



Accounting for Women's Work in Censuses in Developing Countries—Nepal Experience


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Two kinds of Problems in Developing Countries

- Definitional: Household maintenance and care activities --- Usually termed unpaid work in developed countries-not counted
 - Incomplete accounting of economic activities themselves, due to developed-country orientation of the questionnaires and cultural biases
 - In 2001 Census, Nepal took up the second aspect
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I. The Engendering Process

- Engendering part of a larger exercise to improve the quality of the Census
 - Funded jointly by NIFEM, UNFPA, and UNICEF, started in 1998
 - Carried out by the CBS census personnel, in intensive and continuous interaction with the gender experts.
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- Extensive improvement & questionnaire & Manual: definitions, examples, pictures, descriptions etc.
 - Extensive media and poster campaigns
 - A supplementary manual on concepts of gender and their relevance
 - Increased number of supervisors
 - Recruiting women supervisors and enumerators
 - Training with participation of gender/ethnicity experts etc.
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II. Outcomes

- **Many kinds of New information generated---Examples**
 - Kind of marriage,
 - Percent HH with land, house and livestock in women's legal ownership,
 - Living arrangements of children below 16, disabled population etc.
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➤ **Specific Reforms in the concepts and methods on Econ. Act.– 3 directions**


- Capturing extended economic activities mostly performed by women and children,
 - Taking account of multiple economic activities to reflect reality of subsistence economies,
 - Minimum time limit- for economically active- 15 or more days in a year, at least one hour a day
 - More rigorous and clearer definitions
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II. Results-- Improvement in Economic Activity Rates



- Capturing - additional 1.5 million people, who performed some economic activity
 - Difference between usually econ. active- (3.2 million) and engaged in econ. activity for more than 3 months (4.3 million) – 1.1 women
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- Women's economic activity rates improved by 18 percentage points and men's by 8 percentage points
 - Capturing children's and adolescents work more effectively
 - Inclusion of extended economic activity improved Men's econ. activity rate by 1% compared to 6% for women
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III. Introducing the concept of total "working population" in analysis to include care work

- More than 90 percent of men and women in the 25-54 age groups -- working
 - The difference is only in the kind of work they do
 - Overall and among most age-cohorts larger % women working than men
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- Among 10-14 ages- 22 % girls 12 % boys are working
 - In 15-24 age cohort also, larger % girls work than boys, and more than half of them are engaged in economic activity.
 - Among all age cohorts, larger % of women perform econ. plus extended economic activities than just home-making
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Better Quality of Occupational data

- Women constitute more than 43 percent of the labour force
 - 48 percent in agriculture, and
 - 34 percent in the non-agriculture sector
 - Only 19 % among professionals and technicians, and
 - 13.8 % among senior administrators, politicians, judges, lawyers etc.
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Limitations



- No improvement in the definitions in status of employment -- based on time and membership in the household –not ownership and management
 - 62 % men and 84 % women - in self- employment plus family labour—not very useful from gender analysis
 - Activities, the unpaid work of those who are counted as economically active is left out
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IV. Further Improvement in Census


Employment status

- Employers-- only who own and operate and employ other people
 - Self-employed- two sub-groups
 - (a) Who own and operate and
 - (b) Who are full time family workers
 - Only joint owning working members - be among the employers or own account workers
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- Delisting home-making as a cause for non-economic activity and describing the specific kind of activity- e. g., household maintenance, child-care, sick care category etc, under this heading.
 - In Nepal example listing it as a separate heading in column 16 and removing 12 months limit on total work-time –to account for unpaid work of the economic active
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Further possible refinements in recording and processing the data from rest of the columns as well –Examples

- More careful training for listing occupations
 - Formal-informal sector analysis as column 16 describes the institution or organisation
 - Domestic workers could be identified from column
 - Adding pregnancy and delivery in 18 as cause of inactivity
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Lessons from Nepal

1. Much can be done to improve regular reporting of economic activities in censuses
 2. Feminist should work with the statistical bureaus to do so
 3. Reasonably large time-use data set can be generated through recall by integrating it with other surveys
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● **There is no alternative to recall for such data - in developing countries**

● **However recall must be:**

- Multiple and spread over a year
 - With detailed activity list and
 - Cover different seasons to yield reasonably accurate information on time-use.
 - Supplemented by small scale culturally /geographically and class wise representative case studies –based on observation
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Thank You

