



The Impact of Unpaid Care Work on
Women’s Economic Empowerment in
Sierra Leone– A Scoping Study

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The Impact of Unpaid Care Work on Women’s Economic Empowerment in Sierra Leone – A Scoping Study

1. Executive Summary

Across the world, unpaid care work is done predominantly by women. Its invisibility is however mainly due to paucity of data and the lack of a proper means of codifying and enumerating such work. This is an area that has generally been neglected by economists as well as many development actors, especially in developing countries. Yet the amount of unpaid care work done, and the way the burden of this work is distributed across different individuals have important implications for the well-being of individuals and households, as well as for economic dynamism and growth.

Although there exist various empowerment programmes aimed at empowering women economically, socially and politically, the efforts are likely to underperform if considerable time and effort of women and girls is devoted to unpaid care activities.

The policy environment in Sierra Leone is yet to give the required attention in keeping with the provisions of the Sustainable Development Goals, due to absence or insufficient data and proper representation of women’s unpaid care work with its resultant effects on women’s economic empowerment.

This study was inclined to providing the needed information for the development of genderfriendly policies and platform for further research. The work took into consideration analysis of time use; capturing unpaid care work in gender-responsive budget initiatives;

understanding country circumstances valuing unpaid care work; and Strategies for raising awareness and building capacities.

Sierra Leone has made tremendous progress in the areas of legal protection, education; and some steps forward in financial and digital inclusion. However, much attention is needed in addressing the issue of unpaid care work. The policy environment in Sierra Leone is yet to give the required attention in keeping with the provisions of the Sustainable Development Goals. There are discriminatory clauses in all legal documents appertaining women, but they all stop short in addressing women's unpaid care work with its resultant effects on women's economic empowerment.

One of the significant structural barriers to women's economic empowerment revealed in this survey is women's disproportionate burden of unpaid work at home, which restricts women from taking up paid jobs, undertaking advanced education and skills training, and participation in public life. This has been partly due to societal, religious and traditional orientation. Nonetheless, translated into monetary terms, UPC accounted for 2.4 time the minimum wage of five hundred thousand leones in Sierra Leone.

Secondly household chores if counted and accounted for, have economic value that can contribute to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The provision of training initiatives, labour-saving technologies and social infrastructure, such as access to water, sanitation, roads and healthcare was found reduce the unequal distribution of unpaid care work between men and women.

Based on the observations made, the following were recommended:

There is need to factor in care as a serious economic and social policy issue, rather than assume that there is an unlimited supply of it flowing from a natural inexhaustible source

In an example of the He4She initiative of the United Nations Women (UN Women) in Sierra Leone, experience suggests that participatory action oriented methodologies, involving both men and women, increases recognition of unpaid care work within communities and key stakeholders.

The 'Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP) Scheme' administered in India for example can impart skills related to employability and entrepreneurship

Identifying all relevant system actors including, market and 'non-market' actors, at the household (including men as well as women), community or government levels and finding incentives and leverage points when addressing unpaid care related constraints will result in increased value.

Promoting the elimination of gender wage gaps and converting unpaid care work into paid jobs, including through state-funded or market-driven care services.

Robust awareness raising through radio and television discussions, jingles, folksongs, music and entertainment industries, and outreach programmes in schools and other public institutions would prove worthy in creating the need transformation.

2. List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

CEDAW	Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
GALS	Gender Active Learning Systems
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GENVAD	Gender Value Chain Development
GRB	Gender Response Budget
HWC	Home Work Care
MAFFS	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security
MSWGCA	Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PALS	Participatory Active Learning Systems
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
STEPS	Support to Training and Employment Programmes for Women
UN Women	United Nations Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UPC	Unpaid Care
WFC	Work Family Care
WHC	Work Home Care

3. Introduction

Sierra Leone is either a signatory to, or has ratified or acceded to a hosts of international conventions that speak to the protection of children, gender-based discrimination and the empowerment of women. These conventions, though domesticated to fit contextual realities, remain in tandem with their global nature. One such is the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (**CEDAW**) defines discrimination against women as “... any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of **impairing or nullifying the recognition**, enjoyment of exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of **equality** of men and women of human rights. In its effort, the convention holds countries accountable for discrimination that takes place in their territory. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise known as the 2030 Agenda spells out the need to achieve gender equality and empowering all women and girls under the SDG target 5.4, with the inclusion of ‘Unpaid Care Work and Domestic Work; thereby recognizing and valuing unpaid work. This target states: *“Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of **shared responsibility** within the household and the family as **nationally appropriate**.”*

In her paper, Razavi (2016) observed that the inclusion of gender inequalities in the division of unpaid care and domestic work in the 2030 Agenda was a hard-won target, but criticized the language used, which included **shared responsibilities** instead of **redistribution** and “**as nationally appropriate**”, taken to have a further watering down its mandate with such proviso.

Elson (2000), in *Progress of the World's Women* report defined unpaid care work as “unpaid” because person doing the activity is not remunerated. The term “care” indicates that the services provided nurture other people, and the word “work” referring to that involving mental or physical effort with cost in terms of time resources, and are undertaken as obligations, be it contractual or social. Most of the unpaid care works including (i) direct care of people, such as child care or care of dependent adults; (ii) housework – such as cooking, cleaning or collecting water or firewood; and (iii) unpaid community work undertaken for friends, neighbours or more distant family members, and work undertaken out of a sense of responsibility for the community, such as volunteer work are largely done by women and girls in the family and communities.

On the one hand, many women themselves derive pleasure and satisfaction from the care work; but on the other, when care responsibilities bore heavy burden on women, it becomes unequal and invisible, and results into time poverty, poor health and well-being, limited mobility and perpetuation of women’s unequal status in society (Maestre and Thorpe 2016; Esquivel 2013). Such disproportionate burden of unpaid care work is one among many manifestations and causes for persistence of gender inequalities in societies. These, Chopra 2015; Carmona (2013) and Razavi (2007), observed to be roadblocks in women’s path to empowerment, by undermining the rights of careers, limiting opportunities, capabilities and choices and often restricting them to low-skilled, irregular or informal employment.

Woetzel 2015, identified unpaid care work as one of the four important areas where progress would substantially reduce gender inequalities, other three being education level, financial and digital inclusion, and legal protection.

Although unpaid work enables and energizes active and paid labour force to work (Chopra and Sweetman, 2014), its contribution largely goes **unnoticed** at all levels of the society. In developing countries, girls are often forced to abandon their education to assist in the family care work. Being uncouncted and unaccounted the care work goes invisible, unrecognized and undervalued

with adverse effects on health and wellbeing of women/girls, limiting their opportunities outside family and undermining their capabilities and skills for paid work. For Feminist and gender analysts, this is a call for thorough analyses of unpaid care work on women's time, health, their opportunities, and underlying assumptions of stereotyping roles and persistence of gender inequalities.

PLATE 1

“Decision makers in the African Union and in national governments need to urgently re-evaluate their current priorities, policies and approaches. Women’s economic empowerment must be understood beyond simply equipping rural women with skills and assets so they can compete in existing markets. Crucially, it must encompass their access to and control over productive and natural resources, control over their own time, being free from violence and abuse, and ensuring that they have voice, choice and control in all spheres of life”.

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2017

In response to these challenges, ActionAid developed policy briefings as part of a five year multi country POWER project that provided an analysis of the current policies, and practices, across Africa relating to rural women’s economic empowerment and, in particular, the inclusion of the

issue of Unpaid Care Work. These policy research considered successes, gaps and opportunities for improving the lives of women by linking Unpaid Care Work and women's economic empowerment with the issue of Violence Against Women. Plates 1 and 2 summarize key recommendations and messages

4. Conceptual Framework and Policy Environment

Across the world, unpaid care work is done predominantly by women. This is an area that has generally been neglected by economists as well as many development actors, especially in

developing countries. Yet the amount of unpaid care work done, and the way the burden of this work is distributed across different individuals have important implications for the well-being of individuals and households, as well as for economic dynamism and growth.

The 2015 Population and Housing Census of Sierra Leone captured disaggregated statistical data for the working and dependency population worthy of note. The report revealed a total household population of 7,076,119, with the female population accounting for 51%; with similar proportion of the working population. Although the report gave some recognition to unpaid work as part of the employed population that accounted for 70% of the working population, this was either subsumed in unpaid apprentices or unpaid family work, lending little emphasis to unpaid care work.

PLATE 2

Key Messages

Rural women are the backbone of African economies, they play a fundamental role in ensuring food and nutritional security across the continent and drive Africa's agricultural development and GDP growth. Yet on virtually every single measure they are more economically excluded than men and, in global comparison, suffer from the highest rates of violence.

In addition to the widespread gender discrimination that hinders access to productive resources such as land, rural women in Africa carry what can only be described as a huge, relentless and entirely unequal burden of Unpaid Care Work. This has massive consequences for their ability to secure decent livelihoods and to the detriment of their ability to enjoy human rights.

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To underpin this concept, Elson (2000), observed that women have challenged conventional views and proposed new visions of economic life in which their activities count, in several senses: counted in statistics, accounted for in representations of how economies work and taken into account in policy making.

