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Navigating Time Poverty: Understanding the Challenges Faced by Women in Developing Countries

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Abstract:

In this paper, gender inequality is focused. Basically, the social issues have been highlighted which hinders women to participate in labor-force. Through the intensive literature review, the causes of social issues have been highlighted. If we focus on labor-force participation rate then we can get to know that, where men make up 80% of the workforce globally and women barely exceed 50%. Conditions of women in all over the developing countries have been highlighted here. Generally, it is found that one of the cause of gender inequality is 'time poverty for girls'. Time poverty describes a condition in which people, particularly females, have a restricted amount of time because of many responsibilities and commitments, leaving them with little time for goal-setting, personal growth, education, and leisure activities. There has many reasons like demand sided and supply sided problems regarding job participations but time poverty is something which is supply sided problem. If we focus on developing nations then this problem common. This time poverty becomes a reason of income inequality and chronic poverty, which hinders the growth of developing countries.

Keywords: Gender inequality, Time poverty, Labor force participation, Sustainable Development Goals, Income inequality.



Introduction:

While "Gender Equality" is specified by SDG 5 and must be promoted by 2030, "Decent work for all," "sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth," and "full and productive employment" are those of SDG 8. If we concentrate on the labour market, where men make up 80% of the workforce globally and women barely exceed 50%. Women's participation rate in the labour force decreased from 34.1 percentage in 1999–2000 to 27.2 percentage in 2011–2012 (ILO report). The reasons of low labour force participation rate can be analysed by supply-side and demand-side factors. The demand side problems occurred when women cannot get suitable jobs after their child birth and marriage. So the job structure, time involvement and miss match between job and job seeker are the several reasons of low labour force participation of female. There are several supply sided problems for women to participate in labour market, among them one of the most important reason is time poverty, it results from social norms, economic situations, an uneven division of home duties and job structure, time flexibility, mismatch between job and job seeker. Time poverty describes a condition in which people, particularly females, have a restricted amount of time because of many responsibilities and commitments, leaving them with little time for goal-setting, personal growth, education, and leisure activities. Cultural norms, social expectations, economic situations, and an uneven division of home duties are only a few reasons for which women suffer from lesser time availability. Although 'time poverty' for girls' has many negative effects on society, one of the most significant ones is "Gender Inequality" in all spheres, including home decision-making and involvement in the labour force. Here we discuss a few of social issues and challenges, faced by women in developing nations and make them unable to become a part of labour-force.

Literature Review:

In this section we want to focus on the causes of the low female labour force participation:

- Dowry

Financial shocks significantly effects not only the women's marriage but also women's educational success in Pakistan. The paper shows the relation between marriage market and



education. Financial shocks can raise a girl's chance of early marriage and school dropout. (Khan.S, Jan 2024).

- Early marriage

According to (Deshpande. A et al, 2023) women generally want to work closer to their homes after marriage, and mothers who have had their first child also prefer this. As a result, there are demand side issues as well as supply side issues which are responsible for declining female labour force participation. They also observed that religion disparities are a significant contributing factor which hinders women to participate in labour market.

- Educational attainment

From this paper we can get to know that there is a significant gender gap in the division of domestic labour in Bihar. This research presents empirical evidence that, as a result of patriarchal norms in rural Bihar, female students receive less time for educational attainment (exam preparation) and involved more in unpaid domestic work than male students. (Bhattacharya.S, 2023).

- Lack of infrastructures

This study shows the connection between children's scholastic results and the provision of liquefied petroleum gas & piped water facility within homes. Results from the 2nd round of the IHDS (2011–12) data for rural India prove that children between the ages of 6 and 14 who reside in homes that collect water and fuel for cooking for free have lower math's test marks and benefit from lower educational costs than children who reside in homes where they don't need to collect water and fuel. In addition, it signifies that gender inequality in the amount of unpaid household work also important factor which provides lesser time to women for self-growth. (Choudhuri.P, 2021)



- Lack of childcare services

The largest district in Bangladesh, Dhaka, is the basis for this study. This study looks at one of the causes of Bangladesh's low female labour force participation rates. It turns out that mothers with small children who lack access to child care spend more time doing unpaid household chores than they do working, primarily because there is a shortage of childcare services. (Ahmed, 2021 July)

- Labor saving household work

This research examines particularly for rural India, where rising levels of education among women in households make them more effective at caring for the home and their children, increasing the likelihood that educated women will leave the labor force (Afridi. F and Dinkelman. T, Feb 2016).

