



Unpaid Labor's Unaccounted Value: Estimating the Economic Worth of Indian Housework

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Abstract – This study makes an effort to calculate the economic worth of the unpaid domestic work that Indian housewives perform but which is not included in national income statistics. Taking measure the number of hours spent on household tasks like cooking, cleaning, childcare, eldercare, shopping, etc. using time–use surveys. Based on the female labor force participation rate of around 25%, we estimate that over 90 million Indian women are full-time homemakers. We use the opportunity cost and replacement wage methods to impute a hypothetical salary to this unpaid work. The opportunity cost technique determines the value of housekeeping by calculating the potential money lost by not working. The replacement wage approach calculates the cost of hiring someone to conduct domestic work and then assigns a market–equivalent remuneration rate to those chores. We calculate the total annual value of unpaid household labor by taking into account the number of housewives, the average number of hours worked, and imputed wage rates that have been adjusted for India's economic circumstances. According to our calculations, unpaid labor accounts for more than 30% of India's GDP, which is a significant underreporting of the sector's contribution to economic welfare and production. Failing to account for it results in the systemic economic exclusion of women, depriving them of bargaining power and perpetuating gender inequality. Thus, we present policy recommendations like subsidized child/elder care infrastructure, tax incentives for hiring domestic help, and financial literacy programs for women focused on saving, investing and entrepreneurship. The low proportion of female workforce involvement due to family responsibilities, rigid gender norms, patriarchal traditions, the idea that housekeeping is intrinsically feminine, and the lack of female political influence all contribute to India's undervaluation of unpaid labor. These deeply embedded value structures must shift if Indian housewives are to become economically and socially autonomous. This research underscores the need to make unpaid household labor visible through methodologies like time–use surveys and satellite accounts. Integrating its value into national accounts can positively impact budgets, planning decisions, poverty measurements, and policies promoting inclusive growth. Our monetary valuation aims to highlight how leveraging women's productive potential by alleviating the disproportionate burden of unpaid work could unlock trillions in economic value.

Keywords: Housework, Unpaid work, Care work, Childcare, Housewives, Replacement wages, Opportunity costs, Economic valuation, Gender inequality, social policy.

1.INTRODUCTION

Unpaid domestic and care work forms the invisible foundation supporting families, societies and economies worldwide. This shadow workforce comprising primarily of women engaged in cooking, cleaning, childcare, elderly care and myriad household services, operates informally within the private realm of homes. Despite playing an indispensable role in sustaining the formal economy by raising future



generations, caring for working adults, and maintaining homes, the compounded labor of housewives remains unaccounted for in economic metrics like GDP.

Indian households provide one of the starkest exemplars of this oversight, with almost 60% of adult women reporting 'housework' as their primary occupation as per Census 2011. Conservative estimates peg the contribution of unpaid household services rendered by Indian women to be anywhere between 39–47% of the country's GDP. Their indirect savings in expenses avoided by governments, organizations and other families range in billions of dollars. Yet, the ubiquitous efforts constituting the groundwork of social reproduction are repeatedly made invisible by their attribution as traditional 'duties' mandated by gender roles rather than recognized as economic work warranting fair compensation.

Myriad factors underpin this financial undervaluation stemming from unpaid housework's classification as non-market activity. Neoclassical economic paradigms centered on market transactions overlook specialization in domestic chores. Social norms positioning household responsibilities as an extension of femininity result in the normalization of unpaid or underpaid care roles for women. Unexamined privilege benefiting from invisible subsidy manifests in expectations of cooking, cleaning servicing from mothers, daughters, wives, sisters, daughters-in-law and female domestic staff. Segregation in household work initiates at a young age via gender socialization and intensifies after marriage and childbirth, preventing women from acquiring advanced degrees, formal sector jobs, income security, property rights or authority in familial decision-making.

Ignoring volumes of unpaid household services also skews national statistics. GDP counts only quantifiable paid transactions, omitting subsistence output. Time-use surveys reveal women spending 5–6 times more time on care activities than men. Yet measures of labor force participation and unemployment rates classify housewives as 'non-workers' due to lack of remuneration, undercounting women's work. Such economic invisibility further depresses women's socio-political status, bargaining power, poverty resilience, and intergenerational mobility.

Valuation methodologies for imputing monetary value to unpaid household work can encompass input cost approaches tracking time spent, indirect opportunity cost estimates for foregone earnings, wage regression techniques or specialized satellite accounts. Each methodology presents pros and cons for accurate assessment depending on local contexts. In India, total hours spent on unpaid care work gets compounded by lack of infrastructure support. Rural women walk miles for water and fuelwood in addition to cooking, cleaning and childcare. Replacement wages for domestic staff underestimate the complex managerial dimensions of overseeing households. Shadow pricing of specialized caregiver services fails to capture emotional labor. Comparison to previous earnings excludes women who have never entered the formal workforce.

This paper attempts to provide a comprehensive economic valuation of the invisible contributions of Indian housewives using the most context-appropriate methodology. Estimates quantify the replacement household and caregiving services currently provided by women at no monetary compensation to families and the nation. Analysis sheds light on the significant GDP value of unpaid work and the adverse impact of discounting this labor on gender equality, financial stability and national growth. Discussion links valuation to actionable policy responses like social security frameworks, subsidized child/elder care programs, basic income schemes, enhanced wages and labor regulation for domestic workers, shifts from sole responsibility to shared obligation, and awareness campaigns emphasizing dimensions of unpaid family care.



Findings can influence international metrics tracking unpaid work and inform labor laws placing household services on par with formal sector occupations. Overall the research underscores the need to make visible, value, reduce and redistribute the unequal burden of unwaged domestic duties as an essential step to recognizing women's economic agency, ensuring gender-just work trajectories and enhancing familial as well as national wellbeing.

Making the unseen visible constitutes the initial step to transforming traditional gender scripts, accounting for invisible subsidy to formal economy, progressing equitable work-life balance, getting closer to human development goals, and enabling policy action supporting economic valuation of indispensable caregiving underpinning society.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Prevalence of Housewives in India

India's unseen foundation of unpaid domestic and care work is propped up the efforts of its 41.57 crore (415 million) housewives as per the 2011 Census. Defined officially as non-workers rather than economic contributors, this cohort comprised 59.3% of adult women in India a decade ago. The age-old normalization of cooking, cleaning, childcare as 'women's work' rooted in socio-religious traditions continues to pressure a majority of Indian women to prioritize familial caregiving roles over external employment.

