

Gender Impact Assessment and Gender Equality

Young Joo KIM (Korea)

According to the Beijing Platform that was adopted at the UN World Conference on Women in 1995, the concept of gender equality should be considered a major guideline for all policies. And the platform encouraged all countries to accept 'Gender Analysis for Policies'. This shows that gender equality has some limits to being achieved through policies and plans only for women and emphasizes a need to apply a 'Gender View' to all policies and plans of governments.

This change of paradigm has influenced women's movements and policies for women in Korea to a large extent. Korea has improved its systems to deal with problems such as assaults on women and gender discrimination for employment and at work since the 1990's. However, as there are still various forms of discrimination against and disadvantages for women in daily life, it became necessary to systematically and closely analyze various cases of women's inequality and put forth an effort to solve them.

Because of these reasons, Korea introduced the Gender Impact Assessment in 2004 and has continued to promote it. In fact, the Gender Impact Assessment had been introduced in many countries and international institutes before being applied in Korea, and over 40 countries including the U.K. (Gender Impact Assessment), Canada (Gender Analysis), the UN, the ILO, etc., have applied this system. These Gender Impact Assessments analyze gender characteristics and differences and find issues to be corrected, in order to apply them to policies before planning and executing them.

This system can contribute to actual gender equality by eliminating the discriminating facts of policies. This is because the system guarantees the fair participation of men and women and their opportunities for fair development. Now all departments of the central government, local governments and education offices are participating in the enforcement procedure of the Gender Impact Assessment, so most administrative agencies are carrying out this system.

After executing the Gender Impact Assessment, policies applying to gender differences and desires are being carried out. Gender discrimination is also being corrected in many fields such as welfare, education, culture, local development, etc., little by little. For example, in 2007, Seoul City had a 'Making parks safe for women' campaign through the Gender Impact Assessment for the management and administration of 'Seoul Forest'. And, as a result, they installed CCTVs in the park, increased night-time guards, changed 7 bus lines to make them pass the park for easy

accessibility, built baby-carriage rental places and nursing rooms for women's convenience, and expanded weekend programs for families.

Korea has recently been strengthening the Gender Impact Assessment system. Last year, <Gender Impact Assessment Law> was established and it is now being executed. Therefore, this law should be applied to political projects as well as the regulations and basic plans of the central government and local government. In this way, the Gender Impact Assessment will be carried out before preparing those regulations and basic plans. However, strengthening the Gender Impact Assessment system doesn't mean that gender equality will automatically be achieved, and assessment is not only for administrative agencies and public servants. To correctly execute the Gender Impact Assessment system and reinforce its results, all women who are beneficiaries of this policy should actively participate in the execution procedure of this system.



Paving blocks installed in consideration of female pedestrians

In this regard, the role of NPOs such as women's organizations is very important to monitor the results of the Gender Impact Assessment and its execution as well as to provide suggestions. Furthermore, cooperation and partnership with NPOs is essential to effectively develop the Gender Impact Assessment system in Korea.