- Motherhood penalty

After having a child, urban working women suffer more than their rural counterparts because urban women typically have higher levels of education than rural women do. As a result, women in urban areas typically work in the formal sector, while the major part of rural women in are casual workers in informal sector (Gautham, 2022).

- Motherhood and flexibility in Job structure

Research from Latin American countries indicates that maternity not only decreases women employment but also alters the occupational structures for women. Generally speaking, women who have their first child prefer part-time, informal jobs over regular paid jobs (Berniell.I, July 2023).

- Per capita income within household

This study explains the reasons of female participation in the labour market has been declining for rural India even while their level of education has been rising over time. In the instance of



the income impact, women have a propensity to leave the labour force and take up domestic work when household income rises to a particular level. (Daniel Neff, May 2012).

- Job structure

In Indonesia, female participation in the labour market after marriage is significantly influenced by their access to the internet. Internet accessibility has a minor but positive influence on young, less educated women's likelihood of working a full-time job (Khao Vu, Oct 2022).

- Social norms

In underdeveloped nations, women who labour in family businesses for no pay are sometimes not counted as workers, whereas males are. Married women who come from families with working mothers and in-laws are naturally more supported to be a part of labour force (Deshpande. A K. N., 2024).

Methodology:

Here I used an intensive literature review through reading reports and articles and papers. Then I have given a graphical presentation on the reasons of social issues and gender inequality. The analysis is basically qualitative in nature.

Results:

Social Issues & Challenges:

There are a number of supply-sided and demand-sided factors contributing to the decline in female labor force participation in India over past few decades. Early marriage, child care, care giving of family members, adhering to social norms inside home, and other issues go under the supply side, whereas labor shortages and mismatches between job searchers and available positions fall under the demand side. According to (Deshpande. A S. J., Feb 2023.) Women generally want to work closer to their homes after marriage, and mothers who have had their first child also prefer this. As a result, there are demand side issues as well as supply side issues in labor market which declines female labor force participation. Religion disparities shows a significant contributing factor for poor participation in labor market by female; following



marriage, females from Islamic families have fewer opportunities to enter the workforce than women from other religious backgrounds. (What are the reasons for decreasing rate of participation of Indian female in paid work?)

After having a child, urban working women suffer more than their rural counterparts because urban women typically have higher levels of education than rural women do. As a result, women in urban areas typically work in the formal sector, while the major part of rural females are casual workers in unofficial sector (Gautham, 2022). Women, therefore, did not obtain careers that suited them after marriage. (Has parenthood become a stigma for women in rural or urban areas?)

Research from Latin American countries indicates that motherhood not only decreases females' employment but also changes their occupational structures. Generally speaking, women who have their first child prefer part-time, informal jobs over regular paid jobs (Berniell.I, July 2023). According to another study, women's unaccounted work which is not taken into account under SNA (System of National Accounts) when they work in family businesses is another cause of the low labor force participation rate among females. In contrast, men's work is treated differently in this regard. (What are the effects of parenthood on female employment and labor market participation in Latin American countries?)

Other studies demonstrate that the miscalculation of the difference between household and unpaid economic labor is the cause of females' poor labor market participation. In underdeveloped nations, women who labor in family businesses for no pay are sometimes not counted as workers, whereas males are. Married women who come from families with working mothers and in-laws are naturally more likely to engage in the labor force (Deshpande. A K. N., 2024). (Are women in India truly not working, or are they undervaluing their contributions in terms of earning money, saving money, and performing unpaid household duties?)

