Non-government development organisations (NGOs) and women’s wage discrimination against women in all sectors, as lower wages design more realistic labour and employment policies. While commitment to “leave no one behind,” it is critical to estimate the causes gender inequalities, and results into sub-optimal use of labour has also advocated approach. Some literature household satellite accounts accounting system through the poor households. Many work may in/f_late the per cent of women’s production. considered as part of national accounts estimates. This has primarily three times higher compared to a corresponding male person (2.5 (2015) also estimated that time spent by a female household person activities on a typical day, while the of unpaid work among the male and female members of the the burden of unpaid work by lessening the drudgery part (including the time stress) of unpaid work. Available literature appears to follow opportunity cost approach generally measures the economic value unpaid work in the economy (ILO, 2011). However, literature on methodology to estimate women’s contribution in the form of unpaid work. For example, different households define leisure differently. While a pertaining to scoping of volunteer work, unpaid work and leisure. women’s unpaid work in the SNA of Bangladesh (Figure 1). However, there are three major challenges in incorporating complement the traditional economic accounts by using the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) may consider adding a disaggregated data. Table 1 summarises the limitations of the measure the volunteer work in the economy using a household country will need information on at least five core variables to details of the unpaid volunteer activities of women. According to as useful platforms by available literature for measuring volunteer of data collection. Labour Force Surveys (LFSs) have been identified revolving around the valuation methodology of multitasking and unpaid work for the same hours that the woman is doing on a voluntary of the unpaid work a woman performs by assigning an appropriate Bangladesh

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In Bangladesh, Khatun et al. (2015) found that the value of women's unpaid household work was equivalent to 76.8 per cent of Bangladesh's GDP in FY2013-14 based on the replacement cost method, and 87.2 per cent of GDP based on the willingness to accept method. Besides, it was also found by the study that, on an average, a female member of a household undertakes 12.1 non-SNA (System of National Accounts) activities on a typical day, while the corresponding figure for a male counterpart is only 2.7. Khatun et al. (2015) also estimated that time spent by a female household person (aged 15 years and above) on non-SNA works (7.7 hours) is about three times higher compared to a corresponding male person (2.5 hours). Regrettably, in Bangladesh, unpaid works have never been considered as part of national accounts estimates. This has primarily neglected the contribution of the women in economy and society. Hamid (1996) found that, in Bangladesh, conventional GDP estimations captured 98 per cent of men's production, but only 47 per cent of women's production.

Global literature appears to be divided when it comes to the valuation of the unpaid work. The most common debate is regarding the trade-off between the micro and macro landscape. While several literature argues that valuation of women's unpaid work may inflate the household income of the poor, which will eventually misrepresent their standard of living at micro level; others have placed total well-being of the economy (in terms of a wider estimate of GDP) above the inflated income of the poor households. Many developed countries have included women's unpaid work in their national accounting system through household satellite accounts approach. Some literature has also advocated mainstreaming the inclusion of women's unpaid work in the SNA.

The unequal distribution of unpaid work across the genders often causes gender inequalities, and results into sub-optimal use of labour force in a country (Hirway, 2015). Hence, from the lens of SDG commitment to “leave no one behind,” it is critical to understand the value of unpaid care and domestic work of women. While consideration of estimating women's unpaid work in SNA will help reduce social inequality between men and women, at the same time, it will also facilitate the process of achieving the SDGs in Bangladesh by 2030. Hirway (2015) also argued that it is essential to incorporate unpaid work into labour market analyses, as it could help countries to design more realistic labour and employment policies.

To this end, Elson (2008) recommended the so called triple ‘R’ approach for integrating unpaid work (of women) with macroeconomic policies. First, recognition of unpaid work is required by ensuring visibility of such works in the SNA. Second, a continuous effort needs to be made towards reduction of unpaid work by lessening the drudgery part (including the time stress) of such works through providing necessary infrastructure and improving productivity (e.g. access to modern fuel, water, connectivity, etc.). Third, it will be critical to redistribute the burden of unpaid work among the male and female members of the household, which would require bringing changes in the traditional patriarchal norms.

Accounting women's unpaid work in SNA: A household satellite accounts approach

The need for accounting the unpaid care and domestic work of women was first realised when the actual form of the SNA was approved by the Statistical Commission of the United Nations (UN) in 1993. In that connection, statistically best equipped countries came up with the solution to introduce a satellite account for unpaid domestic activities and volunteer work. The satellite account will complement the traditional economic accounts by using disaggregated data of physical as well as of monetary accounting. However, there are three major challenges in incorporating women's unpaid work in the SNA of Bangladesh (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Major challenges in incorporating women's unpaid work in SNA of Bangladesh

1The study was based on a household survey of 5,670 households located across all 64 districts of the country.
2Efroymson, Ahmed and Ruma (2013) also found that including women's unpaid work could almost double the country's GDP.
3ActionAid (2017) estimated that women spend over six hours a day doing unpaid care work, while their male counterparts spend just over an hour on such activities.
of the unpaid work a woman performs by assigning an appropriate average wage with the hours of unpaid work to obtain how much the woman would earn if she were involved in a regular job for those same hours. In some cases, the unpaid working time is assumed to be a substitute for leisure rather than work. In that case, the wage is considered as zero. The replacement cost approach is a simpler technique, where the economic value of women's unpaid work is estimated using the cost to hire someone for pay to do the unpaid work for the same hours that the woman is doing on a voluntary basis. It essentially measures the value of volunteering to the recipient of the volunteer effort, and hence to the society at large. Apart from these methodological issues, there are debates revolving around the valuation methodology of multitasking and risk factor of double counting of the paid work.

