

## **Need for social relevance of social sciences research and putting knowledge to work for sustainable development in the South Asian Region**

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The South Asian economies are growing but are also beset with problems of poverty, growing rich-poor divide and equitable opportunities for education and information accessibility for all. Millions of people in the South Asian Region are still living in abject poverty and do not know how they can do and accomplish their work in the best possible way and what opportunities exist for them at any given point of time. Advanced ICTs and growth of the internet is also having a profound influence on every section of the society. There was never a time in history as today when a social scientist had access to huge data and information right on the work desk. Individualistic social sciences is not marking as much of a mark as a team based mission oriented work. Social scientists are required to look beyond their subject boundaries and collaborate to find prompt solutions to complex problems through integrated efforts. Social linkages with social organizations and social activists are also essential to correctly perceive societal problems, changes and developments. Institutional models may be tested for successful implementation of better alternatives. The Grameen Bank pioneered by the Nobel Laureate Mohammad Yunus in Bangladesh to meet the needs of microfinance for poor women was initiated as a local innovation, but eventually got transformed into an internationally appreciated national model. The Shakti Ammas initiative by a private sector company, the Hindustan Levers Limited, in India is another experiment for empowerment of women. This paper highlights the need for extensive research in the first place to find out what is really needed to be done in social sciences so that research effort is need based and relevant to contemporary societal problems and challenges. Efforts are required to develop mechanisms for information for all and for putting existing ideas and knowledge to work by connecting people with the information of their concern. Social scientists may connect globally but they must act locally by orienting their work to local problems and issues.

**Key words:** Social relevance, Social science research, Sustainable development, South Asia, Knowledge

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