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REVALUATION OF WOMEN'S WORK IN BANGLADESH

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ABSTRACT

The paper seeks to revalue women's nonmarket work in the context of parts of rural Bangladesh, which is where most of her women folk live. It raises relevant conceptual and methodological considerations relating to revaluation of women's work, reviews various sets of evidence on the pattern of time use of women in Bangladesh, and then puts up a broad order of magnitude as to the value of women's nonmarket work. For this purpose, it taken the sexual division of labour and sexual differential in rates of wages as given.

The paper shows that rural women in Bangladesh work as hard, if anything harder, as men on a daily basis. It also shows the widespread sexual distribution of labour in the sense of involving the influence of social stereotypes in the allocation of tasks between males and females. Finally, it shows that productive work within households consists of market work, typically by men, and a good deal of subsistence work and domestic work performed by women.

I. INTRODUCTYON

One of the distinguishing features of the three decades beginning with the Korean boom has been the widespread acceptance by third world countries of planned economic growth essentially through industrialisation as a fundamental tenet of economic policy. The result has been accelerating rates of investment and economic growth involving a large number of countries in the Third world. Accelerating growth in the GNP in many countries has, unfortunately, been accompanied by manifest symptoms of acute unevenness of growth and development. The focal points of the examination of the unevenness

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of development have so far been provided by urban-rural divides, or by irrigated-nonirrigated regional divide, or landed-landless class divides.

Recent surges in feminist thought and research have underscored an additional, but perhaps potentially the most endemic, focal point of the uneven nature of contemporary economic development: namely, the male-female divide. For many women in the Third World, especially in its rural areas, the conditions of literacy, health and life expectancy, energy balance, intake of food and health services, and life options are such that the dictum, "The hands that rock the cradle rule the world" is perhaps more memorable, in the light of the contemporary experience at any rate, of its proverbial exaggeration than for the challenge it may offer to the fancy, whatever its flight over time and space, of the most ardent feminist. For most women, the power status that typifies woman is not so much one of domination, as of subordination, even *de facto* unilateral bondage. A recurrent theme in feminist writing is that the roots of feminine subordination lie embedded in the manner in which and the objectives for which women and men relate themselves in the specific contexts of a household. One of the central features of this set of relationship is the question of what work women do that has utility for the household, and of what value to accord to such work. This paper seeks to contribute to this area of discussion in the context mostly of rural Bangladesh.

Before proceeding any further, we would like to elucidate the cause of our using the noun "re-valuation" in the title chosen for this paper. It might be argued that using 'valuation' or 'evaluation' might have done just as well. The point, one may say, is that, while women's commoditised production for the market is valued in the nature of market exchanges, the concern should be with valuing, or evaluating, their unpaid but productive work. The task called for is therefore a straightforward one of evaluation of women's productive, mainly subsistence-oriented, work.

This line of reasoning leaves at least two things to be desired. First, to our mind, if one accepts that valuation of women's productive and "quasi-productive" but unpaid work is a "straightforward" one of applying some such thing as an appropriate rate of earnings to the quantum of time they use in such work then this may imply an uncritical acceptance of a regime—the prevailing regime—of prices and values that is essentially a derivative of the existing division of labour between the sexes. If we evaluate what women's production is worth, for any given technological and organisational combination, on the basis of a set of prices that are predicated on the latter, then we are building the carefully and male-orchestrated occupational roles and values of women into the quantitative exercise itself. It is not to be construed that the set of values corresponding to existing sexual division of labour is to be totally discarded. After all, this set of values can be measured directly from the real life, however unfairly it may be organised. If, however, one takes the resulting value as uniquely defining what women's production is worth, then one may well be outside the bounds of propriety: there can not just be one "straightforward" measure of what women's nonmarket work is worth. Perhaps, valuation and revaluation are both necessary.

The second but related difficulty of the above line of reasoning lies in the fact that a "straightforward" exercise implies a certain condition of settled finality in terms of conceptual development that may be associated with any given empirical task. The fact of the matter is, while it is incontestable that women make a truly fundamental contribution to the productive effort of any society, the precise methodology of putting a range of values to it must be seen to be only evolving. One cannot blithely assume a condition of settled conceptual finality on this question. A proper assessment of women's non-market production is thus more properly seen as a process of successive fine tuning, corresponding to which is a parallel process of increasing conceptual clarity.

The paper is structured as follows. Section II is a review of issues relevant to revaluation of women's non-market work. It is argued there that the creation by women of value through subsistence and household work is a specific chapter of a wider area of thought relating to the creation of value by different modes of production. It is therefore necessary to put the treatment of housework in the perspective of the history of thought. This is necessary to give the paper its philosophical underpinning. Section III invokes some broad methodological considerations relating to the paper, delimits its objectives, outlines the sources of its data. Section IV presents our evidence. Section V simply summarises the main conclusions of the paper.

II. TREATMENT OF DOMESTIC WORK IN ECONOMIC THOUGHT

Revaluation of women's non-market and home production raises certain issues of thought that are in themselves quite fertile grounds for contemplation. Indeed, it would be quite inappropriate to think that one could proceed to such revaluation task without so much as posing a few considerations in deference to the various positions taken on the subject by economists of different orientations of value. A clear delineation of the cleavage of the viewpoints expressed on the subject of revaluation is necessary so as to promote a sense of proper identity on one's part. It is the aim in this section to provide an account, over historical time as it applies to the evolution of thought, of views held on domestic labour. The plan of the discussion in the section is as follows. We first take up the treatment of domestic production in the tradition of the so-called neo-classical economics, particularly relying on the insights of the new economics of the household. This is presented as a polar case of the treatment of the subject under conditions reflecting full development of capitalist relations of production and institutions. As a contrast, we then present some Marxian perspectives on domestic labour. Finally, we posit the pervasiveness of the absence of both fully developed capitalist relations and market-based exchanges and hence the inappropriateness of both Marxist and neo-classical perspectives, in the specific contexts of rural areas in Bangladesh.

Domestic Work in Neoclassical Economics

In this tradition, household is taken to be an unproblematic decision unit in matters of labour supply, use of income etc. Presumably in its acceptance of the household as just such an unit, the early architects of this body of thought had expected the nuclear family, as distinct from the extended family, to become the universal form of family, as industrialisation and economic development gathered pace. This predisposition was understandable in that decision-making within a nuclear family would appear to involve fewer potential decision agents and thus be more amenable to generalisations than in the case of extended family. There was also the fact that family provided a convenient and socially acceptable focal point for quantitative analysis, and of course neo-classical economics was cast in quantitative tendencies. There was, therefore, a sharp separation of consumption and production: while the former was mainly done in the family, the latter was mainly done within firms or enterprises.