Elson (2008), further conceptualized the framework for integration of the three interconnected dimensions into policy towards unpaid care work: Recognition, Reduction and Redistribution

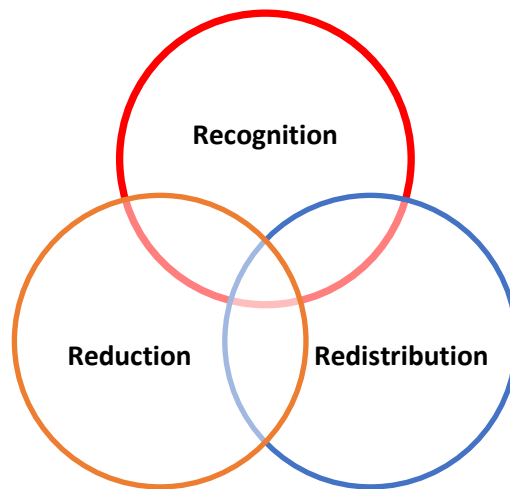


Figure 1. Elson’s Conceptual Framework of Unpaid Care work

Recognition in her context means making unpaid work visible and duly acknowledged. The invisibility of unpaid care work by women is mainly due to paucity of data and lack of proper codification and enumeration of the work. A UNDP Policy document (UNDP, 2009) highlighted important actions required in these three dimensions.

Core actions for recognizing women’s unpaid work include

- (i) conducting time use survey;
- (ii) capturing unpaid care work in gender-responsive budget initiatives;
- (iii) understanding country circumstances
- (iv) valuing unpaid care work
- (v) raising awareness and building capacities; and (vi) assisting caregivers.

Core actions under reduction strategy dimensions includes

- (i) improving task productivity
- (ii) expanding access to key infrastructure
- (iii) maintaining/expanding core public service

Core actions under redistribution strategy dimensions includes

- (i) policy interventions by implementing policies favourable to burden-sharing
- (ii) expanding access to health care and ensure high quality care
- (iii) engaging with men and
- (iv) promoting the elimination of gender wage gaps.

Although various empowerment programmes are aimed at empowering women economically, socially and politically but the efforts are likely to underperform if considerable time and effort of women and girls is devoted to unpaid care activities.

The policy environment in Sierra Leone is yet to give the required attention in keeping with the provisions of the Sustainable Development Goals. There are discriminatory clauses in all legal documents appertaining women, but they all stop short in addressing women's unpaid care work with its resultant effects on women's economic empowerment.

This study was inclined to providing the needed information and platform for further research, to inform the review of existing policies or developing new gender-friendly policies. By understanding how programme interventions interact with existing care work and responsibilities, programmes can identify where excessive household care responsibilities affect women's participation in economic opportunities, as well as the potential to facilitate changes in the underlying structure, operation and dynamics of the system.

5. The Objectives

Although time spent on care responsibilities is rarely counted, it occupies the majority of work hours for rural families, and mostly falls on women. This pattern of care responsibility is influenced by power, relations and social norms, which often define caring as an innate characteristic of women. While many women feel empowered, and derive pleasure and satisfaction from these responsibilities, care work has associated problems when it is invisible and highly unequal, with the biggest responsibility falling on women and girls in poor, marginalised communities. Heavy and unequal care responsibilities contribute to time poverty and limiting opportunities.

How this is addressed in societies can have essential social significance on gender relations and inequalities as well as other structures of power and inequality. In order to overcome the gender bias that is deeply entrenched in systems of social protection and to make citizenship truly inclusive, care must become a dimension of citizenship with rights that are equal to those that are attached to employment (Standing 1999).

The objectives of this study, therefore included:

1. To critically analyse Unpaid Care (UPC) work and identify challenges
2. To raise the visibility of care and how important it is to sustaining societies and achieving gender equality.

3. To encourage greater collective responsibility and accountability for care provision between women, men, the community and government.
4. To evaluate national gender legislatures and programmes and assess their sensitivity to UPC work
5. To document factors responsible for women's vulnerability to UPC
6. To analyse the value of Unpaid care work done by women
7. To make policy recommendations for AASL and other relevant national platforms based on findings

6. Methodology

The invisibility of unpaid care work by women is mainly due to paucity of data and lack of proper codification and enumeration of the work. There is no short of methodologies in assessing unpaid care work and its impact on women's economic empowerment. However, the approach will be dependent on time frame, population size and the required data, either qualitative or quantitative.

For this work, in addition to the Participatory Vulnerability Analysis developed by ActionAid, this study considered the core actions for recognizing women's unpaid work which included:

1. Conducting time use survey;
2. Capturing unpaid care work in gender-responsive budget initiatives;
3. Valuing unpaid care work;
4. Understanding country circumstances through desk review of existing policies bordering on the protection of women and the elimination of all forms of gender discriminations.
5. Proffering strategies for raising awareness and building capacities.

These could inform policy interventions and implementation of policies favourable to burdensharing or role redistribution.

6.1 Data Collection Instruments

Data were collected from individual men and women in the ActionAid operational areas using interview guide while questionnaire was used to solicit information from key informants. Group discussions were held at some point to solicit information from members of some communities. Relevant information was also obtained from publication such as legal instruments, text books, journals, magazines from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs (MSWGCA) and the UN agencies.

6.2 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

A desk survey was done incorporation with some interviews of some Key Informants (KIs) in order to access detailed information about group work’s activeness and effectiveness in the districts. Some of these KIs which include Directors of MSWGCA and Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security (MAFFS), Community Leaders and the ActionAid field Staff. Some of the items addressed were to identify programme interventions in empowering women and the technologies introduced.

6.3 Group Discussion (GD) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

To obtain detailed information, group discussions were done in some communities. These qualitative data were purposively collected to elicit vital information of interest to the women and care work, to reveal and understand the perception and attitude (Mack et al, 2005).

6.4 Scope of Study

Table 1. Scope of Study

District	Number of Chiefdoms	Number of Communities	Sample Size	Population size
Moyamba	2	33	50	318,588

Bo	4	33	50	575,478
Bombali	3	33	50	606,544
Tonkolili	3	14	30	531,435
Kambia	3	36	50	345,474
Kono	3	17	30	506,100
Western Area	1	17	50	1,055,964

7. Findings

A set of change philosophies, including the Gender Action Learning Systems (GALS) and the Participatory Action Learning Systems (PALS) were considered in the presentation of results. This is so because they underscore the principles of social and gender justice, inclusion and mutual respect. In particular these promote women's human rights based on the United Nations Convention on Elimination of ALL Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW):

- freedom from violence
- equality of property ownership
- equality of decision-making
- equality of work and leisure
- freedom of thought and association

The results are thus presented in the following sub-heads:

1. Demographic Characteristics
2. Time Use Dynamics
3. Gender Responsiveness to Budget Initiatives

4. Value of Unpaid Care Work
5. Country Situation
6. Strategies for Raising Awareness

7.1 Demographic Characteristics

With a country population now projected at 7.7 million, the 2015 Population and Housing Census revealed the population of Sierra Leone a 7.1 million, with 51% of this being female. The survey interviewed 310 key respondents, among which were 81% females, 18% males and 1% children (figure 1).

The overall demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented below:

Age:

Data revealed that 83% of the women interviewed were between the ages of 18 – 60 years, which is the active working age in Sierra Leone. Among this, only 9% were formally employed, mostly in the Western Area.

Household size:

The average household consisted of six members, which in most cases rose up to 13 members.