Third, the data challenges, which involve the frequency and depth of data collection. Labour Force Surveys (LFSs) have been identified as useful platforms by available literature for measuring volunteer work. The underlying condition to this end is that, they collect all the details of the unpaid volunteer activities of women. According to the ILO Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work (ILO, 2011), a country will need information on at least five core variables to measure the volunteer work in the economy using a household satellite account:

i. number of persons (with gender) involved in unpaid work;
ii. number of hours involved in unpaid work;
iii. type of unpaid work performed (i.e. occupation);
iv. institutional setting of the unpaid work performed; and
v. field (industry) in which the unpaid work is performed.

Existing LFS in Bangladesh does not provide the required disaggregated data. Table 1 summarises the limitations of the existing surveys along with possible way out for accounting the value of unpaid work in SNA. To obtain the required information, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) may consider adding a carefully designed ‘volunteer supplement’ to the national LFSs on a periodic basis. Indeed, the future rounds of LFS should incorporate a section, where the information on the above mentioned core variables will be captured for both male and female population.

To this end, the BBS should leverage the National Strategy for the Development of the Statistics (NSDS) under the Capacity Building of BBS Project. Its objective is to strengthen the National Statistical System in terms of producing timely and reliable statistics for efficient policy formulation. The strategy has gender as one of its prime focuses. Besides, in connection to achieve the SDGs, especially Goal 5, the government needs to either launch an independent survey for collecting data on women’s unpaid work on a pilot basis, or recalibrate the scope and coverage of data collection through LFS in a way that facilitates the incorporation of a satellite account in SNA of Bangladesh. In this regard, the government should invest more in capacity building along with conducting surveys on a regular basis. In terms of financing the surveys or capacity-building programmes, the government should tap the potential resources along with mobilising domestic resources for facilitating the process.

**Concluding remarks**

Comprehensive Time Use Surveys should be conducted by the BBS as part of its LFSs on a regular basis in order to present the time use pattern of both women and men across various activities. The government needs to show political will and should undertake necessary policy steps towards reforming the estimation practice of SNA in order to reflect women’s unaccounted activities in the estimated GDP. To this end, the government may consider forming a technical committee consisting of statisticians, economists, gender specialists, advocacy groups and relevant stakeholders who can give concrete inputs for developing an acceptable methodology for incorporating women’s unaccounted contribution in the GDP. This will help recognition of women’s contribution to the economy and society.

Besides, the government should also put adequate attention to reduction and redistribution of unpaid work. The government may undertake programmes which can contribute in reducing women’s workload within the household. Examples of such initiatives may include increasing access to drinking water and natural gas for cooking, and establishing childcare centres; these may in turn reduce the time spent by women on household work. Stricter legal measures should be introduced by the government to eliminate

**Table 1: Data requirement for accounting of unpaid work**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information</th>
<th>Available data source</th>
<th>Frequency of available data source</th>
<th>Potential data source</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of persons (with gender) involved in unpaid work</td>
<td>LFS 2016-17</td>
<td>Yearly</td>
<td>LFS, BBS (yearly)</td>
<td>Need to continue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of hours involved in unpaid work</td>
<td>Unavailable</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>LFS, BBS (yearly)</td>
<td>- Adding a carefully designed volunteer supplement to LFS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of unpaid work performed</td>
<td>Unavailable</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>LFS, BBS (yearly)</td>
<td>- Launching a yearly pilot survey on volunteer/unpaid workforce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional setting of the unpaid work performed</td>
<td>Unavailable</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>LFS, BBS (yearly)</td>
<td>- Adding a carefully designed volunteer supplement to LFS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field/industry in which the unpaid work is performed</td>
<td>Unavailable</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>LFS, BBS (yearly)</td>
<td>- Launching a yearly pilot survey on volunteer/unpaid workforce</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors’ elaboration.
wage discrimination against women in all sectors, as lower wages compared to men is one of the key reasons behind the accounted lower contribution of women in the national economy. Non-government development organisations (NGOs) and women’s activist groups can play an active role towards this. Eliminating wage discrimination should make women’s economic contribution more recognised. Also, there is a need to launch a countrywide awareness-building campaign with a focus to engage men in the household to share the burden of unpaid work at the household level. To bring a sustainable change, the students at the school level need to learn the importance of sharing household works across genders. The education system will need to incorporate such learnings from the very beginning, so that these become instill as an upbringing norm.

REFERENCES


