



# Gender Unequal Unpaid Care Work in India: A Barrier to Social Progress

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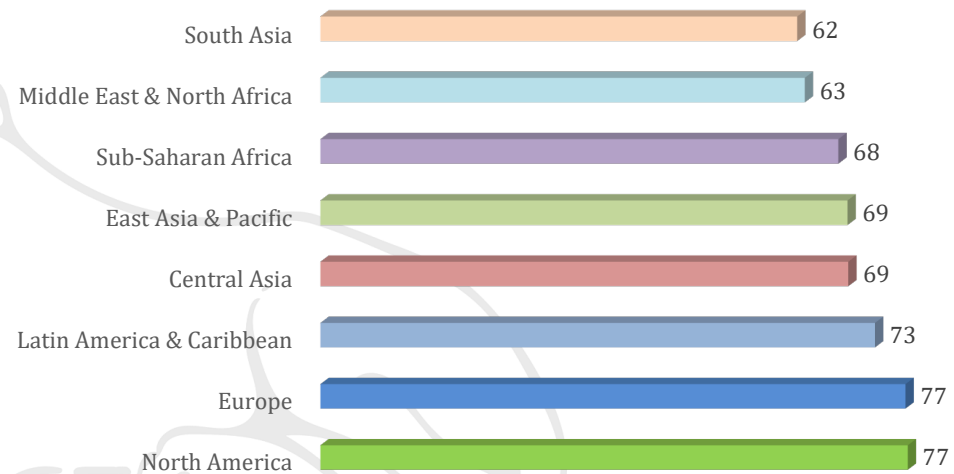
- South Asia: A Development Paradox
  - The region has experienced significant economic growth in recent years, but this growth has not led to commensurate improvements in social indicators such as education, health, and poverty reduction.
  - The South Asian economies are projected to experience a collective growth of 7.0% and 7.4% in 2022 and 2023, respectively.
  - Gender-based disparities in well-being, education, economic participation, health, access to assets, services, and voice have been identified as significant drivers of inequality and poverty (Klasen and Lahoti, 2021).
  - Despite advancements in some of these areas, gender inequalities endure, with no change observed in certain domains.

# Global Gender Gap Index & South Asia

- Global Gender Gap Index
  - Economic Participation and Opportunity
  - Educational Attainment
  - Health and Survival
  - Political Empowerment

- South Asia ranks lowest, with only 62.4 % of gender gap closed in 2022
- It will take the longest time (197 years) to reach the gender parity.

Figure 1: Global Gender Gap Index (values are in percentage points)



Source: WEF, Global Gender Gap Index 2022

# Global Gender Gap Index & South Asia

Growth story of South Asia tends to be incomplete without improving social indicators like education, health, and women's participation in economic activities.

Table 1:

	Overall Index	Economic Participation & Opportunity	Educational Attainment	Health & Survival	Political Empowerment
Central Asia	69.10	68.20	98.80	97.40	11.80
East Asia & Pacific	69.00	72.20	95.40	95.20	13.30
Europe	76.60	70.20	99.50	97.00	39.80
Latin America & Caribbean	72.60	64.50	99.50	97.60	28.70
Middle East & North Africa	63.40	46.00	96.20	96.40	15.10
North America	76.90	77.40	99.70	96.90	33.70
South Asia	62.30	35.70	93.20	94.20	26.20
Sub-Saharan Africa	67.90	67.70	85.30	97.20	21.30
Global Average	68.10	60.30	94.40	95.80	22.00

Source: World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Index, 2022  
 Note: Figures are in Percentage Points

# Economic Participation of Women: South Asia

- In South Asia, the labor force participation rate in females is 25.6 percent and in males is 74.7% in 2022.

