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Gender Mainstreaming at India's Land Ports

REPORT

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AEO	Authorised Economic Operator
ASHA	Accredited Social Health Activist
ATM	Automated Teller Machine
BADP	Border Area Development Programme
BBIN	Bangladesh Bhutan India Nepal
BIMSTEC	Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation
BSF	Border Security Force
CBIC	Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs
CCHAA	Calcutta Customs House Agents Association
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
CEPA	Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement
CHA	Custom House Agent
CLAP	Comprehensive Logistics Action Plan
DGCIS	Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics
DGFT	Directorate General of Foreign Trade
DPD	Direct Port Delivery
DPE	Direct Port Entry
EDI	Electronic Data Interchange
FSSAI	Food Safety and Standards Authority of India
GPS	Global Positioning System
IT	Information Technology
ICD	Inland Container Depot
ICP	Integrated Check Post
LCS	Land Customs Station
LPAI	Land Ports Authority of India
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
MVA	Motor Vehicle Agreement
NCTF	National Committee for Trade Facilitation
NLP	National Logistics Policy
NMP	National Master Plan
NTFAP	National Trade Facilitation Action Plan
PGA	Participating Government Agencies
POSH	Prevention of Sexual Harassment at the Workplace
RMS	Risk Management System
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCAP	The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
WB	World Bank
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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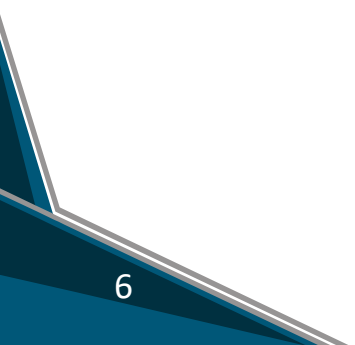
All errors remain our own.

Abstract

India shares a land border of over 15000 km with seven countries – Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, China, Bhutan, Myanmar and Bangladesh, and the land ports operate as key gateways for trade with neighbouring countries. However, the impediments faced by women at the land borders are a major reason for the low level of female participation in regional trade. Gender mainstreaming is important as policy actions tend to be 'gender neutral' or 'gender blind' and overlook the differences in the impact on men and women. This study is one of the first attempts in India to develop a comprehensive template for a gender lens assessment of hard and soft infrastructure at land ports, as a crucial input into incorporating a gender mainstreaming strategy in trade facilitation measures at the land ports.

The study provides an evidence-based, gender-lens analysis of both hard and soft infrastructure gaps and safety related challenges that combine with existing socio-cultural barriers to constrain women and perpetuate a challenging environment for them at the land ports in India. In tandem, the report recommends targeted gender mainstreaming actions to make the land port environment and operations gender responsive. While prepared with the particular objective of making India's land ports gender friendly, the report can also serve as a useful reference guide for other agencies involved in trade facilitation in adopting a gender mainstreaming approach, both within India as well as in other developing countries.

To facilitate the participation of women in international trade by making the land port environment and operations more gender responsive and friendly, the study presents an Action Plan for Gender Mainstreaming at India's Land Ports. With focus on seven key areas – information, infrastructure, digitisation, facilitation, staffing, outreach, and capacity building – the action plan lists the enabling measures needed both at the land ports as well as the overall ecosystem to increase women's participation in international trade.



1. Background

India shares a land border of over 15000 km with seven countries – Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, China, Bhutan, Myanmar and Bangladesh, and the land ports operate as key gateways for trade with neighbouring countries. The land ports at the international land borders are of two types. The land customs stations (LCSs) were notified under Section 7 of the Customs Act, 1962, by the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, Government of India, as places which alone would serve as ports for the clearance of goods imported or exported by land or inland water. Currently more than thirty LCSs are operational. In 2003, to facilitate trade and passenger movement across India's land borders, it was recommended that Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) be set up to house all regulatory agencies in a single sanitised complex and provide complete state of the art infrastructure facilities for cross border movement of passengers and goods. The Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI) was established in 2012 and functions as the nodal agency for construction, operation, and management of integrated check posts (ICPs). Currently, ten ICPs are operational and thirteen are under development. After a comprehensive evaluation, the LPAI has shortlisted 66 LCSs for up-gradation into ICPs in a phased manner.

Figure 1: Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) at India's Borders

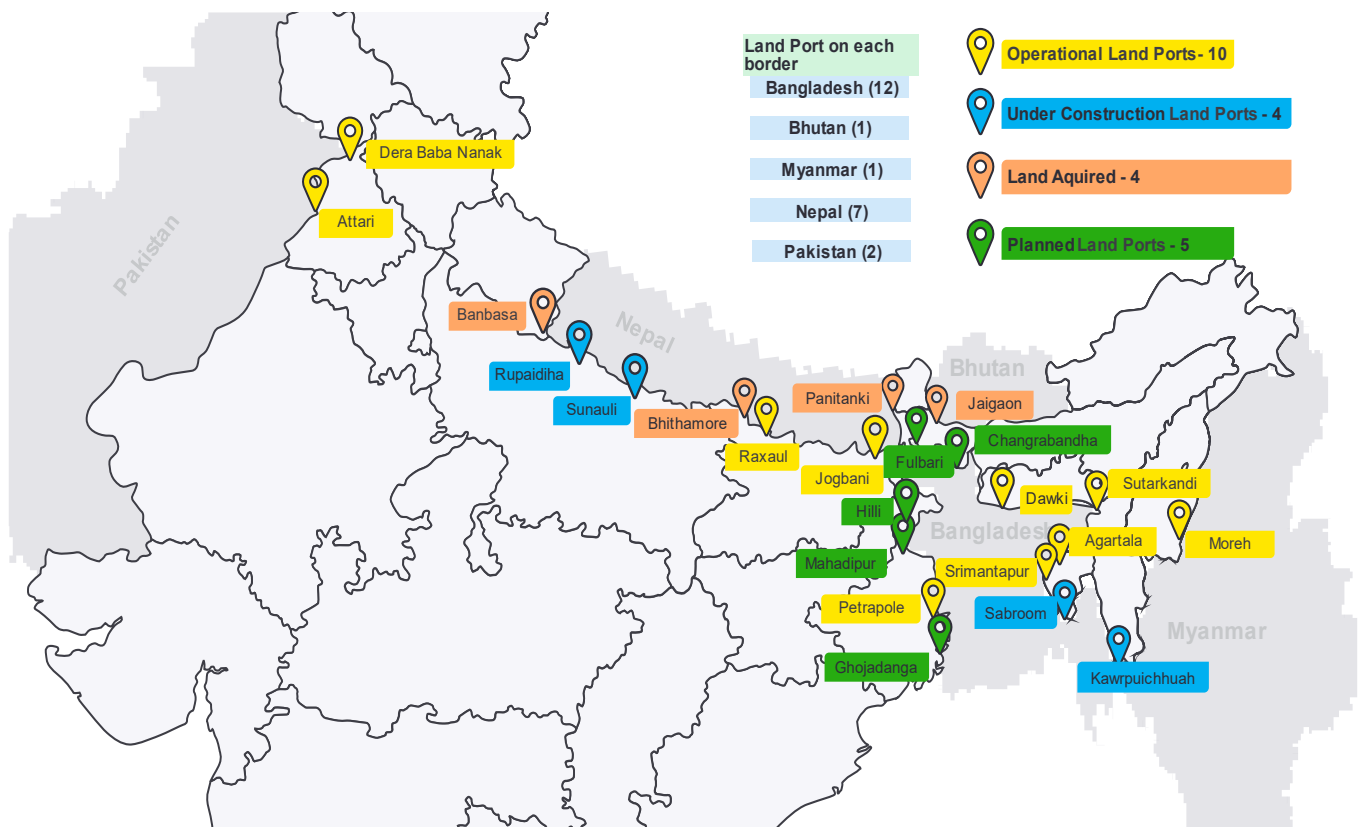


Image Source: Land Ports Authority of India

Over the years, India's trade across the land borders has grown exponentially. Between 2016-17 and 2021-22, the total value of land-based trade with Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal has almost doubled from around USD 10 billion in 2016-17 to USD 20 billion in 2021-22 (DGCIS, 2022). All of India's trade with Nepal and Bhutan currently takes place through the land ports, while trade with Bangladesh across all land ports constitutes forty per cent of total bilateral trade (DGFT, 2022).

The role of land ports in facilitating trade, particularly on India's eastern borders, is set to increase with the implementation of several regional agreements. Bangladesh was India's fourth largest export destination in 2022-23 and the proposed Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) is expected to further boost trade between the two countries. Land ports are also a vital aspect in the goal of seamless transport connectivity within the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal (BBIN) and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Co-operation (BIMSTEC) Agreement and will further help realise the vision of economic corridors linking India and East Asia.

