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Task or Time?

Comparing Methods for Measuring the Gender Distribution of Work

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ABSTRACT

There is growing evidence that gender disparities in the distribution of paid and unpaid work impose constraints on women's well-being and livelihoods, reducing access to paid employment, and time for education, leisure, and social activities. Yet, gender disparities in unpaid work often go undiagnosed by traditional household surveys. While time-use surveys are well-suited for measuring unpaid work, they are often expensive to administer and take substantial amounts of survey time, leading to respondent fatigue, particularly in multi-topic surveys where other outcomes are also being collected.

In this paper, we compare data collected using the task allocation module in the Transforming Agrifood Systems in South Asia (TAFSSA) integrated household survey and the time-use module in the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) survey. We begin by describing the methods used to collect the data in each of the surveys. We present an overview of the characteristics of the study sites in the TAFSSA integrated survey and sites in the same countries where the WEAI data were collected. We then present comparable data from each of the two methods. The findings confirm the gendered patterns in involvement in different activities as measured by both survey modules. While women's participation in agricultural activities is high across Bangladesh, India, and Nepal, the amount of time they spend on agricultural activities is less than that spent by men. Both survey tools confirm that women undertake most of the food preparation-related activities, and men contribute through shopping/purchasing food.

Keywords: time use, household task allocation, gender, South Asia

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ACRONYMS

BIHS	Bangladesh Integrated Household Survey
CAPI	Computer-assisted personal interview
5DE	Five Domains of Empowerment
GPI	Gender Parity Index
Pro-WEAI	Project-level Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index
TAFSSA	Transforming Agrifood Systems in South Asia
UN JP RWEE	United Nations Joint Programme for Rural Women's Economic Empowerment
WEAI	Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index
WINGS	Women Improving Nutrition through Group-Based Strategies
PRADAN	Professional Assistance for Development

1. INTRODUCTION

There is growing evidence that gender disparities in the distribution of paid and unpaid work impose constraints on women's well-being and livelihoods, reducing access to paid employment, and time for education, leisure, and social activities (Seymour et al. 2020). On average, women spend at least three times as many hours as men on unpaid work, and as a result, have a higher total work burden than men, when both unpaid and paid work are considered (United Nations 2015). Attempts to increase women's participation in market-oriented work or in remunerative activities have been stymied by the time they spend in reproductive and care work, and the possible toll that market work extracts on the welfare of women and their families. Yet, gender disparities in unpaid work often go undiagnosed by traditional household surveys. While time-use surveys are well-suited for measuring unpaid work, they are often expensive to administer and take substantial amounts of survey time, leading to respondent fatigue, particularly in multi-topic surveys where other outcomes are also being collected. There is therefore scope for innovation in cost-effective and nimble ways of collective time use data.

Since 2012, time-use data have been collected as part of the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) (Alkire et al. 2013) using a 24-hour recall time-use module administered to a female and a male respondent within the same household.¹ Although the WEAI has now been used by 255 organizations in 61 countries as of March 2024, many WEAI users cite lengthy interview time as one drawback of this approach. Early estimates of interview time per individual cited in Seymour et al. (2020) were 19.4 minutes in Bangladesh and 7.94 minutes in Uganda. A recent paper on Rwanda (Hickman et al. 2023) reports a mean of 8.89 minutes and a median of 8.33 minutes. To obtain a measure of intrahousehold time allocation, it is necessary to interview both the man and the woman within the same household. The task allocation module embedded in the Transforming Agrifood Systems in South Asia (TAFSSA) Integrated Survey takes

¹ In this paper, we use "man and woman" and "male and female" interchangeably when discussing our results. We recognize that gender is a social construct reflecting the different rights, resources, and responsibilities of men and women within a society, while sex is biologically determined. However, because sampling guidelines were based on biological categories, and included adolescents (not adults), in many cases "male and female" are the relevant descriptors. This paper also uses binary gender categories, which are those that were acceptable to use in our survey contexts.

a novel approach to measuring the intrahousehold distribution of tasks. The task allocation module collects information on how household tasks are shared over the course of the year between household members and hired help. In contrast to the WEAI time-use module, the TAFSSA task allocation module only takes four to five minutes to implement and generates information on all tasks performed in the household (irrespective of who performs the task). We take advantage of datasets from the same countries collected using the two different methods to answer the following questions:

Is there a gendered distribution of productive and reproductive work in South Asia? Do the two methods uncover similar patterns in the gendered distribution of work?

Are the tasks in which women more involved also those that take the most time?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of using either type of module to obtain insights into the intrahousehold distribution of tasks and time?

In this paper, we compare data collected using the task allocation module in the Transforming Agrifood Systems in South Asia (TAFSSA) integrated household survey and the time-use module in the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) survey. We begin by describing the methods used to collect the data in each of the surveys. We present an overview of the characteristics of the study sites in the TAFSSA integrated survey and sites in the same countries where the WEAI data were collected. We then present comparable data from each of the two methods. To ensure similarity, for the TAFSSA dataset we restrict tasks to those performed by the primary male and the primary female adults (and equally shared between them), so that we can compare tasks performed by them over a one-year recall period to the time reported by the primary male and female respondents in the WEAI survey over the last 24 hours.

The TAFSSA data show similarities across the three countries despite some important differences: Bangladesh and India have more similar task allocation patterns compared to Nepal. The extent of female participation in agricultural tasks varies by the type of task. In households performing agricultural tasks, sole female participation in pre-harvest tasks is lowest in Bangladesh and highest in Nepal. For these same households, sole female participation increases for postharvest tasks and is highest for tasks related to livestock, especially in Bangladesh and India. Equal sharing of tasks is higher in India and Nepal compared

to Bangladesh. However, in all three countries, a large number of agricultural tasks is performed by other household members (apart from the primary female and male respondents). On average, Bangladesh and India exhibit similar patterns in task allocation for food preparation activities. Nepali households have a lower rate of sole engagement of the primary female respondent in food preparation-related tasks as compared to India and Bangladesh. Only the food preparation tasks that involve going outside the homestead show higher exclusive male engagement, particularly in Bangladesh and India. Across the three countries, maintenance and care-related tasks are primarily performed by the female respondent.

The WEAI data show that women not only perform a greater number of tasks than men but also that there are significant differences in the gender distribution of tasks. Women are more likely to perform tasks related to cooking, maintenance, and care. Interestingly, a higher proportion of women than men indicated participating in farming and fishing tasks. Men tend to be more involved in “outside-facing” activities like shopping or getting services, working as an employee, engaging in own business work, and traveling. There were some differences across the countries. Examining the time spent by men and women on each activity also reveals interesting insights. For example, in Bangladesh, although a higher proportion of women than men report undertaking tasks related to farming and fishing, men spent twice as much time on these tasks than women did in the previous day.

A comparison of the gender distribution of tasks across TAFSSA and WEAI data suggests that women (female respondents) perform a variety of agricultural tasks in all three countries, but with substantial variations. In the TAFSSA surveys, for more than three quarters (78 percent) of households where agricultural tasks are undertaken, Bangladeshi women respondents report participating in these tasks, followed by 64 percent of Nepali women, and 50 percent of Indian women. In the WEAI time-use data, the largest proportion of women respondents reporting participation in agricultural tasks is in Nepal (88 percent), followed by Bangladesh (59 percent) and India (49 percent). However, there are subtleties revealed by the TAFSSA datasets owing to the possibility of reporting task-sharing between male and female respondents. There appears to be significant sharing of agricultural tasks between male and female household members in Nepal (45 percent), whereas in Indian and Bangladeshi households such sharing is

reported by 38 percent and 36 percent of households. Even food preparation tasks, typically regarded as within the female domain, shows extensive task sharing in India (39 percent), and less in Bangladesh and Nepal (14 percent and 15 percent, respectively), within households undertaking these activities. WEAI datasets, however, shed light on the actual time spent on each activity, with one important exception: the broad categories of tasks that women undertake—food preparation, maintenance, and care—are also the tasks that require more time. The exception is agriculture, participation and time spent varies across the three countries.

2. METHODS AND DATA

2.1 Survey Methods

2.1.1 TAFSSA Integrated Household Survey Task Allocation Module

The TAFSSA task allocation module was fielded as part of the Transforming Agrifood Systems in South Asia (TAFSSA) district agrifood systems assessment. This assessment is designed to be implemented in multiple years and aims to provide a reliable, accessible, and integrated evidence base that links farm production, market access, dietary patterns, climate risk responses, and natural resource management with gender as a cross-cutting issue in rural areas of Bangladesh, India, and Nepal. The task allocation module obtains information on how different tasks are performed and shared within the household and how female respondents within these households perceive the notion of leisure, work pressure, and support with chores from other household members. The TAFSSA survey was administered using computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) techniques, and based on time stamps, the time needed to administer the task allocation module in the survey ranged from 3.88 minutes in India to 5.02 minutes in Nepal. Findings on each of the TAFSSA study sites are presented in Banerjee et al. (2023a, 2023b, 2023c, 2023d, 2023e); the analysis in this paper aggregates across sites within each country.

Village and household sampling. The survey was implemented in two districts in Bangladesh (Rajshahi and Rangpur), one in India (Nalanda), and two in Nepal (Banke and Surkhet) in the first quarter of 2023 (see Table 1). Survey sites were selected from TAFSSA learning locations facing significant poverty, malnutrition, social inequity, environmental degradation, and climate risks, with potential for substantial development impact. (Gupta et al., 2022). Across all districts, 50 villages in Bangladesh and India, and 25 wards in Nepal, were selected within each district with a probability proportional to the number of households that reside in each village or ward. Within each village, a household listing was conducted to identify eligible households, that is, those with adolescents (10–19 years old). From the households with adolescents, 20 households were randomly invited to participate in the survey. If a

household refused, that household was replaced with another randomly selected eligible household, to achieve a sample size of 1,000 households in the district. Thus, findings of the task allocation module are representative of rural households from this district that include an adolescent.

Table 1. Study sites, sampling design, and agroclimatic and livelihood patterns

	TAFSSA Integrated Survey			WEAI or pro-WEAI surveys		
	Bangladesh	India	Nepal	Bangladesh	India	Nepal
Type of survey	Part of TAFSSA district food systems assessment; evidence base linking farm production, market access, dietary patterns, climate risk responses, natural resource management in Bangladesh, India, Nepal.			WEAI survey: Includes detailed information on agricultural practices, dietary intake, anthropometric measurements, and women's empowerment	Pro-WEAI survey: Impact evaluation of a nutrition-intensification intervention layered on an SHG platform	Pro-WEAI survey: Impact evaluation of UN Joint Program for Rural Women's Economic Empowerment, Nepal case
Sample coverage	Rajshahi, Rangpur	Nalanda	Surkhet, Banke	Nationally representative of rural Bangladesh, 2018-19	Eight districts in the five eastern and central states of India (West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Jharkhand, and Madhya Pradesh)	Ten municipalities of Madhesh Province, southeastern Nepal.
Year of data collection	February-March 2023	March-April 2023	March-April 2023	2018-19 (3rd round)	2019 (endline survey)	2021
Respondent selection	One adult female aged 20+ years, one adult male aged 20+ years, and one adolescent aged 10–19 years in each household. When multiple adolescents were living in a household the oldest adolescent was selected.			Adult man and woman in the same household (age 15+)	Ever-married woman aged 15–49 and her spouse (if available)	Adult woman (age 18+) and an adult male in the same household (typically her spouse)
<i>Total number of households</i>	1,997	1,000	998	5,604	1,355	1,300
% owning land	56	50	76	64	93	97
% operating land	74	63	80	53	84	n.a.
% cultivating land	73	62	77	52	80	93
% land with irrigation	72	62	77	52	n.a.	n.a.
% raising livestock	89	62	82	80	87	90
<i>Main source of income</i>						
Crop cultivation, %	39	38	25	11	16	31
Business, %	25	10	12	5	1	n.a.
Wages, %	22	31	13	9	7	n.a.

n.a.: not available Source: Authors

Respondent selection. Within households, one adult female aged 20+ years, one adult male aged 20+ years, and one adolescent aged 10–19 years were selected as survey respondents. In households with multiple adolescents, the oldest was selected. In some households, an adult male was not available, and thus the female was the only adult respondent (see Table 1 for respondent sample sizes). At the beginning of the interview, the adult in the household primarily involved in agriculture (either male or female) and the adult primarily responsible for food purchasing (either male or female) were identified as the primary respondents and answered different sections of the questionnaire. The TAFSSA task module was intended to be administered only to the adult female respondent, the designated proxy respondent, but is designed to capture task dynamics among all household members, including adult males and adolescents.

