

Gender gap and perception in STEM in Korea

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According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2017 published by the World Economic Forum (WEF), in Korea, 96% of the gender gap in educational achievement has been resolved, while the labor participation rate for women is 55.9%, which is only 73% for men. While the labor participation rate of highly educated women and men is higher than that of the whole population, the gender gap in labor participation rate is much larger in the highly educated population. This is fundamentally due to social and structural gender inequality.

The analysis of the gender perspective among international indicators related to human resource development can be a cornerstone for the development of a balanced policy that reflects gender equality. In Korea, both the Human Development Index (HDI) and the Inequality-Adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI) are higher than the average among member countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), but the gap between the two is large. In particular, the HDI for men is noticeably higher than the OECD average, while the HDI for women is lower than the average, indicating a large development gap between the genders. Looking more closely at the Gender Inequality Index (GII) and the Gender Gap Index (GGI), in the GII-based ranking that measures gender inequality in terms of human rights and fundamental rights, Korea ranks highest among 162 OECD countries, unlike most Asia and Pacific Nations Network (APNN) countries. On the other hand, in the GGI-based ranking that measures the gender gap in the economic, education, health, and political domains, it ranked 108th out of 153 countries, showing a high level of inequality. It can be seen that the gender gap in Korea in terms of economic participation, opportunity, and political authority has not improved significantly over the past decade.

If we look closely at the GII and GDI, there are issues among APNN countries that show similar inequality levels in terms of type or opportunity of economic activity or educational achievement and political authority, which are different from issues common to OECD countries, such as the gender gap in the participation rate in economic activities. Therefore, it seems useful to find specific solutions by in-depth analysis of the causes while examining the social and cultural similarities and differences among APNN countries. Considering that equitable human resource development is the basis of a sustainable society, it is necessary to continuously promote balanced policy development through cooperation between APNN countries.

[1] UNDP, Human Development Report 2010-2019

[2] WEF, Global Gender Gap Report 2014-2020