2. Introduction to the Study

2.1 Motivation

Trade can be a powerful tool for economic growth and poverty reduction but there is need to ensure that it is inclusive and that women participate and benefit from it to the same extent as men. However, the extent of women's participation in India's trade with neighbouring countries is extremely low. Although, no gender disaggregated official data is available, anecdotal evidence suggests that far fewer number of women entrepreneurs trade with neighbouring countries as compared to the rest of the world (Taneja et al., 2023).

Land ports are important conduits for India's burgeoning regional trade. However, impediments faced by women at the land borders are a major reason for the low level of female participation in regional trade within South Asia (UNDP, 2016; Taneja et al., 2023).

This study was initiated in support of the announcement by the LPAI in 2021 that it aims to make all ICPs gender friendly in three years (The Economic Times, 2021; ICRIER & LPAI, 2021). The National Trade Facilitation Action Plan (NTFAP) 2020-2023 has highlighted the need for "infrastructure improvement" at border land ports, and the enhancement and upgradation of infrastructure at the land ports are important elements in both the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan (NMP) and the National Logistics Policy 2022. However, the immediate context for the LPAI initiative to make India's ICPs gender friendly is Action Point #27 in the NTFAP, which specifically includes the promotion of "gender inclusiveness in trade". The NTFAP points out that gender mainstreaming "is the only parameter on which India has not performed as well as its regional counterparts" in the Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation undertaken by the United Nations. In the 2021 survey report, India's overall score was 90.32 per cent, but its score was 66 percent in the "Women in Trade" component (UNESCAP, 2021).

According to the 1997 United Nations Report of the Economic and Social Council (UN, 1997), "mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality."

Gender mainstreaming at India's land ports to create an enabling environment for women would be an important trade facilitation measure in pursuance of the national emphasis on "women-led development". Besides encouraging more women to engage in cross-border trade with neighbouring countries, it would also add to the efforts to formalise the flourishing informal trade. A significant number of women currently rely on informal channels to conduct cross-border trade due to inadequate infrastructure and complex procedures at border crossings. For instance, the ease of doing business at the border haats in the north east region of India has increasingly drawn local women into cross-border trade as a livelihood

opportunity, besides providing impetus to informal traders to shift to the formal channel (Taneja et al., 2018).

2.2 Objective

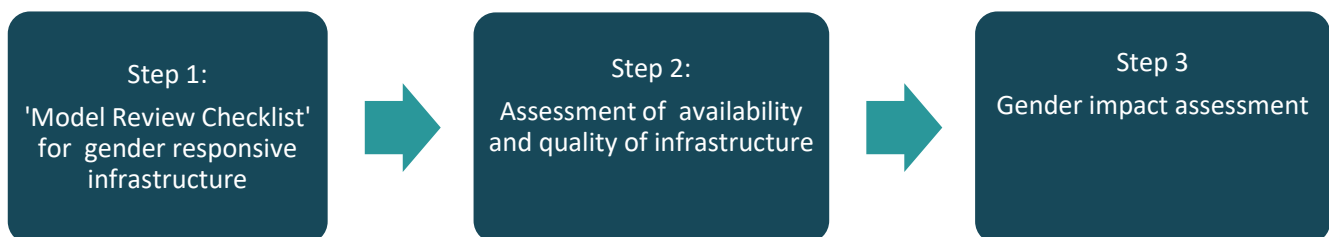
The objective of this study is to provide an evidence-based, gender-lens analysis of both hard and soft infrastructure gaps and safety related challenges that combine with existing socio-cultural barriers to constrain women and perpetuate a challenging environment for them at the land ports in India. In tandem, the report recommends targeted gender mainstreaming actions to make the land port environment and operations gender responsive. While prepared with the particular objective of making India's land ports gender friendly, the report can also serve as a useful reference guide for other agencies involved in trade facilitation in adopting a gender mainstreaming approach, both within India as well as in other developing countries.

3. Analytical Framework

Gender mainstreaming is important as policy actions tend to be 'gender neutral' or 'gender blind' and overlook the differences in the impact on men and women. This study is one of the first attempts in India to develop a comprehensive template for a gender lens assessment of hard and soft infrastructure at land ports, as a crucial input into incorporating a gender mainstreaming strategy in trade facilitation measures at the land ports.

The analytical framework was developed in three steps. First a "Model Review Checklist" was crafted as a benchmarking tool to measure the availability of gender responsive infrastructure. Using the checklist, the availability and quality of infrastructure was assessed to analyse the "as-is" situation. Lastly, an impact assessment was undertaken to identify the constraints faced by women due to infrastructure gaps.

Figure 2: Gender Lens Assessment of Infrastructure at Land Ports



The evidence-based analysis of infrastructure gaps that constrain women has been used to prepare an action plan of measures that should be implemented for gender mainstreaming at India's land ports.

The framework for gender lens assessment of infrastructure at the land ports was developed on the basis of existing literature and the authors' insights on the application of concepts related to gender mainstreaming in infrastructure design and development. The insights from Taneja et al. (2018) and Taneja et al. (2021), which covered infrastructure assessment at LCSs in North East India, and from World Bank (2022) and Shaw and Jones (2019) that highlighted the types of constraints that women experience in relation to trading opportunities, were especially useful in this regard.

The Model Review Checklist for gender responsive infrastructure at the land ports consists of 57 elements across six categories: information and access to port, basic utilities, public facilities, safety set-up, cargo handling, and digitisation.

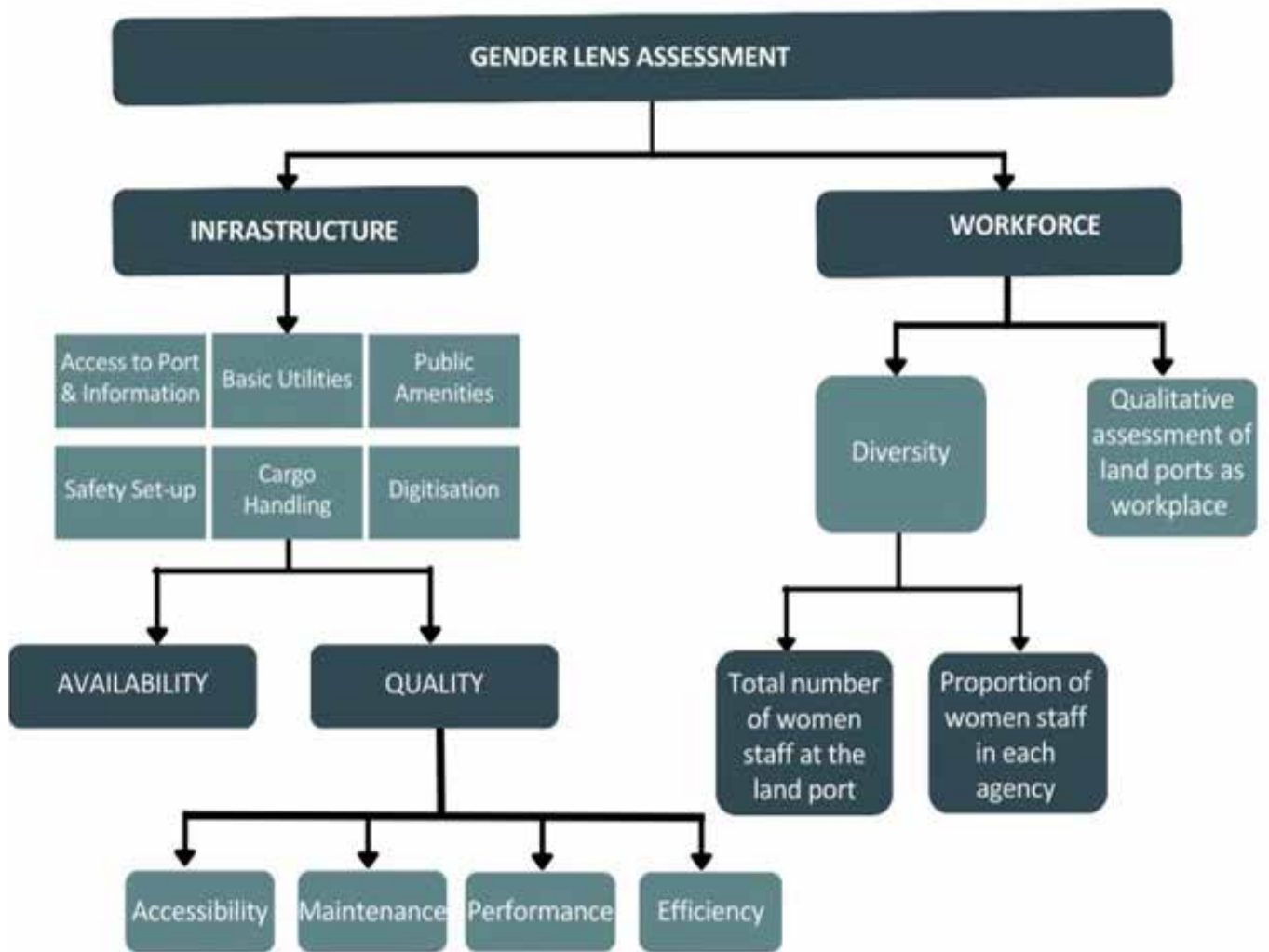
Table 1: Model Review Checklist for Gender Responsive Infrastructure at Land Ports

