

WOMEN'S HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS: ASIA AND THE WORLD

(Women's indicators in percent, except for life expectancy)

Country	Female Literacy	Male Literacy	Female Life Span (years)	Working Women*	Executives	Women Legislators	Cabinet
Bangladesh	33	52	64	53	23	15	8
Cambodia	64	85	60	74	14	11	7
China	87	95	74	69	N.A.	20	6
Hong Kong (China)	90**	97**	85	53	27	N.A.	N.A.
India	48	73	65	34	N.A.	9	3
Indonesia	87	94	69	51	N.A.	11	11
Japan	99	99	86	49	10	11	13
Malaysia	85	92	76	46	23	13	9
Myanmar	86	94	64	68	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Pakistan	36	63	64	32	2	20	6
Philippines	93	93	73	54	58	16	25
Singapore	89	97	81	51	26	19	0
South Korea	99	99	81	50	7	13	6
Sri Lanka	89	92	77	35	21	5	10
Thailand	91	95	74	65	28	11	8
Vietnam	87	94	73	73	N.A.	27	12

*Economic activity rate; this figure includes both women who are currently working and those who are looking for work.

Source: *UNDP Human Development Report, 2006*, except ** *NDP Human Development Report, 2005*.

N.A. = not available

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Discussion Questions

Examine the data on page 1 of the worksheet and answer the following questions.

1. What is the status of women's literacy in Asia? Which three countries have the lowest literacy rates and what might be the reasons?
2. In which countries do women have life expectancies over 80 years? What characteristics do these countries share that might contribute to life expectancy?
3. Is there any correlation between literacy and life expectancy?
4. In countries such as India and Pakistan, fewer women work. Relatively few women work in Japan and Singapore, but for very different reasons. What might these reasons be? Two of the countries with the highest percentage of working women are Vietnam and China. What might explain these figures?
5. Look at the next three categories: executives, legislators, and cabinet. What conclusions can you draw about the status of women in these areas?
6. Examine the summary statistics at the bottom of the table. Why is it difficult to make generalizations about women's development in Asia?