Segregation of household responsibilities is initiated early via childhood socialization of gender scripts. Young girls are taught domestic skills like cooking, cleaning, stitching, homemaking as grooming for marriageability while their brothers focus on education and skills for market work. After marriage, the unequal division intensifies with daughters-in-law taking charge of most household chores, child rearing responsibilities and elder care in joint families. Despite working 8–10 hours of unpaid housework daily, only 24% of married women aged 15–49 were allowed to independently make decisions about their healthcare, major household purchases or visiting their natal families as per the 2005–2006 National Family Health Survey.

The Census classification of housewives as non-workers obscures the economic value generated by cooking, cleaning, shopping for daily essentials, caregiving, helping with family businesses or farms, stretching household incomes through budgeting, repairing clothes, gardening and diverse tasks symbolizing unpaid family care. Time-use surveys reveal women spending 312 minutes per day on housework against men's 97 minutes. 75% of childcare and 83% of elderly care at home is performed by women.

Invisible subsidy offered by housewives saves crores in government spending on childcare programs or geriatric facilities. It reduces organizational costs related to maternity leave, crèches, flexi-work arrangements essential for retaining women employees after motherhood. Tax systems fail to account for inter-household transfers of unpaid services as women specialize in non-market home production while men focus on market earnings. Household surveys under-capture indirect economic activities like subsistence farming, livestock rearing, gathering fuelwood performed alongside cooking, cleaning duties.

Cultural traditions and religious texts glorifying women's self-sacrifice for family nourishment and harmony have normalized excessive unpaid working hours. Lack of agency or financial valuation engenders widespread secondary status, economic dependency, negligible fall-back positions post-divorce/widowhood, muted voices in household finance and politics. Unpaid care work gets compounded by poverty and caste discrimination as lower income and socially oppressed women spend longer hours



collecting water, fuelwood, engaged in odd jobs to supplement household incomes alongside servicing family needs.

Rural-urban divides also impact prevalence. 2011 Census figures indicated only 15.5% of rural women as employed, majority occupied in home-based subsistence production. In contrast, urban women had 19.8% workforce participation, indicative of better education, shifting cultural norms towards dual-earning nuclear families and increasing employment choices leading to outsourcing of domestic chores to paid help. Nonetheless over 50% urban women were classified as non-workers, pointing to still limited, gendered opportunities concentrating women in informal, temporary, low wage or vulnerable work double-shifted with housework at home.

Alarming secondary status manifests in only 0.9% home ownership by working women as per 2011 Census, even among top 20% income households. Intra-household power dynamics remain skewed due to men controlling incomes, assets and decisions. Complex two-way relationship exists between high unpaid workload at home restricting women's capability to undertake paid work and low participation in quality work perpetuating the poverty risk from specializing in unpaid tasks. Valuing housewives' services can initiate the first step for informing supportive policies targeting equal participation in domestic responsibilities and formal labor markets.

Thus unpaid services underpin Indian homes, indirectly subsidize business profits and propel national economic growth. Estimating magnitude of this shadow workforce quantifies the dependence of India's families, communities and GDP on the uncounted, unrecognized caregiving performed by its vast proportion of homemakers. Such valuation can influence structural support systems reducing time poverty via infrastructure and technology. But transformative reduction of the unpaid burden necessitates progressive shifts in gender attitudes, behaviors, discourses and family practices guided by the overarching vision of co-responsibility and shared parenthood.

2.2 Nature of Household Labor

Housework encompasses the invisible infrastructure of services, care and emotional support underpinning Indian families, spanning cooking, cleaning, childcare, elderly care, financial management and self-sacrifice for collective wellbeing. This umbrella term obscures the multidimensional, skilled efforts involved in sustaining homes, raising children, caring for working adults, stretching budgets, maintaining kin relations, upholding traditions behind the scenes without recognition as economic work.

Time-use surveys capture the spectrum indicating housewives spending 312 minutes per day on core housework against men's 97 minutes. Cooking tasks involve planning nutritious menus, kneading dough, chopping vegetables, cooking meals over wood stoves, carrying water, washing dishes – amounting to 2.5 hours daily. Cleaning encompasses sweeping, swabbing floors, dusting, laundry, storing utensils, bedding – together totaling about 2 hours each day.

Childcare translates to physical caregiving, feeding, bathing, teaching, playing, dropped/picked up from school, monitoring homework across ages. Elderly parents unable to live independently are assisted with daily chores, medical care, and mobility. Shopping and household administration requires budgeting monthly kitchen expenses, sourcing groceries/vegetables, stocking supplies, stretching finances. Unpaid family business assistance is common too.

Care tasks require patience, time commitment, personalized care, trust unlike automated, transactional market work. Emotional labor constitutes the invisible 'second shift' spanning reassuring anxious family



members, resolving conflicts, remembering events/rituals, upholding traditions behind the scenes. Kin work involves maintaining relations through visits, gifts, support during crisis. Managerial flux scheduling rotates priorities applying specialized human judgment – contrasting automated algorithms.

Housework thus operates akin to a home-based unpaid family enterprise with housewives at the helm of planning, multi-tasking diverse responsibilities, stretching limited resources to nurture collective wellbeing. Lack of vehicles, household help, convenience foods and modern appliances compounds physical intensity of manually undertaking all tasks in lower income homes. Semi-urban women spend longer hours in water, fuelwood collection amidst other chores.

Caregiving specificity limits outsourcing or substitution by household technologies. Socialization of gender roles casts unpaid family servicing as an expression of love by daughters, daughters-in-law and mothers. Religious texts glorify sacrifice signifying 'good wife' or 'good mother' perpetuating self-effacement. Historical undervaluation has normalized excessive unpaid work hours for women even among educated, urban families. Limited spousal support for household tasks even dent progressive attitudes in the face of persistent cultural conditioning.

Recent shifts driven by urbanization, nuclearization, rising women's education, access to work opportunities have transformed some practices. Middle/upper class families have begun outsourcing cleaning, cooking by hiring domestic help enabling focus on caregiving roles. Shared parenting is emerging among younger generations prioritizing involvement in child raising including tasks like feeding, bathing, school drops/picks ups constituting a noteworthy positive departure from previous cohorts dominated by sole maternal responsibility for the second shift.

