



Family Poverty in Asia: Back to Basics

- What Poverty in Asia means
- Sample Categorizations:
 - the extremely poor, the moderately poor or the vulnerable poor (Bauer et al., 2008)
 - the decrepit poor, the very poor and the marginal poor in India (Vijayanand, 2001)
 - the “Three Nos” households—no relatives, no working capacity and no income source (Liu & Wu, 2006).

Is poverty a form of social exclusion?

- According to ADB and WB estimates, 1.8 billion people or 54 per cent of the Asia and the Pacific region population are poor.
- the poor comprise the majority in Asia, but they can be excluded from economic growth, social development programs, governance intervention and many other factors.
- Families can be marginalized and trapped in poverty with the lack of employment opportunities, poor housing, lack of access to reliable electricity and safe water supply (Xiaoyun & Remenyi, 2008).

Anti-poverty programmes focused on families

- social security benefits in cash or cash equivalents.
- Indonesia: cash transfers implemented from October to December 2000. Discontinued due to the difficulties in program administration (Daly & Fane, 2002). In-kind includes rationed or subsidised amounts of essential goods such as rice, kerosene, nutrition programs and school grants
- Philippines: cash transfer program since 2008

Anti-poverty programmes focused on families

- economic aid to the cost of living or childbirth
- China: MLSA
- Singapore: the family-related population policy provides child benefits and various types of tax rebates
 - child benefits have a small positive impact to fertility rate which negatively correlates with women's earnings (Park, 2005)

How much are the Asian governments willing to spend on basic social protection package?

- Basic package consists of “affordable access to basic health care, minimum income support for elderly, disabled and children and employment guarantees and social assistance to unemployed and working poor” (Hagemejer & Behrendt, 2009: 89).
- Malaysia devotes 6.5 per cent of GDP to pensions, China 2.7 per cent, and India only 2 per cent (Gerecke & Prasad, 2011).
- An ILO study concluded that even low-income countries can afford basic social security if they fulfill some necessary conditions such as the political will to apportion public spending on basic social security, capacity to raise additional revenues, strong public institutions and sustained productivity (Hagemejer & Behrendt, 2009).

more effective and sustainable ways to reduce poverty

- wage employment to the poor through public works programmes in India (Vijayanand, 2001)
- supplementary employment opportunities among the rural poor during agricultural slack periods, also in India (Gaiha, Imai, & Kaushik, 2001)
- microcredit services in remote rural areas in Malaysia (Chan & Ghani, 2011)
- job creation schemes for unskilled workers in Indonesia (Daly & Fane, 2002)

Successful anti-poverty programs from the private sector and NGOs

1. Philippines: Gawad Kalinga (housing)
2. India: Sulabh International (sanitation)
3. Tibet: Shokay



<http://www.gk1world.com/>



"Poverty is not an economic problem, but a behavioral one."


"Slum behavior breeds slum mentality."

"Poverty is not a lack of resources, but a lack of caring and sharing."



Sulabh International
Social Service Organisation

Museum of Toilets



Scavengers liberated and rehabilitated	1,20,000
Sulabh household toilets constructed	1.2 million
Government of India constructed toilets based on Sulabh design	54 million
Sulabh community toilet blocks	Over 7000
Human excreta-based biogas plants	200
Towns made scavenging free	640
Scavengers trained and resettled	7000
Towns where Sulabh works	1247
Districts where Sulabh works	436
States/Union Territory	25/4
Persons using toilets based on Sulabh design daily	300 million approx.

Style with a touch of humanity - considered, every thread of the way.

<http://www.shokay.com>

Shokay's Model



1. *SHOKAY* buys yak down directly from Tibetan herders. We have helped thousands of herders increase their income by 10%-30% since 2006.



2. The yak fiber is cleaned, dyed, and spun into yarn in factories in other parts of China.

elderly poverty

- formal social security programs in the Southeast and East Asian countries have very low coverage of older adults (Chan, 2005)
- to help the families bear the costs of elderly care, policy-makers are called to expand social security to a more universal coverage, reinforce filial piety through values formation, support payments to key caregivers and promote elderly-friendly residence design (Long & Pfau, 2009; Chen, 2009; Suwanrada, 2009).

Treatment and care for sick family members

- the most common communicable disease in Southeast Asia is diarrhea —affecting 1.27 million individuals annually (Gupta & Guin, 2010)
- Detels (2004) reported that HIV/AIDS has severely affected Thailand, Cambodia and Myanmar, although its prevalence does not exceed 2 per cent of the sexually active adult population.
- Governments are urged to pay urgent attention to improve health infrastructure and information systems, to give sufficient and constant public funding to epidemiological research, and ensure the adequate training and availability of health care professionals.

Waiting for Governments to Work

	Political Freedom (Score 0-2)	Human Rights Violation (Score 0-5)	Corruption Victims	Democratic Decentralization (Score 0-2)	Political Engagement (% of people who voice opinion to public officials)
	2008	2008	2008	2008	2008
Afghanistan	1	5	31	0	22
Bangladesh	0	4	9	0	7
China, People's Republic of	0	4	..	2	..
India	2	4	15	1	12
Indonesia	2	3	4	2	11
Korea, Republic of	2	2	10	1	22
Malaysia	1	2	4	..	11
Myanmar	0	5	6
Nepal	2	4	8	2	11
Pakistan	2	4	9	1	15
Philippines	2	4	13	2	24
Sri Lanka	2	4	5	2	12
Thailand	2	3	13	2	29
Viet Nam	0	3	9	2	16

Source: <http://data.un.org>

Conclusions

- The anti-poverty strategies focused on the families are basically reiteration of the functions proper to the State and the family.
- To the State pertains the provision of the adequate human, social and economic environment (access to food and water supply, jobs, education, infrastructure, wealth redistribution, social security spending) needed by families to look after the development and well-being of their family members.
- There is a challenge for families to foster greater filial piety and strengthen intergenerational support. On the other hand, the governments have to protect and assist the family, respecting always the principles of common good and subsidiarity.

Recommendations

- Harness regional solidarity in tackling family issues by catalyzing an intra-region coordinating council that will help governments to identify issues, trends and challenges in family policy and promote cooperation among neighbors of similar cultures in developing strategies and sharing best practices.
- Institutionalize a comprehensive set of performance measures with which to evaluate the achievements of Member States in eradicating family poverty
- Initiate a regional discussion on cash transfer programs to leverage on the successes and learn from the failures within Asia and in relation to Latin American experience. The same proposal is made of other anti-poverty strategies like social protection packages, capacity building, elderly poverty, healthcare , collaboration with NGOs, etc.