

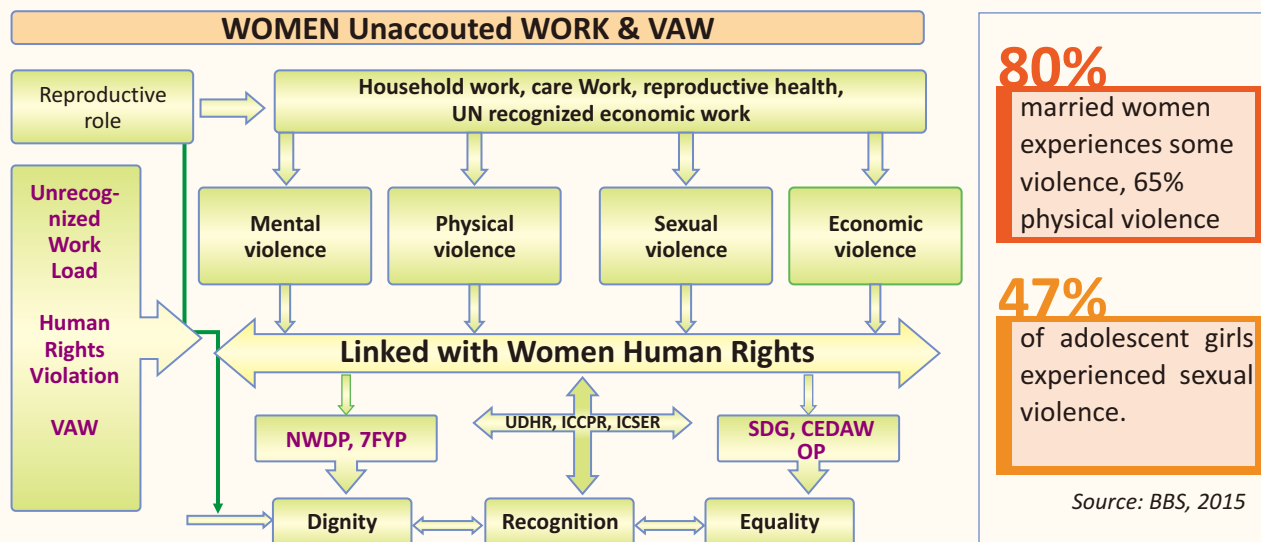
# Recognition of Women's Unaccounted Work

Manusher Jonno Foundation launched a campaign “Equality through Dignity” in 2012 to raise status of women in public and private domain to reduce discrimination and violence against them. The campaign aims to change current negative perception of women by highlighting their contribution in the family, community and state.

In the last 40 years Bangladesh has made tremendous progress in promoting education for women and girls, reducing maternal mortality and creating job opportunities. Thousands of medium and small women entrepreneurs have grown due to the provision of micro credit and policies of national and state lending institutions. Specific laws and policies have been enacted to address gender based violence and promote political empowerment of women. Today in Bangladesh, there is no sector where women are not present and not making a contribution. However, in spite of these gains, women in Bangladesh continue to face violence and discrimination and accorded lower social status than their male counterparts. One of the outcome of the lower status of women is manifested in violence against girls and women, discrimination and even death.

## Specific objectives

- Build knowledge, creating mass awareness and in-depth analysis among stakeholder regarding women's contribution to the economy through both, paid and unpaid work.
- Sensitizing policy makers and planners that the under valuation of women's contribution to the society is a hindrance to meeting development goals and impacting negatively on the GDP.



As part of the campaign strategy of highlighting women's contribution, MJF commissioned CPD to undertake a study titled “Estimation of women's contribution to the economy”. The objective was to gather evidence on women's unpaid contribution and give it a monetary value. The other objective was to lobby with policy makers for its inclusion in the National GDP. MJF believes such a step will make society realize the contribution of women's unpaid, unseen work and thereby raise their status.

## Estimating women's contribution to the economy

### A case of Bangladesh

Major reasons for under-representation of the women's contribution in the national income accounts are : (i) women's presence is most prominent in the unorganized sector where pay is little or there is no payment at all; and (ii) the traditional method of national accounting does not include unpaid work performed by women. According to International Labour Organization, worldwide women account for about one-third of the workforce in the unorganized sector. In Bangladesh only 3.25 percent of employed women are working in the government sector and 8.25 percent in the private sector. The remaining 89.5 percent are employed in the informal sector with varying and often unpredictable earning patterns or as it so often happens, work without any payment.