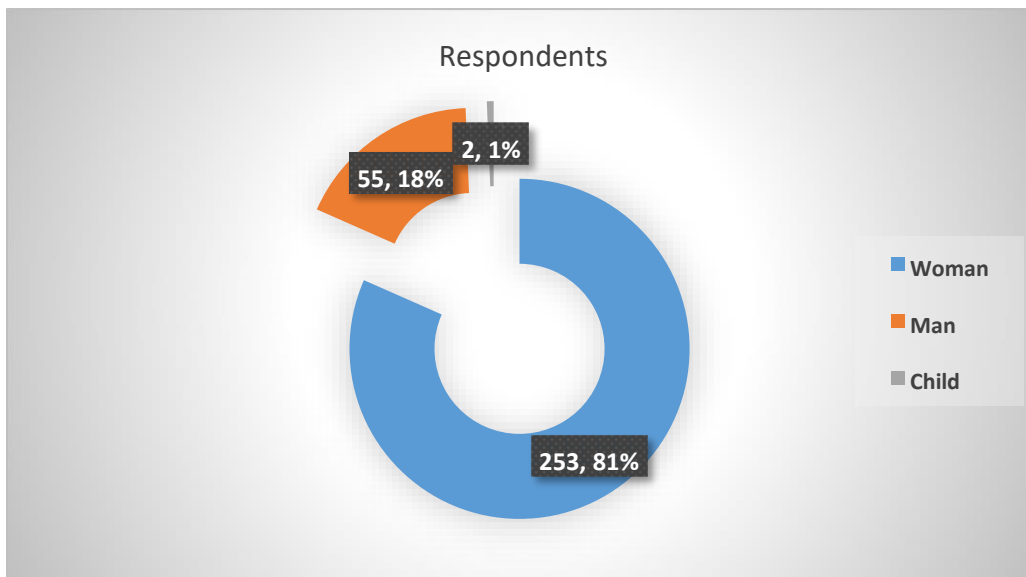


Figure 2. Respondent Ratio

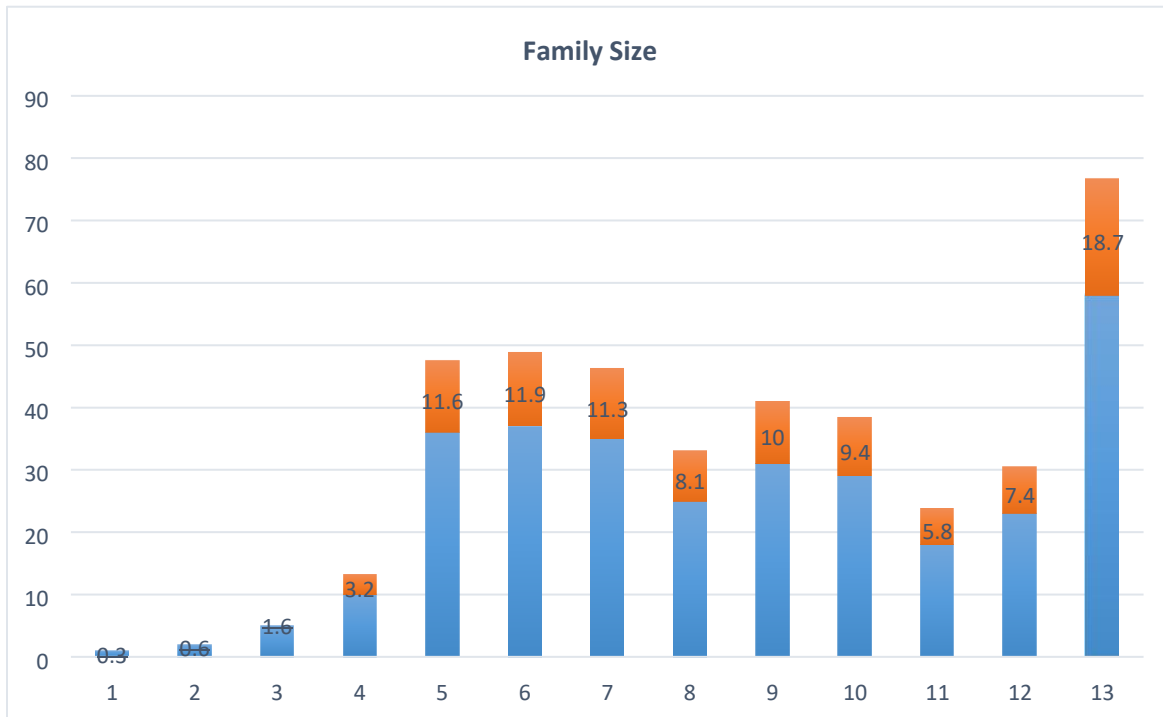


Figure 3. Family Size

Marital status:

The majority of men and women (85%) interviewed were married in a monogamous or polygamous homes (Fig. 4), with 69% and 14% of women interviewed living in monogamous and polygamous homes respectively (Table 2).

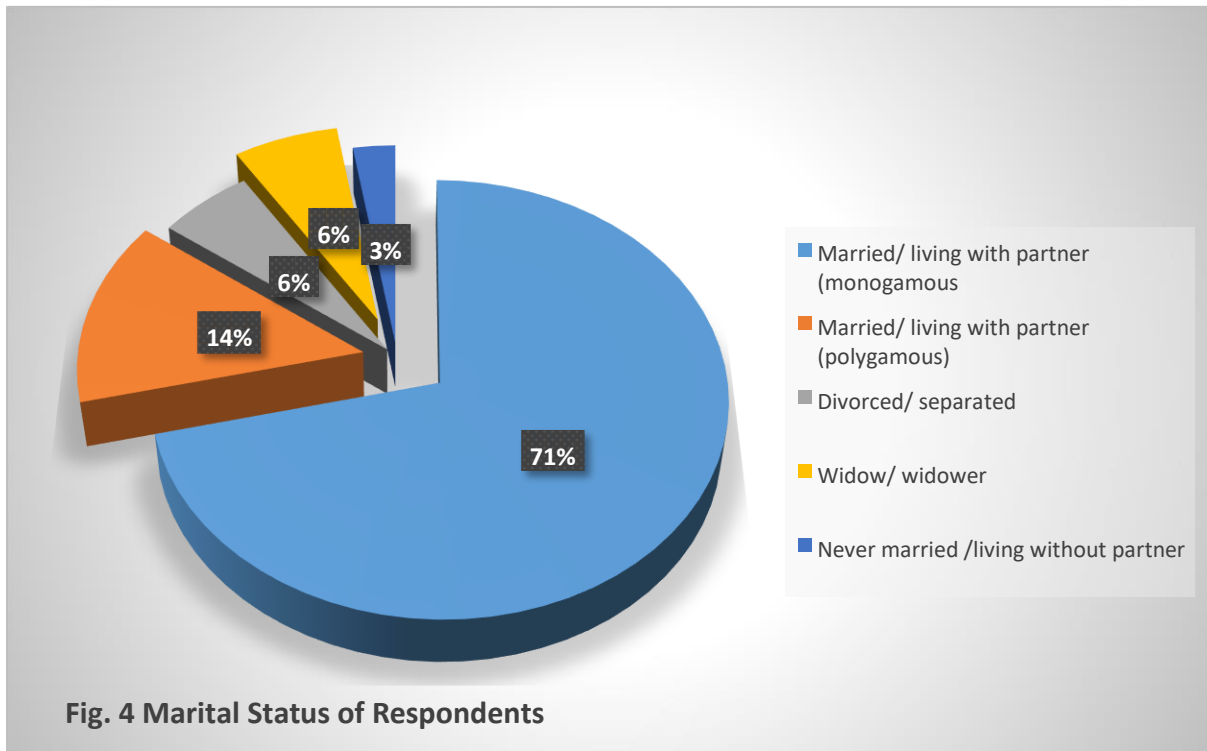


Table 2. Marital status of respondents

		Marital status					Total
		Married/ living with partner monogamous)	Married/ living with partner polygamous	Divorced/ separated	Widow/ widower	Never married /living without partner	
Respondent	Woman	175	35	17	20	6	253
	Man	46	8	1	0	0	55
	Child	0	0	0	0	2	2
Total		221	43	18	20	8	310

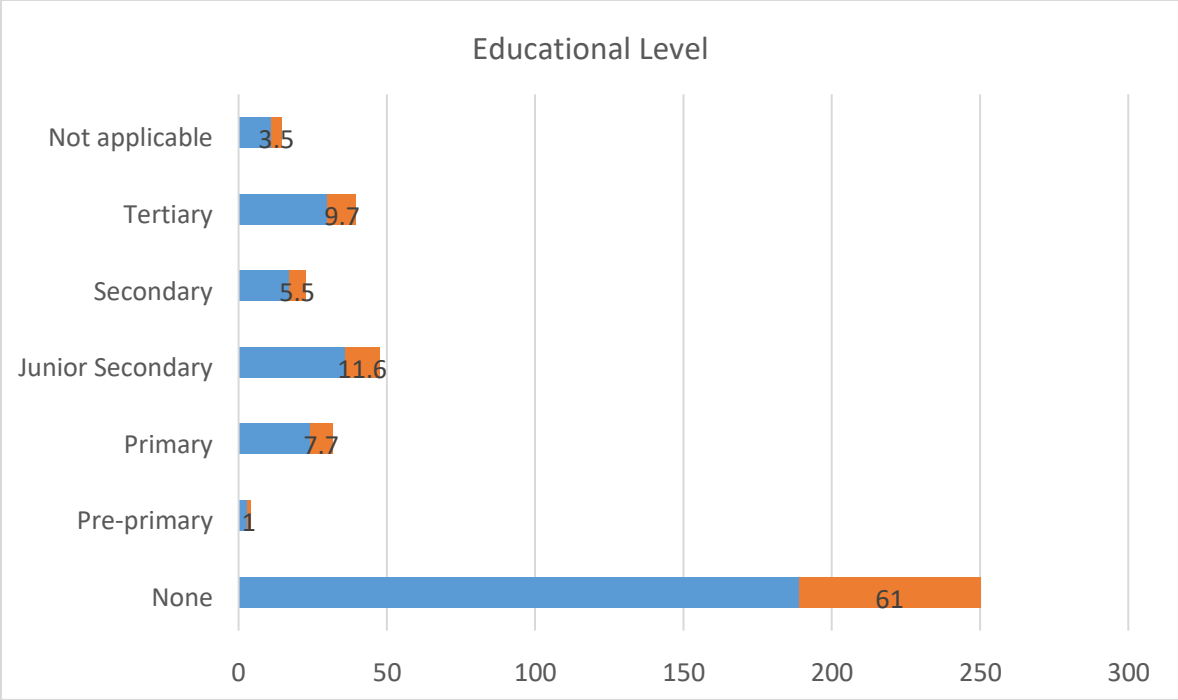


Figure 5. Educational Level of Respondents

Education of Respondents

Corroborating the literacy level of Sierra Leone, 61% of the respondents had no western schooling at all, 4% had some form of Quranic education (Figure 5). The study recorded the level of literacy of the studied sample at 36%, which did not include Quranic education.

Asset Ownership

The data revealed that 66.0 percent owned a radio, 78 percent a mobile phone, 20 percent a television, and 26 percent a refrigerator. This was more prominent in the urban areas. In rural communities, livestock was part of the assets owned by majority of the respondents. Worthy of note is that among the households interviewed, those with most assets are associated with less time spent on any care work.

