

Measurement of Unpaid Household Work of Women in India: A Case Study of Hooghly District of West Bengal

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Paper Abstract: A comprehensive notion of economic empowerment of women comprises both the market economy where women participate in the labour market, and the household economy, where women bear the burden of sustaining and nurturing the market economy. When household work is carried out in the person's own home, it is unpaid and not reflected in national statistics or economic analyses, despite its significance to our everyday wellbeing. Using Time-use survey method, this paper tries to figure out the labour force participation of women, their time use pattern and the type of domestic activities in which they are mainly involved and to find out the monetary value of these activities in Hooghly district of West Bengal. A sample of 400 households comprising 200 rural households from 8 villages of the Chinsurah-Magra Administrative block and 200 urban households from 8 municipal wards of the Hooghly-Chinsurah Municipality area is collected during July 2015 for our study. We have used the six-working-day recall method, i.e. we have excluded Sunday from our study, since Sunday is a holiday which does not follow the normal working routine of the members of the household. We have also tried to compute the monetary value of such unpaid household activities including care activities done by the women respondents of our sample using the replacement cost method. Highlights of the results of our study are as follows. Both rural and urban women have spent much lower share of total time on paid work than their men counterparts, whereas share of total time spent on unpaid care work by rural and urban women is much higher than their men counterparts. While variability of total time spent on paid work by men is less than that of women, that of total time spent on unpaid household care work by men is higher than that of women both in rural and urban areas. For all the age-groups, average work-time of women on unpaid household activities is higher than those for men, whereas, average work-time of men on paid activities is higher than those for women. There is no significant difference in average work-time on unpaid family care activities by women due to difference in their educational qualifications. As household size increases, average work-time of women on unpaid household care work increases, although finally it declines for households with large family-size. There is no significant difference in average work-time of women on household care activities for the low and medium monthly expenditure classes. However, for higher monthly expenditure classes, women have spent fewer hours on household care activities. Our study reveals that Total value generated by 400 women respondents of our sample in the 6 working days of previous week is Rs. 239118/-. Therefore, per capita value of unpaid care of women is Rs. 597.80/-.