

Regional Report : Key findings from an ESCAP Study

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I . Introduction

Introduction

- ❑ Asia and the Pacific has showed **remarkable achievements**
 - ✓ Nevertheless, **around 641 million people** are still suffering under extreme poverty.
 - ✓ **Income inequality within countries** has been **consolidated** in many of this region.
- ❑ Newly emerged challenges in Asia & the Pacific
 - ✓ Recurrent economic crises, Natural disasters (e.g.: floods, cyclones, tsunami)
 - ✓ The convergence of such crises has generated **unprecedented threats** to daily life of people, especially the poor and vulnerable.

- ❑ **Social protection** has assumed **greater importance**

- ✓ **As a tool** to **mitigate** the impact of shocks and to **help accelerate** the recovery of people.

- ❑ Among other social protection measures, the **income support schemes** (hereafter, ISSs) have particular attention.

- ✓ **Meet the needs** of the poor and vulnerable by providing direct support and protection.

- ✓ **Building blocks for more comprehensive social protection** by expanding coverage to those who had been excluded from existing social protection system.

- ❑ In response to abovementioned risks, this project aims:

- ✓ To **strengthen social protection**, especially for the poor and vulnerable

- ✓ To **provide a platform** for researchers and policy makers to exchange views, experience, and knowledge on social protection and ISSs

Introduction

- ❑ This research analyzes social protection of five sub-regions in Asia and the Pacific with focus on income support schemes.
 - ✓ East and North-East Asia, The Pacific, South-East Asia
 - ✓ South and South-West Asia, North and Central Asia
- ❑ The study conducts cross sub-region comparison of those income support schemes in terms of **coverage, benefits, budgets & financing, delivery system & governance and policy outcome & challenges**.
 - ✓ Suggests implications and recommendations based on the comparative analysis.

II. Overview of Asia-Pacific Region

□ Population

- ✓ Total population of the region was 4.2 billion in 2010, which is about 61% of the world's population.
- ✓ The proportion of children in the total population in the region has fallen steadily, from 33% in 1990 to 25% in 2010, while the proportion of elderly aged 65 and above has been gradually increasing reaching 7.0% in 2010.

□ Standard of Living- Economic growth

- ✓ Asia and the Pacific achieved great economic growth in a shorter period of than other regions in the world.
- ✓ Total GDP of Asia and the Pacific reached 14,432 billion US dollar in 2009, which is about double of GDP in 1990, 7,566 billion.

□ Standard of Living- Poverty

- ✓ The region have achieved significant progress in reducing poverty.
- ✓ Number of people living in poverty in the region declined from about 1.6 billion in 1990 to 0.9 billion in 2008.
- ✓ More than half of the population in the region was living in poverty in 1990 (poverty defined as those living on less than PPP\$1.25 per day), but the incidence of poverty had fallen by more than half by 2008.
- ✓ Nevertheless, one quarter of the people in the region, 945 million in 2008, still live in poverty.

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□ Standard of Living- Inequality

- ✓ While the incidence and depth of poverty have declined steadily in the region, **the trend in income inequality seems less clear.**
- ✓ The poorest quintile of the population receive small share in a number of middle and high-income countries, such as Singapore (5.0%), Turkey (5.4%), and Malaysia (6.4%) while those in India (8.1%), Pakistan (9.1%) and Bangladesh (9.4%) do relatively better.

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Overview of Asia-Pacific Region

□ Standard of Living- Social Protection

- ✓ Considerable variation in the types of social protection programs in Asia and the Pacific.
- ✓ On average, Asia-Pacific region spends 4.8% of its GDPs on social protection.
- ✓ In sub-regional level, Central Asia has the highest spending on social protection with spending 6.8% of GDP on social protection, followed by East Asia (4.8%), Pacific (4.5%) and South Asia (3.1%).

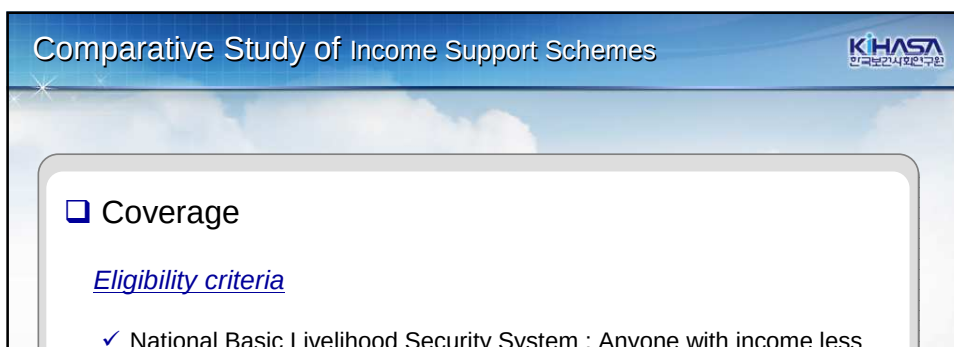
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SPI and SP Expenditures (as Percent to GDP, 2009)

Member Economy	SPI	SP expenditures (as percent of GDP)	GDP per capita (at current prices, in USD)
Afghanistan	0.046	2.0	488
Armenia	0.085	2.2	2666
Azerbaijan	0.187	6.1	5018
Bangladesh	0.043	1.4	617
Cambodia	0.020	1.0	731
China, People's Rep. of	0.139	5.4	3734
Fiji, Rep. of	0.060	1.7	2945
India	0.051	1.7	1043
Indonesia	0.044	1.2	2335
Japan	0.416	19.2	39714
Korea, Rep. of	0.200	7.9	17110
Kyrgyz Republic	0.151	8.0	871
Lao PDR	0.026	0.9	904
Malaysia	0.155	3.7	6915
Mongolia	0.206	9.6	1692
Nepal	0.068	2.1	463
Pakistan	0.047	1.3	926
Philippines	0.085	2.5	1746
Samoa	0.066	2.3	2863
Singapore	0.169	3.5	35514
Solomon Islands	0.045	1.3	1048
Sri Lanka	0.121	3.2	2057
Tajikistan	0.039	1.2	668
Thailand	0.119	3.6	4151
Uzbekistan	0.343	10.2	1187
Viet Nam	0.137	4.7	1130

Source : ADB (2012), OECD Korea Centre (2013. 11)

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