

Importance of Unpaid Care for Women's Rights and Empowerment

Mona Sherpa

Unpaid care work (UCW) is a significant human rights issue. It is an important aspect to sustain human development, family and the society. The importance of nurturing and caring for personal, family, and societal well-being cannot be undermined. It is proven fact through various research studies and particularly time diary that globally, women and girls spend substantially more time compared to men in unpaid care work. According to the "Gender Gap Report" of the research entitled "World Economic Forum" carried by OECD (Organization for Economic Development and Corporation) in 29 countries round the globe; comparatively male carries light work and spent 7 hour 47 minutes of their time at work daily (Parker, 2017). While women work longer hours than men when unpaid work is taken into account, be it unpaid care work, unpaid work, or paid care work. The study conducted in Nepal in four different areas of two different districts i.e. Sarlahi and Terathum, by Action Aid in 2011, it is noted that 'women work a total of 688 hours per day compared to only 485 hours for men. This means that, on average, Nepali women work 1.4 hours for every one hour worked by Nepali men.' In the same study it was found that 'excluding sleeping, men spend longer time than women on self-care, social and cultural activities such as socializing with friends and mass media use including listening to radio. The pattern in respect of social and cultural activities and mass media use confirms the traditional male = public: female = private dichotomy. This division says that women's main area of operation is in the home, while men's main area is outside the home. This type of thinking contributes to men's domination on public decision-making' (Action Aid, 2011).

The whole notion of men as 'breadwinner' and women as 'caretaker' is based on patriarchal beliefs which recognizes the role of women limited to mostly social reproduction and care work. Women's roles as traditional caregivers, is highly demanding and it contributes to the wellbeing of the family, society; both household and overarching economy, and also to ensure rights to those who receive care. Though under-recognized, the responsibility of care work is essential and time consuming and since it mostly takes place in private domain, it is often invisible and undervalued. Unpaid care work takes up a significant amount of time, which results to curbed social, economic, political, and public life.

The study done by HELVETAS Swiss Interco-operation in Belpata VDC of Dailekh district within the period of a year with average of 3 months' time diary collection has reported that while men engage more in paid work i.e. 185 minutes per day compared to 44 minutes of women, engagement of women in housework is 319 minutes per day compared with 56 minutes per day of men. Engagement of women in collection of fuel, collection of water, care of children, care of adult is more than that of men from the same household whereas engagement of men in paid GDP work, Unpaid GDP work (57 minutes more than women), learning, mass media use, sleeping and other self-care is more than that of women from the same household. This also

indicates and proves that women's disproportionate responsibility for the care work has severe consequences on their ability to enjoy their other rights and freedom (Moussie, 2010).

Similarly, evidences suggests that unpaid care work also leads to a state of illiteracy, unhealthiness, economic dependency, wage differences, time poverty, vulnerability to any kinds of risks and ultimately to the state of poverty, exclusion and powerlessness for both men and women. As published in OECD policy issue, 2014, '*Unpaid Care Work: The Missing link in the analysis of Gender gaps in labor outcomes*' 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 and tackling entrenched gender norms and stereotypes is a first step in redistributing responsibilities for care and housework between women and men (Ferrant, Pesando and Nowacka, 2014). The share of women involved in non-agricultural wage work has increased from 19.9 per cent in 2009 to 44.8 per cent in 2011 (Ghosh et.al., 2017). Considering the changed definition of economic activities in the *Nepal Living Standards Survey (NLSS) 2010/11* as extended economic activities i.e. with the inclusion of the collection of goods for own consumption, such as collection of fodder/firewood and fetching of water, women's engagement as labor force is in increasing trend. Despite high rates of labor force participation, there are distinct gender gaps in wage rates in the informal sector. The average daily wage rate for women is Rs 189; whereas for men it is Rs. 286 (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011). Moreover, the majority of women who are involved in wage employment are confined to low skilled and low paid work in the informal sector (Lokshin and Glinskaya 2009). Unequal distribution of unpaid care work based on gender division of role/labor is both the cause and the effect of unequal power-relation between women and men in both private and public sphere. There has been very little engagement on the issue of women's unpaid care work in Nepal by communities and the state. One of the earliest attempts to engage with the issue was made in 1979 as part of the Status of Women in Nepal report (Acharya and Bennett 1983), which showed that women in rural Nepal spent 10.81 hours daily on unpaid care work, including subsistence farming and animal care (around three hours more than men). A recent effort of study women's unpaid care work in Nepal was attempted by ActionAid in 2013 (Budlender and Moussie 2013), which found that women on average spent 268 minutes per day on housework (which includes cooking, cleaning, washing, shopping) in comparison to 56 minutes per day spent by men (Ghosh et.al, 2017).