Figure 2: Female Labor Force Participation Rates, 1990 to 2021

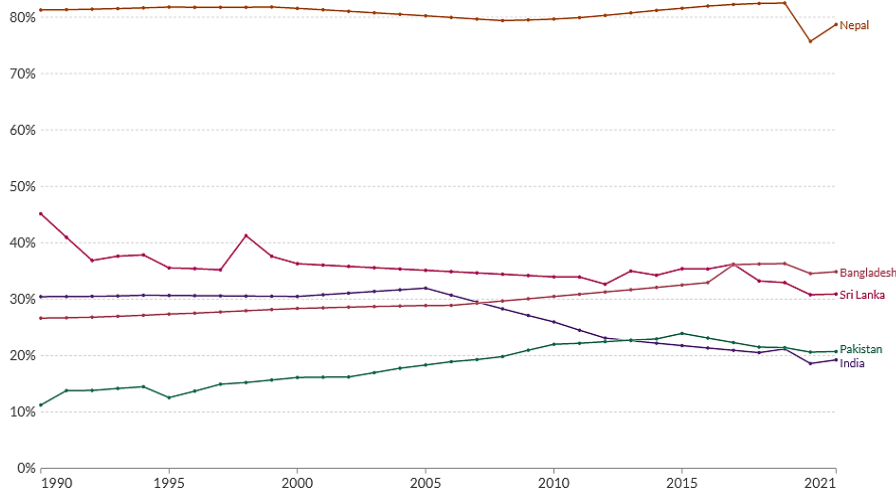
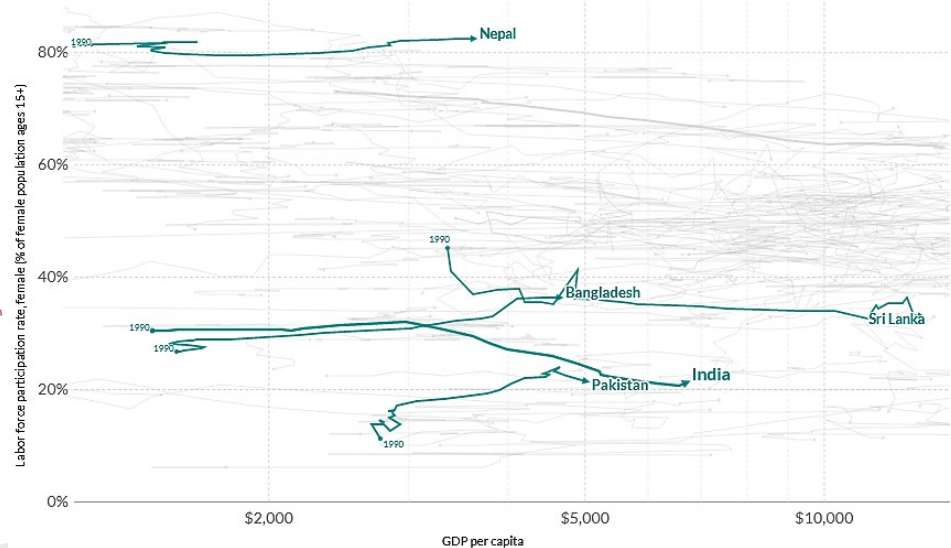


Figure 3: Female Labor Force Participation Rate vs. GDP per capita, 1990 to 2019



Source: International Labour Organization (via World Bank); UN, World Population Prospects (2022)

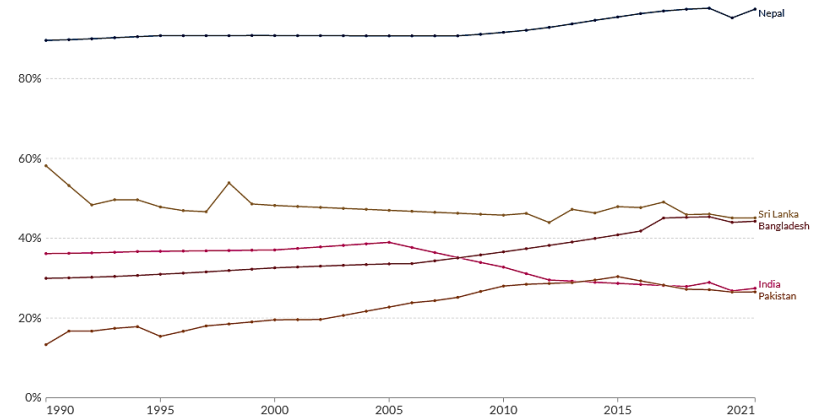
Despite experiencing significant economic growth, improved education, and reduced fertility rates over the past few decades, women in South Asia still encounter more challenges in accessing economic opportunities than in most of the developing world.

# Economic Participation of Women: India

- Within South Asia, India ranks second lowest only after Pakistan in terms of female labor force participation despite being the largest economy in the region.

- Rising educational attainment
- Rising household income
- Social norms
- **Domestic duties of women**

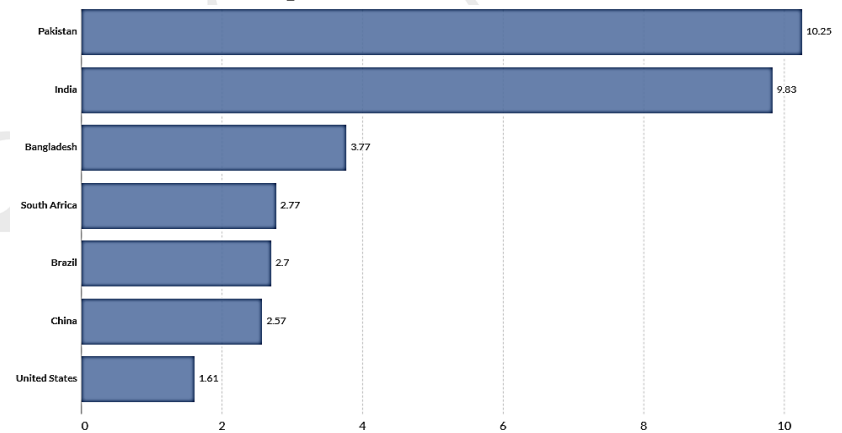
Figure 4: Ratio of Female to Male Labor Force Participation Rates, 1990 to 2021



Source: World Bank based on data from the International Labour Organization

- Unpaid care work acts as a missing link in labor market outcomes, limits the women's mobility and affects their choice of work leading to fewer job options, less bargaining power in the labor market and economic disempowerment of women.
- Unpaid care work is a global phenomenon however, it is acute in India.

