



**REPORT**

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**Capacity Building Workshop**  
**on**  
**“Gender Mainstreaming at India’s Land Ports”**

**New Delhi**

**December 18-19, 2023**

## INTRODUCTION

The two-day capacity-building workshop on gender mainstreaming at India's land ports was organized by the Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI) in collaboration with the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations, (ICRIER) at New Delhi on 18-19<sup>th</sup> December, 2023.

The objective of the workshop was to create awareness of the need to integrate gender considerations in processes and behaviour and build capacity among the various agencies operating at the land ports to adopt targeted measures that can create an enabling environment for women at the land ports.

More than thirty participants drawn from various agencies, including LPAI, Bureau of Immigration, Customs, Border Security Force (BSF), Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and Regional Plant Quarantine stations attended the workshop.



The workshop deliberations were structured around the following topics:

- Importance of Gender Mainstreaming in Trade Facilitation
- Entry Points for Gender Lens Assessment of Land Ports in India
- Information and Port Amenities
- Safety Set-up
- Cargo Processing - Mechanisation & Digitisation
- Importance of a Gender Inclusive Workforce
- Perspectives from Sea Ports
- Gender Mainstreaming through Financial Tools

## SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS



In her welcome remarks Nisha Taneja, Professor & Lead Trade, Investment and External Relations (TIER), ICRIER, highlighted action point #27 of India's National Trade Facilitation Action Plan which calls for mainstreaming gender in trade and commended LPAI for being the first agency to act upon this and set the goal for all the Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) to be gender friendly in three years. She introduced the initiatives that the ICRIER team have been taking in collaboration with the LPAI including the recently released study report on Gender Mainstreaming at India's Land Ports. Dr. Taneja stated it is largely assumed that women will automatically benefit from trade facilitation initiatives in the same way as men do, without acknowledging possible distinct impediments and impacts on women and men according to their needs and social roles. Therefore, the workshop discussion themes and the mix of international and Indian experts as well as women stakeholders as session leads had been chosen to provide the participants with a holistic and progressive overview of the need for gender mainstreaming at the land ports and how this could be implemented.

In the inaugural remarks Dr. Rekha Raikar Kumar, Member (Finance), LPAI, spoke about the historical context of the importance of women in Indian culture and went on to highlight LPAI's initiatives to become gender inclusive. She reiterated LPAI's committed target to make all land ports gender friendly in three years and provided a brief overview of roadmap that has been drawn up along with the steps that have already been initiated in this direction.

According to Dr. Raikar an important initiative that is in the pipeline is the creation a gender index for land ports and awarding the most inclusive land port.



Setting the context Soo Hyun Kim, Economic Affairs Officer, Trade, Investment and Innovation Division, UNESCAP, introduced the need and importance of gender mainstreaming in trade facilitation, based on findings of the UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation (UNTF survey).



She highlighted that the UNTF survey reflects a low level of implementation of women's trade facilitation measures, which strongly indicated that the majority of government policies globally do not adequately consider the barriers faced by women in trade. She stressed that a comprehensive range of solutions is necessary to reduce gender disparities in trade facilitation, even though it may be challenging and highlighted some good practices from Ghana, Gambia and New Zealand-FTA. She noted that although the implementation level for India has improved over the years to 77.8 percent in 2023, there was still scope for further trade facilitation measures such as mandating specific quotas for women in the NTFC.



The session on entry points for gender lens assessment of land ports in India was led by Sanjana Joshi, Senior Fellow, ICRIER. She focused on the analytical framework template developed by ICRIER's recently released study on "Gender Mainstreaming at India's Land Ports". First, is a model review checklist with six identified categories – information and access; basic utilities; public facilities; safety set-up; cargo handling; and digitization - encompassing 57 elements that serve as entry points for gender lens assessment of the 'as is' situation. Second step pertains to the evaluation of the quality of available infrastructure with focus on accessibility, maintenance, performance, and efficiency. This is supplemented with an appraisal of workforce diversity among the agencies involved in port management and operations as well a qualitative appraisal of the work place environment. The gender assessment typology highlights the type of impact on women as being either facilitating or constraining and the constraining impact is evaluated on the basis of four parameters – impact on mobility, impact on well-being, impact on transaction costs and impact on safety. Finally, the Action Plan recommends specific enabling measures with focus on seven areas - information, infrastructure, digitisation, facilitation, staffing, outreach, and capacity building.