Importance of addressing the unequal distribution of care work- both paid and unpaid between women and men, as a significant measure for women's empowerment and gender equality was emphasized in the Beijing Declaration and platform for Action in 1995. Realization on the poor status of women and their invisible, devalued and cost-free contribution through the lifetime care work to sustain the family, society and economy, led to the recognition of the issue in 1995 document. The UN Convention on the *Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW) has recognized women's disproportionate burden of care in General recommendation 21, "*The responsibilities that women have to bear and raise children will affect their right to access education, employment and other activities related to their personal*

development. They also impose inequitable burdens of work on women.” Even the recent report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights has positioned unpaid care work as a major human rights issue, arguing *that heavy and unequal care responsibilities are a major barrier to gender equality and to women’s equal enjoyment of human rights, and, in many cases condemn women to poverty, by creating and exacerbating inequalities and threatening women’s rights enjoyment.* Sarah Cook, UNRISD Director has highlighted that, *“Unpaid care work underpins economic growth and productivity, equity and social cohesion, but the cost of providing care is unequally borne, whether by gender, class or other lines of inequality. While much is known about the issue, getting care onto policy agendas has been a challenge, because unpaid work and care are marginalized in mainstream economic thinking, and because the women’s movement has failed to mobilize around the agenda.”* (Freedman and Wengler, 2013)

Women’s role as care provider can undermine their right to decent work, health, education and political organization. The violation of these rights then reinforces gender inequalities- due to their more limited access to education as girls; women later find themselves in lower paying and insecure employment when the economic necessity forces them to engage in market economy. This puts additional strain on women’s time and energy and also constraints their mobility impeding their access to several opportunities for their empowerment and claiming of rights. The study done by Oxfam, ISST and IDS has shown that high care dependency ratios exacerbates the lack of options for women, and more so in female-headed nuclear families. Women with high care dependency were unable to participate in Women’s Economic Empowerment (WEE) programs because of lack of enabling measures within the program (childcare facilities at worksites), the nature and location of work, and a lack of family support that would allow them to participate without worrying for their children. Whereas, the study also noted that women’s participation in various forms of paid work increased with a decrease in the number of small children in their care. The burden is felt more acutely when women living in poverty have no choice but to engage in both paid work and unpaid care work to maintain their households. Point 8 of the General recommendation 23 (CEDAW) has pointed out that, *“Relieving women of some of the burdens of domestic work would allow them to engage more fully in the life of their communities. Women’s economic dependence on men often prevents them from making important political decisions and from participating actively in public life. Their double burden of work and their economic dependence, coupled with the long and inflexible hours of both public and political work, prevent women from being more active.”* (UN SEED committee)

