

Gender, Trade and Green Growth

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The report, *Gender, Trade and Green Growth in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal*, explores the interconnections between gender equality, regional trade, and sustainable development. The study builds on the premise that green growth frameworks devoid of gender equality as one of the key imperatives will fail to achieve inclusive and sustainable development. It provides evidence from select sectors across four countries in the South Asian region on how women's equal access to and control over resources is not only critical for improving the lives of individuals, families, and nations, but also essential to ensuring the sustainability of the environment.

This document is a summary of a technical report of UN Women for the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The primary questions asked are: What are the areas and extent of participation of women in green trade? What are the barriers, opportunities, and potential entry points of their participation in "green sectors" intra-regional trade? The study also looked into the potential effects of increased South Asian intra-regional trade in "green sectors" on women's participation in these sectors, and on women's overall well-being.

Gender Dimensions of Regional Cooperation in South Asia: Gender, Trade and Green Growth Volume I of the full report provides an overview analysis, while Volume II includes detailed country case studies (both volumes are available at <http://www.adb.org/themes/regional-cooperation/publications>).

THE CONTEXT

To explore the issues of gender equality, trade, and green growth, the study discusses a number of themes: green sectors, intra-regional trade

in the green sectors, gender and trade, and women's participation in these sectors. It explores the literature, analyzes data, and focuses on Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal. The analysis is based on both macroeconomic data and original country case studies.

Green Industry: Definitions

The term "green industry" was coined by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) to describe industrial production that does not come at the expense of natural systems or lead to adverse human health outcomes. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Brazil in 2012 (Rio+20) solidified the international community's commitment to building "green economies."

The study used, as its starting point, the definition of "green industries" provided by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)/Eurostat Informal Working Group on the Environment Industry (OECD 1999). However, owing to issues of definition and classification, the process of matching the OECD Environmental Goods and Services (EGS) classification to the national databases from South Asia was not straightforward. The definition and the type of industries vary from country to country according to their particular circumstances. Thus, the study expanded its working definition to include industries that can be considered "close to green" as well as a broader definition of EGS to include goods and services grown, extracted, manufactured, and provided following sustainable criteria at all or some stages of their life cycle (Lendo 2005).¹

The study builds on the premise that green growth frameworks devoid of gender equality as one of the key imperatives will fail to achieve inclusive and sustainable development.

¹ It is important to note that owing to definitional issues arising from strict rules regarding certification, farming, and related businesses in many developing countries (including those studied in this report), cannot often be labeled as "green or organic" even though they are carried out in the most sustainable ways possible (e.g., with little or no chemical intervention), using only indigenous seed varieties, and using practices that are clearly environmentally friendly, such as the use of solar power to run the entire enterprise. Thus, it was impossible to find industry classifications in many of these countries that pertained specifically to organic agriculture. Therefore, all agriculture was included in the segment. The same problem arises with ecotourism. Consequently, when studied at the country level, all tourism has been included in the segment.

The impact of increased trade has been different for different groups of people, often exacerbating inequalities. Thus, it is important to bring gender analysis (that includes an understanding of diversity and intersector issues) to trade policy.

In addition to examining national level statistics, researchers carried out detailed sector case studies of the following industries:

- agroprocessing industry in Bangladesh and Bhutan,
- ecotourism industry in Nepal, and
- organic horticulture industry in the Ladakh region of India.

Intra-Regional Trade

Of the region's total trade volume of \$517.5 billion in 2007, only 4% was intra-regional trade. The region is regarded as the least integrated region in the world, accounting for 2% of world exports, and less than 2% of global foreign direct investment as of 2008 (ADB 2011). Intra-regional trade accounts for an average of just 2% of gross domestic product, compared with 20% in East Asia.

Exports related to agriculture and agroprocessing make up the bulk of the four countries' export baskets. This is not surprising given the nature of their economies as developing economies with large primary sectors.

The countries in the region have restrictive policies toward each other that amount to nontariff barriers to trade. These take the form of inefficient customs clearing procedures and delays, and transit restrictions or disallowing each other's vehicles from traveling within their borders. In addition, services and a large number of agricultural products are excluded from bilateral trade agreements.

In terms of bilateral trade, India is the dominant trading partner of the three other countries. Small increases in trade between the other neighbors (such as between Bangladesh and Bhutan; and between Bhutan and Nepal) have been relatively minor.

Detailed descriptions of each country's trade policy and evolution are included in the full study.

