

TRANSFORMING ROLES FOR WOMEN TRADERS IN GLOBAL VALUE CHAINS

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CUTS International was invited as a speaker at the 'Workshop on Women in Global Value Chains' at the World Trade Organization on 1 October, 2018. This paper formed the base of discussions that were initiated by CUTS at the workshop. The paper has also benefitted from reviewing by CUTS Geneva Resource Centre. More details about the workshop: <http://snip.ly/hw9mss>

Abstract

In the last decade alone, more businesses and governments have started recognising the potential of increasing per capita income by integrating women traders in global value chains. Increasingly the current role of women has been defined by their traditional participation in the employment sector as physical workers, commodity producers and small-scale traders. However, emerging role of women in global value chains indicate the presence of women as consumers of high value goods as well as employers and business-owners who generate profits and actively pay taxes to the national economy.

With the recent joint declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment on the Occasion of the WTO Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires in December 2017, multiple multilateral platforms are striving to break women traders from the cycle of 'productivity trap' and 'pink ghetto'. The mainstream global value chains are inhibited in their engagement due their conventional models of engaging women in businesses. Hence, women traders are now creating business models that are built for women who have nuanced needs as a consumer and producer of niche commodities.

This discussion paper attempts to present the data trends regarding the current role of women in global value chains. The paper goes ahead to highlight specific case studies from around the world to highlight the emerging avenues in global value chains, which women traders are creating for themselves as well as their counterparts.

Global Overview of Women in GVCs:

Integration of global value chains (GVC) across borders generates employment and drives economic development. While in simple terms, a 'value chain' could surmise the range of activities incorporated in a product or service from its conception to its end use, the term 'global value chain' stands out due to its fragmentation across borders and thereby driving mini models of economic growth.

Multiple indicators have been identified in various literatures, which can measure women's participation in GVCs (Bamber & Staritz, 2016; Gereffi, Humphrey, & Sturgeon, 2005). As more businesses and governments are recognising the potential of increasing income by integrating women traders in global value chains, the points for deliberation loom beyond the generalisations on equality and opportunity for women traders.

Investing in women traders unlocks new market opportunities by creating a powerful consumer demographic as well as an investor group. Increasingly the current role of women has been defined by their traditional participation in the employment sector as physical workers, commodity producers and small-scale traders. However, emerging role of women in global value chains indicate the presence of women as consumers of high value goods as well as employers and business-owners who generate profits and actively pay taxes to the national economy.

As shown below in Figure 1, the average trend of female employment¹ from 1998-2017 provides an overview of the status of the kind of participation and value-addition that women provide in GVCs. Across the years, it is evident that the per cent of female employment as wage and salaried workers (56 - 48 per cent) forms the substantial workforce followed by vulnerable employment (51-43 per cent), own-account workers (26 - 23 per cent) and as employers (2-1 per cent).

As indicated by the data, Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia lead the percentage of female employment in the category of own-account workers and vulnerable employment. The regions, which are leading the employment of women as employers and as wage and salaried workers are North America, Latin America and Caribbean and Europe and Central Asia.

It is worthwhile to note that within distinct regions, across 20 years, the category of female employment shows minimal fluctuation. The change in percentage of female employment is merely across the years, which is expected since these trends are subject to fluctuations in the national economies as well. Through the course of the sections ahead, it is evident from the data trends and the case studies that female participation can exceptionally redirect a country's national economic growth due to their presence in the country's key economy.

