

A New Approach to An Old Debate:
Care Responsibilities and Women's Work in Bangladesh

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Overview

- Literature Review: focused on care responsibilities and FLFP
- What's new in our approach: Focus on the location of work and time allocation between care responsibilities and productive labor hours with LFS data
- Empirical Analysis: Gender differences across Location of Work, Age, Education, Occupation, and Time use
- Regression Results
- Conclusion

Female Labor Force Participation (FLFP) and care responsibilities in the global literature

- Assaad et al. (2017) (Middle-east) domestic responsibilities inelastic
 - Married women work a second shift at home to work outside the home
- Hoodfar (1997): (Egypt) Injunctive gender norms
 - working outside the home is acceptable only after fulfilling domestic responsibilities
- Elson (1999): women's weak position in terms of earnings and occupations
 - Domestic work penalizes women in the labor market
- Ferrant et al. (2014): gender inequality in unpaid care work is the missing link in the analysis of gender gaps in labor outcomes, such as labor force participation, wages, and job quality.

FLFP and care responsibilities in Bangladesh

- Amin (1997) : time use divide between home and the world
 - women spend 60 % of their time in food preparation and other household work, while men spend most of their time in crop cultivation and wage labor.
- Zohir (1998) : women's work unpaid
 - Women work much longer hours of unpaid work: 31 hours on average for women, compared to 13 hours for men.
- Kotikula et al. (2019); (Tas & Ahmed, 2021): share of care responsibilities mostly falls on women
 - Urban women spent about six hours per day on household domestic tasks and unpaid care work, while urban men spent only one hour per day on these activities.
 - having children aged under five reduces the chances of labor market participation, working, and being an earner.
 - In terms of time-use, they find that mothers of young children with no access to childcare spend less time on market work, more time on unpaid work, and less time on leisure or other activities.

What's new in our approach?

- Role of care responsibilities in women's labor market choices
 - i) infant and child care;
 - ii) aging-in-place and home-care provision for older adults and adults with disabilities;
 - iii) household management; and
 - iv) non-home-based long-term care for older adults and adults with disabilities
- Mostly takes place at home (Andrew et al. 2020; Peng, 2021).

What's new in our approach? (Continued)

- Broadening the scope from paid vs unpaid work to a locational measure. Most studies analyze female labor force participation through the lens of paid and unpaid work, or in terms of sector of work.
 - a) Not in the labor force:**
 - b) Unemployed (in the labor force):**
 - c) Employed (in home/in front of home):**
 - d) Employed (outside home)**

More precise estimates of women's allocation of time between productive and domestic hours and its implication for their labor market outcomes through utilizing information on time use provided in the data.