Intra-Regional Trade in Green Exports

Green exports form a very small, sometimes insignificant, proportion of total exports for three of the four countries under consideration. The only exception is Nepal where green exports, primarily agricultural exports, have been increasing over the last decade. Even though their share of trade has been small, green exports have been on a slow but rising trend since 1989 in all four countries. In

Bangladesh and Bhutan, renewable energy exports have increased in the last 10 years. Other sectors that have shown promising trends from an export perspective are ecotourism in Bhutan and Nepal, and organic horticulture and renewable energy in Bangladesh and India. Given the national and international push toward sustainable growth, it is expected that the green sector and green exports will continue to grow.

Gender and Trade

While standard economic theory argues that trade liberalization will automatically lead to increased opportunities, enhanced production capacities, and overall poverty reduction, historically, this has not always been the case. The impact of increased trade has been different for different groups of people, often exacerbating inequalities. Thus, it is important to bring gender analysis (that includes an understanding of diversity and intersector issues) to trade policy.

One hypothesis is that trade expansion may worsen gender inequality because women are at a different starting point, relative to men, and, therefore, are not in a position to take advantage of the economic opportunities that come with trade growth. Given unequal access to economic resources (such as land, credit, and technology) as well as gender norms and expectations, macroeconomic policies often have different effects on women and men.

The impact of increased trade can and does vary, even among women. For example, women employed in export-oriented manufacturing have experienced benefits. They often earn higher wages than they would have in other manufacturing sectors, increasing access not just to cash in hand, but also improving their status and bargaining power in the household (Jarvis and Vera-Toscano 2004).

Summarizing the arguments, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD 2010) reviews a number of empirical studies to present the common themes in the impact of trade liberalization on women:

- i. increased trade flows usually bring about increased employment opportunities for women in export-oriented manufacturing sectors;
- ii. female employment is less stable than male employment (e.g., rapid turnover of employees in response to business gains and losses, more part-time and temporary

- employment of women, and more relocations of women employees);
- iii. the effect of trade liberalization on the gender wage gap varies with the competitiveness of the industry and between countries; and
- iv. increased competition in accessing resources, especially land, often threatens the livelihood of women entrepreneurs in societies that are opening to foreign trade.

Thus, while trade policy may by itself appear to be gender neutral, the impact of trade policy on underlying gender relations is significant. There is need for a more in-depth examination of the gender impact of trade policy to ensure that all sections of the society—rich and poor, men and women—benefit from trade expansion.

Women’s Involvement in Green Sectors

The barriers in access and opportunities that keep women from benefiting from trade liberalization also affect their participation in the green economy. Gender imbalances in the conventional “brown” economy are equally valid for the green economy. One study identifies five key imbalances that prevent women from fully engaging in and reaping the benefits of a green economy (Donor Committee for Enterprise Development 2008).

- **Time Burden:** Women’s “triple burden” of paid work, care, and housework severely thwarts their economic opportunities, and often leads them to being perceived as less career-oriented than their male counterparts.
- **Education:** Though the gender gap may be closing in primary education in many countries, women still end up being less qualified for many green economy jobs, often needing technical skills. These include technical roles in alternative energy generation and distribution, managerial and engineering roles in ecotourism, and access to organic certification as agro-entrepreneurs. The skills and professions that have been identified as relevant for the green economy tend to be male dominated.
- **Labor Market:** Women are often concentrated in low-productivity jobs, working in smallholder farms, micro or small businesses, and are overrepresented in the informal sector. This can limit their ability to transition to new technologies and jobs created by the greening of the economy.
- **Access to Productive Inputs:** Women often have very limited access to productive inputs such as technical know-how, land, finances,

technology, and equipment. They often lack comprehensive, relevant, and timely information on markets, price developments, and consumer preferences, which are essential to the running of a successful business. These obstacles are rooted in market and institutional failures, such as bureaucratic hurdles and discriminatory legal frameworks, property rights, or credit provisions.

- **Comprehensive Participation of Women:** Increased economic participation of women does not automatically lead to gender equality. Access to economic resources does not inevitably imply control over them. Fundamental socioeconomic factors and power relations eventually determine who benefits from larger economic change. In most cases, decisions at the household and community levels are still made by men, and changes in gender roles in the economy could lead to increased tensions or even violence in families and communities.

FEMALE INTENSITY OF TOTAL EXPORTS AND GREEN EXPORTS

While a number of studies have examined the impact of trade liberalization on gender inequality, very few studies focus on measuring the female contribution to trade. To conduct an evidence-based analysis of the impact of change in trade policy on women’s roles and participation, the study needs to include a measure of female contribution to trade, and its linkage with trade policy changes. To meet this challenge, the study developed a metric of female intensity of exports, and traced the changes in female contribution to total exports and exports from the green sectors.

