
**Policy Logic and Suggestions for
Incorporating Men into Gender Equality Policy**

Kyoung Hee Ma
Hee Young Moon
Hyun Gyung Kim
Ji Sung Park

Introduction

Research Background and Purpose

This is an exploratory study of the policy logic and suggestions for incorporating men into gender equality policy grounded on the Framework Act on Gender Equality.

Since the Framework Act on Women's Development was fully amended to the Framework Act on Gender Equality, there has been a growing interest in a new direction for the gender equality policy in Korean society. However, no social consensus has been formed yet on what gender equality means. In this situation, the society has also taken a greater interest in men from the stance that because women's policy in the past had only women as its policy targets, gender

equality policy should include not only women but also men. Nevertheless, there is still a lack of discussion about the manner of setting the relationship between gender equality policy and existing women's policy and about the goals to base gender equality policy when encompassing men in its policy targets. Considering social expectations from the name change from women's policy to gender equality policy, now is the time to make more systematic and earnest discussions for gender equality and men and for incorporating men into gender equality policy.

In this background, this study aims to build a policy logic about how to include men in policy targets under the Framework Act on Gender Equality and to explore policy directions and issues based on this logic. Specifically, this study reviewed directions of activities and discussions of the United Nations and the European Union as they have a momentous impact on the gender equality policies and directions of countries around the world. Then, in compliance with this logic, the study analyzed cases of policies being implemented in many countries. The study identified policy implications from these cases and attempted to provide ideas of suggestions for implementing policies in South Korea. The study is also expected to contribute to clarifying the issues over what is the gender equality that we should pursue and what policy efforts are required to be made to do so, going beyond the wasteful debate primarily over the terms related to "equality between men and women" and "gender equality."

Research Contents and Methods

This study has largely the following four contents:

First, it reviewed the introduction and dissemination of the agenda "gender equality and men" in the international community and the current trends, and analyzed recommendations of the international organizations to their member states to identify implications for policy directions and areas.

Second, it identified logic for incorporating men in the gender equality policy

based on the grounds for the argument of the international organizations originating from the academic studies of pro-feminism and critical studies of men and masculinities as well as from discussions of scholars contributing to these studies.

Third, it analyzed overseas national policies and projects of global-non-profit organizations by agenda area that is addressed in “gender equality and men” and identified their implications. The study selected two to three cases from six areas, including anti-violence, education, fatherhood, men's health, support services for men, and basis for policy making, and then conducted an in-depth analysis.

Last, putting all the above-mentioned discussions together, the study defined the concept of gender equality policy and presented policy directions and suggestions for incorporating men in Korea's gender equality policy.

The main research method is literature review. To build theoretical logic for incorporating men in gender equality, this study reviewed academic studies with themes on “gender equality and men,” and collected and analyzed data produced by the United Nations, the European Union, private international organizations, and individual nations.

Logic for Incorporating Men into Gender Equality Policy

Goal of Incorporating Men into Gender Equality Policy

In the gender equality policy, we should avoid such a male-discrimination perspective that “men as well are discriminated” or such approach as parallel policies that support men in the same manner as supporting women. This approach may not only weaken the foundation for the gender equality policy that has been implemented thus far but may also distort the issue of gender equality as the zero-sum game between men and women.

Connell contended that in gender equality policy, incorporating men should aim at gender reform as a systematic attempt to change unequal gender relations. Gender reform is to raise a question about the gender order that divides the areas of women's and men's lives and behavioral modes in a hierarchical manner and produces inequality (Connell, 2003:6).

Principles for Incorporating Men into Gender Equality Policy

In the gender equality policy, incorporating men is under the influence of politics of masculinities as men's systematic response to changes in the gender order. Politics of masculinities is important in that it exercises discursive influence on the formation of a new gender order while connoting normative and political implications on the relations between women and men, and that it has an impact on gender politics and on gender equality policy (Messner, 2000). In his study on the types of politics of masculinities in the 1970s and afterwards, Messner saw that politics of masculinities could have different implications for roles to perform in politics of gender equality according to the emphases on three aspects, including men's institutionalized privilege, the costs of masculinity, and differences and inequalities among men. Messner's arguments provide important insights into identifying principles for policies for incorporating men into gender equality. In other words, it is necessary to take a "balanced approach" based on the awareness of the institutionalized privilege, the costs of masculinity, and differences and inequalities among men. This poses very complicated and tough challenges of positioning men as policy targets without losing the direction of "gender reform, while incorporating men's legitimate welfare and needs in policies without sacrificing the policy support that has been provided for women (Connell, 2003:12; Commission on the Status of Women, 2004; Flood, 2015:5).

