

Gender, unpaid care work in Uganda: Evidence from the 2017-18 Time Use Survey

Executive Statement

Most governments, Uganda inclusive, have established measures to promote gender equality regarding access to resources, political representation, and reduced discrimination at workplaces. However, despite all these efforts, women are still disadvantaged along social, economic and political dimensions. For example, role allocation and time use vary by gender, and this has far-reaching implications in terms of poverty and inequality. This brief summarizes the study findings that used time use survey 2017 data to examine how time use, role allocation and perceptions about work vary by gender in Uganda¹. The results showed that women were significantly more likely to do unpaid household work, unpaid care work such as taking care of children, the elderly and the sick, and they were more likely to participate in agriculture. However, men were more likely to participate in employment work and in socializing with friends. The results on work perceptions revealed that females are more likely to believe that undertaking unpaid household and care work was their responsibility, indicating that discriminative role allocation has been institutionalized to the extent that females believe that it is their responsibility to do unpaid work. These results suggest that changing time use and role allocation patterns in Uganda requires awareness creation and mindset change, and interventions that empower women.

Introduction

Time use and role allocation within the household and beyond vary by gender, which has severe implications for welfare, inequality, and overall development (Guloba, et al., 2019; Stevano, et al., 2018; Hirway & Jose, 2011; Sarah Gammage, 2010). Within the household, women engage disproportionately in domestic tasks and undertake most social reproduction, caring work, and household maintenance. Moreover, many women engage exclusively in reproductive activities or non-market production within the household (Sarah Gammage, 2010). The differences in task allocation and time use manifest in a visibly sex-segmented labour market with pronounced income and earnings gaps. Women typically earn less than men in the same jobs. Therefore, it is apparent that addressing gender differences in time use and role allocation within a household would reduce different forms of discrimination and enhance equitable growth.

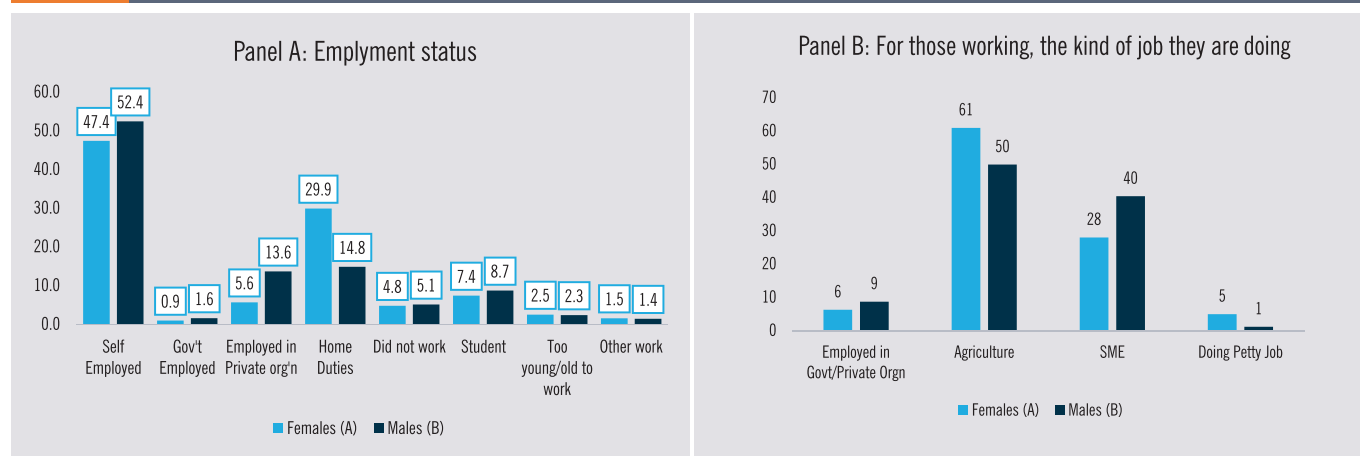
Data and evidence are critical for policy guidance to address gender gaps in time use and role allocation. A number of countries, Uganda inclusive, have undertaken time-use surveys, and many others are mainstreaming gender questions in several household surveys. For instance, Uganda has made efforts to mainstream gender statistics in the production and dissemination of statistics in response to the ratification of declarations on gender equality on the international scene, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform of Action (BPfA) and the SDGs. In addition, recognizing that gender statistics is necessary for effectively attaining equity and equality in

government planning and decision-making processes, the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBoS) has undertaken several household-based surveys, including the Time Use Survey 2017.