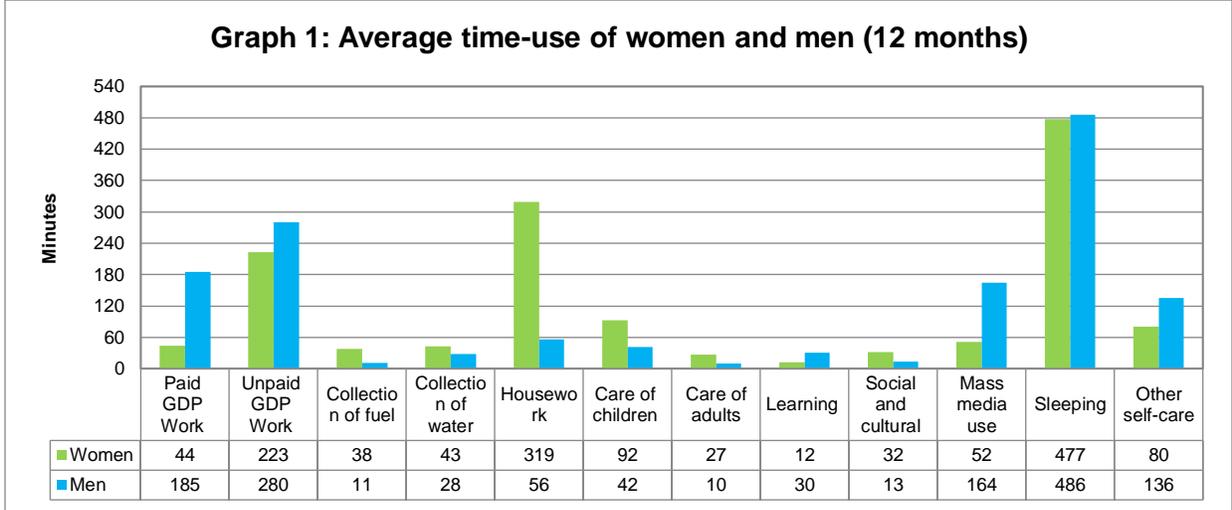
The feminization of care responsibility

Unpaid care work: *“The term ‘unpaid’ differentiates this care from paid care provided by employees in the public and NGO sectors and employees and self-employed persons in the private sector. The word ‘care’ indicates that the services provided nurture other people. The word ‘work’ indicates that these activities are costly in time and energy and are undertaken as obligations (contractual or social).”*(Diane Elson, 2000)

Unpaid care work refers to the activities done around the home and in the community. Otherwise, known as ‘domestic work’ or ‘household work’, unpaid care work refers to work that contributes to meeting the basic physical and emotional needs of individuals, families and communities. It includes care of children, elderly people, people who have fallen ill, as well as, housework, preparing and cooking food, collecting firewood, fuel and water, etc. Care work is central to human and social wellbeing and the responsibilities can be carried out by households and families (women and men) and state, private sector and civil society actors- the responsibility is distributed differently in different societies as the role is socially ascribed. It is demanding, unrelenting work that is critical to the daily functioning of any household. It is also essential to building and reaffirming social ties between household members and the community. In our country context, care work is perceived as being women’s work, whether it is paid or unpaid and in most societies is seen to be part of women’s culturally defined identity to provide and care for her family. Women’s disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care work is universal as UN CEDAW committee has pointed out.

In the case of Nepal, the action research carried out by HELVETAS Swiss Interco-operation Nepal took place over a one-year period. The table below shows the full data set over one year.

Graph 1: Average time-use of women and men in Belpata VDC, Dailekh Nepal



‘The graph 1, is an average of 3 time diary collections in one year (baseline, mid-term and end) of women and men. In the graph, it can be clearly observed that men spend more time in paid work than women. In average, women spend comparatively less time in paid GDP work although the difference between time spent by both women and men in unpaid GDP work is not high (185 minutes in average by men and 44 minutes by women). Similarly, the time spent by women in

collecting fuel and water and unpaid care work is relatively higher than that of men. The time women spend for sleeping and resting is slightly lower than men. The graph also shows that women spend more time in social and cultural activities than men. This has happened due to women's participation in the death ceremonies for one of the participant's family members, as well as support in preparing this ceremony, in one of the time diary collection periods. The type of activities that women and men spend time on in the social cultural categories varies. Men are usually engaged in meetings at the tea shop, talking about the country and politics with neighbors and friends and participating in meetings in the local government office and other political meetings. However, women are mostly observed to be participating more on the regular meetings of savings and credit groups that they are engaged in and also conducting religious rituals every morning and evening. Additionally, women spend less time than men in learning, mass media use and self-care.'(HELVETAS, 2017)

The feminization (biased action or process to becoming more feminine) of caring responsibilities and the disproportionate time women spend on unpaid care work, as compared to men, contributes to and reinforces gender based inequalities in economic, social and political life. It has direct implications on women's life, especially on their ability to build up assets, agency, skills and voice and, thus, women's empowerment. This perception drastically limits women's choice and perpetuates further violence or denial of their human rights. Women's burden of unpaid care work is a principle barrier to the fulfillment of her civil, economic, social and cultural rights. Women forego their other human rights and also in special condition accept low wage, poor working conditions, flexible contracts to balance their responsibilities at home and their work in the market. Many also rely on the help of the other women in the family, mostly elderly women, or the girls in their households to manage these different responsibilities. Girls are forced to drop out of schools to share the responsibility of taking care of their siblings, mostly compromising with the opportunities that are paved by education. This further deprives them of a future free from poverty through secured paid employment, and a break from the vicious cycle of discrimination and inequality that uneducated women in most countries have to face. In most households across Nepal and also in the sites of Action Aid and HELVETAS Swiss Interco-operation action research, women were usually supported and helped by their daughters in household work such as with cooking, cleaning, cutting grass, fetching water, and sibling care, which affected their daughters' time and physical wellbeing (Ghosh et.al, 2017). When mothers are involved in intense or multiple paid jobs, it is often the eldest girl child who is responsible for unpaid care work and many cases of girl child quitting school in order to support their mother with unpaid care work is another reality of Nepali society. Girls of the research sites have complained and shared their interest of studying more but not been able to due to request of their mother to support in household chores or to fetch firewood or water and also taking care of their siblings (HELVETAS, 2017).