Figure 5: Female-to-male ratio of time devoted to unpaid care work, 2014



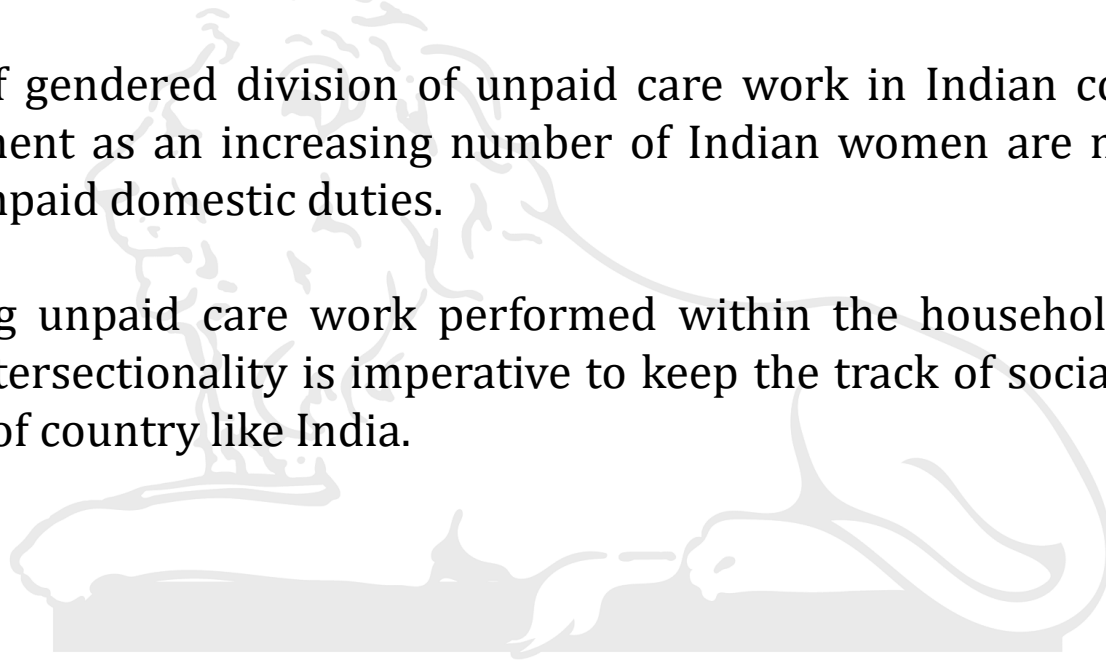
Source: OECD Gender, Institutions and Development Database (2014)

## Objective

Equitable distribution of unpaid care work between men and women in an economy is a critical pathway to move towards gender equality and social progress.

The study of gendered division of unpaid care work in Indian context becomes highly pertinent as an increasing number of Indian women are moving into the domain of unpaid domestic duties.

- Examining unpaid care work performed within the households through the lens of intersectionality is imperative to keep the track of social and economic progress of country like India.





# Database and Methodology

## Database

- The present paper uses data from Indian Time Use survey carried out by National Statistical Office (NSO) during January 2019 to December 2019 in India.
- Total 4,47,250 persons of age six years and above were included in the survey.

## Methodology

Average time spent per person has been calculated:

$$\text{Average time spent per person in activity 'A'} = \frac{\text{Total time spent by the participants in activity 'A'}}{\text{Total number of persons}}$$

Pattern of time spent in unpaid care work vis-à-vis socio-economic and demographic factors has been examined to better understand the dynamic nature of the intersectionalities present in India.