However, transformations remain limited in scale and scope without strongly redistributive policy infrastructure easing unpaid burdens like widely available, good quality subsidized crèches, elder care facilities, family-friendly work arrangements applicable to all sectors. Technology too plays a selective role currently in reducing drudgery. Replacement of some cleaning tasks offers helpful respite but total automation remains unrealistic considering need for human judgment in childcare, cooking, emotional caregiving.

Thus, persistent invisibility of the processes underpinning homebased production and care shape its undervaluation in economic metrics. Elucidating the skills spectrum, decision complexity, intersecting work streams, emotional diligence, customized caregiving involved can better reflect the nuanced human efforts needed to run this unpaid, taken-for-granted engine powering India's present and future. Turning the lens on the indispensable portfolio of nurturing services performed behind the scenes constitutes the initial step to recognizing economic value of housework and caregiving underpinning families, communities and national productivity.

2.3 A Lifetime Without Salary, Retirement, or Weekend Holidays

Embedded cultural normalization of feminine duties encompassing cooking, cleaning, childcare, elder care translates into a lifetime of unpaid work for millions of Indian housewives with negligible recognition or rights. Binary gender socialization delineates home, hearth as 'women's domain' while men undertake paid market work as 'breadwinners' with salary packages, trade unions, annual raises and legal safeguards. Marital home constitutes the predominant site for a housewife's unpaid services.

A recent ILO survey indicates only 11.9% employers in India providing paid maternity leave, 14.1% work-from-home options and 3% crèches reflecting negligible work-family support. Post motherhood, 30% women



withdraw completely from the workforce and 50% report reduced working hours due to lack of caregiver support at home. Employed women still undertake 75% domestic duties, 83% childcare despite tax systems failing to acknowledge inter-household transfers or provide rebates for substituting tasks.

Limited access to education, vocational skills, digital literacy circumscribes employment choices for untrained homemakers in their 30–40s interested to restart careers after child rearing years. Reentering job markets later sans contemporary skills amidst high competition proves challenging. As fathers often control major expenses given predominant designation as primary workers, housewives struggle to save independently for old age sans steady incomes or property rights.

Intergenerational cycle of daughters/daughters-in-law transitioning to housewife roles post-marriage/childbirth continues making women's domestic unpaid work responsibilities the foundation for raising succeeding workforce generations at no visible cost to employers, governments. As per NSSO data, women spend 2.5 times more hours in unpaid care activities than men daily revealing highly skewed division. Time use conflicts with undertaking skill-building, career pursuits condemning families to remaining trapped in subsistence production.

The vulnerable balance limiting financial security is indicated in women accounting for only 24% of Indian bank account holders, 11% borrowers with stilted access to loans or capital limiting entrepreneurship scope too. With no salaries or contractual safeguards, the unmarried, separated, divorced and 60% widows lacking independent incomes, land or housing rights are pushed deeper into poverty due to socio-religious laws biased against inheriting ancestral property or assets.

High health expenditure combined with lack of insurance forces difficult trade-offs on medical expenses given the unpaid nature of familial care work. A survey reports 22% dip in girls' secondary education levels post pandemic as economic shocks increased opportunity costs making housework assistance from daughters more worthwhile for income-poor parents than school fees viewed as non-essential expenditure.

Even for the upper quintile, cultural expectations surrounding roles as daughter-in-law or wife dominate over individual aspirations. Highly educated women report being asked to serve in-laws tea by mothers/aunts as grooming for good wifehood. Intentional career breaks spanning years due to societal conditioning are impossible to compensate in corporate sectors valuing continuous work experience for promotions. Regressive tax laws disincentivizing second earners thus disproportionately affect married women solidifying traditional role divisions.

Thus multifaceted discrimination intersects with gender, caste, class relegating housewives as a cohort to perpetual socioeconomic vulnerability with no recognition of or recompense for care work sustaining current and future generations. Lacking financial autonomy or legal rights over 50% life span by undertaking unpaid tasks, neither employment contracts nor anti-discrimination laws cover this shadow workforce underpinning India's growth into third largest economy over past 30 years by low-cost nurturing, nourishment and intergenerational transfer of structural inequality.

The COVID spotlight on heightened housework has foregrounded the precarity. News report women quitting salaried jobs due to impossible work-home conflict sans domestic support. But transforming unequal gender scripts requires sharing family duties regardless of income levels or work status. As study shows husbands co-participating equally in childcare and chores despite 60 hour work weeks, social change emerges not from time availability but attitudinal shifts breaking masculinized ideologies and role rigidity by envisioning co-parenting within equitable relationships as the path forward.



2.4 Lack of Recognition in National Accounts

Mainstream economic indicators systematically fail to capture the silent subsidy offered by unpaid household services underpinning national productivity. Systemic invisibilization manifests clearly in national statistics classifying housewives as 'non-workers' and omitting measurement of their indirect economic contributions. Time use data reveals a paradox of women spending longer hours in unpaid work than men are in paid jobs yet accounting for barely 20% share of India's GDP.

Skewed metrics emerge from the predominant System of National Accounts popularized in 1953 prioritizing paid market transactions while overlooking non-market unpaid household production. Joint family set ups involving inter-household transfers of domestic services without financial compensation elude quantification. Subsistence output like kitchen gardening, basic clothing production escape GDP calculations unless selling surplus harvest in markets.

Complex flows of care work and assistance rendered by housewives to family enterprises escape Input-Output matrices tracking goods/services production. Unpaid tasks supporting next generation workforce by securing children's wellbeing remain uncounated as economic work. Savings incurred by governments, organizations and families by women substituting paid care work too finds no acknowledgment in statistics that determine public budgets, corporate performance incentives and household consumption patterns.

Labor force metrics overlook specialized skills applied in cooking nutritious meals on restrictions, stretching limited grocery budgets, coordinating personalized care for young/old/ill family members and kin work sustaining social networks. Surveys often capture only primary occupations indicating housework as secondary, undermining its value. Lopsided focus on careers & incomes branded as masculine success reinforces discounting of feminine spheres. Aggregate hours of total unpaid work thus fail to inform progressive, supportive infrastructure planning and policy design.

Among formal workers too, unpaid second shift persists at home restricting women's output and mobility across job types. Yet systemic tools ignore triple work days amounting to part time job equivalent daily. As women manage both professional and domestic responsibilities, concentrated pockets manifest in select sectors and low hierarchy roles rather than even distribution across industries. Stark implications become visible in women holding under 19% of board seats among BSE 500 companies and under 8% leadership roles in news organizations covering gender issues ironically.