7.2 Time Use Dynamics

The nature of unpaid care work varies between contexts, affecting women differently in different communities, in rural or urban settings, or for those working in agriculture versus those working

in industry. But in all contexts, evidence shows that the time spent by women on unpaid care work is substantial.

In a time use analysis, indicators make it possible for comparative analysis of quality of life within the same population, monitored over time for specific activities such as work (unpaid or not), free time, leisure, personal care (including sleep), etc. In this context however, the activities and time were recorded based on responses within a 24-hour period, asking respondents to report what they did during each hour of the previous day, starting from 4am. Enumerators noted the relevant activity using pre-determined codes. Since care activities are often carried out at the same time as other activities, they are often omitted when only primary activities are recorded. For this reason, the survey also took into account secondary activities as well as the supervision of children and dependent adults.

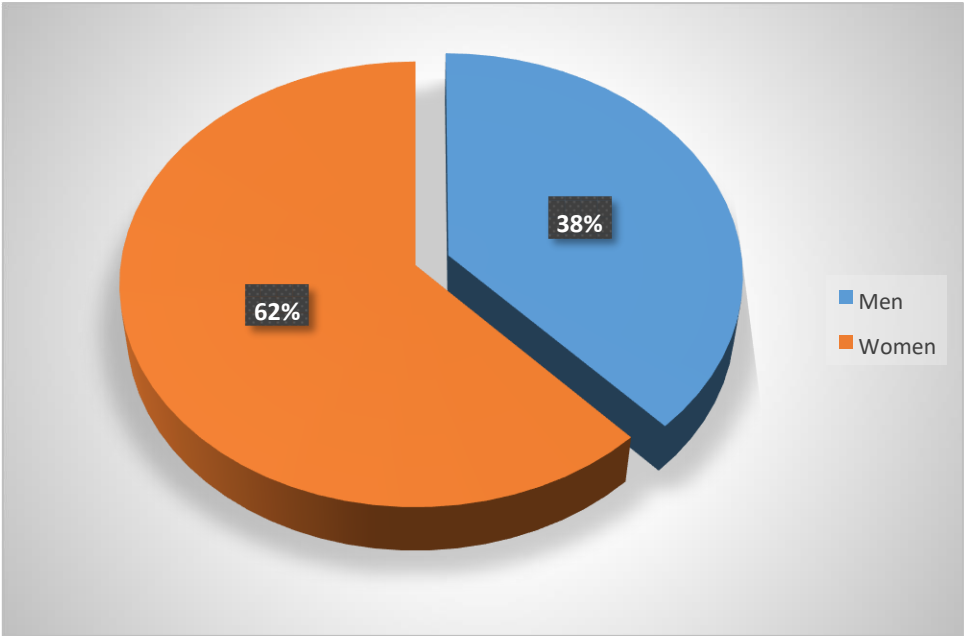


Figure 6. Average activity of respondents

This study revealed that women work 0.6 hours more for every one hour worked by men. This indicates that for an eight-hour working day for men, women would put in an additional 4.8 hours, totaling to an approximate 13-hour working day for women (Figure 6).

The results corroborates Budlender and Moussié (2013), who noted that men spend more hours on average doing paid work; but if both total paid and unpaid hours are combined, women work more overall. This goes to confirm ActionAid's programme 'Making Care Visible' in Nepal and Kenya that asserted that women work 1.4 hours for every 1 hour worked by men.

7.3 Gender Responsiveness to Budget Initiatives

There exists gendered-division of roles and responsibilities of productive activities: For example, in agriculture, men may be considered responsible for growing vegetables, yet women also go to the field, and prepare seeds or carry out post-harvest activities at home. Women also often prepare meals for men and take meals to the field, fetch water and fuel and take care of the children. Excessive care work can impact on the quality of inputs by women. In all of these for most parts, their participation in decision-making that would largely inform benefits, is a far cry. In figure 7 below, 35% of the respondents would have no part in deciding on the daily purchases, 32% would not decide on child spacing, schooling and health and how they should spend their own time. About 30% would have their personal health, large purchases at home and the acquisition of land be decided by men.

At the national level, budget initiatives may be non-discriminatory in principle, but may not be specifically targeted at the special needs of women.

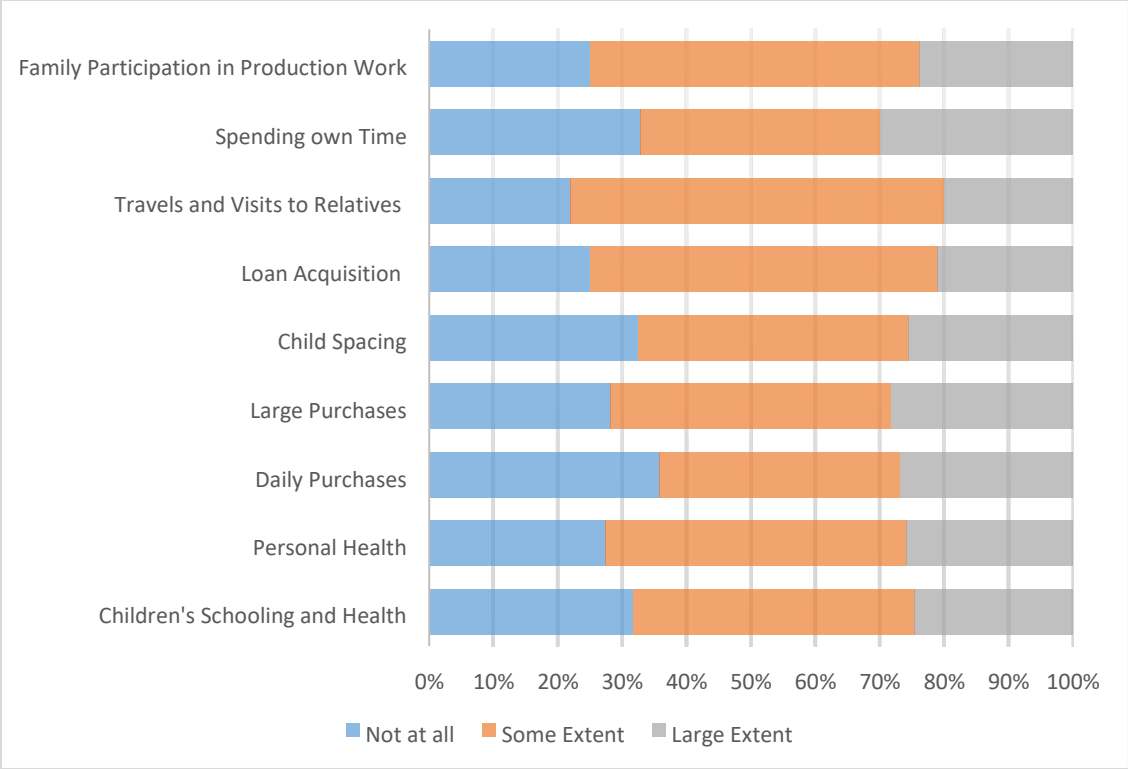


Figure 7. Participation in Decision-Making Processes

The goal of GRB initiatives is to promote equality between women and men by influencing the budgeting process. Collectively, gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) initiatives seek to raise awareness of the effects that budgets have on women and men, hold governments accountable for their commitments to gender equality, and achieve gender-responsive budgeting. Participation in budget decision-making process is one key area of ensuring need-responsiveness. capacity building of elected representatives strengthening the advocacy capacity of women’s NGOs on budget matters increasing the gender sensitivity of participatory budget processes increased capacity of budgetary circulars to align government policies with the budget submissions of departments and agencies recognition of the contributions and costs of the unpaid care labour of women and girls, **(Tasrif, A and Puti Renosari, G (2008))**

7.4 Value of Unpaid Care Work

It is estimated that if women’s unpaid work were imputed monetary value it would constitute between 10% and 39% of GDP. Other studies show that reducing the household time burdens on women could increase agricultural labour productivity by 15% and capital productivity by as much as 44% in some countries. Paid care services have been susceptible to competitive

pressures that generate low-pay and low-quality services adversely affecting both care workers and the recipients of care (Folbre 2006).

In this survey, household monthly income was largely below Le. 500,000 as indicated in figure 8 below. This did not in any way affect the amount of family and community care work. If the energies given to care work indicated in figures 9 & 10 were directed to economic activities or remunerated, the income derived will better that the minimum wage of Le.500,000 offered in Sierra Leone.