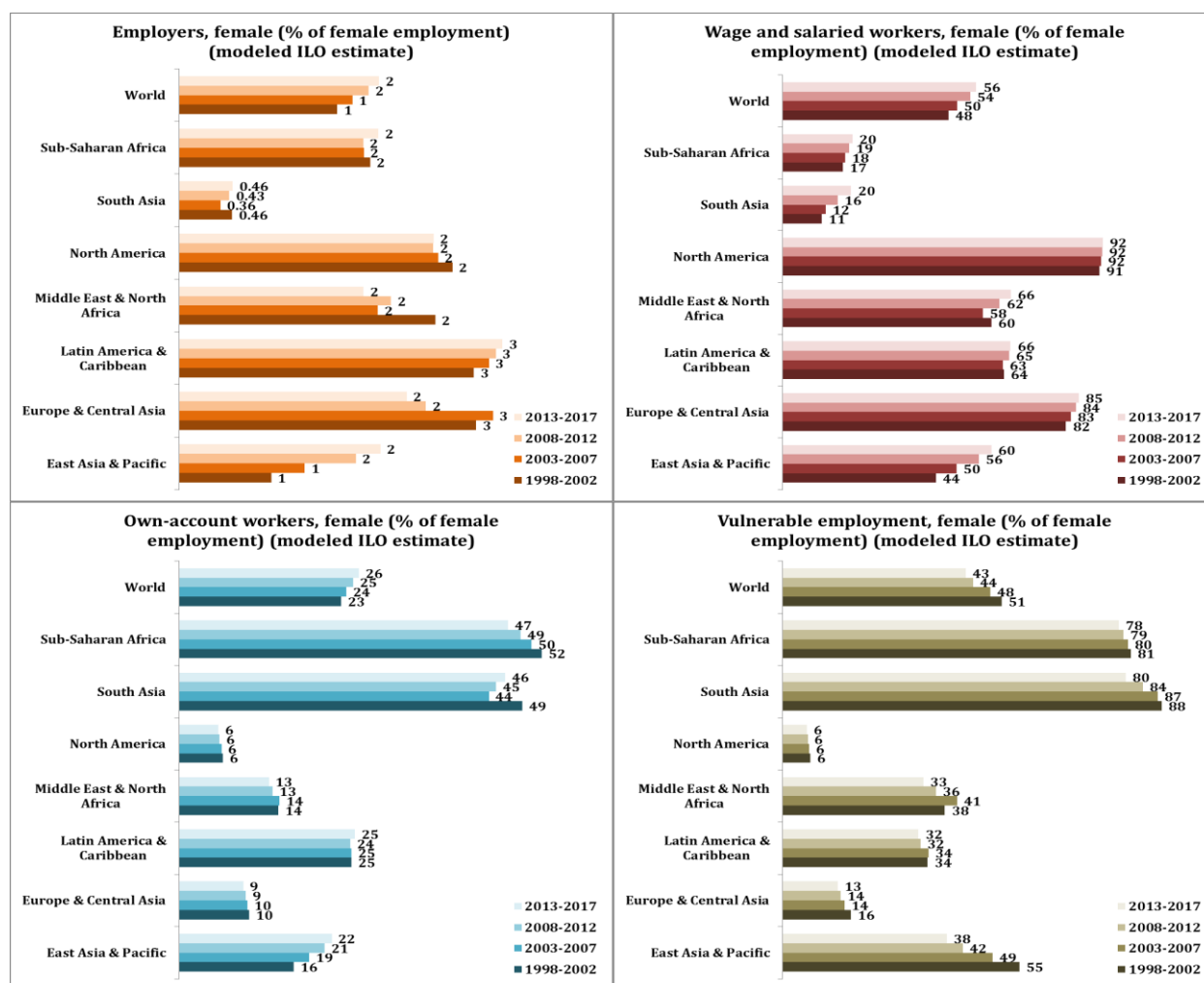
¹ Employers are those workers who, working on their own account or with one or a few partners, hold the type of jobs defined as a "self-employment jobs" i.e. jobs where the remuneration is directly dependent upon the profits derived from the goods and services produced), and, in this capacity, have engaged, on a continuous basis, one or more persons to work for them as employee(s).

Wage and salaried workers (employees) are those workers who hold the type of jobs defined as "paid employment jobs," where the incumbents hold explicit (written or oral) or implicit employment contracts that give them a basic remuneration that is not directly dependent upon the revenue of the unit for which they work.

Vulnerable employment is contributing family workers and own-account workers as a percentage of total employment.

Own-account workers are workers who, working on their own account or with one or more partners, hold the types of jobs defined as "self-employment jobs" and have not engaged on a continuous basis any employees to work for them. Own account workers are a subcategory of "self-employed".

Figure 1: Average trends of type of female employment over 20 years (1998-2017)



Source: World Bank, 2018

Glossary: <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/metadataglossary/Gender-Statistics/series>

In order to help women reach their full potential in the world economy, 118 WTO members and observers agreed to support the Buenos Aires Declaration on Women and Trade, which seeks to remove barriers to, and foster, women's economic empowerment². This has created an avenue for women traders to participate as equal counterparts in conventional global value chains.

Taking advantage of the opportunity provided by this Declaration to advance the role of women in international trade, this paper aims to identify the various sectors, occupations and stages occupied by women across the globe in the GVCs³. The paper concludes that benefits from integration in GVCs and economic upgrading are dependent on the employment in the value chain segment, higher skills, ownership

²Joint Declaration on Trade and Women's Economic Empowerment on the Occasion of the WTO Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires in December 2017 -

https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/minist_e/mc11_e/genderdeclarationmc11_e.pdf

³ Acting at the intersection of policy implementation and action research, CUTS has initiated research, advocacy and networking among various state and non-state actors on mainstreaming gender in international trade. More details:

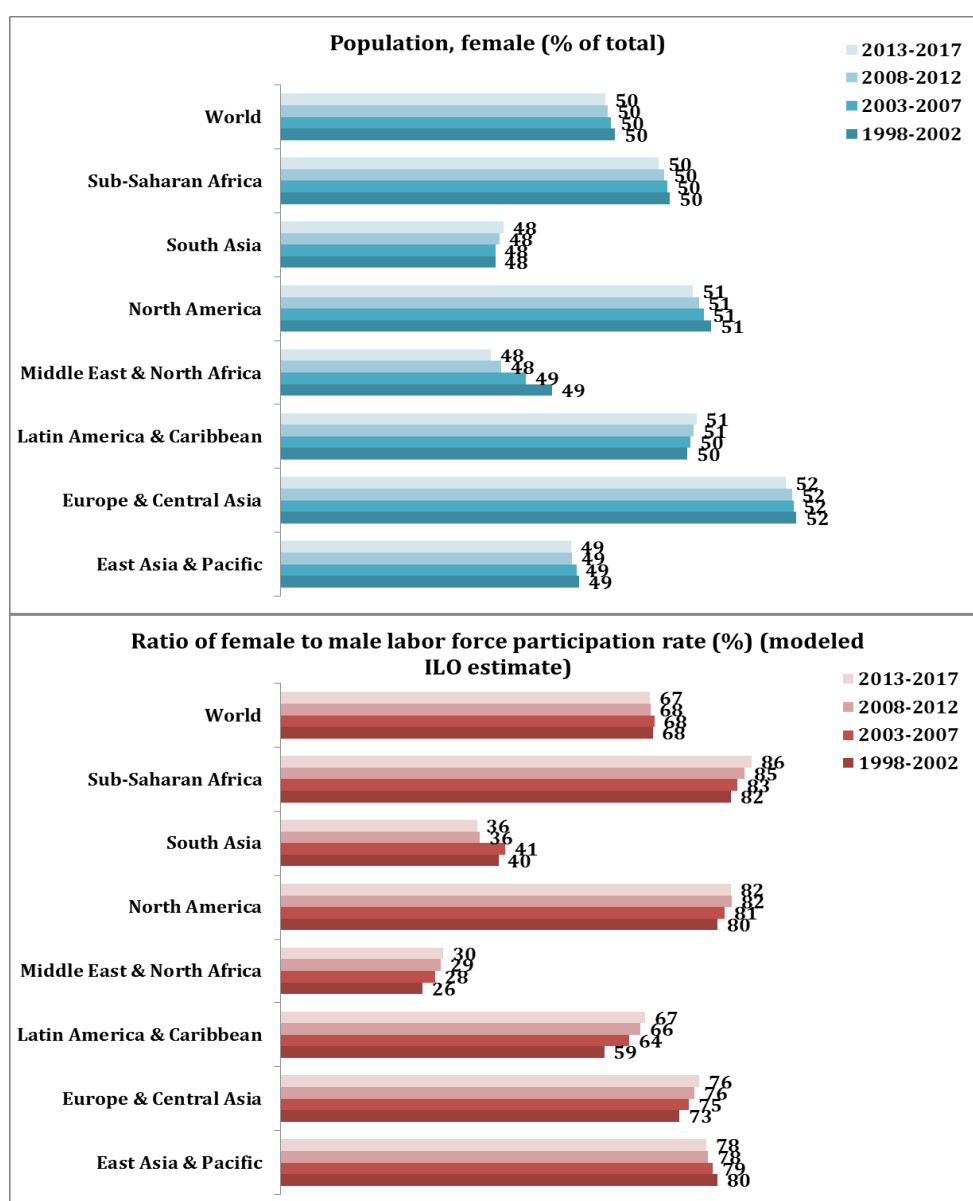
<http://www.cuts-citee.org/mgit/India.htm>

of businesses and change in gender share due to economic upgrading of jobs and firms. Without doubt, these benefits are magnified by the benefits from social upgrading too as evident from the case studies mentioned.

Current Role of Women in Global Value Chains:

Globally, women account for only 38 per cent of human capital wealth versus 62 per cent for men. In low- and lower-middle income countries, women account for a third or less of human capital wealth. This is exemplified by the 'productivity trap' circled by lower pay and lower hours of work (Figure 2). Market and institutional failures have categorically been proved to contribute to the low estimates of human capital and productivity trap attributed to women in their current conventional roles in the GVCs.

Figure 2: Trends of average productivity trap of female workforce over 20 years (1998-2017)



Source: World Bank, 2018

Glossary: <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/metadataglossary/Gender-Statistics/series>

Female participation rates in conventional global value chains have risen across many economies, but more so in some than in others. Economies such as Chile, Colombia, Peru and Spain have experienced some of the sharpest increases in women's participation rates.

Many other economies, such as Canada, France, Indonesia and the Republic of Korea, have registered a more modest rise in the female participation in the labour force. Several other economies, such as China, India, Japan and Poland, have experienced a relative decline in the labour force participation of women (WTO, 2017).

Box 1: Women as physical workers: Improving workplace conditions in the garment and textile industry

The textile and garment industry in Vietnam is the largest industrial employer, out of which female workers account for over 80 per cent of the labour force.

Among the various textile and garment industries, 2 per cent are State Owned Enterprises (SoE), 15 per cent are foreign-invested companies and 83 per cent are private companies. Despite the small percentage, SoEs are the dominant producers due to the low-cost labour force, which is substantiated by the dominant female workforce.

These SOEs were predicted to be the biggest beneficiary of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), since the rules of origin require all products in a garment, beginning at the yarn stage, to be sourced in TPP member nations in order to enjoy preferential access to member nations.

According to the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Convention 87 on Freedom of Association and ILO Convention 98 on Protection of the Right to Organise, Vietnam has not ratified worker's rights. Hence freedom of association remains the most challenging problem for Vietnam and by extension its female workforce in the textile and garment industry.

In such scenarios, entities such as the Fair Wear Foundation (FWF) present a sustainable solution. Fair Wear Foundation has been active in Vietnam since 2006 and manages the local complaints hotline and handles complaints from workers who submit labour rights violations.

They also conduct factory trainings, which aim to raise awareness of both workers and employees of their rights and responsibilities and to build better communication between workers and management.

As more emerging economies participate in global value chains, improving workplace conditions for women workers will ensure efficient and sustainable employment conditions in the long run.

Source: FWF, 2015

Fast fashion in the textile industry and labour-intensive agriculture form the backbone of many LICs and LDCs and hence these economies show considerable statistics to support formal and informal forms of employment. The Trade in Value Added (TiVA) database on emerging and developing economies (WTO, 2016) indicate that formal labour markets (e.g. textile) and agriculture (e.g. subsistence farming) are the two (and only) competing platforms for women as physical labourers.

