

Session 15: Practical Strategies and Measures in Incorporating Gender Dimension in Trade Facilitation

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Introduction

You are trade (facilitation) experts.
You may wonder **WHY** and **WHAT**
you need to know about gender
dimension in trade.



SDGs: No One Left Behind

“...The achievement of full human potential and of sustainable development is not possible if one half of humanity continues to be denied its full human rights and opportunities. Women and girls must enjoy equal access to quality education, economic resources and political participation as well as equal opportunities with men and boys for employment, leadership and decision-making at all levels. We will work for a significant increase in investments to close the gender gap and strengthen support for institutions in relation to gender equality and the empowerment of women at the global, regional and national levels...The systematic mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the implementation of the Agenda is crucial.” (emphasis added)

Source: UN (2015). *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, Declaration para. 20.

Questions:

Q. Simplified trade procedures, single window, paperless trade...

Do they benefit women more than men?

Your governments committed to “increase in investments to close the gender gap and strengthen support for institutions in relation to gender equality and the empowerment of women at the global, regional and national levels (UN, 2015, para 20).”

Q. Incorporating gender dimension in trade facilitation (TF):

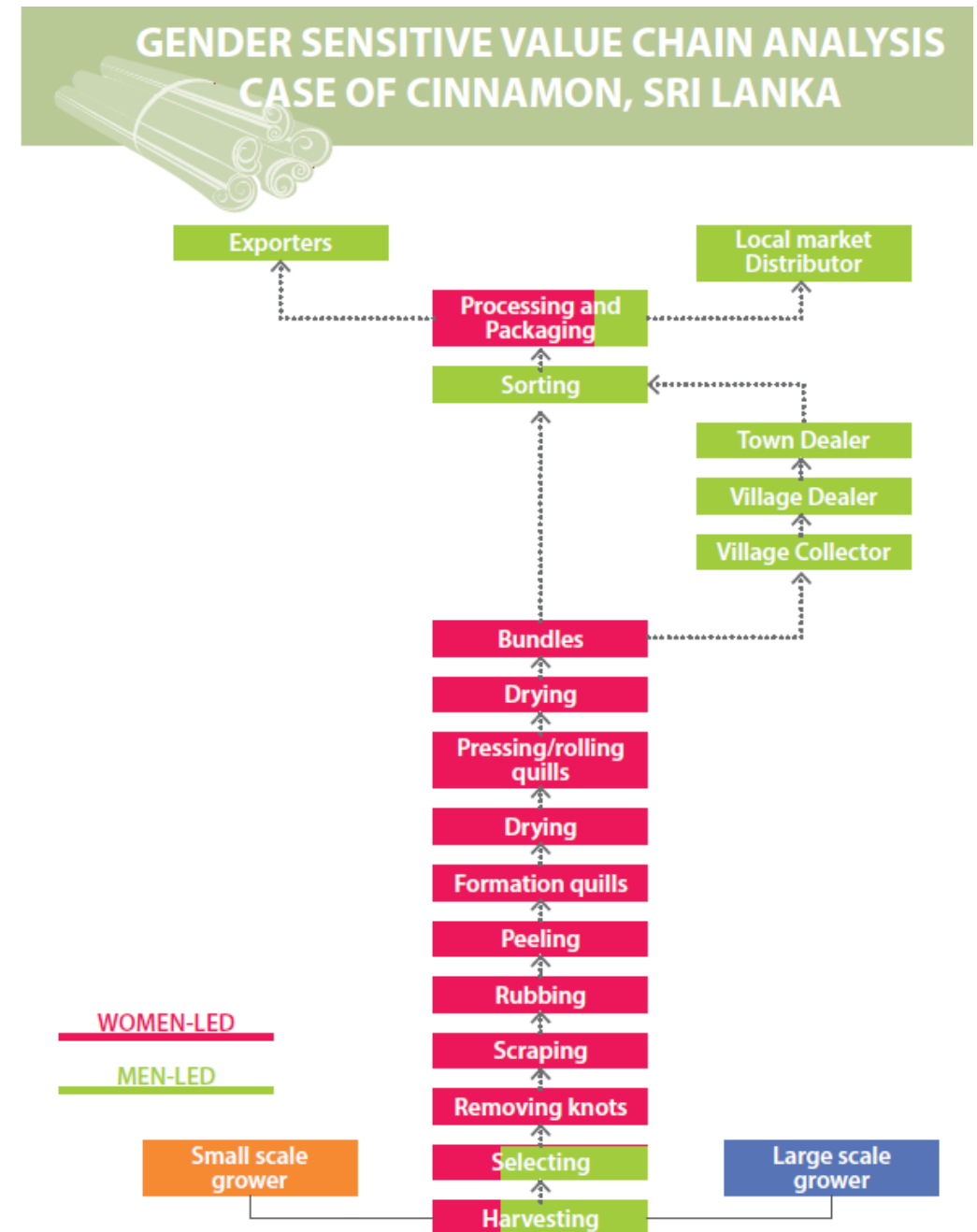
What could be the gender equality goals?