As economic development brought about conditions of full or near-full employment, especially in the market economies of the Western World, the opportunity cost of time rose sharply. Total time available to an individual has two potential uses: time spent at work that generates income, and time spent on the production of "use-values" and their consumption. Near-full employment conditions brought about a situation where there was a trade-off between work within and outside the home, in other words between wage work and "domestic labour". The decision space of time allocated to wage and house work thus had become effectively coterminous. This prompted the recognition that the traditional separation of the household from the theory of production was untenable (Cairncross 1958). This also prompted the recognition that the households maximised their utility through allocating time between work outside and within the households subject to the constraints of prices of commodities (including time) and what was called full income (money incomes plus income foregone by time devoted to consumption and domestic production) (Becker 1965). This has been christened as the general household production model, the fulcrum of which rests on the proposition that the total work time of the household is the sum of time spent on income-earning activities plus time spent on productive but nonincome-earning activities at home. In this tradition, it is seen as misleading to describe the nonincome earning time of women as leisure. Because both housework and wage contribute to what Becker has called full income, which may be associated with family welfare, "inducing women to increase work outside the home does not necessarily mean increasing their contribution to family welfare or reducing their leisure" (Quizon 1978, p. 185). The new applications of the new home economics have addressed the question of the production of quantity and quality of children (Benporath 1973; Willis 1973; Khandker 1983).

The neoclassical theory of production and time allocation is critically conditioned by its stress on quantification and commodity production. Quantification however forces a

dependence on the presence of the pervasiveness of exchange, and markets. The primacy of exchange and the market underscores the influence on both of capitalist institutions, such as private property, and a particular structure of demand. A preoccupation with quantification can lead to a neglect of non-commoditised sectors which can frequently be quite important and, thereby, to an omission of a treatment of economic behaviour and forms that characterise these sectors.

Before turning to the Marxian perspectives on the subject, it may be in order, in line with Himmelweit and Mohun (1977, p. 19), to posit a Marxist criticism of the exercises in the tradition of the new home economics. These neoclassical exercises, in seeking to analyse domestic production, are not so much concerned with production relation as such—that is, with the questions of patriarchal relations, the sexual division of labour, etc, as with “only their fetishised appearance in exchange ; exchange not as a relation between people and their labours, but as a quantitative relation between the products of their labours . . . exchange relations between things are seen as a result of their particular physical properties, from which utility derives, and the concept of production itself disappears. . . this approach is superficial because it does not penetrate the actual relations of *Production* involved ; it only considers the product, and these only as providers of utility” (and not as representing the social relation between their owners) (Himmelweit and Mohun 1977, italics in the original ; the last insertion added).¹

Marxian Perspectives on Domestic Labour²

While neoclassical economics has de-emphasised home production out of a preoccupation with quantifying the commoditised exchange values, early Marxist writers, except perhaps Engels to an extent, neglected domestic labour as a result of their antithetical preoccupation with the capitalist mode of production and the dynamics of accumulation². Since we reserve the qualified exception for Engels, it may not be entirely pointless to briefly present one of his most fruitful thesis that, with the benefit of intellectual hindsight, now appears to be pregnant with rich implications for the possible early integration of the domestic labour into the corpus of Marxian perspectives on “social production”: Engels wrote : “According to the materialistic conception, the determining factor in history is, in the final instance, the production and reproduction of immediate life. This, again, is of a twofold character: on the one side, the production of the means of existence, of food, clothing and shelter and the tools necessary for that production; on the other side, the production of human beings themselves, the propagation of species” (Engels 1950, p.155). Now, production in the above would presumably refer to exchange value as well as use value. This latter is necessary for reproducing labour-power on a daily basis. Again, reproduction in the above quote relates to that of labour power on a generational basis (Beneria 1979). Indeed, Engels’ above insights have been refined by Beneria into two dimensions of reproduction, (a) the repro-

duction of labour power on a daily basis and (b) the social reproduction of labour force, associated with the fact that child care and the socialisation of children into different occupational stereotypical role, are universally seen as women's domain of activity (see, on this, Beneria 1979 and Himmelweit and Mohun 1977).

Engels correctly ascribed women's subordinate position to women's association with biological reproduction and childcare, as also to the separation between the social and domestic spheres of production. For him, these roles were due to the development of private property and class society. Hence, the primary thing was to eliminate the latter, and it was argued in this tradition that merely focussing on increasing women's participation in social production would not necessarily achieve the improvement of the condition of women.

Engels himself did not pursue his original insights into the roots of the question of whether, insofar as much of women's home production was in the nature of use values, and as he had himself noted the unequal relationship between the sexes within the household, the production of use values could also conceivably involve social relations and could thus be properly treated as a province of political economy³. Since Engels himself did let go of his point, it is a small wonder that others, including Marx, too, continued to neglect noncommodity production in discussing political economy. Hence, despite the fact that Marx talked about all labor producing use-values as productive labour, the most prevalent position within the Marxist tradition has been in accordance with his contention that use value as such was outside the sphere of political economy. Put differently, the categories of productive and unproductive labour relate to labour only: they are irrelevant in the analysis of domestic labour.

Himmelweit and Mohun (1977) have reviewed the various definitions and approaches in the Marxist tradition of economic analysis to domestic labour. This is not the place to go into a detailed discussion of these approaches. These authors criticise the inadequacy of the position that domestic labour constitutes a separate mode of production—a position taken by Edwards (1971) and Harrison (1973), among others. Also reviewed by them is a large body of Marxist writing on domestic labour which hinges on the relationship between housework and capital. These authors endorse the view that analysis of housework can only become significant if it is done in terms of the accumulation of capital and the dynamics of capitalism. However, this position has been vigorously controverted by Hartmann (1979), who argues that, while Marxist analysis of capitalism is extremely powerful, "Marxist categories, like capital itself, are sex-blind" (p. 8). To Hartmann, the importance of housework as a social relation lies in its crucial role in perpetuating male supremacy, (and not a capitalist function of causing higher rate of profit (p.6), thus causing class contradictions)⁴.

Since patriarchy pre-dates capitalism, and since it can be shown that patriarchal relations are well accommodated by and in turn sustain capitalism (Hartmann 1979) and

since patriarchy is practically universal in its incidence, one is led inexorably to the observation that housework must be deemed to involve a certain unequal social relation. Hence Beneria's remark that production of use-value can also involve social relations in production - especially when one remembers the egregious sexual differentiation in favour of men in terms of access to productive resources (Beneria 1981; Ahmed 1983).

