



## Gender and Labour in the Global South

### Video Transcript

#### Why women do more care work

NARRATOR: The global picture of the division of labour is also evident in Nepal. There is an unequal distribution of domestic work between women and men. Some data shows that women spend about four and a half hours a day on household chores, including cooking, cleaning, washing and grocery shopping. Men, on the other hand, spend only 56 minutes a day on domestic work. This video gives you a first-hand look into the life of Sangita from Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, and of her personal view on her role in the labour market and at home. Sangita works as a domestic worker, is married and has two children.

SANGITA NEPALI: People tend to inform me a day prior and tell me to come to their home the following day to wash clothes. So, on that day, I wake up at 5:30 am. I have to wake up and feed my son throughout the night so I tend to be tired. After I wake up, I wash my face and then cook lentils and rice, whatever curry is available at home. Then I feed my daughter and drop her off at her school at exactly 9 am and inform them of when I will return. I take my son with me and it is normally around 3 to 4 pm when I am done with washing the clothes. Then I return and bring my daughter with me. After we reach home, I make her lunch and then later dinner. Then when my husband gets home, I have to serve him food as well. And then go back to sleep. It is difficult, very difficult. As a new mother, when I should be looked after, I am having to do everything by myself. If I ask my husband, then he doesn't even know how to turn on the gas stove. Maybe he actually knows, but is just lazy and does not want to help.

NARRATOR: The power relations that determine gender roles are a product of Nepal's patriarchal structure. Even in urban settings, where women are educated and more informed about gender roles, they are obliged to perform unpaid household chores in addition to their paid work. Care work hinders Sangita from finding paid work.

SANGITA NEPALI: I have a younger son, he is still an infant; and a daughter. It is difficult for me to work carrying the kids around. And if I don't work, then there is nothing for us to eat. If I feed my son when he cries, the employers tell me that I am wasting time when I should actually be working. They accuse me of slacking off and only feeding my son. Due to all of this, I don't really have work. But I do go wash clothes sometimes, and they pay around 200 to 300 Nepalese Rupee.



NARRATOR: In January 2020, the first case of COVID-19 was confirmed. Nepal was in national lockdown for almost three months, from March 24th to June 14th, 2020.

This had a massive impact on Sangita's life.

SANGITA NEPALI: When the coronavirus came to Nepal, I was working as a housemaid. But due to COVID, everything shut down. When the lockdown happened, I still had some balances yet to be cleared, but due to the lockdown I could not even go to get them. At that time, there were ambulances outside and police vehicles patrolling, and I could not even step out. Our landlord also did not allow us to bring anyone in or go out because of the fear of the spread of COVID. We were all scared for our lives back then. On top of that, we did not have food. What little we had, we ran out of it during corona. We ran out of resources, but COVID was still prevalent then, and I could not go out. During that time, I was still pregnant with my son, and my daughter would also get hungry, but I could not really do much. My neighbours are rich and they have enough food, but we don't. And one sister suggested that even though COVID is still here, I do need to feed my kids. So she told me to go to Balkhu, buy some vegetables in bulk, and then sell them, and she gave me 500 Nepalese Rupee. I can introduce you to her if you would like to, she has helped me a lot. She gave me 500 Nepalese Rupee, and I went to Balkhu and bought two and half kilos of chili peppers that they were selling at a cheap rate, and sold it in bundles at the entrance of my home. I did not have prior experience of selling vegetables and I ended up making way too big bundles. Because of that, it cost me more and I could not make any profit.

NARRATOR: As the example of Sangita shows, the absence of regular and decent employment opportunities forces women to work under flexible, multiple and precarious conditions. As for women working in the informal labour market, it is evident in the Nepalese context that vulnerability plagues them, as they earn a living without any kind of protection or safety net. However, in addition to having to earn their living, women are bound to take on a greater share of domestic and care work in their own or other people's homes, which men rarely do. They have a double workload as they have to alternate between domestic and income-generating activities.