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**ACCOUNTING FOR UNPAID WORK:
THE KEY TO INCLUSIVE GROWTH**

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ABSTRACT

The concept of inclusive growth is now an agenda of development in most countries. Inclusive growth (Hirway, 2011) has been defined as the growth process that reduces poverty faster, that is broad based and labour intensive, reduces inequalities across regions and across different socio economic groups, opens up opportunities for the excluded and marginalized not only as beneficiaries but also as partners in the growth process. It is not a goal that can be achieved in the short run though the process of inclusion should start first without waiting for a certain level of growth and redistribution to take place. This implies that everyone, including women and the marginalized sections of the society are to be encompassed in the growth process. To make this objective a reality, women who constitute half of the world's population need to have access to their full socio-economic potential. This is, in fact, the prerequisite of inclusive development. This is possible when unpaid work gets due recognition in the economy. The main objective of this paper is to look into the theoretical aspects of unpaid work and how unpaid work has been incorporated in the Sustainable Development Goals. It studies how unpaid work restricts women's entry into labour markets and livelihoods through which women gain access to economic resources. It also studies the impact of unequal distribution of unpaid work on labour market performance of women.

Keywords

Inclusive Growth, Unpaid Work, SNA, Time Use Surveys, Female Labour Participation Rate.

INTRODUCTION :

The concept of inclusive growth is now an agenda of development in most countries. For example, the African Development Bank (2013) has conceptualised inclusive development as ' providing wider access

to sustainable socio-economic opportunities for a broader number of people, countries or regions, while protecting the vulnerable, all being done in an environment of fairness, equal justice, and political plurality'. The Eleventh Five Year Plan in India envisions inclusive growth as a key objective. And the Twelfth Plan talks of 'more inclusive growth'. Inclusive growth (Hirway, 2011) has been defined as the growth process that reduces poverty faster, that is broad based and labour intensive, reduces inequalities across regions and across different socio economic groups, opens up opportunities for the excluded and marginalized not only as beneficiaries but also as partners in the growth process. It is not a goal that can be achieved in the short run though the process of inclusion should start first without waiting for a certain level of growth and redistribution to take place. This implies that everyone, including women and the marginalized sections of the society are to be encompassed in the growth process.

To make this objective a reality, women who constitute half of the world's population need to have access to their full socio-economic potential. This is, in fact, the pre-requisite of inclusive development.

Gender equality has a positive impact on economic growth. This relationship is most consistent with regards to education (the most widely studied), holding for a variety of different countries and across differing time periods, over the past half century (Kabeer, 2012). Micro studies (Quisumbing, 2003; WDR 2012; Kabeer, 2003) find a strong rationale for ensuring women's participation in the processes of growth. Women's participation in the growth process contributes to inclusiveness of growth; not only because women constitute about half of the world's population, but also because women's access to economic resources improves the distributional dynamics within the household.

However, economic growth on its own is not always sufficient to promote gender equality. Economic growth needs to be accompanied by expansion of women's access to employment and education. Emphasis should thus be on public policy/action to remove gender-related barriers to education and employment (in addition to finance, land and housing).

Thus women's access to economic resources contributes to growth. The main objective of this paper is to look into the labour market participation of women and how unpaid work has been incorporated in the Sustainable Development Goals. It studies how unpaid work restricts women's entry into labour markets and livelihoods through which women gain access to economic resources. It also studies the impact of unequal distribution of unpaid work on labour market performance of women.

UNPAID WORK: THEORETICAL ISSUES

Unpaid work comprises of all productive activities outside the official labour market done by individuals for their own households or for others. These activities are called productive because they use scarce resources (time and energy of the worker) to satisfy human wants. Housework, care for children and for sick and old people, voluntary community work or work in political or societal organisations, subsistence agriculture, help in family businesses, etc., are examples of unpaid work, which can be replaced by market goods and services. As the 'third person criterion' makes it clear, there is technically nothing inherent in the work itself that causes some work to be unpaid. In principle, unpaid work can be done by a third person for money. Women throughout the world are seen to bear major responsibilities for unpaid work – this work is essential for the development of human capabilities and their well-being. By contributing to human and social capital

formation, unpaid work also plays a pivotal role in generating and sustaining economic growth (Folbre & Nelson, 2000).