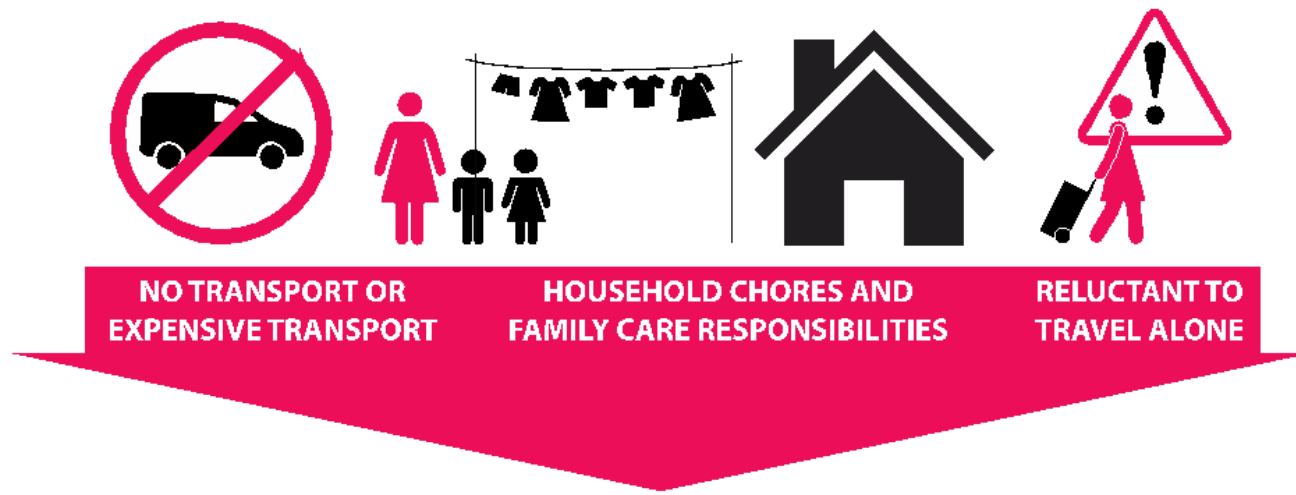
- Increasing the number of women traders?
- Improvement in TF benefits the industries where women work?
- Improvement in TF benefits women consumers?
(e.g., lower the price of goods that mostly women consume)

1. Gender and mobility: Few women traders

Women's mobility is limited in general, and more so in conflict-affected areas, remote areas, and in the neighborhood with poor security.

