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UNDERSTANDING INEQUALITIES IN TERMS OF TIME ALLOCATION: NEW EVIDENCE FROM KERALA

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ABSTRACT

Work, in its diverse forms contributes to the human development, economic growth and social development of a nation. The work force in an economy can engage in three kinds of activities, namely System of National Accounts (SNA) work, Extended SNA work and Non-SNA work. This paper makes an attempt to analyze the time allocation pattern of men and women and explore the gender disparity in time allocated for unpaid care work in particular. The research design was a small scale exploratory design utilizing cross-sectional face to face recall Interview Schedule using a light time activity matrix and focus group discussions. The study revealed the skewed distribution of unpaid care work between men and women. On an average, time spent by women for unpaid care work was eighteen times more than men. A striking finding of the study was that 73 per cent of men did not spend any time for unpaid care work, whereas all women, irrespective of their employment status did some kind of unpaid care work. 95.87 per cent of women spend more than four hours a day only for the house work component of the unpaid care work. The care dependency ratio of the study area was estimated to be 0.4365 and it is an indication of the high care demands from the part of children and elderly persons. The regular collection of time-use data can be of tremendous value for government agencies for gender sensitive programmes, schemes and prioritizing allocation of resources from a gender perspective. This can be achieved only by proper gender budgeting.

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INTRODUCTION

Work, in its diverse forms contributes to the human development, economic growth and social development of a nation. But, Traditional economic analysis conceptualized income earning activities as "work" and it fail to capture a wide spectrum of works that are of human development implications. The work force in an economy can engage in three kinds of activities, namely System of National Accounts (SNA) work, Extended SNA work and Non-SNA work. But the GDP estimates and work force estimates are based only on SNA work and government continues to set social and economic policy using such incomplete information. As women concentrate in extended SNA activities more than men;

it leads to economic invisibility and statistical underestimation of their work (Beneria, 1995). "This has an impact on the status of women in society, their opportunities in public life and the gender blindness of development policy" (United Nations HDR, 1995). Time use statistics are needed to get a comprehensive picture of the activities of men and women of an economy. "Measure of time use is really a measure of the use of human capital" (Ironmonger, 1996). Time use studies are quantitative summaries of how a particular person allocates his/her time over a specific period like 24 hours of a day or 7 days of a week. This paper makes a disaggregated analysis of time allocation pattern of men and women and reveals the gender disparity in time allocated for unpaid care work in particular.

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The Problem

In most of the developing countries the provision of care in the family continues to lie unbalanced mainly with women on an

unpaid basis, which is not economically or socially valued. Thus the burden of providing unpaid care falls heavily on those who are vulnerable, have less choice and less decision making power. Unpaid care work has a crucial dimension of well-being, not only for those who benefit from the care received but also as a cost for those who provide care, mostly women (Esquivel, 2013). The unequal distribution and invisibility of unpaid care work has a major impact on women's life, the material cost in terms of time, energy, health and other resources, which can undermine their quality of life, their opportunities, capabilities and human rights. This could have tremendous influence on their well-being.

Kerala, the southernmost state of India stands apart from other states with a consistently high level of human development indicators like health status, sex ratio, education and life expectancy among the women, but it is facing a "gender paradox". The state is well known for gender based violence, depression and suicide which can be attributed to lack of autonomy and powerlessness experienced by women in the State. This growing gender 'unfreedoms' has been, and could continue to be, an impediment to the growth prospects of the state's economy. The most serious form of capability failures in Kerala is the problem of educated female unemployment and their poor political participation and representation. The care needs of the Kerala society is intensified by a range of factors including rapidly ageing population, high morbidity rate, life style diseases, migration, environmental degradation, climate change, climate related depletion of essential water, fuel and food resources etc. Government of Kerala has not conducted a full- scale time use survey to understand the magnitude of the internationally discussed issue of unpaid care work in our state. If we cannot understand properly and measure the unpaid care sector of the economy, we cannot manage it to minimize poverty, gender inequality etc. and to boost sustained development of the economy. To evolve local specific policies and programmes, one needs to know the issues, challenges and needs of people residing in a particular panchayat.