UN-Women commissioned a study to use Time Use survey data 2017 to conduct an empirical analysis of time use and role allocation variations by gender. The research questions were: (i). who of the men and women contribute more towards paid work and unpaid care work?, (ii) what factors influence women and men's participation and time allocation to different kinds work (productive, reproductive, and voluntary work)?, (iii). what perceptions do men and women have towards work?, and (iv) what is the association between perceptions and individual-level characteristics and time use?

Employment Status by Gender

Figure 1 represents statistics on the activities undertaken by the respondents seven days preceding the survey. Panel A looks at whether the respondents work or do not, and if they are working, what kind of activities they are involved in. The results show that a significantly small percentage of females reported to have been self-employed or employed by government and other private organizations compared to males. However, most females reported that they were more involved in home duties compared to males. This suggests that men are more likely to be employed in income-generating activities while women are doing unpaid domestic work.

Figure 1 Employment Status and the activities involved in the past 7 days prior to the survey

Panel B follows up those reported to be working and categorizes the activities they were involved in into private or government employment, agriculture, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) for those who are self-employed in small businesses, petty jobs for those that sell food on streets etc. The results show that females are primarily employed in agriculture and petty jobs while men are employed by private and government organizations and SMEs. This variation in employment indicates that women are mainly in less rewarding activities.

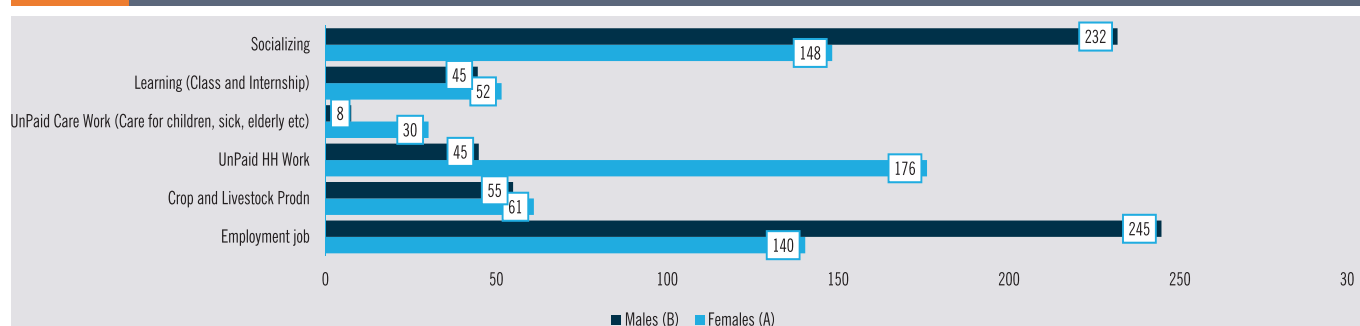
Time spent on different activities in a day

Time use and role allocation can be examined using the amount of time an individual spends doing an activity. Figure 2 shows gender differences in time (minutes) allocated to different activities throughout the day. The results show that men spend more time on employment work and the difference in minutes spent on employment work between men and women is 104 minutes, about two hours a day. Also, men spend more than 83 minutes socializing with friends compared to women. On the other hand, women spend more 131 minutes (almost 2 and a half hours) on unpaid household work compared to men. Women also spend more 23 minutes on unpaid care work and 6 minutes on agriculture compared to men. These results have vital implications: (i) women spend more time on household and care work which do not accrue any payment, (ii) Since men spend more time employed, their incomes are more likely to be higher than that of

women. This suggests that if this is not addressed, women will continue to be poorer compared to men hence exacerbating inequality, and (iii) women limited involvement in socializing and other leisure activities can have adverse effects on their health.

