

IT IS ABOUT TIME

MEASUREMENT, CHALLENGES AND POLICY DIRECTIONS FOR ASIA

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ADB

Today's Agenda

01 What time-use surveys capture and why they matter

02 ADB's past work: findings, valuation and time transfers

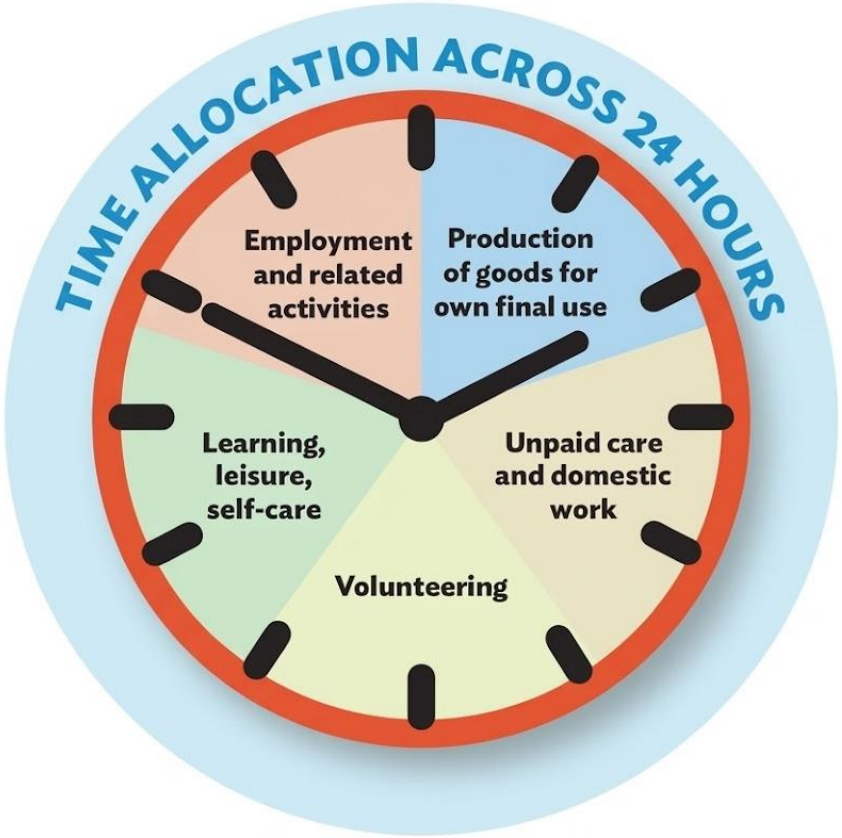
03 ADB's current work: time-use data in Georgia and Bhutan

04 Survey approaches and measurement challenges

05 Economic-policy uses and opportunities for country analysis

Several studies provide useful evidence, but coverage and methods vary across countries.

We All Have 24 Hours



- Time is a universal resource.
- Its use is unequal.
- Much of this inequality is invisible in standard data.

What a Time-Use Survey Captures

- Records activities and time spent during a day

  Work Activities:

  - System of National Accounts (SNA) Production: employment, production of goods for own final use
  - Non-SNA Production: unpaid care and domestic work (UCDW), volunteering

  Personal Activities: learning, socializing, leisure, self-care

- Without time-use data, we miss
  - The invisible labor of care and home maintenance.
  - This invisible labor sustains households, communities, and economies.

Time-Use Surveys Analyzed

Country	Survey Year	Sample Size
Central and West Asia		
Georgia	2020/21	Over 5,700: slight variation for weekdays & weekends
East Asia		
Republic of Korea	2019	26,091
Mongolia	2023	17,241
South Asia		
Bangladesh	2021	17,770
India	2024	450,457
Sri Lanka	2017	15,451
Southeast Asia		
Cambodia	2019	3,625
Viet Nam	2022/23	6,001

