Poverty Reduction: Social Exclusion and Safety Nets in South Asia

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The term social exclusion is generally referred to by development researchers and practitioners as a process through which some social groups are discriminated and/or not allowed to benefit from mainstream development because of some specific attributes like gender, ethnicity, caste, religion, profession, etc. Social exclusion prevents some groups and individuals to move out of poverty. Many countries of the South have initiated “income/food support programmes” with the intention that such support structures (safety nets) would contribute towards reducing poverty and achieving food security (for example Benazir Income Support Programme in Pakistan). However, one must raise questions as to how effective these interventions are; who benefits from them and who is excluded; and, how these exclusions or inclusions emerge.

The main objective of this panel is to address these questions and to identify the social groups and households who are deprived of their right to access to social safety nets and alternative income opportunities. The panel welcomes abstracts followed by papers that explore social safety nets in marginal areas of South Asia and the constraints (social exclusion) for some groups regarding access to livelihood opportunities in general and social safety nets in particular. The focus of the panel is South Asia but abstracts/papers from other developing countries of the South may also be considered.

Themes that this panel will discuss include (but are not limited to):

- The link between poverty reduction and social exclusion
- Different types and forms of emerging social safety nets in developing countries
- Various attributes of social exclusion and excluded groups
- The link between exclusion and social safety nets
- National and regional polices dealing with poverty and social exclusion