
Women and unpaid work in India:

A macroeconomic overview

Sona Mitra

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Women's unpaid work needs to be evaluated in a single continuum of paid and unpaid work which includes different layers and may be represented as

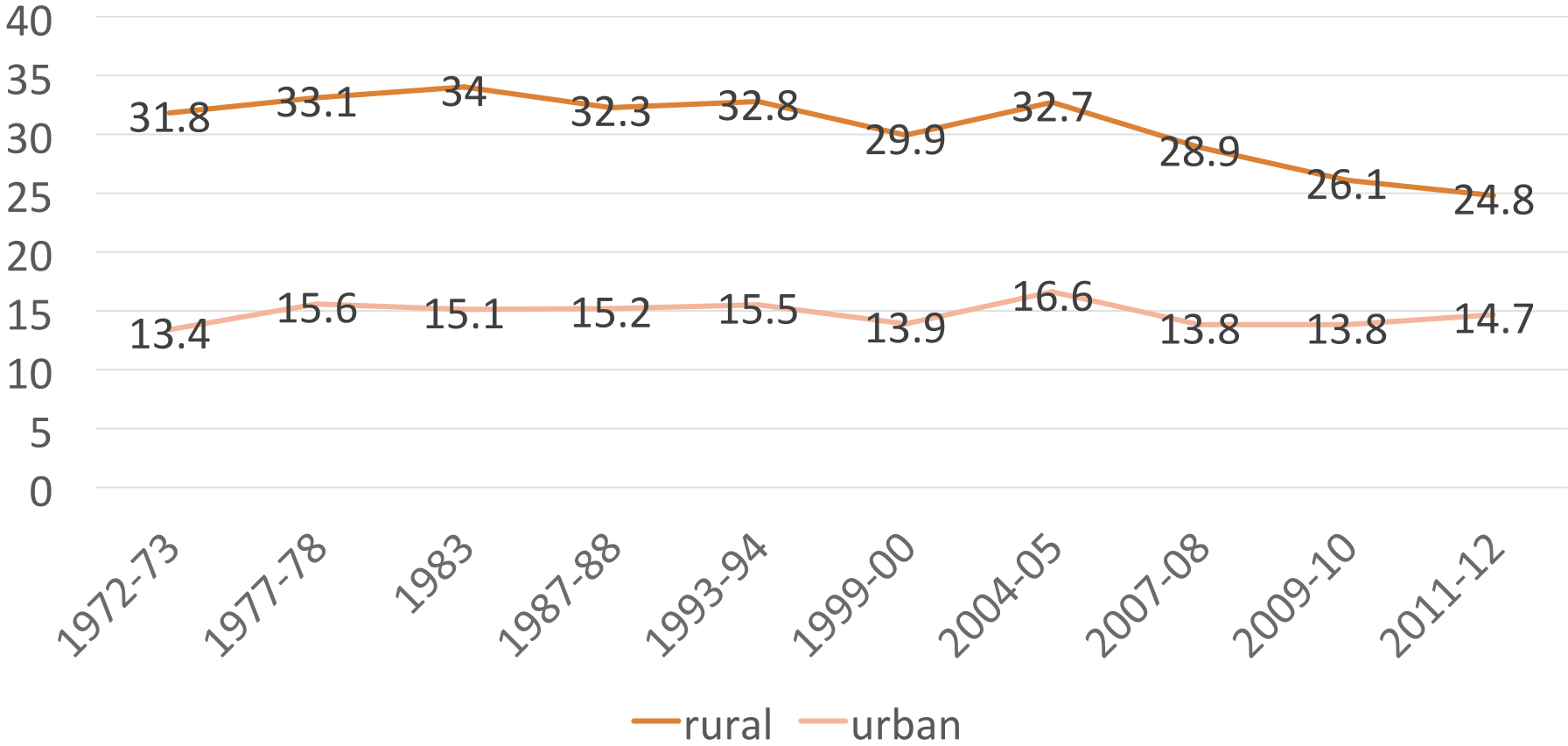
Paid work → Underpaid work → Unpaid work → Unpaid care work

So the need to understand the status of unpaid work has to necessarily adopt a holistic approach towards 'women's work' in general in any economy and has to begin from examining the status of women's paid work in particular.

Some important features of women's paid work in India

- Declining FWPRs since early nineties
- Concentration of women workers in agriculture; no structural transformation
- Predominance of self-employment, in which unpaid family workers constitute the highest share
- Increased informalization of non-agricultural activities
- Substantial gender wage gap, although declining but the gap is higher in regular employment as compared to casual employment
- Rigid occupational segregation persists, though small improvements witnessed in high skilled occupations in urban areas
- Construction assumes the most important change in sectoral patterns of women's engagement in rural areas
- Service activities, both high skilled and petty services and to some extent retail employment assumes importance for women workers in urban areas as emerging employers

FWPRs in India: Historical trends



What drives women's work in India?