The political roles of women are often curbed by the patriarchal society because they are not regarded as active citizens in public sphere and often their voice and views are brushed off.

Historically, these spaces are primarily dominated by men and their leadership. At a more fundamental level, these politics of everyday life create a separation of life purposes for women and men (Bakker, 2007). Restriction of women in the private sphere with the responsibility of social reproductive role emphasizes on filling in gap with the presence and greater access of men in natural and public resources and opportunities, thus the condition of Nepal's politics also sharply portrays the condition and even with maximum number of men in decision making roles.

The importance of unpaid care work for the household, society and nation is rarely recognized by responsible actors and even by the government as it is regarded as women's work. Government expects household to be responsible to provide services in case of lack of essential public services or when they cut back public services. When the responsibility comes to the household level, it is mostly women in particular that takes on these responsibilities. For example, with absence of accessible water services, women tend to travel longer distance to fetch drinking water, or with scarce or costly health-post services, women are forced to care for the sick at home; or with absence of grinding mills in the community, women often travel to other communities with the facility or to the bank of river in water mills to grind grains. These works expose women to greater risk and vulnerabilities as they may experience violence and abuse while carrying out these responsibilities. Undermining greater contribution of women's labor to the society and taking it for granted reflects the inefficient and insensitive role of government to address poverty, inequality and development issues. The intensity of the double burden and the imbalance that women experience are also intrinsically linked to the availability and quality of, and access/proximity to public resources and services such as roads, water taps, fuels, etc. (Ferrant *et al.* 2014). In the research site of Karnali Employment Programme (KEP) in Jumla district conducted by Oxfam, ISST and IDS along with the sites of Action Aid (Terathum and Sarlahi) and HELVETAS (Dailekh), women complained of spending almost three to four hours in collecting firewood when the forests opened and unpaid care works like fetching firewood, fetching water and cutting grass took up a lot of women's time and energy, which in turn reduced their energies to do more paid work or engage in any other development or productive work. The lack of irrigation affected women's ability to upscale their seed enterprises and vegetable farming initiative, adding on to their role of fetching water manually from far away. It takes a lot of time and effort and also impacts on the overall wellbeing of women (ibid. p. 17)

Similar to the response of the government, women's role in sustaining the care economy has also been neglected and overlooked by the society and family, in terms of the distribution of resources and considering their contribution. Distribution of resources within the household is also very much governed by the unequal power relation within households rather than the need and contribution of its members. This exacerbates gender inequality and women are more expected to take up social reproductive responsibilities and their role in decision making and household income along with consideration of their choices are curbed. Stereotyped ascribed gender role given to women results to unequal status in the family, society and often results to limited access to public services. Therefore, there's an urgent need to herald dialogue and

