

## **A Social Protection Index For Asia**

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### **Abstract**

Quantitative information on social protection in Asia is generally lacking. This paper reports on a recent study which created an inventory of social protection programs for 31 Asian and Pacific countries. This information was then used to formulate a Social Protection Index (SPI) comprising four summary social protection indicators (cost, coverage, distribution and impact) for these countries. Key findings are that, on average, these countries spend under 5% of GDP on social protection, achieve an overall coverage level of 35% and provide some social protection to over half the poor population. However the impact of the benefits provided is generally low, averaging less than 25% of the poverty line income. There is substantial variation across countries with similar income levels indicating that there is scope for many Asian countries to extend their social protection programs. Examples are provided of ways in which the research can be used by international and national agencies involved in social protection.

**Keywords (5):** Asia; social protection; vulnerability; poverty