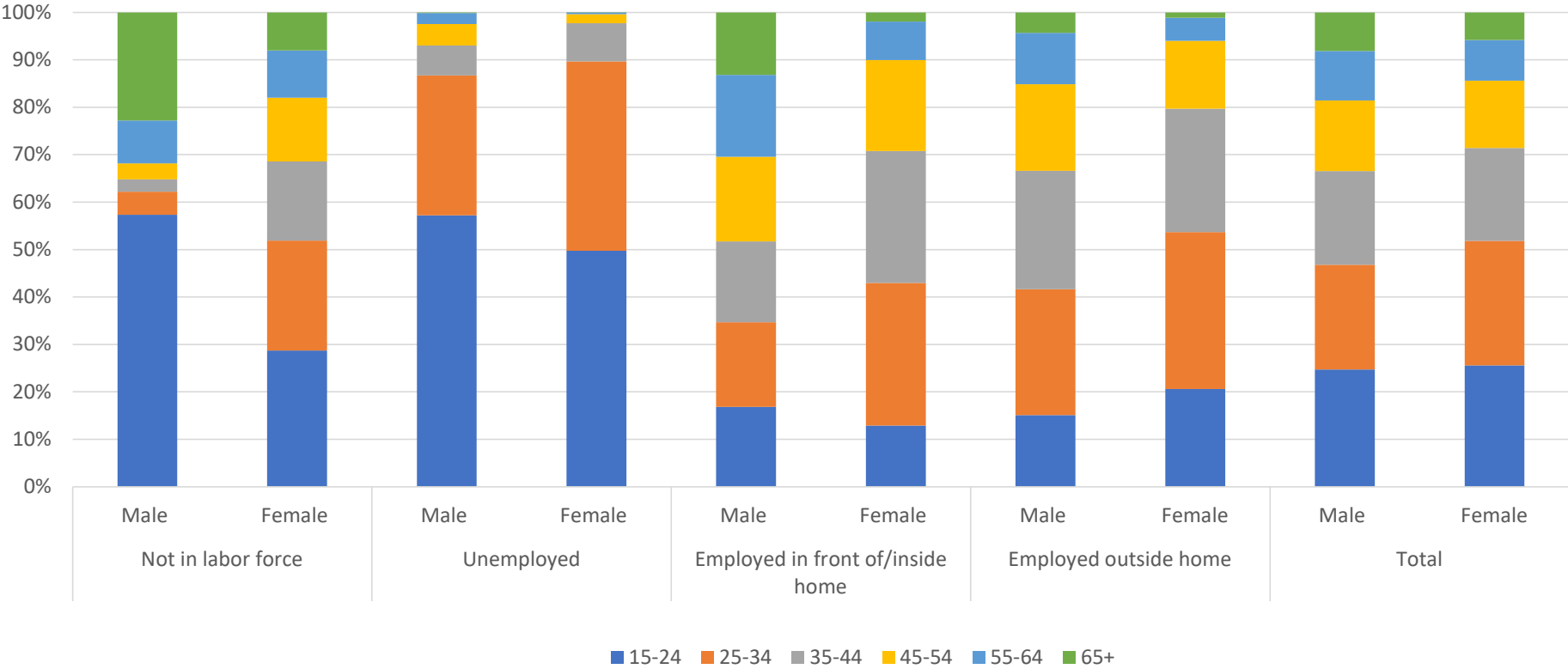
What's new in our approach? (Continued)

- Age: Youngest females have the lowest LFP. Building human capital or sharing care responsibilities?
- Education: How do educated women allocate their time between labor and care hours?
- Family Structure:
 - Young children in the household
 - Living in joint families- helps household management?
- Occupations and Location of work
- Rural-Urban differences in LFP- What could be behind the diverging patterns?

According to Labor Force Survey 2016

Share of all age groups almost equal in out of LF for women... **pursuing education and being of retirement age is not a key reason for women to be out of the labor force, compared to men.**

Age composition of work categories by gender

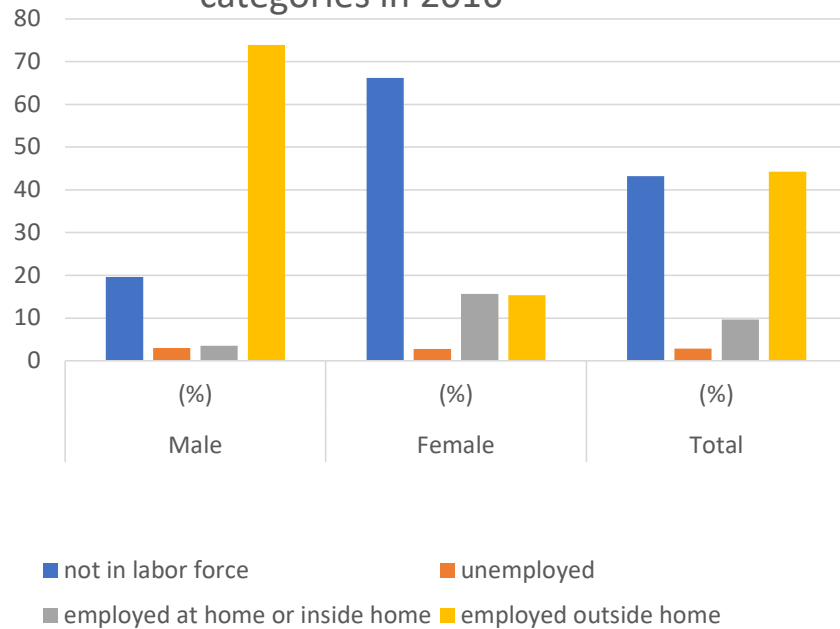


Reasons for being out of labor force: Women spend more time on household chores and less time on building human capital

