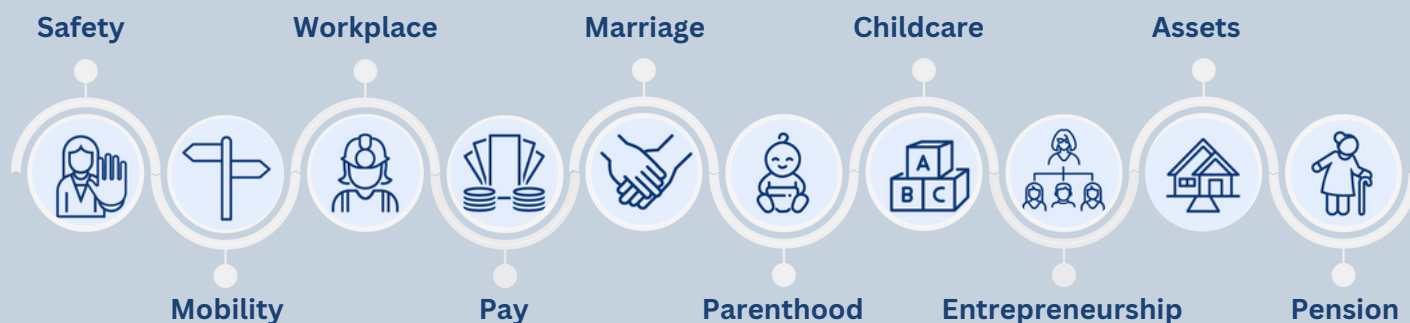


Women, Business and the Law (WBL) is a World Bank Group flagship project designed to improve women's labor force participation and entrepreneurship, driving job creation, productivity, and economic growth. By publishing data on laws and policy mechanisms in 190 economies, WBL identifies barriers and enablers to women's economic opportunities, guiding reforms for more dynamic and resilient economies around the world. Structured around the life cycle of a working woman, the dataset presents ten indicators:



To present a fuller picture of the enabling environment for women, **Women, Business and the Law 2024** analyzes de jure laws “on the books”, examines the existence of policy and institutional frameworks supporting the de facto implementation of the law, and gauges experts’ opinions on the outcome of the law for women.

Women in the Eastern and Southern Africa region have just 46% of the legal rights afforded to men. Only 31% of mechanisms are in place to support the implementation of laws. Experts in the region perceive that 43% of women enjoy equal rights with men, pointing to real-world implementation issues.

Reform Highlights

- ⚠️ South Asia was the only region that did not introduce any reforms between October 2, 2022 and October 1, 2023.
- ✅ In March 2022, **Sri Lanka** gave sons and daughters equal rights to inherit assets.
- ✅ In July 2021, **Pakistan** lifted restrictions on women's ability to work at night.

[Click here](#) for a full list of reforms

Regional Performance Legal Frameworks

Top Performers



Nepal (62.5)
India (60.0)
Bhutan (52.5)

Most Room for Improvement



Afghanistan (20.0)
Bangladesh (32.5)
Pakistan (42.5)



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WBL 2.0 Economy
Snapshots



Recent Publications

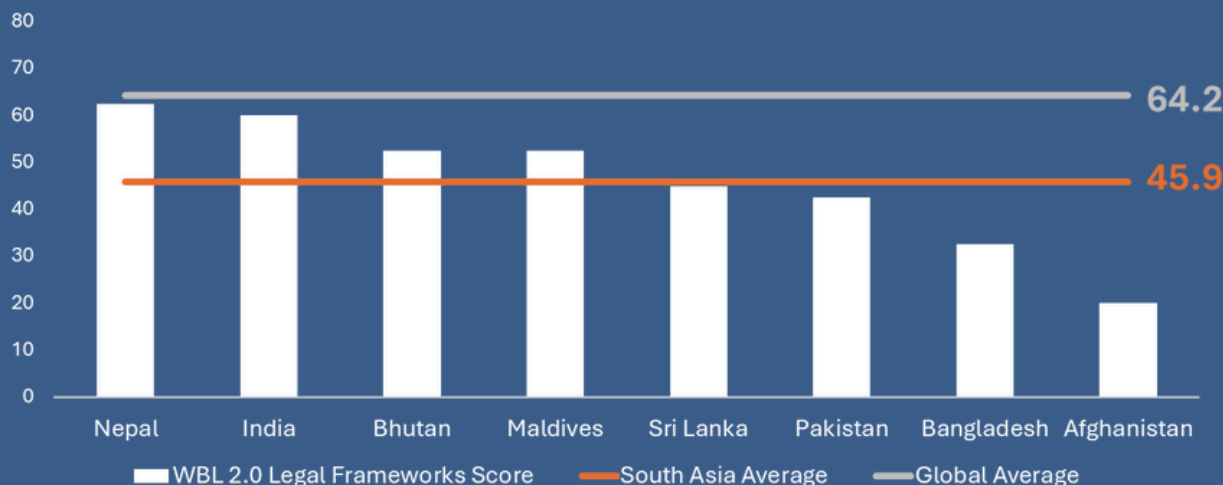
Policy briefs:

- How Did India Successfully Reform Women's Rights? Part I: Answers from the Movement on Equal Inheritance Rights.
- How Did India Successfully Reform Women's Rights? Part II: Answers from the Movement on Protection from Violence.

Other resources:

- Blog: Indian women's long journey towards equality in law and practice.
- South Asia Regional Profile 2022: When societies become equal, economies become more resilient.

Legal Frameworks scores for South Asia - WBL 2024 index



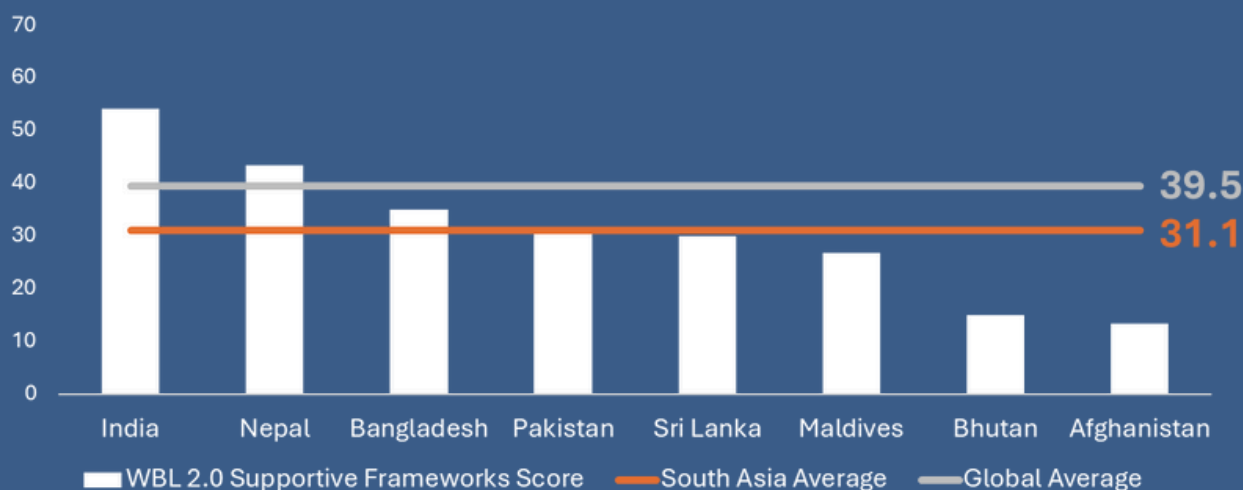
Legal Frameworks

- The Mobility and Marriage indicators perform relatively well, showing that women enjoy freedom of movement and equal rights in marriage in most economies.
- The Safety, Workplace, Parenthood, Childcare, and Entrepreneurship indicators show the most room for improvement.
- Most economies have laws addressing sexual harassment. However, only 2 economies - India and Nepal - have laws addressing child marriage.
- Most economies do not prohibit gender-based discrimination in access to credit.

Supportive Frameworks

- The Mobility and Marriage indicators perform relatively well.
- 6 economies have a specialized family court, 5 provide legal aid, and 4 have a fast-track procedure for family law disputes.
- Large implementation gaps are observed in the Workplace and Childcare indicators.
- The government has not published guidelines on non-discrimination in recruitment or on flexible work arrangements in any of the economies in the region.


Supportive Frameworks scores for South Asia - WBL 2024 index



Expert Opinions

- Bhutan is the highest scoring economy with a score of 85.0.
- Experts perceive women's rights to be advanced in Mobility and Marriage.
- Opinions on Safety and Childcare indicate that women's rights lag in these areas.
- For example, experts perceive that fewer than half of all women are free from gender-based violence in practice.

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