Task categories. Respondents are asked about who performs three types of tasks: agricultural tasks (19 tasks), food preparation tasks (13 tasks), and maintenance and care-related tasks (12 tasks). The persons performing these tasks are identified by linking back to the household roster. (See Appendix A.1 for the TAFSSA task allocation module). Agricultural tasks include preparing land, sowing/seeding, weeding, irrigation, harvesting food, postharvest processing, postharvest storage, taking the produce to market, caring for large livestock, grazing small livestock, washing/cleaning livestock, cleaning livestock shed/space, handling livestock dung, gathering food for livestock, cooking food for livestock, caring for poultry, taking livestock products to market, caring for small fishponds, and caring for large fishponds. Food preparation tasks are comprised of purchasing perishable food, purchasing non-perishable food, storing food at home, fetching water for drinking, cleaning food before cooking, obtaining fuel wood for cooking, obtaining other fuel for cooking, making tea, cooking food, preparing food for children under two, serving food, dealing with leftovers, and dish washing. The final category, maintenance and care-related tasks, cover cleaning floors, washing clothes, minor repairs to the house, major repairs to the house, caring for elderly, caring for ill household members, feeding young children, bathing children, playing with children, taking children to school, watching children at home, and helping children with schoolwork.

2.1.2 Time-use module from the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)²

Launched in 2012, the WEAI measures women’s agency and inclusion in agriculture across five domains—production, resources, income, leadership, and time—and is calculated based on interviews with women and men from the same households (Alkire et al., 2013). The WEAI comprises two subindexes: 1) the Five Domains of Empowerment index (5DE), which measures women’s empowerment at the individual level, and 2) the Gender Parity Index (GPI), which directly compares the empowerment of women and men from the same households. Used in 61 countries and by 255 organizations as of March 2024, WEAI data provide a comprehensive picture of women’s empowerment in agriculture and the empowerment gap between men and women across continents and contexts. Like the TAFSSA survey, the WEAI surveys, originally piloted as paper questionnaires, were implemented using CAPI.

Sampling design. For comparability with the TAFSSA time allocation module, we use WEAI time allocation data from three separate surveys conducted in Bangladesh, India, and Nepal. These surveys were conducted for different purposes, so sampling design varied across the three countries.

The Bangladesh WEAI data come from the most recent (2018–2019) round of the Bangladesh Integrated Household Survey (BIHS), which is nationally representative of rural Bangladesh. The India data come from an impact evaluation of a nutrition-intensification intervention (Women Improving Nutrition through Group-Based Strategies (WINGS)) layered onto the standard livelihoods-oriented programming of a large nongovernmental organization, Professional Assistance for Development (PRADAN). The study was conducted in eight districts in the five eastern and central states of West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Jharkhand, and Madhya Pradesh; control and intervention blocks were chosen for the impact evaluation (Kumar et al. 2021) and included baseline, midline, and endline rounds. We use the endline round because it is closest in terms of time to the TAFSSA survey, but we pool control and treatment households in the current analysis. The Nepal data come from an impact evaluation of the UN Joint Program for Rural Women’s Economic Empowerment (UN JP RWEE), which was implemented in ten

² This draws heavily from Seymour, Malapit, and Quisumbing (2020), Kumar et al. (2021) for India, and Andriano (2021) for Nepal.

municipalities of Madhesh Province, southeastern Nepal from 2015 to 2021. The data for the impact evaluation were collected only at endline, between January to February 2021. Similar to the India WINGS study, we pool both control and treatment households for our analysis. Only the Bangladesh data are statistically representative (of rural Bangladesh); the India WINGS and Nepal JP RWEE data, being collected for an impact evaluation, are not representative of the populations in their study sites.

Respondent selection. In the Bangladesh survey, the primary female adult in the household and her spouse are the respondents. If the women's husband is deceased or does not live in the household (owing to migration), another adult male is interviewed (typically her adult son). In the India survey, the respondent was a woman of reproductive age and the male respondent was typically her spouse; similar rules for replacing respondents were followed if her spouse was deceased or unavailable. At baseline, only 60 percent of the households had both male and female respondents for the WEAI modules. Subsequent power calculations, based on the overall evaluation design with three arms and eight clusters per arm determined the minimum required sample size to detect reasonable changes in WEAI indicators, were 40 percent of the original baseline sample. During the midline survey, conducted from November 2017 to January 2018, the WEAI-related modules were administered to only that subsample of 1,674 households for which we had baseline data on the WEAI-related modules from both a female and male respondent. This served to reduce both the cost of the survey and the burden on respondents. These respondents were reinterviewed in the endline round in 2019, which we use in this study. In the Nepal survey, similar rules were followed: the woman interviewed was the beneficiary (participant) in the JP RWEE project and the man was her spouse.

Time use categories. The time-use module in the WEAI is based on 24-hour recall and collects information for the following eighteen activities:

- Personal activities: sleeping and resting, eating, and drinking, personal care, school (including homework)
- Market work: work as employed, own business work, farming/livestock/fishing
- Non-market work: shopping/getting service, weaving/sewing/textile care, cooking, other domestic work, care for children/adults/elderly

- Leisure: watching TV/listening to radio/reading, exercising, social activities and hobbies, religious activities, traveling/commuting

While most activities should fall within these categories, an open-ended “Other (specify)” option is also included in the module. The survey allows for the reporting of multiple (simultaneous) activities for the same time period. Because the survey is based on 24-hour recall, it does not adequately take seasonality into account, although later versions of the pro-WEAI questionnaire ask whether work inside and outside the home was less than usual, about the same as usual, or more than usual.

Originally designed as a paper survey, the WEAI time-use module uses a format based on the stylized activity log proposed by Harvey and Taylor (2000). Rows, representing each type of activity, and columns, representing the previous 24-hours divided into 15-minute intervals, form an 18×96 grid (see Appendix A.2). Activities are recorded by drawing horizontal lines across the grid. By simply checking that a continuous (though staggered) line extends across the grid, enumerators can verify that the previous 24 hours have been counted fully and that no additional time has been recorded in the module. The WEAI time-use module has recently been adapted for use with CAPI software on a tablet or smartphone, replacing the grid format with nested “drop-down” menus that allow for greater specificity of listed activities, while also providing built-in accuracy checks. The CAPI version of the WEAI surveys were implemented in the datasets used in this paper.

Slightly different versions of the time-use module were implemented across the three surveys. The BIHS used the original time-use module, in which time spent on secondary activities (activities performed simultaneously) was also recorded. The India WINGS and Nepal JP RWEE surveys used the time-use module from the project-level WEAI (pro-WEAI, Malapit et al. 2019), in which the only secondary activity collected is childcare. For comparability across the three WEAI surveys, we analyze only primary activities in this paper.

2.2 Data

Household characteristics from the TAFSSA and WEAI surveys are presented in the bottom half of Table 1 and individual characteristics in Table 2.

Although only 56 percent and 50 percent of households in the Bangladesh and India TAFSSA surveys own land, a much higher percentage operate land—74 percent and 63 percent, respectively (Table 1). A higher percentage of Nepali households in the TAFSSA survey owns land—76 percent—and 80 percent of Nepal households cultivate land. In the WEAI samples, across the three countries, a much higher percentage of households own land, owing to differences in sampling design. TAFSSA survey households in Bangladesh, India, and Nepal have varying degrees of access to irrigation, with 72 percent and 77 percent of households in Bangladesh and Nepal having land with irrigation, and only 62 percent of households in India. We do not have comparable figures for irrigation in the WEAI surveys. Livestock raising is widespread; apart from the India TAFSSA site (62 percent), other sites report more than 80 percent of households raising livestock.

One-quarter to almost 40 percent of households report crop cultivation as their main source of income in the TAFSSA datasets; in the India and Nepal WEAI datasets, approximately 16 percent and one-third of households report crop cultivation as their primary source of income, respectively. Business and wages are also important sources of income for Bangladeshi TAFSSA households, these are less important for Indian and Nepali households, although about a third of Indian TAFSSA households report that wages are their main source of income. We do not have comparable data for the WEAI datasets except for Bangladesh and India, where wage work is the main source of income of a very low percentage of households.

Table 2. Household and respondent characteristics

	TAFSSA Integrated Survey					
	Bangladesh		India		Nepal	
	Rajshahi, Rangpur		Nalanda		Surkhet, Banke	
	Adult male respondent	Adult female respondent	Adult male respondent	Adult female respondent	Adult male respondent	Adult female respondent
Age, yrs. mean (range)	44 (20-75)	38 (20-71)	47 (21-82)	39 (20-75)	46 (20-83)	37 (20-88)
Whether literate, %	91	95	71	45	84	77
Primary schooling or higher, %	69	78	68	38	77	64
Marital status - married, %	99	96	96	93	96	94
Lives in dual-headed household, %	97	90	100	84	99	63
Lives in woman only household, %	0	10	0	16	0	37
Agricultural or farming household, %	76	73	70	62	81	77
Whether works outside the home for money, %	99	10	98	41	93	71

	WEAI or pro-WEAI surveys					
	Bangladesh		India		Nepal	
	Adult male respondent	Adult female respondent	Adult male respondent	Adult female respondent	Adult male respondent	Adult female respondent
Age, yrs. mean (range)	47 (17-108)	41 (15-91)	42 (15-79)	37 (16-53)	48 (18-105)	44 (19-80)
Whether literate, %	82	84	67	37	62	39
Primary schooling or higher, %	57	60	67	37	45	17
Marital status - married, %	93	88	96	96	96	96
Lives in dual-headed household, %	99	83	100	100	100	100
Lives in woman only household, %	0	17	0	0	0	0
Agricultural or farming household, %	59	53	80	80	94	93
Whether works outside the home for money, %	90	8	86	80	44	21

Notes: In India, based on estimates from the WINGS dataset, out of 1,355 households, there are only 5 categorized as "Woman only" households (0.37%). For Nepal, estimates from the JP RWEE dataset indicate that out of 1,300 households, there are only 2 classified as "Woman only" households (0.15%). Rounding up these estimates results in a zero percentage of woman-only households in the sample.

