

# **SEASONAL POVERTY, VULNERABILITY DIMENSIONS AND COPING MECHANISMS IN DEVELOPING ASIA:**

**Policy Implications for Social Protection  
and Social Justice  
- Case studies from BANGLADESH,  
CAMBODIA, CHINA, INDIA, LAO PDR  
and NEPAL**

**By**

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# Field Studies from 6 Asian Countries

Paper based on case studies from 6 Asian developing countries

-BANGLADESH, CAMBODIA, CHINA, INDIA, LAO PDR and NEPAL

Draws upon comparative field lessons for policy

Based on PRA/PLA - seasonal calendars, interviews and group discussions



# KEY ISSUES, LESSONS AND POLICY DO-ABLES - CROSS-COUNTRY COMPARISONS

- Food Security is the Bottom-line - Food deficit periods are highly correlated with Seasonality
- Seasonal Forces make Livelihoods Vulnerable - India and Nepal - Livelihoods diversification helps to reduce vulnerability
- Women and Women-Headed Households most Affected - Cases from Bangladesh Cambodia, Laos, Nepal and India - women and FHHs most affected - Targeted seasonal safety net
- Elderly Women's Plight - Grain transfers and cash transfers guaranteed by public institutions



## KEY ISSUES, LESSONS AND POLICY DO-ABLES - CROSS-COUNTRY COMPARISONS (Continued)

- *Feminization of Poverty and Appropriateness of Programmes* - Customized scheme - seasonal health safety net for FHHs/women/children
- *Seasonal Migration- a Coping Strategy helps Men* - China - felt need amongst migrants for capacity building - New schemes required to protect interests of the migrants
- *Disposable Cash and Seasonal Migration* - Disposable cash helps repay debts, repair dwelling, buy new assets, meet social obligations, family commitments and save



## KEY ISSUES, LESSONS AND POLICY DO-ABLES - CROSS-COUNTRY COMPARISONS (Continued)

- Higher Incidence of Human Disease and Livestock Disease - Important to recognize seasonality patterns of human health and livestock - Provide health education, livestock insurance on easy terms and affordable preventive and curative health services
- Accessing Wild Food and Commons in Deficit Periods - Cambodia, China, Laos, India and Nepal - Important for natural resource policy
- Involvement and Empathy of Local Institutions and Governance - Lao PDR case - Social institutions support coping with vulnerability - India and Nepal - local functionaries when effective help mitigate seasonal impacts - Variability to increase with climate change - Increased capacity to cope with shocks and stresses - Local capacity building



# KEY ISSUES, LESSONS AND POLICY DO-ABLES - CROSS-COUNTRY COMPARISONS (Continued)

- Integrated and Sustained Interventions have Better Value - Cases from India and Nepal show -Integrated and sustained interventions provide better support
- Corruption eats into Social Protection and Hampers Social Justice - India Corruption study estimate 1 of every 3 BPL households paid bribes in availing one or more of the 11 public services in 2007-08 -In NREGS, one-fourth of BPL households bribed a local "public representative" though one of the lowest - more of such reporting required
- Recognition of Local Knowledge - Establishing communication channels with poor women
- Support towards Ethnic Minorities - Often most neglected groups/communities and most affected by seasons



# Concluding Remarks

Case studies from 6 countries indicate:

- Fresh thinking on seasonal safety nets
- New capacity building

Seasonal Safety nets:

- To ensure seasonal food security for women and children
- Livelihoods diversification and support for women and elderly based on the spot-analysis
- Pro-poor natural resource policies for deficit seasons -
- Investment in human resources -
- Capacity building for seasonal migration -
- Institutional capacity building to tackle seasonal poverty