Historical underpinnings of national accounting date back to the industrial revolution when productive work inferred factories/offices undertaken by men. Relegation of housework as an expression of love within familial duty predates modern capitalistic notions of specialized spheres separated by gender. However human activity unpaid by formal employers but providing vital invisible subsidy to the formal economy underpins welfare worldwide, necessitating updated 21st century tools.

Feminist economists have emphasized household production, subsistence agriculture and environmental commons upkeep activities. But specialized time-use/satellite accounts quantifying unpaid work haven't yet entered mainstream policy given continued dominance of traditional industrial era statistical frameworks. Capping unpaid work to measure rest as leisure assumes harmful tradeoff between women's leisure and economy hampering rather than highlighting the interconnections underpinning them.

Valuation can yield more exhaustive understanding of living standards by capturing additional productive work informally sustaining society beyond office/factory settings. As an ILO report notes, "The surge in women's unpaid work under COVID-19 underscores that this work is not marginal. It is the backbone of our economies and societies." Elucidating invisible flows undergirding the visible forms constitutes essential



initial step to designing infrastructural support easing disproportionate unpaid burdens enabling better work–life balance across genders.

Mainstreaming metrics that account for the real, uncounted economy run largely by women's efforts behind the scenes remains imperative to India's vision for inclusive prosperity, sustainable economy and gender–just society. Rectifying longstanding unquestioned assumptions by turning the spotlight upon the invisible unpaid realm can better reflect the complete range of productive activities supporting families as well as fueling national growth trajectories into the future.

3. VALUING HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTION

3.1 Replacement Cost Method

Replacement cost approach constitutes an input–based valuation technique quantifying housewives' unpaid services by estimating payment required to hire market substitutes performing the equivalent tasks. It calculates the cost of replacing cooking, cleaning, childcare services currently provided free by multiplying hours spent by each housewife on diverse responsibilities by the market wage rates of maid servants, cooks, babysitters, tutors or old age caregivers.

Time–use surveys facilitate detailed activity logs. Latest surveys indicate women spending 300 minutes daily on housework against men's 100 minutes. Cooking amounts to 150 minutes, cleaning 90 minutes. Elderly and childcare together add 5 hours where role segregation exists. Shopping, picking–dropping children, helping in family business/farm comprise other invisible tasks on top. In lower income rural homes, additional hours are spent collecting water and firewood manually.

Converting multidimensional unpaid work streams into hourly wage equivalents requires classifying specific tasks under skilled categories and matching to closest paid market alternatives. Cooking lunch/dinner equates skilled chef wages while breakfast preparation aligns to cook's pay. Floor cleaning maps to maid servant rates while dish–washing matches domestic helper pay in cities or half of maid wages in villages lacking water/electricity infrastructure support.

Child care comprises multiple sub–tasks – Feeding, bathing, getting ready aligns with ayah/nanny salaries while teaching equals tuition teacher rates. Elder care activities like bathing correspond to professional attendant wages but conversing, motivating maps closer to specialized counselor pay. Emotional reassurance constitutes invaluable skilled effort lacking formal sector comparison, risking under–estimation if equated to unskilled maid pay grads.

Managerial responsibilities like planning weekly menus, budgeting finances, stocking monthly supplies draw upon high level mental, emotional labor unlike repetitive manual work. Their replacement value warrants knowledge–based pay than physical task compensation norms while directing children's homework requires advanced educational skills matching experienced tutor rates rather than ayah/maid salaries.

Non–farm business assistance indicates varied industry–specific sector wages. Performing select agricultural tasks equals farm laborer pay but livestock maintenance maps to veterinarian rates for similar functions. Asset creation through sewing, knitting products warrants trained tailor charges rather than unskilled darzi rates. Thus each hour of the housework spectrum aligns to different replacement wage as per the skill level needed for undertaking that particular task.



But sole dependence on replacement cost method carries limitations. Yarning family stories builds intergenerational connections which professional artists cannot substitute. Resolving children's disputes requires situated experiential wisdom beyond contractual transactions. Kin work needs contextual social intuition and rapport, not reducible to hourly billing rates. Emotional reassurance relies on personalized care attachment rather than standardized protocol.

Moreover rural-urban variations mean fewer affordable professional substitutes in villages to map full range of complex tasks performed daily. Replacement wages also undervalue deeper dimensions of familial caregiving located within unpaid love, duty and solidarity seen as 'women's work'. Household production intertwines with voluntary assistance by choice rather imposed by contract which market equivalents fail to encapsulate. Satellite time use accounts correspondingly include proportion of tasks undertaken beyond necessity, motivated by emotional bonding.

Overall replacement cost techniques constitute a useful starting point for deriving economic visibility. But imputing salary equivalents should avoid reinforcing occupational undervaluation of care work by equating skills to the lowest manual labor wage rates persisting in society. Parallel policy efforts emphasizing professionalization of care careers, market regulation of domestic staff pay, enhanced caregiver training, and workplace benefits constitute complementary steps for elevating compensation levels.

3.2 Opportunity Cost Method

The opportunity cost technique constitutes an alternative valuation approach assessing housewives' economic loss stemming from inadequate time for career pursuits, skill-building or leisure due to disproportionate unpaid domestic duties. It calculates the potential earnings foregone which could have been gained from the hours spent on cooking, cleaning and carework if allocated to external paid jobs instead.

Opportunity costs evaluate trade-offs by comparing hypothetical income housewives could have generated based on their educational qualifications and work experience in the absence of restrictive norms mandating women's prioritization of homemaking post marriage. It puts an economic value to options bypassed for undertaking unpaid tasks which could have advanced workplace prospects through employment continuity.

For instance ILO surveys show 30% Indian women withdrawing completely from the workforce after motherhood despite higher educational investment, 50% reporting reduced hours beneath their capability due to lack of paid domestic assistance for cooking, cleaning. Conservative opportunity costs from the lost income over their work lifespan ranges between an average ₹15–18 lakhs given persisting wage gap in earning potential.

Additionally unpaid household production obstructs re-skilling opportunities to return to formal sector in their 30s and 40s once children grow older. Limited access to income security reduces bargaining clout, control over major expenses, vulnerability mitigation affecting their lifelong socioeconomic independence in patriarchal family structures. Foregone income accumulation also lowers old age buffers and retirement savings plausibly channelized through steady careers.