Table 2 presents characteristics of the adult males and females covered by both survey modules. The TAFSSA survey did not deliberately sample spouses, and while the WEAI surveys did, adult males in both surveys tend to be older than the adult females, reflecting the age gap between spouses at marriage. Both Bangladesh datasets show literacy rates from 82–91 percent for adult males and 84–95 percent for adult females; the percentage of females completing primary schooling or higher in the TAFSSA dataset is 78 percent and 60 percent in the WEAI dataset, respectively. Both are higher than their male counterparts (69 percent and 57 percent, respectively). The reversal of the gender gap in Bangladesh is manifested in

women's higher literacy rates and primary schooling attainment, reflecting many years of investment in girls' schooling (Asadullah and Chaudhury 2009), particularly through programs to encourage primary and secondary schooling of girls. This contrasts with the larger gender gap favoring males in India and Nepal both in terms of literacy rates and primary schooling completion, which are found in both surveys. A high proportion of adults are married and almost all adult males live in a household with an adult male and female present in all countries and datasets analyzed. In contrast, a small but not negligible proportion of adult females live in women-only households in the TAFSSA dataset and the Bangladesh WEAI dataset. By sample construction, the India and Nepal datasets have close to 100 percent of both women and men in dual-headed households, since the sample in India was conditional on having both an adult male and female present. Similar guidelines were followed in Nepal.

A high but not universal proportion of both male and female adults report living in an agricultural or farming household; interestingly, this proportion is lowest in the Bangladesh dataset, which, being nationally representative of rural Bangladesh, reflects the diversification of rural livelihoods therein. Neither the India nor the Nepal datasets are representative of their communities in terms of livelihoods as samples were designed for evaluating specific interventions. The non-representativeness is evident in the different literacy and education profiles of the Nepali respondents in the TAFSSA and JP RWEE surveys. The Nepal JP RWEE program was implemented in areas selected due to lower women's empowerment measures, the high prevalence of harmful traditional practices, and significant flood-related devastation (Quisumbing et al. 2022). In contrast, the TAFSSA Nepal sample, like those in other countries covered by the TAFSSA survey, was chosen using a probability proportional to the number of households in each ward. A household listing was conducted in each village to identify eligible households. Unlike the JP RWEE program, women's empowerment was not a criterion for the TAFSSA survey. Additionally, since the TAFSSA survey targeted households with adolescents, the women surveyed in the TAFSSA survey were, on average, younger than those in the JP RWEE sample, with mean ages of 37 and 44 years, respectively.

The purposive targeting of JP RWEE to areas that were worse off may explain the lower rates of literacy and schooling in the JP RWEE compared to the TAFSSA sample. See Quisumbing et al. (2022) for

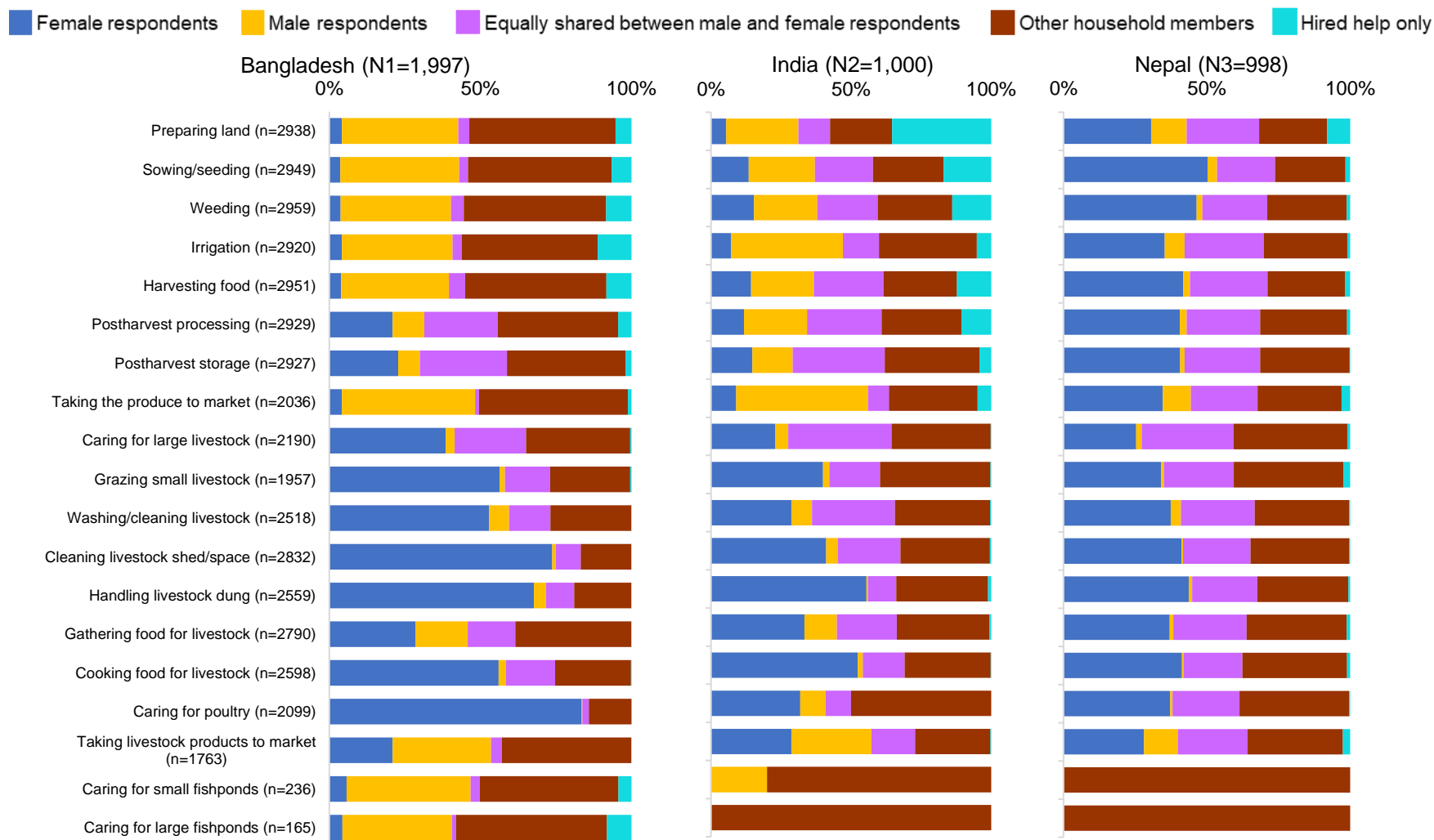
more details on sampling. In all countries, a higher proportion of adult males reports working outside the home for money, reflecting barriers to women's labor force participation in South Asia. This difference is quite large in Bangladesh, which is surprising given the closing of the gender gap in literacy and schooling to favor females.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Task allocation patterns in TAFSSA task allocation data

Task allocation patterns in agricultural, food preparation, and maintenance and care-related tasks from the TAFSSA data, are presented in Figures 1, 2, and 3, respectively. These graphs present percentages of specific tasks performed by the primary female and male adults, tasks that are shared equally between them, tasks performed by other household members (male and/or female), and tasks performed by hired help. Since not all households perform all tasks listed, the sample sizes are shown in the parentheses next to the bars.

Figure 1. Distribution of agricultural tasks, TAFFSA Integrated Survey



Includes only households performing the task

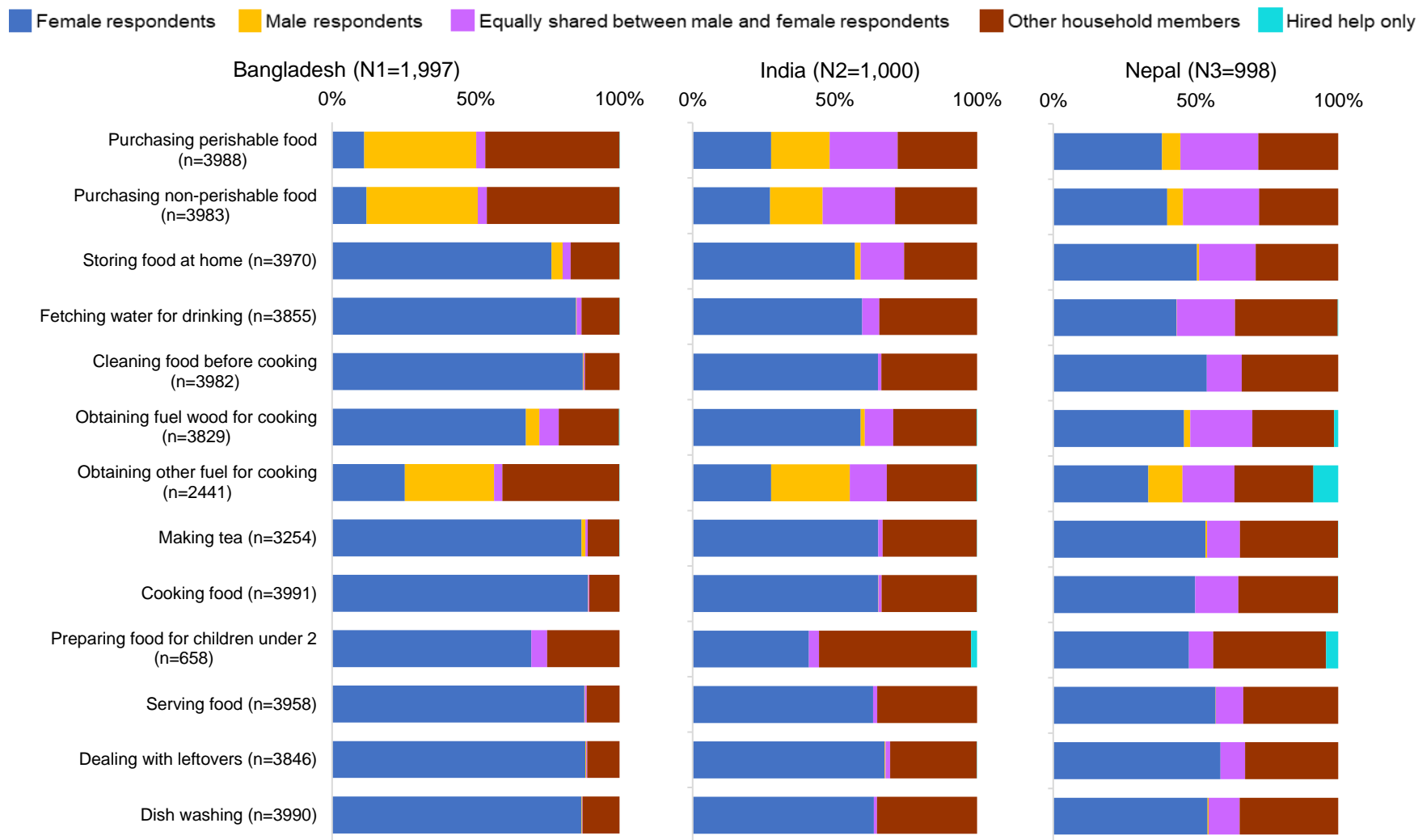
N1, N2, and N3 denote total surveyed households in Bangladesh, India, and Nepal, respectively

The lowercase "n"s in task labels indicate the total of task-performing households for all three countries combined.