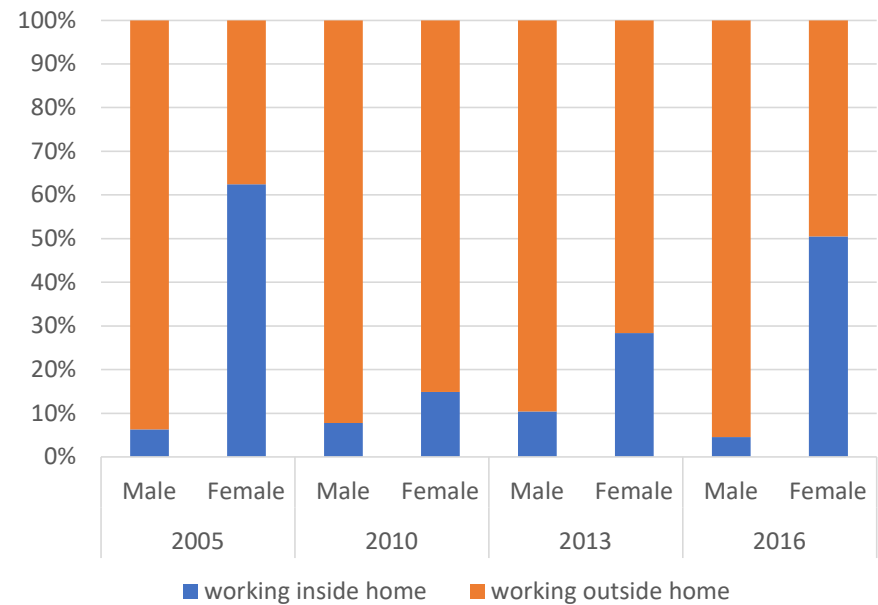
	Male (%)	Female (%)
Illness/injury	24	3
In School / training	48	12
Housework/ family work	9	81
N	32,660	112,820

A big proportion of women work at and around homes and the share is increasing.....