Information and Access to Port	Basic Utilities	Public Facilities	Safety Set-up	Cargo Handling	Digitisation
1.Port Website/ App	1.24*7 electricity with backup	1.Wi-Fi Hotspots	1.Boundary wall around port complex	1.Working space for clearing house agents (CHAs)	1.EDI
2.Enquiry number for real-time information	2. Internet connectivity for port operations	2.ATM	2.Adequate lighting throughout the port	2.Separate export/import zone	2.Online submission and processing of documents
3.Availability of public transport between nearest town and port	3. Mobile signal (calling & data use)	3.Separate toilets for women	3.CCTV surveillance	3.Weighbridge	3.RMS
4.Two-lane road between nearest town and port	4.Drinking water facility	4.Cubicles in toilets for the physically challenged	4.Display boards with sexual harassment/bribery/corruption reporting mechanisms	4.Warehouse	4.E-single window
5.Overnight stay facility for staff		5.Running water supply in toilets	5.Disaster response supplies & equipment	5.Cold storage	5.E-gate pass
6.Guest house or hotel		6.Sanitary napkin dispensers in toilets		6.Quarantine facility	6.Online duty payment
7.Display boards with names of facilities (English and local language)		7.Sanitary waste disposal in toilets		7.Loose cargo area	7.Advance duty payment
8.Display boards with guidance map of processes (English and local language)		8.Lactation/ baby care room		8.Cargo handling equipment (cranes, forklifts etc.)	8.Fast-track processing for perishables
9.Help desk/ Information counter		9.Health Centre/First Aid Booth		9.Full-body Scanners	9.E-cargo tracking
		10.Pharmacy		10.Presence of officials from testing agencies	10Automatic clearance for AEOs
		11.Cafeteria		11.Parking	11.Pre-arrival processing
		12.Convenience store		12.Inspection area	12.Land port management system
		13.Porter services			
		14.Driver's resting room			
		15.Vehicle repair services			

Using the model review checklist, an audit of the available hard and soft infrastructure elements across the six categories was conducted to identify the infrastructure gaps. Availability of infrastructure against the elements in the checklist was captured in a binary format. The infrastructure elements were scored 0 (No) and 1 (Yes), where 0 indicated the unavailability of a particular facility while 1 indicated its availability. Consequently, the land ports can score between 0 and 57, depending on the availability of the listed elements in the check list.

This was followed by an evaluation of the quality of available infrastructure with focus on accessibility, maintenance, performance, and efficiency. In addition, workforce diversity among the agencies involved in port management and operations was also appraised. The gender diversity evaluation was done by calculating the proportion of women staff in the port agencies and qualitative assessment of land ports as a workplace.

Figure 3: Gender Lens Assessment of India's Land Ports



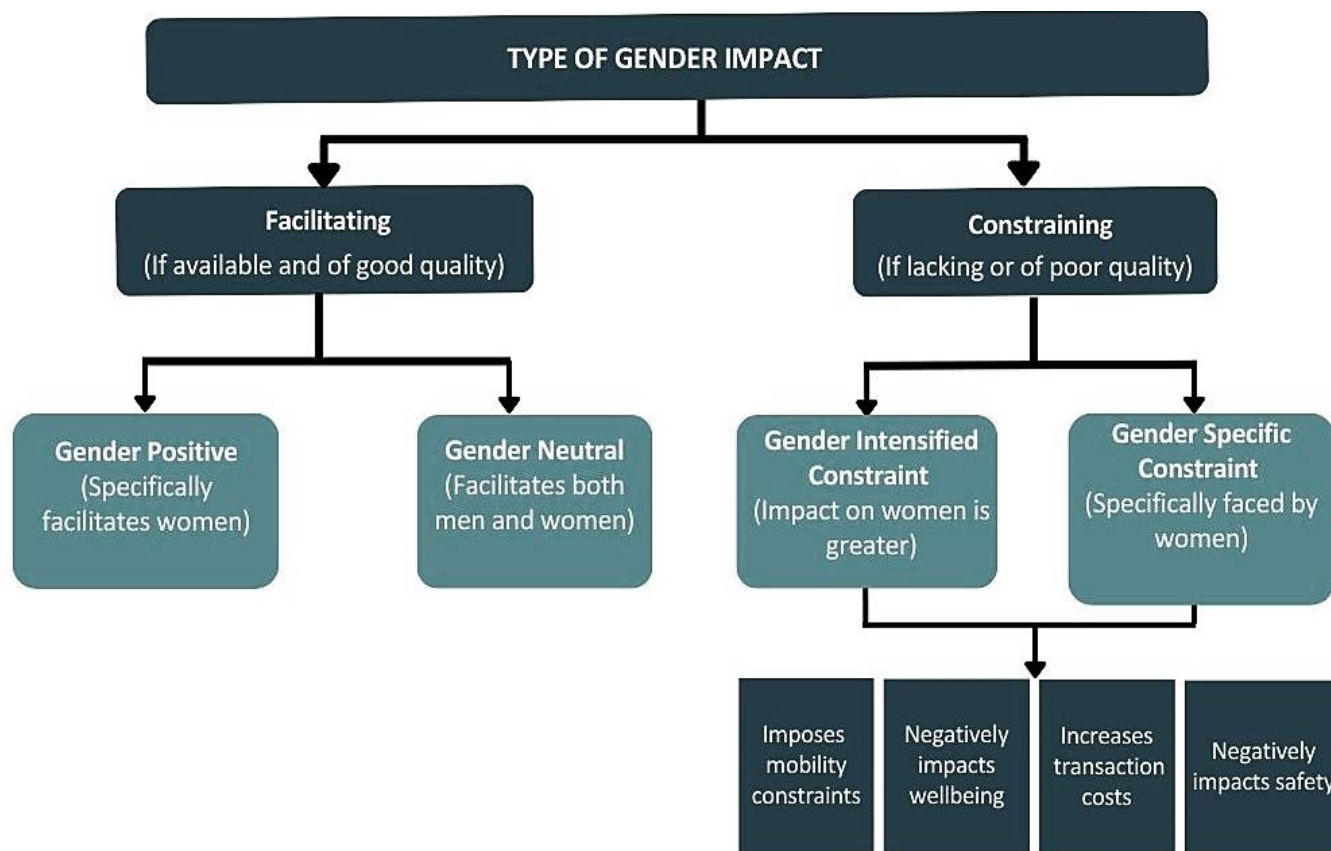
The assessment of availability and quality of infrastructure at the land ports was supplemented by assessing the type of impact on women. The gender impact typology is broadly categorised as being either facilitating or constraining for women. Facilitating infrastructure and processes can be gender positive or gender neutral.

- Gender Positive – specifically facilitate women
- Gender Neutral– facilitate both men and women

The constraints are classified as being gender intensified and gender specific.

- Gender intensified constraint – affects both men and women, but the impact on women is greater due to already prevalent socio-cultural inequality
- Gender specific constraint – faced only by women

Figure 4: Gender Impact Typology



The constraining impact on women is evaluated on the basis of four parameters – impact on mobility, impact on well-being, impact on transaction costs and impact on safety.