Using this metric, the study had broad findings about women’s participation in the export sectors in the four countries.

- Women’s contribution to the exports of all four countries is very low, particularly considering their overall contribution to the workforce.
- The average contribution of women’s work to exports is 21% in Bhutan, and 25% in Nepal. These figures are even lower in Bangladesh, at 5%; and India, at 14%.
- The female intensity of exports has risen for nearly all countries (except Nepal where it has remained more or less constant) from 1989 to 2012.

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ADB: Ian Gill

A woman planting crops in Bangladesh.

While women’s contribution to total exports is low, their contribution to green exports is even lower:

- In both Bangladesh and India, the female intensity of green exports is even lower than the female intensity of total exports for the most recent years, averaging 14% in Bangladesh, and under 5% in India during 1989–2012.
- Compared with that from Bangladesh and India, the female share of green exports from Bhutan is relatively high at approximately 25% over this same period.
- Looking at the aggregate industry-level data from Bangladesh, there are similar trends in the agriculture, agroprocessing, and renewable energy sectors.
- At the same time, the female intensity in green exports has been mostly stagnant, even

declining, and abysmally low for the largest of the four countries, India. In 2012, less than 5% of total green exports came from women’s labor—even as the total female labor force participation (FLFP) rate in India was 18%.

- In 2012, only Bhutan had a greater contribution from women in green exports (28%) than the contribution in total exports (22%). This appears to be largely driven by agriculture and agroprocessing exports, where more than 25% of the exports were a result of women’s efforts.
- Since annual labor force participation data is not available for Nepal, the study was unable to calculate comparable figures for Nepal.

It must be noted that despite the push by both national and international actors going forward, as green exports expand, women’s share in these exports may not automatically rise—and more specific and targeted measures may be needed to ensure that women are able to participate in this future expansion.²

GENDER ANALYSIS OF SELECTED GREEN SECTORS

An analysis of available data reveals that FLFP rates in the green sectors are mostly consistent with economy-wide FLFP rates. In other words, women are engaged to more or less the same extent in green industries as they are in the economy as a whole. The four case studies carried out for this review present a somewhat different picture. All case studies report very high labor force participation rates for women. This could be partially explained by the fact that the sectors chosen for the case studies are those with high participation rates by women. However, while it is true that women are engaged widely in deeply entrenched ways in primary sectors across all developing economies, women’s work in the economy in general is vastly underreported.

In all four countries, women are principally employed in agriculture, and are significantly underrepresented in the industry sector. More often than men, women are the marginalized farmers, small horticulturists, the owners of tiny pickle-and-jam-making, home-based enterprises,

² A few observations and caveats about the analysis in this section: the estimation of female intensity of exports is based on the assumption that FLFP is the same across sectors, and can be directly applied to get the monetary equivalent of the female labor involved. While the study accepts that the the measure of female intensity may not be exact, the purpose of computing this measure is to show the proportionate share of female labor compared with that of their male counterparts. Not surprisingly, the study finds that the female share of exports across all three countries is small.

as well as the factory floor workers. However, as has been documented time and again, their participation in conventional labor force surveys is often underreported. For instance, the India case study found anomalies between existing countrywide FLFP data, such as that sea buckthorn farming is exclusively the domain of women in collection, as well as in trade. Work participation rates for women are much higher than that reported in secondary data, and their contribution to both economic growth and trade is heavily unrecognized and uncalculated, given the invisibility of the harvesting of sea buckthorn.

Of the total workers employed in green industries, Bhutan employs the largest proportion of women. In 2012, 62% of the total employees in Bhutan's green industries were women, as opposed to 32% in Bangladesh, and a mere 19% in India. This share has increased significantly since 1989 for all the three countries. Because of the unavailability of industry-level data on FLFP rates in Nepal, the report did not have a similar analysis for Nepal.

An interesting phenomenon in India is the convergence of male and female wages in the green sectors. While overall, there is a significant gender wage gap, analysis of secondary data shows that the average wage gap between men and women has almost disappeared in the green sectors. This interesting finding needs further analysis. A possible hypothesis based on this finding is that wages are, in general, higher in green industries, and that once adequate skills have been acquired, the wage gaps can be reduced in these high skill sectors.

The nature and quality of women's participation in green industries is revealed particularly well through the four case studies.