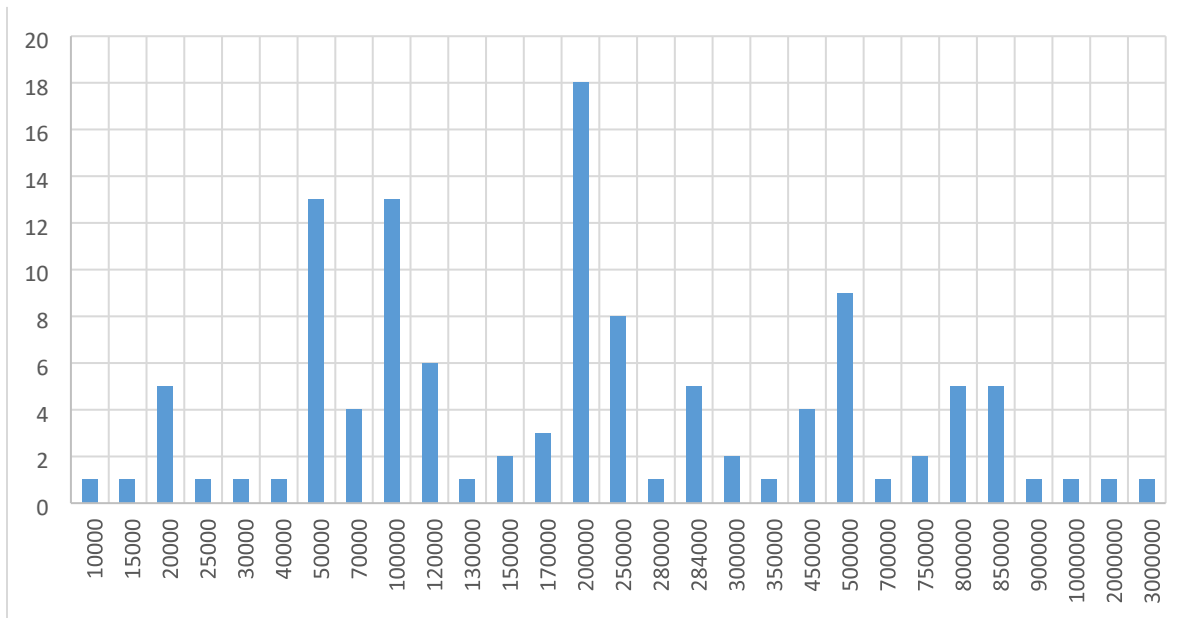


Figure 8. Household Monthly Income

The typology for time use activities included personal care, employment activities, education activities, domestic activities, Child care activities, purchasing activities, voluntary work and care activities, social and community interaction, and recreation and leisure. Figure 9 & 10 below give an indication of activities by women between 5:00 – 6:00 am, and 10:00 – 11:00 pm. It revealed that women spent a considerable amount of time on unpaid work activities combined (productive activities), spanning beyond an 8-hour paid work period. Up to 59% of women would have been up to house chores between 5:00 and 6:00 am; and 30% would still be up and working

until 11:00 pm. When this is estimated, women’s total hours with care responsibility could reach an average of 11 to 12 hours a day.

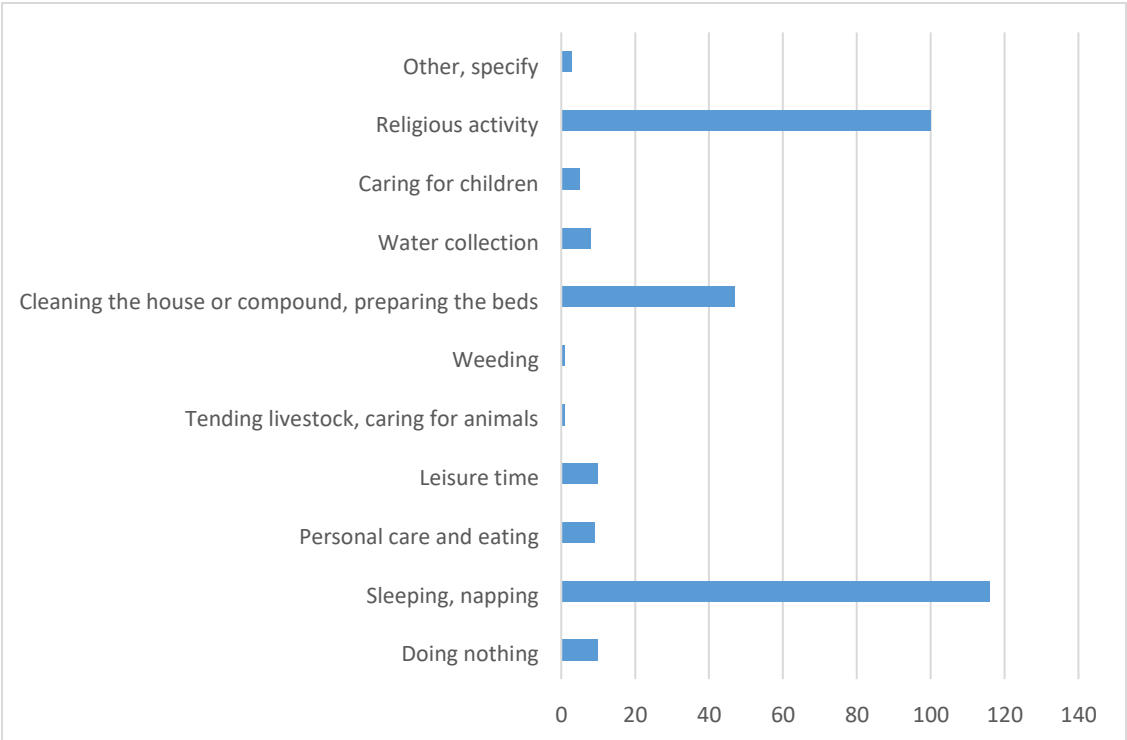


Fig. 9. Activities undertaken by women between 5am and 6 am

Rural women remain at the margins of development, particularly regarding access to productive resources, decent work and their disproportionate burden of Unpaid Care Work. Action Aid research found that, in Bangladesh, women complete nearly eight hours of Unpaid Care Work each day (nearly three times what men do), while in Pakistan women spend over 10 hours daily on Unpaid Care Work.

A five-day working hour is in Sierra Leone is 200 hours to earn the monthly minimum wage of 500,000 leones. If women are engaged for a minimum daily work-hour of 11, which sometimes has no weekends, this would translated into 77 hours a week or not less than 308 hours a month, demanding the much needed attention to the value of the unnoticed economic drivers.

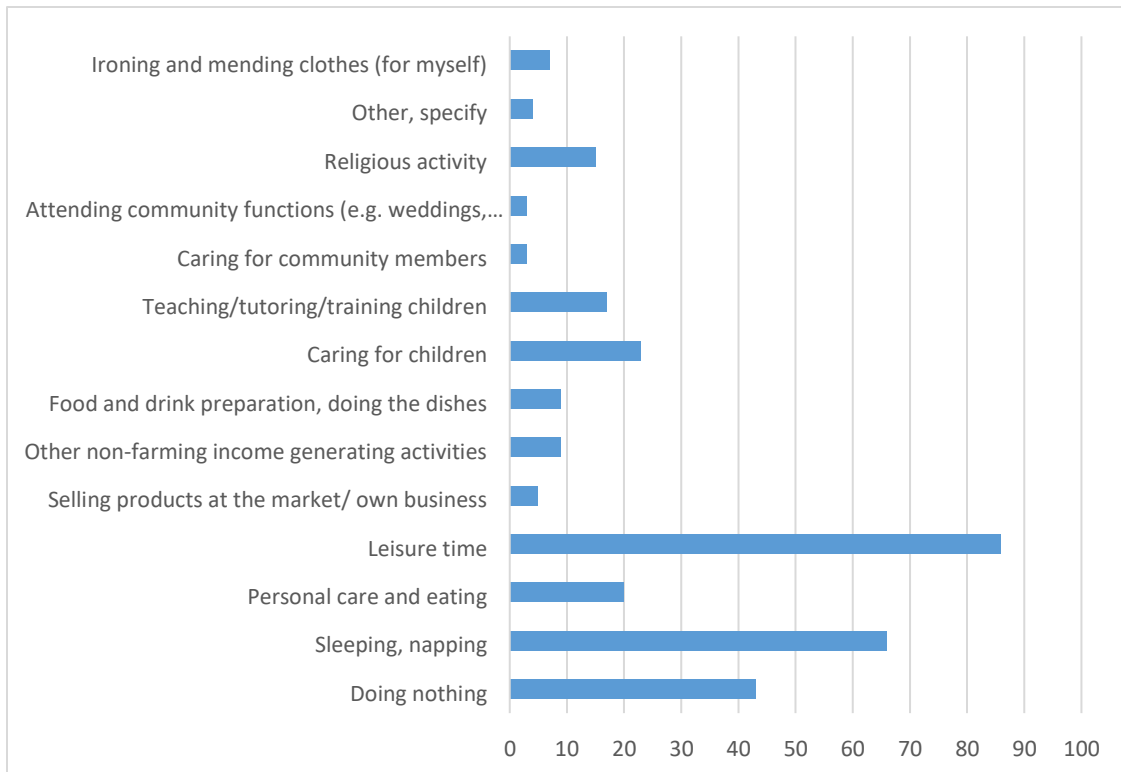


Figure 10. Activities undertaken between 10 pm and 11 pm

7.5 Country's Situation

The following instruments: The Constitution of Sierra Leone, 1991; The Three Gender Acts of Sierra Leone, 2007; the Labour Laws, 1965 amendment, The Local Content Agency Act, 2016 ; the Education Sector Plan – 2018-2020, Education Act – 2004, all provide the legal environment for non-discrimination on the basis of gender and otherwise.

In the Constitution of Sierra Leone, 1991 (Cap III, Sec. 19, sub-sec 2e), provides protection against forced labour that is here further described as communal labour or labour which forms part of other civic obligation. In section 27, the constitution makes provision for non-discrimination on a large note, but stopped short in addressing unpaid care work as discriminatory or forming part of forced labour.