The position taken up by feminist writers such as Hartmann, Beneria, Jain et al. (1979) in the treatment of housework— that the focal point should be not so much its relation to capital and capitalist dynamics as its consequence for patriarchy and, through it, for capitalist dynamics, raises an important question of methodology. Marxist theoretical reasoning which rigidly adheres to the Marxist theory of value and productive labour would like to see the treatment of housework critically conditioned by the capitalist law of value, and by the Marxist concept of the paramourcy of capital. This theory has its own frame of reference, which generates a theoretically precise measure of value. The motivation of the discussion of a proper treatment of whether domestic labour generates values is critically conditioned by such a frame of reference. In contrast, one might be treating the same domestic labour not so much as a Marxist theoretician as one who seeks to understand the roots of an asymmetric sexual division of labour which is universal, immanent. The motivation of the latter is somewhat akin to that of an empiricist who is open to adjust his or her theoretical stance when persuasive evidence appears to dictate such a course. In other words, measurement in terms of theoretical categories and measurement to obtain approximations may result from fundamentally different motivation, even though they may superficially relate to the same things.⁵ The Marxist and feminist divergence - for example, as articulated by Beneria (1981)—can, upto a certain point, be explained in terms of differences in motivation behind the treatment of housework.⁶

III. SOME METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS, AND THE DATA

Having seen in the last section the evolution in the history of thought of the treatment of women's work in the home, we are now ready to move to the realm of measurement. Our object is to obtain a range of values for what women's home production is worth. While the presentation of this range of values is reserved for the next section, our present purpose is to pose some broad considerations of methodology, and to go on to outline the nature of our data.

Macro and Micro Measures of Women's Non-Market Work

Revaluation of women's work can well be cast in both macro and micro terms. Questions about the under-statement of the GNP entailed by the fact labour participation rates of women are typically far lower than they ought to be are concerned with revaluation in aggregative terms.⁷ This would involve revaluation of woman's housework on

the basis of nationally representative sample data. Such exercises have the virtue of promoting awareness of the economy-wide importance of the production by women, both market and home production. Such economy-wide measure of women's share in national output can then be pitted against their use of the national product, with a view to obtaining a macro measure of possible sexual discrimination (Mukherjee 1983). However, such exercises are extremely intensive in data requirements, and it is beyond the scope of the present paper.

Micro focus in revaluation of women's work involves understatement of the full income of households arising from the treatment of subsistence and housework of women as not active labour. The advantage of micro focus lies in its ability to examine the possibly different roles played by women's work in the survival of households in different social (i.e. land owning) classes. An additional advantage of these essentially more manageable exercises is that with them it is possible to examine how women's creation of value through subsistence and home production within household may conceivably be, and at times, is contrasted with the less than equal share of women in food and other scarce resources, again, within households.⁸ A third virtue of these studies, although it may be claimed to be incidental, is that its very micro nature requires for it a defined economic and environmental locale. When several of these are put in a common perspective the stage is set for one to observe that the role and extent of women as producers depends not only on one's economic class but also over space, across agrarian systems, and cultural patterns, and also depending on the stage of the development of the family, etc.

This study belongs to the tradition of a micro revaluation of women's work in the context of some rural areas of Bangladesh.

What is Active Labour ?

In rural Bangladesh, women's lives are filled up with a great variety of work, interspersed with brief spells of leisure, socialisation and personal need-fulfilment. Now which type among this variety of work is composed of what may be called productive, active, gainful, useful work ? The question has assumed great significance as evidence, especially in rural areas of Bangladesh, as elsewhere in developing countries, has mounted showing that women work as long or longer than men, and that their work, especially in food storage, post-harvest processing and subsistence production can be of fundamental importance to the maintenance of rural production cycle. This has been elaborately covered by Beneria (1981). It is enough to very briefly summarise the state of the debate. This can be done in terms of the following sets of propositions.

First, the recognition of the importance of subsistence production, and the fact that the commodities implied by it are very largely substitutable for those exchanged via the market has led to the realisation that such output is part of the national

output, and that such labour is active. Such output has a potential for generating income for households, and certainly has the virtue of saving them costs of subsistence. It is common to find the practice in branches of economic theory, e.g. cost-benefit analysis, to treat many types of investment projects as productive because they are not so much income-generating as cost-saving. The sanction, therefore, to treat women's time involved in expenditure-saving activities as of the same status as market-bound work would appear to be of respectable academic pedigree. Now this set of activities can be a long one : threshing, drying, husking, winnowing, and storing paddy; looking after seed and rice stocks; collecting food, fodder, fuel and water; looking after and marketing what is obtained from owning cattle, poultry; growing fruits, vegetable; drying fish, fruits; making home condiments and desserts; plastering mud-walls, floors, cooking stoves, yards; sewing clothes, quilts, knitting fishing nets and making mosquito nets.⁹ In Marxist terminology, this would be production of use value mainly for consumption. These are the activities which an early definition of home production viewed as "carried on, by and for the members, which activities might be replaced by market goods, or paid services, if circumstances such as income, market conditions, and personal inclinations permit the service being delegated to someone outside the household group" (Reid, as quoted in Quizon 1977, p. 186).

It is now agreed that this definition, which appears to be quite acceptable, is broad enough to cover many important aspects of housework associated with reproduction of the labour force as well as social reproduction of individuals¹⁰. Surely, if incomes, tastes and state of the development of market permit it, child care, home keeping, and socialisation of children can all be delegated to someone outside the household group. In fact, the only aspect of reproduction that is irreplaceable from women inherently lies in its biological aspect. However, biological reproduction usually accounts for a relatively small portion of the working year of women: incapacity for usual kind of work is essentially confined to a small number of weeks of pre-and post-natal state. The upshot is that, with a minor exception on this score, almost the entire time allocated to reproductive work (of labour power and 'social reproduction type') may be deemed to be part of active labour.

All this means that the market can not be viewed as the only arbiter of what is productive, useful, gainful and economically active. Home production which ceases output that either competes with or can potentially substitute market output must be seen to involve economic activity. Finally, home-based reproduction of the labour force on a daily basis and the social reproduction of traits and abilities necessary for performance in the labour market, too, has to be seen as economic activity¹¹. This means that one, perhaps an idealised, basis for determining which of women's labour is active would call for inclusion of all women's work concerned with household maintenance and socialisation functions.

The Choice of an Appropriate Measure of Work

The next question that arises is how best to measure women's nonmarket and house work. There can be at least two main ways of measuring women's work. First is in monetary terms, and the second is in terms of number of hours or person-days of work performed. There can be three plausible ways of determining the monetary value of such work (Mukherjee 1983). One can evaluate all housework at housewives' rate of opportunity earnings. Or, one can evaluate all housework on the basis of the market rate of earnings of a person to be hired for doing that work. Finally, one may go ahead by finding the market price of each piece of work done by the housewife. It may not be entirely amiss at this stage to dilate on some of the problems that may arise from efforts to monetise women's nonmarket work especially in the light of the economic realities obtaining in Bangladesh.