Agriculture and Agroprocessing

The case studies of women in agroprocessing in Bangladesh and Bhutan note that women farmers and producers are fully involved in family farm activities (although often as unpaid workers) and, in some cases, they are the principal actors and decision makers. However, their wages are still lower than men's, and their work contributes significantly to their time poverty.

The main challenges women farmers encounter at the cultivation and harvesting stages relate to increased workload, poor information on new technology, and lack of direct access to markets. The Bangladesh case study found that with

improved roads and transport facilities, traders are able to come closer to the villages and fields to collect produce nearer the homes, thereby improving farmers' access to markets. One of several positive effects of commercialization of farming is that farmers—both men and women—have increased access to cash incomes. While they also have greater expenditures for seeds, irrigation, and transportation, savings have increased.

Significantly, while women engaged extensively in cultivation, fewer women were found to be involved in marketing the produce. Their reluctance to be involved in marketing was explained by the lack of security, that it is a predominantly male domain, and that it requires travel away from home. This lack of involvement in marketing limits women's integration in the wider economy, and thwarts their ability to gain from an expansion in trade or production.

The India case study documents that women's role in the sea buckthorn industry is primarily at the collection and harvesting stages. Through a network of small and unofficial women's collectives, women collect the sea buckthorn directly from the forest. Women are involved in the processing stage as well, although mostly in worker, not supervisory, roles.

In both Bangladesh and Bhutan, women make up the majority of workers at the floor level in agroprocessing factories. In Bhutan, women's participation is mainly on the factory floor, attending to manual labor activities such as peeling, cutting, washing, packaging, and labeling. While promotion opportunities may exist in theory, the fact that most women workers are often illiterate and unskilled creates many barriers in practice.

In Bangladesh, agroprocessing offers some women workers steady jobs and a regular income. They have various benefits such as health care, food, clothing, bonuses, and are able to work in clean, safe and secure environments. There is scope for workers to graduate from the floor level to supervisory and quality control levels. Women in management have yearly increments and evaluations. There is a capacity development program for staff, and a group deposit pension scheme. The larger firms are able to maintain good working environments and labor standards.

Primary data collected from the agroprocessing sector in Bhutan notes that women are employed in rice milling, dairy products, fruit pulp processing

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Workers plucking chillies, from the fields at Gabbur, district Raichur, Karnataka, India.

and pickling, and cheese and wine making. The sector is dominated by micro-, small-, and medium-scale enterprises that are owned by the government, private corporations, families, farmer groups, or cooperatives. The study found that women dominate the sector, working mostly in low-skilled jobs requiring manual execution. The sector has contributed to the enhancement of their livelihoods, rural income generation and, thus, poverty alleviation. However, most women are paid the minimum wage only.

Women entrepreneurs and exporters face somewhat different challenges. Case studies of women entrepreneurs in Bangladesh and Bhutan show that developing and maintaining export linkages are challenging. There are few trade fairs in the country, and there is a lack of organizations that promote women entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs often rely on family or husbands' contacts to establish business connections and locate overseas buyers.

In Bangladesh, with greater trade expansion in agriculture, women are seen to be more conscious of the demands of the local and international markets, in terms of quality control, packaging and processing, and to be more open to innovation and the use of technology. They have more cash to spend, invest, and save, and are increasingly recognized as economic actors and contributors to family income. However, the study observes that while this enhances their ability to earn an income and generate savings, it also increases workloads and their time poverty. Traditionally defined roles also mean they are reluctant to move into the more commercial aspects such as marketing,

and reducing market interface, and consequently limiting their ability to benefit from an expansion in trade. The study notes that over time, in Bangladesh, men have moved out of agriculture and into more profitable ventures, while more women are moving into agriculture.

In India, the study finds that every step of the sea buckthorn value chain is owned and run by women and their self-help groups. The control over the value chain is also manifested in control over earnings, and a high degree of autonomy and decision making over both economic and extra-economic aspects of the women's lives. For example, the women interviewed for the study reported they use their earnings for travel and spiritual purposes. The official statistics from the Census of India 2011 report a higher level of women's participation in the study area (83.3%) than male participation (73.6%). However, the study says there is a vast discrepancy in the official statistics for women's participation, and that the figures remain an underestimation pointing to the increasing feminization of the rural labor force. The contribution of women to both economic growth and trade in the area thus remains heavily unrecognized and unaccounted for. Moreover, there are several constraints to the expansion of business in sea buckthorn, including limited credit opportunities; limited energy, especially alternative energy, requirements to meet daily needs of the business; bad roads; lack of transportation facilities for marketing the produce; and lack of facilities for packaging the produce.