Source: Authors

Figure 1 shows some patterns that are similar across the three countries despite some important differences. Sole female participation in pre-harvest agricultural tasks is lowest in Bangladesh and highest in Nepal. For example, among households that report preparing land, in approximately 5 percent of the households in Bangladesh and India this is done solely by the female respondent, while the corresponding percentage for Nepal is 31 percent. Sole participation of the primary female respondent is higher for post-harvest tasks and for tasks related to livestock, as compared to sole male participation in these tasks. Households in India and Nepal exhibit a higher prevalence of equal sharing of agricultural tasks compared to Bangladesh. However, an important common trend across all households undertaking these tasks in all three countries is the large number of agricultural tasks performed by other household members apart from the primary female and male respondents; for each task a significant percentage is performed by other household members (male and/or female).

Figure 2. Distribution of food preparation tasks, TAFSA Integrated Survey



Includes only households performing the task

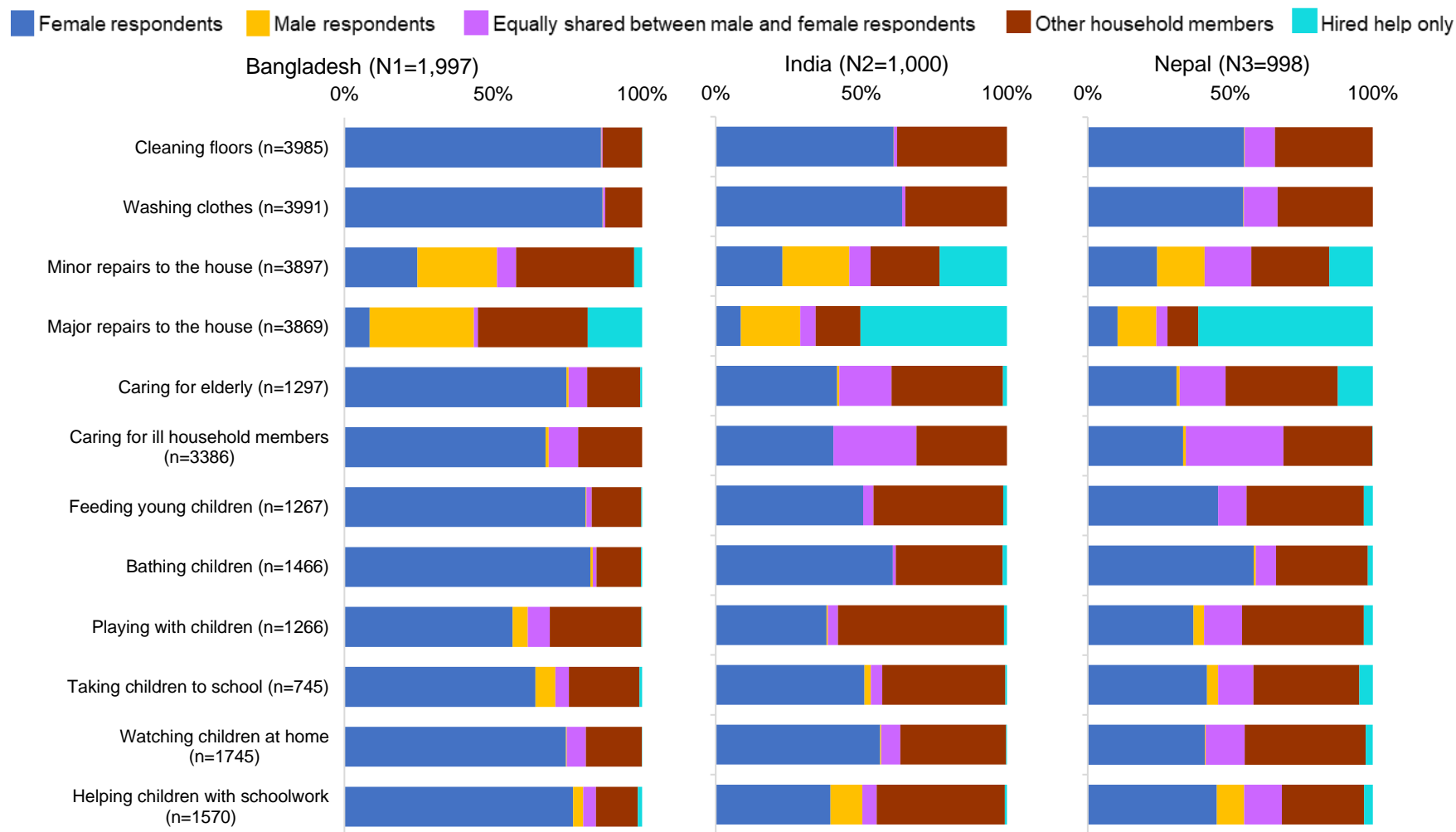
N1, N2, and N3 denote total surveyed households in Bangladesh, India, and Nepal, respectively

The lowercase "n"s in task labels indicate the total of task-performing households for all three countries combined.

Source: Authors

Broadly, Bangladesh and India exhibit similar patterns in task allocation for food preparation-related activities, while in Nepal there is significantly more sharing of tasks between the female and male respondents compared to the other two countries (Figure 2). For instance, in Nepal, fetching water is shared equally between female and male respondents in 20 percent of households engaged in this task, this figure stands at around 6 percent in India and 2 percent in Bangladesh. Furthermore, Nepal demonstrates a comparatively lower rate of sole female engagement in food preparation-related tasks compared to India and Bangladesh. Only tasks involving external purchases, such as buying perishable and non-perishable foods and obtaining fuelwood and other cooking fuel, show higher exclusive male engagement, particularly in Bangladesh and India. Across the three countries and all food preparation-related tasks, a sizeable proportion of households report that these tasks are performed by other household members (excluding the primary male and female respondents).

Figure 3. Distribution of maintenance and care-related tasks, TAFFSA Integrated Survey



Includes only households performing the task

N1, N2, and N3 denote total surveyed households in Bangladesh, India, and Nepal, respectively

The lowercase "n"s in task labels indicate the total of task-performing households for all three countries combined.

Source: Authors

The distribution of tasks related to maintenance and care is illustrated in Figure 3. Across the three countries, we observe that exclusive participation of female respondents predominates in these tasks, but there are important differences between countries. For instance, in Bangladesh, 81 percent of households have female respondents exclusively responsible for feeding young children, compared to 51 percent in India and 46 percent in Nepal. As observed for other task categories, a significant proportion of households report other household members (not including the primary female or male respondent) undertaking tasks related to maintenance and care, across the three countries. This is slightly more prominent in India and Nepal as compared to Bangladesh. In Nepal, equal sharing of maintenance and care-related tasks between male and female respondents is more prevalent than in Bangladesh and India. For example, caring for the ill is equally shared in 34 percent of the households in Nepal compared to 29 percent in India and 10 percent in Bangladesh. Sole engagement of male respondents is generally limited for maintenance and care-related tasks across all three countries, except for major and minor house repair tasks. The allocation patterns for these tasks also reveal that a significant percentage of households hire external help, particularly for major home renovations. In Nepal, approximately three-fifths of households solely rely on hired help for major house repairs, compared to 50 percent in India and 18 percent in Bangladesh.

3.2 Activity patterns in WEAI time use data

In Tables 3, 4, and 5, we summarize the distribution of activities performed in the 24 hours prior to the survey in each of the countries, Bangladesh, India, and Nepal, as measured using the time allocation module in WEAI (Bangladesh) and pro-WEAI (India and Nepal). For brevity, we refer to these collectively as WEAI data.

Table 3. Bangladesh WEAI data: Distribution of activities performed in last 24 hours by respondent gender

Activities in last 24 hours	Respondent gender				Difference (M-W) ^a	Significance of difference ^a
	Men		Women			
	(N=4,625)	(N=5,555)	(N=4,625)	(N=5,555)		
	Mean	%	Mean	%		
Number of activities performed	6.82		8.28		-1.46	***
Whether respondent performed activity (%)						
<i>Agricultural tasks</i>						
Farming/Fishing		47.26		59.23	-11.96	***
<i>Food preparation related tasks</i>						
Shopping/getting service		27.83		4.10	23.72	***
Cooking		0.69		88.44	-87.75	***
<i>Maintenance and care related tasks</i>						
Weaving, sewing, textile care		0.30		7.54	-7.24	***
Domestic work		18.92		97.34	-78.42	***
Care for children/adults/elderly		13.38		55.88	-42.49	***
<i>Non-agricultural (productive) tasks</i>						
Work as employed		24.28		4.97	19.31	***
Own business work		30.53		4.25	26.28	***
<i>Schooling, social, and religious activities</i>						
School (also homework)		2.27		1.85	0.42	
Social activities		76.43		87.45	-11.02	***
Religious activities		37.41		54.78	-17.37	***
<i>Self-care and leisure activities</i>						
Sleeping and resting		100.00		100.00	0.00	
Eating and drinking		100.00		99.96	0.04	
Personal care		99.91		99.98	-0.07	
Watching TV/listening to radio		27.61		31.32	-3.71	***
Exercising		5.88		5.09	0.79	*
<i>Travel and other activities</i>						
Travelling		68.22		25.33	42.89	***
Other		1.36		0.68	0.68	***

^a*** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$

Shaded cells correspond to tasks covered by TAFSSA task allocation module

Table 4. India pro-WEAI data: Distribution of activities performed in last 24 hours by respondent gender

Activities in last 24 hours	Respondent gender		Difference (M-W) ^a	Significance of difference ^a
	Men	Women		
	(N=1,355) Mean	(N=1,355) Mean		
Number of activities performed	6.58	7.42	-.846	***
Whether respondent performed activity (%)				
<i>Agricultural tasks</i>				
Staple grain farming	27.60	23.32	4.28	**
Gardens/high value crop farming	4.06	3.54	0.52	
Large livestock raising	44.21	25.90	18.30	***
Small livestock raising	10.70	8.49	2.21	*
Poultry/small animal raising	1.55	4.06	-2.51	***
Fishpond culture	0.15	0.22	-0.07	
<i>Food preparation related tasks</i>				
Shopping/getting services	15.06	11.00	4.06	***
Cooking	4.65	92.18	-87.53	***
<i>Maintenance and care related tasks</i>				
Weaving/sewing/textiles	0.44	1.48	-1.03	***
Domestic work	39.19	98.38	-59.19	***
Caring for children	15.20	40.96	-25.76	***
Caring for adults	0.52	2.73	-2.21	***
<i>Non-agricultural (productive) tasks</i>				
Work, employed	22.21	7.60	14.61	***
Own business work	11.73	5.90	5.83	***
<i>Schooling, social, and religious activities</i>				
School/homework	4.80	0.66	4.13	***
Social activities/hobbies	85.24	57.64	27.60	***
Religious activities	7.68	18.38	-10.70	***
Attending SHG meeting	0.37	0.30	0.07	
<i>Self-care and leisure activities</i>				
Sleeping/resting	99.78	100.00	-0.22	*
Eating/drinking	99.70	99.70	0.00	
Personal care	99.63	98.97	0.66	**
Exercising	5.24	0.52	4.72	***
<i>Commuting, traveling, and other activities</i>				
Commuting	38.52	28.19	10.33	***
Traveling	19.56	12.32	7.23	***
Other activities	.	.	.	

