

## Poverty, Inequalities, and Human Rights in Developing Countries

### First, how are Poverty and Inequalities Connected with Human Rights?

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Organizers: Asian Legal Resource Centre (ALRC), Asian Legal Resource Centre - Gwangju

#### Background

Observing a staggering level of spread of poverty, it becomes clear that the issue of poverty and the issue of violations of human rights are most intermittently intertwined. In this context, it is essential to define violations of human rights not only in terms of the absence of laws or statutory provisions to protect human rights but primarily as state failures to take make appropriate institutional developments for the implementation of human rights obligations. The traditional human rights approach of merely demanding the state to investigate, prosecute and provide legal redress and compensation for victims of human rights abuse fails to take some considerations, the realities of developing countries in particular where basic state institutions for conduct such investigations, prosecutions, adjudications are grossly inadequate and quite often does not exist at all. Often, institutions are designed to defeat the attempts of the victims who seek redress and justice for the violations that they have suffered, individually and collectively. The result of the failing institutions is a major source for the spread of corruption which in turn is one of the major causes for causing of poverty and destruction of livelihoods and spoiling of every aspect of quality of life.

It is also necessary to note that by violations of human rights, we mean not only civil and political rights, but also economic, and social-cultural rights, and also every form of discrimination. Still, the violations of civil and political rights are at the core of factors that cause poverty by manipulations of illegal arrests, illegal detentions, torture, extrajudicial killings (including enforced disappearances), denial of a fair trial, suppressions of freedom of association, assembly, and expression, and also obstructions of free and fair elections.



Heavy restrictions can be enforced on peoples' attempts to participate in the development processes is more and more visible that denial of the right to life, right to education, right to health, and right to cultural freedoms are considered unrealizable and should be sacrificed in the name of development.

Entire economies are re-adjusted in a way to deprive even necessities for the people and particularly those who are relatively poor. The processes of accountability and transparency are sacrificed to defeat attempts and resistance to deprivations of rights by the people. Anti-terrorism laws and public or national security laws are used as means of silence in the protests of the poor.

Thus, inequalities are a product of highly designed programs that try to create various degrees of semi-slave conditions for the people. The basic strategy for that purpose is the undermining of the rule of law and the denial of democracy. Thus, it is essential to look into the causal connection between the state structure that is organically transformed in a way to displace the rule of law, deny democratic space and participation, and take away the basic protection of people, at individual and collective, by undermining their human rights. The responsibility for this process lies not only with governments of particular countries but also with the international relationships where the powerful countries in the world so manipulate the situations in favor of the maintenance of inequalities and their consequences. Thus, from that point of view, there is a global crisis in the economies, political systems, and legal systems including the systems of international law, and the moral order.

This situation is threatening the entire humanity, and all natural resources and creating the possibilities of global disasters far more frightening than what had been seen in the past. This calls for serious reflections, particularly among civil society, the intellectual communities, and those who represent the concerns of people to face it on an urgent basis and find immediate, intermediate, and long-term solutions to this problem. The most important response should be to save lives and livelihoods, the right to food, the rights of children, right to education and health by measures to protect the livelihoods of both men and women. Starvation, malnutrition, denial of medicines, denial of basic educational facilities for large sections of children, and massive damage that is happening to the environment and nature are the most urgent needs to begin to deal with global and national inequalities.



## Objectives

The goal is to present a picture of the connection between deprivation of human rights, the undermining of institutions of justice, widening corruption, and resulting poverty and inequalities.

And the specific objectives are to widen the human rights perspectives which are fixed to the mere development of legislative measures to protect human rights but ignore the practical ground realities on which the deprivation of human rights is rooted. And thus, contribute to a richer debate that may have practical consequences on dealing with poverty and inequalities together with the protection of rights.

It will contribute to a better understanding of the problem of poverty, inequalities, and human rights with the view to develop new forms of solidarity actions particularly to assist the poor in developing countries. It will also highlight the problems of food, medicines, and denial of children's rights with the view that those in cities with better conditions may help those who are living in difficult conditions. It is also expected to develop solidarity for the exchange of ideas for the improvement of institutional frameworks and the rule of law and democracy capable of dealing with problems of poverty and denial of rights.

## Main Agenda

First, discussion on the overall theme as mentioned above.

Second, some short country presentations and possible solidarity actions.

