

Protecting the Most Vulnerable: An Analysis of Poverty Targeting Programs in the Philippines

Abstract:

In 2000, the Philippine government embarked on an anti-poverty program that targets the poorest people in the country. This paper scrutinizes the gains of this approach by comparing the poorest provinces in the country over a six-year period. The study revealed that the poorest provinces eight years back were almost the same poorest provinces at present.

The government's preoccupation with the 'victims of poverty' rather than with 'victimizing processes' missed the essential questions in pursuing poverty reduction goals and treated the poor as 'the problem'. This paper argues that this paradigm of looking at and addressing poverty provides only temporary relief and not remedy; it treats only symptoms, and not causes. The more important question then, is not 'who', but 'why'.

Keywords: targeting, poverty reduction, Philippines