



EXAMINING TRADE THROUGH GENDER LENS

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OUTLINE

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- Domains of gender inequality
- Trade and gender nexus
- Why examine trade through gender lens?
- Nepali context
- Inhibiting factors
- Way forward

GENDER ROLES

- Gender is a system of norms and practices that ascribe particular roles, characteristics and behaviours to males and females based on their sex and generally assign those born female a subordinate status in society
- These differences are socially constructed rather than based on any “natural” distinctions
- They are context/ time-specific and changeable
- gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue



ECONOMY AS A
GENDERED
STRUCTURE

GENDERED ECONOMY

- Disproportionate burden of unpaid care work
- Vertical and horizontal segregation of labour
- Access to economic resources
- Social norms and discrimination
- Policy and institutional biases

DOMAINS OF GENDER INEQUALITY



DOMAINS OF GENDER INEQUALITY

- **Capabilities:** limited access to education and TVET; time and mobility constraint that prevent their full engagement in economic activities
- **Access to resources and opportunities:** limited access to financial resources and external credit, little control over income, poor quality of transport and infrastructure
- **Security:** vulnerable to threat of sexual, physical and psychological violence; more susceptible to coercion

TRADE AND GENDER NEXUS

WORKERS

Categories	Effects
<p>Self-employed or wage workers; Contributing family workers; Unpaid (family) workers; Casual (seasonal) workers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Labour segregation at the industrial, sectoral and occupational level (horizontal segregation and vertical segregation)• Gender wage gap• Concentration in precarious and low-paid forms of work (part-time and informal jobs)• Fewer skills and lower education• Restricted time availability (“time poverty”): household responsibilities fall disproportionately on women’s shoulders• Limited access to and control over income and productive resources (i.e. credit, land and inputs)

WOMEN AS TRADERS AND PRODUCERS

Categories	Effects
Owners of micro and small enterprises; Informal cross-border traders; Street traders and vendors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Time constraints to travel long distances to seek better deals• Limited access to and control over different modes of transportation (e.g. bicycles)• Weaker bargaining power• Higher exposure to gender-based violence and harassment• Limited access to capital• Higher health-related risks• Limited access to formal social protection measures• Limited access to business development services that are usually designed without taking into account the needs of women entrepreneurs

WOMEN AS CONSUMERS

Categories	Effects
Purchasers of food and other goods; Users of public services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Higher exposure to increases in import prices• Higher vulnerability to cuts in public expenditure

WOMEN AS TAXPAYERS

Categories	Effects
Direct taxpayers; indirect taxpayers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Higher exposure to explicit and implicit forms of bias in taxation• Higher risk of dropping out of work as a result of higher direct taxes• Higher exposure to indirect taxes on consumption

WHY EXAMINE TRADE THROUGH GENDER LENS



TRADE FOR BETTER OUTCOMES

- Women-owned businesses that export employ
- Advancing women's equality could add \$28 trillion to global GDP by 2025
- Firms that engage in international trade employ more women
- Trade increases women's wages and increases economic equality
- Trade creates better jobs for women

BUT...

- Trade can also lead to job losses and a concentration of work in lower-skilled jobs
- Trade may lead to changes in the structure of production and may change levels and distributions of employment
- trade-induced changes in the relative prices of goods and services bring about changes in real incomes
- trade openness is also likely to reduce tariff revenues, and this, in turn, may have gender-specific effects on the size and composition of government expenditure

HENCE...

- Given that women in many settings have fewer resources than men, they have greater difficulty in both taking advantage of new opportunities generated by trade and coping with adjustments brought about by trade reforms
- Sectors that are female-intensive—such as food and beverages, and textiles and apparel—on average face higher tariffs on inputs

NEPALI CONTEXT

WOMEN IN TRADE

- FLFP: 26%; 37% of labour is female; 90% are informally employed
- 29.6% of the business establishments led by women; 98.3% are micro enterprises; less than 17% women-led businesses export (less than 1% of the total exporting firms managed by women)
- Women-led businesses tend to be smaller, less profitable, operating in less profitable sectors, necessity-based, more informal, limited to domestic market and risk-averse
- In Nepal, women entrepreneurs are involved in export of processed food, textiles & clothing, handicrafts, among others; major markets are Europe, US

INHIBITING FACTORS

- Inadequate Infrastructure: transport charges too high; no accredited laboratories; cold storage or warehouses
- Limited knowledge about operational side of businesses, foreign trade procedures and schemes: face difficulty accessing information, such as trade fairs, subsidies, changes in regulations, grievance redressal mechanism etc
- Limited access to finance: collateral still an issue; appear risk-averse—average size of subsidized loan is 700,000 while the ceiling is 1 million

INHIBITING FACTORS

- Challenges in scaling business: difficulty in establishing new business contacts in foreign markets; issues with productivity and quality
- Constraints in digital transactions and logistics: lack of digital payment network; logistical cost for small package delivery high; limited e-commerce footprint
- Gendered societal conditionings: more care burden; limited network; fear of sexual violence, among others
- Lack of female participation: less female presence in trading spaces and policy making (Trade Facilitation Committee, for example)



AREAS OF FOCUS

- Bridging information gap and raising awareness:
- Advocacy and agenda setting; framing gender and trade issues: By highlighting gender disparities in trade and advocating for gender-responsive policies
- Holding Stakeholders Accountable
- Amplifying Marginalized Voices
- Not take gender as a beat but mainstream gender into trade issues as much as possible



THANK YOU

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