Assessing opportunity costs relies on human capital valuation frameworks recognizing housework as an invisible constraint upon realizing one's expected returns from educational degrees, prior work performance and skill sets rendering women to below potential participation later in life. It compares



average income trajectories between groups of professionally continuous women versus housewives with similar initial endowments across geographies to highlight gaps stemming from occupational segregation.

However precise calculation remains statistically challenging. Establishing causality requires ruling out self-selection by women intentionally choosing household work over employment unrelated to norms or motherhood duties. Contrasting matched groups on observables avoids over/under-estimation. Some systematic differences between homemakers and career women may still persist skewing direct income differential somewhat.

Additionally whether to use back-calculated historical income, current period salary or projected future earnings remain open methodological questions for opportunity cost approaches. Rural-urban variations in women's work access add further complexity in determining counterfactual income constructs typical of marginal returns techniques in behavioral economics. Sociological perspectives clarify monetary valuation alone insufficiently captures relational meanings, identity aspects or non-economic motives underpinning some women's articulated 'choices'.

Cultural expectations and gender socialization further mediate evaluations of work-family trade-offs, ambition gaps explaining divergent career trajectories between observationally similar women. Estimating opportunity costs should thus avoid imposing universalist assumptions about motivations, capacities or notions of fulfillment through a purely economic lens. Parallel policy efforts enabling better work-life conciliation such as subsidized child/elder care, flexi-scheduling, remote work and equal parenting incentives can expand real options beyond polarized debates counterposing career and caregiving.

Overall opportunity cost methods significantly enrich understanding of economic constraints experienced by housewives specializing in unpaid tasks on family demands. But methodological limitations make their isolated use insufficient. In conjunction with time-use, wage regression & representative sample surveys, lost income estimations can highlight areas for institutional interventions easing structural barriers to women's workforce participation and prospective career growth post-motherhood across localized contexts.

4. ESTIMATING THE VALUE OF INDIAN HOUSEWORK

4.1 Number of Housewives

Quantifying the magnitude of the invisible unpaid workforce underpinning Indian homes is essential for assessing the true economic worth of indispensable services undergirding families and fueling national growth. Official statistics from the 2011 Census enumerated 59.3% Indian women aged 15+ engaged primarily in 'household work' summing to over 41 crores (415 million) housewives. This cohort exceeds the total population of USA and constitutes one of the largest shadow workforces lacking recognition as economic contributors.

Categorization as non-workers obscures multifaceted tasks spanning cooking, cleaning, childcare, elderly care, shopping for daily essentials, helping in family farm/enterprise, property maintenance and stretching household budgets elegantly performed behind the scenes. Time use surveys reveal housewives spending over 5 hours daily on core housework against men's 1.5 hours, in addition to assisting children's remote learning, motivating anxious family members and sustaining community ties.

The numbers highlight persistent gender segmented roles despite rising female education levels over past decades. Over 50% of urban housewives possessed 10+ years of schooling attributed to better access.



Nonetheless stereotyped expectations of feminine duties posterior to marriage and motherhood continue to disproportionately burden women. Employment rates remain less than 20% for urban married women (15% rural), majority with marginal, informal, irregular jobs offering negligible social security.

Housework intensity also often increases post marriage via transition into joint households and multi-generational caregiving pressed upon daughters-in-law. Proportions engaged primarily as homemakers peak between 25–39 years corresponding to peak child rearing phase followed by continued elderly caregiving. Meagre state pension or healthcare support for elderly further augments the unpaid care burden upon middle aged women possessing least decisional autonomy within patriarchal family structures.

Rural urban divides also emerge with agricultural women spending longer hours in livestock rearing, crop processing, fuel wood gathering – all unpaid and invisible. Tribal women's household production intertwines complexly with forests commons maintenance engaging them in sowing, harvesting minor forest produce, protecting greenery via watering, fencing etc unpaid to conserve environmental resources sustaining communities.

Some scholarly estimates suggest unpaid subsistence production alone contributes between 4–8% of India's GDP unacknowledged by national statistics. Further research incorporating satellite environmental accounts can enrich such initial valuations. But numbers emphasize how women by virtue of gender have fed, fueled and cared for families and future generations without salaries, assets or minimum wages guaranteeing bare sustenance through such indispensable services undergirding society.

Valuing contributions by the 41 crore strong shadow workforce of Indian housewives requires moving beyond dated industrial era dualisms separating 'productive' economic work undertaken by men in offices/factories from 'non-productive' caregiving coded as feminine duties. Household production interlinks with external economy across hidden transfers between home, market and state uncovering which can clarify the true worth of unpaid tasks by scores of women uncouneted by and large in GDP metrics.

Quantifying hours spent, evaluating components tasks, estimating opportunity costs of specialized skills applied, comparing substitute wage rates for market equivalents together build a mosaic methodology for deriving more exhaustive understanding. Mainstreaming metrics that account for the complete spectrum of productive activities supporting national growth trajectories constitutes an ethical imperative within visions for gender equal, inclusive and sustainable economies.

4.2 Time Spent on Household Tasks

Time-use surveys facilitate detailed activity logs quantifying hours spent daily on diverse unpaid responsibilities from cooking, cleaning, childcare to elderly assistance by housewives. Latest Periodic Labor Force Survey data indicates women still spending 300 minutes on average per day on domestic chores against men's 100 minutes reconfirming highly skewed distribution persisting since decades.

Cooking amounts to over 2.5 hours daily spanning planning nutritious menus, kneading doughs, chopping vegetables, cooking meals on wood stoves, carrying water, washing utensils manually in lower income rural homes lacking modern appliances. Cleaning adds nearly 2 hours daily across sweeping, swabbing floors, laundry, dusting, storing household items. Child care includes feeding, bathing, teaching, playing, tracking homework progress across ages.



Elderly parents unable to live independently require additional assistance with daily chores, mobility, medication, regular monitoring. Shopping responsibilities involve sourcing vegetables/groceries, budgeting monthly kitchen expenses, stocking essentials, stretching limited incomes. Unpaid assistance in family farm/enterprise constitutes an overwhelming yet invisible responsibility for rural women across livestock rearing, crop processing, equipment repair.

In addition, the second shift manifests through emotional reassurance provided to all family members. Counseling anxious kids, supporting elderly loneliness, resolving disputes requires deep mental and emotional effort paralleling undertaking physical household chores. Familial responsibilities also encompass rituals planning, social functions attendance sustaining community ties. Quantitative recordings often under-represent these indispensable 'kin work' elements embedded within unpaid tasks.

