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The Importance of the Role of Government on Integrating a Family Perspective in Development: Korean Experience

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[Introduction]

After the Second World War in the 20th century, most LDCs(less-developed countries) remained under-developed, and only a few countries escaped from poverty and achieved development with industrialization. Korea transformed from an agrarian society to an industrialized one within three decades between the 1960s and the 1990s, and the family lives have changed dramatically. Social, political and economic indicators are still improving in Korea.

South Korea has a small size of land, densely populated and has very few natural resources or almost none. After the Korean War in 1953, population was around 30 million, and grew to 51 million in 2016. In the 1950s, Korea was poor and hungry, did not have enough food and heavily depended upon food aid from the

USA and many European countries. Their economic development was driven by the strong and authoritative government. By 2015, the country became the 13th largest economy, and 6th largest trading nation in the world.

It is worth discussing about Korean development, and how it can be applied to developing countries on family perspective and sustainability. I would like to focus on the role of government, and some micro issues on family and sustainability.

[Role of Government]

Adam Smith, a British Scholar in the 18th century, stated that the government should focus on three major tasks such as national security, the law and order and the provision of public goods in a market-driven economy. He insisted that the government should minimize market intervention, *laissez faire*, and the market could work the most efficient way by the invisible hand. This classical economic theory could apply in many economies even in the contemporary world.

[National Security]

First of all, national security is required to protect the people, citizen's property and the territory. South Korea had a war with the North for 3 years between 1950 and 1953. After the War, South Korea has kept their national security well over the last nearly 70 years, though North Korean is creating problems with missiles and nuclear bomb crisis in recent years. The national security in Korea made possible to attract many foreign investors, and the Korean economy was able to

develop with successful industrial promotion.

However, some countries in this part of the world, are suffering from internal and external conflicts. Syria has been seriously damaged by internal conflict which caused a lot of destruction, and affected their family lives. The economy has been shattered. It is estimated that a total of 11 million people out of 25 million were displaced internally and externally. Afghanistan is struggling with internal conflict for more than four decades. It is estimated that more than 1 million people were displaced in 2016 and 2017. Yemen is suffering from internal conflict and some 3.3 million people were displaced since March 2015, and 2 million people are in temporary shelter. Iraq is still fighting with the IS (Islam State) group. We can claim that the national security is the top priority for any government to bring the society stable and people will be able to enjoy normal lives.

[Law and Order]

Secondly, the law and order is crucial for any society to maintain decent daily living. When the government is not efficient and cannot keep the law and order, there will be a lot of unlawful activities and misbehavior. Every society works with common laws and public morality. In many countries including developed countries have problems of low level of common laws and public morality. The level of education and public perception of the citizens will be related to the common laws and public morality.

South Korea, has been keeping the law and order at a high standard. The crime ratio in Korea is one of the lowest among industrialized countries. It was possible with the improved capacity of the central and regional governments. Korea has

the highest participation ratio in the tertiary education in the world, and improved the perception of public morality and virtue.

[Provision of Public Goods]

The third major role of the government is the provision of public goods. This includes a wide range of public services such as social overhead capital and infrastructure. Education and training could be included. The government should provide business friendly policies, and social policies to improve the living standard of citizens and social welfare.

The Korean government managed to provide high level of SOCs and social infrastructure. Economic policies were effectively supporting private businesses. The improvement of the education sector was helpful to build up capacity of the public and the private sectors. With substantial amount of government revenue raised as the economy became strong, their social welfare systems were well developed. The health service is one of the best in the world resulting increased life expectancy and quality life.

Among the LDCs, many governments have policies, and many policies are mismatching with what the society wants, and what the business sector needs. Many LDCs are having problems of improving the education sector due to lack of resources and quality teachers. Industrial promotion requires a lot of skilled workers. LDCs do not have proper training system and institution to train vocational skills, and only low level technology industries are promoted which makes it difficult to sustain.

[Political Aspects of the Government]

Fourthly, the political aspects of government affect family lives and sustainability. Government levies taxes to the citizens and business entities, where the revenue will be spent to run the country. The government requires a high level of management skills so that the revenue will be properly used, and policies would be effective. The capacities of civil servants and the public sector determine the quality of public services, hence the quality of people's life.

In South Korea, highly education talented people join the public sector. It was due to job security, public perception, social recognition among citizens. Korean culture maintained since the Chosun Kingdom more than 600 years. The quality of public services was guaranteed and efficient for many years throughout the long Korean history.

Some countries have strong governments, but the public sector is not effective in policy making and implementation.

[Micro level Issues]

It is helpful to discuss about the family and the SDGs at the micro level. At the village level, it is necessary to keep some norms and rules among village residents and individuals. There can be some village level democracy through community gatherings to bring issues within the boundary. These will be applied to both urban and rural areas. The government could support small community to encourage cooperatives in rural areas, and to bring economic benefits to the village.

Korea has been successful to bring the New Village Movement (NVM) during the early 1960s when the country was about to start industrialization. The NVM was very successful to develop rural areas and expanded to urban areas. The NVM brought higher income and improved living environment, hence better life at the household level.

Korean family values have been changing over the years. The life style of family member has changed with industrialization. Majority people have transformed from family centered thinking to more individualistic. Korean traditional values were similar to the Confucianism with kinship, seniority and man dominated, but changed a bit. Moreover, there are some traditional customs remain and keep on progressing such as strong education motivation.

[Importance of Human Resource Development]

One of the critical factors for Korean development is the improvement of human capital. In Korea, it was possible with education and training, and strong government-led economic development policies. Korea has the highest ratio on the tertiary education in the world. Koreans have strong beliefs of education for better life and gain social status. One of the reasons why the birth ratio is low in Korea, is due to costly education. Parents are still devoting themselves for their children's education. Korean students were top level in the PISA completion in science and mathematics for many years.

[Future Prospects]

Many things are changing very fast with the 4th industrial revolution now. Due to

the rapid technological progress, less people will be working in industries, and unemployment ratio among the youth is going to increase. Some Korean youth are taking jobs in Japan and abroad. We have one of the fastest aging society in the world with good health care system and increased income level. It would affect sustainability of the society. The government is trying to encourage people to have more children, but the policies are not that successful. Despite of these changes, the Korean society is still moving upward.

[Concluding Remarks]

In conclusion, it is necessary to build up capacity of the public sector and policies should adequately match with development and sustainability. It is required to promote the micro level policies in villages and at the household level. These activities all require education and training of the citizens.

The role of government is critical to integrate family perspective and development. By sum up, we could argue that the government needs to focus on following issues.

- 1) Keep national security, the law and order and provide public goods,
- 2) Capacity building of civil servants and the public sector,
- 3) Provide policies to improve education and training,
- 4) Provide policies on micro level (village and household) policies like the NVM in Korea

These will bring the country better and make possible to achieve sustainable development and integrated to family lives. The Korean experience could be an example for many developing countries those who are trying to achieve sustainable development goals and integrating to the family. END.