The distribution of work – paid and unpaid, between women and men, is skewed, as proven in the Human Development Report, 1995 (UNDP, 1995, Chapter 4). A sample of 31 countries studied showed that of the total burden of work, women not only do more than men (53 per cent in developing countries and 51 per cent in industrial countries), but also that of women's total work time – both in developing and in industrial countries – roughly two-thirds is spent in unpaid work and one-third in paid work. For men in industrial countries, these shares are reversed. Men in developing countries spend even less of their total work time in unpaid work: roughly one-fourth.

Since the 1970s, the contribution of unpaid work to the economy has come under focus from different theoretical perspectives. There are actually several motives for studying unpaid work, each one connected to policy issues (Francavilla et al., 2011). First, the motive of measuring the contribution of unpaid work to GDP, which has led to the construction of satellite accounts to be incorporated in the System of National Accounts (Chadeau, 1992; EUROSTAT, 2000, 2003). This methodology tried to find out the GDP of a country if unpaid domestic work are measured, valued and included in national accounts. Second, the motive of its interrelation with labour market work, which is important, especially for women. Women's participation in the labour market needs to be studied in the framework of the theory of allocation of time, thus involving the analysis of its interaction with domestic work (Breen and Cooke, 2005; Bonke et al., 2008) with family child care tasks and fertility choices (Del Boca and Vuri, 2007) and with care of the elderly (Spiess and Schneider, 2003). The aim of measuring and assigning values to unpaid

work is to study the gender inequalities arising from the unequal sharing of family care tasks between women and men. Third, the motive of choosing the optimal mix of public and private resources to meet the demand of family care in a welfare system. In fact, in a cost-benefit analysis, the value of unpaid family care can be taken as a cost not only for the family, but also for the society, when household members performing unpaid work could generate, with the same amount of work, a higher value added in the market. In this case, state intervention with public services or subsidies might be more efficient. With sufficiently detailed data, estimates of the value of specific family-based care activities that could be in part either subsidized or supplied by the State at possibly lower costs for the society may be derived (Goswami, 2015).

UNPAID WORK AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The distribution of unpaid work is not a matter of free choice but is imposed on women as a social construct. Women are pushed into invisibility by excluding them from mainstream economics. That is why the concept of unpaid work has been included in the Sustainable Development Goals. It can be said that gender equality and women's empowerment is a pre-requisite to attain the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Women and girls should have equal rights and opportunities and be able to live free of violence and discrimination. Women's equality and empowerment is one of the 17 SDGs, which is essential for inclusive and sustainable development (SDG 5: Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls). Targets of Goal 5 are i. End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere; ii. Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation. Gender equality by 2030 requires

elimination of the root causes of discrimination that curtail women's rights in private and public spheres.

In every region of the world, women and girls do the bulk of unpaid work, including caregiving and household tasks such as cooking and cleaning. Combined with paid work, this leaves women and girls working longer hours with less time for rest, leisure, self care, learning and other activities such as political participation. While societies/economies depend on unpaid work to a great extent, however, it leads to lower income/earnings and less time to engage in other remunerative works. This fact that unpaid work or inequalities in time use of men and women impact almost all SDGs is not recognized implicitly under the SDGs.

Inclusion of Unpaid work in the SDG framework comes as SDG 5.4 which states '*Recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate*'. Indicator of SDG 5.4: *Proportion of time spent on domestic and care work, by sex, age and location*. This is a very valid indicator as it has significant impact on gender equality and women empowerment. However, a time line for achieving this goal should be laid out. There is a necessity to mainstream time use surveys in their national statistical systems. However, time-use surveys remain unavailable or ad-hoc in many countries and few are carried out with regularity to allow for trend analysis. Moreover, caring for children, elderly and the sick often overlaps with domestic work, making accurate person-to-person care statistics difficult to capture (UN Women : Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (E/2017/66)).