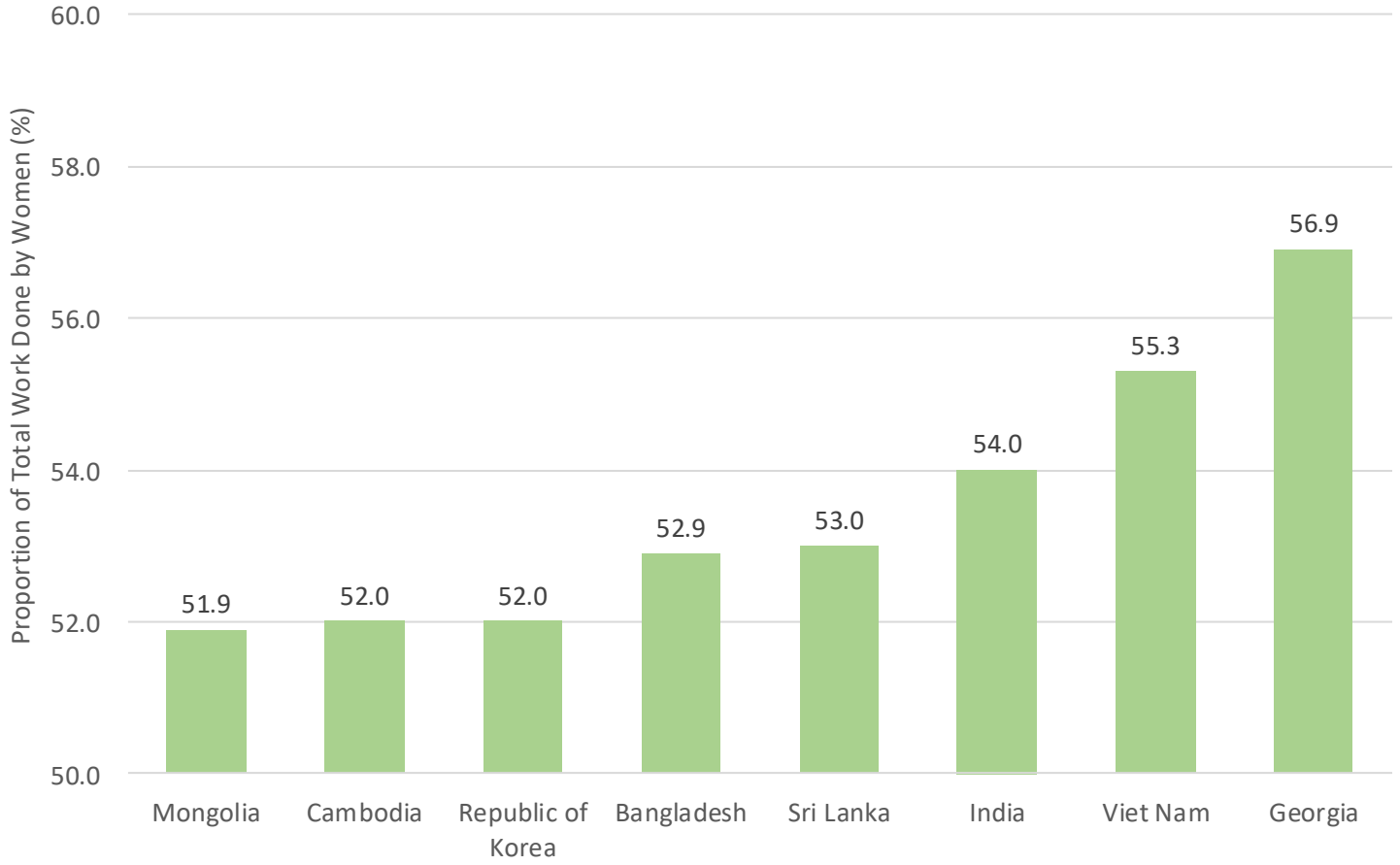
Note: Comparability across countries depends on activity classification. Refer to the report for the details on the harmonization approach used for the remaining countries.

Time-Use Indicators (Daily Activities)

- Average Hours Spent per Person
- Participation Rate (%)
- Average Hours Spent per Participant

Analytic Sample: 18-64 years of age

Women Carry a Higher Overall Workload



- When we count all work, women do more than half, especially rural women.
- Rural women workload: 6.6 hours/day (ROK) to 9.3 hours/day (Mongolia & Viet Nam)—partly due to weaker access to time-saving infrastructure.