Gender distribution across work categories in 2016

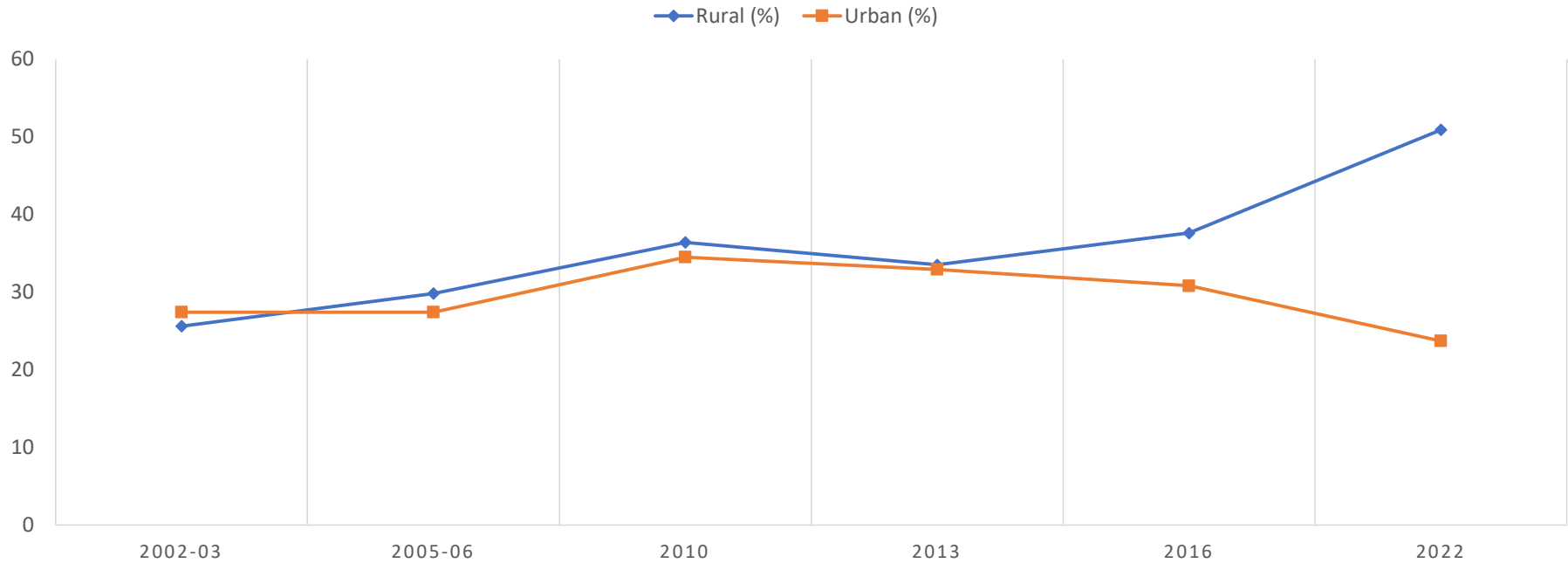


Changes in workplace location across gender



Rising FLFP is driven by women in rural areas where scope of home-based jobs are high

RURAL-URBAN DISTRIBUTION OF FLFP

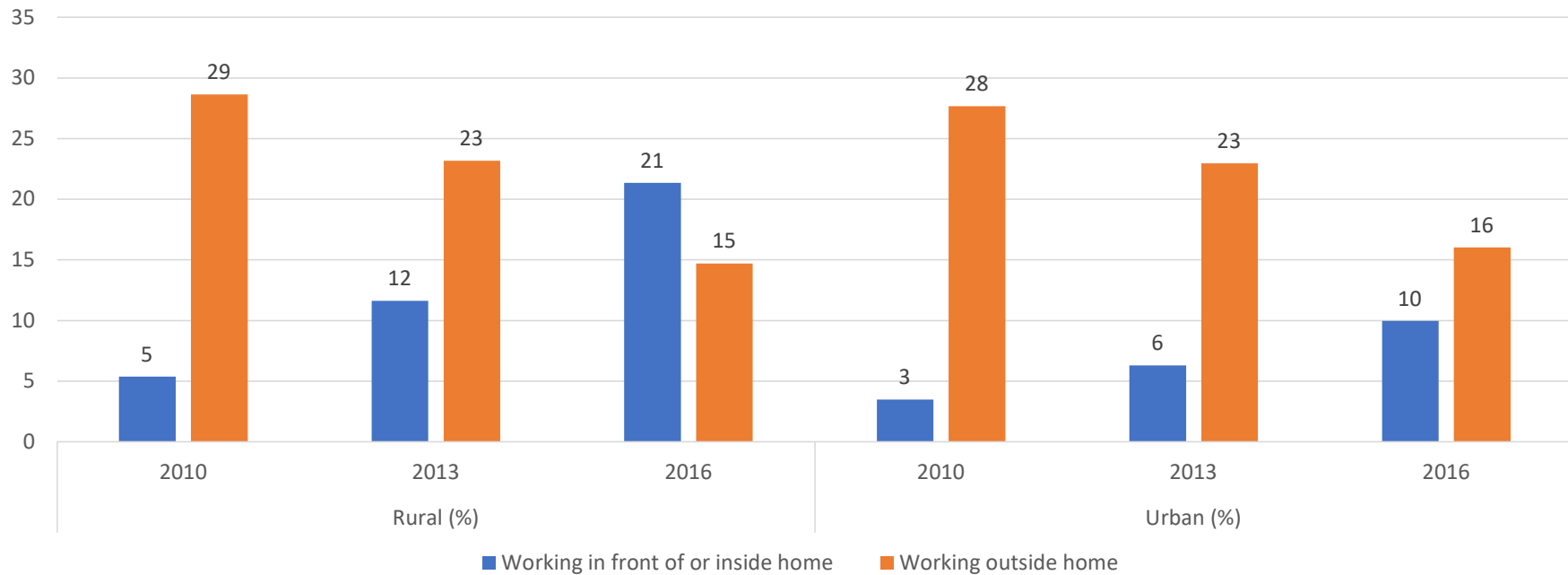


Women's occupation: Bulk of women work in agriculture based jobs

- Almost two-thirds of the women in home-based jobs are engaged in agriculture-related activities, mostly as animal producers).
- Among those who work outside home, the share of agriculture-related occupations still remains the highest, although the share decreases to around 25%.