UNPAID WORK AND PERFORMANCE OF WOMEN IN THE LABOUR MARKET

Men are more likely to participate in labour markets than women in almost all countries. This gender difference has been narrowing substantially in the last century. However, in some parts of the world, the increase in female labour force participation has slowed down in recent years.

For women to be able to participate in the labour market, they need the time and opportunity to do so. In case of female labour supply, time allocation for the labour market is affected by the fact that women all over the world usually spend a substantial amount of time on activities which are unpaid (i.e., fall outside the traditional economic production boundary). That is, women are engaged in a number of activities but they are not regarded as 'economically active' for the purpose of labour supply statistics. Female participation in the labour markets will increase when the time-cost of unpaid work is reduced, shared equally with men, and made more compatible with market work.

On an average, women spend more time on unpaid work than men. If the sum of unpaid work is considered, women work more than men – on average, 2.6 extra hours per week across OECD (The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). Thus, women's socially ascribed responsibilities for various forms of unpaid work within the home play a great role explaining lower rates of labour force participation relative to men. This is also the reason for women being concentrated in work that brings with it responsibilities but have poor remuneration – part-time, casual, irregular, seasonal and at times, home based.

The main determinants of female labour supply include

- i. **Maternal Health:** Maternity imposes a substantial burden on women's time. This is a biological burden which is uniquely borne by women and is a substantial burden in terms of time and health.
- ii. **Fertility:** Lower rates of fertility can free up a significant amount of women's time, making way for their entry to the labour force. There is a strong causal link between fertility and labour market outcomes (participation, employment, wages, etc). A study by Lundborg, Plug and Rasmussen (2017) show that women who are treated by IVF in Denmark earn less because of having children. According to them, there is a decline in annual earnings by women when children are young.
- iii. **Childcare and Other Family-Oriented Policies:** Public spending on family benefits results in higher female employment. Austerity measures following crises increase the pressure on women's unpaid work burden leading to withdrawal from the labour market. Feminist economists argue that macro structural adjustments and neo-liberal policies formulated without taking into consideration the unpaid work in the economy not only increase the penalty on women but ultimately have an adverse impact on the economy (Elson, 2008; Folbre and Yoon, 2008; Hirway, 2005). An example of this pertains to the impact of austerity measures such as those that have been implemented across the world since the global economic crisis of 2008, in the form of cuts in public expenditure on health, education and public services. Such policies have increased the

burden of unpaid work on women who can no longer depend on free or low-cost public goods (UN, 2013; UN Women, 2014), reducing their well-being, human capital and productivity, and an withdrawal from the labour market.

- iv. **Labour – Saving Consumer Durables:** The consumer goods revolution led to the introduction of labour-saving durables such as washing machines, vacuum cleaners, and other time-saving products. This has contributed to the rise in female labour participation amongst a section of the population.
- v. **Social Norms and Culture:** Social norms and culture to a large extent is responsible for women’s entry into the labour market. Socially assigned gender roles are often institutionally enforced and in most countries around the world there are restrictions on the types of work that women can do. A study of female labour supply decision – making among Bangladeshi households in London and Dhaka reported both on women who were forbidden to take up paid work outside the home by their husbands and in-laws as well as the prolonged negotiations through which other women obtained permission to do such work from their husbands and parents (Kabeer, 2000). In both Mazambique and Tanzania, research shows how husbands and fathers prevent women from engaging in paid work outside the household, particularly forms of paid work where the women are likely to come into contact with other men (Oya, 2010). In Mexico, women reported that husbands were against spouses working outside. The women had to ask for