Notes:

1. SNA production includes ICATUS 1 (employment and related activities) and 2 (production of goods for own final use), while non-SNA production includes ICATUS 3 (unpaid domestic services), 4 (unpaid caregiving services), and 5 (unpaid volunteer, trainee, and other unpaid work).
2. In Cambodia, non-SNA production includes only ICATUS 3 and 4, as information on ICATUS 5 is not collected in the survey.
3. In Viet Nam, SNA production includes only ICATUS 1, as information on ICATUS 2 is not collected in the survey.

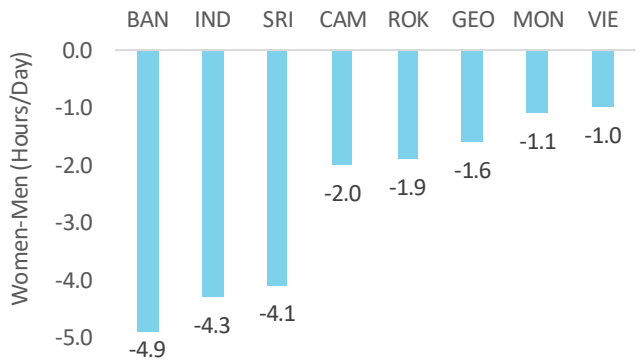
Caregivers and Breadwinners

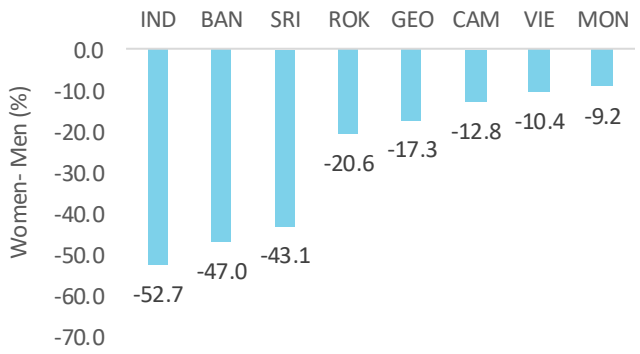
Gender Gaps in Time-Use, Aged 18–64 Years

Average Hours Spent per Person

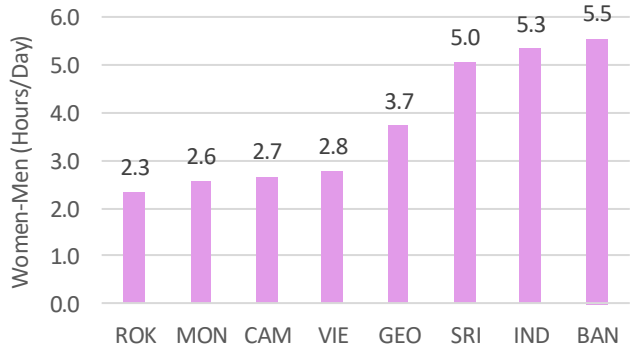
Participation Rate (%)