Proportion of women working outside is falling and home-based work is rising

Rural-urban distribution of location of work for females

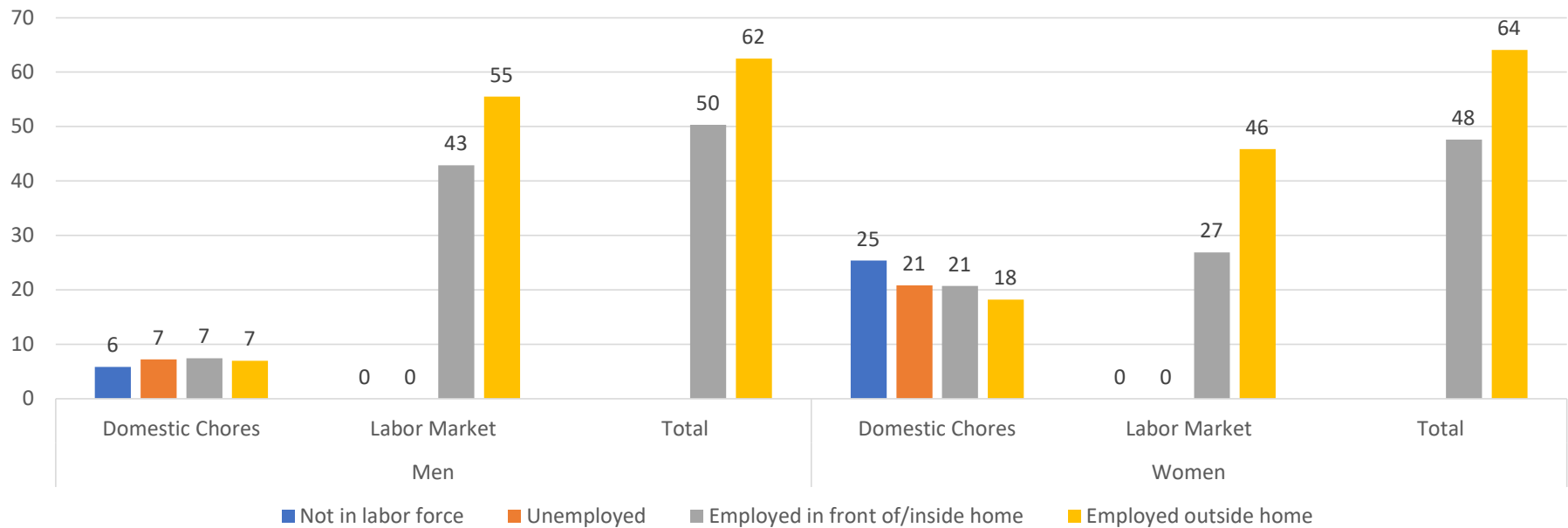


Data & Methodology:

- We use the latest round of nationally representative LFS data (2016), collected by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.
- Based on the question of the location of the workplace and definition of labor force participation, we categorize working-age (aged 15 and above) women into four groups for our descriptive as well as econometric analysis

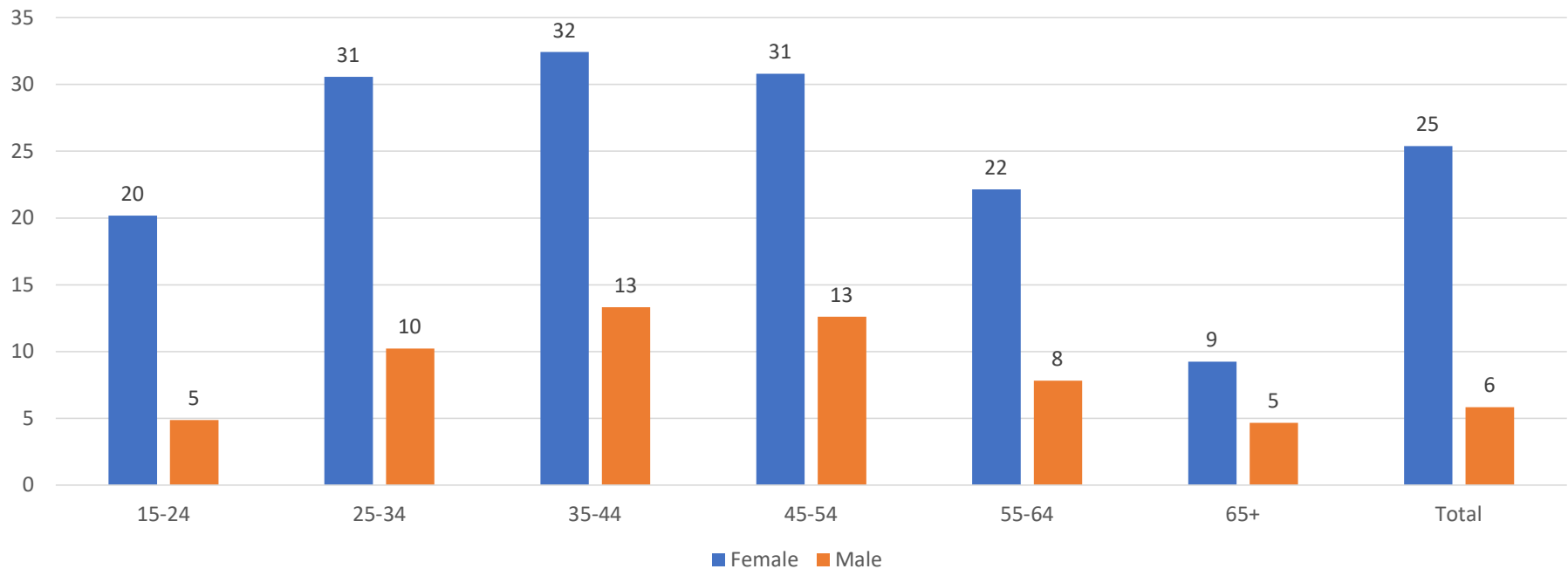
Women in general spend almost three to four times as much time as men in domestic chores - time spent in domestic work is relatively invariant within gender by work status – women seek flexibility in labor hours