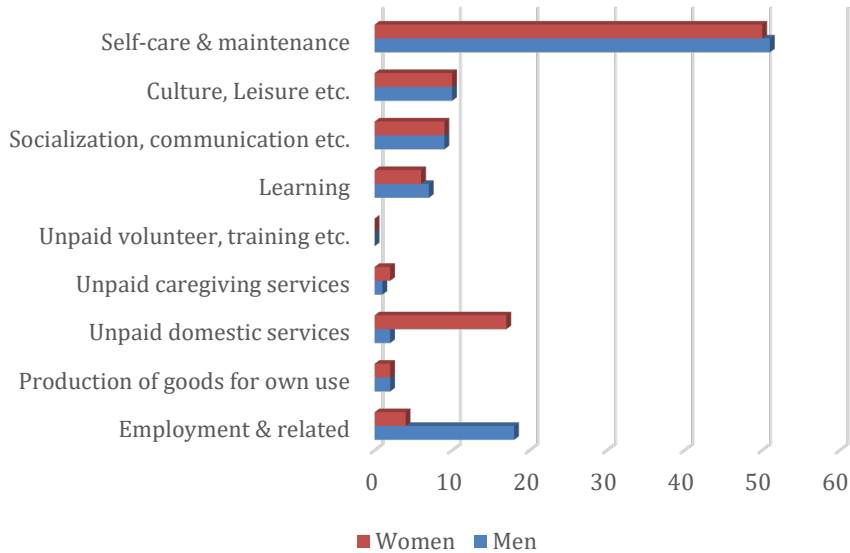
The study applies the Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression to determine the factors associated with the time devoted to unpaid care work by an individual. The basic form of representing OLS regression model is:  $Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_i X_i + \varepsilon_i$

*where  $Y_i$  is the dependent variable depicting the minutes spent on unpaid care work whereas  $X_i$  represents the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the individuals.*



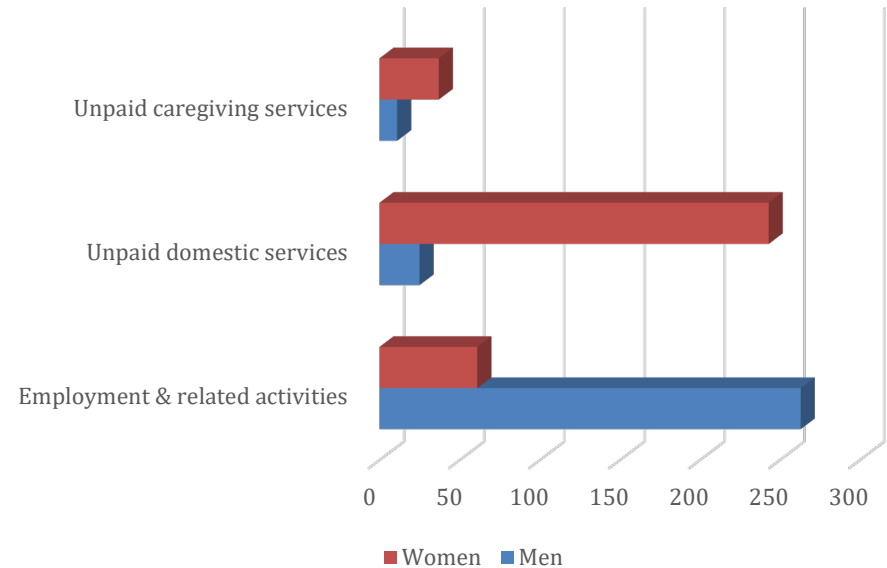
# Time Use in India

Figure 6: Time Distribution Pattern across Gender (in Percentage)



Source: Author's own estimation

Figure 7: Time Distribution Pattern across Gender (Average time spent (mins./day))



Source: Author's own estimation

Women devote 19% of their time in unpaid care work whereas men devote only 3%. In terms of average time spent per day, women spend 243 minutes on unpaid domestic work, 37 minutes on unpaid caregiving activities & 61 minutes on employment activities. However, men spend 25 minutes per day on unpaid domestic activities, 11 minutes on care giving activities & 263 minutes on employment activities.

**These findings indicate the presence of gendered division of unpaid care work in India.**

# Time Use and Gender Differences

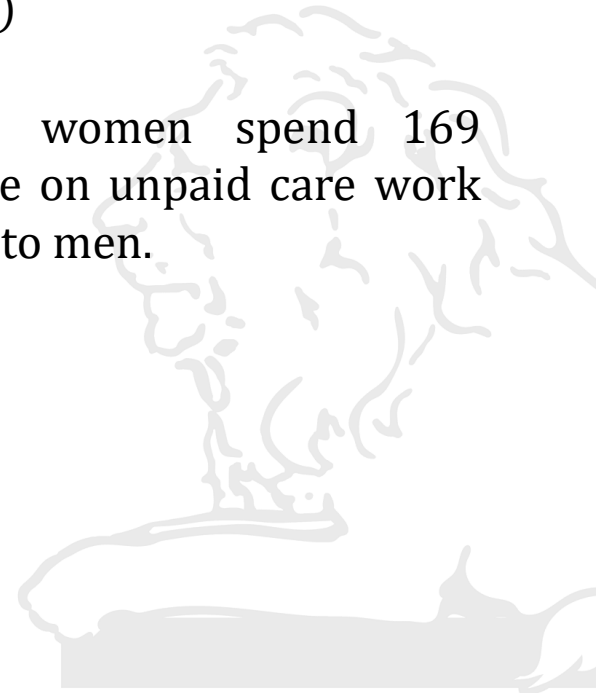
- **Time Availability Theory**
  - Unpaid care work is performed by those individuals that have time (Blair and Lichter, 1991)
- **Relative Resource Theory**
  - Based on the premise that power differential operates between men and women that results into unequal contribution of males and females in unpaid care work (Lundberg and Pollak, 1996)
  - The partner who possesses more resources that can be education, income, occupational status etc. will have more power in marital relationship. Thus, by using more power will try to minimize his/her unpaid care work.
- **Doing Gender Theory**
  - Households do not produce household goods or services only rather produce 'gender' as well (Berk, 1985). Men and women undertake unpaid care in accordance with their gender identities.
  - Women are characterized as nurturing biologically and best suited to carry out unpaid care work. Thus, gender plays a crucial role in assignment of unpaid care work within households (West and Zimmerman, 1987).