- Mobility constraint – limits women from moving about easily
- Well-being constraint – has an adverse impact on women’s health, hygiene etc.
- Transaction costs constraint – increases the trade transaction time and/or cost for women
- Safety constraint – increase the potential for sexual harassment or extortion for women

Table 2: Gender Impact of Infrastructure Constraints at Land Ports

Constraint Element	Type of Constraint	Impact on Women
1. Information and Access		
No website or mobile app	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs
No public helpline number for assistance	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs
No reliable and safe public transport for last mile connectivity	Gender Intensified	Mobility, Safety
Narrow access roads, and unsafe highways between the land ports and nearest towns	Gender Intensified	Mobility, Transaction Costs, Safety
No on-site accommodation for staff to stay overnight	Gender Intensified	Mobility, Safety
No hotels or guest house for users to stay overnight	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs, Safety
No display boards with names of facilities	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs
Absence of display boards with guidance map of procedures.	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs
No help desk/information counter	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs

2. Basic Utilities		
Frequent power outages and no backup	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs
Weak internet connectivity	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs
Weak cell phone signal strength for calls and internet	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs, Safety
Lack of easily available drinking water	Gender Intensified	Wellbeing
3. Public Amenities		
No public Wi-Fi hotspots	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs
No ATMs within the complex	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs
Unavailable or unmaintained women's toilets	Gender Specific	Wellbeing
No separate cubicles in toilets for persons with physical disabilities	Gender Intensified	Wellbeing
No sanitary napkin dispensers or sanitary waste disposal facility	Gender Specific	Wellbeing
No baby-changing facilities or lactation room	Gender Specific	Wellbeing
No health centre/pharmacy	Gender Intensified	Wellbeing
No cafeteria/canteen or convenience store	Gender Intensified	Wellbeing
No porter services	Gender Intensified	Wellbeing
No vehicle repair facilities	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs
Lack of separate area for women in drivers' resting room	Gender Specific	Safety
4. Safety setup		
No boundary wall around port complex	Gender Intensified	Safety
Inadequate lighting in the complex	Gender Intensified	Safety
Unavailable or non-functional CCTV surveillance	Gender Intensified	Safety
No display boards with safety reporting mechanisms	Gender Specific	Safety
Inadequate disaster response supplies and equipment	Gender Intensified	Safety
5. Cargo handling		
Lack of dedicated working spaces for CHAs	Gender Intensified	Wellbeing
No separate export/import zones	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs
Non-functional weighbridges	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs
No warehouses	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs
Non-availability of cold storage facility	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs
No quarantine facility	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs
No separate area for loose cargo	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs
Absence of/non-functional cargo handling equipment	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs
No full body truck scanners	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs
No testing labs or officials from testing agencies	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs
Insufficient parking space	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs
No covered inspection area	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs
6. Digitisation*		
Non-functional EDI	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs, Safety
No provision for online submission of documents	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs, Safety
Low IT-enabled risk management system (RMS)	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs
Incomplete implementation of e-single window system	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs, Safety
No provision for e-gate pass	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs, Safety
No provision for online duty payment or advance duty payment	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs, Safety
No of automated fast-track processing for perishables	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs
No real-time tracking of cargo	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs, Safety
No automatic priority clearance for AEOs	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs
No land port management system	Gender Intensified	Transaction Costs, Safety

* The absence of or fragmented digitisation means that the processes are not faceless or contactless, leading to increased safety concerns by presenting greater potential for sexual harassment.

4. Approach to the Study

A total of 12 land ports were surveyed for the study. These included eight operational ICPs and four LCSs that are planned to be upgraded. The ICPs were Attari, Raxaul, Jogbani, Petrapole, Agartala, Srimantapur, Sutarkandi, and Moreh. The LCSs were Gojadanga, Mahdipur, and Hilli. The LCS at Dawki was upgraded to an ICP during the course of the study, allowing the study team to gain first-hand understanding of the transformation. In addition to the land ports, Kolkata Sea Port and the inland container depots (ICDs) at Tughlakabad and Kolkata were also surveyed for a comparative perspective.

The survey comprised of field visits to the select land ports, comprehensive in-person as well as virtual consultations with all relevant stakeholders and follow up interviews with select persons for clarifications and seeking additional information. During the field visits, discussions with port officials and stakeholder consultations were held. Semi-structured questionnaires were used to elicit quantitative information (on availability of infrastructure) and qualitative information (perceptions and feedback).

The study has identified constraints faced by two sets of female stakeholders:

- Users of land ports (traders, logistics operators such as customs house agents (CHAs), freight forwarders and transporters)
- Providers at the land ports (staff of agencies involved in management and operations of land ports for cross-border movement of cargo including LPAI, customs, Bureau of Immigration, border security forces, plant and animal quarantine departments and the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India etc.)

Stakeholder consultation sessions were held with male and female members of the Calcutta Customs House Agents Association (CCHAA), who either facilitate trade through the Kolkata Sea port or through the land ports in the state of West Bengal. Consultations were also held with members of the Petrapole CHA Welfare Association. Women entrepreneurs engaged in regional trade between India and neighbouring countries were also interviewed.

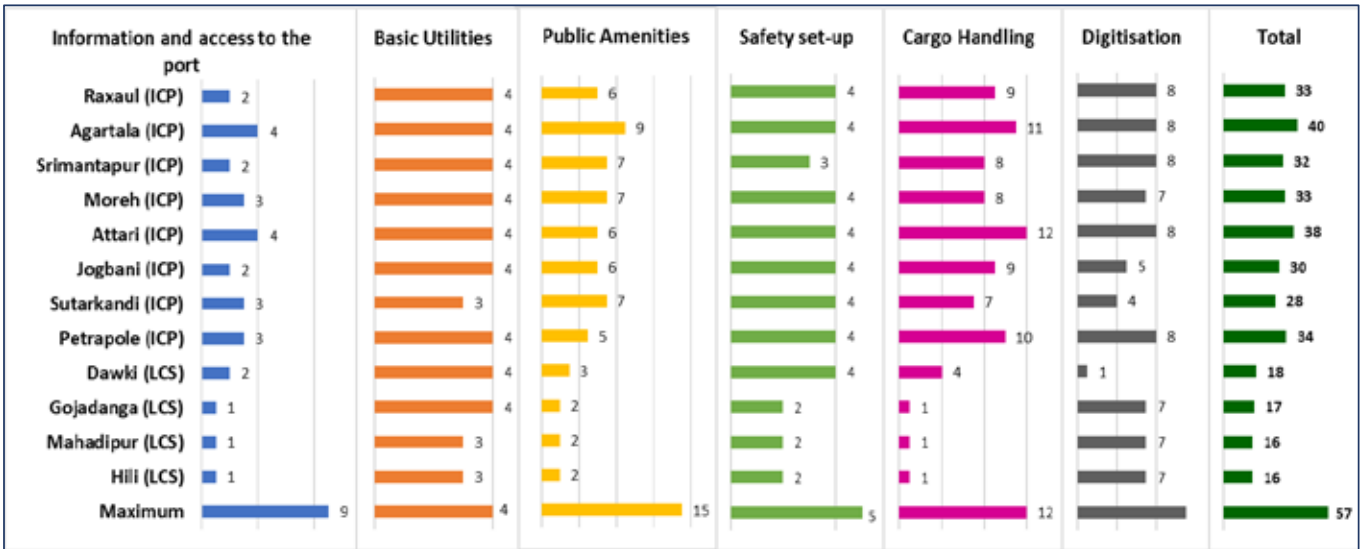
5. Gender Lens Assessment of Infrastructure at Land Ports

5.1 Main Findings

Very few women 'users', whether they are traders, transporters or logistics operators, actually visit the land ports for trade related activities. The procedures and processes for cargo clearance are primarily handled for women traders by male intermediaries and for logistics operators by male colleagues. For example, there are no woman CHAs in the list of four hundred CHAs registered at the Petrapole Customs House Agents Association. There are a few female CHAs based in Kolkata who facilitate trade through land ports but they prefer to send their male employees to the land ports. Similarly, a very small percentage of the staff deployed by the port management and operating agencies – 'providers' – are women. The availability and quality of infrastructure at the land ports are major constraints.

The audit of available hard and soft infrastructure at the 12 surveyed land ports using the Model Review Checklist (Figure 5) shows that none of land ports has all the recommended 57 elements in place across the six categories.