In the session on gender mainstreaming infrastructure for information and port amenities, Shravani Prakash, Consultant, ICRIER, Shravani Prakash sensitised the participants on the need for introducing a gender perspective into the design of the port building and constructing inclusive spaces. She highlighted the need to build gender smart land ports, by factoring in the physical, physiological and mental gender differences. She noted that the gender-lens assessment of the land ports by ICRIER has shown several elements that need to be included in port access, information availability, basic utilities, and public amenities. In

terms of port access, she emphasized the need for efficient and safe last-mile connectivity to the land ports and address the shortcomings in basic utilities that have an accentuated impact on women. Participants were sensitised on the need and process of building women-friendly amenities in female toilets, lactation rooms, waiting areas, first-aid facilities etc.



In the session on gender responsive safety set-up, Sanjana Joshi, Senior Fellow, ICRIER, asked the participants to share women’s-safety related concerns that they may have experienced or could be potential areas of concern at their land ports. She pointed out that safety was a very important aspect that women stakeholders had highlighted in the consultations undertaken by the ICRIER team as part of their study.



She sensitised the participants on various facets of women’s safety that need to be addressed at the land ports, as public spaces as well as workspaces as these incentivise more women to access and work at land ports. Suggested measures included functioning CCTVs and proper lighting in dark spots and spaces with less surveillance as well as danger-alert mechanisms

(like panic-buttons and alarms) as well as prominently displayed reporting mechanisms for sexual harassment complaints like notice boards with helpline numbers. For efficient implementation of the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) of Women at Workplace Act 2013 guidelines, it was suggested that multi-agency committees should be established at each land port.

The session on cargo processing was led by Sudip Dey, Honorary Secretary, Federation of Freight Forwarders' Associations in India (FFAI) who underlined the importance of greater mechanization and digitization at the land ports. He pointed out that inadequate mechanization and digitization of the cargo handling increases time and cost of trade and this impacts women businesses adversely since they are largely small and medium enterprises. Moreover, technology-based processes also require less physical effort and thereby increase the employment opportunities for women at the ports. He also highlighted the various ways in which FFAI is promoting the participation of women in the logistics sector.



In the context of the low female labour force participation in India, Mitali Nikore, Consultant, underlined the vital importance of workplace diversity. She focused on the forthcoming Gender Toolkit for supporting implementation of gender responsive land ports in India under the ACCESS Program of the World Bank. The tool kit resting on a four-pillar framework is based on three parameters – safety, inclusivity and normative barriers. She drew attention to some notable efforts by LPAI towards gender mainstreaming such as gender balancing in the work force, gender sensitive work timings, training opportunities for women staff to bridge the digital gap and gender sensitization training. Examples of international best practices included the 'Women Employee Referral Programme' at Port of Tanjung Pelepas (PTP) in

Malaysia and the 'Gender Pact' signed by port network authorities with the efforts of the Women in Transport Working Group set up by the Italian Ports Association.