With pressure from the coalition on the gender bills, which comprised representatives from Action Aid, the International Rescue Committee, Oxfam, the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone, and local NGOs, the government of Sierra Leone in June 2007 passed the Domestic Violence Act together with two other Acts, namely the Registration of Customary Marriage Divorce Act and the Devolution of Estates Act, referred to as the Gender Laws of Sierra Leone.

The Domestic Violence Act, 2007 introduced the crime of domestic violence that covers violence occurring in a domestic relationship. It sought to address the high incidence of domestic violence in Sierra Leone sometimes resulting in death.

The Registration of customary Marriage and Divorce Act, 2007 introduced the legal minimum age of marriage to 18 years, providing protection against child and forced marriages, being common place for unhappy union and divorce. Women once considered as part of their husband's property and could also be inherited by the husband's family now had right to own and dispose of property.

Introduced under **Devolution of Estates/Intestate Succession Act, 2007** is that there should be no discrimination between male and female children. They should be treated equally and had the same inheritance right. Also, husband and wife now had right to inherit property from each other. This act was intended to improve the economic status of women allowing them access to acquiring loans, owning property, starting businesses, etc.

Here too, these all-important Three Gender Acts were inadequate in addressing the issue of unpaid care work.

The Employment and Labour law covers a wide range of issues pertaining to the conditions of employment, discriminations, maternity and family leave rights, termination of employment and litigations processes. CAP 212 of the labour laws of Sierra Leone, 1965 provides some

consideration for night work for women. However, this instrument does not have absolute stress on the issue of unpaid care work.

In the **Local Content Act, 2016, Part VIII Sect 55.4 (4)** “All staff employed by Sierra Leonean or foreign companies that hold the same professional category and exercise similar functions, shall enjoy the same benefits such as salary and emoluments as well as working conditions under the principle of equal rights”. This is how far this instrument goes in protecting all from forms of discrimination.

One of the areas of intervention recommended in the **Education Sector Plan 2018-2020** is to improve gender parity or address gender disparity and girls’ participation and to ensure all schools are safe for girls through curbing sexual violence and exploitation in schools. As a recommended intervention that may provide opportunities for women in local communities to engage in paid care work is stated in *Intervention 2b* “Develop strategy and costed action plan for expansion of public pre-school education in existing primary schools, and continue the development and piloting of community-based cost effective pre-primary education models One of the identified ways of expanding provision of pre-school education in other countries with high enrolments at this level, **is to establish centres within existing public primary schools.**”

During the desk review, it was noted that though these documents did not specifically address UPC that is mostly undertaken by girls. The non-discriminatory clauses could be expanded to address issues of women’s empowerment by addressing the issue of UPC.

On another note, which may not be the norm; but in some organizations, especially in the private sector, there was evidence that women lacked full bargaining powers as do the male counterparts. In all communities the presence of the legal framework, and the intervention and advocacy roles of women-focused organizations such as the UNWomen through the He4She campaign, NGOs like Oxfam, Action Aid, have in large part aided awareness-building on men’s reactions to women (Figure 11).

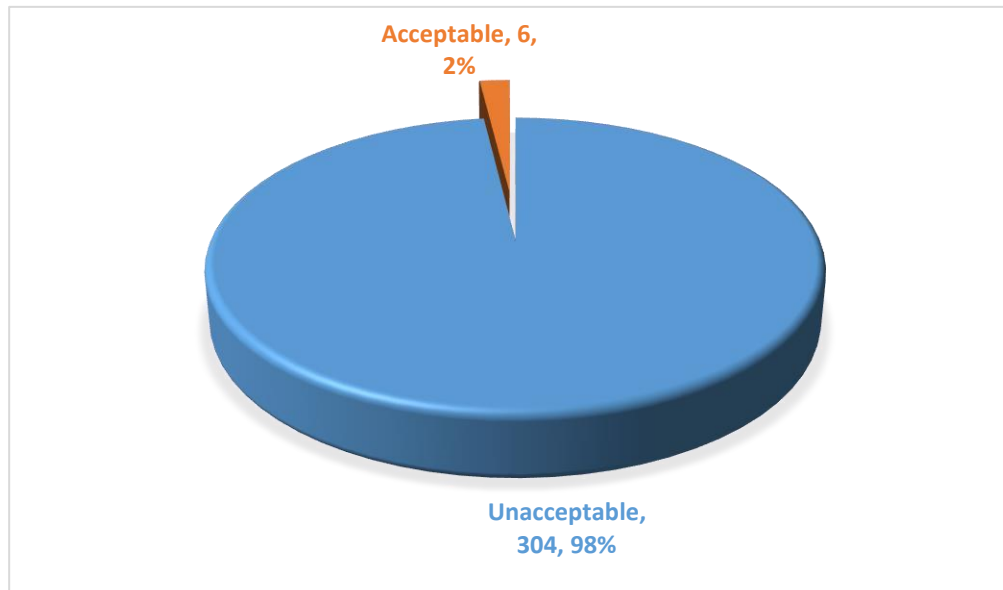


Figure 11. Views of Respondents on Domestic Violence

7.6 Strategies for Raising Awareness

How women's involvement in care work may impact on their participation in development projects can be used to identify how wider programmes can ensure adequate care for vulnerable people.

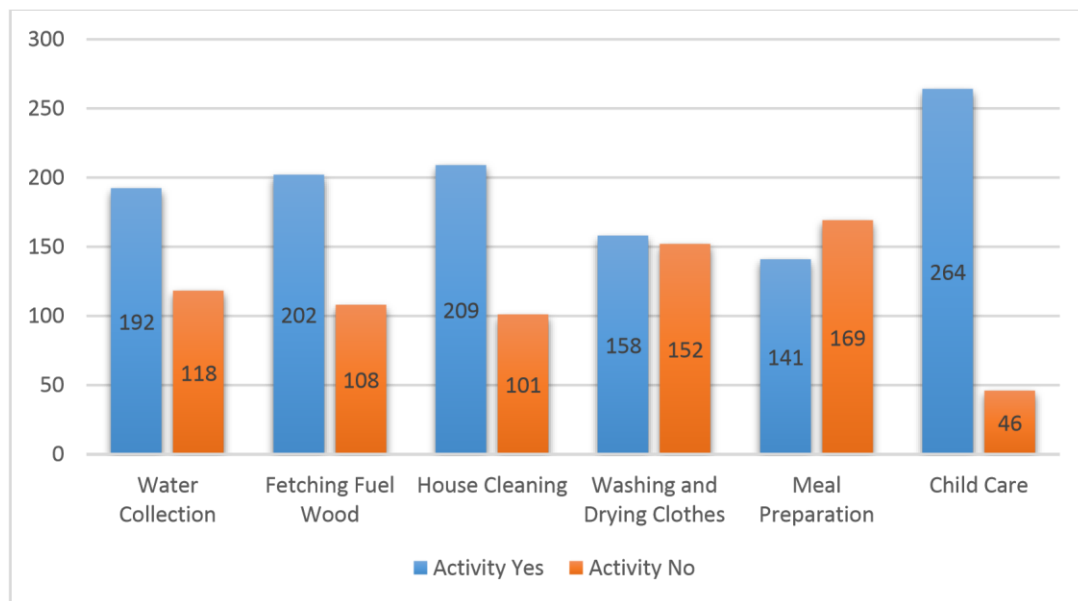


Figure 12a. Perception of Men and Women to Participating in House Chores -

Men's Willingness to Assist

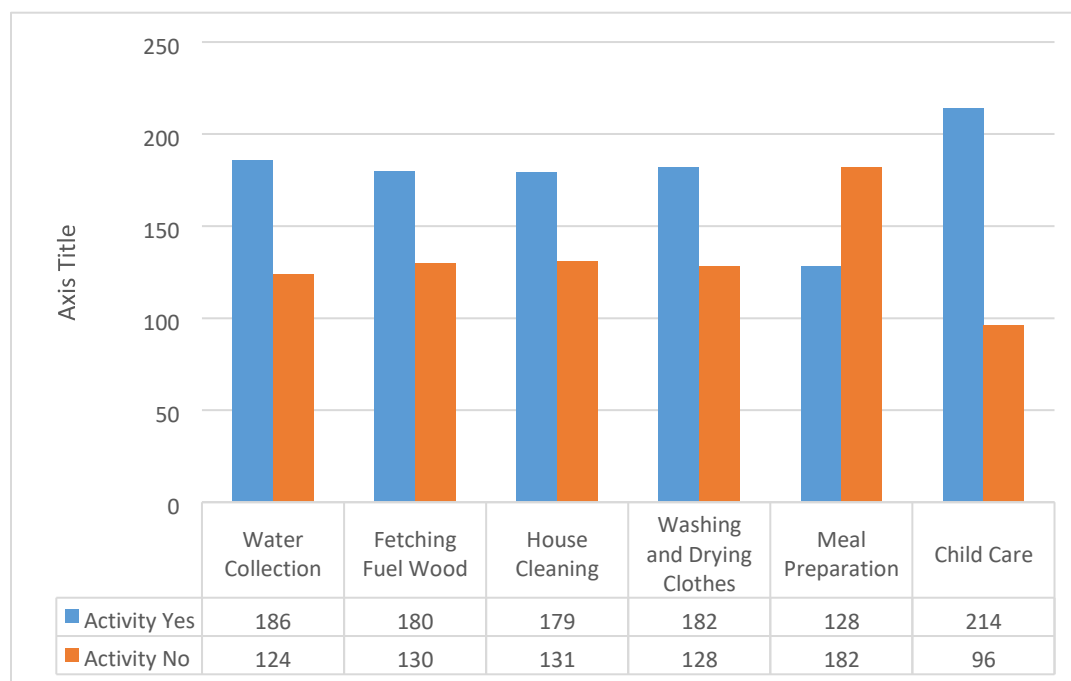


Figure 12b. Perception of Men and Women to Participating in House Chores - B. Women's Views on Men Assisting

As Martinez and Paterna (2009) indicated, gender ideology seems to determine the percentage of tasks considered traditionally feminine by members of the couple, such as washing, ironing,

shopping, cooking, or cleaning. It also generates a differential meaning about household chores for men and women. Studies have shown that there is still a division of house chores by gender, depending on the gender role.