- Demand side factors
 - Rate of economic growth – rapidly rising between 2002 -03 to 2011-12, majorly uneven sectoral process with financial services leading the overall growth
 - Rates of growth of employment – declining for all cohorts, RM, RF, UM, except UF (1993-94 and 2011-12) , low output elasticity of employment
 - Macroeconomic policies creating employment in general and focused opportunities for women in particular
- Supply side factors
 - Demographic characteristics: age, marital status, social groups, household income levels
 - Education levels: general, technical, vocational
 - Social protection measures and other facilitating work environment
 - Domestic responsibilities

What has not worked for women's WPRs in India especially in the last few years?

The growth-employment relationship and absence of macro-policy framework looking at women's work in a single continuum

- Nature of economic growth
- Lack of education endowment
- Lack of access to basic amenities including social protection
- Nearly 'genderless' macroeconomic policy framework till Tenth Plan
- Continuing absence of a holistic approach to include women as an overarching component within development policies and programmes

All of the above leads to '**non-recognition**' of women's contribution to the economy, by ignoring the interconnectedness of the nature of work performed by women

**Non-recognized part of women's
contribution forms the core of women's
unpaid work**

Understanding unpaid work

- Crucial for an economy to function as an indispensable factor contributing to the overall maintenance of stable labour supply within an economy
- Women spend more time on unpaid work, especially in developing countries
- Unpaid work of women often is a consequence of rigid patriarchal norms stemming from historical sexual division of labour prevalent in class societies and continuing into the capitalist society, albeit in different forms
- Overwhelming presence of unpaid work of women act as barrier for women to freely access labour markets, reduce income-earning potential and also lead to persistent inequalities
- Unpaid work of women forms the core of 'double burden' that women workers experience over a lifetime
- Unpaid work imposes costs in terms of missed opportunities for education, skill acquisition or improvement and public participation

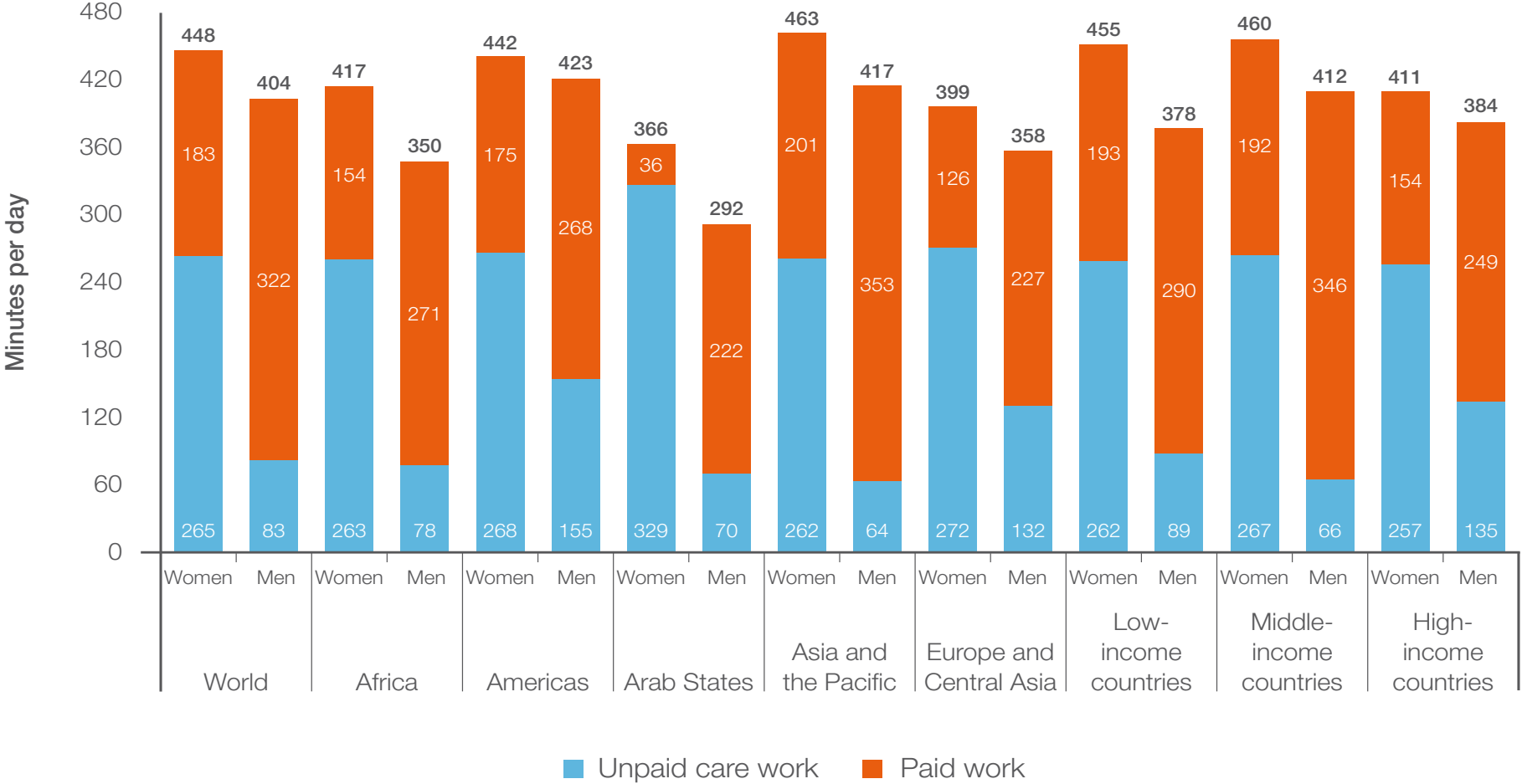
Defining/identifying/recognising unpaid work