^a*** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$

Shaded cells correspond to tasks covered by TAFSSA task allocation module

Table 5. Nepal pro-WEAI data: Distribution of activities performed in last 24 hours by respondent gender

Activities in last 24 hours	Respondent gender		Difference (M-W) ^a	Significance of difference ^a
	Men	Women		
	(N=4,625)	(N=5,555)		
	Mean	Mean		
Number of activities performed	6.72	7.66	-0.94	***
Whether respondent performed activity (%)				
<i>Agricultural tasks</i>				
Staple grain farming	46.38	21.54	24.85	***
Gardens/high value crop farming	24.00	28.77	-4.77	***
Large livestock raising	44.46	53.23	-8.77	***
Small livestock raising	24.46	66.38	-41.92	***
Poultry/small animal raising	3.00	13.46	-10.46	***
Fishpond culture	0.62	0.00	0.62	***
<i>Food preparation related tasks</i>				
Shopping/getting services	14.92	5.62	9.31	***
Cooking	2.08	62.46	-60.38	***
<i>Maintenance and care related tasks</i>				
Weaving/sewing/textiles	0.31	1.15	-0.85	**
Domestic work	34.08	92.23	-58.15	***
Caring for children	11.62	33.77	-22.15	***
Caring for adults	0.54	1.23	-0.69	*
<i>Non-agricultural (productive) tasks</i>				
Work, employed	17.77	1.69	16.08	***
Own business work	19.31	6.92	12.38	***
<i>Schooling, social, and religious activities</i>				
School/homework	1.38	0.31	1.08	***
Social activities/hobbies	61.54	29.38	32.15	***
Religious activities	9.85	14.23	-4.38	***
Community activities	4.54	3.23	1.31	*
<i>Self-care and leisure activities</i>				
Sleeping/resting	100.00	100.00	0.00	
Eating/drinking	99.92	100.00	-0.08	
Personal care	99.62	99.38	0.23	
Exercising	4.92	0.92	4.00	***
<i>Commuting, travel, and other activities</i>				
Commuting	2.23	0.92	1.31	***
Traveling	9.77	2.69	7.08	***
Other activities	34.54	26.08	8.46	***
Unspecified	0.08	0.08	0.00	

^a*** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$

Shaded cells correspond to tasks covered by TAFSSA task allocation module

The activity list differs across countries owing to slight differences in the detail and disaggregation of the respective time-use modules across surveys—excluding the “other” category, Bangladesh has 17 activities and India and Nepal have 24. In all cases, the list is intended to be exhaustive, to cover all activities during the respondent’s waking hours, and has an “other” or “unspecified” category. In all three countries, women perform a higher average number of activities than men. In Bangladesh, women undertake 8.3 activities compared to 6.8 activities undertaken by men in the previous 24 hours. Women in India perform 7.4 activities while men perform 6.6 activities in the previous 24 hours. In Nepal, women perform 7.7 activities and men perform 6.7 activities in the previous 24 hours.

Next, we categorize the activities from the WEAI time allocation module to align with the TAFSSA task allocation module to make comparisons across similar task or activity categories and to understand the extent of participation in these activities and the gender difference therein. The WEAI time-use module captures time spent in all activities in the previous 24 hours and is neither restricted to tasks in agriculture nor those performed within the household. Therefore, it includes activities like own business work, undertaking wage employment, going to school, and sleeping and resting, among others. Notably, the India and Nepal pro-WEAI surveys included activities related to participation in groups, which were the platform for intervention delivery. In Tables 3, 4, and 5, the activities that overlap with the TAFSSA broad task categories are shaded in grey.

Tables 3, 4, and 5 show that women not only perform significantly more tasks than men but also that there are significant differences in the gender distribution of tasks. In Bangladesh (Table 3), women perform more tasks related to cooking, maintenance and care-related tasks (weaving, sewing, textile care, domestic work, care for children, adults, and the elderly). Interestingly, a higher proportion of women than men indicated participating in farming and fishing tasks. Among the activities that are not in the TAFSSA categories, more women than men tend to engage in more social and religious activities and are more likely to watch TV or listen to the radio. Men tend to be more involved in “outside-facing” activities like shopping or getting service, working as an employee, engaging in own business work, and traveling.

In India (Table 4), among the activities common to TAFSSA and WEAI datasets, women are more likely to have undertaken poultry and small animal raising, and all categories of maintenance and care-related tasks (weaving/sewing/textiles, domestic work, caring for children, and caring for adults). Men are significantly more likely to have been involved in staple grain farming, large and small livestock raising, and shopping and getting services. Outside the TAFSSA categories, men are more likely to work as employed, engage in own-business work, attend school, or do homework, engage in social activities, personal care, exercise, commute, and travel.

Finally, time use in our Nepal sample (Table 5) shows that women are more likely to spend time in maintenance and care-related activities (all categories) and cooking, but, unlike women in the India sample, have higher involvement in some categories of agricultural work—gardens, large and small livestock raising, and poultry/small animal raising—partly because of the JP RWEE intervention that targeted women’s farmers groups (Quisumbing et al. 2023). Among the activities that overlap with the TAFSSA list, men are more likely to be involved in staple grain farming, shopping, and getting services. Similar to the other countries, men are more likely to have engaged in employment, own business work, school/homework, social activities, and community activities, as well as exercising, commuting, and traveling.

Table 6. Bangladesh WEAI data: Average time spent on activities in the last 24 hours, by gender of respondent

Minutes spent on activity	Time spent (unconditional)				Time spent (conditional)			
	Respondent gender		Primary Task		Respondent gender		Primary Task	
	Men	Women	Difference	Significance of	Men	Women	Difference	Significance of
	(N=4,625)	(N=5,555)	(M-W) ^a	difference ^a	(N=4,625)	(N=5,555)	(M-W) ^a	difference ^a
Primary Task Mean	Primary Task Mean			Primary Task Mean	Primary Task Mean			
<i>Agricultural tasks</i>								
Farming/Fishing	124	64	60	***	262	111	151	***
<i>Food preparation related tasks</i>								
Shopping/getting service	29	3	26	***	105	75	30	***
Cooking	1	128	-128	***	75	145	-71	***
<i>Maintenance and care related tasks</i>								
Weaving, sewing, textile care	1	11	-10	***	234	152	82	**
Domestic work	25	184	-159	***	134	190	-56	***
Care for children/adults/elderly	9	69	-61	***	72	137	-65	***
<i>Non-agricultural (productive) tasks</i>								
Work as employed	120	18	102	***	493	362	131	***
Own business work	153	8	145	***	501	186	315	***
<i>Schooling, social, and religious activities</i>								
School (also homework)	3	1	2	***	119	59	60	***
Social activities	151	134	17	***	200	161	39	***
Religious activities	44	64	-20	***	118	117	1	
<i>Self-care and leisure activities</i>								
Sleeping and resting	572	563	9	***	572	563	9	***
Eating and drinking	71	72	-1		72	73	0	
Personal care	69	85	-16	***	69	85	-16	***
Watching TV/listening to radio	26	35	-9	***	108	116	-8	***
Exercising	4	4	1		76	75	1	
<i>Travel and other activities</i>								
Travelling	56	17	38	***	82	69	13	***
Other, specify	3	1	2	***	191	147	44	

^a*** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$

Shaded cells correspond to tasks covered by TAFSSA task allocation module

Table 7. India WEAI data: Average time spent on activities in the last 24 hours, by gender of respondent

Minutes spent on activity	Time spent (unconditional)				Time spent (conditional)			
	Respondent gender		Difference (M-W) ^a	Significance of difference ^a	Respondent gender		Difference (M-W) ^a	Significance of difference ^a
	Men (N=1,355)	Women (N=1,355)			Men (N=1,355)	Women (N=1,355)		
	Mean	Mean			Mean	Mean		
<i>Agricultural tasks</i>								
Staple grain farming	86	68	17	***	311	293	18	
Gardens/high value crop farming	9	9	0		233	251	-18	
Large livestock raising	67	18	49	***	152	71	81	***
Small livestock raising	8	6	2		74	73	2	
Poultry/small animal raising	0	2	-1	***	27	46	-18	***
Fishpond culture	0	0	0		15	50	-35	
<i>Food preparation related tasks</i>								
Shopping/getting services	21	12	9	***	139	107	32	**
Cooking	4	143	-139	***	85	155	-71	***
<i>Maintenance and care related tasks</i>								
Weaving/sewing/textiles	1	1	0		243	47	196	***
Domestic work	65	234	-169	***	166	238	-72	***
Caring for children	15	49	-34	***	100	120	-21	***
Caring for adults	0	2	-1	***	86	64	22	
<i>Non-agricultural (productive) tasks</i>								
Work, employed	96	25	72	***	433	323	110	***
Own business work	43	17	25	***	364	294	70	**
<i>Schooling, social, and religious activities</i>								
School/homework	7	0	6	***	138	70	68	
Social activities/hobbies	185	83	103	***	218	143	74	***
Religious activities	10	10	0		132	56	76	***
Attending SHG meeting	1	0	0		171	135	36	
<i>Self-care and leisure activities</i>								
Sleeping/resting	595	561	34	***	596	561	35	***
Eating/drinking	78	84	-6	***	78	84	-6	***
Personal care	78	81	-3	**	78	82	-4	**
Exercising	3	0	3	***	58	15	43	***
<i>Commuting, traveling, and other activities</i>								
Commuting	38	22	16	***	98	79	19	***
Traveling	23	11	11	***	117	93	23	***

^a*** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$

Shaded cells correspond to tasks covered by TAFSSA task allocation module

Table 8. Nepal WEAI data: Average time spent on activities in the last 24 hours, by gender of respondent

Minutes spent on activity	Time spent (unconditional)				Time spent (conditional)			
	Respondent gender		Difference (M-W) ^a	Significance of difference ^a	Respondent gender		Difference (M-W) ^a	Significance of difference ^a
	Men (N=1,300)	Women (N=1,300)			Men (N=1,300)	Women (N=1,300)		
Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean				
<i>Agricultural tasks</i>								
Staple grain farming	101	48	53	***	217	222	-5	
Gardens/high value crop farming	54	53	1		224	183	41	***
Large livestock raising	48	63	-15	***	108	119	-10	**
Small livestock raising	14	59	-46	***	55	89	-34	***
Poultry/small animal raising	2	5	-3	***	67	34	33	***
Fishpond culture	0	0	0	**	66	.	.	
<i>Food preparation related tasks</i>								
Shopping/getting services	23	10	13	***	152	180	-27	*
Cooking	1	85	-84	***	47	136	-89	***
<i>Maintenance and care related tasks</i>								
Weaving/sewing/textiles	1	1	0		278	124	154	
Domestic work	45	177	-132	***	132	192	-60	***
Caring for children	11	58	-47	***	94	173	-79	***
Caring for adults	1	2	0		242	123	119	
<i>Non-agricultural (productive) tasks</i>								
Work, employed	83	7	77	***	468	385	83	**
Own business work	72	23	50	***	375	326	49	*
<i>Schooling, social, and religious activities</i>								
School/homework	4	0	4	***	290	53	238	*
Social activities/hobbies	88	28	59	***	142	96	47	***
Religious activities	10	9	1		99	64	36	***
Community activities	12	7	5	**	264	212	52	*
<i>Self-care and leisure activities</i>								
Sleeping/resting	704	658	46	***	704	658	46	***
Eating/drinking	62	68	-6	***	62	68	-6	***
Personal care	52	51	0		52	52	0	
Exercising	3	0	3	***	66	48	18	*
<i>Commuting, travel, and other activities</i>								
Commuting	2	1	1	*	94	98	-3	
Traveling	14	3	10	***	138	126	12	
Other activities	34	23	11	***	98	87	10	**
Unspecified	0	0	0		15	15	0	

^a*** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .10$. Shaded cells correspond to tasks covered by TAFSSA task allocation module.