discussion around the issue, and garner sincere efforts from government and public alike to address this disparity - which has restricted women to attain their holistic growth and development. Increasing involvement of women in market economy along with their involvement in different arena of life in recent times has given some space for women to exercise their rights and freedom though the situation remains embedded in unequal gender relations. In many low income countries this increase is indicative of rising poverty levels. The decline of agricultural production, increased migration for unskilled work, rising cost of basic services due to privatization and declining wages compared to inflation of the country of both men and women are all contributing factors that have pushed women into the labor market. Women's entry into the labor force doesn't necessarily signal a positive shift in gender relations- gender hierarchies are reproduced within work relationships, women are more likely to be found in low paying, insecure employment in the informal sector, and they remain primarily responsible for unpaid care work. Globally women's wages are persistently lower than men's and even the Central Bureau of Statistics of Government of Nepal 2011 has indicated the difference in average daily wage rate of women and men (for women Rs 189 and for men Rs 286). The availability of formal childcare reduces care responsibilities at home and enables parents to work and mainly women. The study done by Oxfam, ISST and IDS has also confirmed that the relationship between women's care dependency ratio and their participation in the four main categories of paid work, women with high care dependency were unable to participate in WEE programs because of a lack of enabling measures within the program (childcare facilities at worksites), the nature and location of work, and a lack of family support that would allow them to participate without worrying for their children. Only about 5% of women from the total with high care dependency ratio were found mostly involved in non-agricultural wage labor (breaking stones, carrying sand, etc.) near their homes and the study also observed that women's participation in various forms of paid work increased with a decrease in the number of small children in their care. And women with medium and low care dependencies of the research site without land and any other decent work options had no choice but to work (possibly as primary earners) on either agricultural or non-agricultural daily wage labor with long hours of work (ibid. p. 14). Effort to bring women out of the private sphere as productive identity in a dignified manner will require higher level of commitment, dedication and resources not just of the state but also of family and community. Sensitivity on the part of government, private sectors, industries and employers along with realization of gender stereotyped role of understanding unpaid care work as women's role, will be required for women to break the chain of such conformities and come out as economic and political actors and also engage in public life

Experience of women engaging in labor market is governed by various factors including their personal situations. It has been witnessed that many women often undertake the role of care givers, and engagement in manifold household routines to escape from the clutches of patriarchy - it ensures mobility and a sense of freedom. However, the situation is different for married women, it also means a double burden, as their responsibilities for the unpaid care work doesn't necessarily shift after participating in the market economy, and rather they have to complete both

tasks. Earnings of women are expected to help families stay out of poverty and make a contribution to rising welfare costs (Crompton et.al, 2006). If we look at EU, with better statistics and situation of women, women work fewer paid hours than men at all stages of their life, however, still the parenting phase is one where the gender gap increases, with employed women spending twice as many hours on care and house work compared to employed men. When entering the parenting phase women reduce their paid work by four hours and increase their unpaid work by 25 hours, while men increase their unpaid work by 12 hours (Davaki, 2016). Similar study to understand the gravity of women's engagement in unpaid care work and men's engagement in child care is also required in Nepal. This will help especially to convince larger population and make them understand the impact of current differences in gender role on women's well-being. It will also contribute on the current advocacy of women's movement on provision of community child care centers and public services to reduce the workload of women (*See declaration developed after the national workshop on Unpaid Care Work, organized by Asmita Publication House, Mahila Adhikar Manch and Action Aid Nepal on December 1 and 2 of 2017*). There are exceptional cases of men sharing responsibilities, however, the number of men engaged in care giving role is significantly low, and there has been no tectonic shift in the division of labor. Mostly women reduce their workload with the introduction of new technologies in the urban and peri-urban areas, but complete redistribution of workload within family members and especially to male members have been limited also due to established patriarchal cultural norms. Women's involvement in market economy though has challenged the idea of men as breadwinner concept, the same progress on men as caregiver is not yet visible. This presents a barrier to the full realization of women's rights, gender equality and, full justice and empowerment of women.

Perpetuated burden of unpaid care work on women

Patriarchal architecture of the society has always considered men as superior and women as subordinate within the family and society as well. This established notion undermines choices of women in her life, controlling her labor and engagement in public sphere. There is also a point of empathy towards the men, who are often forced to fit into power roles, and often challenged to prove their roles as 'economic agents'. This leads to women being entitled to less economic and more household centric roles. New changes in the practice have been noticed especially in case of women treading beyond the given space and role within private sphere and men also either comfortably or uncomfortably entering into the role in private sphere mainly care work, but still the burden of unpaid care work still resides on women even when they engage outside of the home to work. Women's role in economic structure has been redefined due to the increased migration in many developing countries, which has resulted to the emancipation of women as 'breadwinners' due to the increase in women led households. However, in Nepal increased male migration has also added on the workload of women by limiting the possibilities of sharing burden within the household and they have to be responsible for unpaid and paid GDP work and

