

Sub Regional Deliberations

South Asia, which has 860 million women, is home to one-third of the world's poor. Up until recently, it was regarded as the region with the fastest economic growth and had made tremendous progress in reducing the gender gap in all fields. It will take 71 years to close the gender gap in the region, which is still the second greatest in the globe. South Asia is not on track to achieve gender equality by 2030. And this was before COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdown, which has exacerbated pre-existing challenges and created new impediments to achieving gender equality in the region.

Since 2010, the number of teenage pregnancies in South Asia has declined, and 23 out of every 1,000 girls between the ages of 15 and 19 give birth. In South Asia, women have lower levels of adult literacy than men do, and the difference between men and women's levels of adult literacy is 15:7, which is greater than the global average difference of 6:7.

Compared to the rest of the globe South Asia has lower adult literacy rates than the rest of the world, for both men and women. South Asia's female poverty rate before the pandemic was 10 percent and at present it has been revised to 13 percent. South Asia has a lower percentage of women in the labor force, and the gender wage gap is wider. In South Asia, women are already overrepresented in the informal sector and do three times as much unpaid care and domestic work than men. Women devote more time to unpaid domestic and care labor than males do in all of South Asia's countries for which data are available. The region's labor force participation rate is 22%, and male involvement is 71.8%.

In 1 out of 5 countries in South Asia, the share of women who have experienced sexual violence is greater than 8.4%. Considering women's participation in politics 18.9% of seats in national parliaments are held by women in South Asia

In many South Asian nations, structural violence against women and girls is pervasive, perpetuated, and persistent due to social norms, cultural practices, patriarchy, and centuries-old traditions.

South Asia to get on track to achieving gender equality.

- Since the majority of nations have restricted their indicators to globally proposed targets, South Asian governments must adopt context-specific extra indicators for crime and violence against women.
- Governments must create additional gender-specific metrics for all SDG targets and goals, including SDG 16. Asian governments should work with civil society experts to create these gender-specific indicators and to help mainstream gender in all pertinent targets and goals.
- South Asian governments must locate the SDG implementation at sub-national and local levels as much as possible to reflect local realities and make it an all of society effort, moving from an “all of government” engagement to a “whole of society” approach.
- The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) should actively engage with its member states on SDGs, share good practices, and forge regional partnerships in fast-tracking Agenda 2030 in the region.