Urban upper income homes reveal some positive shifts via nuclear families and domestic helpers reducing housework time for women by half on average. But persistent gaps prevail with working women still handling majority laundry, childcare, caregiver appointment fixes constituting the 'third shift' post professional work hours. Nor do household appliances significantly ease total burden evidenced through employed women spending 4 hours on domestic duties daily against men's 1 hour in dual-earning homes.

Rural lower income contexts present heavier demands with women walking miles for collecting water, firewood in addition to cooking, cleaning – no replacements for manual labor possible. Unpaid farming subsidiary wings rely extensively on women's labor across cotton picking, sericulture, beedi rolling, livestock rearing, dairying. School closure months show adolescent girls devoting upto 6 hours on domestic chores in lieu of education opportunities, risking inter-generational transfer of undervaluation.

Overall housework translates to a parallel shadow economy ecosystem thriving on women's uncounted, unrecognized efforts behind the scenes. But persistent assumptions of familial duties mandated by feminine roles undermine visibility of women's work across policy, legislation and budgeting. Social stigma even detrimentally affects self-reporting by women on time poverty. Mainstreaming exhaustive time-use metrics in conjunction with wage rate estimations can thus significantly advance realistic understanding of true economic contributions.

4.3 Imputed Wage Rates

Imputing appropriate wage rates to quantify the pay due for cooking, cleaning and carework if undertaken in formal labor markets constitutes a key component influencing valuations of housework. Under-estimation risks perpetuating occupational segregation Concentrating women in underpaid 'feminine' roles like domestic staff, care work. But sole reliance on replacement wages misses irreplaceable emotional dimensions within familial responsibilities.

Multidimensional skill sets deployed by housewives span specialized culinary expertise gained through years of practice planning seasonal menus on budget, precision coordination scheduling personalized care for young and old family members, advanced cognitive load balancing household finances. Rare professional equivalents exist for comparison. Yet prevalent segmentation confines women to lower strata of skill ladders concentrating in informal, temporary work.

Average monthly income for full time maids approximates ₹5000–8000 in urban areas, ₹3000–5000 in semi urban regions reflecting socio-spatial inequality. Government accredited childcare workers earn ₹9000–12000 monthly but lack generalized skills comparable to mothers integrating education, nutrition, wellbeing



across social, cognitive, psychological development milestones daily. Elder care consultants are emerging in bigger cities but opposite ends of the spectrum remain devoid.

Assumptions of lower competence capacities arising from larger proportions of women undertaking household production relative to external economy participation further depress prevailing wage rates structurally by confining them to supplementary earnings. But imputing parity to market and non-market realms avoids recognizing complexity of care tasks. Cooking special diets for family members' health conditions requires situated judgment going beyond commercial cook books.

Opportunity cost estimations signaling income loss from housework specialization post motherhood attempts to balance some limitations of replacement approaches. But counterfactual career trajectories themselves remain shaped by initial under-representation of girls in higher education streams leading to formal sector jobs. Early exit of women from labor force and lack of quality flexi-work options further constrain re-entry prospects. Thus imputing fair wage to unpaid family work needs situating within the context of occupational segregation and systemic discrimination affecting realistic alternatives.

Besides the care diamond embeds emotional sustenance, personalized attention and interdependencies impossible to commoditize or profitize. Kin work building community cohesion can lack transactional equivalents. The very institution of family hinges upon solidarity and voluntary sharing rather than contractual exchanges for instrumental gain. Parallel policy efforts emphasizing professionalization of care careers, workplace benefits for the paid sector constitute complementary, interconnected steps.

Adopting parity principles valuing all necessary effort equal, irrespective of association constructs like masculinity/femininity allows recognizing irreplaceable skills. But transformative approaches like Universal Basic Income, strengthening public provisioning of care services, increased men's co-responsibility in familial work radical alternatives easing unpaid burdens structurally across locales. Imputing wage parity along the spectrum of productions interdependent economic and social realms then becomes realizable.

Overall multiple approaches interpolating replacement costs, opportunity losses and localized notions of fair pay offer richer pictures than Administratively fixed minimum wages disconnected from context. But reaching the roots of undervaluation requires moving beyond technocratic number fixes toward emphasizing dignity, agency, voice for marginalized workers undertaking indispensable tasks sustaining society behind the scenes. For GDP metrics mirror hierarchies of work cultures valuing some forms of work over others unless consciously restructured.

5. DISCUSSION OF ESTIMATED VALUE

5.1 Percentage of GDP

Conservative valuations quantifying the invisible labor of Indian housewives through replacement wages, opportunity costs and time-use data analysis indicate an annual economic contribution ranging from 39% to 47% of national GDP according to various scholarly estimates. This constitutes over a third of total measurable economic production unfolding silently via the uncounted efforts of women specializing in cooking, cleaning, childcare and elderly assistance within homes.

Estimating the replacement value of unpaid household services currently provided by 50–60% of adult Indian women approximates the costs government, organizations and families would incur by substituting specialised maid servants, cooks, nannies, attendants to perform the equivalent set of daily tasks across public and private domains. Even by modest monthly remuneration scales of Rs 15,000 per housewife for



multi-tasking skills applied, their aggregate annual worth matches over 40% of GDP - rivalling figures for the entire formal sector.

Invisible flows of inter and intra household transfers of nurturing support sans financial compensation undergirds the formal architecture visible through economic transactions and commercial infrastructures powering offices, factories, institutions. Substitute wage techniques illuminate the care diamond's hidden base quantifying hours spent by housewives daily on cooking, cleaning, shopping, stretching budgets and raising children outside scaffolds of employment contracts, minimum wage guarantees or social security protections.

Opportunity cost valuations highlighting income loss from disrupted career trajectories and skill development post motherhood indicate lifetime implications of specialization in unpaid family responsibilities. Socio-cultural norms positioning domestic duties as mandatory for wives and daughters-in-law concentrate their talents towards invisible subsidy. Lopsided focus on masculine spheres perpetuates discounting indispensable feminine realms underpinning society and intergenerational productivity.

Mainstreaming exhaustive metrics that account for the complete spectrum of productive activities supporting national growth trajectories can constitute an ethical imperative within visions for gender equal, inclusive and sustainable economies. Spotlighting the true worth of unpaid sectors challenges dated conceptual binaries that relegated housework as 'non-work'. Elucidating the silent subsidy buttressing visible structures brings economic visibility to home based care undergirding collective wellbeing.

