

## Abstract

# Review of Global Agenda on Gender Equality and South Korea's Experience

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The year 2020 marks the convergence of three important international gender agenda, that is, the 25th anniversary of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action(1995), the 20th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women Peace and Security, and the 5th anniversary of Sustainable Development Goals. Against this background, this study aims at identifying the achievements and challenges of South Korea's gender policies for the last ten years by 1) examining the development of various global gender agenda in

terms of continuity and changes, and by 2) reviewing South Korea's policy achievements in the areas of women and the economy, women and health, violence against women and gender mainstreaming.

### **Women and the Economy in South Korea**

Domestic policy interventions to bridge gender gap in labor market in South Korea can be broadly classified into those tackling labor market and those tackling care work. Korea has taken measures at various levels to enhance women's economic activities, including supports for: women's participation in the labor market; reemployment of career-interrupted women; and maternity care and work-family balance. This study presents the analyses of gender gaps in labor force participation rates, wages, and job quality over the last 10 years and explores key policies and issues to address the gaps.

### **Gender Mainstreaming in South Korea**

South Korea institutionalized gender mainstreaming since the mid-2000s based on four policy tools: gender impact assessment (2005), gender responsive budgeting (2009), gender responsive statistics (2008) and gender responsive education (2006). This study looks into the development of each of these tools and finds that there is a gap between the system and reality. To ensure effective operation of gender mainstreaming, it is recommended that South Korea establish the Gender Equality Committee at the Office of the President, set up a dedicated secretariat for Gender Equality Council within the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, conduct performance management based on the link between gender impact assessment and gender responsive budgeting, and build a cooperative system among government agencies.

## **Women and Health in South Korea**

Korea continuously pursued various policies such as supporting medical services during pregnancy and childbirth, preventing abuse of cesarean section, supporting plans for infertility treatment for infertile couples or couples having difficulties getting pregnant, enhancing systems to support health of working women and to secure women's health rights. On the other hand, women's health issues in Korea focus only on diseases and symptoms that occur frequently or only in women, and lack interest in diseases that may occur in both men and women. Korea's future task is to pay attention to sex education and issues related to sexually transmitted diseases among adolescent girls. Recently, abortion is emerging as a major social issue and there is a need for policy makers to utilize more accurate research data so that legal and institutional improvements in abortion can be made at a level that is both realistic and does not violate bioethics at a moment where women's rights to self-determination and bioethics are at odds.

## **Violences against Women in South Korea**

There have been various institutional achievements in the areas of sexual violence, domestic violence, prostitution and cyber-space violence, expansion of the scope of sexual violence prevention education, and the enactment of the Violence Against Women Act. Progress has been made as number of charges reported by victims of sexual violence are increasing along with changes to laws and systems related to sexual violence crimes. However, addressing the issue of secondary damages on victims during police investigation processes due to lack of consideration for victims, victims bearing the burden of proof, improving the Violence Against Women Act,

and institutionalizing the #MeToo movement remain as future challenges. In addition, it is difficult to punish perpetrators of date-related sexual violence and stalking as legal grounds for their punishment is vague despite the increasing number of such cases. Moreover, it is necessary to actively respond to digital sexual violence and online misogyny as violence and prostitution against women in online spaces have increased rapidly due to development of internet and rapid spread of smart phones.