Average weekly time-use in domestic and productive work across gender
(hours per week)



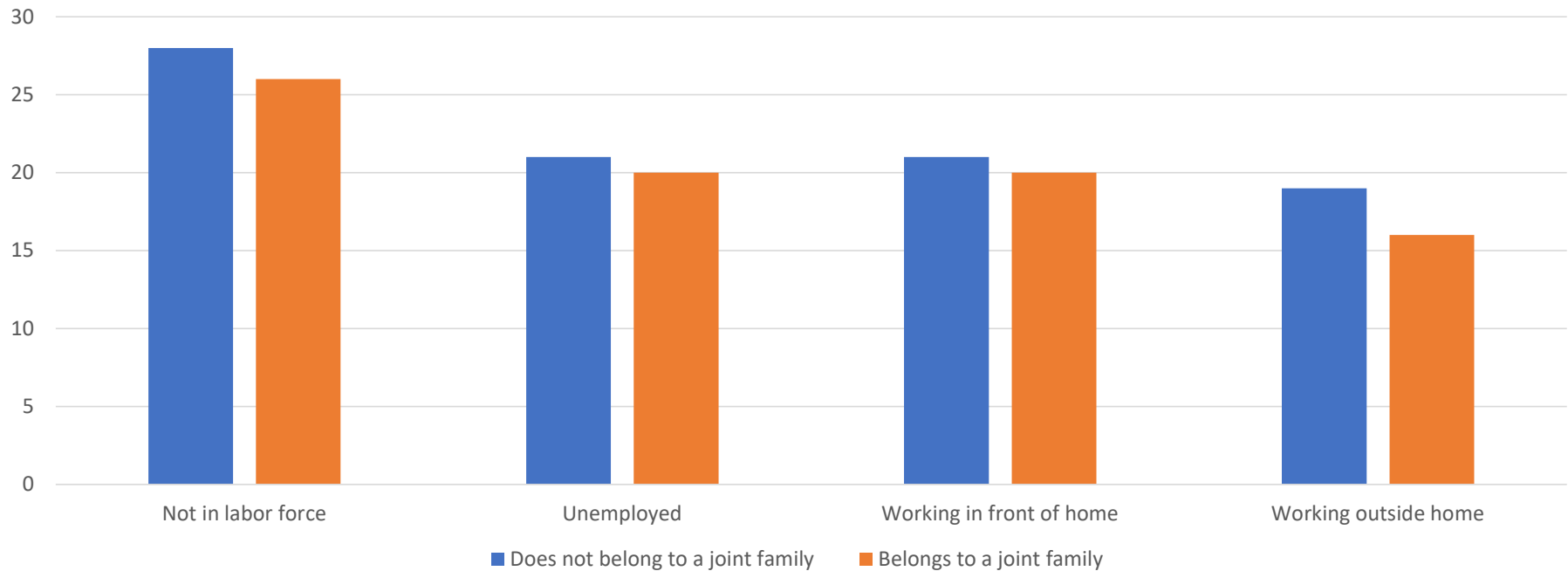
Young girls spent 20 hours a week on average in domestic chores, and young men spend only about one-fifth of the time.
Women belonging to the retired age group (65+) still spend almost double the time as men in domestic chores