Participation of women in global value chains can also be closely monitored by the dynamics of change in the GVCs. During 1998-2002, bouts of liberal economic policies around the world transformed the employment trends in global value chains across the world. For instance, Figure 3 indicates that during 1998-

2002, the percentage of female employment in agriculture was lower than the employment in the services sector⁴.

Around 2013-2017, the agriculture sector was lagging behind by twice (28 per cent) as much as the services sector, which indicates substantial setback in the percentage of female employment in the agriculture sector for the developed countries. This setback is further substantiated by the steady trend of 19-16 per cent of female employment in the industry sector across the 20-year period. On closer analysis of the 20-year data, it is evident that substantial setback of overall female employment percentages in agriculture is reflected in the substantial increase of female employment in services in North America.

Box 2: Women as commodity producers: Farmers to Businesswomen

In 2003, the Unión de Cooperativas Agropecuarias (UCA) SOPPEXCCA in Nicaragua became the first cooperative organisation to implement a gender-equality policy with around 40 per cent of its members as women.

Through this intervention, the organisation works to help female farmers produce, manage, and market their own coffee and offers credit to women producers to enable them to buy their own land. Today, the cooperative has successfully integrated its women producers as independent businesswomen in international fair trade value chains for coffee companies across the US, Germany and the Netherlands.

Following the partial liberalisation of the cocoa sector in Ghana around 1993, the Kuapa Kokoo Cooperative Cocoa Farmers and Marketing Union Limited (KKFU) was formed with 2000 farmers. In 1999 with the formation of its own chocolate marketing company, Divine Chocolate, Kuapa Kokoo has further strengthened the participation of its women producers in global value chains.

In addition to enforced quotas for female representation at every level, from village to district to national bodies, Kuapa Kokoo has an equal opportunity approach. For example, no collateral is required to secure loans – often a problem for women; only a peer group approval of someone as credit-worthy is needed.

In both the cases mentioned above, the existence of a strong cooperative model has directed the transition of women from being mere commodity producers to being participants in the global value chains.

Source: UCA, 2018; Kuapa Kokoo, 2018

The data further shows that the female employment in agriculture is majorly comprised of the contribution from South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa – regions with developing countries with emerging economies. On

⁴ The agriculture sector consists of activities in agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing, in accordance with division 1 (ISIC 2) or categories A-B (ISIC 3) or category A (ISIC 4). The industry sector consists of mining and quarrying, manufacturing, construction, and public utilities (electricity, gas, and water), in accordance with divisions 2-5 (ISIC 2) or categories C-F (ISIC 3) or categories B-F (ISIC 4). The services sector consists of wholesale and retail trade and restaurants and hotels; transport, storage, and communications; financing, insurance, real estate, and business services; and community, social, and personal services, in accordance with divisions 6-9 (ISIC 2) or categories G-Q (ISIC 3) or categories G-U (ISIC 4).

closer observation, it can be concluded that within South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, the percentage of female employment has decreased from 1998-2017 to the tune of 6 per cent and 10 per cent respectively.

Figure 3a: Trends of average female employment in various regions (1998-2017)