### STUDY FINDINGS

The present study on Estimating Women's Contribution to the Economy: the Case of Bangladesh conducted by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), estimates women's unaccounted work in monetary terms and compares with the gross domestic product (GDP) of the country. The study is based on a comprehensive survey of 13,640 individuals aged 15 years and above. Of these 8,320 are female and 5,320 are male residing in 5,670 households (HHs) located in 378 primary sampling units (PSUs) across 64 districts of the country. Household members were interviewed through a detailed questionnaire. The HH survey was conducted during March-May 2014.

The study attempts to address the issue of women's unaccounted activities more comprehensively. Thus it has conducted time use survey and estimated women's contribution to the economy.

### STUDY ATTEMPTS

- (i) Estimate time spent by both men and women for daily activities;
- (ii) Estimate the economic value of women's unaccounted activities; and
- (iii) Make recommendations for capturing women's contribution to the economy with a view to improving women's status in the family and society.

## NEW EVIDENCE ON WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO BANGLADESH ECONOMY:<sup>2</sup>

### *Time Use for Unpaid (Non-SNA) Activities*

- Time spent by a female person (aged 15 years and above) on non-SNA works is about three times higher compared to a male person (aged 15 years and above).
- On an average, a female person works about 7.7 hours on non-SNA activities on a typical day; in contrast a male person works about 2.5 hours.
- This pattern is similar in both rural and urban areas.

### *Number of Unpaid (Non-SNA) Activities*

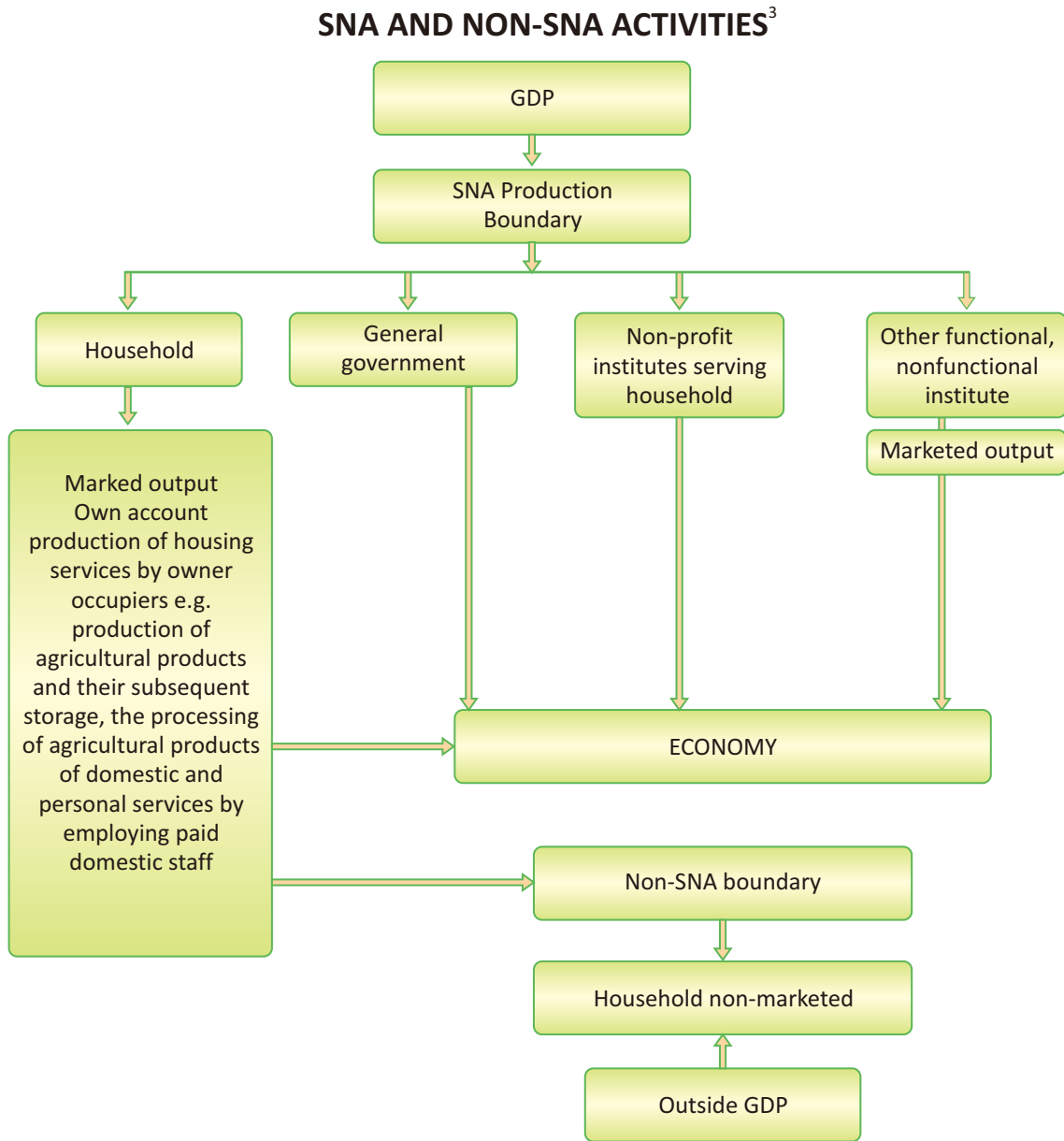
- On an average, a female member of a HH undertakes 12.1 non-SNA activities on a typical day – the corresponding figure for a male HH member is only 2.7.