Tables 6, 7, and 8 present estimates of the average time spent by men and women in these activities in the past 24 hours. We present two sets of estimates: unconditional estimates, which are based on averages across all individuals, separately for men and women, regardless of their performing the activity, and conditional estimates, which are averages across all individuals who report performing the activity, separately for men and women. We present both estimates because they reveal different aspects of time use within households. Unconditional estimates include those who do not report performing the task because whether an individual performs an activity can be interpreted as a combination of individual choice and gender norms; conditional estimates are higher because they are restricted to those who are performing the task.

Interestingly, activities in which men (or women) are most likely to report engaging are not necessarily those in which they spend the most time. Table 6 shows the average time that Bangladeshi men and women spent on the primary activity in the last 24 hours. Although a higher proportion of women than men report undertaking tasks related to farming and fishing (Table 3), men spent twice as much time on these tasks than women in the previous day (124 minutes vs. 64 minutes for unconditional estimates; 262 minutes vs. 111 minutes for conditional estimates). Similarly, a greater proportion of women than men report spending time on weaving, sewing, and textile care, but the gendered pattern of time use differs depending on whether unconditional or conditional estimates are used. For unconditional estimates (across the entire sample), women spent 11 minutes on this activity, compared to one minute for men, in the past 24 hours. However, restricting the sample only to those who perform the activity reverses the direction of the difference, with men reporting twice as much time in this activity. This probably reflects specialization of men in tailoring work, which can be a full-time activity, compared to sewing and textile care, which are women's activities that do not require specialization. While a greater proportion of women engage in social and religious activities than men, the latter spend more time in social activities. Women still spend more time in religious activities (for the unconditional estimates). Nevertheless, the gender division of time use suggests that men spend more time in "productive" and outside facing activities such as agriculture, own

business work, and employment, whereas women spend more time in cooking, domestic work, and care work. Men also spend 9 more minutes sleeping and resting than women, a small but significant difference.

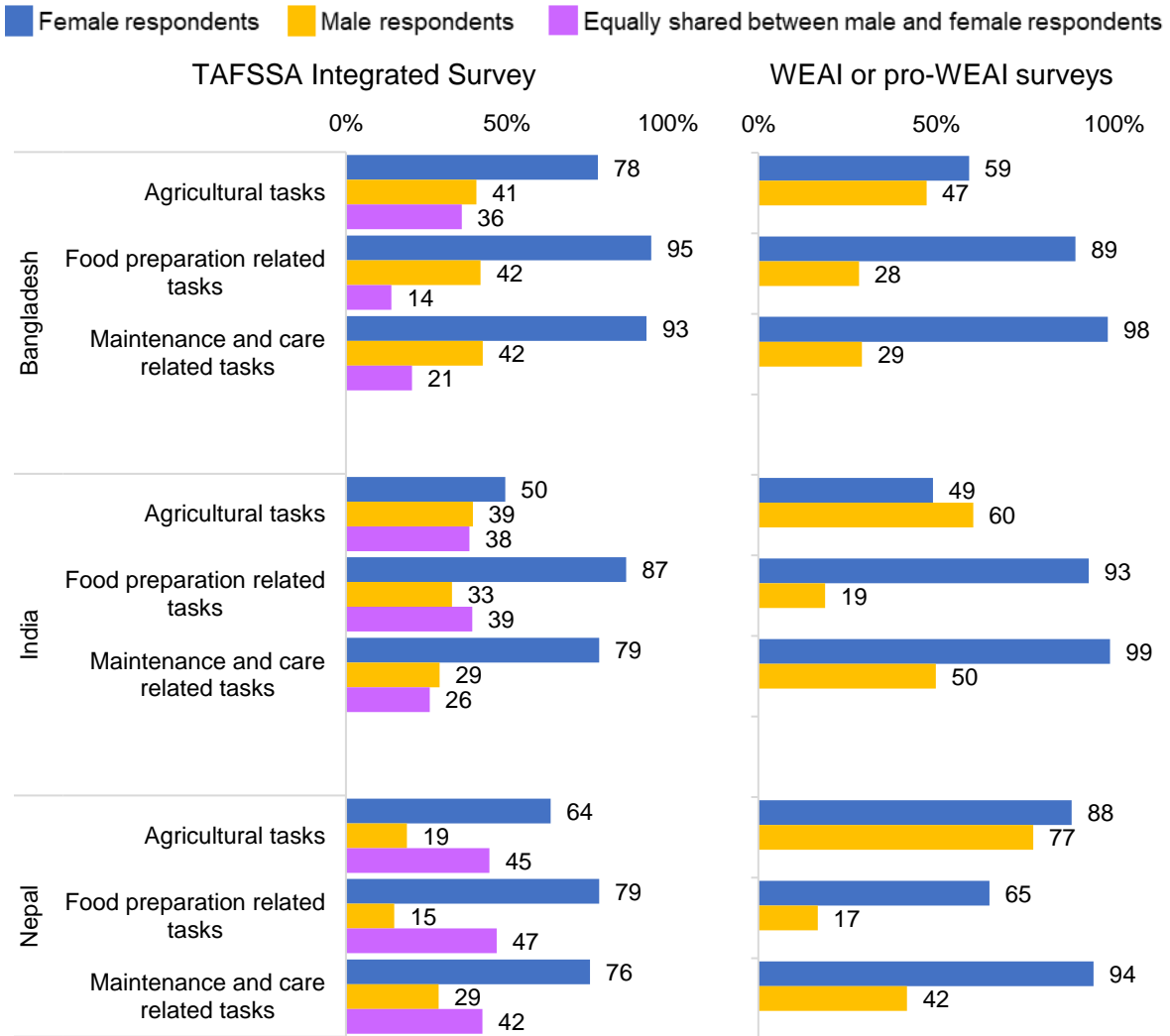
Gendered activity patterns in the India WEAI data (Table 4) are mostly consistent with reported time spent in these activities, regardless of conditionality (Table 7). Except for poultry and small livestock raising, men spend significantly more time in agricultural activities than women. Interestingly, while unconditional estimates show no difference in sewing and textile care between genders, conditional estimates reveal some specialization in this activity for men, among respondents reporting this activity. As with the Bangladesh results, although a greater proportion of women report performing religious activities, men spend more time on them, and men also spend more time on “outward facing” activities such as non-agricultural productive activities, social activities, commuting, and traveling. Moreover, Indian men enjoy half an hour more of sleep than Indian women in our sample, although women spend more time on personal care, although both the time spent, and the magnitude of the difference are small.

In the Nepal WEAI data, gendered activity patterns (Table 5) are mostly consistent with reported time spent in these activities, regardless of conditionality (Table 8). Across the entire sample, men spend more than twice as much time on staple grain farming than women do (101 vs. 48 minutes). However, unlike the other two countries, livestock raising—both large and small livestock—are activities in which a higher proportion of women participate and also spend significantly more time than men. Similar to the activity patterns reported earlier, women spend more time in maintenance and care-related tasks, and across the entire sample, men spend more time on shopping and getting services than women do. Both activity and time use patterns are consistent with the South Asian custom of men being involved and spending more time in public-facing activities, and women dealing mostly with the domestic sphere. Nepali men in this sample also enjoy more time sleeping and resting than women do—about 45 minutes more in the past 24 hours.

3.3 Comparison of task and time allocation patterns across TAFSSA and WEAI

Figure 4 compares the gender distribution of tasks across TAFSSA and WEAI data, for the broad task categories common to both datasets: agricultural tasks, food preparation related tasks, and maintenance and care related tasks. Across both types of datasets, it appears that women (female respondents) perform most types of agricultural tasks in all three countries, but with substantial variations. In the TAFSSA surveys, among households engaged in agricultural activities, more than three-quarters (78 percent) of Bangladeshi women respondents reported participating in agricultural tasks, followed by 64 percent of Nepali women and 50 percent of Indian women. In the WEAI time use data, the largest proportion of women respondents reporting participation in agricultural tasks is in Nepal (88 percent), followed by Bangladesh (59 percent), and India (49 percent). However, there are subtleties revealed by the TAFSSA datasets owing to the possibility of reporting task-sharing between male and female respondents. There appears to be significant sharing of agricultural tasks between male and female household members in households undertaking these activities in all three countries—Nepal (45 percent), India (38 percent), and Bangladesh (36 percent). Even food preparation tasks, typically within the female domain, shows extensive task sharing in India (39 percent) and less in Bangladesh and Nepal (14 percent and 15 percent, respectively). Nepali households report that the primary male and female respondents share 42 percent of maintenance and care related tasks, followed by 26 percent in India and 21 percent in Bangladesh. We are unable to examine task-sharing using the WEAI datasets.

Figure 4. Comparison of gender distribution of tasks performed, TAFSSA and WEAI data

