

# Educational Challenges in Asia

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# Introduction

- Level of development and educational status of the population ( Tertiary enrolment varies from less than 3 % in some countries, i.e. Cambodia to about 70% in others i.e. Korea)
- Inter-country variations
- Intra-country variations; class, gender, rural-urban
- Levels of educational attainment
- Different types of challenges across the region ( universal primary education to development of highly skilled workers to fit into service economies of NIC's)

# Basic Education and Literacy

- Enrolment rates
- Regional disparities
- Transition to secondary and beyond( This is critical not only from a development point of view but also from a broader social perspective; social mobility, avoiding teenage pregnancies, etc.)
- School drop out rates in some countries increase rapidly from primary to secondary, and secondary to tertiary; intra-country variations

country	Total	Male	female
Bangladesh	84	82	86
Cambodia	93	96	91
India	98	98	98
Indonesia	87	90	85
Malaysia	93	93	93
Mongolia	79	78	80
Myanmar	84	84	85
Republic of Korea	100	100	100
Sri Lanka	95	-	-

Primary enrolment in selected countries ; source: Global Education Digest, UNESCO 2005

# Inequalities in Education

- Transport systems
- Rural infrastructure: Electricity, Telephone
- Language skills
- Public investments in education( wide variations between countries; less than 10% in SL to over 20% in Singapore)
- Abject poverty and educational performance; malnutrition and cognitive development)
- Quality of education: trained teachers, number of students per teacher

# Globalization, Liberalization and Education

- Private investments in education
- Rich and poor countries; suppliers/consumers
- Technology based education concentrated in developed countries
- Increasing costs and competition
- Increasing pressure on children and youth

# Access to ICT

- Public education and ICT
- Language Skills and Internet
- Digital Divide; rich and poor countries
- Singapore: 527 computers per 1000 persons; 1-3 in Pakistan
- Marginalization of rural poor
- Internet use varies widely across and within countries; 0.2 per thousand persons in Bangladesh as against 419 in Singapore; Sri Lanka 3.4, India 4.5

# Changing Directions

- Economic restructuring and education:  
Unskilled labor versus skilled labor
- Technical and vocational education
- Marginalization of liberal arts
- What kind of an educated person?

# Science and Technology

- Wide disparities at national and regional levels
- Scientists and engineers
- Registration of patents; only a very few Asian countries (Japan, Korea, Singapore, India)
- Exodus of scientists and engineers

# Migration and Education

- Level of development and migration of youth
- Level of education and migration
- Brain drain
- Changing role of developed countries; suppliers of education on a commercial basis

# Education and National Integration

- Secular education is still not the norm in some countries
- Segregation on ethno-linguistic and religious lines and identity formation
- Marginalization of the poor and minorities
- Rise of nationalism and political conflict

# Other challenges

Use of education as a means to  
achieving

**a.** Sustainable livelihoods,

**b.** Healthier life styles,

**c.** combat crime and violence,

**d.** promote democratic values

# The Way Forward

- An integrated approach to policy formulation; youth, education and employment policies
- Development of program interventions
- Effective monitoring and evaluation systems