'permission' to work and had to abide by the husband's opinion, which was serious issue for young and middle-aged women (Appendini, 2010). In West Africa, there is a long established tradition of women cultivating their own fields. Here Dey Abbas (1997) found that women's obligations to work on their husbands' fields meant they were unable to give sufficient time/labour to their own fields and enterprises. In rural Tanzania, the main constraints in expanding agricultural production identified by men included transport, marketing constraints, and lack of credit; whereas according to women it was the time required to look after their families, food preparation and the work on their husband's gardens (Fontana & Paciello, 2010). According to Ghosh (2009), successive National Sample Surveys in India report increasing proportions of women being engaged in unpaid domestic work out of compulsion rather than choice.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE 3 R's

Unpaid work is universally viewed as 'women's work'. Cross- country analyses of national Time Use Surveys , undertaken since 1990s (Budlender, 2010; Miranda, 2011; UN, 2015) has come up with the fact that as a group, men dominate paid work and women dominate unpaid work in terms of both participation and time spent. They have also proved that the gender gap in unpaid work is greater than the gender gap in paid work. This is because of two reasons – i. women spend considerably more time than men on unpaid work and a higher proportion of women than men engage in both paid and unpaid work; and ii. When a woman enters the labour market or when her paid work

increases, the time spent on unpaid work declines but less than proportionately, the shortfall being met out of time formerly spent on leisure including sleep, personal care, social activities or education. ActionAid Report 2016 made a comparison the total amount of both paid and unpaid work undertaken by both men and women. It estimated that globally 'a young woman entering the job market today can expect to work for the equivalent of an average of four years more than her male peers over her lifetime, as she balances both paid and unpaid work' the equivalent of one month's additional work for every woman, every year of her life.

Unpaid work and the commodities and services it produces for the household are indispensable for maintaining and improving the well-being of the households and communities and is essential for the functioning of the economy. But when the State-Provided alternatives are absent in developing countries, the burden of unpaid work leads to limiting women's choices as they are expected to provide the unpaid work (UN Women, 2017). Expanding women's opportunities, choices and freedom requires actions that can remove barriers to their full and equal participation in paid work and also recognize, reduce and redistribute the unpaid care burden that they disproportionately carry. This requires that individuals and society recognize and value the different forms of unpaid work including care work, without reinforcing such work as something that only women can or should do (Razavi, 2007). This argument applies equally to other forms of unpaid work that women do – unpaid SNA work that is indistinguishable from care work.

The '3 R' approach for a more equitable sharing of the unpaid care burden by integrating it into macroeconomic policies, was first suggested by Diane Elson in 2008. This can be easily extended to other forms of

unpaid work also, where the 3 R's stand for Recognise, Reduce and Redistribute.

Recognition: It is important to recognize the importance of unpaid work, making it a core developmental issue in national policy and bringing forth interventions across sectors in a gender sensitive manner. Social protection measures for unpaid workers should be an important element of gender-sensitive macroeconomic policies. Paid maternity leave is a good example of social protection that directly addresses working women's care responsibilities. It not only offers income and job security to mothers, but also allows them time to recover and rest from the effects of pregnancy and childbirth. A strong database (with requisite information on multiple facets of unpaid work and workers) is a prerequisite for an effective gender sensitive macroeconomic policy. Such a system can push governments to rethink how they visualize the economy and how they prioritize the allocation of public resources (ActionAid, 2013). Time Use Survey (TUS) need to be mainstreamed in national statistical systems. It is also necessary to analyse Gender Budgets, and set up a monitoring and evaluation systems that use gender-disaggregated and unpaid work related information to routinely assess and modify developmental interventions.

It is also necessary to break gender stereotypes, thereby expanding women's choices and opportunities. This can be done by finding ways of actively involving men in breaking down entrenched cultural norms regarding the gender division of labour. The education system can help in this regard and promote gender equality. Policies and systems that promote and protect the rights to decent work need to be extended to unpaid SNA workers. In Argentina, Chile and South Africa, gender advocates have been successful in convincing governments to

implement measures to protect the rights of unpaid care workers, by ensuring they have access to the same basic labour protections that are available to other workers (Esplen,2000) In India, gender advocates have been organizing domestic workers as well as anganwadi workers to secure rights under conditions of decent work (UN Women, 2017)).

