

Challenges in Ensuring Gender Equality in Science and Technology in the Asia Pacific Region

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Outline

- **Ensuring gender equality:** A major global challenge
- **Gender Equality in S&T**
Though percentage of young women scientists has increased substantially, excellent examples but their fraction is small at the top levels
- **AASSA External Review**
Terms of reference includes: “To suggest strategies to enhance participation of young scientists and women scientists in AASSA activities”

Ensuring gender equality: A major global challenge

- One of the Millennium Development Goals.
- This is being emphasized in the UN **Sustainable Development Goals**, to be formalized soon.
- Very high enrolment of female students in higher education and increasing number of young female researchers is a positive sign .
- Performance of female students in educational exams and competitions is excellent

Ensuring gender equality: A major global challenge

- There is a need to remove all types of discrimination against the female fraction of global population and ensuring full realization of their potential under a secure, safe and healthy atmosphere

Representation of Female Scientists and Technocrats at Top Positions

- The fraction of female Fellows in National Academies of Science and Technology is small though increasing slowly
- Good exceptions

Dr Soraya Popal, President of Academy of Sciences of Afghanistan.

The percentage of women Fellows of the Turkish Academy of Sciences (TUBA) is ~20%, perhaps highest in the world.

Representation of Female Scientists and Technocrats at Top Positions

- Dr. Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw has made a mark at global level as the founder of a successful multi-national high-tech company Biocon.

Governmental Initiatives

- Several governments are introducing new schemes to enable women scientists to remain active in research and to take care of families, particularly that of the young kids.
- For example, the Department of Science and Technology (DST) of Government of India has a special group engaged in running Women Scientists Programme.
- Age group 30-50 years

Department of Science and Technology, Government of India

Women scientists are being encouraged to:

- a) Pursue research in frontier areas of science and engineering;*
- b) Work on problems of societal relevance; and*
- c) To take up S&T-based internship followed by self-employment.*

The Association of Academies and Societies of Sciences in Asia, AASSA

- One of the four Regional Network of the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP) covering Asian and Australasian region
- 34 Members from 30 countries
- Widely different level of economic development and S&T establishment

External Review of AASSA

- AASSA is at present undergoing a review of its activities by an External Panel.
- One of the terms of reference is:
“To suggest strategies to enhance participation of young scientists and women scientists in AASSA activities”.

External Review of AASSA

- AASSA will make very effort to work on the recommendations of the Panel on this important issue.
- Continuous efforts are needed on the long term basis for improvement in the overall situation.

Summary

- **Gender equality: A global issue**

Its inclusion in UN Sustainable Development Goals will help in tackling this global challenge

- **Some positive examples from the AASSA membership**
- **External review of AASSA and Gender equality**

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