



Gender and Labour in the Global South

Video Transcript

“Gender sensitive” or “gender responsive”?

CHRISTINE BIGLER: Let us look at the terms "gender-sensitive" and "gender-responsive" and how they are useful in policy-making. "Gender-sensitive" considers gender norms, roles and relations. It involves awareness of how gender identities and roles influence women's and men's opportunities in society. However, it does not address inequality generated by unequal norms, roles or relations in laws, policies and practices.

"Gender-responsive" also considers norms, roles and relations, and is aware of how gender identities and roles influence women's and men's opportunities in society. However, it goes further and responds to the inequalities by addressing the causes of gender inequality. It ensures that laws, policies and actions are structured. It operates to remove structural barriers to gender equality and transform discriminatory gender norms, roles and relations. A gender-responsive approach also requires empowering women and ensuring that they know their rights.

When we talk about the labour market and labour market policies, the question that comes up is: When are policies gender-responsive? Policies are gender-responsive when gender norms, roles and inequalities have been considered, and when measures have been taken to actively redress them. They are gender-responsive when they undo the mechanisms that led to these inequalities in a given context; when adequate resources have been allocated; and when impact has been measured through specific gender indicators.

To formulate gender-responsive policies, knowledge about gender norms, roles and inequality is needed. For this knowledge to be available, we need gender-disaggregated data and specific gender indicators. This means that we need data which is broken down by different genders.

Let us take a closer look at the Nepali context and the introduction of gender-responsive policies. Firstly, the 2015 Constitution of Nepal explicitly mentions the principles of equality, equity, and non-discrimination. As a result, the constitution and various policies criminalise discriminatory practices against women. However, in practice, gender ostracism and discrimination remain evident.



Secondly, gender-responsive budgets were introduced along with a gender-responsive budget committee at the ministerial level. Gender-responsive budgeting is government planning, programming and budgeting that contributes to the advancement of gender equality and the fulfilment of women's rights.

One of the challenges was implementing gender-responsive budgeting on a local level. During this process, there was a lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities in government institutions. This meant that gender-responsive budgeting did not reach the local level.

Another challenge was the lack of gender-disaggregated data. Such data is necessary for Nepal to implement an inclusive gender approach. For Nepal to become a gender-responsive country, it needs to effectively plan, implement and monitor gender-inclusiveness as a whole package.

This means that locally elected representatives must apply inclusiveness from the planning to the monitoring phase. It also means including women in decision-making and leadership positions. A transformative approach that moves from gender-sensitive to gender-responsive policies can lead to a better functioning of the labour market.

This applies especially to the situation of women and of marginalised groups and their needs. Nepal needs to address these inequalities and the barriers that women face when they want to access resources and facilities. By identifying discriminatory roles and practices, Nepal can undertake a needs-based approach to the informal economy and can safeguard the vast majority of people in the informal sector.