Technically, women's unpaid work can be categorised into following major divisions:

- Unremunerated market and other subsistence activities (such as unremunerated work carried out by family helpers in the family farm or enterprise)
- Activities involving production for own-consumption (such as processing of agricultural products, milling, weaving and so on)
- Domestic activities including collection of free goods such as fuel, fodder and water for production and consumption
- Voluntary/community activities
- Activities involving production of services meant for the maintenance and care of household

Global dimension of unpaid work: regional snippets

Time spent on paid, unpaid and total work by region, latest year



ILO calculations, based on study by Charmes, 2018

Average time spent on unpaid domestic and care work and paid work in Asia and Pacific, by sex

Country	Survey year	Age group	Unpaid domestic and care work		Paid work		Total work	
			Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Pacific								
Australia	2006	15+	5.11	2.52	2.08	4.08	7.19	7.00
New Zealand	2009-2010	12+	4.36	2.39	2.16	4.13	6.52	6.52
East and North Asia								
China	2008	15-80	3.54	1.31	4.23	6.00	8.17	7.31
Japan	2016	10+	3.28	0.44	2.29	4.41	5.57	5.25
Mongolia	2011	12+	4.50	2.19	3.58	5.48	8.48	8.07
Rep of Korea	2014	10+	3.28	0.47	2.26	4.08	5.54	4.55
Southeast Asia								
Cambodia	2004	18-60	3.54	0.56	3.57	6.10	7.51	7.06
Lao PDR	2002-2003	10+	2.30	0.36	4.30	5.12	7.00	5.48
Thailand	2015	6+	3.25	1.48	7.29	7.52	10.54	9.40
Viet Nam	2016	15+	5.14	3.10	5.09	5.57	10.23	9.07
South Asia								
Bangladesh	2012	15+	3.36	1.24	5.12	6.54	8.48	8.18
India	1998-1999	15-64	5.52	0.52	2.29	5.18	8.21	6.10
Nepal	2014-2015	15+	3.03	0.43	5.21	6.25	8.24	7.08
Pakistan	2007	10+	4.47	0.28	1.18	5.21	6.05	5.49

(Reproduced from UNDP_APRC report "Now is the time")

India as an extreme case

- OECD (2014) study reveals women in India spent an average of 5.6 hours a day in unpaid work, compared to 52 minutes a day for men (same source).
- ILO 2018 shows on an average women in India spent 297 minutes per day on unpaid care work as against 31 minutes by men (in paid work, women spend only 160 minutes compared to 360 minutes by men).
- WEF Global Gender Gap Report 2017, on an average 66 per cent of women's work in India is unpaid, compared to 12 per cent of men's.

Work Participation rates of men and women with children below 3 years: Male breadwinner-Female Caregiver models?

	2004-05		2011-12	
Number of children	M	F	M	F
0	90.7	46.0	90.2	34.6
> 1	94.5	39.8	94.1	28.6

Based on unit level estimates of NSSO-EUS, 2004-05 and 2011-12

WPR by marital status: Care work increases under institutions of marriage?

	age group	Never married	currently married
1999-00	25-34	54.2	42.5
	All ages	22.4	20.3
2011-12	25-34	56.3	33.0
	All ages	24.0	20.0

Based on unit level estimates of NSSO-EUS, 1999-00 and 2011-12

Age Specific WPRs – Sex disaggregated: Older women relatively more excluded from paid work due to care responsibilities?