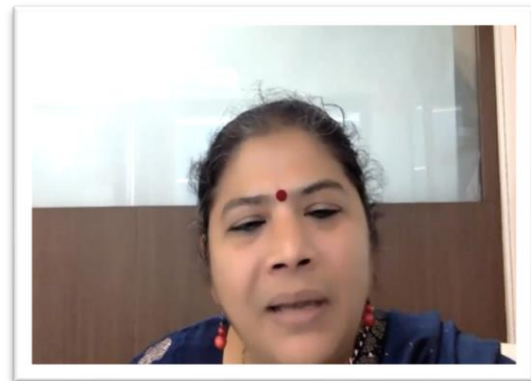


The interactive session with stakeholders on the need for gender mainstreaming at land ports has Sushma Morthania, Founder Director, SME Forum, Dolly Khonglah, Secretary, MEICC, Dawki and Suparna Banerjee, SCF International, Kolkata as panelists and was moderated by Nisha Taneja, Professor, ICRIER. This session highlighted various perspectives from women exporters and women CHAs. The speakers emphatically stressed the pressing need for basic facilities like toilets, waiting rooms, drinking water, mobile and internet connectivity, uninterrupted electricity supply etc. at the land ports. It was also pointed that more female staff at the land ports boost confidence of the women users and makes them feel safer. Since the land ports are located on the border, better availability of information on processes and requisite documentation as well as greater digitization would reduce the need to physically visit ports. At the wider level land ports can play a progressive role by organizing training cum awareness programs on trade procedures especially focusing on women entrepreneurs and women in the logistics industry.

Leading the session on perspectives from sea ports, Sharmila Amin, Managing Director, Bertling Logistics India Pvt. Ltd. shared her experiences of being a woman leader in the logistics industry and elucidated various achievements in her career that she was able to attain despite being a female in a male-dominated industry. She shared various anecdotes, pictures and videos to elucidate the kind of work that goes into the operations she undertakes, giving the participants vital exposure and learnings from seaports that could



come in use for land ports in future, not just in terms of dealing with women but also items that need to be moved.



With the focus on global experiences, Pamela Ugaz, Economic Affairs Officer, Trade Facilitation Section, UNCTAD, highlighted insights from the “Women in Trade Facilitation” section of UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation for India.



To address the existing challenges for women at land ports, she listed out measures for enhancing information access to make transparency work for all women; upgrading basic infrastructure (utilities and public amenities) to create a more women-friendly environment; using digital tools to stop gender-based discrimination at borders, and increasing staff diversity at land ports. She also made additional suggestions, that included - setting up a reporting mechanism on gender-based discrimination; including informal traders; providing gender-sensitive technical assistance and building a gender-sensitive National Trade Facilitation Committee.

In the session on gender mainstreaming through financial tools, Rekha Raikar Kumar, Member (Finance), LPAI, introduced the concept of gender budgeting as a tool for gender mainstreaming at 3 levels - legislation, organization and household. Providing an overview of the gender budgeting process in India, she highlighted the indicative statistics and summarised the shortcomings and achievements. This was followed up with explanations of related concepts like gender analysis, gender audit, and gender accounting along with several real-life and relatable examples to illustrate the points. Giving the example of her engagement with the “Gender-Based Audit of National Child Labour Project (NCLP) Gurugram and measures for mitigating the impact of Covid19 on women using key gender tools.



In his closing remarks Aditya Mishra, Chairman, LPAI, reaffirmed the commitment to adopt targeted measures to foster an enabling environment for women at India's land ports as part of the overall goal of inclusive and sustainable development. He commended the success of the Capacity Building Workshop and stated that more such sensitization and capacity building

programs are being included in the training agenda of the LPAI. The workshop concluded with the distribution of certificates of participation to the attendees.



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

The number of attendees from the various partner agencies operating at the land ports and their active participation in the discussions were indicative of the high interest generated by the first capacity building workshop on gender mainstreaming at the land ports in India. The workshop was attended by more than thirty participants drawn from various agencies,

including LPAI, Bureau of Immigration, Customs, Border Security Force (BSF), Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and Regional Plant Quarantine stations. The participants were highly appreciative of the LPAI-ICRIER collaboration stating that the inclusion of both international experts and women stakeholders in India was a very good addition and provided extremely useful insights. The enthusiastic and frank sharing of personal experiences relating to both women role models in their families along with the experiences dealing with women in the professional sphere by the participants made for greatly interactive and engaging sessions. The general consensus was that such gender sensitization programs have immense value in stimulating thoughtful appraisal of the current position and will pave the way for inculcating a more gender responsive approach in the functioning of their respective organisations as well as at the overall ecosystem at the land ports. It was hoped that LPAI would continue with this initiative and incorporate it as a regular program in its annual calendar of activities.