1 MJF commissioned Center for Policy Dialogue (CPD) to conduct research on 'Estimating women's contribution to the economy' in Bangladesh, 2015

2 Research findings, 'Estimating women's contribution to the economy' in Bangladesh, 2015

### Valuation of Unpaid (Non-SNA) Activities

- Based on replacement cost (the shadow wage for similar type of work) method, the estimated value of women’s unpaid non-SNA (household) works was equivalent to 76.8% of GDP (of FY2013-14).
- According to the willingness to accept (for outside her own household) method, the corresponding estimate was equivalent to 87.2% of GDP (of FY2013-14).
- These figures are 2.5 to 2.9 times higher than the income of women received from paid services (estimated from this from survey).



<sup>3</sup> Dr. FahmidaKahtun, Research Fellow, CPD and Author of the study : ‘Estimating women’s contribution to the economy’ in Bangladesh , 2015

## Recognition of Women's Unaccounted Work

The UN System of National Accounts (SNA), first published in 1953 excluded goods and services in the estimation of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) that were produced by households (HHs) for their own consumption. In 1993, the UN Statistical Commission stipulated that national statistics offices in all countries need to prepare satellite accounts using Time Use data for unpaid work, particularly those performed by women. The Commission also emphasized that these should be in conformity with the now universally accepted 1993 SNA so that women would fall within policy frameworks. Since then some countries have been following the Time Use method to capture women's contribution to the economy. Though the SNA production boundary was expanded to include household production of goods it still excludes non-marketed service.



MY WIFE  
DOES NOT  
WORK

\* A poster of Banchte Shekha

### POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

- Inclusion of women's unaccounted work in national GDP
- Government should recognize unpaid care work as a human rights issue

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO POLICY MAKERS

- Comprehensive Time Use Survey should be conducted by the BBS on a regular basis in order to show the time use pattern of both men and women in various activities.
- The government should undertake policy reforms towards changing the estimation practice of SNA so that women's unaccounted activities are reflected in the GDP.
- In doing so the government can form a committee consisting of economists, statisticians, gender specialists, advocacy groups and relevant stakeholders who can give concrete input for developing a methodology to include women's unaccounted contribution in the GDP.
- The government should undertake programmes which may contribute in decreasing the workload of women in the household. For example, increased accessibility of drinking water, natural gas for cooking and setting up of day care centres for children can reduce the workload and time of women. This in turn can help them either to be engaged in the formal economy and make their contribution to economy more visible or to have their own personal time.
- The government should take legal measures for eliminating wage discriminations against women in all sectors. One of the reasons for lower contribution in the national economy by women is due to lower wages of women. This will also make women's economic contribution more appropriately measurable.

