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Unpaid Work and Female Labor-Force Participation: Insights from in India's Time Use Data

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## 1. Background and Objective:

There has been a surprising decline in the female work-force participation rate despite some decent economic growth alongside higher educational attainment among women in India. There could be several factors responsible for the low shares of women participation in the labor market, viz., lack of job growth in formal sectors, prevailing social norms, gender gap in education and skills, lack of safety and independent decision-making (Verick 2014, Ghai 2018, Chapman and Mishra 2019, Deloitte 2019). The literature has also provided alternative explanations for the declining female workforce participation in terms of growing family and child-care responsibilities of women (Kapsos et al 2014, Chaudhary and Verrick 2014). The low female labor force participation may not always imply that women work for fewer hours, since their unpaid work is not captured. The data on the number of hours worked can be better interpreted after utilized women's unpaid contribution inside and outside the household. The time use data provides information on the aspects of unpaid family work. Hirway (1999) by using the first time use survey data in specific states have argued that the census and NSSO underestimated female participation in SNA activities. The main strength of the time use data is that they provide comprehensive information on how individuals spend their time on daily or weekly basis for SNA, extended SNA and non-SNA activities. This study plans to use the latest time use survey data to investigate into the aspects of female labor force participation at the level of Indian states.

## 2. Methodology and Plan of Study:

The family, household and caring works by women in several states of India are not paid, and these family responsibilities are at times causes of women's engagements in low-paid informal activities. This study plans to use the latest time use survey data to investigate into the aspects of female labor force participation at the level of Indian states. We would also use time use data by education level of females to examine hypothesis like whether the female time allocation has shifted from non-SNA to extended SNA and from extended SNA to SNA activities along with literacy levels.

3. Data Source:

The first national time use data of India was is based on the survey conducted on a pilot basis during 1998-99 that covered six states, viz., Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Odisha and Meghalaya. The National Sample Survey Organization has launched the next time use survey in January 2019, and the results are awaited till the end of the current year. Once released, it will help to present insightful observations on how men and women spend their time on economic activities.  This study would employ the forthcoming time use survey data. It would also use the Periodic Labor Force Survey data referring to the year 2017-18, which gives information on the hours actually worked by workers in current weekly status.

4. Policy Implications:

The share of informal sector among female workers remained at 54.8 per cent in non-agriculture and agriculture sector excluding growing of crops sector in India (GOI 2019). Our results could provide some insights on the low labor force participation and high informal sector participation of female workers in India.