Monetisation of women's work at any rate presupposes that female labour force participation is in such a state that there exists a hierarchy of rates of earnings of women workers corresponding to a reasonably wide variety of jobs, or at least that it should not involve a great deal of speculation to produce an order of magnitude as to just what is the opportunity cost of women performing all housework. Whether we are evaluating the housework on the basis of the opportunity costs of the relevant women, or on the basis of costing hired help, it is clear that one would need detailed task-specific rates of earning. Some economists think that "in every traditional, semi-feudal, semi-commercialised economy, almost every kind of unpaid quasi-productive labour is purchased and paid for in some nearly commercialised sub-sector" (Raj 1983, p.6), which can easily provide a possible basis for revaluation. However, it is necessary to examine the sex-composition of these nearly commercialised "sub-markets" for it is by no means self-evident that working women will predominate or even be in evidence there, and because applying earnings in a conceivably male-dominated sub-market of a service that, within households, are the domain of women will not mean the same thing as using opportunity costs of female time in quasi-productive work (for details of this argument, see Chowdhury and Jahan 1984, p. 37). In a market segmented by sex, earnings in the male segment of the market reflect the opportunity cost of male workers, not female workers.

What one ideally needs in this context are rates of earnings of "women-only" or "mainly female" segments of the labour market. Now it is quite conceivable that there exist sex-induced differentials "unfavourable" to women, in that earnings for the performance of the same tasks in the female segments will be lower than in the male segments. This may be the case for no more an enlightened reason than the influence of an unsubstantiated fact that all or most working men are the sole breadwinners of their families, while all or most women are minor earners in the family.¹² Whatever the reason, the fact of a sexual segmentation of the structure of earnings in the labour market in developing countries may be taken as largely true. Monetisation of women's work on the basis of

earnings data which are subject to the existing and exploitative sexual division of labour and the associated structure of earnings raises deep-seated reservations from a feminist viewpoint. This does not mean that revaluation of women's work becomes any the less important for certain practical purposes. Monetisation may still remain necessary for projecting the worth of women's work in such terms as are understood by the general run of people. However, the difficulty indicated in the paragraph is a real one. Using female rate of earnings would not do because it will bring through the back door the influence of the existing sexual division of labour. Using earnings of male workers who do for a wage outside the home something that women typically do within the home would also not do. This may be because while men, working as cooks or tailors, for example, will be working full time on one such job, while women cook, sew, feed, as well as perform myriad other chores. While women's time as cooks and sewers can each attract the same unit value in relation to time, the problem is that it would involve some arbitrariness to claim justification for it in wages of full time male cooks and tailors, in that these may be widely discrepant. The upshot of all this is that monetisation of women's work, while frequently necessary, has its own problems, some of them serious. Nonetheless, in this paper we shall in part revalue women's work in this particular sense.

One of the most natural ways of measuring work is in terms of the quantity of work performed which is best measured in number of days worked. All 'work' creates value, but to want to measure value on the basis of market prices presupposes the existence of a developed regime of exchanges, and the presence of pervasive capitalist relations. However, neither a developed regime of exchange nor pervasive capitalist relations can be said to be the most marked distinctions of rural areas of Bangladesh where most of her women live. Within Bangladesh's agriculture, while the presence of a large landless farm workers shows *prima facie* the existence of capitalist organization of farming on the basis of wage labour, it remains true that a degree of share tenancy also exists, thus giving greater play to the subsistence nature of farming. And, of course, a large proportion of farming, especially carried on by small farmers, is motivated by subsistence. Production for exchange may account for a relatively small proportion of males that work on farm. The concentration of women's work on subsistence production is of course even greater. The critical importance in rural Bangladesh of subsistence as a motif of production activities of both male and female does therefore strengthen the thesis that the quantity of work is its own measure. Work should therefore be physically measured in terms of the number of person days involved.

It should not be seen surprising that we are suggesting an alternative physical way of measuring the contribution of women to the welfare of the family. It is well known in production function literature that when both inputs and output are measured in physical terms (e.g. manhours of labour, hours of machine services, tons of output) the statistical exercise better approximates the assumptions of the production model implied. The reason why physical measures are more reliable than monetary measures in that the latter

is mediated by peculiarities of the income distribution, for example. A procedure of monetising women's work in preference to that of physically measuring work is mediated by precisely the same sort of forces. In this paper we shall see what contribution women's work at home and at subsistence makes to total useful work, measured physically, by members of households.

The Data

Bangladesh has a relatively abundant body of data showing time use of women versus men, and very little systematic data relating to their cost of time. There have been, to my knowledge, five sets of studies of time use, associated with the work of Farouk and Ali (1975), Cain (1977), Khuda (1978, 1982), Khuda (1983) and Rural Studies Project of BIDS (in process). Farouk and Ali attempted to estimate how an average individual in Bangladesh spends his or her 24 hours of the day. Mainly the head of family, and to some extent the spouse concerned and other members above 18 years of age were covered in the body of information collected. The twenty-four hours preceding the day of interview constituted the period of reference. Seven unions in Bangladesh broadly representative of her agro ecological zones and socio cultural diversities in relations to variations in time use decisions were covered.

Cain, Khuda and RSP locale was rural. Cain collected time use data every fortnight, referring to the twenty four hours preceding the day of interview. All household members of 5 years and above were covered. Khuda was the first researcher who combined observation and interview methods in his study of a sample in Barkait in Comilla in the east of Bangladesh. 71 males and 79 females aged five years and over through a 14 hour observation period were observed for a run of 210 days, yielding 30450 person days of observations. Khuda's second time use study, again from a village in Comilla, consisted of 79 males and 86 females, who were observed for twenty four weeks. A total of 30744 person-days were observed. Cain's and Khuda's Barkait studies are distinctive in their addressing the problem of seasonality in time use behaviour within their methodologies.

One of the most comprehensive efforts to collect time use data in Bangladesh has been that associated with the RSP of BIDS. It was comprehensive because study sites were selected from four defined agro ecological and socio economic zones and because its methodology had included provision for the collection, round the year, of information on a suitably selected sample of households on monthly income, expenditure, household and time use of each member 5 years and over. Also, transactions in wage labour for both males and females, together with the rates of earnings were also covered in the information collected.¹³ Time use data were generated monthly, referring to the twenty four hours preceding the day of the interview. We have been able to use such data from two rounds (as processing of the data from other rounds is not yet quite complete).

IV. THE EVIDENCE

We first of all examine the extent of daily work of Bangladesh women versus men. We shall then look at the sexual division of labour within households. We shall finally take up the issue of how much women's work at home and on subsistence is worth.