Table 1 provides a summary of these barriers, as well as opportunities and possible entry points to promote increased and improved participation by women identified in the case studies.

Renewable Energy

Women have a significant role in both the use and supply of energy at the household level, as well as in the production of primary products, which is the mainstay of livelihoods in this region. The case study from India examines the role of gender in realizing the potential of renewable energy in regions such as Ladakh in order to attain efficiency at the micro and macro levels. The issues examined are (i) the extent to which gender needs are incorporated in the solar energy plans and policies; (ii) whether there is an impact—preferably quantifiable—on time poverty and household drudgery; (iii) whether solar energy has been integrated into the production of commodities, such as fruits; and services, such as tourism; and

Table 1: Barriers, Opportunities, and Potential Interventions to Promote Gender-Responsive Green Agriculture

Barriers and Challenges	Opportunities	Possible Entry Points for Women's Integration in Trade and Green Agriculture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women are employed at the lower end of the value chain • Increasing numbers of unpaid women laborers • Increasing drudgery and time poverty • Lower wage rates than men • Existing gaps in policy framework • Limited involvement of women in marketing • Difficulties in developing and sustaining enterprises • Unfriendly credit and repayment policies • Challenges in developing and maintaining export linkages, and low involvement of women in exports • Prevalence of stereotypes around women's vs. men's roles in agriculture • Poor quality of infrastructure and storage facilities • Invisibility and undervaluation of women's work in organic agriculture in national statistics • Limited opportunities for training for women entrepreneurs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great opportunities for regional trade because of the perishable nature of goods, and the prevalence of preferential trade agreements among countries • Access to information and new techniques • Decent work conditions and job security for women in large firms • Women's involvement in agriculture increasingly recognized and made visible • Efforts to develop a gender-responsive policy framework on agriculture and green growth • Support for women's entrepreneurship development • Support for women producers and contact farmers through credit and training facilities • Increasing opportunities for paid work • Increasing number of women in agriculture • Enhanced marketing opportunities as a result of infrastructure improvements, especially of roads • Access to cash incomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the conduct of a gender-inclusive fair trade (GIFT) certification center or association in the region that can develop guidelines, and provide training and certification for small entrepreneurs and producers based on gender-responsive and environmentally sustainable production processes • The GIFT association can also act to organize GIFT fairs where women and other producers can network and connect with buyers • Provide financial incentives to "go green" • Create opportunities for border and local markets which are accessible by roads so women can participate in these markets • Importance of balancing production with marketing • Greater role of producers' and exporters' associations in exploring the potential for regional trade, and in supporting women exporters to engage in regional trade through mentoring and counselling

Source: Primary analysis from the national and sector studies in Volume II of the original study.

(iv) the extent productivity and technology have been enhanced via greening.

The data analysis highlights that women's participation in renewable energy is on the rise in Bangladesh and Bhutan; however, there is little primary evidence on the nature of their participation, their role in the renewable energy supply chain, and the quality of their employment in the sector. The case studies from Bangladesh, India, and Nepal collected evidence on the production of renewable energy as an input to the primary industries, agriculture and tourism.

Women play key roles in energy use and supply, therefore, energy projects will not be effective unless gender differentials are addressed. Energy projects can contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment by involving them throughout the value chain, including in decision-making roles from which they have traditionally been excluded.

Table 2 notes challenges as well as possible opportunities to improve women's involvement in the renewable energy sector.

Ecotourism

Tourism is a major job creator and an important source of livelihood for the residents of India's Ladakh region, and the Leh-Kargil region in Nepal. The socioeconomic impact of tourism has been positive as well as negative. On a positive note, the rise in tourism has resulted in a substantial increase in income for some sections of the population. However, the case studies note that women have not always benefited to the same extent as men.

The Nepal country case study observes that while women are well represented in local and national ecotourism businesses, they are also often found to be of lower socioeconomic status, education,

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Table 2: Barriers, Opportunities, and Potential Interventions to Promote Gender-Responsive Renewable Energy

Barriers and Challenges	Opportunities	Possible Entry Points for Women’s Integration in Trade and Renewable Energy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of inputs in terms of investment, skills, management, or technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant role of women in both the usage and supply of energy at the household level, and in the production of primary products which is the mainstay of livelihood Use of renewable energy technology can reduce the long hours spent collecting fuelwood Renewable energy is the healthier option because of less exposure to indoor air pollution Increased investment and commitment from the government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training women in renewable energy production, maintenance, and usage Link renewable energy usage with the promotion of small business and entrepreneurs Make technology easily accessible Strengthen export policies to promote the renewable energy sector

Source: Primary analysis from the national and sector studies in Volume II of the original study.