also unpaid care work. The change of guard is not to be celebrated, as women still face the wrath of balancing both economic activities, and continue to be burdened with household chores, and care giving roles. Similarly, increased threat of violence in the public spaces has further restricted women and girls mobility, hence, forcing them to curtail themselves in a close setting. Prevalence of violence against women in public spaces supports in re-establishing the idea of women being safe in private sphere with increased household responsibilities. These systematically established and obliged responsibilities on women i.e. unpaid care work, are often invisible and not regarded as work, eventually missing its figure or picture in the national statistics and policy efforts. Government and its inability to provide public services is subsidized by women's contribution which can also be understood as exploitation of women's unpaid care work to reduce the financial burden that comes with public provision of basic services (Action Aid, 2013). This creates structural barrier to women's empowerment and development increasing the burden of care work and this again limits women to engage in paid employment, continue their education, self-care and participate in public life. Women, then are left with the choices of taking in low wage income, temporary contracts, compromise on the working conditions and mainly in informal sector with flexible working hour or home-based work, so that they can also handle the responsibility of unpaid care work simultaneously.

Lack of progressive realization on women's rights and inadequate state provisions for key development agendas including infrastructure and public services has greater impact on women. It further escalates the household drudgery and thus time deficit on women. The fundamental pillars of international human rights law i.e. equality and non-discrimination, which is also the obligation of the State are largely violated with the absence of proactive attempts to value and redistribute workload of unpaid care work on women, knowing its impact on overall attainment of their rights and lives (UN General Assembly Report, 2013). Transforming gender relations, roles and the pursuit of substantive equality as mentioned in CEDAW should be a priority to achieve gender equality and justice.

Restrained enjoyment of range of Women's rights

Entire life-cycle of women and girls has gendered impact of unpaid care work with deep effect on the enjoyment of their rights. There is an intimate connection between the position of women in the private sphere and their exclusion from full enjoyment of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. This further contributes to inter-generational transmission of poverty as well. Women being unable to enjoy their human rights on an equal basis with men due to ascribed gender role, is definitely gender inequality and a violation of the their rights.

The established gender indoctrination has larger consequences in the lives of women. If we look into the root causes of women's such position, it points out to the unbalanced socialization process with different gender roles, norms intersecting with religious values, class structures and unequal power relation thereafter. However the hidden root causes are predominant influence of men at decision making level reinforcing women's role in the private sphere, insensitive or

regressive policies drafted with traditional beliefs and practices and not sharing of traditional role of women to other actors or institutions, along with failure incorporate experiences and realities of women in development, be it infrastructural or social development and gap in public services and finances. Consequently, women have less secure access to resources and are economically dependent on men, less time and status to participate in decision making level, lower literacy rate, less access to decent paid and secure employment, poor health condition by engaging in arduous household work, psychological trauma with constant mental load, emotional guilt, lack of time and space for self-care and leisure, face violence and rape because of the distance from homes to portable water or firewood, and ultimately reinforced and established gender stereotypes.

Unpaid care work is often a determining factor in women's choice, decisions and opportunities regarding work, exploring new employment opportunities, political participation, and extending their horizon through education and skills. In one of the discussions carried out by HELVETAS Swiss Interco-operation Nepal, during time diary analysis in Dailekh, heaving a long sigh, Ms. Bishna Parajuli from Beldaanda Mothers' Group shared, "Most of the time, we are limited to housework. So the reason behind us, women, not being able to lead social development is our load of daily chores. We need to discuss on reducing our load." That is how the women in the three groups started discussing on the alternatives to recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care work in order to strengthen their leadership and representation. The analysis of the time diaries filled up by women has proved that they work more than men every day. The women even shared and discussed the effects of the drudgery they have been exposed due to the social gendered division of labor. "After whole day's work, my body aches, I get tired and I don't feel like eating anything. So, I just sleep without eating."- Ms. Sita BK, Bhayarthan Community Forest Users' Group. When discussing about participating in the discussions in community discussions and filling time diary, one of the answers from all three groups was similar. "I love coming to the community discussions because at least I get some rest," echoed in all of the groups.