Figure 5: Availability of Infrastructure at Land Ports

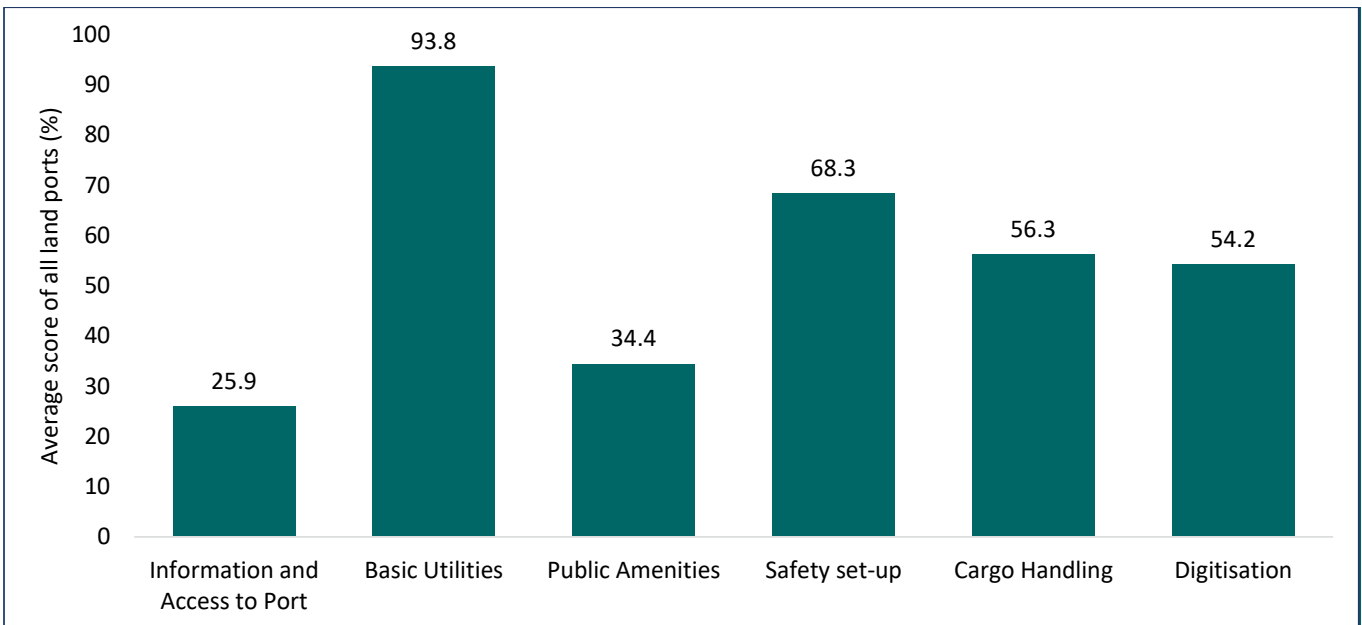


Source: ICRIER Survey

The difference in availability of infrastructure between the LCSs and ICPs is along expected lines. The four LCSs - Dawki, Mahadipur, Hilli and Gojadanga have an average score of 16.2 as compared to the ICPs which score 33.2 on average from the maximum possible score of 57.

There is significant variation in the availability of infrastructure elements within the six categories in the Model Review Checklist (Figure 6) at the surveyed land ports. Ninety-four per cent of the infrastructure elements under the category of basic utilities are, on average, available. Safety set-up also scores relatively high, with almost 68 per cent of the infrastructure elements being available at the land ports. On the other hand, the average score for information and access to port category is only 26 per cent.

Figure 6: Comparative Scores for Infrastructure Categories
(Percentage of maximum score in each category)



Source: ICRIER Survey

Information and Access to Port

The following causes of information gap and travel and transport challenges encountered in visiting the port were found to be major constraining factors for women:

- None of the land ports have a website/app providing real time information such as port timings, daily performance dashboard, processes flow chart, documents downloads, etc. In contrast, major sea ports have websites with a port user focus that provide relevant information related to procedures, forms, tariffs, productivity and vessel allotment and position. Land ports also do not provide any toll-free helpline for assistance. The ICP at Agartala has a help desk/information counter, but none of the land ports have display boards in the complex with a guide map of the processes or directional signage boards.
- Reliable and safe public transport connecting the land port to the nearby towns is largely unavailable. Since the land ports are located near the border in remote and fairly isolated areas, travelling to them using private commercial transport such as taxis is a matter of considerable concern for women. Even where the land port is located in the vicinity of town, women face last-mile connectivity issues. None of the land ports are easily accessible using the existing railway network. Only the ICP at Attari can be accessed using state-run public buses. At Agartala, state-run buses have been proposed for connecting the ICP to the city along with airport shuttle buses. A passenger railway line up to the ICP is planned at Petrapole, which will enhance connectivity to the port.
- The approach/link roads at most of the land ports are single lane. Further, the road condition leaves much to be desired. With rows of trucks parked alongside due to inadequate parking space at the land port, traffic flow on the approach/link roads is prone to congestion and accidents, and frequently disrupted with traffic jams. The situation worsens with rain.

The Suvidha - Vehicles Facilitation System is an innovative digital solution that has been developed through a partnership between the state government in West Bengal and the Land Ports Authority of India, to facilitate the quick clearance and smooth movement of vehicles. The Suvidha portal is a web-based system to book the date and time slot of entry of export-bound cargo trucks to the land ports for a fixed fee. It has reduced congestion at the land ports and significantly lessened the turn-around time benefitting traders in terms of decreasing the parking/waiting charges at the land ports. This system has been very successful at ICP Petrapole in significantly reducing the truck processing time. Subsequently, the facility has been introduced at several other land ports in West Bengal.

The ICPs at Raxaul and Jogbani are connected with 4-laned highways. The ICPs at Agartala and Moreh, which are within the limits of the main city, are in the process of addressing traffic congestion with the construction of a double-laned by-pass road.

- There are very few hotels or guest houses near the land ports for women to stay safely overnight, if required.

Basic Utilities

Basic utilities such electricity with power back-up, internet for IT enabled port operations, mobile connectivity, and drinking water are available at majority of the land ports. Only the ICP at Sutarkandi and the LCSs at Mahadipur and Hili do not have power back-up. However, dysfunctional

supply frequently hampers port operations intensifying the mobility, time and safety constraints faced by women.

- Outages in regular electricity supply are common at the land ports and running the operations using power back-up facilities such as generators involves a high cost. Therefore, authorities at some land ports are reportedly reluctant to use the power back-up, causing operations to come to a standstill for several hours.
- Major improvement is needed in internet connectivity for IT-enabled port operations. Currently, the dedicated internet leased line at most land ports is provided by the government-owned BSNL. But the signal is often weak and inconsistent, causing delays in cargo clearance, especially by customs authorities.
- Poor mobile connectivity at most land ports greatly affects women's need to remain connected to their families. Given that most women juggle work and care giving responsibilities, this is a real concern for them. Further, on account of safety concerns, employers are also discouraged from sending women staff in the logistics sector to the land ports because of the inability to contact them at all times.

Public Amenities

The availability of gender responsive public amenities provided at the land ports is extremely inadequate. Among the public amenities listed in the Model Review Checklist, only separate toilets for women with running water supply are available at all the surveyed land ports. No other public amenities are available at the LCSs. None of the land ports provide Wi-Fi hotspots or porter services.

- Since they deal with both cargo and passenger movement the ICPs are better equipped in terms of public amenities. However, most of these are located in the passenger terminals.
- All ICPs have a canteen/cafeteria. The ICPs at Attari, Agartala and Raxaul have ATM. Agartala and Moreh have a convenience store. Only the ICP at Srimatapur has a pharmacy.
- The toilets at Raxaul, Moreh, Jogbani and Sutarkandi ICPs provide cubicles for the physically challenged. The ICP at Agartala provides sanitary napkin dispensers and sanitary waste disposal facilities in women's toilets. However, overall, the toilets are not well maintained.
- Most ICPs do not have conveniences like a diaper changing table, baby care facility or lactation room.
- There is a health centre/first-aid booth at six of the eight surveyed ICPs. The ICP at Agartala has a land border health unit that was set up by the Ministry of Health. A doctor from the Central Government Health Scheme as well Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) workers are deployed at the unit. The ASHA workers are trained female community-based functionaries who act as first responders to the health needs of the local population.
- Drivers' resting rooms are provided at all the ICPs. However, there is no separate demarcated area in these for women. Vehicle repair services are only available at ICP Petrapole.

Safety Set-up

Although safety set-up scores relatively high in terms of infrastructure availability at the land ports, women mentioned it as a major concern in stakeholder consultations.

- Most of the surveyed land ports have a boundary wall/fencing on the outer perimeter. CCTVs have also been installed at most land ports but they are often not well maintained as cameras were frequently reported as being non-functional.
- Most of the surveyed land ports have a boundary wall/fencing on the outer perimeter and CCTVs are also installed. However, at most places, the CCTVs are not functional.
- Women security forces personnel are largely deployed in the passenger terminals at the ICPs.
- None of the land ports have police post or periodic police patrolling across the port complex and its vicinity.
- While in some places there are display boards providing information on corruption and bribery reporting mechanisms, there are no display boards providing information on reporting mechanisms for sexual harassment.
- Only ICP Attari has set up a 'Complaints Committee' in line with the provisions of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Work Place (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH), comprising three female staff. Complaints to the committee can be made by the staff and ICP users.