Moreover, the intersectional forces of micro and macro conditions prevailing in society or economy, determines the engagement of women in unpaid care work.

The level of education, age, marital status, place of residence, religion and social group, household income, household size, employment status and having children at home all act as decisive elements for spending time in unpaid care work.(Antonopoulos, 2009).

# Unpaid Care Work in India

- Gender plays a predominant role in allocation of time in unpaid domestic work within households (Sayer, 2005)
- On average, women spend 169 minutes more on unpaid care work as compared to men.

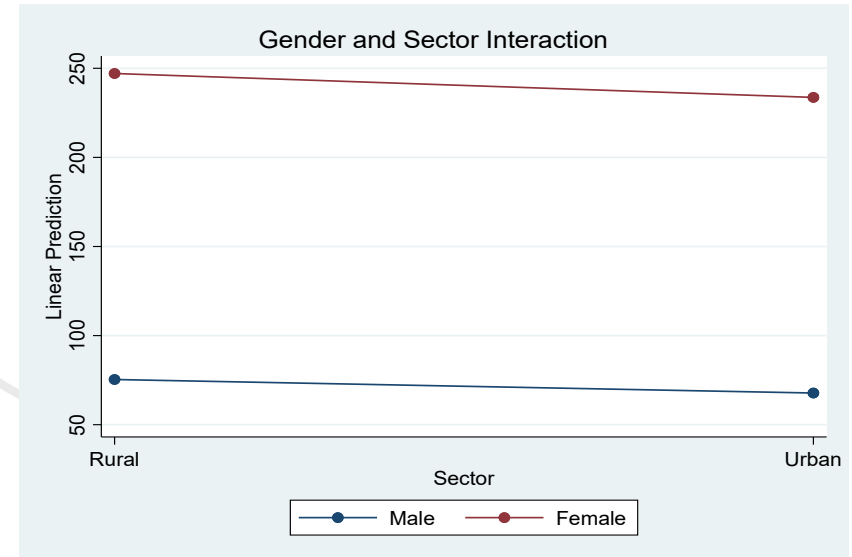
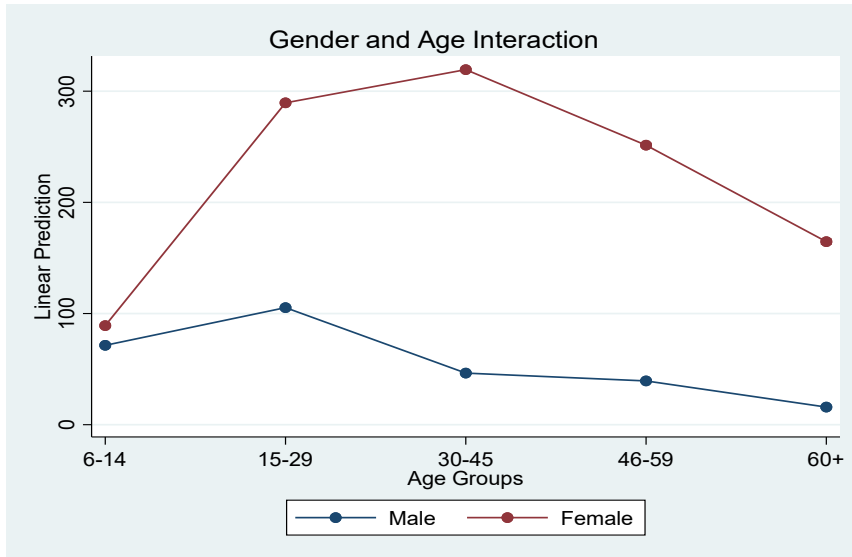