Figures 12a&b above respectively depict the willingness of men participating in house chores, and how much women would love men assisting in the activities around the home. There was an expressive willingness of men participating in fetching water, firewood, house cleaning and with over 85% men willing to assist in childcare. However, washing clothes and preparation of meals were rather left in the hands of women. This was perhaps as a result of women's acceptance of these roles as natural or traditional, as expressed in figure 12b. Some research have shown that role pressure and the degree of participation in the home is likely to create difficulties for participation in work, resulting in the home-work conflict (HWC); conversely, the degree of participation in the work domain can hinder performance on the family role, producing an increase of strain-based, time-based or behavior-based work-home conflict (WHC) (Huang et al., 2004). Men's and women's perceptions of their partners' involvement in household chores contribute significantly to the perception of Work Family Conflict (WFC); their own involvement also contributes significantly to mitigating family conflicts.

The perception of injustice or inequalities is a militating factor on an unequal distribution of domestic work and the perceived quality of the relationship; the relationship may be perceived as satisfactory although the sharing of responsibilities may be unequal, if it is not perceived unfair (Yago and Martínez, 2009). In our findings, except for cooking that was perceived to be female role, all other house chores were viewed to be shared by men and women (figure 12 a&b). In which case, gender ideology and unequal distribution of activities do not generate distress in the more traditional women as it does in women with an equal gender ideology.

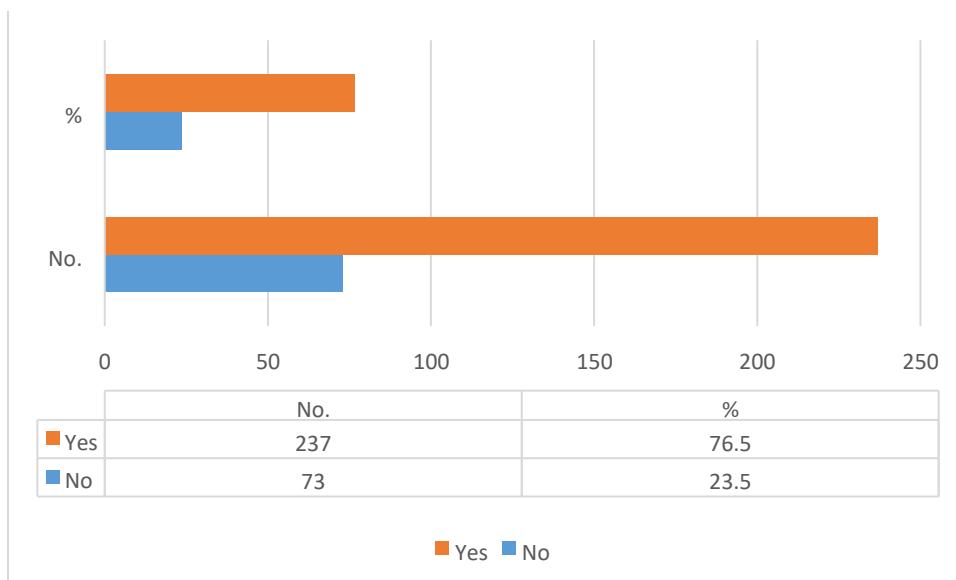


Figure 13. Membership to Groups

Table 3. Group Types to which women belong

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Economic/ producer group	43	13.9	19.1	19.1
	Religious/ social group	71	22.9	31.6	50.7
	Finance/ savings group	102	32.9	45.3	96.0
	Voluntary group for community activities	4	1.3	1.8	97.8
	Other	1	.3	.4	98.2
	Women's group	4	1.3	1.8	100.0
	Total	225	72.6	100.0	
Missing	System	85	27.4		
Total		310	100.0		

Kabeer (1999), provided a concise definition of empowerment as a “process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such ability,” reflecting four features that include: a starting point of disempowerment, or “to be denied choice”; a process should be led by women themselves with other actors only playing a facilitating or supportive role; decision-making power on “strategic life choices; and a process without a fixed end goal or stopping at a given point in time.

In our survey, membership of women to self-help groups was as high as 77% (figure 13), with 33% belonging to finance groups (Table 2), and for which 58% of our respondents had received some amount of training (figure 14).

Labour saving technologies and equipment could help improve the livelihoods of women. Access to these technologies saves time and energy, increase efficiency and the level of control they have over leisure and personal care, enabling them to contribute more effectively to village life. However, the use of cooking stoves over firewood appeared the only time and energy-saving device common in the communities. This corroborates their choice for cooking over other house chores (figure 15).

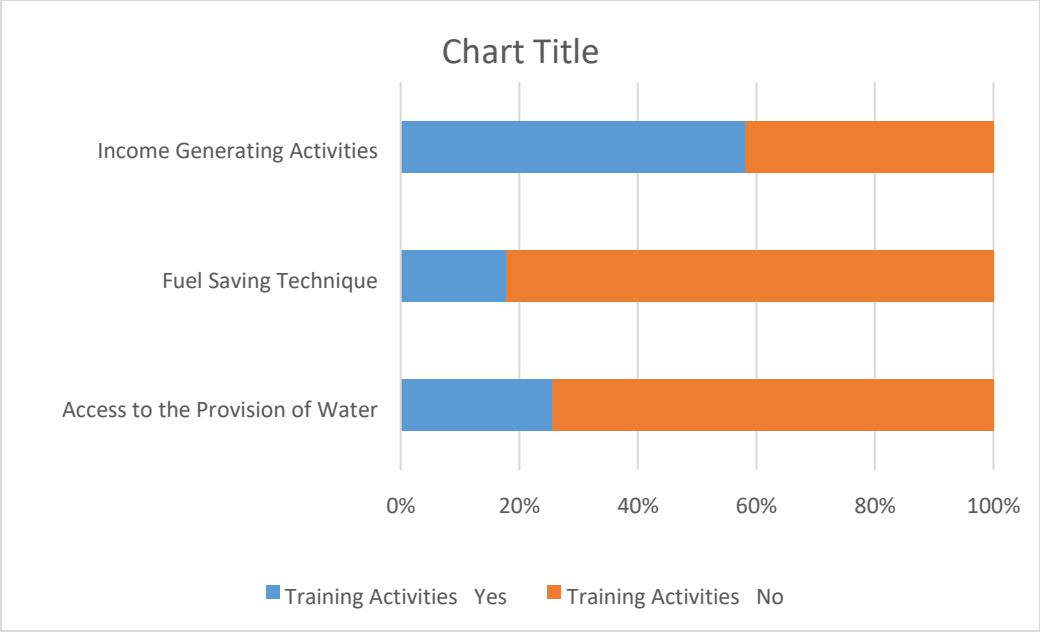


Figure14. Training Activities for Women

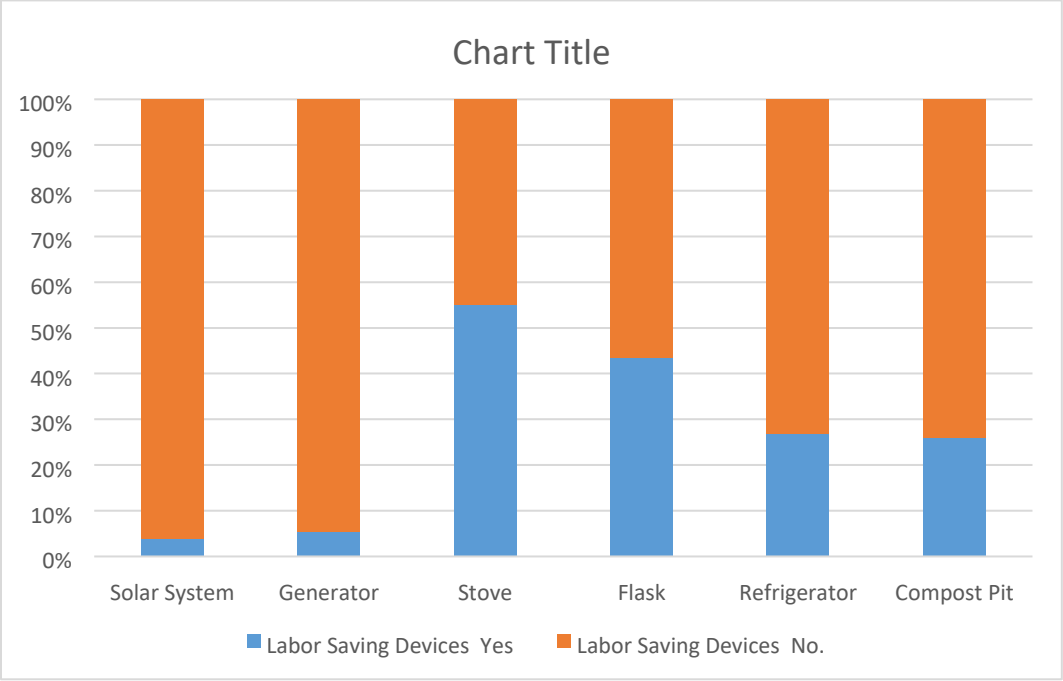


Figure 15. Labour and Time Saving Technologies

Caring for some people is a valued source of self-esteem and social legitimacy (Chant 2002; Molyneux 2007), rather than an injustice. This may not be so for some other groups of people, particularly the socially and economically marginalized ones. The time, effort and other resources used in providing care usually violate the right to health and undermine their quality of life and general wellbeing of the caregiver. The associated exhaustion and stress resulting from the everyday burden of care can be overwhelming. Given that 57% (figure 16) may walk to health facility is indicative of access. This does not however indicate the degree of services provided.