Q. What are the obstacles for women to move freely?





LIMITED ACCESS TO



Source: Yamamoto (2016)



Source: UNDP

Women at borders (Findings from Yamamoto (2016))

- At the borders and checkpoints along the highways, authorities hassle and request for a bribe. It occurs to both men and women. But women traders may perceive them differently than men because many of the officials are men.
- Along the highways to the land ports and near the ports, lack of safety measures and amenities such as women-friendly hotels and bathrooms add women's concerns.

Q. What are the means to remove the obstacles to support women's mobility given your country's / region's context?



The case of Myitkyina-Ten Chong highway

(see Phyu (2012) in Kusakabe (ed.) 2012.)

- Women in Myitkyina, Myanmar, played a significant role in petty trade during the 1960s-1990s.
- When the road from Myitkyina-Laiza, China, improved, more men entered the cross-border trade, esp. in goods with higher profit margins (e.g., motorbikes.)
- The 2008 construction of Myitkyina -Ten Chong (China) highway turned the Myitkyina–Laiza route into an informal/ illegal channel for trading.
- This state control to promote the new highway/ border facility put;
 - Women traders who use Laiza route in risks of arrest and confiscation of goods (they made business connections along the road)
 - Male traders continue to use informal routes including bush routes, avoiding informal payments.

Economic corridors, border facility (Findings from Kusakabe (ed.) 2012.)

There are differential impacts on women and men depending on geographical, social, and historical factors and people's own capacities to make optimum use of the new resource.

- New highways/ border towns may not necessarily bring economic opportunities and prosperity for women.
 - ✓ They tend to benefit; men more than women, and
large freight operators, than local women and men,
squeezing out small cross-border traders, mainly women.
- They may not improve women's mobility, and
 - ✓ Better mobility does not necessarily improve peoples' income or income generating opportunities.
 - ✓ Women's better income didn't change the gender division of labour at home.

Q. What the authorities should do to make a new land port etc. work for gender equality and poverty reduction?

2. Trade Facilitation and women producers

While tariffs have fallen, there is significant incidence of NTMs, across the sectors.

- Since women producers/ entrepreneurs are concentrate in specific products (e.g., agricultural products, handicrafts), NTBs in such commodities tend to harm women's economic activities more than men's.
- Women tend to work at micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and trade adjusting costs for MSMEs are generally higher than that for large enterprises.

Q. Whether/how do MSMEs gain from single window, paperless trade?

A Case from South Asia [See Yamamoto (2016)]

Officers at the border hold the goods for an extensive period of time at border or open the package resulting in high damage costs. For example,

Nepali *Allo* natural fibre does not have a specific Harmonized System (HS) code at 8-digit level. The closet codes at the 6-digit are for silk, hemp or 'other' fibres.

How to overcome the problem?

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How to overcome the problem?

- ✓ Create and assign a new HS code for the exportable products
- ✓ Train the customs/ checkpoint officers for better handling
- ✓ Introduce electric scanner or adequate goods handling equipment