In underdeveloped nations, it is frequently advised for health reasons to invest in clean fuel and piped water. This study looks at a different route, namely the connection between children's scholastic results and access to liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and piped water. Results from the second round of the India Human Development Survey (2011–12) for rural India show that



children between the ages of 6 and 14 who reside in homes that collect water and fuel for cooking for free have lower math's test scores and benefit from lower educational costs than children who reside in homes that do not collect water and fuel. In addition, the gender gap in the amount of unpaid work is important. Children's outcomes are much worse in homes where women bear a disproportionate amount of the collection burden, especially for boys. (Choudhuri.P, 2021). (Is there a connection between a child's education and her family's unpaid domestic work?)

This research examines data from 1987 to 2009, and one finding is that women's increased educational attainment has been a contributing factor for low female labor force participation in India during past 20 years. This may seem strange, but the explanation is real. Particularly for rural India, where rising levels of education among women in households make them more effective at caring for the home and their children, increasing the likelihood that educated women will leave the labor force (Afridi. F and Dinkelman. T, Feb 2016) (Why do educated women in rural India participate at a lower rate?)

The largest district in Bangladesh, Dhaka, is the basis for this study. This study looks at one of the reason of lower rate of female labor force participation in Bangladesh. It turns out that mothers with small children who lack access to child care spend more time doing unpaid household chores than they do working, primarily because there is a shortage of childcare services. (Ahmed, 2021 July). (Is 'lack of childcare service' hindering women to participate in labor market?)

This study explains why female participation in the labor market has been declining in rural India even while their level of education has been rising over time. The education effect and the income effect are the main causes. In the instance of the income impact, women have a propensity to leave the labor force and take up domestic work when household income rises to a particular level. Social and cultural aspects had a role in this as well. The education effect is little more than a demand-side issue in the rural Indian labor market, as women's increased education levels prevented them from finding suitable jobs. (Daniel Neff, May 2012). (Why do educated women in rural India participate at a lower rate?)

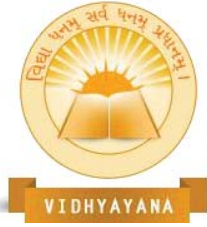


In Indonesia, female participation in the labor force after marriage is significantly influenced by their access to the internet. Internet accessibility has a minor but positive influence on young, less educated women's likelihood of working a full-time job (Khao Vu, Oct 2022). (What factors are contributing to the rise in women's engagement in Vietnam?)

Financial shocks have a significant impact on women's marriage & educational success in Pakistan. The paper shows the relation between marriage market and education. Financial shocks can raise a girl's chance of early marriage and school dropout. According to Pakistani marriage customs, women receive both dowries and bride prices as marital assets, although it's unclear how education and asset type are related to one another (Khan.S, Jan 2024). (What are causes of Pakistan's low labor force participation rate of female?)

This study shows the characteristics of time-poor male and female employees in metropolitan China and estimates prevalence rates of time poverty. Time poverty is characterized as not having enough time for leisure and rest. Female paid workers and low-paid workers differ from a significant fraction of the time poor by all three metrics. Furthermore, regression analysis demonstrates that, all factors are constant, women who are low-paid & married and have children, or are older and live in counties with greater rates of overtime and lower minimum wage standards are more likely to be time poor. (Liangshu Qi and Xiao-yuan Dong, 2018). (In the context of China, is there a connection between time poverty and income poverty for both males and females?)

What causes the decline in Indian women's involvement in paid work? Has being a mother turned into a shame for women in cities or rural areas? What impact does parenting have on women's employment and engagement in the labor market in Latin American nations? Do women in India really not work, or do they undervalue the money they make, the savings they make, and the unpaid work they do around the house? Does a child's education have anything to do with her family's unpaid domestic work? Why is the rate of participation of educated women in rural India lower? What aspects of women's participation in Vietnam are becoming more prevalent? What factors lead to Pakistani women's low rate of labor force participation?