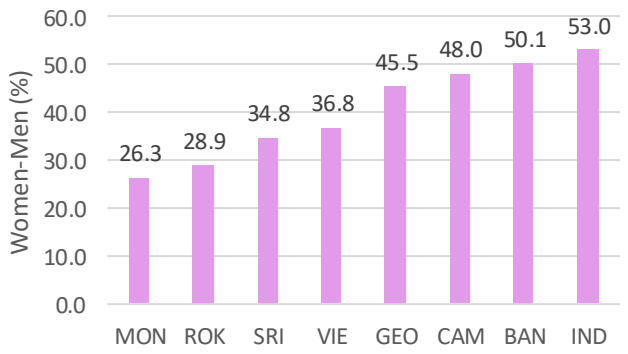
Employment





Unpaid Care and Domestic Work





Hours per day

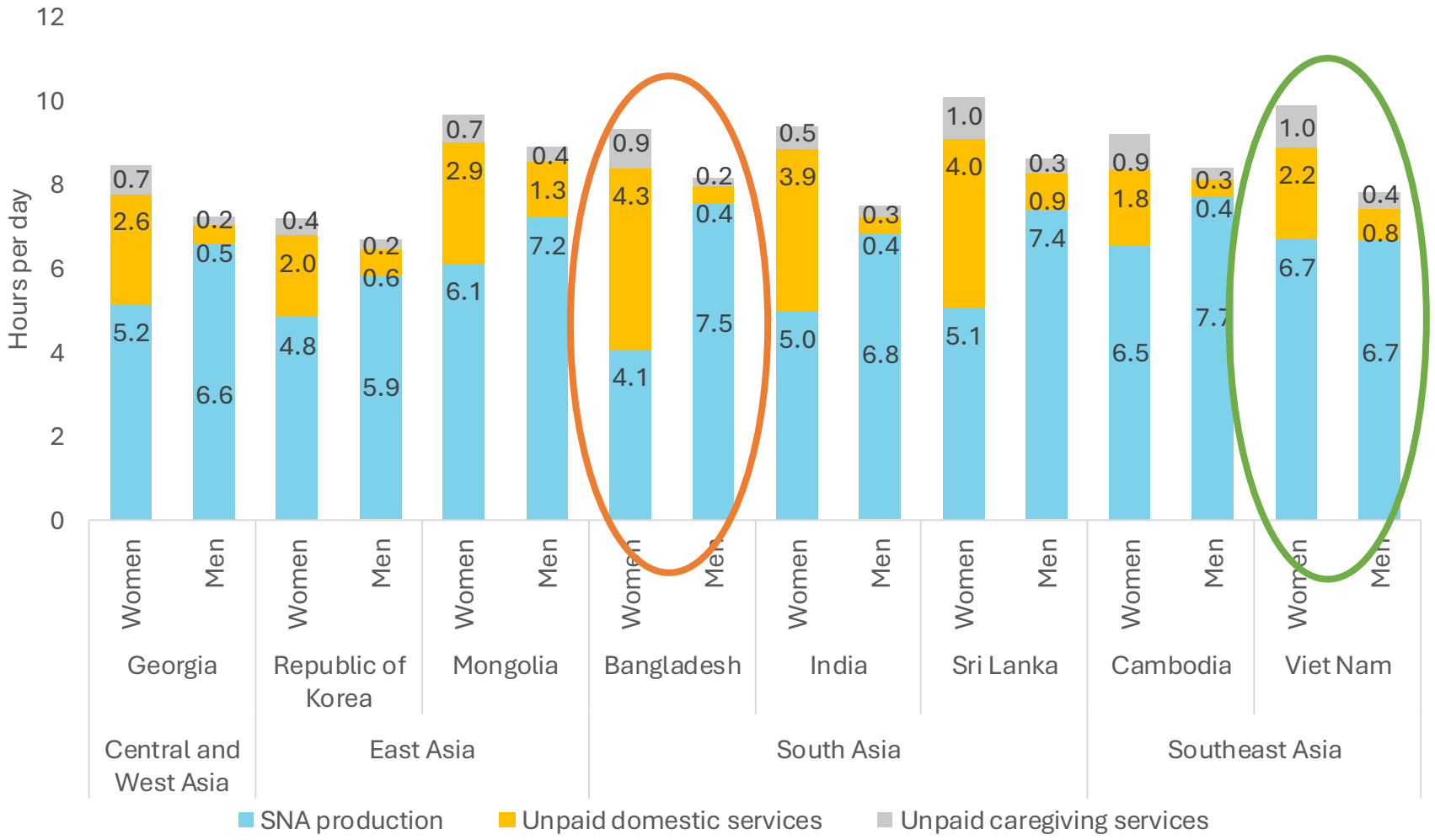
Employment:
4.6 (W); 6.1 (M)

Unpaid Care and Domestic Work:
4.3 (W); 1.1 (M)

BAN = Bangladesh, CAM = Cambodia, GEO = Georgia, IND = India, MON = Mongolia, ROK = Republic of Korea, SRI = Sri Lanka, VIE = Viet Nam

Note: **Women–men** differences are estimated using weighted OLS regressions of each outcome on a sex indicator, with robust standard errors. The differences are significant at 1% level.