METHODOLOGY

The research design is a small scale exploratory design utilizing cross-sectional face to face recall interview schedule and focus group discussion. The survey instrument consisted of three components; a background schedule, light time activity matrix to know the time use pattern of the respondent, and a stylized questionnaire. The activities were prelisted as rows and time line in one hour increments starting from 4 am to 5 am ending at 3 am to 4 am as columns. Contextual variables were also used for enhancing the utility of the information collected about the activities. The exhaustive list of activity categories were grouped into three broad categories (United Nations, 2005): i) SNA work, ii) Extended SNA work and iii) Personal activities (Budlender & Moussie, 2013). This is remarkably similar to high-level categories of the International Classification of Time Use Activities (ICATUS) developed by the United Nations Statistical Division (United Nations, 2005). Multi stage random sampling procedure was used to collect primary data from the selected wards of the Madappally panchayat of the Kottayam district of Kerala. 315 households with both male and female primary care givers, thus, the total number of respondents were 630. The analysis of this study is based on the New Home Economics approach

developed by Gary S Becker (Becker, 1965) and extended by Reuben Gronau (Gronau, 1977).

EMPIRICAL RESULTS

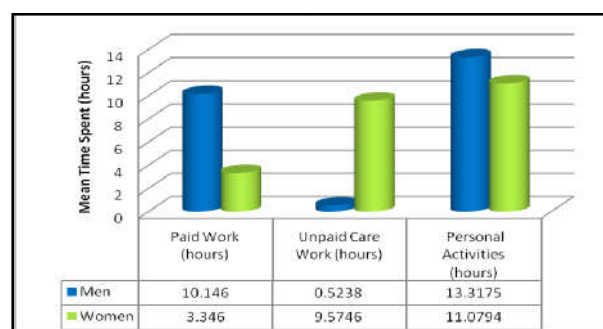
Demographic and Socio-economic Background of the Family Care Takers

Demographic profile of the respondents indicates that majority (67.7 percent of women and 58.4 percent of men) belongs to 30-50 age groups. Their household size ranges from a minimum of 2 members to a maximum of 9 members and majority (65.4 percent) of households have 4 to 5 members in their families. Social profile confirms Kottayam district-Panchayat Level Statistics of 2006 that 14.9 percent households belongs to the scheduled caste community, 1.6 percent to scheduled tribe, 32.7 percent other backward communities and 50.8 percent to general category. Religious composition indicates that Hindus come to 46.3 per cent, Muslims 10.5 per cent and Christians 43.2 per cent, which confirms that the Madappally panchayat also reflects the same trend of the Kottayam district.

The education level of respondents shows that 45.7 per cent of women care givers have secondary education, 20.3 per cent have higher secondary education, 14 per cent have primary education and 12.7 per cent has university education. At the same time, 43.5 per cent of men have secondary education, 21 per cent has primary education, 15.9 per cent has higher secondary and 12.7 per cent has university education. Better educational attainment from the part of women is not reflected in their paid employment rate, as 34.3 per cent of women are only into paid work and the remaining 65.7 per cent of women just remain as unpaid family workers. In the case of men, 89.85 per cent are employed and only 9.15 per cent are unemployed / not in labour force.

Time Allocation Pattern of SNA, ESNA and Personal Activities

The SNA activities consist of primary production activities and unpaid GDP work. House works, child care, elderly care, collection of water/fuel are categorized as Extended SNA activities. Personal Activities include learning, social and cultural activities, mass media use, sleeping and other personal care. Time allocation pattern of men and women in these three broad categories is clear from the Figure 1.



Source: Survey Data

Figure 1. Average time spent by Men and Women on SNA, ESNA and Personal Activities by Gender

Analysis of time use pattern reveals that mean time spent for paid work by men is 10.146 hours and that of women are 3.346

hours per day. However, on the average men spend only 0.5238 hours for unpaid care work, and women spend 9.5746 hours for the same.

2 and 3. 95.87 % of women spend more than four hours a day only for the house work component of the unpaid care work.