Findings underscore the adverse implications of ignoring invaluable household production for India's families, communities and GDP numbers. Persisting invisibility drives policy apathy on urgent interventions like subsidized child care, paid maternity leave, flexi-work arrangements and social security for housewives that can structurally transform disproportionate burdens. Strategic reforms emphasizing visibility, formal valuation, redistribution and reduction of unpaid work burdens can drive better work-life balance across genders.

Discussion notes that several developing regions with high women's unpaid work participation interestingly report better poverty alleviation, healthcare and nutrition metrics at the community level relative to districts with lower magnitude of informal women's work participation. This indicates uncounted positive externalities and social capital diffusion stemming from non-enumerated subsistence production sustaining marginalized households neglected by public provisioning - worth deeper investigation. Findings collectively emphasize rethinking concepts of work centred on remuneration alone by bringing care to the core.

5.2 Macroeconomic Implications

Evaluating housework as a significant economic force constituting between 39-47% of national GDP carries profound macroeconomic implications for India across multiple indicators - output, poverty, consumption, public finance and long term human capital development. Elucidating the true worth of unpaid domestic production and care work provides more realistic understanding of the complete range of productive activities fueling aggregate demand, shaping human capabilities and undergirding sustainable growth.

The uncounted contribution by women specializing in child nourishment, family health and intergenerational skill transfer builds the foundation of future workforce productivity. Enhanced household incomes accounting for such invisible subsidies can boost consumption expenditure with positive



multiplier effects given high marginal propensity. Budgeting women's invisible input can increase disposable incomes for nutrition, healthcare and education – with intergenerational impact. Poverty metrics capturing unpaid sectors indicate lower prevalence despite seeming income disparity relative to districts focused predominantly on enumerated market work. Uncounted subsistence output bears further study given poverty alleviation policies informed by incomplete statistics risk misdirected targeting. Incorporating metrics beyond income as development indicators can improve understanding of populations sustained by non-enumerated work.

From a public finance perspective, acknowledging housewives' economic magnitude can make visible the invisible subsidy offered to keep dependency ratios stable. With no state compensation for domestic eldercare, child raising or family healthcare, persistent assumptions of feminine 'duty ethic' fill the care gap. But contributing unpaid tasks matching 47% GDP merits representation in budgeting via care infrastructure. Ignoring underpins fiscal illusion with over-reliance on altruistic, voluntary services papering over deficits. On monetary policy, enhanced visibility and valuation of unpaid work can influence more informed understanding of inflation thresholds tolerable without destabilizing household budgets, especially subsistence sectors. Women disproportionately bear price rises with second-order effects on health and nutrition thinly cushioned by non-enumerated coping strategies like working longer hours, distressed migration, community reciprocity. Their contributions warrant greater voice in determining potential tradeoffs.

From an external sector viewpoint, systematically undercounting women's economic participation skews metrics like per capita income dragging India down on human development indices reinforcing gender inequality. Satellite accounts quantifying the care economy can enable cross-country comparisons on work culture gaps, work-life policies, aspirational benchmarks for revising maternity benefits, creche access towards equitable growth. Rebalancing gender lopsidedness via redistribution of unpaid work can also influence multiple macro development goals. Enhanced labor force participation expands output level frontier. Upgraded recognition of household skills makes visible positive production externalities. Gender balanced decision making may direct household expenditure towards more child-centric consumption. Mainstreaming care as an economic deliverable holds wide ranging potential.

5.3 Policy Recommendations

Valuing the invisible realm of unpaid family care work undertaken by millions of Indian women to sustain households and fuel national growth opens viable pathways for supportive policy action in several interconnected domains.

Social security and legal protections:

Extending social security coverage, health insurance, pension and widow benefits to housewives can provide safety nets recognizing their economic contributions. Legal reforms for equal inheritance rights regardless of marital status can enhance property ownership. Mandating minimum 50% marital property registration in wives' names can reduce vulnerability.

Basic income schemes:

Compensating portions of unpaid family care through universal basic income transfers recognises household production as legitimate economic work. Piloted cash transfer programs to women show positive health, nutrition and education outcomes via increased autonomy in domestic budgeting. Large scale funding remains a fiscal challenge.



Public provisioning of care services:

Subsidising childcare centres, paid maternity–paternity leave, creches at workplaces, flexible arrangements and eldercare facilities can ease unpaid burdens through affordable access. This elevates burden of care from voluntary duty expected of female relatives to shared public responsibility. Enabling women’s paid work participation then becomes viable across contexts.

Informal sector support services:

Providing social security, minimum wages, skill training in women–centric informal sectors like beedi rolling, agarbatti making, readymade garments and paid domestic work can uplift working standards. But effective implementation requires upgrading limited state capacity currently.

Financial inclusion:

Expanding access to loans, savings accounts, digital payments interface for housewives facilitates financial independence to navigate household decisions, healthcare emergencies minimising vulnerability and enabling micro–entrepreneurship within family settings as supplements to unpaid tasks.

Gender budgeting:

Earmarking fiscal outlays accounting for unpaid sectors in national budgets can allow policy choices reducing burden through public provisioning of welfare services tailored to housework replacement needs. Gender audits illuminate burden disproportion faced by women. Allocative efficiency improves when unpaid work calculations inform budgets.

Changing tax incentives:

Reforming regressive tax structures like joint household income assessments for married women that disincentivise secondary earners can encourage women’s workforce participation. Allowing housework related expenses deduction compared to standard fixed amount rebates considers context across geographies.

Mainstreaming digital interfaces:

Digital interface training enables accessing government subsidies, price information searches, direct entrepreneurial selling platforms by homebased women producers balancing tasks. But programs should customise around usability constraints of older women struggling with touchscreen literacy relative to adolescent girls’ ease.

Emphasizing men’s co-responsibility:

Norm change requires equal participation by men in invisible tasks within households, not just visible breadwinning. Policy signals valuing family work equally regardless of gender via compulsory paternity leaves, equal caregiving rewards and affirmative messages help dismantle entrenched social conventions at root. Making caregiving aspirational for men transforms gender lopsidedness.

Rethinking concepts of work:

Policy imagination needs expanding definitions of work beyond enumerated paid transactions to recognize indispensable unpaid activities underpinning society and economy. Satellite time–use accounts constitute starting point. Moving care tasks from naturalized duty to creative enterprise sharing family responsibilities rebalances skewed realities.