Reduction: It refers to the reduction of drudgery and time stress of unpaid work. Some of the ways of reducing workload and time stress are – i. Making infrastructural support more accessible (like providing clean and safe water, clean toilets and clean and affordable fuel within the household); ii. Improving connectivity through good roads and transportation services; iii. Improving technology, making it user friendly, particularly women- friendly (invention of light women friendly agricultural equipments).

Redistribution: Redistribution refers to a more equitable sharing of unpaid work between men and women within the household; and within the four institutions in the society – State, Market, Caste/Community Structure and Community Organisations. It is possible to shift unpaid work to the mainstream economy because of the existence of hidden vacancies (Antonopoulos & Fontana, 2006), defined as vacancies or job opportunities which ought to have existed in the mainstream economy but are hidden as they are filled up by unpaid work in the household. These mainly exist in the area of childcare and care of elderly, sick and disabled. According to a UN policy brief, investing 2 per cent of GDP in the care sector could increase employment rates by 4 to 7 per cent points with women filling between 59 to 70 per cent of the newly created jobs (UN, 2017). Public provision of reliable and affordable childcare can have double benefits – give young mothers enough time to boost their participation in the labour market; at the same time contribute to the early development of children.

Of the main actors involved the 3 R's – individuals, households, communities, employers, government – the State clearly has the most critical role. But state interventions alone may not lead to desired changes within a desired timeframe; however they can be the crucial first steps towards genuine change for women and a means of institutionalizing a gender-equitable mindset (UN Women, 2017). Personal empowerment and changing social norms need to be combined with macroeconomic and social policy measures, legal frameworks and social mobilization to achieve gender equality.

METHODOLOGY OF EVALUATING UNPAID WORK

There are two main approaches of evaluating unpaid work within the household depending on what it measures – (i) output of the unpaid work or (ii) input (i.e., time) required to carry out the work and produce goods for household consumption. In the first approach, which is used in the System of National Accounts, all unpaid activities such as food preparation, washing, cleaning, etc. is classified and broken down into different types of work based on their availability in the market. These activities are then priced at the market rate. This approach is not usually used in studies that evaluate unpaid work of women, mainly because of the detailed information needed on different activities carried out and products produced at the level of households as well as markets. In the second approach, a monetary value is put on the time required to perform unpaid activities. This method provides an indirect and reasonably accurate measure of the value of unpaid work. Data required for this method can be collected by a time-use survey. After the time-use survey of women's activities at home is done, a monetary value is put on these activities by the (i) opportunity cost approach (which is the income/wage foregone by doing unpaid work), or (ii) market rate approach or

replacement cost approach (which is the market cost of buying the goods and services that are provided by the unpaid labour within the household).

The opportunity cost approach assumes that the person doing the work at home have a foregone income in the labour market. The market rate/ wage approach can be carried out by evaluating unpaid labour at the wage of a 'general' worker (who can do everything from cleaning and cooking to helping children with their homework and nursing the sick and the elderly) and a 'specialist' worker (which treats different activities as distinctly different works, each having their own specialist market wage). All the above approaches have their methodological and empirical problems and shortcomings which bring a certain degree of bias into the estimation of the monetary value of unpaid work. But, despite the shortcomings of the market rate approach, it gives monetary estimates of unpaid work which are less biased than given by the opportunity cost approach.

Time Use survey can be used to give visibility to the unpaid work of men and women. Here an in-depth analysis is made of participation of work on men and women on different SNA, non SNA activities. However, Time Use survey has been carried out in only a few countries till now (for example Australia, Japan, Maldives, Myanmar, Bangladesh, India, China).

CONCLUSION:

The question is whether a monetary value is required to be put to all work women do. But it is necessary to acknowledge their work and value it. Unpaid work actually does not devalue women. Women are devalued when their work is discounted. When unpaid work is considered, it will be clear how societies work. If something is invisible,

it cannot be understood or valued. Actual measurement will help address inequities and will show the path of development, leading to inclusive growth.

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