Background Characteristics		Unpaid Care Work
Gender (Male)®	Female	169.47*** (0.447)
Age Groups (6-14)®	15-29	118.50*** (0.686)
	30-45	104.46*** (0.964)
	46-59	64.11*** (1.063)
	60+	-0.55 (1.113)
HH Size (1-6)®	7-12	-27.02*** (0.652)
	13-18	-48.91*** (3.934)
	19-23	-60.38*** (9.458)
Sector (Rural)®	Urban	-10.43*** (0.417)
Social Group (ST)®	SC	-0.33 (0.694)
	OBC	-3.17*** (0.632)
	Others	-1.98*** (0.672)
Religion (Hinduism)®	Islam	4.17*** (0.578)
	Christianity	2.17** (0.903)
	Others	3.41*** (0.962)
Marital Status (Unmarried)®	Married	171.16*** (0.762)
	W/D/S	112.76*** (1.226)
Education (Illiterate)®	Pri to Middle	5.47*** (0.571)
	Sec. to Diploma	-7.71*** (0.644)
	Graduate	-2.07** (0.831)
	PG & above	-6.03*** (1.250)
UMPCE Quintiles (First)®	Second	1.21** (0.579)
	Middle	2.16*** (0.579)
	Fourth	3.74*** (0.628)
	Highest	3.53*** (0.684)
Employment Status (Employed)®	Unemployed	89.71*** (1.399)
	Not in Labor	
	Force	117.03*** (0.512)
No. of Children (None)®	1-2	22.72*** (0.449)
	3-4	46.29*** (1.234)
	More than 5	56.96*** (4.903)
Constant		-182.37*** (1.014)
R-squared		0.6062

Source: Author's calculation

# Unpaid Care Work in India

Marginal effects for interaction of gender and socio-economic and demographic variables on time spent on unpaid care work

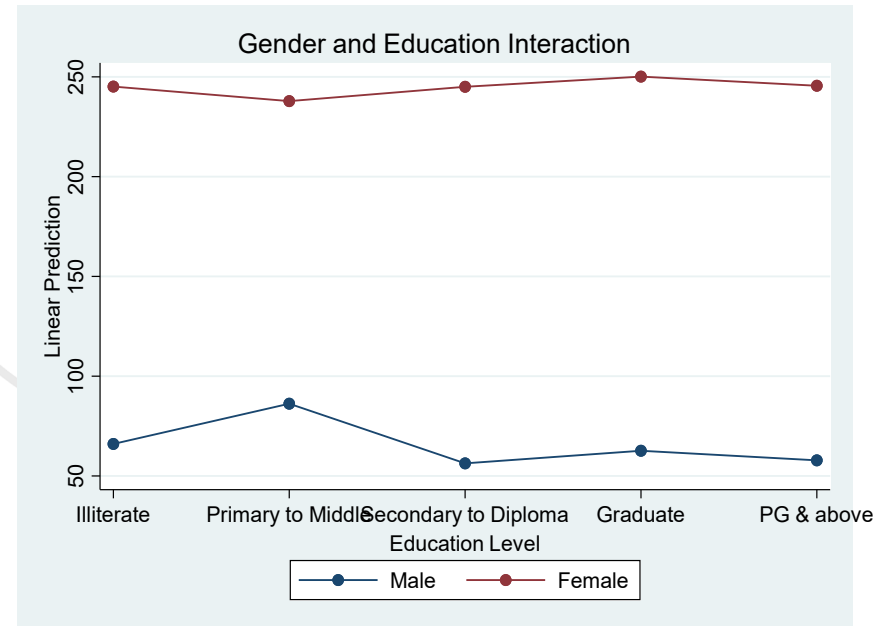
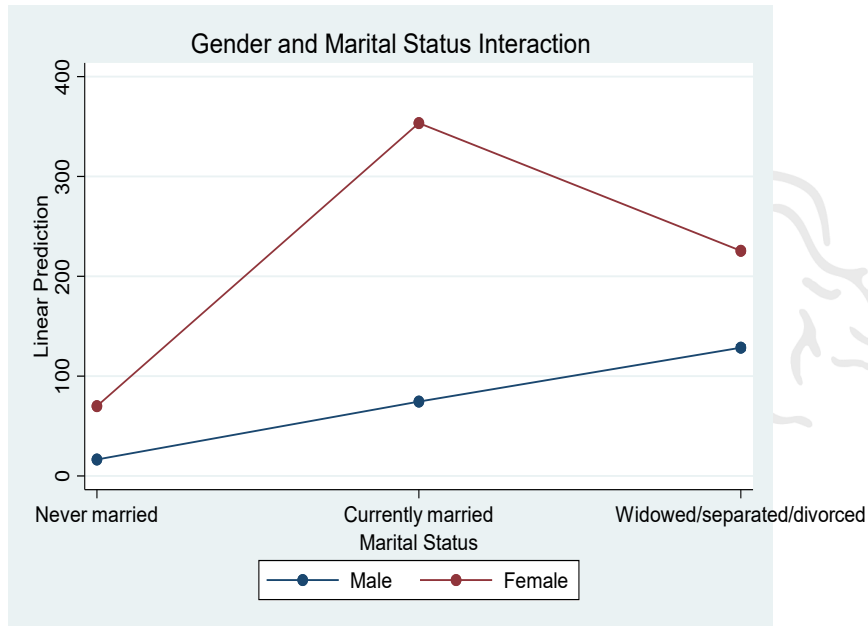


- Gender difference in time spent on unpaid care work first increases with age, reaches maximum in the middle age group and then declines.