Table 1. Variation of SNA, ESNA, Personal Care with Gender- ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
SNA * Gender	Between Groups (Combined)	7282.800	1	7282.800	575.979	0.000
	Within Groups	7940.565	628	12.644		
	Total	15223.365	629			
ESNA * Gender	Between Groups (Combined)	12901.906	1	12901.906	2445.218	0.000
	Within Groups	3313.568	628	5.276		
	Total	16215.475	629			
Personal Activities * Gender	Between Groups (Combined)	788.929	1	788.929	101.792	0.000
	Within Groups	4867.270	628	7.750		
	Total	5656.198	629			

Source: Survey data

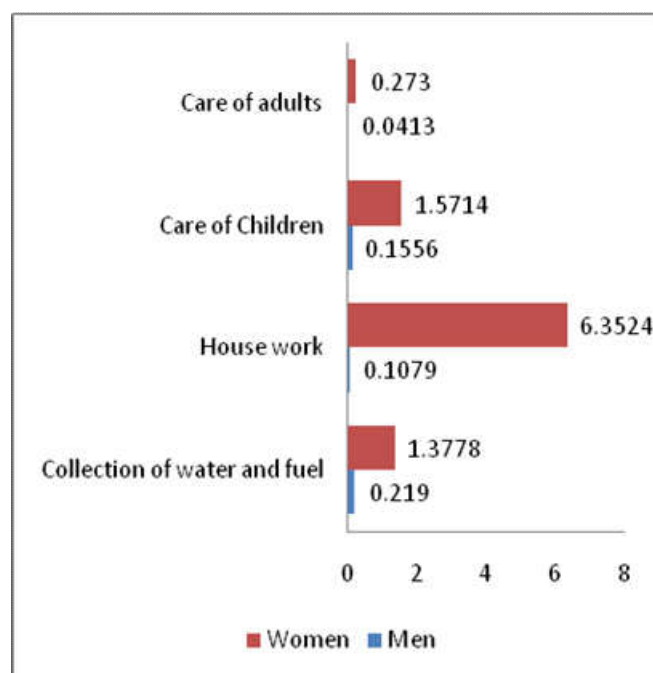
Furthermore, women spend about nine times more time in unpaid care work, indicative of the fact that the gender inequality is much higher in the distribution of time in unpaid care work than in the paid work. It may be due to the fact that the society is rooted in strong patriarchal structure and the prevalence of gender role is so strong in the society. For personal activities men spend more time (13.3175 hours) while women spend only 11.0794 hours a day. It can be observed that, irrespective of men and women, the time allotted for nonmarket work is higher than market work. The findings prove Becker's Theory of Allocation of Time, which states that the amount of time for paid work is never be greater than time spent on other activities. The study revealed the skewed distribution of unpaid care work between men and women. On an average, the time spent by women for unpaid care work was eighteen times more than men. A striking finding of the study was that 73 % of men did not spend any time for unpaid care work, whereas all women, irrespective of their employment status did some kind of unpaid care work. All these findings are reflective of the unequal distribution of paid work and unpaid care work between men and women. Still gender differences were more pronounced in unpaid care work than in paid work.

Disparities in Sub-Categories of Unpaid Care Work

Unpaid care work can be of either direct personal care or indirect care work. Direct care work consists of care of children and the care of adults, while indirect care work refers to the collection of fuel/water and the house work. Another important characteristic of unpaid care work is that there are differences between men and women in the distribution of direct and indirect unpaid care work. It is found that women spend 80 per cent and men spend only 62 per cent of their total unpaid care work time for indirect care work. But regarding direct care work, women spend only 20 per cent of their time for it, but men spend 38 per cent. This is a characteristic of unpaid care work in developing nations that the time spent on indirect care work is much higher than that of direct care work. It might be due to inadequate public provision of key infrastructure facilities and labour saving technologies.

Among different components of unpaid care work, women spend 66 per cent of their total unpaid care work time for house work, were as men spend only 20 per cent time. 14 per cent, for collection of fuel/water by women and men spend 42 per cent. For the care of children, women spend 17 per cent and men spend 30 per cent of their care work time. Concerning care of adults, women spend 3 per cent and men spend 8 per cent of their total unpaid care work time. Thus there are gender differences in time spent on all categories of unpaid care work.

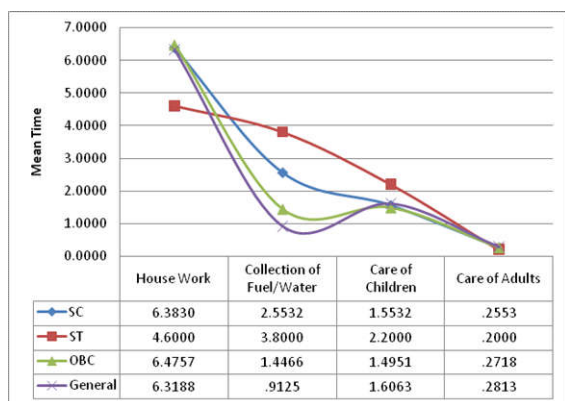
of housework component of unpaid care work, that woman caregivers spend 6.3524 hours daily for housework, men caregivers; on average allocate only a fraction of time 0.1079 hour for the same. For childcare, women allocate an average of 1.5714 hours, while men do only 0.1556 hours a day. Women caregivers spend an average of 0.2730 hours for adult care and men spend only 0.0413 hours a day. This disproportionate responsibility borne by women and the time-consuming nature of care work might constraint women from engaging in paid work and other social, political and civil engagements See Figure.