While men have one big “job” with responsibility and power, women have many small jobs that are often unaccounted for.

and literacy levels compared with their male counterparts.³ For many women, the business of attending to tourists adds considerably to their daily household duties, especially when husbands and sons are away for extended periods working as foreign laborers, or trekking porters or guides.

Women operate lodges and tea shops along the major trekking routes, sometimes with their husbands or fathers, but often alone. As cooks and primary servers, they have the greatest contact with tourists, and with the tourists’ trekking guides and porters. They are always working, producing, or serving others. They spend their rest time knitting woolen caps, mittens, and socks; weaving bags; or making handicrafts to sell to tourists. Some mountain women work as porters or pack animal drivers for trekking or mountaineering groups. A handful of these women have attained the rank of trekking guides, and even of mountaineers. The study notes that gender stereotypes are typical of the sector in Nepal. While men have one big “job” with responsibility and power, women have many small jobs that are often unaccounted for. Women are also burdened with heavy workloads.

An analysis of women’s role in ecotourism in the Ladakh region of India shows that women are generally invisible in the tourism industry. Women in this region have benefited from homestays as the direct access to income often gives them control over money and decision making. Tourism

has enabled women to become independent functionaries, and provided them access to improved livelihood opportunities.

A number of organizations, such as the International Center for Integrated Mountain Development and the National Trust for Nature Conservation, are involved in enhancing women’s participation in mountain tourism. These organizations create awareness of local women’s potential in tourism, empowering them by offering training and capacity-building activities, and helping to increase their involvement in mountain tourism.

The Nepal case study also observes that the burden of keeping the “eco” in ecotourism often falls upon the women alone. Often, women perform their traditionally defined roles of running organic kitchen gardens, using improved cookstoves or alternative cooking fuel, ensuring eco-friendly disposal of waste, and even creating an environment reflecting tradition and culture to ensure ecotourists get an authentic and natural experience. In spite of this, men continue to control the bulk of the earnings, and possess decision-making powers.

The Nepal study also reports a rising incidence of violence against women as tourism opens their villages and homes to strangers with no commensurate rise in security provisions. An expansion in tourism has also reportedly led

³ This study was conducted before the devastating earthquake hit Nepal on 25 April 2015.

Table 3: Barriers, Opportunities, and Potential Interventions to Promote Gender-Responsive Ecotourism

Barriers and Challenges	Opportunities	Possible Entry Points for Women's Integration in Trade and Ecotourism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women mostly work at the low end of the value chain and play informal roles • Lack of training for women entering into and running ecotourism businesses • Limited investment in the sector • Poor accessibility and technological links lead to difficult working conditions • Harsh geographic terrain limits trade opportunities with neighboring and border countries • Lack of strategies for starting in tourism • Ecotourism is a volatile sector susceptible to changes in global demand • Gender disparity in ownership of enterprises • High exodus of men due to migration places heavy burden on women • Potential increase in sex tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecotourism presents a potential win-win opportunity for women's employment, environmentally sustainable tourism, and reversing migration • Ecotourism is one of the booming sectors contributing in high numbers to the nation's gross domestic product • Design of holistic sustainable, pro-poor, and community oriented inclusive tourism systems will increase the number of women working in tourism services. • Network of organizations working with women in ecotourism • Trade-friendly policies initiated by governments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide better credit opportunities for women business owners • Generate employment opportunities in ecotourism by streamlining the sector • Train women for livelihood opportunities in ecotourism • Encourage establishment of formal associations that promote local handicrafts and culture for tourism, and provide employment opportunities for women; this can also promote local manufacturing in significant ways • Establish target support services for women tourist owners and operators in national tourism policies

Source: Primary analysis from the national and sector studies in Volume II of the original study.

to a growth in incidents of sex tourism, as well as generation of vast amounts of garbage, the management of which remains the sole responsibility of women.

Table 3 provides a summary of challenges and entry points to support women's participation in ecotourism.

WOMEN, TRADE, AND GREEN SECTORS: CRITICAL ISSUES

Various factors determine the quality of women's participation in the green sectors in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal. What is evident is that gender equality and greening can benefit each other. For example, greening can be driven by consumer preference for healthier products and processes. At the same time, work with poor women can minimize negative environmental impact through harmful practices, e.g., in the use of fuel and water. In turn, greening offers women opportunities for economic participation, increased income, and health benefits.