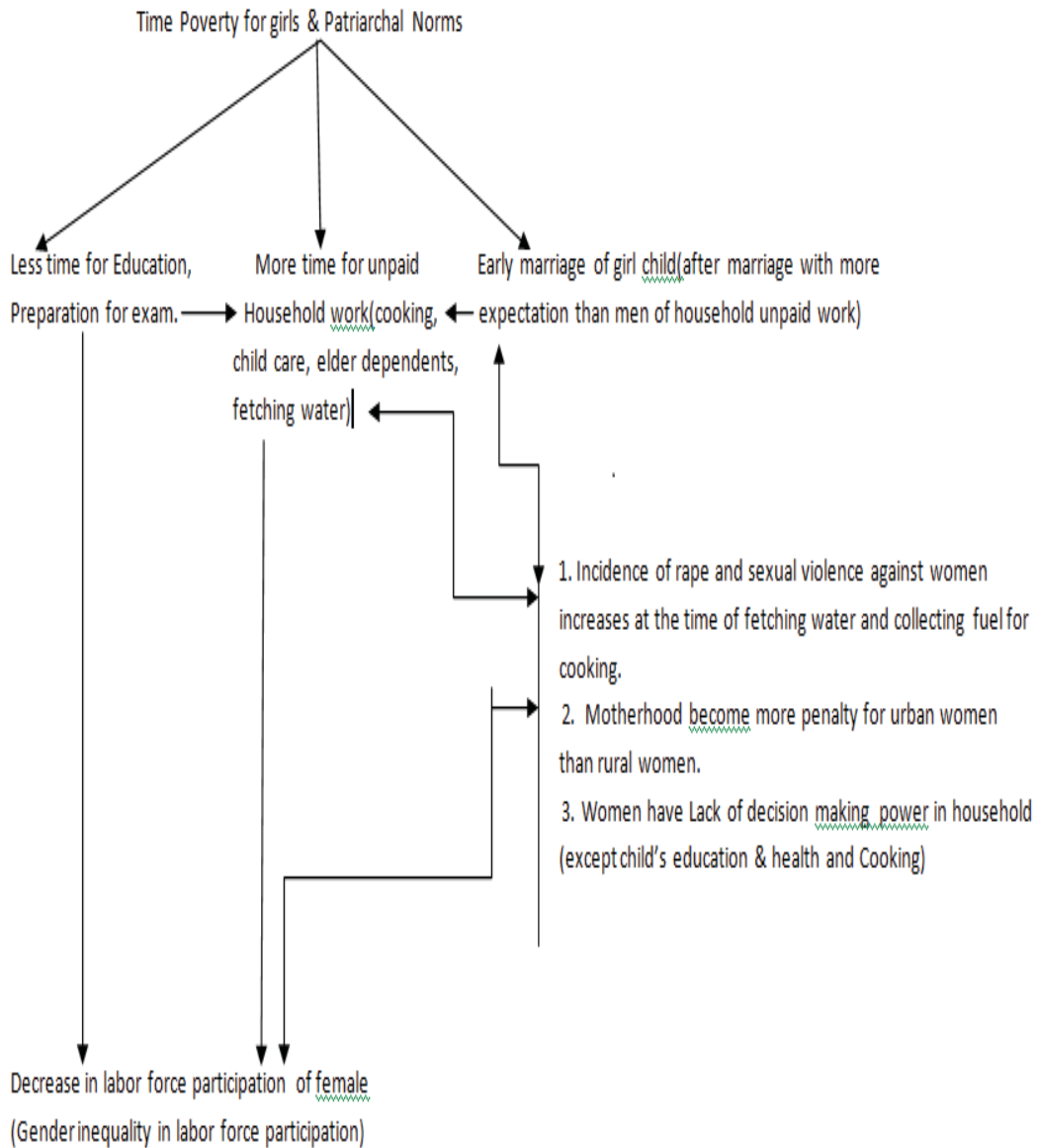
Discussion:

In the Indian context:

PLFS 2021–2022, Youth with education make up the majority of the unemployed, and employment is determined by a person's current weekly status. Since 2019, women have mostly shifted from wage labor to self-employment. When it comes to the percentage of female in the labor market, Indian states continuously do worse than similar emerging nations. The percentage of workers in non-agricultural jobs increased significantly more quickly than the percentage of workers in regular wage jobs in the non-farm sector. Over time, India's caste structure has an impact on the participation rate of female in the labour sector. There has been a decrease in female employment since 2004 in all caste and religion categories. A negative correlation exists between the earnings of husbands and the likelihood of women finding work. An increased chance of the woman participating in paid work is linked to the presence of an employed in-laws. The link between education and employment is U-shaped. U-shaped relationship is observed between female employment and economic growth. Structural transformation initially pushes women out of the workforce as demand for female labour in agricultural sector falls. As growth continues and education attainment level of female increase, new employment opportunities and higher level of wage pull women into the workforce. The primary finding of the Time Use Survey (TUS) data, which indicates that women are more involved in unpaid household work and care giving and less in paid employment in India and specially in Bihar, suggests that gendered norms influenced by patriarchal notions of female and male roles in society and due to the lack of basic public infrastructural facilities, like accessibility of clean water and affordable fuel, eat up sizable portion of available time of women. Women with infants suffered more from time poverty. Female students in rural Bihar are given less time for academic accomplishment (exam preparation) than male pupils as a result of patriarchal traditions. In India, women spend twice as much time caring for children and dependent adults as men do. Women spend three times as much time performing unpaid domestic chores than men do. For those reasons women gets less time for their personal growth and girl children get less time for educational attainment all this causes the gender inequality



in labor force participation. This causes problems to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well.



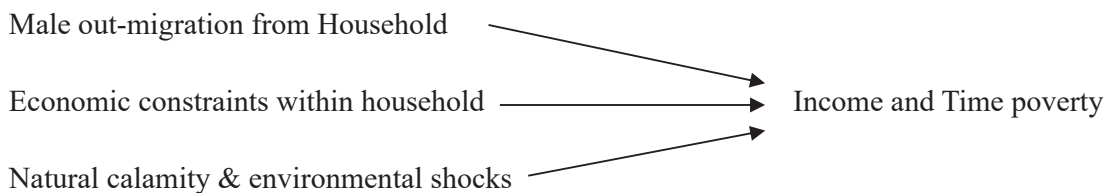
(Graphical presentation of time poverty of girls' and it's impact in Indian context)

Source: Author



In the Bangladesh Context:

According to the most recent IPCC study, the nation is predicted to experience high heat and humidity, ongoing sea level rise that would cause the loss of homes for 4 million people, and a threat to the industrial and agricultural sectors due to climate change. In Bangladesh, where 48% of women reside in disaster-prone areas, climate shocks have an impact on women's household income and asset losses. Due to social expectations, women now spend a lot of time on unpaid domestic work, such as child care, fuel collection, and cooking. This situation has gotten worse as more men have left the home, and women are now also responsible for farming. (Haor region more than 54% of women are suffering from time poverty), Rural Bangladesh faces a vulnerable condition due to a larger reliance on natural resources, which causes women to experience time poverty as a result of having to spend a lot of time gathering fuel and water due to a scarcity of natural resources due to deforestation and natural disasters. On other hand due to male out migration this condition became worse for female as then all responsibilities of household and farming put on them. Not only the local customs but women's endowment, economic constraint within the household level are also the reason that provides lesser work opportunities for women in rural Bangladesh. Due to two crisis like Covid pandemic and Russia-Ukraine war the pace of poverty alleviation became slower and uneven. For women in Bangladesh suffered from both income poverty as well as time poverty.



Many findings shows that time poverty and nutrition outcomes are positively correlated with each other, as maternal time spent on reproductive activities (domestic work, cooking, care giving) led to poorer nutrition outcomes for children. Women empowerment and children nutrition outcomes are positively correlated, women empowerment and their nutrition outcomes are also positively correlated to each other (other socio-economic factors also important to explain adult nutrition). Similarly, there is an association between income poverty and household dietary diversity. On an average Income poor household consumes 1.5 fewer



food groups compared to non-poor households. According to Household Income & Expenditure Survey (HIES) slower and unequal household consumption growth explain the delay in poverty eradication. Many programs like 'Livelihood Improvement of Urban Poor Communities'(LIUPC) at the time of covid-19 was taken, to uplift human skills, in collaboration with BARC, Graduation program was taken on 2007 and 2011. In 2010 where 1/3rd of population were live in poverty, it became 1/4th in 2016. Due to two crisis like Covid-19 pandemic and Russia-Ukraine war the pace of poverty alleviation became slower and uneven.