Age-wise mean hours spent in domestic chores for those not in labor force



There is little difference in hours spent on domestic chores for unemployed females and females employed in front of or inside home – joint family works as a source of care support

Average hours spent per week in care responsibilities for women by joint families



Regression Models

- Model A1 shows multinomial logit regression results for female sample.
- The dependent variable has four categories.
- The results show a relative risk ratio.
- A relative risk ratio of less than one indicates a lower likelihood, and, if the value is more than one, it suggests an increase in the likelihood.

Regression Models (Continued)

- we also ran the same MNL estimation (Model A2) on the subsample of females who have children aged five or below.
- Independent variables for the regression analysis are: Rural area dummy, Age, Division, Hours spent in domestic work dummy, Children dummy, Household size, Joint family dummy, Injured/Ill household member dummy, Education, Marital Status, Wealth index, Household's main income source
- Next, we estimate a Seemingly Unrelated Regression Model (Model B) to explore the factors that explain domestic and productive time use, since they are likely to be interrelated to each other.

What changes the likelihood of being outside the labor force for women:

- The likelihood increases for individuals aged 55 or above in comparison to the age group 15-24 and decreases for other age groups.
- Compared to some or completed primary education, tertiary education decreases the likelihood but secondary education increases it.
- The likelihood increases with greater time spent on domestic work and having children under 5
- coming from a joint family has the opposite effect.
- having an injured or ill member in the household also decreases the possibility

Having joint family decreases the likelihood of being in home-based work for women:

- The likelihood decreases if the individual is in an urban area compared to rural areas.
- increases for all age groups in comparison with the age group 15-24.
- Compared to some or completed primary education, having no education increases the likelihood
- On the other hand, higher secondary and tertiary education decreases the likelihood.
- Again, spending more time on domestic work, having children under 5 increases the likelihood
- while having a joint family and an injured or ill member in the household decreases the likelihood

Women with no children under five, tertiary education and joint family spends more time on labor market and less on domestic chores

- We find that work hours increase slightly and hours spent on care responsibilities decrease somewhat for women in urban areas relative to rural areas.
- Women who have children aged under five experience a decrease in productive hours and an increase in care hours relative to those who have no children.
- belonging to joint families increases productive hours and decreases care responsibilities.
- Both lower and higher secondary education groups experience a fall in hours spent in these activities. However, those with tertiary education experience an increase in labor hours and a decrease in care responsibilities.

Limitations of the Findings

- the definition of home-based work may have changed from one round of survey to another, rendering over-time change difficult to capture and interpret.
- Second, information on time use does not allow us to disaggregate the shares of time spent in specific care responsibilities, etc.
- Third, the lack of data on fertility and family structure forced us to use a weak proxy for living arrangements.

Conclusion

- A big proportion of women work at and around homes and the share is increasing
- Proportion of women working outside is falling and home-based work is rising
- pursuing education and being of retirement age is not a key reason for women to be out of the labor force, compared to men.
- Women spend more time on household chores and less time on building human capital
- Having a joint family is positively associated with female labor force participation, especially for employment outside the home
- Those with tertiary education experience an increase in labor hours and a decrease in care responsibilities.

Gender Dimensions and Policy Implications

- Women are largely responsible for care work which drives their preference for working from home and the increasing trend in working from home-- this emphasizes the need for better support for informal work as well as the gig economy rather than the exclusive focus on the formal sector that characterizes labor policies to date.
- Women working from home and in the rural/agricultural sector are rising rapidly calling for the need to support such work by women. Sectors such as agro-processing deserve greater attention
- Young men and women ages 15-24 differ greatly in terms of unemployment—due to this being the prime age for childbearing for women while men enter childbearing later. Policies to delay marriage and childbirth can have strong follow-on effects on women's workforce participation and deserves further investments.

Thank you