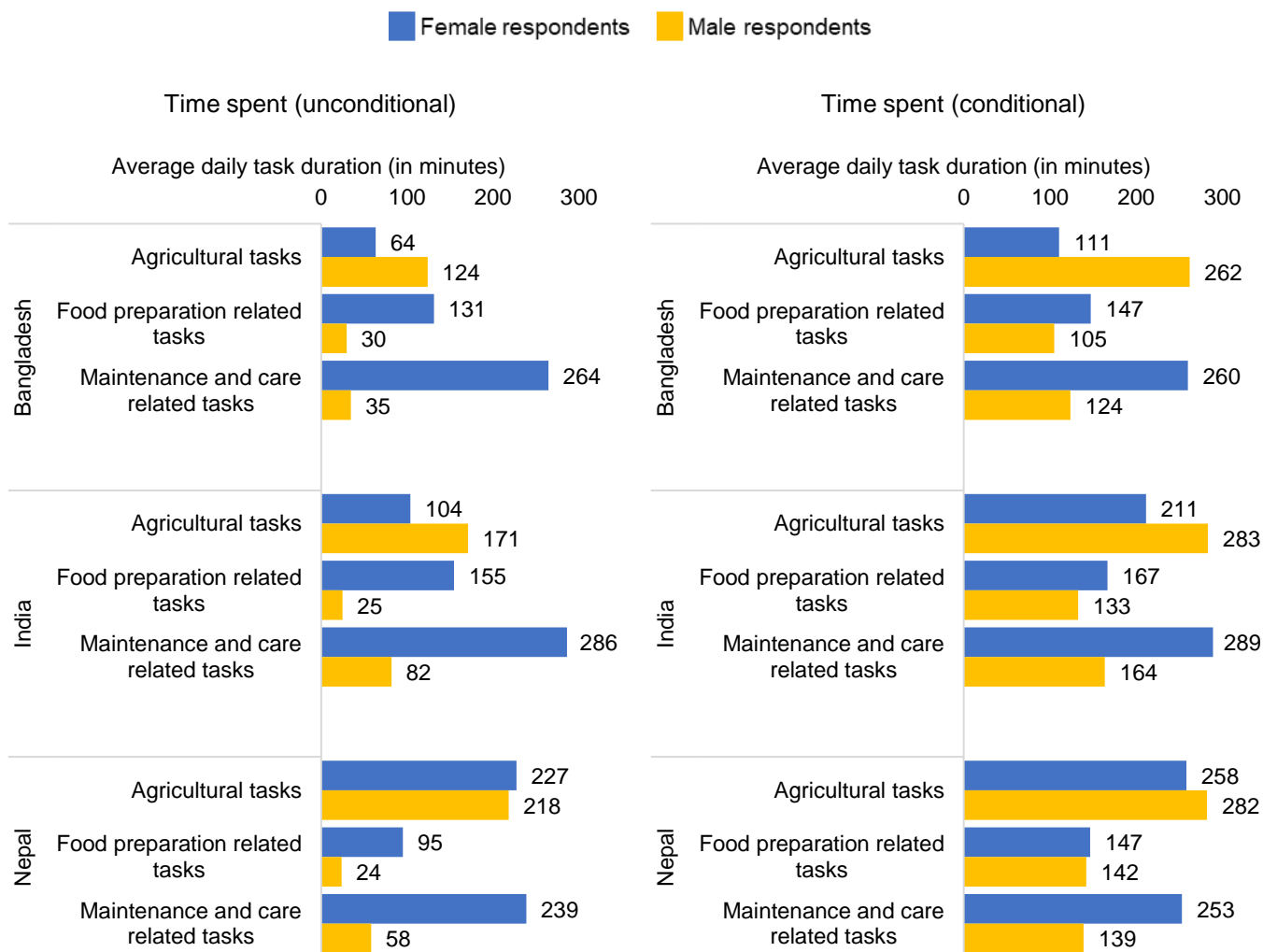


WEAI datasets, however, shed light on the actual time spent on each activity (Figure 5). With one important exception, the broad categories of tasks that women undertake are also the tasks that require more time: food preparation-related tasks and maintenance and care-related tasks. The exception is agriculture, where there is variation in participation and time spent across the three countries. In Bangladesh, a higher proportion of women report being involved in farming/fishing, but men spend twice as much time than women do. This is probably because women may be involved in many distinct types of agricultural activities but may not spend a dedicated amount of time in them. Given women’s limited mobility and exposure to the public sphere, they may do several agricultural tasks within the homestead that do not necessarily require a lot of time or that are compatible with doing other tasks. Men typically work in

agricultural fields that are separate from the homestead and spend a larger amount of time in them. Relying on data on the distribution of tasks alone would tend to overstate the extent of women’s involvement in agriculture.

In the India sample, a higher proportion of men report being involved in agriculture and put in more hours worked in agriculture than women. Nepal is the outlier among the three countries: a greater proportion of women than men (88 percent compared to 77 percent) report being involved in agriculture, and the unconditional means indicate that women spend more time than men working in agriculture-related tasks. Although this difference is reversed using the conditional means, Nepali women appear to be more involved in various aspects of agriculture, especially livestock raising, compared to women in the other two countries.

Figure 5. Distribution of time spent on tasks also covered in TAFSSA, WEAI surveys



The WEAI surveys do provide insight into total average time spent by male and female respondents, including self-care activities, such as sleeping/resting, eating/drinking, personal care and exercising (Table 9). Table 9 confirms our earlier analysis: in all three countries, men spend significantly more time in productive and other activities, and women spend significantly more time in activities related to food preparation, maintenance, and care. Men in India and Nepal spend 30 minutes and 43 minutes more than women in self-care activities, respectively, while women in Bangladesh spend 15 more minutes in self-care activities than men. These patterns are confirmed in Figure 6, which shows the distribution of total time. We also note that the share of total time spent in self-care activities does not vary substantially across and within countries by gender, at about 50 percent.

Table 9. Total average time spent on activities by male and female respondents, by country (WEAI surveys)

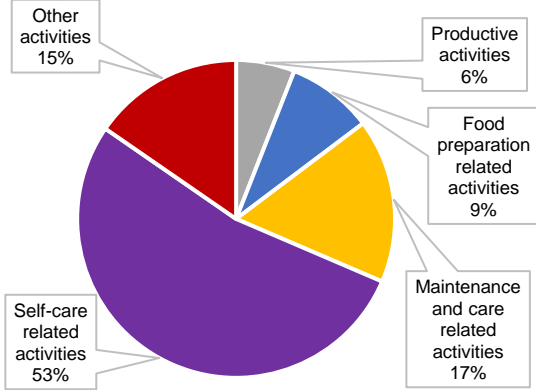
Country	Activity	WEAI or pro-WEAI surveys			Significance of difference ^a
		Men	Women	Difference (M-W) ^a	
		Mean activity duration (in minutes)			
Bangladesh	Productive activities	375.98	85.91	290.06	***
	Food preparation related activities	31.18	126.27	-95.09	***
	Maintenance and care related activities	34.56	240.73	-206.17	***
	Self-care related activities	750.14	765.56	-15.42	***
	Other activities	248.15	221.53	26.62	***
India	Productive activities	313.26	145.66	167.60	***
	Food preparation related activities	25.27	154.56	-129.29	***
	Maintenance and care related activities	82.48	286.68	-204.21	***
	Self-care related activities	755.23	725.43	29.80	***
	Other activities	263.77	127.66	136.10	***
Nepal	Productive activities	373.81	256.45	117.36	***
	Food preparation related activities	23.70	95.12	-71.42	***
	Maintenance and care related activities	58.10	238.60	-180.51	***
	Self-care related activities	821.65	778.57	43.08	***
	Other activities	162.74	71.25	91.49	***

Productive activities include both agricultural and non-agricultural productive activities.

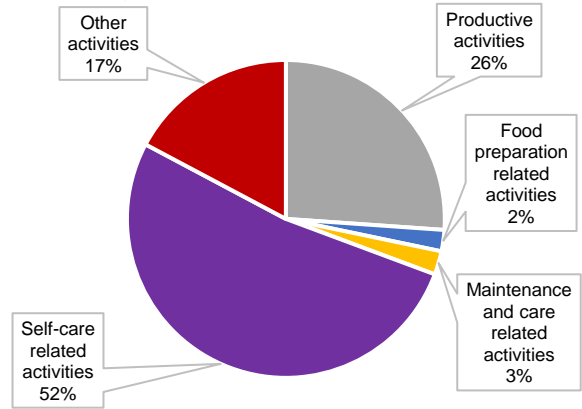
Self-care activities include sleeping/resting, eating/drinking, personal care and exercising.

Figure 6. Distribution of total average time spent on activities by male and female respondents, including self-care, by country (WEAI surveys)

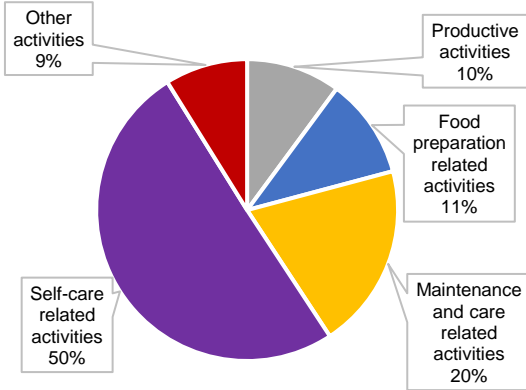
Bangladesh - Female respondents



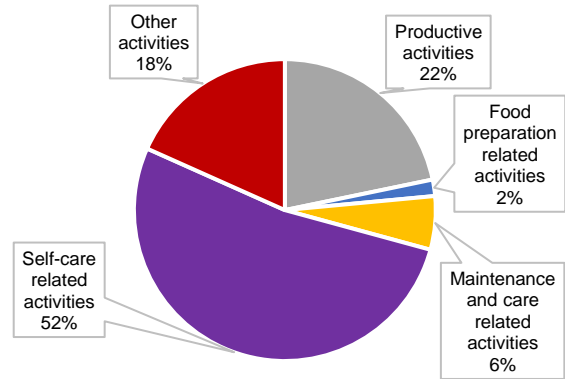
Bangladesh - Male respondents



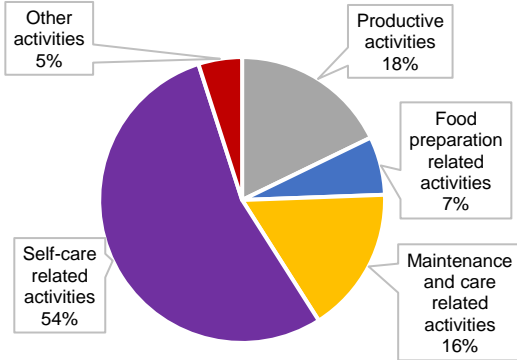
India - Female respondents



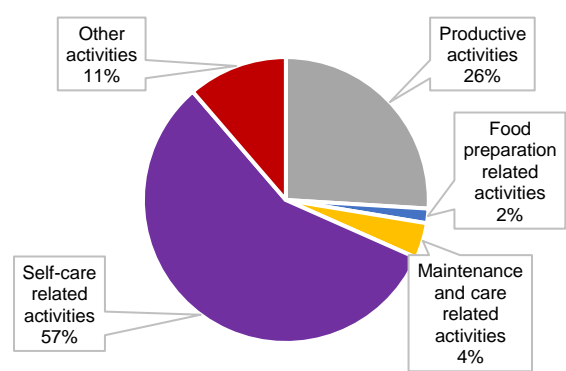
India - Male respondents



Nepal - Female respondents



Nepal - Male respondents



4. DISCUSSION

The analysis shows that the TAFSSA task allocation module and the WEAI time-use module collect information on similar aspects of household activities, but the specific data collected is very different. Table 10 compares several features of the TAFSSA task allocation and WEAI/pro-WEAI time-use modules.

Table 10. Comparison of TAFSSA task allocation and WEAI/pro-WEAI time-use modules

	TAFSSA	WEAI/pro-WEAI
Respondents	Task allocation module designed to be administered to primary female adult	Primary female adult and spouse (if available)
Coverage	Proxy reports on male and female household members (including adolescents) and hired labor	Self-report of time use for primary female and spouse (if available)
Data collected	Participation in task in the last year (12 months); 19 agricultural tasks, 13 food preparation tasks, 12 maintenance and care related tasks	Time spent in activity in the last 24 hours, in 15-minute intervals; 17-24 activities, including productive and reproductive work, leisure, self-care
Interview format	CAPI	CAPI or paper
Average interview time needed for module per respondent (latest estimate) ^a	Bangladesh: 4.87 minutes India: 3.88 minutes Nepal: 5.02 minutes	Bangladesh: 19.4 minutes Uganda: 7.94 minutes Rwanda: 8.89 minutes
Task-sharing	Yes	No
Multi-tasking	n.a.	Yes, in original WEAI, revised to cover childcare only as secondary activity in pro-WEAI
Productive work		
Agriculture	Yes, very detailed	Yes, broad categories, and time spent in each
Non-agriculture	No, unless agriculture-related or food-related	Yes, broad categories, and time spent in each
Reproductive work	Yes, detailed task listing food preparation and maintenance and care work	Yes, broad categories, and time spent in each
Schooling, leisure, self-care, other activities	No	Yes
Gender differences in productive and reproductive work	More tasks reported performed by women across three major task categories, although there is substantial task-sharing	More tasks reported by women across the three major task categories, but more time spent by men in agricultural tasks
Gender differences in non-work activities	No information	Men spend more time in public-facing social activities, commuting, traveling; more time sleeping and resting

^aWe do not have access to module-specific time stamps for all the WEAI datasets, so we present estimates from other studies. The Bangladesh and Uganda estimates are from Seymour et al. 2020 and Rwanda from Hickman et al. (2023).