Recommendations emphasize a multi–pronged approach tracking interventions across legal, fiscal, cultural, technological domains coordinated in the overarching vision of easing unpaid burdens, facilitating



work-life balance and empowering women's participation across sectors by redistributing indispensable shadow work preserving human capital foundation.

6. Sociocultural Factors Influencing Valuation

The entanglement of economic activities within thicker sociocultural meanings constitutes a significant analytical lens for interpreting persistent undervaluation of household production despite formidable GDP output value. Unpacking the processes behind homemaking duties coded as almost natural feminine 'labour of love' rather than 'real work' reveals complex interplay of religious discourse, family structures, masculinity constructs and traditional gender role expectations in India.

Socio-religious texts glorify women's self-sacrifice as markers of virtuous wifehood and motherhood. Stories valorize Sati-Savitri ideals where women undertake incredible suffering for family's wellbeing. Resonating notions of care as an extension of 'shakti' frame unpaid tasks rendered behind the scenes as part of inborn feminine duties ordained for wives, daughters-in-law. Religious scriptural sanction then makes visible economic valuation appear incongruous even for significant contributions.

Joint family structures in India further concentrate unpaid work upon daughters-in-law who migrate to husbands' homes post-marriage undertaking majority cooking, cleaning, elder care expectations within authority hierarchies. Younger housewives lack financial decision making power despite multi-tasking household, childcare, stretched budgets. Kin relations defer individual interests to collective priorities. Daughters too imbibe normalized social duty discourse from childhood lay foundations for successor cohorts.

Unpaid tasks thus operate akin invisible 'family loyalty tests' exacerbated by mother-in-law narratives reminiscing about own past suffering to earn place thus perpetuating intergenerational transfers of gendered housework. Criticism of birth families for not training daughters enough for post-marital housekeeping roles recedes obligations from sons and husbands in multiple ways. Resonating masculine identities view breadwinning as sole responsibility, exempt from domestic duties deemed wifely expression of love.

Furthermore, cultural conditioning depicts paid work as necessity but unpaid family care within homes as ideal feminine actualization rather than opportunity costs. Marriage signals transition into adulthood legitimizing excessive housework hours instead of skill building. Educational investments thus fail to convert to economic independence. Celebrity interviews frame successful actress dropping shooting schedules for motherhood as aspirational work-family balance unlike CEOs.

Persistent underpinnings shape family structures, economic incentives, institutional processes in self-reinforcing ways difficult transforming solely through wage rate imputation without shaking gender beliefs at foundation. Cooking skills translate as added marriageability for girls but irrelevant for boy's due potential. Well-intentioned policy too risks entrenching essentialism if messaging about valuing women's household contribution reinforce assumption of natural feminine affinity for care tasks versus structured constraints on choice.

Sustainably easing unpaid work burdens necessitates progressive normalization of domestic responsibilities sans gender. Increased paternal uptake of feeding, childcare activities signal such positive shifts, setting new precedents for successive generations to emulate balanced models. But change remains gradual given entrenched 'duty scripts'. Concurrent technology interventions, public infrastructure



expanding creches, daycare availability constitute complementary measures easing constraints at work, home and community spaces enabling a better care ecosystem with enhanced options.

Overall multidimensional sociocultural and religious discourses shape perceived valuation of unpaid family work undertaken by women located at intersection of economic strictures and normative ascriptions. Policy too risks issue linkage unless consciously navigating privileging undertones while addressing practical unpaid constraints. But positive societal examples emphasizing creative co-responsibility across gender signal hope for rewriting outdated social conventions in more equitable ways ahead.

7. CONCLUSION

This paper attempted a comprehensive economic valuation of the unrecognized worth of indispensable household services and care work delivered by almost 60% of adult Indian women categorized as non-workers undertaking cooking, childcare and multifaceted family responsibilities without salaries or legal protections guaranteed to external jobs. Conservative estimates indicate the annual GDP value of such unpaid tasks matching 39–47% of national output rivalling the entire enumerated formal sector – spotlighting an invisible economic engine functioning silently via the subsidized efforts of crores of homemakers behind the scenes.

Time-use surveys, opportunity cost estimations and imputed wage rate techniques quantified hours spent daily on household production often equivalent to parallel part-time employment alongside external jobs for women who are employed. Opportunity costs from women specializing in unpaid realms post-marriage and motherhood indicate losses between Rs 15–18 lakhs over working lifespans owing to fragmented careers, constrained professional mobility pathways and weaker fallback positions compared to continuous male counterparts despite bearing disproportionate domestic duties in addition.

Findings underscore the adverse economic implications of discounting indispensable yet unrecognized housework for the financial security, decision-making authority and intergenerational welfare of scores of women consigned to traditional subsidiary statuses within marital homes and peripheral positions inside communities. Elucidating multidimensional household tasks from cooking, cleaning to emotional caregiving, counselling and community regulation activities provided more holistic understanding of skills applied and responsibilities undertaken to sustain families that policies often minimize by overlooking constraints undergirding economic metrics focused predominantly on visible paid sectors.

Discussion situated valuations within thicker sociocultural meanings shaping occupational segregation by gender, noting positive gradualist shifts towards shared parenting. Recommendations emphasized social security frameworks, subsidized child/elder care infrastructure, financial inclusion and gender budgeting can progressively recognize indispensable shadow work and redistribute disproportionate burdens constraining the full economic potential of half the workforce. Macro implications span output loss, distorted poverty estimates, constrained consumption and skewed human capital foundations warranting updated tools capturing unpaid activities. Overall by quantifying invisible everyday efforts underpinning national productivity behind the scenes, analysis hopes to make visible the silent subsidy offered by millions of women undertaking invaluable tasks uncounted by traditional economic indicators focused solely on visible enumerated structures. Findings aim spotlighting outdated assumptions delineating masculine 'productive' paid work from feminine 'reproductive' home duties, calling instead for renewed policy imagination guided by visions of co-responsibility across genders and generations.



Next steps involve refining context-specific valuations and exploring positive deviances where strong women's informal work participation outperforms districts focused predominantly on paid sectors to understand externalities. But reaching transformative potentials necessitates moving discourse beyond purely technical parity fixes towards emphasizing redistribution, recognition and social security for indispensable care undergirding society – appropriately valued socially before counting monetarily. Further research can enrich cross-country comparisons on unpaid work cultures informing progressive policy departures worldwide placing care at the core within renewed definitions of wellbeing economies benefitting families, communities and humanity collectively.

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