Under human rights law, all persons have the right to **just and favorable conditions of work, including fair wage and decent working environment**, however due to gendered division of unpaid care work, women often compromises and face inequality in workplace as in home. Deprivation of time due to constant engagement in unpaid care work provides less time for women and girls to exercise their **right to education and further development**. Girls/daughters frequently substitutes women/ mothers to share the burden of care of younger siblings and household chores and it is even intense in the household with poor living conditions. Girls are also married off in small age or sent as domestic helpers to urban or peri-urban areas due to underprivileged economic conditions of the country. Women and girls not being able to enjoy right to education also trickles in not being able to enjoy positive effects of education like **empowerment, economic opportunities, political participation and on equal basis with men** and many more. More importantly, despite lifelong engagement in taking care of family

members and unpaid work, due to lack of **recognition of their work as work by government policies**, they miss out on **enjoyment of social protection** further contributing to their poverty and economic dependency on men.

A tectonic shift in behavior, practice, and understanding is important *“Giving a value to unpaid care work is a question of justice. Proper valuation of unpaid care work would show that in many countries women are the main breadwinners if we look at the number of hours worked rather than money earned.”* – Debbie Budlender, 2002

There is no single solution to address the unequal distribution of unpaid care work within household, society and between women and men. Different mixes of public and private responses may be proposed depending on contextual factors including questions of economic development, politics and culture. Though family plays the primary role in providing care with huge contribution of women, other institutions such as states, community organizations and the private sector should also play a certain role in the provision of care.

Knowing the current unequal status of women due to unequal burden to unpaid care work, our focus should be in **recognizing, reducing and redistributing** women’s workload (Faith et.al, 2010). This needs to be done to enable women and girls to **represent** themselves in different opportunities and take part in social, economic, political and public life. Women’s engagement in unpaid care work should be recognized and valued including cooking, childcare, cleaning, and community work. It should be made visible within the community and society at large. However, we have to be more specific as to what kind of unpaid care work we want to see reduced and redistributed. We cannot demand for one policy or plan of action to address the impact of unpaid care work on women and girls but it requires different responses in an integrated and intersected manner. To reduce means identifying policies that can minimize the difficulty, and therefore time, of undertaking unpaid care work, though certain responsibilities are not desirable to reduce the amount of time expensed like childcare, taking care of ill and elderly people. These important care responsibilities can be redistributed to the State by setting up the provisions like community child care center with adequate public funds. And it is expected that it isn’t just women’s time that is spend on these care activities. It may not be practical to redistribute housework to the state but what we can demand for State to provide basic services like water, fuel, sanitation services or other infrastructures like bridges, safe road and technology to reduce the time it takes to do housework along with demanding equitable distribution of workload between women and men within the household as well (HELVETAS, 2017).

State as a primary duty bearer should be aware of the impact of unequal division of labor in the household and introduce initiatives and infrastructures for more equal sharing of such responsibilities. Provisions like social services, insurance and protection, of women who contributes their entire life to sustain household and national economy, are must. This can be done by ensuring well-being of family members, who are also the labor and citizen of the country, and it should not just be the responsibility of family and women within it but be the

responsibility of the government. Time poverty affects women's involvement in leadership or decision making positions, whether in households or in cooperatives, companies, local councils or community based organizations. As a result, women's practical needs and challenges are often not reflected. In particular, women's need for specific services or infrastructure to support care tasks or for better access to information and overall wellbeing often have low priority. Representation through individual and collective action is critical for women's empowerment and to bring about change to women's status in society through more engagement in public life (HELVETAS, 2017). This can then contribute to a more collective responsibility for unpaid care work between women, men, community, the State and private sector. Representation not just in the sense of political representation but also economic representation, meaning being empowered economically and having the opportunity to participate in remunerative activities outside of the house, which can act as confidence builder and an enabler of political voice.

Collective attempt of each individual, women and men, household, community, private sectors and the state can result in changing the current realities of women for their better and 'just' life. It can ensure different rights of women which are presently denied due to unequal share and division of gender roles and responsibilities. Facilitating mutually reinforcing interventions from the level of individual and household to national policy dialogue, to give the power of choice and decision making of her own life to women, can result in recognizing, reducing and redistributing of women's engagement in unpaid care work, and thus women's empowerment and representation in political, social and economic arenas. Empowering women to challenge the given gender roles, transforming private and public spaces which are reflective of the gendered power relations rooted in the political, economic and social structures, and challenging established gendered answers in the society through religion, cultural norms, laws and policy provisions are the way forwards to make change possible. This can result in the situation where women enjoy wider range of their rights from the right to work; rights at work; right to education; right to health; right to social security; right to enjoy the benefits of different progress; to right to participation. Applying a care perspective in development work of both social and physical infrastructures, researches and in policy making can bring about changes that women are aspiring for which ultimately will establish their human rights and equality.