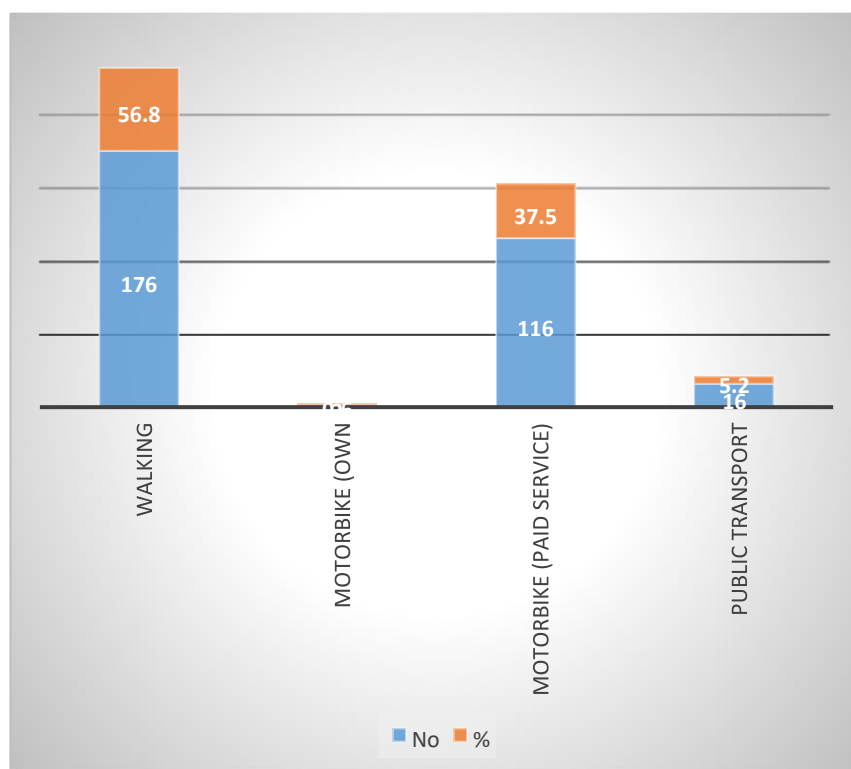


Figure 16. Access to Health Center

8. Conclusions

One of the significant structural barriers to women's economic empowerment revealed in this survey is women's disproportionate burden of unpaid work at home, which restricts women from taking up paid jobs, undertaking advanced education and skills training, and participation in public life. This was in part found to be strongly correlated to societal norms, traditional and religious orientations.

Nonetheless, translated into monetary terms, UPC accounted for 2.4 time the minimum wage of five hundred thousand leones in Sierra Leone.

Secondly household chores if counted and accounted for, have economic value that can contribute to the GDP. There is total lack of data on the contribution of UPC to the GDP in Sierra Leone.

The provision of training initiatives, labour-saving technologies and social infrastructure, such as access to water, sanitation, roads and healthcare can reduce the unequal distribution of unpaid care work between men and women.

Policy environment that makes provision for investments in family care services, maternity and paternity leave policies, and flexible work arrangements can improve access to decision making.

9. Recommendations

9.1 Programme intervention

Programmes to reduce burden of unpaid care work based on the literature surveyed revealed that government, NGO, international organisations and aid agencies are required to intervene by adopting measures to reduce the excess and unequal burden of unpaid work on women through investment in time-saving infrastructure such as safe water sources within easy reach, clean and affordable domestic fuels, availability of electricity and institutionalized care homes for children, elderly and sick can free up women's time for paid work.

In addition to making unpaid care work visible and recognizing its crucial economic value, another solution to the problem of valuing care lies in engaging father and all men as vital participants in creating and sustaining an infrastructure of care.

Another strategy could be to convert unpaid care work into paid jobs, including through statefunded or market-driven care services. This strategy if properly targeted and effectively implemented could result in higher GDP to the extent that time saved by women is used for paid work. Beside GDP, it would have other positive effects such as more women could be financially independent, and there may be intergenerational benefits for the children of earning mothers (Woetzel 2015), as daughters raised by an employed mother spend less time on housework, are better compensated and are more likely to hold supervisory positions than daughters whose mothers stayed home fulltime (McGinn et al 2015).

The 'Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP) Scheme' administered in India for example imparts skills related to employability and entrepreneurship specifically in the sectors like Agriculture, Horticulture, Food Processing, Handlooms, Tailoring, Stitching, Embroidery, Zari etc, Handicrafts, Computer & IT enable services along with soft skills and skills for the work place such as spoken English, Gems & Jewellery, Travel & Tourism, Hospitality.

In an example of the He4She initiative of the United Nations Women (UN Women) in Sierra Leone, experience suggests that participatory action oriented methodologies, involving both men and women, increases recognition of unpaid care work within communities and key stakeholders a year after of implementing them. Also, participatory workshops can create awareness around unpaid care, help actors better understand their roles and connections within the system, and start the process of building a common vision for the system.

Identifying all relevant system actors including, market actors (e.g. companies) and 'nonmarket' actors, at the household (including men as well as women), religious and traditional leaders, advocacy groups, community, local or government levels, and finding incentives and leverage points when addressing unpaid care related constraints will result in increased value. For example the government may have existing policies supportive of changes that would address root causes of women's time and mobility constraints, but these may be poorly coordinated and implemented. These can be good entry points for interventions.

Although not a prominent issue to deal with in Sierra Leone, there exist semblance of gender wage gap in some NGOs. Promoting the elimination of gender wage gaps (women's lower wages compared to men's) directly impact women's opportunity costs for entering into paid employment. The benefits and costs of women versus men going to work are weighed against the benefits and costs of women versus men staying at home undertaking unpaid care work. Because women's opportunity can be costed lower than men's, households tend to decide that it is more economically practical for the woman to stay home

The implementation of GALS (Gender Action Learning System) as a methodology specifically focused on promoting gender justice was developed under Oxfam Novib's Women's Empowerment Mainstreaming and Networking (WEMAN) programme including work with Microfinance Institutions in Latin America, Asia and Sudan linked to the Micro Credit Summit and

work on value chains in Uganda, Rwanda and Nigeria under a co-funded Gender and Value Chain (GENVAD) project proved to be a successful implementation strategy.

Robust awareness raising through radio and television discussions, jingles, folksongs, music and entertainment industries, and outreach programmes in schools and other public institutions would prove worthy in creating the need transformation.

9.2 Policy Stimulation

There is a wide range of possible policy interventions: cash payments in the form of caregivers' allowance or citizen's wage (more gender-neutral than a mothers' pension); taxation allowances; different types of paid and unpaid leave from employment; social security credits and social services.

There is need to factor in care as a serious economic and social policy issue, rather than assume that there is an unlimited supply of it flowing from a natural inexhaustible source (Elson 2005; Folbre 2001). At the same time, gender analysis of labour markets, which draws attention to the family, care and welfare arrangements that interlock with the labour-market system, points to unpaid caring responsibilities as an obstacle to the expansion of female employment (Orloff 2002; Rubery et al. 2001).

Gender responsive budgeting requiring recognition of the costs and the contributions of women's unpaid care labour in government funding arrangements can be central to the efficient and equitable design of programs and their funding. There is needs to be a match between resources, and the objectives of new programs and laws; and gender budgeting can assist in that process. For example, implementation of the 1999 South African Domestic Violence Act was costed by the civil society Women's Budget initiative (Budlender *et al.*, 2002).

While paid and unpaid leave provisions may seem marginally relevant to countries like Sierra Leone where the great bulk of employment is of the informal kind and involves self-employment,

there are also a number of important social policy options in developing countries that affect the social rights and inclusion of those who provide unpaid care, for example, the design of pension systems and the extent to which they recognize unpaid work as a “contribution”, the provision and design of health and education services and the design of various family and child benefits (Razavi 2007).

Paternity leave can make provisions for male Central Government employee with less than two surviving children for a few weeks to take care of his wife and new born child. The efforts aimed at increasing women wage employment would also help in reducing unpaid care burden on women and girls. As more women enter paid jobs that are more stable and higher paying, they can help to fuel economic growth, while growth brings more urbanization and wage jobs that move women out of unpaid and less productive work.

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