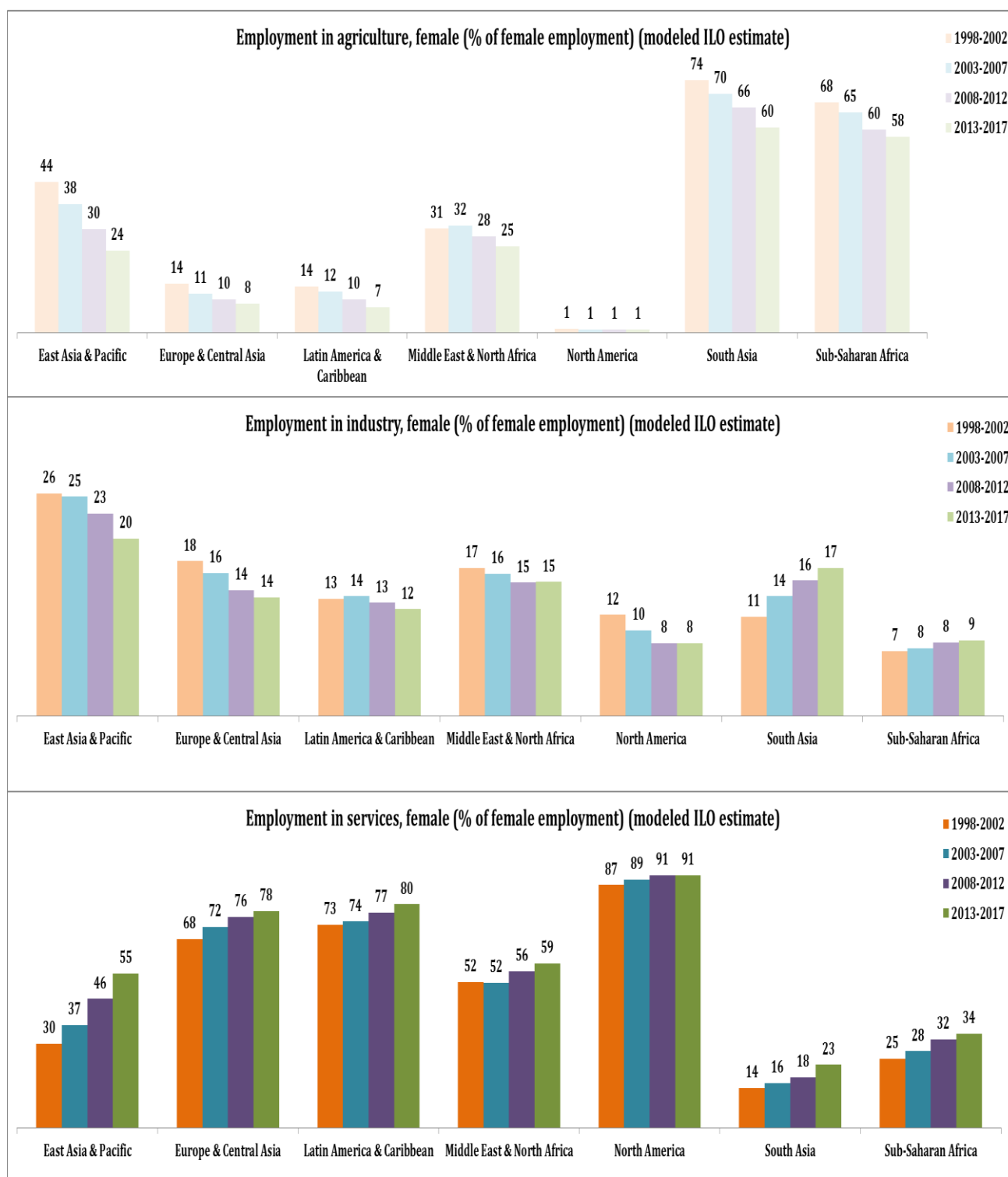
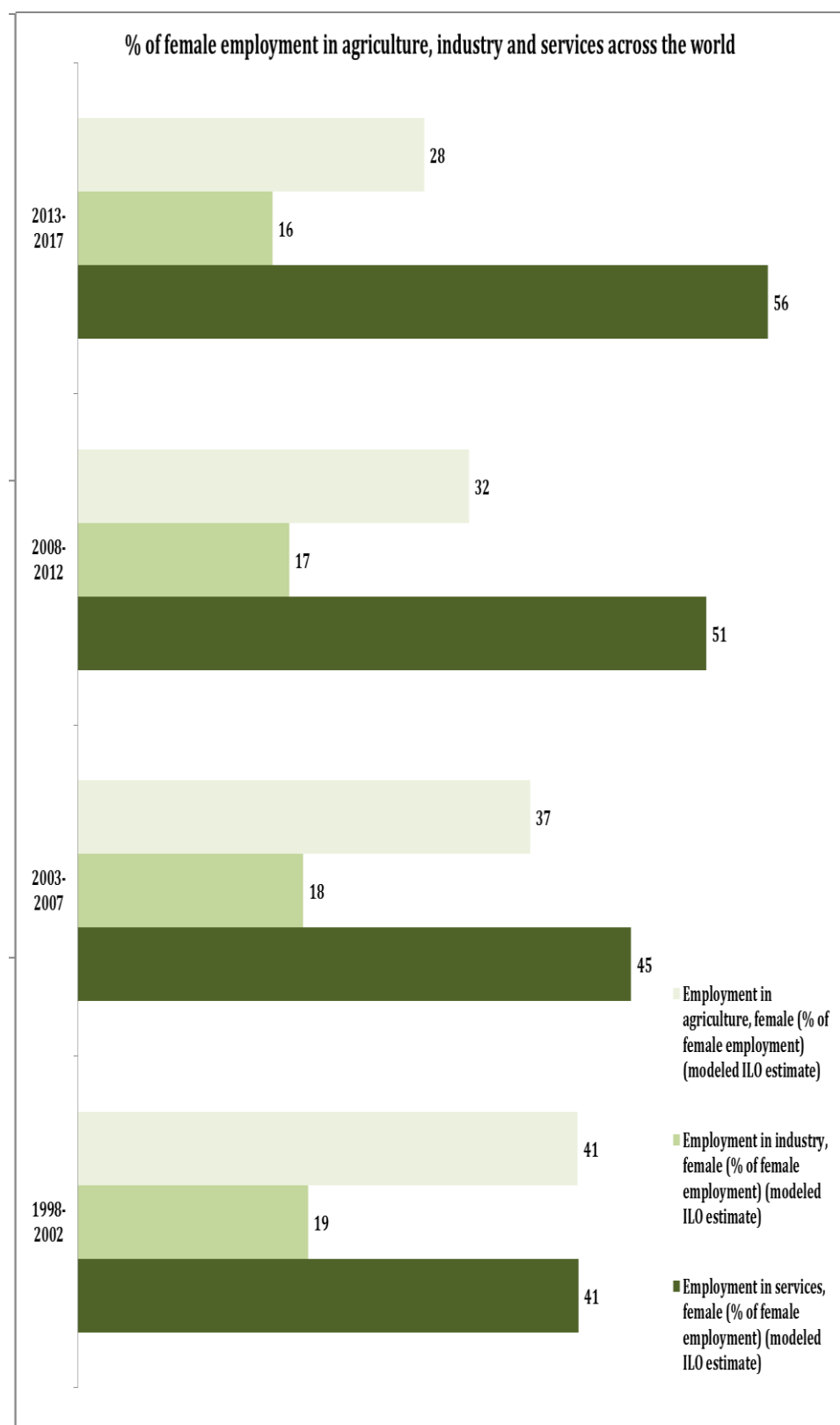


Figure 3b: Trends of average female employment across the world (1998-2017)



Source: World Bank, 2018

Glossary: <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/metadataglossary/Gender-Statistics/series>

In this situation of changing employment structures for female workers, it is imperative to understand the reasons for the shift of female employment from agriculture and industry sector to the services sector. Within the agriculture and industry sector, segregation of jobs based on gender tends to keep women's wages low.