- Not much disparity is witnessed in gender difference in time spent on unpaid care work across sectors. Gender difference is present in both rural and urban areas.

# Unpaid Care Work in India

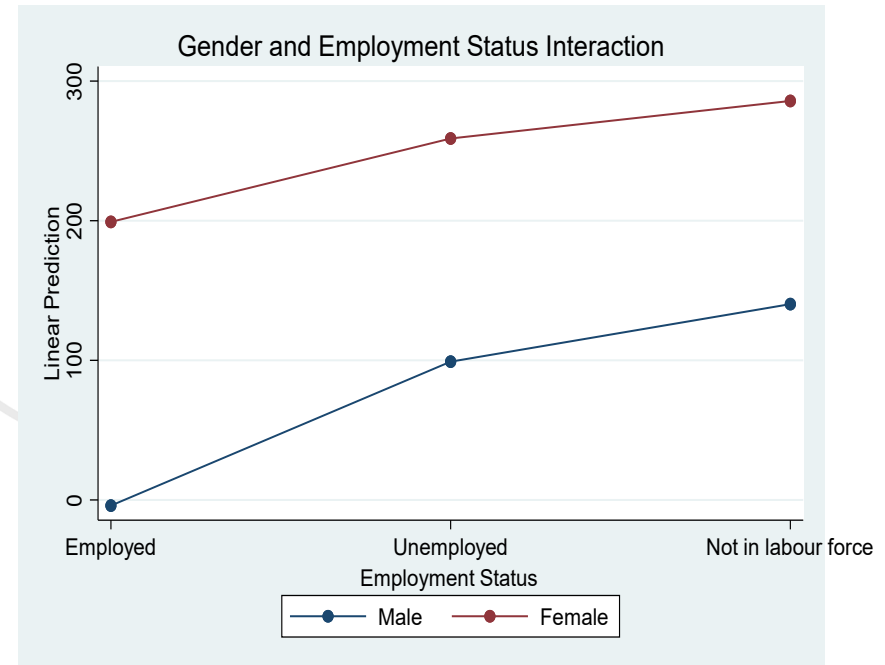
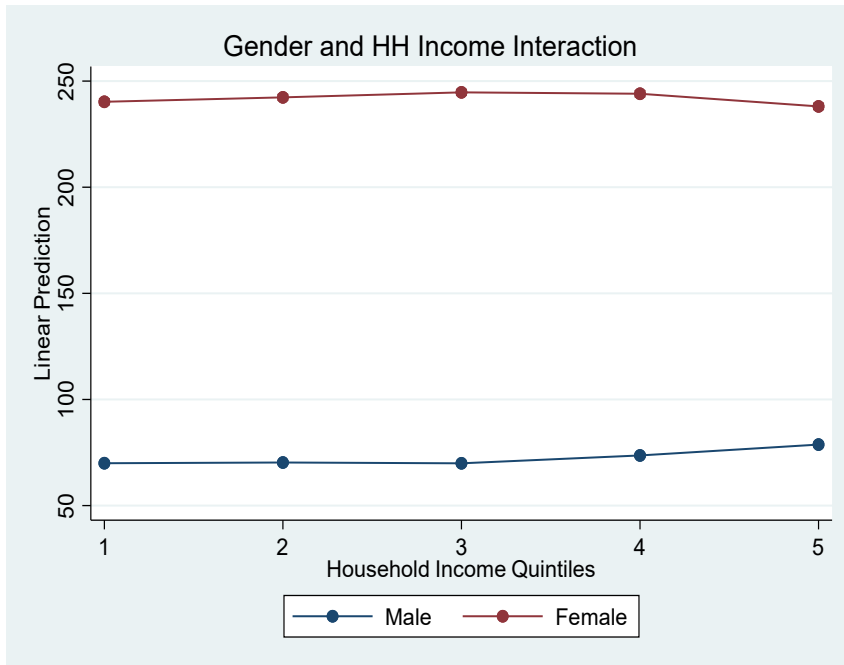
Marginal effects for interaction of gender and socio-economic and demographic variables on time spent on unpaid care work



- Gender difference in time spent on unpaid care work is highest among married individuals.
- Gender difference in time spent on unpaid care work persists even among highly educated individuals (Post-graduate and above).
- Moreover, gender difference at PG level is slightly higher (9 minutes) more as compared to gender difference among illiterate individuals.

