of satisfaction of female uniformed personnel

on Gender and Development (GAD) policies of the Philippine Navy on their intention to stay or leave the organization.

Secrets of gender equality and women's empowerment in Bangladesh: Grameen Bank Experience

Nawaz Faraha (University of Rajshahi)

The paper aims to analyse the critical evaluation of micro finance program of Grameen Bank on gender equality and women's empowerment in Bangladesh. By applying ethnographic research design, this paper emphasizes respondents' perspectives about their life transformation due to their participation in micro finance, rather emphasising on researchers' own perspective that most other researchers have done thus far. Various qualitative research methods and techniques have been applied in order to explore and understand the impact of micro finance on poor women's level of empowerment from their own point of view. The paper highlights that participation in micro finance program assist the women to undertake income generating activities which further enhances their access to and control over resources, income and expenditure of their families. Their enrolment in micro finance also increases women's bargaining and decision making capacity within the household in certain circumstances. However, the paper demonstrates that although micro finance empowers women, it cannot bring empowerment to all women equally at all levels. Therefore, the paper argues that in order to bring about higher levels of empowerment, micro finance programs must be combined with other services such as financial literacy, socio-economic training, education, health care, social mobilisation and legal support. The paper concludes with some policy suggestions which could also be useful for microfinance providers to redesign their programs into packages that bring long term benefits for women in Bangladesh.

The title of the paper clearly shows how it fits with T13: Gender, Diversity and Public Policy and PO2: Gender Inequality and Public Policy in Asian Societies

Women and Disasters: A post-tsunami (2004) case study of India, in accordance with United Nations

Arti Devi (Jawaharlal Nehru University)

Women and Disasters: A post-tsunami (2004) case study of India, in accordance with the United Nations

A disaster affects the different sections of a society differently. It can affect a particular community or society according to their hazardous and vulnerable position in the society and capacity to mitigate the disaster. Every section of society differs on the basis of their vulnerability and capacity. Gender is one of the most important and evident bases of the division existed in society. On the other hand, the disaster research and policies are gender neutral in theory but in reality, it is gendered because of the gendered nature of society. Therefore, Gender sensitive approach of disaster management is not a luxury; even it is a call of the hour. The Indian state realised it only after the Indian Ocean Tsunami of 2004 because it was the first major disaster when grave gender issues have emerged and it also led to many research and policy demands in this area. Since then, Indian Government has come with many policies and programs to combat the gender issues during a disaster, such as a Disaster management act 2005, Rural Health Mission, Janani Suraksha Yojana etc. However, the impact and efficiency of these initiatives are still a matter of analysis.

United Nations and its subsidiary organisations are also working in the area policy suggestion and research related to gender sensitive disaster mitigation and management especially during the given period. From Yokohama Strategy to Sendai Framework, each document has talked about the gender issues of disasters and the need for integration of a gender perspective into it. Along with these policy frameworks, the United Nations have organised many intergovernmental conferences, meetings and researches to address this issue.

So, here we have two sets of policy initiatives and programs for the integration of gender perspective in disaster management. One is an international perspective led by the United Nations and the other in a national perspective led by the Government of India. Based on this background, the proposed study would centrally address the issues of the government of India's plans and policies of gender sensitive disaster management in the post-2004 era, in accordance with United Nations policies and programs. For this purpose, the study would be majorly divided into four parts; Part one would be based on the theoretical and practical dimensions of women and disasters, Part two would contextualise the major initiatives of the Government of India to combat the challenges of women during disasters. Part three would be dedicated to the initiatives of the United Nations for integration of gender perspective in disaster management. The last part would analyse the level of efforts taken by the Government of India for Gender Sensitive disaster management in accordance with United Nations with necessary policy suggestions.