On one hand, this categorically inhibits their chances to be part of an export-oriented global value chain in the sector. On the other hand, labour-intensive sectors (including manufacturing and non-traditional agriculture) form the crux of intensive-export markets in developing countries. Such markets shall continue to create the demand for female employment in global value chains.

Box 3: Women as participants in bilateral trade: Harmony through Border Markets

Cross-border agricultural trade allows women to participate in bilateral country-trade through the system of 'Border Markets'.

In East Africa, cross-border market facilities at Rusizi at the border of Rwanda and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) acts as a catalyst for information sharing between producers and buyers in addition to improving security for women traders who make up between 75-80 per cent of the informal cross-border traders in Rusizi.

Similarly, in South Asia, India and Bangladesh share four border haats (Kalaichar, Balat, Srinagar and Kamalasagar), which have renewed their focus on increasing women vendors to promote the well-being of the people living in remote areas, along both sides of the border.

Due to the proximity of a cross-border market, local women traders can gain international prices for their local products (agricultural produce, locally woven textile, hand-held agricultural implements, etc.) within proximity of their resident places. Such models of cross-border trade have shown significant improvements in a women trader's income as well as participation in the GVC.

Source: TMEA, 2017; Northeast Today, 2016

To enable successful participation of women as physical workers, commodity producers and small-scale traders, sustainable models of intervention need to be encouraged to enable enhanced participation of women in the global value chains. Regular audits on workplace condition, direct access to engage in cross-border bilateral trade and easy access to farm credit in cooperatives are some interventions.

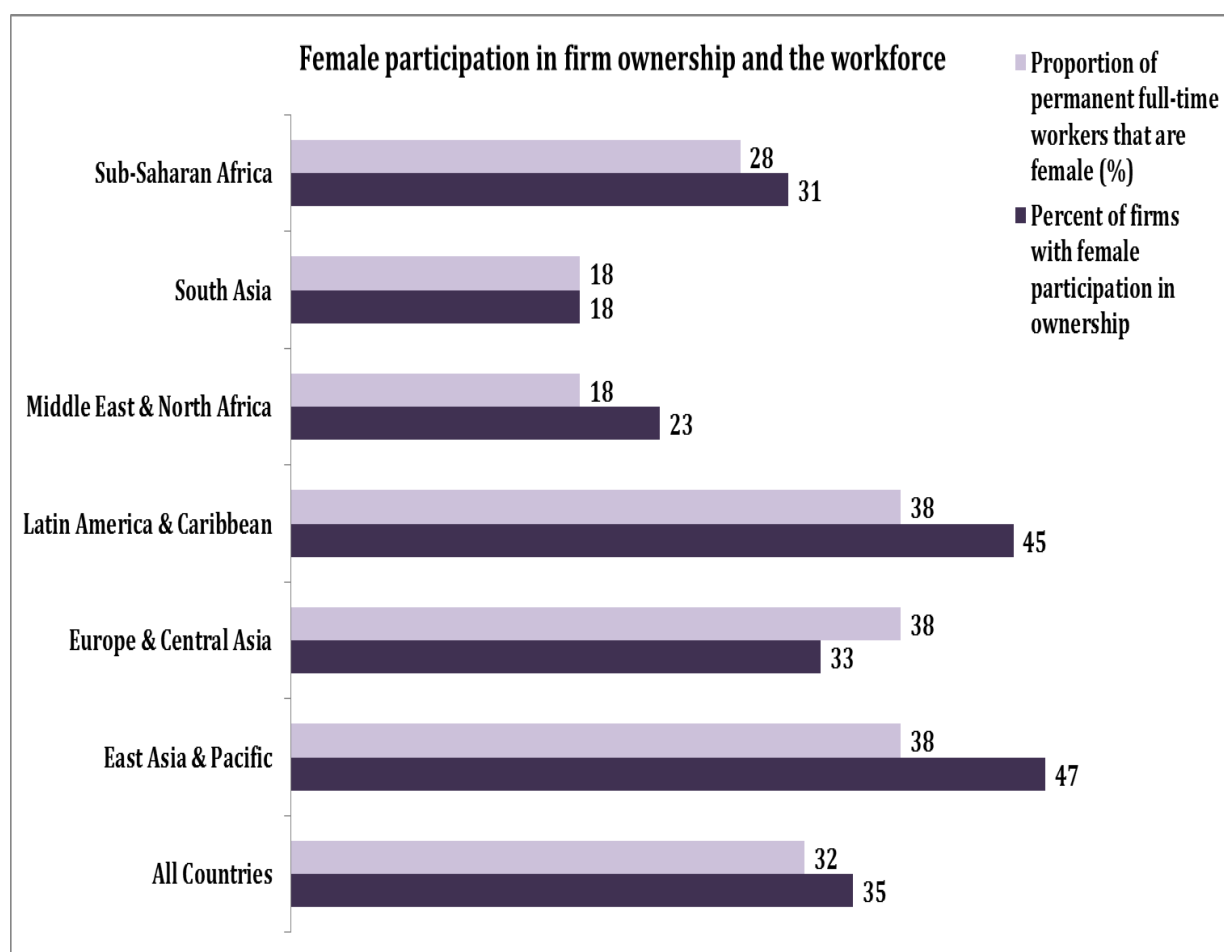
Emerging Role of Women in Global Value Chains:

While substantial amount of women-centric employment will be spread across the agriculture and industry sector, multiple emerging trends show the phenomenon of women as consumer of high value goods and as business-owners generating profits and contributing to the national economy in the services sector.