In terms of respondent selection, the TAFSSA task module was intended to be administered only to the adult female respondent but was designed to capture task dynamics among all household members, including adult males and adolescents (even children). WEAI and pro-WEAI datasets typically interview the primary female adult and her spouse/partner, if available, or the beneficiary of an intervention and her partner (in the case of pro-WEAI). The inclusion of adolescents in the TAFSSA task allocation module

permits the analysis of intergenerational patterns of task allocation, which is not possible in the WEAI datasets. In addition, the inclusion of all female and male household members enables the examination of lateral and hierarchical task sharing within the same gender.

Both modules also have different levels of detail and recall periods. The TAFSSA task allocation module has a total of 44 tasks (19 agriculture-related, 13 related to food preparation, and 12 maintenance and care-related tasks), while the WEAI time-use module ranges from 17 to 24 activities. The recall period in TAFSSA is the past 12 months, and WEAI, the past 24 hours. It is difficult to ascertain the extent of recall bias because the surveys differ both in their recall periods and the detail of the task list. Seymour et al. (2020) compare differences between time-use estimates obtained from 7-day recall stylized questions and 24-hour recall time diaries using data from WEAI surveys in Bangladesh and Uganda in which respondents were asked to answer both types of questions about similar reference periods. They find that stylized questions with a longer recall period involve a relatively greater cognitive burden placed on respondents than the 24-hour recall time diary because they have to mentally aggregate their activities over seven days. Although TAFSSA has a much longer recall period than WEAI, we cannot conclude that it has a higher probability of recall bias because it compensates for the longer recall period with a much more detailed list of tasks and that it does not require the respondent to recall the amount of time spent on each task (but only asks about who within the household performed the task). The much shorter interview times in TAFSSA also reduce respondent burden, compared to the longer interview times using the WEAI time-use module. The use of computer assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) in both surveys helps to ensure consistency, and in the case of the time-use module, that total time does not exceed 24 hours.

Another important difference between the TAFSSA task allocation module and the WEAI time-use module is that in the former the respondent reports for herself and all other household members and in the latter the respondents report for their own time allocation. This may also have implications for response bias when reporting for other household members.

Both surveys also take different approaches to task-sharing and multi-tasking. The TAFSSA survey allows the respondent to indicate whether tasks are equally shared between any two household members

(male or female) and includes responses for the use of hired labor. This option does not exist in the WEAI time-use module. However, the latter allows some measure of multi-tasking. The earlier version of the WEAI implemented in the BIHS collects information on primary and secondary activities; in pro-WEAI, respondents can indicate whether they were caring for a child while undertaking their primary activity. An important feature of the TAFSSA module is that it provides precise information on who within the household is performing the task because responses can be linked to the household roster. So, instead of analyzing the aggregate for all male and female household members, we can look within each gender to examine intrahousehold dynamics across ages and relationships. For example, does the primary female do the cooking but the sisters-in-law or the adolescent daughters help with other food preparation related activities while the mother-in-law does not do much work? If male engagement is observed in collection of fuel wood, are the adult men or the adolescent boys doing this task? These are some of the questions that we can answer using the TAFSSA data.

The TAFSSA task allocation module covers both productive and reproductive work, but the WEAI time-use module has broader coverage, including time spent in non-agricultural (own business and employment), schooling, leisure, self-care, and other activities. Although TAFSSA was designed to obtain information on agrifood systems, it may be beneficial to include non-agricultural employment or non-agricultural business in the task list, because the non-agricultural sector is likely to grow as economies transform.

What do both modules reveal about gendered patterns of task allocation and time use? Based on the comparison of common tasks and activities and restricting the sample only to the primary male and female, both the TAFSSA and WEAI modules indicate that a higher proportion of women than men report undertaking all three types of tasks: agriculture, food preparation, and maintenance and care. The TAFSSA module also indicates some degree of sharing of tasks between male and female household members. Time-use data from WEAI confirms the large amount of time that women put into food preparation and maintenance and care activities. However, using the task allocation data from the TAFSSA and the proportion of women and men reporting the activity from WEAI will tend to overestimate the extent of

women's involvement in agriculture. Another important aspect is that of seasonality—which is relevant to agricultural activities more than the other two categories. While the TAFSSA data measures involvement over the course of a year, the WEAI data captures it at a point in time. So, depending on when the survey occurs with respect to the agricultural cycle, the time use data may miss out on the true extent of women's involvement in some seasonal activities. For example, the TAFSSA findings show women's greater participation in post-harvest processing as compared to pre-harvest activities.

The time use data from WEAI, across all three WEAI datasets, whether using conditional or unconditional estimates, reveal that men spend much more time working in agriculture than women do, except for Nepal. Women may undertake many different types of agricultural tasks, but these tasks tend to be smaller, discrete tasks (such as care of the home garden or livestock), unlike the substantial blocks of time that men spend. The WEAI time use data also reveal that men spend more time in public-facing work and social activities, commuting, and traveling, and more time sleeping and resting.

The two types of data have different recall periods, which has implications for seasonality. Since the recall period is the past 12 months in TAFSSA and the past 24 hours in WEAI, the time use data in the latter is likely more susceptible to seasonality issues. The seasonal nature of agriculture implies that men's and women's time commitments vary throughout the year. For example, during planting and harvest seasons, women may allocate more time to farming, reducing their leisure and rest. Conversely, off-peak periods may shift their focus toward household and childcare responsibilities. These seasonal fluctuations may complicate data collection and interpretation, necessitating a nuanced approach to accurately capture women's contributions and empowerment. In contrast, the TAFSSA task allocation module, focusing on task distribution rather than time spent, is not subject to seasonality bias.

5. CONCLUSION

This paper compares the TAFSSA task allocation and WEAI time allocation modules along several dimensions. Analysis of data collected in Bangladesh, India, and Nepal using the TAFSSA time allocation and WEAI time-use modules indicate a gendered distribution of productive and reproductive work in South Asia, with women undertaking the bulk of food preparation work and maintenance and care work. Both modules also indicate that women perform a majority of agricultural tasks, but analysis of time spent in agriculture indicates that, while women may report being involved in more tasks, in Bangladesh and India, men spend more time in agricultural work. Thus, it does not necessarily follow that tasks in which women report being more involved are those that take the most time, although women are both more involved in food preparation and care work and spend more time in those activities.

The differences between the two modules indicate that they address different aspects of the intrahousehold distribution of tasks and time. TAFSSA provides a good picture of *work*, covering both productive and reproductive spheres, as well as their distribution within the household—not just between spouses. However, TAFSSA is focused more closely on agriculture, and does not include non-agricultural employment except in relation to food systems. Although WEAI initially started out as focused on agriculture, subsequent modifications of WEAI such as pro-WEAI have expanded its scope to include all livelihood activities. Thus, WEAI gives a more comprehensive picture of the allocation of *time*, including time for rest, leisure, self-care, and social and religious activities.

Which module(s) are suitable for which type of investigations? As Seymour et al. (2020) suggest, the choice of method ultimately depends on the researcher and the research question—and the resources available to the researcher. If the researcher is interested in understanding how the tasks across the agri-food system are distributed within a household and is interested in going beyond the dichotomy of men and women, then the TAFSSA module is the right choice. It is also helpful because it identifies activities that are undertaken by hired labor, which may be relevant to understanding local labor markets. The TAFSSA

module is also cheaper to implement as it takes about five minutes to administer to a single respondent within the household.

However, if the researcher is interested in in women's and men's well-being more generally, capturing their time use may be a more concrete way to assess time burdens. This might be of particular interest in the context of interventions that are designed to sensitize communities (or couples within communities) towards a more egalitarian division of household tasks. Using the WEAI time-use module can inform program designers and implementors whether the intervention has changed time allocation and the distribution of work burden between spouses.

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APPENDIX A: TAFSSA AND WEAI SURVEY MODULES

Appendix A.1. Task allocation module from the TAFSSA integrated household survey

Source: TAFSSA integrated household survey female questionnaire.

MODULE E1: Household tasks				
<u>RANDOMIZE SEQUENCE OF E1 AND E2 ACROSS SAMPLE</u>				
<i>Say: now I will ask you about various household tasks. I would like to know who mainly <u>does</u> these tasks, not just the person responsible.</i>				
<i>[Enumerator Instruction: For each task, ask who the primary person is that does the task. Select ID from List A3_2 of household members. If two people equally do the task, you select 'Equally shared' and can enter both IDs. If they hire help for any task, enter "Hired help". Enter '0' if household is not involved in an activity]</i>				
Q.no	Q. label	Response		
E0_1	Is anyone in your family involved in crop cultivation?	0. No 1. Yes		
E0_2	Is anyone in your family involved in livestock rearing?	0. No 1. Yes		
E0_3	Is anyone in your family involved in fish rearing?	0. No 1. Yes		
Skip E1_1_1 – E1_1_8 if E0_1=0				
E1_1	Who <u>does the following agriculture related tasks</u> in your household?	Primary person (Enter one ID from A3_2)	Equally Shared (Enter two IDs from A3_2)	Hired Help
E1_1_1	Preparing land			
E1_1_2	Sowing/seeding			
E1_1_3	Weeding			
E1_1_4	Irrigation			
E1_1_5	Harvesting food			
E1_1_6	Post-harvest processing (need specific tasks)			
E1_1_7	Post-harvest storage			
E1_1_8	Taking the produce to the market to sell			
Skip E1_1_9 – E1_1_17 if E0_2=0				
E1_1_9	Care for large livestock like cows and buffalo			
E1_1_10	Grazing for small livestock like goats			
E1_1_11	Washing/cleaning livestock			
E1_1_12	Cleaning livestock shed/space			
E1_1_13	Handling livestock dung (includes making dung cakes)			
E1_1_14	Gather food for livestock			

E1_1_15	Cook food for livestock			
E1_1_16	Care for poultry			
E1_1_17	Taking livestock products to market to sell			
Skip E1_1_18 – E1_1_19 if E0_3=0				
E1_1_18	Care for small fishponds			
E1_1_19	Care for large fishponds			

Q.no	Q. label	Response		
E1_2	Who usually does the following food/diet related tasks in your household?	Primary person (Enter one ID from A3_2)	Equally Shared (Enter two IDs from A3_2)	Hired Help
E1_2_1	Purchasing perishable food (fruits, vegetables, meat etc.)			
E1_2_2	Purchasing non-perishable food (grains, lentils, oil, spices etc.)			
E1_2_3	Storing food at home			
E1_2_4	Fetching water for drinking or food preparation			
E1_2_5	Cleaning food before cooking			
E1_2_6	Obtaining fuel wood for cooking			
E1_2_7	Obtaining other fuel (e.g., LPG) for cooking			
E1_2_8	Making tea			
E1_2_9	Cooking food			
E1_2_10	Preparing food for little children (<2-year-olds) [Enumerator Instruction: Ask if the household has any member < 2 years old]			
E1_2_11	Serving food			
E1_2_12	Dealing with leftovers			
E1_2_13	Dish washing			

Q.no	Q. label	Response		
E1_3	Who does the following household tasks in your household?	Primary person (Enter one ID from A3_2)	Equally Shared (Enter two IDs from A3_2)	Hired Help
E1_3_1	Cleaning floors			
E1_3_2	Washing clothes			

E1_3_3	Minor repairs to the house			
E1_3_4	Major repairs to the house			
E1_3_5	Care for elderly			
E1_3_6	Care for ill household members			
E1_3_7	Feeding young children <i>[Ask if the household has young children]</i>			
E1_3_8	Bathing children			
E1_3_9	Playing with children			
E1_3_10	Taking children to school			
E1_3_11	Watching children at home			
E1_3_12	Helping children with schoolwork			

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