There are a number of existing developments that promote women's participation in green

industries with export potential. As greening becomes a more competitive factor for producers, an increase in international and intra-regional trade will lead to an expansion in green industries. In many cases, moving to green methods of production (using less chemicals or fertilizers, for example) actually reduces barriers to entry for women in that sector. Similarly, in many cases, access to modern technology reduces reliance on intermediaries, and gives small business owners direct market access. A number of women's groups and producer networks offer important opportunities for women's economic participation in green industries. For instance, certain fair trade institutions have developed requirements for women's participation.

However, for women to take full advantage of the potential offered by intra-regional and international trade, a number of bottlenecks must be addressed. Some of the challenges relevant to women laborers include decent working conditions, women's workloads, skills and training opportunities, and access to resources and incomes.

Intensification of green exports could increase women's workloads. If support mechanisms (such as childcare and shared housework schemes) are not considered and put in place, women's net gains may be minimal. Thus, it may not be enough

Even if women are able to participate in the growth of this sector, in the absence of support measures at the household level, it will place even greater burden on their time, pulling them in multiple directions.

for women to earn higher incomes if there is no enhancement in their empowerment, and the ability to access household support mechanisms.

Another issue relates to intra-household control of resources and decision making. When women do not control their incomes, any increase in green requirements may act as disincentives for them. Increased and independent income for women allows greater independence in decision making on spending at the intra-household level. However, men still often receive and control the income generated through women's participation. Women's increased earnings can also contribute to disequilibrium inside households, and give rise to domestic violence. Therefore, women's participation in the green economy does not automatically lead to gains in gender equality at the household level. On the other hand, over time, an increase in women's contribution to household income could bring about increased bargaining power for women at the household level, where they can have a bigger say in how household budgets are allocated.

An important impact of increased trade has been the increased reliance on contract workers. While there are new employment opportunities, working conditions are often harsh. This study found that women are more likely to be working in informal employment. Thus, they do not benefit to the same degree as men from job opportunities created by international trade in the formal sector. Given poor working conditions, especially for women workers in green industries, the green growth paradigm must consider decent work as one of its key dimensions.⁴

Challenges for women business owners that restrict their participation in green industries and trade include limited access to credit, inputs, and market access. Increasing trade creates opportunities, but it also increases competition from cheaper imports. Since women entrepreneurs and landowners face more obstacles than their male counterparts in accessing credit (for new investments and upgrades), and accessing technology, women producers and business owners are more likely to be affected by international competition.

The involvement of women and women's organizations in the analysis of trade policy and impact is another important factor. Given that the gender dimensions of trade are not always

well understood, there are important gains to be made by broadening the discussion, and ensuring the participation of those affected in policy formulation. As part of this process, there is a need for improved research, better data collection, and capacity building among women and women's organizations on this topic.

Finally, when analyzing underlying gender patterns limiting women's economic participation, it must be emphasized that increased economic participation of women does not automatically lead to the attainment of gender equality. Access to economic resources does not always imply control over them. Economic benefits, specifically, control over income, are dependent on sociocultural factors, as are all gender power relations. These are context-specific; cannot be generalized; and require donors, governments, and others to conduct thorough analyses to prevent unintended effects. Therefore, it is not enough to merely foster women's economic participation; comprehensive programs, which include both women and men, should accompany the transformation of gender roles.

CONCLUSION

South Asian regional trade in green industries has had both positive and negative effects for the women involved in these sectors. The ability of governments to build on the opportunities depends significantly on their ability to both put in place policies that allow women to strengthen their advantages, as well as create safety nets.

As trade expands, strong patriarchal mind-sets and women's lack of access to, and control over resources could worsen existing gender inequalities. Both economic theory and empirical evidence tell us that an expansion in trade will result in greater opportunities and increased incomes in green industries. In the face of rising opportunities and in the absence of proactive measures pushing women to partake of these increased benefits, the study anticipates that it is possible that women will become increasingly marginalized and pushed out of the sector. Even if women are able to participate in the growth of this sector, in the absence of support measures at the household level, it will place even greater burden on their time, pulling them in multiple directions.

⁴ For information on the "decent work agenda," see the International Labour Organization website: <http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/decent-work-agenda/lang--en/index.htm>

Thus, explicit attention to the gender dimensions of trade, and the promotion of green industries is crucial. It is possible for governments and civil society organizations to take initiatives to support positive outcomes in this growing sector.

