

Women's invisible labour

Why in News?

The Time Use Survey 2024 (January-December), released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation last week, confirms that women take on a lion's share of unpaid work.

What is the gender divide in domestic labor?

- **Women's unpaid work** - Women perform over eight times the amount of unpaid work, valued at 15% to 17 % of the GDP notionally.
- **Participation gap in unpaid domestic services** - While 81% of female participated in unpaid domestic services, it was just 21% of male.
- **Contribution gap in unpaid domestic services** - In 2024, women spent 289 minutes a day on unpaid domestic services, 10 minutes less than in 2019, but still 201 minutes more than men.
- **Participation gap in care giving** - 41 % of females aged 15-59 years participated in caregiving for their household members, male participation in this age group in such caregiving was 21.4 %.
- **Contribution gap in care giving** - Female participants in caregiving activities spent about 140 minutes in a day, compared to 74 minutes spent by male participants.

What are the impacts of gender divide in domestic labour participation?

- **Low Female Workforce Participation** - Women spend almost five hours daily on unpaid work, which limits their ability to engage in formal employment.

India's female labor force participation rate (FLFP) is 41.7%, compared to 78% for men (Periodic Labour Force Survey 2023-24).

- **Job insecurity** - Women engaged in unpaid work often enter low-paid, informal jobs with little job security.
- **Wage gap** - This structural inequality exacerbates wage gaps, with women earning significantly less than men for similar work.
- **Wastage of human resources** - Valuable ability and potential of educated and skilled women is kept unused in households.
- **Affects skill development** - The extensive hours spent on household responsibilities limits women ability to acquire additional qualifications.
- **Reinforcement of gender roles** - Traditional norms continue to associate women with domestic work and men with paid employment.

- **Psychological and health burdens** - The physical and mental toll of managing unpaid labor leads to burnout, stress, and health issues.

What can be done to bring equality?

- Inclusivity will have to begin with a re-imagination of the foundation of household dynamics.
- Dismantling the stereotype around the household work and encouraging shared domestic responsibilities.
- Incorporating unpaid work in GDP calculations to measure the economic value of household work.
- Invest in care economy, particularly in early childhood care and education to increase the female labour force participation rate.
- Promoting behavioral change through campaigns like "Share the Load" (ariel) to successfully challenge gendered domestic roles.

Reference

[The Indian Express | Women's invisible labour](#)

[For Mains practise question , click here.](#)

