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

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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
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
Thank You

Dhanyavad

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Thank You