Age group	1999-00		Diff	2011-12		Diff
	M	F		M	F	
Rural						
15-29	74.1	40.0	34.1	61.6	25.8	35.8
30-44	98.2	57.2	41.0	98.6	46.1	52.5
45-59	95.8	51.8	44.0	96.8	44.6	52.2
60 and above	63.9	21.8	42.1	64.9	21.3	43.6
All	53.1	29.9	23.2	54.3	24.8	29.5
Urban						
15-29	59.3	14.9	44.4	55.8	15.7	40.1
30-44	96.9	26.6	70.3	98.1	26.7	71.4
45-59	92.1	25	67.1	93.9	21.9	72.0
60 and above	40.2	9.4	30.8	36.5	7.8	28.7
All	51.8	13.9	37.9	54.6	14.7	39.9

Based on unit level estimates of NSSO-EUS, 1999-00 and 2011-12

Female Work participation rates including codes 92 and 93:

	Codes	1999-00	2004-05	2009-10	2011-12
Rural	11-51	35.0	35.9	29.0	25.0
	92	30.3	25.6	31.6	26.1
	93	23.3	26.2	25.6	33.6
	Total	88.6	87.7	86.2	84.7
Urban	11-51	16.6	18.5	15.9	16.7
	92	55.00	48.3	53.2	48.2
	93	9.8	14.8	11	15.4
	Total	81.4	81.6	80.1	80.3

Codes represent,

- 92 attended to domestic duties only
- 93 attended to domestic duties and was also engaged in free collection of goods (vegetables, roots, firewood, cattle feed, etc.), sewing, tailoring, weaving, etc. for household use

Reproduced from Ghosh, 2017

Proportion of women performing 'unaccounted' economic activities among UPS women in codes 92 and 93

Activity	rural		urban	
	1999-00	2011-12	1999-00	2011-12
various activity to obtain food				
Maintenance of kitchen garden	14.1	24.2	3.4	7.9
maintenance of HH animal resources	32.7	22.2	4.5	2.5
free collection of food	15.2	19.4	1.2	1.8
food processing for HH use	26.3	13.6	14.5	3.8
Various activities to obtain fuel and fodder				
free collection of cattle feed	39.6	44.1	5.4	5.3
preparation of coddung cake	48.8	41.8	5.8	4.8
Fetching water from outside	50.9	31.3	23.3	10.0
making/mending clothing	28.6	29.6	28.4	25.1
Making baskets and mats	10.1	5.0	6.3	1.6
Tutoring children, own and/or others for free	6.2	7.6	13.9	13.3

Computed from NSSO-EUS 1999-00 and 2011-12

ESNA activities and hours men and women spent on ESNA work, IPTUS, 1998-99

<i>Name of activities</i>	<i>WPR for men</i>	<i>WPR for women</i>	<i>Time spent by men</i>	<i>Time spent by women</i>
Fetching of water	1.08	22.87	0.05	1.64
Fetching of fruits, vegetables, berries, mushrooms, leaves, and other such products	0.90	11.61	0.09	1.49
Fetching of minor forest produce, bamboo, wood, and other such products	0.58	1.67	0.11	0.15
Fetching of fuel and wood/twigs	0.46	15.74	0.08	1.59
Fetching of raw material for crafts	1.96	4.80	0.16	0.45
Fetching of building materials	0.03	0.06	0.01	0.01
Fetching of fodder	1.68	12.11	0.18	1.38
Other activities	1.26	1.89	0.19	0.22
Sale and purchase related activities	0.14	0.12	0.03	0.02
Collecting building material and material for craft	0.94	2.31	0.08	0.16
<i>Total</i>	<i>7.04</i>	<i>41.56</i>	<i>0.97</i>	<i>6.11</i>

Implications on women

- Increased time stress and time poverty
- Reduced income earning potential
- Missed opportunities for uptake of skills, education, socialization, leisure, entertainment

Leads to reinstating sexual division of labour and further the gender inequalities and creates an intergenerational cycle of 'unpaid work' for girls and women.

What components should be included as integral to a comprehensive macroeconomic framework that enables women's work?

The overarching requirement is thus to engender the macro-economic policy framework to

Recognise – Reduce – Redistribute

Not only to free women's time to engage in productive activities but also to release women from the daily drudgeries involved in performing such work

The policy frame work needs to include a holistic approach to macro policies that include women not only in the labour and related policies but also all social and development policies, in which both social protection policies as well as policies for formalizing informal support plays distinct role as enablers of women's work, especially unpaid work.

Thank you

sona.mitra@iwwage.org

www.iwwage.org