Cargo Handling

In general, ICPs have much better infrastructure and equipment for cargo handling than LCSs. However, the current availability and quality of requisite infrastructure falls short of the mandate to set up a single complex housing all regulatory agencies and providing complete state-of-the-art infrastructure facilities. The infrastructure gap, the insufficient level of mechanisation and problems with the performance and maintenance of cargo handling equipment make for longer dwell time at the land ports, intensifying the time and cost impact on women.

- In terms of availability of cargo handling infrastructure in line with the Model Review Checklist the ICP at Attari received a perfect score. The ICP at Agartala comes a close second with the availability of 11 out of 12 elements. All the ICPs have a separate import/export zone. However inadequate parking, the lack of separate gates for movement of export and import vehicles and lack of separate lanes for loaded and empty vehicles creates a lot of congestion.
- All the ICPs have warehouses and provide weighbridges. Most also have cold storage facilities. However, frequent breakdowns are reported in weighbridges and, in some places, the warehouses/cold storages are being used to accommodate security forces personnel.
- Loading and unloading of trucks is done by manual labour at all land ports. Cargo handling equipment such as forklifts are available only at Attari, Petrapole and Agartala ICPs. The cargo handling process is most mechanised at ICP Petrapole.
- A full-body truck scanner is present only at ICP Attari. The inspection area is not covered in

most land ports and only a few have a loose cargo area.

- There are no testing labs at the ICPs. While quarantine facilities are provided at the ICPs, offices of partner agencies such as plant and animal quarantine and food safety department are usually unavailable.
- The ICPs provide working spaces for CHAs; however, inadequate seating is an issue.

Digitisation

Digitisation and e-processing are widely recognised as greatly enabling and empowering for women. Several important reforms have been introduced in India to provide contactless, faceless and paperless processes in trade facilitation; however, land ports are yet to make full use of these. The incomplete and fragmented implementation of digitisation and e-processing initiatives at land ports adversely affects women by intensifying their time and cost constraints as well as increasing the potential for sexual harassment and extortion.

- Most land ports are connected to the centralised Indian Customs Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) System, which is designed to exchange/transact customs clearance related information electronically. The system also enables IT-based risk management systems (RMS) and single window clearance (E-Single Window). However, logistics operators such as CHAs and traders are still required to physically visit the land ports in order to move documentation and shipments from one stage to another.
- At all ports, records are digitised, but all processes are not completely electronic. Some problems are unique to land ports. For instance, it is a challenging task to file an import or export general manifest at land ports as there could be several trucks for a single manifest. This process is manual even though the records are digitised.
- IT-based RMS is enabled at every land port that has EDI, but is rarely used.
- Most items that require testing are not sent through land ports as testing facilities are located in far off places. E-single window is available at some ICPs but most partner agencies are not yet linked. CHAs are still required to manually co-ordinate the delivery of samples for testing and generation of reports.
- Digital solutions such as e-cargo tracking, e-gate pass, pre-arrival processing and a land port management system are not yet available at land ports. Online duty payment has been enabled at all the land ports but advance duty payment is only available at some ICPs.
- Even though the AEO status and perishable cargo consignments show up automatically on the centralised system, there is a dependence on CHAs to clear such cargo. Information regarding AEO status is also not widely known at most ports. Other than Petrapole, there are only one or two AEOs at other land ports.

Staff Diversity at Land Ports

A very small proportion of the staff deployed by the participating government agencies (PGAs) at the ICPs – 'providers' – are women (Table 3). The percentage share of female staff at none of the ICPs is more than 15 percent. There are no women staff at ICP Sutarkandi.

Table 3: Proportion of Women in the Staff at ICPs

ICP	No. of Female Staff	Total Staff	% Share of Female Staff
1. Raxaul	54	483	11.2
2. Agartala	22	175	12.6
3. Srimantapur	3	44	6.8
4. Moreh	3	72	4.2
5. Attari	100	725	13.8
6. Jogbani	4	208	1.9
7. Sutarkandi	0	92	0.0
8. Petrapole	37	449	8.2

Source: Staff Data Provided by ICPs

Besides women security force personnel on duty, women are primarily employed by LPAI and are involved in cleaning and housekeeping tasks. Hence, most of the women staff are deployed at the passenger terminals at the ICPs. The percentage of women staff under each agency at each ICP is given below (Table 4).

Table 4: Agency-wise Distribution of Women Staff at ICPs (in %)

ICP	LPAI	Security Agencies	Customs	Immigration	Other Agencies
1. Raxaul	0	98.1	1.9	0	0
2. Agartala	41	27.3	4.5	22.7	4.5
3. Srimantapur	0	100	0	0	0
4. Moreh	66.7	0	0	0	33.3
5. Attari	13	80	0	0	7
6. Jogbani	0	100	0	0	0
7. Sutarkandi	0	0	0	0	0
8. Petrapole	32.4	54.1	8.1	0	5.4

Source: Staff Data Provided by ICPs

- Since the land ports are usually at remote locations, women, other than those employed by the security agencies, are rarely posted there. Often, women at the mid to senior levels are themselves reluctant to take up assignments at such non-family friendly locations due to inadequate facilities related to education, health and recreation in the vicinity.
- There is no residential accommodation and the staff usually stays in the nearby border towns. Since, none of the port agencies provide any pick up or drop facilities the safety concerns of women staff are intensified. None of the ICPs presently have a guest house for the staff to stay overnight if necessary. At some places separate residential barracks are being constructed for women security personnel and hostels/dormitories with separate wings for women staff.
- No incidents of sexual harassment were reported in the consultations. However, apart from Attari, none of the ICPs have a 'Complaints Committee' in line with the provisions of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Work Place (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH).
- On the other hand, the LPAI has taken the initiative to hire local women in a number of positions at the newly operational ICP at Dawki. Preference was given to female applicants right from the initial short-listing stage and currently, 43 per cent of LPAI staff are women (15 women out of the total staff of 35).

5.2 Key Insights

Overall, the availability of infrastructure at the ICPs is better than at the LCSs. The recent shift from the LCS to ICP at Dawki aptly illustrates this (Box 1).

Box 1: LCS to ICP at Dawki

At Dawki in the State of Meghalaya, about 600 to 650 trucks carrying boulders and limestone cross are cleared to cross the border daily and deposit the cargo on the Bangladesh side. More than 50 per cent of the exporters are women.



Dawki LCS



ICP at Dawki

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The LCS at Dawki operates out of a small building. The LCS is used for customs clearance of cargo and also for immigration formalities. ▪ The LCS is not EDI enabled and therefore there is no provision for digital submission and electronic cargo processing. All clearance is done manually. ▪ The nearest functional weighbridge is located at a distance of 4 km from the LCS. ▪ No work space is provided for the CHAs and there is no ATM in the nearby vicinity. ▪ Since its inauguration in 1981, 25 customs superintendents have been posted at LCS Dawki, out of whom only two were women. Presently there is only 1 woman staff amongst the 9 customs staff deployed at the LCS. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The recently inaugurated ICP at Dawki is spread over a total area of 23 acres. ▪ The ICP is EDI enabled. ▪ The offices of all partner government agencies are housed in the main building. ▪ The master plan provides for all necessary cargo clearance infrastructure such as cargo terminal, transshipment yard, warehouse, buffer parking for trucks and cold storage facility etc. ▪ It is planned to have a porter's room, toilet block for drivers and motor workshop at the ICP. ▪ CCTVs are installed at vantage points all across the ICP complex. ▪ The LPAI has proactively recruited local women as staff. Presently, 15 out of 35 LPAI staff stationed at the ICP Dawki are women. |
|---|---|

However, most of the public amenities are located in the passenger terminal at the surveyed ICPs. Therefore, ICPs which have high passenger movement are more gender responsive as they have more women-oriented amenities and these are also better maintained.

The constraints for women users, which discourage them from undertaking activities that require a physical visit to the land port, include the following:

- Information gap with regard to land port processes and procedures is more prevalent among women as compared to men.
- Travel challenges between the land port and nearest town along with absence of safe overnight stay facilities near the port are a greater impediment for women.
- The irregular provision of basic utilities such as electricity, consistent internet connectivity for port operations and cell phone connectivity affects women more acutely.