Activities performed at different time intervals

The study further examined different activities performed by both men and women at different periods throughout the day. Table 1 presents the results from the individual diary where both men and women detailed what they were doing every hour for 24 hours. The results reveal that during period 8-17 Hrs, a significantly higher percentage of males are working on employment jobs (81%) compared to females (76%). However, a considerably higher rate of females (49%) were conducting crop and livestock production during these hours than males (32%). These results indicate that men work outside the home in employment jobs, while women remain home working on agricultural production during the 8-17 hours. The results also show that during 8-17 Hrs, 88% of females were involved in unpaid household work such as cooking, while 29% were engaged in unpaid care work such as taking care of children, the elderly and the sick. On the other hand, 37% and 8% of men were involved in unpaid household and care work. This suggests that women in Uganda primarily perform unpaid work.

Figure 2 Time Allocation to different activities in Minutes by Gender

Source: Authors' computation using Time Use Survey Data, 2017

Table 1 Percentage of individuals performing different activities at Different Time Periods in a day

	Overall MEAN	Females (A) MEAN	Males (B) MEAN	ttest A-B
<u>Time Period: 8:00-17 Hrs</u>				
Employment job	78	76	81	-6***
Crop and Livestock Production	42	50	32	18***
Un-Paid HH Work	64	88	37	50***
Un-Paid Care Work (care for children, Sick Elderly)	19	29	8	21***
Learning (Class and Internship)	56	63	48	15***
<u>Time Period: 17 -23 Hrs</u>				
Employment job	47	46	48	-2**
Crop and Livestock Production	15	18	11	8***
Un-Paid HH Work	47	70	20	50***
Un-Paid Care Work (care for children, Sick Elderly)	19	31	6	25***
Learning (Class and Internship)	21	23	20	3*
Socializing	76	71	81	-10***
<u>Time Period: 25-05 Hrs</u>				
Employment job	3	2	4	-2**
Crop and Livestock Production	0	0	0	0
Un-Paid HH Work	2	2	2	0
Un-Paid Care Work (care for children, Sick Elderly)	5	9	1	8***
Learning (Class and Internship)	1	0	1	0
Socializing	8	7	8	-1
<u>Time Period: 05-08 Hrs</u>				
Employment job	52	45	59	-15***
Crop and Livestock Production	24	27	20	7***
Un-Paid HH Work	40	55	24	31***
Un-Paid Care Work (care for children, Sick Elderly)	11	18	4	14***
Learning (Class and Internship)	5	5	4	1
Socializing	31	29	33	-4**

Source: Authors' computation using Time Use Survey Data, 2017. *** is significant at 1%, ** at 5%, and * at 10%.

Other forms of time use are learning, socializing, participating in games, functions, catching up with friends, and self-care such as sleeping and eating. The results show that a higher percentage of males (78%) socialized with friends during period 2 (8-17Hrs), which is significantly higher than 64% of females who participated in the same activities.

During period 3 (17-23Hrs), females still essentially do unpaid household and care work, while men largely participated in employment, even past the official employment hours, and socializing. During 23-5 Hrs, 9% of women reported having been involved in unpaid care work, significantly higher than only 1% of men who were involved in unpaid care work during the same time.

The patterns of time use remain consistent when we look at period 5-8 Hrs. The results show that men are more likely to participate in employment jobs and socializing during this period, while women are more involved in crop and livestock production, un-paid household and unpaid care work.

Perceptions about Work

Time allocations to different activities are primarily influenced by the perceptions that both men and women have on who should do what and why. The study elicited information on different perceptions held by the

surveyed respondents, as reported in Figure 3. Perceptions can be used to assess the degree of women empowerment and decision-making abilities.

The results in figure 3 show that majority of the respondents believed that taking care of the family and elderly and child-raising are women's responsibility. Besides, these beliefs were significantly common among women than men. This suggests that role allocation is institutionalized within a family. Women are socialized to believe that their central role in a family is to engage in unpaid household and unpaid care work. Indeed, a large percentage of both women and men reported that it is shameful for a man to wash women's clothes and that men who are seen playing with children are believed to be behaving like women. Also, there was a common belief that women do not know how to take care of children suggesting that there are clear boundaries on what men and women can and cannot do.