Extent of Work Done by Bangladeshi Adult Men and Women

Table 1 below calls from various sources information about the number of hours of work done daily by persons, men and women, roughly between fifteen and fifty nine years

TABLE 1. NUMBER OF HOURS OF WORK BY BANGLADESHI ADULTS, 1974-1981

Period, year	Place	District	Hours of daily work	
			Males	Females
1974 ^a	Azimpur	Dhaka	9.78	9.89
	Godanail	N. Ganj	9.74	11.54
	Jamalpur	Thakurgaon	9.33	10.20
	Belkuchi	Pabna	10.71	10.62
	Amadi	Khulna	10.20	12.48
	Bara Vakoir	Sylhet	10.60	10.04
	Maichhari	Chittagong H.T	10.22	11.21
1976 ^b	Char Gopalpur	Mymensingh	9.20	9.30
1977 ^c	Barkait	Comilla	6.50	8.40
1981 ^c	Sree bollobpur	Comilla	8.70	9.10
1979 ^d	All four RSP areas	Bogra, Dhaka	8.30	8.40
		Jessore, Dhaka		

- a. Derived from Farouk and Ali (1975). That work was unable to show extent of work by age and sex groups. It may be presumed that virtually all respondents were adults, i.e. 15 years or above.
- b. Derived from Cain (1977), and relate to age group 16-59 years.
- c. Derived from the works of Khuda (1982, 1983), and both relate to the age group 15 years and above.
- d. Relates to 15-59 years age group.

of age. Let us note at the outset that, while Farouk and Ali's results are based entirely on recall method and can not deal with seasonality, all the other four sets of results are more exhaustive in terms of coverage of seasonal peaks and troughs. While the average number of hours worked per day by males and females in the seven unions covered by Farouk and Ali are found to be 10.1 and 10.8 respectively, the matched averages are only 8.2 and 8.8 for the other four sets of results. Unfortunately, it is not possible to explain the significant differential in the extent of work between the seven unions on the one hand, and the other four study sites. However, insofar as the latter was accompanied by specialist measurement of time use, there is a presumption that Farouk and Ali's results overstate the number of hours of works. It appears from the other four studies that Bangladeshi adults work for about 8 to 9 hours daily. More to our present purpose, the figures in the table show that adult women work just as long as men, indeed perhaps may work slightly longer than men. (However, the difference is not statistically significant.)

Sexual Division of Labour in Bangladesh

The existence of sexual stereotypes conditioning allocation of labour as between males and females within households has an old history. The roots of these stereotypes lie in patriarchy, and feminist authors have argued that patriarchy pre-dated private property and class societies (Reiter 1975). Patriarchy may be defined as a set of political relations that deliberately define women's biology in ways which manipulate women's child-bearing capacity and transform this capacity into her life function (Atkinson 1974, p. 6). Women's domestic work and childbearing chores constitute the mystified form of the feminine part of the sex-typical division of labour.

Sexual division of labour within households is as old as it is universal (Beneria 1982; Nelson 1981; Abdullah and Zeidenstein 1981; Raj 1982; Lee 1983; Jahan 1975; and Greeley 1982). In rural Bangladesh, the division lies in the fact that, while men and boys work on the farm and afield, women typically only work within the homestead or within the extended, secluded precincts of the home. A voluminous research has illuminated all major aspects of this division of labour in the concrete contexts of production and processing of rice, the staple of Bangladesh (Greeley 1982; Begum 1983; World Bank 1983; USAID 1983). While men plough, broadcast seeds or transplant saplings, weed, irrigate, harvest, and market crops, women thresh, winnow, dry, dehusk, polish and store paddy and rice. They also are responsible for storage of seed-stock, which is a delicate business, and for seed interculture (Srivastava 1983). Cultivation, transportation and marketing are the province of men's work and post-harvest operations are that of women's work. The same sexual divide also typifies the other food and cash crops in Bangladesh, such as jute, sugarcane, wheat, etc.

Asymmetric Impact of Agricultural Seasonality on Sexual Division of Labour

The division of labour is not only sexual but more often than not asymmetric, at the expense of women. A debate is just unfolding on the nature of sex-specific seasonal and annual energy balance, and the nature of allocative process of food and health resources between sexes. This is a question about sexual differentials in terms of energy and food balance within households, and, thereby, of the state of their health¹⁴. Casual empiricism would suggest that women's supply of effort is more volatile, that women's productive work (e.g. in postharvest work, and in other nonmarket ways) is short-lived, intermittent and secondary. This may be based in part on the various alleged compulsions arising from biological aspects of women's reproductive character. Men's involvement in productive work may, on the other hand, be casually seen to be more steady and invariant over seasons. Recent insights that can be gleaned from examining intensive rural data on pattern of time use by men and women suggest that the above conventional stereotypes may have to be re-examined, if not altogether set aside (Table 2).

Table 2 shows, for example, that, within the sample, the total number of persons found to have worked productively over the RSP rounds is no more variable for women than for men and, if anything, a good deal less than for men. The number of persons, of either sex, who report productive work certainly can denote sexual difference in extent of work. Thus women's involvement in productive work has to be seen as more consistently, predictably spread over the work year.

Table 2 shows quite the same thing, if only a little more strongly. It shows that the quantum of work that women perform on the sample as a whole is less variable, more predictable and dependable than is true for males. It may of course well be argued that migration, for example, makes the total number of active males left within the sample inherently more variable, and that it would be quite fallacious to treat periods in migration as nonwork, or leisure. There is of course something in this. And yet it is quite fair to argue that, while working males can enjoy the occasional let up and the change in surroundings that migration entails, the women represent a category of persons for whom the grooves of all-too-familiar work within an all-too-familiar environment become the irreplaceable life functions.

Evidence has accumulated that even the sexual impact of the seasonal peaks in the workload within households can be asymmetric. The relevant category here is energy imbalance. Haswell (1973) has produced a detailed study of women rice growers in Gambia, and shown how seasonal peaks in labour demand coinciding with periods of food shortage could create a state of energy deficits, reflected in loss of body weight. In Bangladesh, mean body weight of 216 mothers observed in Matlab was found to decline drastically between the months of July and September. However, these months were also shown to be characterised by low food stocks. Again, July is a month of peak activity and work load for women. Hence July to September are perhaps the most vul-

nable part of the year for most people in rural Bangladesh. Women and children, especially females, are perhaps the most vulnerable of peoples during this part (Chowdhury et al. 1981). Energy balance is at a deficit in part due to low food availability, high food prices, peak work load (in July), and due to energy output associated with postnatal

TABLE 2. VARIABILITY OF THE NUMBER OF WORKERS REPORTING SOME DEGREE OF WORK OVER VARIOUS ROUNDS AND VARIABILITY OF THE TOTAL HOURS OF PRODUCTIVE WORK DONE BY MALES AND FEMALES OVER VARIOUS ROUNDS

Name of area	(Standard deviations)			
	Variability of workers reporting work		Variability of productive work duration	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Khethal	24.3	7.5	195.2	51.9
Narail	17.2	12.8	118.3	77.6
Manikganj	8.8	7.5	85.0	41.5
Companiganj	14.1	7.3	106.4	41.4

Source : Rahman (in press)

child-care. A seasonal peak of births around December 15 (Becker and Sardar 1981, p. 150) implies that during this vulnerable quarter many women are suckling babies who can not yet be weaned off and who yet can demand a great deal.