- The time and mobility constraints of women are accentuated by limited public facilities within the land port complex. The lack of well-maintained toilets and scarce gender specific amenities such as sanitary napkin dispensers and lactation room is not conducive to wellbeing.
- Insufficient safety set-up is a serious concern for women. These are likely to acquire greater salience when the planned 24x7 operations are implemented at the ICPs.
- Cargo handling infrastructure gaps, frequent breakdowns of cargo handling equipment and insufficient mechanisation make for longer dwell time at the land ports, intensifying the time and cost impact on women.
- Women are more affected by incomplete digitisation of the cargo clearance process as this makes the trade procedures lengthy and cumbersome. Further, in the absence of full digitisation and e-processing, several processes and procedures are not faceless and contactless and this increases potential for sexual harassment and extortion.

A very small proportion of the staff deployed by the participating government agencies (PGAs) at the ICPs – ‘providers’ – are women. Besides women security forces’ personnel on duty, women are primarily employed by LPAI and are involved in cleaning and housekeeping tasks.

On the other hand, some good practices were observed at certain ICPs. These are noteworthy and it would be useful to replicate these at other locations.

Figure 7: Notable Gender Responsive Measures at the ICPs

Transport Facilitation	
<p>The <i>Suvidha – Vehicles Facilitation System</i> has been developed by the State Government in West Bengal to facilitate the quick clearance and smooth movement of vehicles at several land ports in the State. The <i>Suvidha Portal</i> is a web-based system to book the date and time slot of entry of export-bound cargo trucks to the land ports for a fixed fee. It has reduced congestion at the land ports and also significantly lessened the average processing time per truck from nearly 110 hours to 14 hours, benefitting the traders in terms of decreasing the parking/waiting charges at the land ports. This system has been very successful at ICP Petrapole.</p>	
<p>Medical Assistance</p> <p>The ICP at Agartala has deployed ASHA workers at its border health unit. The Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) workers are community-based functionaries trained to act as first responders to the health needs of the local population.</p>	<p>Staff Diversity</p> <p>At the newly inaugurated ICP at Dawki almost 40 per cent of the LPAI staff have been proactively recruited from among local women.</p>
<p>Health & Hygiene</p> <p>Among the surveyed land ports, the ICP at Agartala is the only one that provides sanitary napkin dispenser machine in the passenger terminal.</p>	<p>Prevention of Sexual Harassment</p> <p>ICP Attari has a set up a ‘Complaints Committee’ in line with the provisions of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Work Place (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (POSH), comprising three female staff. Complaints to the committee can be made by the staff and ICP users.</p>

The land ports are not integrated with overall economic development in the border areas. The LPAI is a central government agency while challenges such as improvement in approach road conditions, traffic management, consistent supply of electricity, water etc. and policing come within the purview of the State government. Effective channels of communication need be institutionalised for better coordination between the port authorities and the respective state governments.

Regular consultation and engagement with women business associations is vital for informed policy making and impact assessment. However, active consultations and engagement with female stakeholders are rare at the land ports. There are no institutionalised forums for women to put forward their opinions or provide feedback on the measures being implemented or planned at the land ports. This means that women stakeholders are largely excluded from the outreach programs and consultative initiatives at the land ports.

6. Action Plan for Gender Mainstreaming at India's Land Ports

Gender mainstreaming should be an integral part of the trade facilitation framework at India's border land ports. To facilitate the participation of women in international trade by making the land port environment and operations more gender responsive and friendly, the study presents an Action Plan for Gender Mainstreaming at India's Land Ports. With focus on seven key areas – information, infrastructure, digitisation, facilitation, staffing, outreach, and capacity building – the action plan lists the enabling measures needed both at the land ports as well as the overall ecosystem to increase women's participation in international trade.



6.1 Measures at Land Ports

Recognising that infrastructure – hard or soft – is not gender neutral, the action measures at land ports must consider infrastructure and safety related concerns of women.

Address the information barrier

To address the information barrier, land ports, especially the ICPs should set up an official website and app providing real time information across all relevant agencies on details such as port timings, contact details of relevant officials, processes flow chart, document downloads, tariffs, daily performance dashboard, etc. This is already being done by the major sea-ports in India. The navigation across content should be user friendly and consider the infrastructure and safety related concerns of women. All information should be available in English, Hindi and the official language of the state in which the land port is located. Besides, the land port should set up a toll-free helpline for assistance as well as a help desk/information counter at the main entry point to the port. Port management authorities and partner agencies should periodically organise awareness sessions and campaigns directed towards women stakeholders on trade processes at the land ports.

Make it easier for women to reach the land port

Last mile connectivity via safe and affordable public transport is vital for women to easily access the land port. The operation of GPS-enabled shuttle bus services with reserved seats for women at regular intervals between the nearest town centre and the land port (mostly located in remote border areas) will make port access inclusive. Wherever possible, port access should integrate multi-modal interchanging. Widening of approach/link roads is essential to resolve traffic congestion and reduce travel time. Digital solutions such as the Suvidha – Vehicles Facilitation System and e-gate pass should be introduced at the land ports

Improve the quality of basic utilities and offer more public facilities at the land port

The basic utilities at the land ports must be operational and well maintained. Further, more public facilities such as ATMs, health centres, and waiting rooms within the port complex are necessary to address the reluctance of women to take on tasks that require a physical visit to the land port. The public facilities itemised in the Model Review Checklist developed by the study would be a useful reference point. In fact, creating a dedicated services area would be extremely useful from a gender perspective.

Design land ports for greater efficiency and bridge the cargo handling infrastructure deficit

The land ports should be designed for greater efficiency. All regulatory agencies and requisite infrastructure should be housed in a single building. There should be separate gates for movement of export and import vehicles, separate lanes for loaded and empty vehicles to minimise congestion and adequate parking space for trucks with separate zones for exports and imports. Keeping in mind that the time and cost challenges induced by infrastructure deficits affect women much more than men, cargo handling should be mechanised and care should be taken to ensure that cargo handling equipment is functional.

Accelerate digitisation of land port operations and procedures

Digitisation and electronic processing of port procedures act as a great enabler for women traders and logistics service providers. Besides enhancing time and cost efficiencies, digitised processes lessen

the need for personal interaction, reducing opportunity for sexual harassment and corruption, to which women are especially vulnerable. It is recommended that the operationalisation of the various initiatives rolled out by the Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBIC) to facilitate cargo clearance should be accelerated at the land ports (Department of Commerce, n.d.). Moreover, information on digital processes must be widely disseminated amongst users to enable them to reduce dependence on traditional intermediaries. Of course, regular supply of electricity and strong internet connection are an absolute pre-requisite for enabling optimised digital solutions.

Facilitate small-scale women cross-border traders and women-owned MSMEs

Faster and easier border crossings help women-owned MSMEs and small-scale women cross-border traders to participate in international trade and advance economic empowerment of women. The recently introduced “Liberalised MSME AEO Package” by CBIC has relaxed the compliance criteria to attract MSMEs to become authorised economic operators (AEOs) and avail of various benefits such as the facility of direct port delivery (DPD) of imported containers, direct port entry (DPE) of export containers, considerably shorter cargo release time, exemption from bank guarantees, priority for refund/rebate/duty drawback, as well as a ‘client relationship manager’ at the port as a single point of interaction. It is recommended that the AEO compliance criteria be relaxed further for women-owned MSMEs. A system to fast-track low-value consignments of small-scale women cross-border traders should also be introduced at the land ports.

Enhance safety measures for women at the land ports

Sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in public spaces is an everyday reality for women around the world. To reduce the risks for women, land ports should have boundary wall/fencing to prevent unauthorised entry, sufficient and suitable lighting across the port complex, surveillance tools such as CCTV cameras, periodic police patrolling in the port complex, and virtual as well as physical response units to which women can safely report negative incidents. Display boards with sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination reporting mechanisms should be prominently displayed in the port complex.

Improve gender balance in staffing in all participating government agencies, PGAs at the land ports

The visible presence of more women in managerial and operational levels at the port gives greater confidence to women traders, logistics services providers and transporters to access the land port. To enhance gender diversity amongst the LPAI and other partner agencies, it is necessary to support women staff from all agencies to accept appointments at the land ports by providing facilities such as on-site residential accommodation at the land ports, transport facility between nearest town and the land ports, and child day care centres. Other measures needed include the elimination of gender bias in employment in technical positions, using mechanisation of cargo handling operations to increase opportunities for women to join the workforce at the land ports and ensuring zero tolerance for sexual harassment and intimidation.