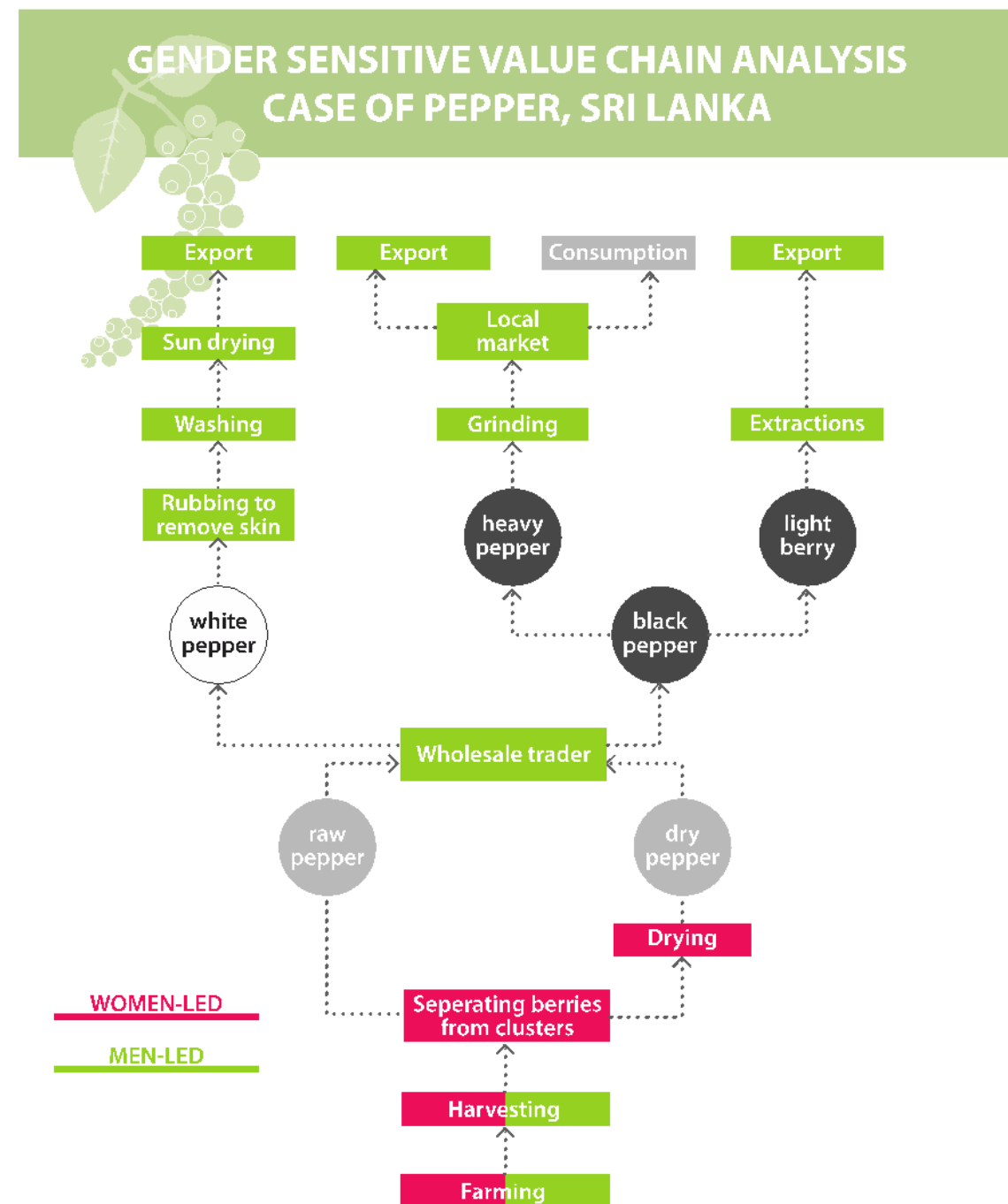
Q. Do you have any mechanisms to incorporate the voices of the MSMEs/ women entrepreneurs into TF measures?

Empowering women

Trade procedure is so complicated that MSMEs (esp. women entrepreneurs) remain at the bottom of value chains.

Since women are not directly engaging in trade, women's benefits from increased trade will be obtained with their increased bargaining power with local traders.

Case of Sri Lankan pepper: Women producers wanted to know about the price differences based on grading.



Summary and Discussion:

- Social and cultural factors that shape gender norms vary across the region/ country, and they change over time.
- Inclusiveness is a key for achieving SDGs. So participatory approach and reviewing TF policies and measures from a perspective of the marginalized population is crucial (Remember: No one left behind).

Improve trade Facilitation measures for whom?

Thank you for your attention!

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References:

Kusakabe, K. (ed.) (2012). *Gender, Roads and Mobility in Asia*.

Yamamoto (2016) [*Trade Winds of Change: Women Entrepreneurs on Rise in South Asia*](#). Bangkok: UNDP (including gender-sensitive value chain analysis by IPS, Infographics)