References:

- Acharya, M. and Bennett, L. 1983. *Women and the Subsistence Sector: Economic Participation and Household Decision Making in Nepal*. World Bank Staff Working Paper 526, Washington DC: World Bank
- ActionAid. *Making Care Visible*. 2011. <http://www.actionaid.org/publications/making-care-visible>
- ActionAid. 2013. Unpaid Care Work Resource Guide. <http://library.pcw.gov.ph/sites/default/files/ActionAid%20Unpaid%20Care%20Work%20Resource%20Guide.pdf>

- Bakker, Isabella. 2007. Social Reproduction and the Constitution of a Gendered Political Economy.
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13563460701661561?journalCode=cnpe20>
- Budlender, Debbie. 2002. Why we care about unpaid care work?. UNIFEM: Zimbabwe
- Moussie, Rachel. 2010. *Women's Unpaid Care Work*. ActionAid.
- Budlender, Deborah and Moussié, Rachel. 2013. *Making Care Visible: Women's unpaid care work in Nepal, Nigeria, Uganda and Kenya*. ActionAid.
http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/making_care_visible.pdf
- Central Bureau of Statistics, Government of Nepal. 2011. Nepal Living Standard Survey (NLSS) 2010/11: Statistical Report Vol. 2, Central Bureau of Statistics, National Planning Commission Secretariat, Government of Nepal
- Crompton, R. and Lyonette, C. 2006. Work-life balance in Europe. *Acta Sociologica* 49(4): 379-393.
- Crompton, R. and Lyonette, C. 2006. Work-life balance in Europe. *Acta Sociologica* 49(4): 379-393.
- Davaki, K. 2016. Differences in men's and women's work, care, leisure time. European Union.
[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/556933/IPOL_STU\(2016\)556933_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/556933/IPOL_STU(2016)556933_EN.pdf)
- Elson, Diane (Coordinator). 2000. *Progress of the World's Women 2000 UNIFEM Biennial Report*. United Nations
- Development Fund for Women.
http://iknowpolitics.org/sites/default/files/progress_of_the_world_s_women_2000.pdf
- Faith, Anna and Mark Blackden. 2010. 'Unpaid Care Work.' *UNDP: Policy Brief Issue: Gender Equality and Poverty Reduction*, Issue 1. March 2010.
<http://content.undp.org/go/newsroom/publications/women-empowerment/policybrief-100201.en>
- Ferrant, Gaëlle, Pesando, Luca Maria and Nowacka, Keiko. 2014. *Unpaid Care Work: The missing link in the analysis of gender gaps in labour outcomes*. OECD Development Centre.
https://www.oecd.org/dev/development-gender/Unpaid_care_work.pdf
- Freedman, Jenifer and Wengler, Joannah Caborn. 2013. *Unpaid Care Work, Women's Rights and Poverty: Human Rights Council Side Event Features Two UNRISD Panellists*.
<http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BE6B5/search/62921A8F5D240B3CC1257BEC00332A18?OpenDocument>
- Ghosh, A.; Singh, A. and Chigateri, S. 2017. *A Trapeze Act: Women Balancing Paid Work and Unpaid Care Work in Nepal*. Oxfam Nepal, Brighton: Institute of Social Sciences Trust (ISST) and IDS
- HELVETAS. 2017. *Unpaid Care Work: Practical Guidance on Analysis and Intervention Design*.
https://assets.helvetas.org/downloads/unpaid_care_work_practical_guidance_on_analysis_and_intervention_design.pdf

- Lokshin, Michael and Glinskaya, Elena. 2009. *The Effect of Male Migration on Employment Patterns of Women in Nepal*. *The World Bank Economic Review*, Volume 23, Issue 3.
- Parker, Ceri. 2017. *It's official: women work nearly an hour longer than men every day*. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/06/its-official-women-work-nearly-an-hour-longer-than-men-every-day/>
- UN CEDAW Committee. *CEDAW General Recommendations*. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/recommendations/recomm.htm#recom23>
- UN General Assembly. 2013. *Report of the Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights*. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2437791
- UN Women. *UNIFEM Biennial Report*. New York: United Nations Development Fund for women. <http://www.unwomen.org/facts-figures/#poverty>