Challenges and opportunities for achievement of SDG1 “Eradicate extreme poverty for all” from the grassroots perspectives

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Central Asia has made notable strides towards achieving SDG1, which focuses on ending poverty in all its forms.

Despite progress, there are still significant challenges to address in the region.

Efforts must prioritize safeguarding and empowering individuals, with special attention to women and vulnerable groups.

Building resilience is crucial, especially in the face of economic and environmental uncertainties.

Key challenges include limited access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities.

Women face additional barriers due to societal norms and cultural practices that perpetuate gender inequality.

Gender disparities not only limit women's potential but also hinder overall societal development.
Protecting and investing in people and enhancing resilience, especially among women and vulnerable population groups

- Rural women rely on water and energy resources for livelihoods, families, and food security, making them highly vulnerable.
- Pollution, biodiversity loss, and land degradation worsen economic vulnerability among rural women.
- Climate change affects women through water scarcity, disrupted agriculture, and pollution of soil, food, and groundwater.
- Socio-economic status, cultural norms, resource access, poverty, and gender influence coping mechanisms.
- Climate change intensifies poverty, inequality, displacements, agricultural crises, and impacts marginalized communities, particularly women.
- Essential financing needed for renewable energy, climate resilience, sustainable land management, and conservation agricultural practices.
- Inclusive participation lacking, especially for vulnerable groups and women, in climate action plans, requiring enforced inclusion.
- Women, young people, and farmers initiate local resilience solutions with limited resources; these efforts must be supported and enhanced for community adaptation.
Role of social protection systems and public policies to mitigate the impact on most vulnerable and increase resilience to shocks

- **Limited Access to Basic Services**: Environmental pollution, outdated infrastructure, and lack of clean drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene contribute to rural women’s health problems.

- **Land and Property Rights**: Traditional laws and gender stereotypes hinder women’s rights, leading to employment problems and labor migration.

- **Informal Sector Challenges**: Women in the informal sector lack social protections, face high unpaid domestic workloads, and have limited access to resources and financial services.

- **Healthcare Challenges**: Commercialized medical services, poor infrastructure, and lack of access to medical resources affect rural women’s health and well-being.

- **Educational Barriers**: Decline in education quality, limited access to family planning, and influence of religious fundamentalism hinder rural girls’ education.

- **Increased Vulnerabilities during Crises**: Women, especially heads of households, face heightened vulnerabilities and increased care responsibilities during crises like the pandemic.

- **Underrepresentation in Decision-Making**: Gender stereotypes limit women’s participation, leading to underrepresentation of rural women in decision-making roles.

- **Inadequate Social Protection**: Existing social protection systems do not meet the needs of rural women, leaving them vulnerable to poverty and economic instability.
Recommendations

- **Leadership Development:** Empower rural women to respond to climate change, natural disasters, and peace issues, ensuring their direct access to climate funds.

- **Agroecology Support:** Aid rural women in developing agroecology, fostering knowledge exchange at the sub-regional level.

- **Access to Services and Technologies:** Increase access to essential services and technologies for water supply, agriculture, family care, and businesses for rural women.

- **Social Justice and Gender Equality:** Challenge traditional practices and norms perpetuating inequalities, addressing women's needs, property rights, access to services, and protection from gender-based violence.

- **Special Needs of Rural Girls:** Provide quality vocational education, sanitary conditions in rural schools, and youth-friendly reproductive health services for rural girls.

- **Land Inheritance Rights:** Establish laws protecting women's rights to inherit land and ensuring secure land tenure.

- **Supportive Infrastructure:** Increase the number of kindergartens in rural areas, enabling women's education and participation in economic activities.
Recommendations

- **Social Protection Transformation**: Reform social protection measures, providing access to pensions, disability cover, unemployment benefits, and healthcare for vulnerable groups.

- **Livelihood Recovery Programs**: Prioritize recovery programs for social enterprises, MSMEs, and informal sectors, offering debt relief, reskilling, and support for structural aspects.

- **Civil Society Involvement**: Strengthen involvement of civil society and professional groups in integrated planning and response delivery, ensuring collaboration and accountability.

- **Digital Divide Addressal**: Address the digital divide, providing equitable access to technology for learning and sustainable recovery.

- **Inclusive National Security Schemes**: Ensure universal coverage under national security schemes for livelihood support, healthcare, food security, and nutrition, prioritizing vulnerable groups.

- **Data Disaggregation**: Collect disaggregated data by gender, ethnicity, and disability for targeted intervention and monitoring support for vulnerable groups.

- **Investing in People**: Prioritize social protection programs, education, and healthcare, especially for women and girls, to break the cycle of poverty and enhance resilience.