Evaluating Non-Market Services of the Households in India through SAM

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Paper Abstract: This paper deals with the measurement of non-market production of services by households in India. India like many other Asian and developing economies does not conduct regular time use studies, which are emerging as a very useful statistical tool for collecting detailed information about how individuals spend their time, on a daily and weekly basis as an input to estimating the value of paid and unpaid work as well as the size of labour force in a country. There is now a strong sentiment from the international community that in order to evaluate the contribution of the women in national well being, such data gaps are needed to be filled and include gender in the macro-economic framework. The first and foremost step in this direction is to capture women's labour force participation with greater accuracy by recognising the non-market work of the women and then imputing the value of the same to incorporate it in national accounts. Hence, in this paper an attempt has been made to recognise the participation of men and women in non-market work and then the issues have been raised for building a Social Accounting Matrix (SAM) database recording the flow of market and non-market work. The development of gender based SAM is very necessary for having a clear view of the CGE models which in principle are used to analyse the effects of policy changes and different shocks to the economy. This paper highlights the importance of capturing gender in such models for more insightful policy simulations. Such accounting exercise, though seem to be difficult with given institutional set-up and available data bases in the country, but not impossible as the work of various agencies collecting data on national income, employment, wages and consumption expenditure can be combined apart from having regular time-use studies. For generating an appropriate picture of the economy, we always need a detailed multi-sector model which again points towards the need of building up a SAM which with gender-disaggregated details has the ability to exhibit the link between income generation and consumption within the households. Building SAM in a more gender sensitive manner would help in understanding the inter-linkages of a sector with other sectors and actors of the economy, especially what we would describe as non market work. Finally, this paper also highlights the potential problems of building a gender sensitive SAM which clearly recognises the non-market work. It is being realised that the estimates of the value of non-market household services are highly sensitive to the method used. Therefore, it is very important to critically analyse the uses and limitations of each of the method with all minute details as the sceptics are already sitting on the edges to derail all such attempts, particularly in the developing economies like India where internal forces for developing and implementing these techniques are already weak. The intelligentsia is not still much receptive to the idea of assigning a monetary value to the 'pious' duties of the women in household care services. It is difficult to deal simultaneously with patriarchal ethics and the intricacies of

national income accounts when the question of evaluating the non-market work of the women is raised. Hence, this study points towards the importance of using both the quantitative and qualitative methodologies in generating time-use data and then presenting a model translated in to the language of national income accountants.