Table 3 juxtaposes the sexual division of labour and the impact of seasonality. The sexual division of labour is already manifest in that, while out of the total of 9423 hours worked per month by all active males on the samples in the four RSP areas, 75% is devoted to productive work, the corresponding percentage for women is only 20%. In contrast, while of the total of 9879 hours worked per month by all female workers on the same sample, 80% is devoted to housework, the corresponding proportion is 27% for men. (We shall come back to the sexual division of labour below.) As for the differential impact of seasonality, we again find that the lowest variability in the incidence of work is found among women, for example, in the case of housework and all work. One of the most

TABLE 3. PRODUCTIVE WORK AND HOUSEWORK DONE MONTHLY BY MALES AND FEMALES IN FOUR RSP AREAS

Bengali Month	Productive work		Housework		All work	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Sravan	7681 (1)	1796 (9)	2437 (9)	8081 (5)	10118	9877
Bhadra	7046 (5)	1705 (11)	2787 (2)	7681 (9)	9833	9386
Ashwin	6236 (11)	1752 (10)	2874 (1)	7294 (11)	9110	9046
Kartik	6466 (10)	1904 (7)	2468 (6)	7992 (6)	8934	9896
Aghran	7357 (3)	2105 (1)	2279 (10)	8389 (1)	9636	10494
Poush	7086 (4)	1986 (6)	2646 (3)	8264 (2)	9732	10250
Magh	6587 (8)	2105 (2)	2580 (4)	7813 (8)	9167	9918
Falgun	6582 (9)	2099 (3)	2264 (11)	7517 (10)	8846	9616
Chaitra	7377 (2)	1823 (8)	2453 (7)	8166 (4)	9830	9987
Baisakh	6773 (6)	2081 (4)	2482 (5)	7868 (7)	9255	9949
Jaishtha	6744 (7)	2024 (5)	2445 (8)	8222 (2)	9189	10246
All months	6903	1944	2520	7935	9423	9879
Std. Devn	423	146	181	322	402	390
Coeff. of Varn. (%)	6.1	7.5	7.2	4.0	4.3	3.9

Note : Productive work for men consist largely of wage work, self-employed income earning work and work as unpaid family workers. Such work by women consist largely of engagement in post harvest processing. Housework relates to nonincome earning but quasi-productive work, including, in the case of women child-care, cooking, fetching water etc. Figures in parentheses reflect ranks of the values with in a given column. Sravan corresponds, roughly, to July 15-Aug 14, etc.

Source : Rahman (in Process).

interesting aspects of the data lies in the extent to which the tendencies of productive and domestic work to peak as between men and women are symmetric in time. The answer may be examined by looking at the rank correlation between the two categories of work as between the sexes. The two rank correlation coefficients are found to be 0.36 and 0.31 for males and females. For men, the negative coefficient implies that they have greater flexibility in terms of dealing with peaks. They can perhaps divert some of their housework to more vulnerable members of the family to prevent a simultaneous peaking on the two counts. While for women, who lacks such autonomy of decision, peaks in productive work and housework have coincidental tendencies. Put in other words, within both categories of work, there is, for women, less scope to adjust the quantum of

work over time so as to modify the peaks. Women are not in the happy position of having **a slack** on the score of productive work coincide with a peak on the score of housework. **Unremitted**, invisible and hard work, whatever the season, has thus indeed become their **life function** in rural areas of Bangladesh.

Sexual Division of Labour in Rural Bangladesh

As regards sexual division of labour, the evidence that we review in the following will not strike the knowledgeable reader as being new. In fact, a sharp sexual cleavage as between the work deemed appropriate for men as distinct from women has already been extensively documented (Farouk and Ali 1975; Cain 1977; Jahan 1975; Greeley 1982; Khuda 1982; Khuda 1983). We only add to this list of sources the name of RSP, which confirms the by now conventional pattern. The division consists in the fact, as has been said before, that while men work on the farm, afield, and at large, customary work by women mostly takes place within the homestead, or within safe limits of its precincts. It should be said in the same breath though that increased economic stress is acting as a change agent of work mores, giving a fillip to wage work among women, especially from landless households (Greeley 1982; Ghuznavi and Chen 1980). Also, there is not only a division of labour between sexes, but also a palpable, though somewhat less sharp, cleavage between women belonging to households from different economic strata in terms of the extent and nature of both categories of work (Cain 1976; Khuda 1982; Khuda 1983; Rahman (in process). Since the ground of the sexual division of labour is so well covered, and since we are unable to produce any striking novelty of evidence, we would summarise it into a set of observations.

Out of the seven unions covered by Farouk and Ali (1975), apart from Maichchari—a tribal locale, where sheer economic pressure and social custom permit females work on self-employment basis—women in the other six unions were, on average, devoting 91% of their work in housework and other subsistence chores. In contrast, cash earning and self-employed work accounted for 89.3% of all work of the husbands on this sample. Cain's (1977) data suggest that both men and women over 10 years work for about an 9 hours per day. But of this, 89.9% is devoted to productive, income-earning work by males while the corresponding proportion for women is only 19%. Khuda (1982) finds that males, over 10 years in Barkait spend 85% of their work-time on directly productive activities while females only 30%. Khuda (1983) finds that while the males over 10 years on his Sren bollobpur sample spend 76% of their worktime on directly productive work, the women spend precisely that much of work on subsistence production and housework. Finally, data from RSP (round 6 and 14) show that, while men spend 62% on productive work women spend a full two thirds of their time on housework.

The above observations show the sexual division of labour in rather aggregative terms, in that both productive and useful house work necessarily have to lump together

categories of work which may be of unequal importance a priori. Table 4 tends to readdress the situation in that it presents, separately for several categories within productive and housework, the relative shares of the members in certain selected age groups in the total time spent by all males and females observed on that particular category of work. Three groups only are selected for tabular convenience, without, however, compromising

TABLE 4. SEXUAL DIVISION OF LABOUR IN A RURAL AREA OF BANGLADESH, 1976

Nature and Locale of work	(% of total time by male and female)					
	Age					
	10-14		15-54		All ages 5 +	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Farm work inside family	6.8	4.8	44.7	27.4	62.2	37.8
Farm work outside family farm	3.9	2.3	87.3	4.7	92.5	7.5
Preharvest work	7.8	6.2	79.6	1.0	98.5	1.5
Harvest work	10.7	0.0	81.4	0.0	100.0	0.0
Postharvest work	3.2	10.8	10.0	58.4	12.4	80.6
All directly productive work	7.8	4.1	47.5	25.1	66.5	33.5
Food making work	0.0	4.1	0.3	81.0	0.3	99.7
Washing, cleaning	0.5	4.6	1.7	88.8	2.3	97.7
Bringing water	0.5	11.0	2.3	78.2	3.4	96.6
Child care	4.1	6.8	2.8	57.1	13.8	86.2
All useful housework	2.6	5.7	7.4	65.2	14.6	85.4

Note that the proportions in cols. 6 and 7 may not add to 100 due to rounding errors. Farm work in rows 1 and 2 refer to activities such as ploughing, sowing, weeding, watering, fertilising, etc. upto the stage when physical growth of the plants is at a maximum. Unfortunately for our present purposes, Khuda's otherwise valuable work does not anywhere present information on age and sex specific extent (in time units) of work on this carefully differentiated set tasks, although data available on his tape would eventually generate crucial additional insights about women's work in exchange of only a marginal increase in computing cost. In the absence of such information, we can not know how important men's and women's work in a particular category is in the context of all male and female work.