Ways Forward

The macro and microanalysis in the study points to common themes across green industries to encourage positive outcomes, and mitigate the negative impact of trade on women. The study also confirms the validity of often repeated calls for better data and measurement of women's work. Given the need to provide specific entry points for international development institutions and national governments, the report focuses on suggestions that are broadly applicable to the region and the sector as a whole.

Involving Women Informal Traders in Trade

Facilitation: It is important to engage women producers and traders, and their respective associations, in the formation of trade facilitation policies and measures. Since most of women's current trading activities are primarily informal in nature, the formalization of trade channels often crowds out women traders. It is important to engage informal women traders through discussions and consultations to both understand how increasing cross-border trade in South Asia affects them, and to reduce the potential negative impact on their livelihoods.

Improved Infrastructure Facilities: These include infrastructure such as roads connecting the enterprise to the market; storage and processing facilities; power generation capabilities, both mainstream as well as alternative; and more sustainable sources such as solar power. It also includes infrastructure available to women within their workplaces, such as toilets and crèches—often critical determinants of their ability to work.

Improved Access to Finance for Women

Entrepreneurs: Access to adequate and timely credit and finance is key to women becoming and staying as entrepreneurs. The Bangladesh case study identifies some areas which may be applicable across countries and sectors: banking services, credit guarantee schemes, loans at preferential rates, pre-investment and post-investment counseling, simplified lending procedures, tax holidays, maintaining sex-disaggregated data on credit disbursement, and disseminating information on credit opportunities.



ADB. Samir Jung Thapa

Female field worker carrying harvested corn in Marpha, Nepal.

Training and Skills Enhancement: Low skill levels are a common feature of women engaged in the green sectors included in this study. Basic interventions—such as adult literacy programs including numeracy, reading, and writing—could go a long way. In addition, more intensive skills-building programs in processing, packaging, communication, use of computers and information technologies, and sales and marketing are all vital to creating a female workforce able to participate in a growing economy. The Nepal case study points out the importance of training women in “nontypical” vocations, allowing them to break out of stereotypical gender roles.

Encouraging Women's Entrepreneurship:

Entrepreneurship is an important route to bringing about an improvement of the socioeconomic status of women engaged in these sectors. It is important to recognize the role of women in enterprise development in the modern economy, and reduce the regulatory barriers they are often confronted with when establishing and operating new businesses. Credit programs may also be linked with entrepreneurship development training programs.

Support Mechanisms for Households: Given the potential impact of income generation on women's workload, it is important to institute interventions that will address these burdens. These could include community childcare centers, cooperative housework where women take turns helping each other in housework while some are engaged in productive work, or strong campaigns

It is possible for governments and civil society organizations to take initiatives to support positive outcomes in this growing sector.



Bhutanese farmer attends to sun drying of rice grains.

For growth strategies to address gender inequality, more comprehensive programs that address underlying power roles are needed.

for husbands or men in the family to take on more household tasks.

Gender-Inclusive Fair Trade: Finally, a suggestion that emerged from the research, and was confirmed at the national validation workshops, was the creation of a South Asian Gender Inclusive Fair Trade (GIFT) forum that would focus on providing greater market integration for women entrepreneurs, farmers, and factory owners. Women entrepreneurs need to be trained and assisted to be able to create better market linkages, identify buyers, and obtain “green” or “fair trade” certification. It is important to ensure that pricing and marketing information are made available in a structured manner at the local level. Branding and certification issues also need to be dealt with. Self-help groups may be particularly helpful here, creating collective bargaining power. If planned correctly, GIFT could become a one-stop shop for women working in green industries that enables them to integrate with international and intra-regional trade opportunities as these arise.

The study concludes that the promotion of regional trade in South Asia needs to fully acknowledge and integrate an analysis of gender differentials in workforce participation, employment, and entrepreneurship in trade

policies and programs. This is necessary to ensure that trade expansion addresses the specific needs of women. Entry points and tools at the national and regional levels to support the full inclusion of women’s concerns in regional economic policies are discussed in both volumes of the full report. Finally, the study cautions against assuming that expanding economic participation and increasing incomes will lead automatically to the attainment of gender equality. Instead, it focuses on how to make macroeconomic policies—whether green growth or trade expansion policies—more gender responsive. For growth strategies to address gender inequality, more comprehensive programs that address underlying power roles are needed.

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- Note: This section only includes the works cited in the summary. The full study includes an extensive bibliography.