A strong institutional environment is essential for expanding access to capital and finance for women-owned and managed businesses. Recent trends show increasing participation of women manufacturing firm ownership and the related workforce (Figure).

In regions like Latin America & Caribbean (45 per cent) and East Asia & Pacific (47 per cent), the percent of firms with female participation in ownership is higher than the global average (35 per cent). This indicates positive trends in the participation of females in firm ownership and in full-time workforce.

Figure 4: Recent trends of women's participation in businesses

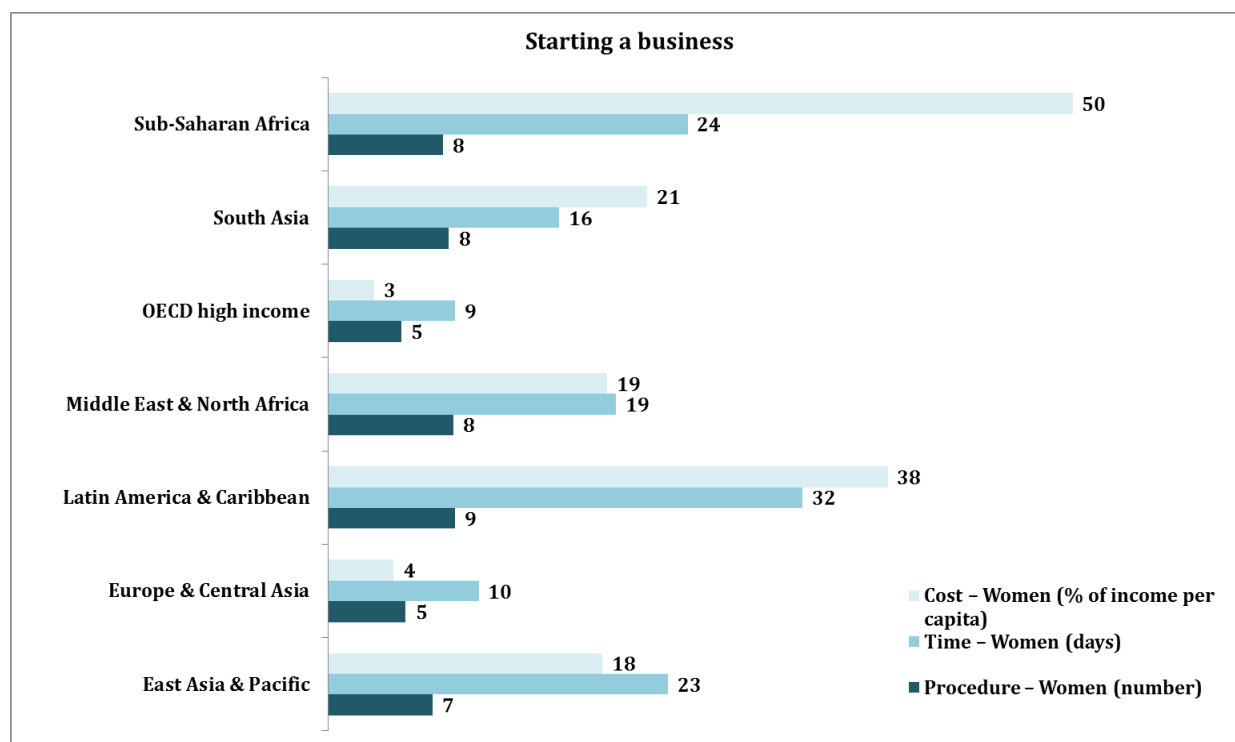


Source: World Bank, 2018

Glossary: <http://www.enterprisesurveys.org/data/exploretopics/gender>

While changing workforce has adapted to the inefficiencies within the services sector, a considerable setback for women participation in global value chains continues to be the procedural inefficiencies. Figure exhibits some of the indicators used for measuring business regulations for doing business by women.

Figure 5: Measuring Business Regulations for doing business by women



Source: World Bank, 2018

Glossary: <http://www.doingbusiness.org/Methodology/Starting-a-Business>

For example, the cost of business start-up procedures for females is drastically varied across the world. Though on extrapolation of the data, it has to be noted that the indicators (cost, time and procedure) for starting a business by women and men are not too varied and merely change based on region. Hence the cost of conducting business for a woman business-owner is directly dependent on the country's ease of doing business.

As indicated in Figure , despite exhibiting positive trends in firm ownership in East Asia & Pacific, the region reports around 23 days required to complete each of the eight procedures to legally start and formally operate a company for women. Alternatively in South Asia, it takes around 16 days to complete each of the eight procedures with a slightly increased cost of procedure of 21 per cent. Since the cost required for completing each procedure is calculated based on the per cent of income per capita; women in Sub-Saharan Africa require 50 per cent of the cost to undertake each of the eight procedures across 24 days.

Box 4: Women as consumers and business-owners: Femtech and Womenpreneurs

With around 10 million active users in 2018, Clue app is a female health app that helps users track their periods and fertility. The app serves an emerging consumer base in the world where women are demanding specific tech solutions for their specific reproductive health. With a user base spread across the world, Clue is an indicative medical technology intervention that has women as the sole consumer base.