Engage with women stakeholders

Women must be included in consultative engagements with stakeholders for feedback on existing and proposed policies and measures. Such opportunities for women to ‘comment and suggest’ and make their voices heard may take the form of interactions with local business associations, participating in impact assessment surveys and meetings with relevant local women’s networks and professional groups. Further these should not be one off events. Rather, regular interaction with women stakeholders should be institutionalised.

Measures at Land Ports

I.	Address the information barrier
a.	Website and app with real-time information for all land ports
b.	Toll-free information & assistance helpline
c.	Help desk/information counter at the land port
d.	Display guidance maps of port procedures at the land port reception area
II.	Make travel between nearest town and land port easier
a.	Regular frequency shuttle bus service between the nearest town and the land port
b.	Wide approach/link road and highways
c.	Digital solutions such as the Suvidha – Vehicles Facilitation System at all land ports
III.	Basic utilities at the land ports should be operational and well maintained
a.	Running water supply system
b.	24*7 electricity supply with power backup
c.	Good cell phone signal strength
d.	Stable internet connectivity for efficient digital operations
e.	Wi-Fi hotspots
IV.	Offer more public facilities within the land port complex
a.	Sufficient number of separate toilets for women with running water supply, sanitary napkin dispensers and hygienic sanitary waste management
b.	Lactation and baby care room
c.	Work space for customs house agents (CHAs)
d.	Reserved waiting area/room for women
e.	Dedicated services area with cafeteria, convenience store, ATM, and pharmacy
f.	Functional health centre
g.	Battery operated carts for internal movement at the larger land ports
h.	Separate resting rooms for women drivers and loading/unloading helpers
i.	Vehicle repair services within the land port complex
V.	Design land ports for greater efficiency and bridge the cargo handling infrastructure deficit
a.	All regulatory agencies and requisite infrastructure housed in a single building
b.	Separate gates for movement of export and import vehicles
c.	Separate lanes for loaded and empty vehicles
d.	Adequate parking space for trucks with separate zones for exports and imports
e.	Enclosed and well-lit inspection area
f.	Greater mechanisation of cargo handling
g.	Functional and well-maintained cargo handling equipment (scanners, weighbridges, cranes, etc.).
VI.	Accelerate digitisation of land port operations and procedures.
a.	Regular supply of electricity and strong mobile and internet connections for enabling optimised digital solutions at land ports
b.	EDI-enabled customs operations
c.	Electronic submission & processing of supporting documents
d.	Customs single window
e.	IT-led risk management system (RMS)
f.	Introduce pre-arrival processing
g.	Automatic prioritisation of AEO status holders and perishable cargo
h.	Land port management system for registration, slot management, gate operations, customs filing and unified online payment of customs duty and cargo terminal charges
i.	Spread information on digital processes amongst users so that they reduce dependence on traditional methods
VII.	Facilitate small-scale women cross-border traders & women-owned MSMEs
a.	Fast-tracking of small-scale women cross-border traders with low-value consignments
b.	Relaxed 'AEO compliance criteria' for women-owned MSMEs beyond the recently introduced Liberalised MSME AEO Package
VIII.	Enhance safety measures for women at the land ports
a.	Hard infrastructure such as boundary wall/fencing around the land port complex; adequate lighting throughout the land port, especially if operations are 24x7; functional CCTV cameras at vantage points across the land port complex
b.	Gender sensitisation training programmes for staff of all participating government agencies (PGAs) at the land ports
c.	Periodic police patrolling in the land ports complex and its vicinity
d.	Quick response teams against gender-based harassment or violence

e.	Easily-accessible and confidential reporting mechanisms
f.	Prominent display of reporting information
IX.	Improve gender balance in staffing in all PGAs at the land ports
a.	Assign/employ more women in managerial positions
b.	Avoid gender bias in recruitment for technical positions and provide mechanical skills training opportunities
c.	Support measures such as on-site accommodation, crèche, staff transport facility, etc.
d.	Enforce stipulated provisions of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition & Redressal) Act, 2013
X.	Engage with women stakeholders
a.	Ensure opportunities for women stakeholders to 'comment and suggest' in feedback surveys on existing and proposed policies and measures
b.	Institutionalise periodic interaction with women stakeholders
c.	Conduct awareness sessions on trade processes at the land ports for women
d.	Partner with logistics training centres and logistics related business associations to offer internship opportunities to women applicants
e.	Work in partnership with the private sector in logistics, especially those involved in women's empowerment activities to develop and implement training and capacity building programs

6.2 Ecosystem Enabling Measures

Besides bolstering the trade facilitation environment for women at the land ports, the surrounding ecosystem also needs to be made enabling with gender affirmative measures.

Mainstream gender in trade facilitation and logistics initiatives/plans at both national and state levels

The NTFAP (2020-2023) has specifically highlighted the need for “infrastructure improvement” at border land ports. To develop synergy with the action point on “gender inclusiveness in trade” a gender lens should be incorporated in identification of critical infrastructure gaps for intervention under the PM Gati Shakti Initiative. Gender mainstreaming should also be made integral to the implementation of the National Logistics Policy, 2022, and the corresponding Comprehensive Logistics Action Plan (CLAP).

Mainstream gender in regional trade and connectivity initiatives

To make regional trade and connectivity initiatives more inclusive, women should be involved as important stakeholders in the consultation process as well as impact assessment. This will ensure that the opportunities and benefits from regional trade are delivered without gender bias and promote the economic empowerment of women.

Promote gender diversity in the logistics sector

Greater gender diversity in the logistics sector has the potential to improve the confidence and comfort levels of women entrepreneurs to engage in international trade. The fast-growing logistics segment of the economy also provides enormous career opportunities for women. To promote gender diversity in the logistics sector, concerted skill development and capacity building programmes are needed. At the professional level, networking and support structures for women through logistics-related industry associations are recommended.

Build convergence between the development and management of land ports with the Border Area Development Programme (BADP)

Land ports should be integrated with overall economic development in the border areas. Convergence between the development and management of land ports with the Border Area Development Programme (BADP), with special focus on women, can generate advantages on all sides. Measures such as mentoring local youth and promoting local recruitment, outreach programmes on cross-border trade related procedures

and regulatory compliance for local traders, using local service providers, and providing designated space in port complexes for local artisans to showcase and sell their handicrafts will not only boost the local economy but also mitigate impediments such as those related to land acquisition for the development of land ports. It would also foster a greater partnership spirit among various levels of government to address issues such as improving road conditions, traffic management and port security.

Ecosystem Enabling Measures

I. Mainstream gender in trade facilitation and logistics initiatives/plans at both national and state levels	
a.	Incorporate a gender lens in the identification of critical infrastructure gaps for intervention under the PM Gati Shakti Initiative
b.	Make gender mainstreaming integral to the implementation of the National Logistics Policy, 2022, and the corresponding Comprehensive Logistics Action Plan (CLAP)
II. Mainstream gender in regional trade and connectivity initiatives	
a.	Bring in gender inclusion as a key component in the implementation of the BIMSTEC Transport Connectivity Master Plan and the BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement
b.	Include women as important stakeholders in the consultations process
III. Foster capacity building of women to enable them to take advantage of career opportunities in the logistics sector	
a.	Awareness campaigns on career opportunities in the logistics sector in schools and higher educational institutions
b.	Introduce courses and programmes on logistics and supply chain management as part of the regular courses in more universities
c.	Set up government supported entry-level logistics training centres for women
d.	Provide fee relaxation for women applicants in government certified training and skill development programmes in logistics and supply chain management
e.	Provide reservation for women in the Customs Brokers Licensing Examination conducted by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs (CBIC)
f.	Partner with the private sector in logistics, especially those involved in women's empowerment activities, to develop and implement training and capacity building programs
IV. Establish networking and support structures for women in the logistics sector	
a.	Set up women's wings in logistics-related industry associations at both the regional and national levels
b.	Organise collaborative events such as conferences, seminars, awareness programmes, training sessions
c.	Companies already involved in women's empowerment activities should take the lead in establishing such networking and support structures
V. Build convergence between the development and management of land ports with the Border Area Development Programme (BADP)	
a.	Partner with state governments and local authorities to address challenges such as improvement in road condition and traffic management and port security
b.	Mentor local youth and promote local recruitment
c.	Provide support to local traders to participate in cross-border trade with outreach programmes on trade related procedures and regulatory compliance
d.	Promote local service providers
e.	Provide designated space in port complexes for local artisans to showcase and sell their handicrafts

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