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OPINION IN LEAD

Data could rescue Nepal's agri supply chain woes

Nepal's policymaking apparatus has realized the importance of data and information to some extent but a robust data-based panning system is yet to be developed. The current data systems in Nepal have some gaps that make effective planning difficult. For example, although international trade data is relatively comprehensive, data related to the domestic supply chain, especially with regard to agriculture, is almost lacking. The Department of Agriculture maintains statistics on agriculture production, but other information such as supply channels, potential loss, pricing and consumption all seem to be missing to a large extent. Availability of such information and data play vital roles in making the supply chain efficient.

Nepal is highly dependent on India even to meet its basic food items' demand. In recent times, the 2015 Gorkha Earthquake and the disruptions in the southern border, remembered as the Blockade, further exposed vulnerabilities of Nepal's fragile domestic supply chain. Back then policymakers had realized the importance of fortifying the agriculture supply chain within Nepal to decrease the dependency on India but hardly any changes have been observed. The ongoing COIVD-19 pandemic for the past year has further exposed the inadequacies in the domestic supply chain. During the lockdown last year, perishable goods imported from India easily reached the market, while domestic fruits and vegetables would rot at farms and collection centres due to ineffective domestic supply. Hence, boosting production alone will not solve the issue of supply, without improving existing supply chain management. Supply chain management can be made robust aided by utilizing tools to collect data and use the date for estimation and prediction...

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REPORT

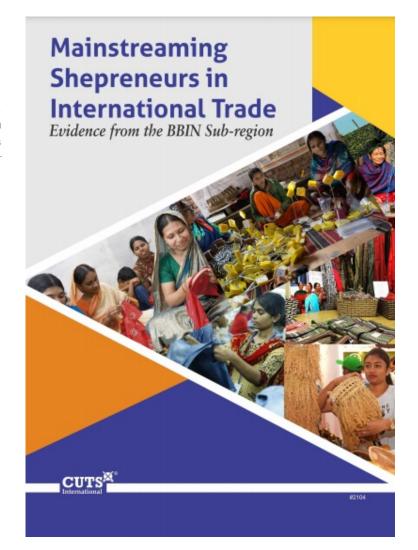
Mainstreaming Shepreneurs in International Trade

To address the challenges women producers, traders, entrepreneurs, and exporters face in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN) sub-region, respective national governments have to undertake gender mainstreaming to address gender

issues, ensuring fair participation, access and control over the available resources at various stages of development programmes, according to a latest report on gender and trade published by CUTS International. It is necessary that women producers, traders, entrepreneurs and exporters in BBIN are included in national-level trade consultations, policy planning meetings and trade negotiations with other countries, says the report, 'Mainstreaming Shepreneurs in International Trade: Evidence from the BBIN Sub-region'.

This research report is an output of a project titled 'Gender Dimensions of Trade Facilitation: Evidence from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal' which was undertaken by CUTS International, in association with, Bangladesh Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BWCCI), Bangladesh, Bhutan Media and Communication Institute (BMCI), Bhutan, and South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment(SAWTEE), Nepal. The project aimed to prepare cases in favour of gender-inclusive trade policies to enhance participation of women from the subregion, in trade and trade-related income-generating activities.

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NEWS



India COVID cases cross 18 million

India's total COVID-19 cases passed 18 million on April 29 after another world record number of daily infections, as gravediggers worked around the clock to bury victims and hundreds more were cremated in makeshift pyres in parks and parking lots.





Pakistan's Khewra salt to be registered with int'l trade bodies

Pakistan is close to taking the lead in the global salt trade, as local rock salt of Khwera is set to be registered with international trade bodies. This will prevent Indian traders to market Pakistani rock salt as Himalayan Pink Salt.

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Bhutan's hydropower policy seeks trilateral and regional cooperation

Butan's government will explore trilateral regional, sub-regional, regional cooperation in developing hydropower projects in the country, according to the Sustainable Hydropower Development Policy 2021.

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China's Q1 GDP grows fastest in three decades

China's GDP grew by 18.3 percent year-onyear in the first quarter of 2021, the fastest in three decades, since the data was released, with key economic indicators all expanding at over 20 percent.

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US still non-committal to get TRIPS waiver to COVID vaccines

The US remained non-committal on the move by India and South Africa to get TRIPS waiver for COVID-19 vaccine before the WTO so that the doses are accessible and affordable to low- and middle-income countries.

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Indian govt allows NEA to purchase power through energy exchange market

Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) can now access the Indian market to purchase electricity at competitive prices set by the free market.

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Nepal has export potential worth \$9.2 billion

Nepal has untapped export potential worth an estimated \$9.2 billion, according to a new World Bank finding unveiled.

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B'desh RMG export to US drops by 13.11%

Bangladesh's earnings by exporting readymade garments to the US in January-February of 2021 fell by 13.11 percent as the consumption of apparel items still remains low due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Pak Cabinet rejects proposal to import cotton and sugar from India

Pakistan's government has deferred the decision to import cotton and sugar from India and linked any "normalisation" in ties to moves by New Delhi on Jammu and Kashmir.

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Event Gender dimensions of trade facilitation



SAWTEE organized a national policy dialogue 'Gender Dimensions of Trade Facilitation: Evidence from Nepal' by South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE) on 27 April to discuss the findings of the study conducted, in association with CUTS International, on gender and trade.

The Virtual National Policy Dialogue brought together policymakers, practitioners, entrepreneurs and other concerned stakeholders to discuss the issues faced by women entrepreneurs in trade and provide recommendation for concrete gender-responsive trade facilitation policies.

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