Source : Khuda 1982, Table 5.3.

on substance. We find that, while women show a certain measure of involvement in work inside the family farm, their involvement stops at its edge: when the harvest is done, their productive activity peaks again. This is why the peak in women's productive work load is in Aghran (Table 3). Postharvest processing is essentially a feminine preserve in rural Bangladesh, where paddy is the major crop. The major message stemming from the rest of the table is about the effectively singular importance of women in household chores, including many facets of subsistence production.

The above account shows that women have to work as long, if not longer, as men and contribute to the supply of effort so as to help reproduce labour power, and to the economic surplus of the family by saving expenditures. The next question is how important is this contribution. To this we shall now turn.

What is Women's Non-Market Work Worth ?

In the typical micro revaluation study of home production, its value is approximated by multiplying time allocated to home production by the wage rates (Quizon 1978, pp. 200-1). Even so, it can be argued that this would understate value of home work because the average product of home time should exceed its marginal product, which in equilibrium should be equal to the wage rate. This may simply be due to diminishing returns to home production. It is convenient to first estimate the home production time allocation function, from which the co-efficients can be utilised to estimate the average product of home time.

This elaborate methodology is not feasible to use in the current state of data availability in Bangladesh on the subject. While there have been a number of time budget studies in connection with population research, no one has yet amassed the data necessary for estimating a home production time allocation function. However, it is still possible to highlight the possible magnitude of the under-valuation of women's work by examining these body of data. While one may not be able to speak in terms of full income in monetary terms and of women's share in it, a suitable reorganisation of the data, especially from Cain and Khuda, can highlight the extent of under-enumeration of women's work. In the present paper, some illustrative figures will be computed to do this on the basis of Cain's published results. Cain's study is selected for a basis because he also presents age-specific wage rates during harvest season at Char Gopalpur, which are essential if monetisation of home production has to be done.

In Table 5, we present the number of person-days of work on a age sex specific basis covered by Cain, as well as the values that are obtained by multiplying them by prevailing sex and age specific wage rates. While the person-days reflect the actual situation, the monetised values are largely illustrative. In a sense, they show what could potentially be the wage earnings of each category of the members of a household if they

could market the designated numbers of person days of active work on the prevailing rates of wages. In other words, the figures of row 6 show the "nominal full supply value" of the active labour of members of the households by age and sex. As will be readily imagined, this may be far higher than the actual value that the market may place on their full supply of labour, thus implying, in part, un-or under-employment of available labour supply and, in part, undervaluation, *ex definitione*, of women's work in the home.

Consider panel-B. There are four values under each age-group. The value at the north-west of the implied rectangle is male productive work (MP), that at south-west is male home work (MH). The other two are female productive work (FP) and female home work (FH). Now MP almost wholly yields a market determined return. Its

TABLE 5. ILLUSTRATIVE FIGURES SHOWING IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN'S WORK

Category of work	Age (years)									
	10-12		13-15		16-21		22-59		All	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Panel-A (Person-days)^a										
1. Productive work	90	22	63	17	100	13	360	85	613	137
2. House work	7	90	5	60	8	64	50	356	70	570
3. Total work	97	112	68	77	108	77	410	441	683	707
Panel-B (Taka)										
4. Productive work	362	59	298	54	492	43	1822	288	2974	444
5. Housework	28	242	24	191	39	211	253	1207	344	1851
6. Total work	390	301	322	245	531	254	2075	1495	3318	2295

- a. Sex and age specific number of person-days were adapted from relevant table in Cain's work cited. The person-days in panel-A were monetised in panel-B, on age-specific basis. From Table 4, we know that harvest work is almost invariably done by men. Number of person-days in panel-A were collected over four rounds some of which presumably having occasioned lower wage rates than during the harvest. Wages during nonharvest time are usually about one-quarter down on harvest wages. Age-specific number of person-days were thus monetised. Female wage rates in each age class was assumed to be two-thirds that of those of males.

Source : Cain 1977.

fruits accrue to the household largely in cash, or in kind. All the other three categories of work are expenditure-saving. The "full income" must be seen as the sum of income from market production and the expenditure that the family is saved from. In our case, we do not have full income in its strictest sense. We have what we have called "potential full income". Concentration on cols. 10 and 11 would show how, for the person days observed by Cain during his four rounds, money or kind income compares with potential full income (PFI).

Only 52.9% of the PFI shows up as the money income of the family, while 47% is accounted for by subsistence and domestic production. A lion's share of this unrequited, unrecognised and invisible work is done by women: our illustrative numbers show that only 13% of the economy yield by such work is due to men. The rest are the labours of women and girls. Women work accounts for 40.9% of PFI, and for 77% of men's productive work. Thus home production is indeed quite important in determining economic welfare of families. It is thus possible to reconfirm the observation made by Boserup that "subsistence activities usually omitted in the statistics of production and income are largely women's work" (Boserup 1970, p. 163). It is not therefore necessarily true that increase in women's work outside home would necessarily increase family's full income, although it will necessarily raise its money income. The work of mothers, wives and daughters within families in rural Bangladesh is hereby seen to be of great economic value for their welfare, is seen to be much greater than is indicated by the stereotypical census or surveys of labour participation of women. This finding should cause a re-examination of the conceptual and statistical basis of the now familiar programmes to mobilise the disadvantaged in rural Asia for participation in development (ILO 1983).

V. SUMMARY

One of the least researched but potentially the most potent focal points of the unevenness of the development process centres around the gender-based divide. Under-enumeration of economically active women, and under-count of their work, are among the most important manifestations of this unevenness. The paper seeks to revalue women's nonmarket work in the context of parts of rural Bangladesh, which is where most of her women folk live. It raises relevant conceptual and methodological considerations relating to revaluation of women's work, reviews various sets of evidence on the pattern of time use of women in Bangladesh, and then puts up a broad order of magnitude as to the value of women's nonmarket work. For this purpose, it takes the sexual division of labour and sexual differential in rates of wages as given. The resulting order of magnitude is illustrative in some formal sense; however, it is firmly rooted in the relatives of what productive and gainful work women actually perform at home in rural Bangladesh.