In the Other countries' (Bangladesh, Nepal, Cambodia, Ghana, Mozambique) context:

Due to some similarities those countries are chose for further study, like in those countries maximum portion of rural women are engaged in agriculture sector for earning, the household characteristics are more or less similar, and income wise those countries are belonging in lower-middle income portion. In those countries we can get a relation between spending time for domestic work by women and children and as well as their dietary diversity. As maximum time spend in agricultural sector which increases women's agricultural work, fell negative outcome on nutrition level of female and children due to reduction of women's time availability for activities that enhance nutrition and health. Other dimension is decision making power within household, female participation in work increases their decision making power within household and also increases their status in household which is associated with better child nutrition level. In case of Mozambique, long hour field work by female in agricultural sector is negatively related with their dietary diversity and after completion of this paid work, addition of unpaid household work fell adverse effect on their health. In case of Ghana and Cambodia, children and women's diet is more diverse when female spend more time in unpaid household work, the reason is non-poor household start with better diets than poor and are less sensitive to reduction in cooking time and household work. In case of Nepal there we get that women spend longest time in agricultural sector other than three countries but there women are suffered from time poverty because of the household structure which is quite similar like Bangladesh, in Nepal there women have to suffer from time poverty due to male out migration of household.



For this male out migration all decisions of household and farming women have to take. Poor women in Nepal spend significantly longer time in agriculture than non-poor women.

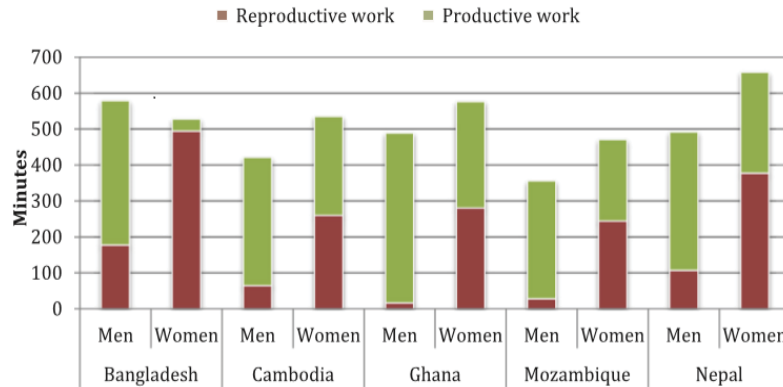


Fig. 1. Men and women's average reported time use in past 24 h. Sources: Authors' calculations using data from Bangladesh Integrated Household Survey (2011–2012) for Bangladesh; baseline survey of Suaahara project for Nepal (2012); and Feed the Future surveys for Cambodia (2012), Ghana (2012), and Mozambique (2013–2014).

Ref: (Komatsu.H, 2012)

Productive work typically refers to activities that result in the creation of goods and services that contribute to economy or society's overall well-being. Reproductive work refers to the tasks and activities that are related to the unpaid domestic work, care giving works etc. In Bangladesh, maximum time is spent by female in unpaid work. In both country Bangladesh & Nepal, household structure is more or less same, women suffer from time poverty due to male-out migration from household.

Conclusion:

Overall country wise discussion, we get that women suffers from time poverty all over the country, in India due to patriarchal norms like child marriage and other social expectations from society women become less empower in household and society also which results in unequal participation in labour force, in rural India women have to suffer from sexual violence at the time of fetching water and other household work, in Urban India due to time poverty 'motherhood' become penalty for women. In Bangladesh women not only suffer from time poverty but also income poverty due to climate shocks and male out-migration from household. Financial shocks significantly effects women's marriage & educational success in Pakistan.



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More or less similar scenario we get in case of Nepal. In case of Ghana, Mozambique, Cambodia we get that working long hours in paid and unpaid domestic work causes adverse impact in diet and nutrition level for female and children within household. This leads unfavourable impact on health of both female and children also.



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