The Double Shift for Employed Women



Total work hours per day for employed women vary from 8.5–10.2 hours, compared with 6.7–8.7 hours for employed men

Note:
SNA production includes ICATUS 1 (employment and related activities) and 2 (production of goods for own final use). In Viet Nam, SNA production includes only ICATUS 1, as information on ICATUS 2 is not collected in the survey.

Key Empirical Messages

- In all countries studied, gender gaps in total work time favor men, driven by higher time by women in non-SNA activities.

- Employment does not offset Unpaid Care and Domestic Work (UCDW) for women: it adds to the total workload.

Valuing Unpaid Work: Bangladesh and Bhutan

Women's unpaid domestic and care work has substantial economic value

Bangladesh

16.1%

of FY2020–2021 GDP

Women provided 85% of the estimated value of all unpaid domestic and care work.

BBS–UN Women–ADB collaboration

Hybrid replacement-cost estimate

Bhutan

7–11%

of 2017 GDP

Women provided around two-thirds of the estimated value of unpaid care work.

ADB research with Bhutan partners

Range across replacement-cost methods

GDP equivalents, not amounts already included in GDP. Years and methods differ, so these are not country rankings.

Sources: BBS, UN Women & ADB (2025), Table 16; Suh et al. (2020), ADB Working Paper 624, Figure 14.

Who Provides Care, and Who Benefits?

National Time Transfer Accounts

ADB study maps unpaid care across age and sex in seven Asian countries.

Older women continue to provide care to others

Care responsibilities extend well beyond the conventional working ages.

Population change can alter the balance of care

Population projections help explore future care pressures.

Care receipt is estimated. Projections hold current care patterns fixed. These are scenarios, not forecasts.

Source: Donehower (2025), Mapping the Unpaid Care Work Economy in Asia, ADB Economics Working Paper 777.

Several Aspects to Capturing Time



Several Data Collection Methods

Diaries, hybrid modules, or recall questions, each trading off cost, depth and burden.



Respondent Burden

Fatigue leads to incomplete entries or rushed reporting.



Recall Bias

Can result in over or underreporting, especially for irregular activities or multitasking.



Seasonality and Timing

Surveys conducted over a short time frame may misrepresent actual behavior.



Cultural & Linguistic Barriers

Languages differ in how activities are described; norms can shape perceptions of *work*.



Ethical & Privacy Concerns

Intrusiveness, confidentiality, digital surveillance, and consent, especially with app-based or passive tracking.

Current Work: Strengthening Time-Use Data

TA 10635: Leveraging Evidence for Gender and Development

ADB is strengthening the collection and use of time-use data in the region.

Georgia:

data collection

Supporting GEOSTAT with time-use data collection.

Bhutan:

capacity building

Working with the Centre for Bhutan Studies.

Policy Shapes Time, and Time Shapes Economic Outcomes

1

Time constraints shape economic choices

High unpaid care responsibilities can constrain labor supply, job flexibility, and sectoral choice.

2

Time constraints shape human capital and well-being

Unpaid work can crowd out learning, rest, and discretionary time, with implications for skills, health, productivity, and time poverty.

3

Policy and infrastructure shape time constraints

Childcare, health and eldercare services, transport, water and energy infrastructure, and resilient school infrastructure can reduce household time responsibilities.

Conversely, cuts or disruptions to public services can shift part of the cost to households through additional unpaid work and time.

Time-use data can reveal costs and benefits of policy that conventional economic indicators may miss.

Country Interest in Time-Use Analysis

Which economic-policy question matters most for your country?

Possible questions for exploration	A starting point for discussion
How do care responsibilities constrain paid work?	What time-use and complementary data are available?
How might population ageing change care pressures?	Would your country be interested in a scoping discussion?

An initial discussion could identify a priority question, relevant data and an appropriate analytical approach.

It Is About Time: Measurement, Challenges, and Policies for Asia

Mapping the Unpaid Care Work Economy in Asia (NTTA)

Bangladesh: Unpaid Household Production Satellite Account

Valuing Unpaid Care Work in Bhutan

TA 10635: Leveraging Evidence for Gender and Development

Thank You!