Accumulation of theoretical insights and empirical evidence about the nature and significance of women's work, the pervasiveness of unequal economic relationships between men and women within households, and the relationship between patriarchy, capitalism and the subordination of women is slowly changing the corpus of economic thought about domestic work of women. Orthodox postulates of both Marxian and Neo-classical economics on the subject have both fallen into disfavour. Both are deficient in being sex-blind, and in treating the family to be an unproblematic, consensual economic unit. Recognition of their deficiency has made room for the conscious use of the gender as an active category of class differentiation. This has opened up fascinating new insights about how production is in fact organised within households; how patriarchy as a political system, manipulates the reproductive biological functions of women and deliberately raises it into a life function of women.

The paper shows that rural women in Bangladesh work as hard, if anything harder, as men on a daily basis. It also shows the widespread sexual distribution of labour in the sense of involving the influence of social stereotypes in the allocation of tasks between males and females. Finally, it shows that productive work within households consists of market work, typically by men, and a good deal of subsistence work and domestic work performed by women. The capacity of men to earn at a certain rate income through market production is critically dependent on the production, within the homes, of use value which saves them expenditure. It is found that while almost the whole of the market income, whether in cash or kind, is accounted for as men's work, women's work accounts for about 40% or more of the potential full income of the family. In other words, women's work, which is largely invisible, is as important as men's work is. One lasting moral that one can draw from all this is that it is a fallacy to believe that to increase outside work of women would automatically raise the full income of families. Someone has aptly said, "If all the men married their maids, the GNP of the country would go down drastically" (Dhamija 1983, p. 39). Revaluation of women's work is critical to an understanding of production in rural Bangladesh, because women's work is integral to it.

NOTES

1. On the fetishism of quantitative relations in commodity exchange, see Geras (1971), and Hunt (1982).
2. This paragraph draws on Himmelweit and Mohun (1977), Bereria (1981), and Fee (1976).
3. Precisely this question has been raised by Bereria (1981).
4. Hartmann's opening sentence is : "The 'marriage' of marxism and feminism has been like the marriage of husband and wife depicted in English common law: marxism and feminism are one, and that one is marxism" (p.1). In Hartmann's view capitalism and patriarchy both are causes of the subordination of women in capitalist society. Hence, an effort to conceptualise housework as involving either no social relation of all, or involving social relations which are only given legitimacy by the

existence of capitalist relations of production is in fact to miss the relations contained in the sexual division of the labour process within the family. Jain *et al.* (1979) also see feminism as distinct from and prior to class solidarity in a revolutionary struggle.

5. The flavour of what I have in mind here can perhaps best be put in the words of Sraffa, written in the context of the debate on capital theoretic measurement: "...there was (the measurement) in which the statisticians were mainly interested. Second, there was measurement in theory. The statisticians' measures were only approximate... The theoretical measures required absolute precision. The work of J.B. Clark, Bohm-Bawerk and others was intended to produce pure definitions of capital as required by their theories, not as a guide to actual measurements" (Sraffa, quoted in Lutz and Hague 1961, pp. 305-6).
6. The qualification towards the end of the sentence in the text must be noted. Ardent feminists would no doubt look suspiciously, to put it mildly at any effort to equate their above all humane concerns with those of the "dispassionate statisticians". And of course they would have done so with the strongest of reason. The point is, however, that the possible advance of feminism over Marxism on the methodology of understanding the nature of housework has lain precisely in the fact its proponents have assimilated, to more scholarly effect, the facts of the nature and consequence of the labour process within the family (Hartmann 1979). To our mind, in the establishment of the need to look at housework as involving social production, better facts have prevailed upon abstract theory. While facts and statistics are intended to refer to roughly the same categories, our use of the latter has been conditioned by our notion that the universality of patriarchal relations within household labour processes deserves to be treated as statistics with a humane cause.
7. A great many studies in the developing world, including Bangladesh, show that official censuses return absurdly low rates of female labour participation, due, in large part, to a concentration on primary activity and to the absence, in census questionnaires, of probing questions leading up to how the working hours are spent (Beneria 1981; Khuda 1982; Islam 1979).
8. The unequal sexual distribution within household of food and health resources unfavourable to women and children has become the focal point of a rapidly burgeoning literature. For a survey of the issues, see Choudhury and Jahan (1984) in the case of Bangladesh. The debate still exists on the presence of sex-specificity of the division of food and health.
9. See Abdullah and Zeidenstein (1982, pp 26-28), for an outline of what extensive involvement performance of subsistence work means for women in rural Bangladesh at least in terms of the separate number of such tasks performed.
10. For an elaboration of the various aspects of reproduction in the context of housework, see (Beneria 1979).
11. The position that time allocated to the household tasks of social reproduction of the labour force should be seen as economic activity not just in a Marxist sense but also in statistical sense may on the face of it be controversial. Critics may say that socialisation of children with a view to generational transmission of the household's distinctive skills and attitudinal ethos cannot be as simply delegated on anyone from outside the household group. This may be because of the distinctive, as opposed to general, nature of these resources and inborn tendencies. However, it is also possible to argue that the spirit of the exercises of revaluation of women's homework is to treat the home to be a production unit, in which all adult females (and males) are workers who treat the division of labour

not so much as a matter of moral or social consideration as of individual economic interest. On this basis, time allotted to childcare and socialisation by women can well be seen as economic activity from the viewpoint of the individuals concerned.

12. This certainly is not the place to go into the debate, particularly in developed countries, on the existence and nature of this differential. Conservative economists may like to explain the differential as a matter of the average male worker being more experienced and skilled, more flexible in work-related mobility, and hence deserving the higher wages they earn, even on the same job. However, feminists can point out, with considerable justification, that labour market as a whole is apt to discriminate against women (Papola 1982; Eisenstein, 1981 pp. 206-12). The demand and supply of labour is conditioned by widespread perceived need, even felt desirability of a sexual structuring of jobs, in which some soft jobs such as secretaries, stenographers, book keepers, school teachers, waitresses, sewers and stitchers become feminised at relatively lower wages, while the women are hardly in evidence on professional, managerial and other skilled jobs. There is little doubt that, in advanced capitalism, having a soft sector in the labour economy, with low wages and relatively 'docile' women workers is beneficial to capital accumulation. This gives substance to the thesis, advanced by Hartmann that patriarchy and capitalism accommodate and reinforce each other. The main point in the text has therefore been about the exploitative sexual division of labour.
13. See Khan (191) for a discussion of the methodology of the RSP.
14. One of the first systematic, comparative analyses of the issues of energy and food balance, in the specific contexts of the incidence of seasonality in rural poverty, were presented in Chambers et al. (1980). One of the most disturbing, however tentative, conclusions of the volume is that even seasonality is 'not sex blind', because it impacts asymmetrically on energy and food balances as between men and women.

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