# Unpaid Care Work in India

Marginal effects for interaction of gender and socio-economic and demographic variables on time spent on unpaid care work

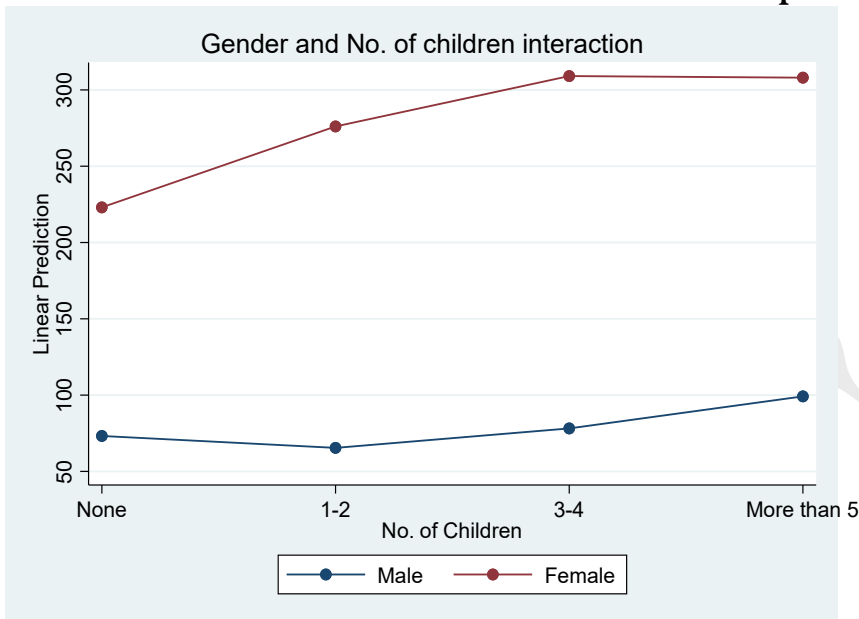


- Gender difference in time spent on unpaid care work is highest in middle-income households.

- Gender difference in time spent on unpaid care work is highest among employed individuals.

# Unpaid Care Work in India

Marginal effects for interaction of gender and socio-economic and demographic variables on time spent on unpaid care work



The magnitude of Gender difference is found to be higher for the individuals:

- In the age group 30-45 years
- Married
- Highly educated
- From middle income households
- Employed
- Having more number of children

- Gender difference in time spent on unpaid care work increases with number of children present in a household.



# Conclusion



- Why Gender Parity?
  - **Economic Growth**: Mckinsey Global Report (2015) estimated that full gender parity in the world of work (parity in LFP, hours worked and representation in each sector of economy) could add \$28 trillion to the annual Global GDP by 2025.
  - Gender equality is a matter of **Social Justice**.
  - Raises family well-being through **Human Capital** effect. When women are unable to fully participate in the employment and education, this may get translated to the next generation as well. This can create a cycle of poverty and limit intergenerational mobility, as children may not be able to achieve their full potential due to a lack of access to education and other opportunities.
- The gender parity in the world of work cannot be achieved without parity in unpaid work within households.
  - Vast amount of gender difference in time spent on unpaid care work has been found in India.
  - Women spend bulk amount of their time on unpaid care work whereas men allocate on employment and related activities.
  - **Large amount of unpaid care work done by women acts as a barrier to social progress in India.**
  - Recognizing and valuing unpaid care work is crucial for achieving social progress, as it contributes to better health outcomes, improved educational outcomes, and greater economic growth.

# Way Forward



- Gender equality is a fundamental human right as well as an avenue to build harmonious, flourishing and sustainable economy by reducing poverty, improving health, promoting education, providing security and well-being.
- The gender inequality in distribution of unpaid care work is perpetuated in all the dimensions of life and impedes the progress towards achieving equity and social progress in the economy.
- To achieve the social progress in an economy, it is the time,
  - to first recognize the **'presence'** of invisible unpaid work in the national economy by putting it in core economic and social policies;
  - to build care economy where **'pressure'** of unpaid care work on middle aged and highly educated women (constitutes important part of labour force) to be reduced by enacting gender neutral care-friendly employment policies;
  - to increase **'possibilities'** for the women to participate in the labour market by creating new care jobs;
  - to engender **'preferences'** for women to undertake unpaid care work as per their own will and not due to social norms and regulations by redistributing unpaid care work within families as well as between all the economic agents of care diamond (state, households, market and community) and
  - providing **'premium'** for the women belonging to middle income households-in the form of better public services—as they do not have means to sustain care burden.

**Thank You**