The results also indicate that women are still disempowered. For instance, 40% of the surveyed respondents believe that a woman will overpower a man who shares housework with his wife. This belief is more held by men (41%) compared to women (38%). Besides, almost 60% of the respondents believed that men's work is more important than women. By gender, a higher percentage of men (63%) believe that men's work is more important than 53% of women who share the same belief. This might explain why men do not allow their wives to work. Indeed, 63% of

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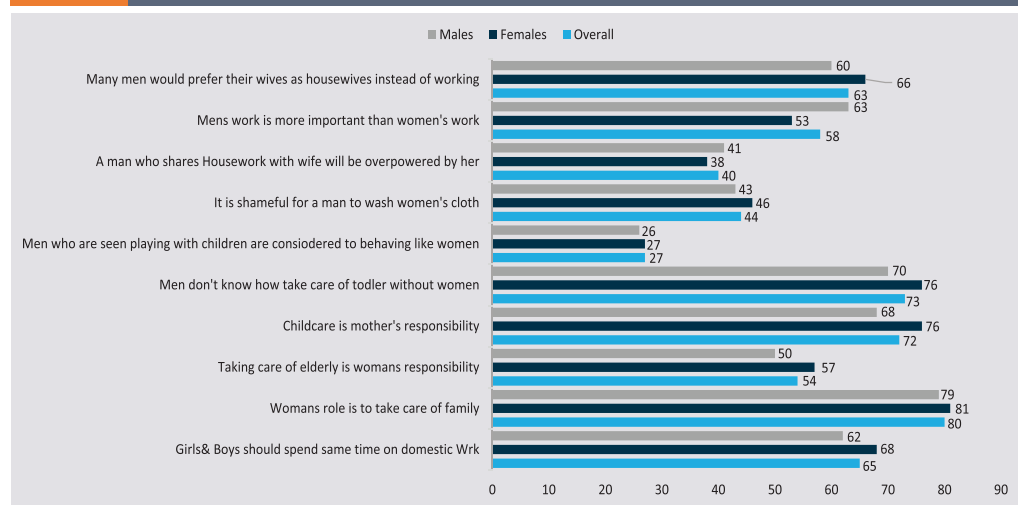
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Figure 3 Perceptions about role allocation by gender



the respondents reported that many men would prefer their wives as housewives instead of working. The analysis by gender shows that 66% of females believe that men like to have them as housewives than working, significantly higher than 60% of men.

Conclusions and Policy Actions

The study showed significant gender gaps as far as time use and role allocation are concerned. The results indicated that women were significantly more likely to do unpaid household work across the day, unpaid care work such as taking care of children, the elderly and the sick. They were more likely to participate in agriculture. As for men, they were more likely to participate in employment work and on socializing with friends. Even during sleep time, women participated in unpaid care work, suggesting that they slept for a shorter time than men.

In addition, gender perceptions about work revealed that women believe that unpaid household and unpaid care work is their responsibility. For instance, females were more likely to think that taking care of children, cooking, and taking care of the elderly is a woman's responsibility compared to men. This suggests that gender norms have been institutionalized that women believe some kinds of work is meant for them. To enhance equality in time use and work allocation within

and beyond the household, the following actions are proposed:

- Undertake awareness and mindset change campaigns to enable women to appreciate their rights. This can be through the use of role models, especially successful women from the respective communities
- Promote education for the girl child to empower women. This can be by addressing challenges that impede girls' access to education and those that lead to high absenteeism, especially in rural areas such as lack of sanitary pads.
- Enforce some fundamental constitutional rights, such as the right to inherit the land that many communities are not adhering to. The traditional practices that deny girls the right to inherit land are still followed even when the constitution requires all children to equally share the property upon the death of their parents irrespective of sex.

Endnotes

¹ An Empirical Investigation of gender and time use in Uganda. Final Report. EPRC Occasional Paper No 49.

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