

Challenges and opportunities for achievement of SDG1 “Eradicate extreme poverty for all” from the grassroots perspectives

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- Central Asia has made notable strides towards achieving SDG1, which focuses on ending poverty in all its forms
- Despite progress, there are still significant challenges to address in the region.
- Efforts must prioritize safeguarding and empowering individuals, with special attention to women and vulnerable groups.
- Building resilience is crucial, especially in the face of economic and environmental uncertainties.
- Key challenges include limited access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities.
- Women face additional barriers due to societal norms and cultural practices that perpetuate gender inequality.
- Gender disparities not only limit women's potential but also hinder overall societal development.

Protecting and investing in people and enhancing resilience, especially among women and vulnerable population groups

- Rural women rely on water and energy resources for livelihoods, families, and food security, making them highly vulnerable.
- Pollution, biodiversity loss, and land degradation worsen economic vulnerability among rural women.
- Climate change affects women through water scarcity, disrupted agriculture, and pollution of soil, food, and groundwater.
- Socio-economic status, cultural norms, resource access, poverty, and gender influence coping mechanisms.
- Climate change intensifies poverty, inequality, displacements, agricultural crises, and impacts marginalized communities, particularly women.
- Essential financing needed for renewable energy, climate resilience, sustainable land management, and conservation agricultural practices.
- Inclusive participation lacking, especially for vulnerable groups and women, in climate action plans, requiring enforced inclusion.
- Women, young people, and farmers initiate local resilience solutions with limited resources; these efforts must be supported and enhanced for community adaptation.

Role of social protection systems and public policies to mitigate the impact on most vulnerable and increase resilience to shocks

- **Limited Access to Basic Services:** Environmental pollution, outdated infrastructure, and lack of clean drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene contribute to rural women's health problems.
- **Land and Property Rights:** Traditional laws and gender stereotypes hinder women's rights, leading to employment problems and labor migration.
- **Informal Sector Challenges:** Women in the informal sector lack social protections, face high unpaid domestic workloads, and have limited access to resources and financial services.
- **Healthcare Challenges:** Commercialized medical services, poor infrastructure, and lack of access to medical resources affect rural women's health and well-being.
- **Educational Barriers:** Decline in education quality, limited access to family planning, and influence of religious fundamentalism hinder rural girls' education.
- **Increased Vulnerabilities during Crises:** Women, especially heads of households, face heightened vulnerabilities and increased care responsibilities during crises like the pandemic.
- **Underrepresentation in Decision-Making:** Gender stereotypes limit women's participation, leading to underrepresentation of rural women in decision-making roles.
- **Inadequate Social Protection:** Existing social protection systems do not meet the needs of rural women, leaving them vulnerable to poverty and economic instability.

Recommendations

- **Leadership Development:** Empower rural women to respond to climate change, natural disasters, and peace issues, ensuring their direct access to climate funds.
- **Agroecology Support:** Aid rural women in developing agroecology, fostering knowledge exchange at the sub-regional level.
- **Access to Services and Technologies:** Increase access to essential services and technologies for water supply, agriculture, family care, and businesses for rural women.
- **Social Justice and Gender Equality:** Challenge traditional practices and norms perpetuating inequalities, addressing women's needs, property rights, access to services, and protection from gender-based violence.
- **Special Needs of Rural Girls:** Provide quality vocational education, sanitary conditions in rural schools, and youth-friendly reproductive health services for rural girls.
- **Land Inheritance Rights:** Establish laws protecting women's rights to inherit land and ensuring secure land tenure.
- **Supportive Infrastructure:** Increase the number of kindergartens in rural areas, enabling women's education and participation in economic activities.

Recommendations

- **Social Protection Transformation:** Reform social protection measures, providing access to pensions, disability cover, unemployment benefits, and healthcare for vulnerable groups.
- **Livelihood Recovery Programs:** Prioritize recovery programs for social enterprises, MSMEs, and informal sectors, offering debt relief, reskilling, and support for structural aspects.
- **Civil Society Involvement:** Strengthen involvement of civil society and professional groups in integrated planning and response delivery, ensuring collaboration and accountability.
- **Digital Divide Addressal:** Address the digital divide, providing equitable access to technology for learning and sustainable recovery.
- **Inclusive National Security Schemes:** Ensure universal coverage under national security schemes for livelihood support, healthcare, food security, and nutrition, prioritizing vulnerable groups.
- **Data Disaggregation:** Collect disaggregated data by gender, ethnicity, and disability for targeted intervention and monitoring support for vulnerable groups.
- **Investing in People:** Prioritize social protection programs, education, and healthcare, especially for women and girls, to break the cycle of poverty and enhance resilience.