Policy Directions and Suggestions for Incorporating Men into Gender Equality Policy

Concept of gender equality policy

Women's policy and gender equality policy have no fundamental differences in that they share the same goal of gender equality. While women's policy includes its targets "women" in its name as a strategy to achieve the goal of gender equality, gender equality policy includes its goal "gender equality" in its name.

Although the two terminologies do not have fundamental differences, gender equality policy needs to seek a new approach, considering its changed policy environment. Also, "women-specific approach of women's policy that has focused on women only has limitations from two aspects: first, it has a negative effect due to its target-centered understanding. That is, target-centered understanding has brought the effect of paying attention only to "women" as policy targets rather than to the policy goal, and as a consequence it led to misunderstanding that men are excluded from policies or reversely discriminated. Second, more fundamentally, this approach of women's policy could not develop into a policy that pursues changes in gender relations by failing to pay attention to men--another axis of the issue of gender inequality. Due to this misunderstanding and intrinsic limitations of the existing approach, the gender equality policy needs to embrace an approach that goes beyond the "women-specific approach." However, this does not mean weakening the "women-specific approach" or replacing it with a new approach. The uniqueness of gender equality policy is not to replace the women-specific approach but to integrate men in the policy in such a manner that can maintain the continuity of the existing approach. In other words, it is to integrate men in the policy as a new approach to attain the goal of gender equality that has been pursued by the women-specific approach, while continually pursuing the women-specific approach.

Policy Directions for incorporating Men

A “balanced” approach considers gender as relations rather than a biological category of men and women in integrating men in the gender equality policy. For this balanced approach, this study suggests the following three policy directions:

First, change men’s attitude and behavior for gender equality. It is also to change the norm and practice of manliness or masculinity. This is possible, first, by providing more skills and opportunities for more men to participate in housework, care, and child-rearing. The second level of this suggestion is for men to disintegrate the relations of masculinities and violence from the process of socialization in childhood, build intimate relationships with others, express their emotions, and possess communication skills.

Second, encourage men to support gender equality and organize their participation, which can be discussed from two aspects: one is to gain support for gender equality from male policy makers who are in a position to exercise influence socially and economically and to officially confirm their will to this end. The other is to organize relatively ordinary men’s support and participation for gender equality.

Third, take an approach of assisting men in difficult situations considering the differences among themselves. This approach may bring very different effects depending on the ways the system is designed and the perspectives the service deliverers take on gender equality and men. As such, discreet discussions are required to develop this approach into a policy. These services need to support vulnerable men’s practical needs on one hand, but should also take an approach to strengthen their competencies that can build equal relationships through new masculinities on the other hand.

Policy Suggestions

First, change men's attitude and behavior: i) run gender equal daycare centers and kindergartens, ii) guide the career path of male students toward non-traditional areas, and iii) promote the use of the work and family reconciliation system that focuses on men.

Second, organize men's participation in order to eradicate gender-based violence: i) support men's small group activities and organizations related to gender equality, ii) support men-initiated campaigns against gender-based violence, iii) support women's movement to provide men's programs against gender-based violence, and iv) enrich educational content on the prevention of violence.

Third, lay a basis for implementing men's health policies: i) conduct mid- to long-term survey and research on men's health and ii) organize and support men's health network.

Fourth, assist men in difficult situations: i) offer total support services for men and ii) integrate men in family support services.

Fifth and last, perform comprehensive surveys and research for incorporating men in gender equality: conduct quantitative and qualitative surveys and research focusing on gender equality (or inequality) in Korea and its relations with men, men's awareness and practice of gender equality, and men's interest and needs in the gender equality policy.