Founded in 2012, Nykaa is a leading player in the e-commerce Indian beauty and cosmetics space. Nykaa claims to offer over 80,000 products across 700 brands on its online portal. In the 2018 financial year, the company more than doubled its turnover to Rs. 570 crores from Rs. 214 crores in the previous fiscal. With the online beauty market expected to touch US\$1.5 billion by 2020, and double to US\$3.3 billion by 2022, the company is looking to increase the brands and categories it offers and open another 30 physical stores.

In India, where post-operation recovery responsibilities are quite often provided by family members, Noora Health is a social enterprise, which is thinking beyond the doctor-patient dynamic by empowering patients to participate in their own well-being. Noora Health is a care companion programme, which trains and educates family caretakers of patients recovering from a major surgery or going through a chronic medical condition. Edith Elliott, who founded Noora Health, is now expanding the organisation within India, and working with eight medical institutions in the US (including Stanford Hospital and Santa Clara Valley Hospital) to launch the program in North America.

While women-centric start-up ideas are slowly picking up pace, the above three cases indicate the prominence of women consumers being serviced by 'femtech' and 'womenpreneurs'.

Source: Clue, 2018; Financial Express, 2018; Forbes, 2015

While data is available for the presence of women as business-owners who generate profits and pay taxes to contribute to national economy, another emerging field for women participation in the global value chains is as a consumer with specific niche requirements.

Almost a decade ago, a study concluded that globally, women control about US\$20 trillion in annual consumer spending with estimated increase to US\$28 trillion in the next five years. In addition to this, their total yearly earnings of US\$13 trillion could also reach an estimated US\$18 trillion in the same five year period (Silverstein & Sayre, 2009). These numbers have surpassed their estimates from the study and have created an economy, which is generated and consumed by women solely. This phenomenon is categorically exemplified in the case of the fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry.

In the high-tech and entrepreneur world, women entrepreneurs are criticised for creating start-ups in the feminine e-commerce sector such as baby goods, cosmetics, fashion, etc. These e-commerce initiatives are also termed as the 'pink ghetto' of the high-tech world. However, vocal advocates tend to side-line these

criticisms by replacing the argument that if businesses are owned by the women, providing services for the women, then this femtech and womenpreneurs should be considered as the emerging winners of a value chain, which is increasingly expanding to an urban consumer base.

Another key promoter of women accessing specific niche FMCG items is the prevalence and ease of access to e-commerce technology via handheld devices such as a smart phone. GSMA estimates indicate that the impact score (out of 100) for SDG 5: Gender Equality has a high potential of increasing from 34.4 to 37.2 under digitisation through mobile services (GSMA, 2018). The report also indicates evidence for the increase in last mile service delivery for farm advisory in multiple countries through mobile devices. Such interventions are also necessary to reduce the drudgery that women farmers face in subsistence agriculture. Closing the gender gap represents a substantial commercial opportunity for the industry. If mobile operators in low and middle-income countries could close the gender gap in mobile ownership and mobile internet use today, this would generate estimated incremental revenue of US\$15 billion in 2018 (GSMA, 2018).

Transforming GVCs for women traders:

As mentioned in previous sections, emerging economies of South Asia and Africa and South-East Asia are projected to experience sizeable increases in gross exports, especially after 2030 (OECD, 2014). These emerging economies have a substantial female workforce in the agriculture and industry sector; hence substantial economic growth can be expected given the low production costs.

However, over a third of the economies have at least one constraint on women's legal capacity as measured by accessing institutions. Such laws and regulations affect women's prospects as entrepreneurs and employees across 189 economies (World Bank, 2018). In such scenarios, a two-pronged approach would be helpful for integrating women traders in global value chains and get the ball rolling:

- 1. Inclusion of women led/managed/owned enterprises and business in government procurement contracts:** Governments spend around 30 per cent of GDP in developing countries and between 10-15 per cent in developed countries in public procurement opportunities. It makes economic sense to employ women-owned enterprises in such situations since this will provide advancements for women-centric labour markets and economic inclusion.
- 2. Orienting women traders:** Expansive literature on behaviour change suggests the need of reorienting women traders' ambitions to be part of the global value chain. Models of individual behaviour change have been attained especially when there is an established value chain to market at the regional and international markets. In cases where the value chain is impenetrable and difficult to access, behaviour of the women trader is resistant to attempts for ambitious decision-making due to competing household and personal priorities. In such scenarios, additional interventions are required to engage the attention and ambition of women traders.

Theoretical growth models (Nayihouba & Wodon, 2018) recognises human capital wealth as a dependent variable, however, human capital wealth per capita needs to be estimated separately for women and men.

Hence improving life expectancy, inducing tech innovation in demographics such as education and health create a substantial influence in such circumstances.

In scenarios, where women traders and female workforce are intertwined in building the human capital wealth, the buck stops at the nation's priority in investments in demographic factors. Inclusive gender-sensitive indicator development priorities at the national level will drive the dialogue on transforming the gender roles for women traders in global value chains.

As automation advances in manufacturing and services industry, skills development will be an essential part in eliminating gender inequalities. The current period is an important timeframe for actors in the GVCs to create nice interventions for women's economic empowerment. As developing countries and emerging markets gravitate towards becoming the new economic powerhouses, gender-sensitive policies and frameworks will build sustainable and productive value chains.

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