Women in Trade – How to Increase Benefits of Trade for Women

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- Transformations reshaping the world of work
  - Technology
  - Migration
  - Urbanization
  - Demographics
  - Trade and value chains
  - Climate change
- Evidence based research and analysis on how to cope with these forces altering the employment landscape.
- Ongoing project on Global Value Chains in the ASEAN region
Why women and trade?

- Low labour costs and greater flexibility
- *Feminisation* of the labour force (Standing, 1989)

Where are the women?
- Formal sector manufacturing
- Informal sector, sub-contracting, home-based work
- Greater capital intensity, technological sophistication, upgrading
Shares of Female Workers in Total Workers, Industry wise, in 2011-12

Source: Own calculations based on NSSO Report (2011-12) and ASI (2011-12). Organised includes only directly employed workers. Unorganised includes contract workers in organised sector.
Over representation of women

- Among the women workers employed in formal garment factories, Karnataka employs the highest – 47%
- Followed by Tamil Nadu -36%
- But most of the work is informal and subcontracted
- Varies from state to state
- Docile work force, non unionised
Wages

- Even with minimum wages, PF, ESI benefits not good enough with the rising costs of living in Bangalore’s Urban district where most of the factories are located.
- Circumventing the laws – gratuity, crèche, overtime
- Men and women are paid the same wages
Manufacturer

- Less room to manoeuvre
- Uniform minimum wages across India
- Relocation in search of lower wages to rural areas of Bangalore, to other states, to other countries.
- Labour turn over is very high
How to increase the benefits for women?

- Government policies attract investors
- Gujarat government’s new apparel policy to create one lakh jobs especially for women, by giving wage subsidies
- Politically driven
- Duty drawback scheme for exporters.
- Putting pressure on the brands
- Trade unions and NGO’s
Lower costs, new processes, work organization, responsiveness
How to create sustainable employment for women?
Ensuring living wages, labour standards
‘Modal batches’
Thank you