Source: Survey data

Figure 2. Mean Time Distributed among the Sub-Categories of Unpaid Care Work by Men and Women

The care dependency ratio of the study area was estimated to be 0.4365 and it is an indication of the high care demands from the part of children and elderly persons. As the government is gradually withdrawing from the health care and education sectors, institutional health care has become affordable only for affluent people; the care needs of the poor households are often met at the cost of emotional and physical wellbeing of the primary care givers-women. This disproportionate responsibility borne by women and the time-consuming nature of care work might constraint women from engaging in paid work and other social, political and civil engagements.



Source: Survey data

Figure 3. Social Groups Time Allocation Pattern on Unpaid Care Work

Another noticeable pattern about the women's time allocation is that employed women spend less time (6.76 hours) for unpaid care work than those who were not engaged in paid work (11.06 hours). Although the employed women devote less time to unpaid work than the unemployed women, the total working hours is higher in the case of employed women. Among the 315 men and women in the study area 89.84 per cent of men are engaged in paid employment as against 33.97 per cent of women who are engaged in paid employment. About time allocation of unpaid care work, 230 men does less than one hour, 83 men spend 1-4 hours for unpaid care work and only two men allocates more than 5 hours for unpaid care work. On the contrary; 97.46 per cent of women (both employed and unemployed) does more than 5 hours of unpaid care work. Out of 107 employed women, 100 women allocate high amount of time for unpaid care work and in the case of men, only two employed men spend more than five hours per day for unpaid care work. In the case of 208 unemployed women only one allocates less than five hours for unpaid care work. Compared to other social groups, the socially marginalized groups like SC/ST's have lower income and less household assets. Madapally Grama Panchayat is such a place where the population of SC/ST is above the Kottayam district average. SC women spend an average of 10.7447 hours a day for unpaid care work, while ST- 10.8000, OBC 9.6893 and other community women do 9.1188 hours a day. Regarding the time allocation of men, an average of 0.8936 hours per day is spend by SC men, 1.000 hour by ST men, 0.417 hours by OBC and 0.468 hours by general community (Figure 3)

Policy Suggestions

The findings of the study disclose that the enormity of unpaid care work from the part of women is significantly high. It also reflects that women allocate relatively higher per cent of time for ESNA activities. By the regular collection of time use data, the Government could recognize and make it more visible the women's contribution to the economy through unpaid care work. Policy makers need think of imputing a monetary value to unpaid care work and include it in national accounts/satellite accounts and labour force estimates or in the models used for economic policy making.

Governments at all levels should make gender-disaggregated analysis of time use statistics in order to ensure that the time spend on unpaid care work by women is accounted in gender sensitive programmes and schemes. This can only be achieved by proper gender budgeting. The drudgery of house work can be reduced to a considerable extent by efficient public provisioning. So governmental bodies, especially the local self governments should bring out policies for the state provision of basic infrastructure facilities and labour saving technologies that benefit women by reducing their burden of house work. State should ensure necessary public services including child care centres, adult care facilities, and health care facilities to support family care provision, which could stimulate active labour force participation of the women care givers. Moreover, there is significant variation in the magnitude of unpaid care work by age, location, social community, household type, employment status etc, which highlights the need for local and context specific micro level analysis for effective policy implementation.

Conclusion

The present study makes it visible the contributions of women to the economy through their unpaid care work. The analysis discloses the intra household inequality in time allocation pattern in general and unpaid care work in particular. Furthermore, care dependency ratio is also calculated in order to stress the care dividend aspect of the study area. Gender statistics are needed to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of policy developments. The regular collection of time-use data can be of tremendous value for government agencies for gender sensitive programmes, schemes and prioritizing allocation of resources from a gender perspective. This can be achieved only by proper gender budgeting.

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