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Analysis of Time-Use Pattern Among Rural and Urban Women in Ondo State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Multi-tasking and lack of time saving infrastructure also subject women in the developing world to time pressure since they are engaged in reproductive, productive and community chores. This research examines how the rural and urban women in Ondo State, Nigeria spend their time. These particular goals were to explain socio-economic attributes of respondents, compare their time use habits, and determine the primary challenges of time management. A multistage sampling technique was used in the selection of respondents, which involves the random selection of four LGAs, ten communities, and 15 respondents per community, giving a total sample size of 150 women (75 urban and 75 rural). A well-structured copies of questionnaires was used to collect primary data from rural and urban women. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data collected. The results showed an average age of (36.1) years with rural women being older than urban women, (55.3%) were married and (85.3%) were employed while rural women were primarily in agriculture. Urban women were more educated (54.7%) and recorded higher incomes (11,433.10) than rural women. Majority (64.7%) of the urban women are members of the co-operative society while few of the rural women respondents (34.7%) were members of cooperative societies. The results showed that majority (90.7%) of the rural women do not have access to time-saving technology while (56.0%) of the rural women had access to time saving technology. The majority (85.3%) of the urban women used gas for cooking, while (69.3%) of the rural women relied on firewood. Furthermore, urban women spent an average of 15.7 hours/day on various activities, while rural women spent a mean of 16.64 hours/day on various activities, with the overall mean of 16.17 hours/day on various activities indicating increased fatigue and stress on rural women. There were significant differences in the time spent on domestic chores, wage employment, and family business. Urban women spent slightly more time on ironing and child care while rural women spent significantly more time fetching firewood and water. In urban areas, women enjoy the comfort of electricity and time saving gadgets whereas in rural areas, women are more time strained because of poor infrastructure, multi occupational status and the high volume of unpaid labor. All the respondents lacked skills in time management. Finally, the research paper suggests that special interventions such as enhancement of rural infrastructure, access to clean cooking energies, water, and economic empowerment initiatives are necessary to save time and enhance the wellbeing of women, particularly in the rural regions.

Keywords: *Nigeria, Ondo State, Rural–Urban divide, Time-use, Women*

Introduction

Time use research is a study that analyses how people allocate time in various activities like work, leisure, rest and household chores. (Ortiz-Ospina

et al., 2020). Time is a scarce commodity of 24 hours annually and 8,760 hours per year. Personal freedom and collective practices help individuals to concentrate on the valuable activities, which affect their living conditions, opportunities, and well-being. (Ortiz-Ospina *et al.*, 2020).

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Researchers use time-use surveys in order to explore different political, economic, social and cultural problems. They tend to use GPS tracking and self-reported time diaries in examining how people spend their time on paid and non-paid work, which provides information about changes in daily time-use variations among individuals across time and demographics. (Gershuny & Sullivan, 2017).

Time-use patterns indicate the ways individuals allocate their 24 hours day on various activities which include paid employment, unpaid care, personal care and leisure. This is because knowledge on such patterns is important to reveal the latent injustices, particularly those that are based on gender roles, socioeconomic status, and cultural demands. (Arora, 2015).

The Urban and rural women in Nigeria have time constraints as they have a lot of productive and reproductive activities. The unequal distribution of time among men, rural women and urban women can limit women's ability to engage in paid work, pursue education and training, and advance their careers, creating barriers to economic empowerment and independence. Traditional gender roles and expectations can impact women's time and contribute to the unequal distribution of domestic and care giving responsibilities, reinforcing gender inequalities. (Makama, 2024). Although several studies in Africa and Nigeria have identified significant gender disparities in unpaid care work, many of these investigations lacked comprehensive, disaggregated data and failed to adequately consider critical socio-demographic variables such as marital status, household structure, and occupational type (Badasi & Wodon, 2016; Adeyeye *et al.*, 2019).

Preceding researches concentrates on national-level statistics, often overlooking community-level variances and so limiting the significance of their findings for localized policy creation (Vickery, 2023; Charmes, 2020). Furthermore, few studies have applied a disaggregated urban-rural lens to time use, leaving critical gaps in understanding localized gender disparities (Charmes, 2020).

This study fills this gap by presenting disaggregated evidence from Ondo State, enabling a context-specific understanding of women's time allocation between paid and unpaid activities in both urban and rural settings.

Many overlook the burden of unpaid care work, especially in rural areas (Ferrant *et al.*, 2014), and the overlapping demands of paid and unpaid labor (Hirway, 2017). Also, personal care time that is crucial in well-being is never analyzed (Floro & Pichetpongsa, 2010). The consequences of these omissions are a restrictive nature of the formulation of effective and context-specific policies (Esquivel, 2011; United Nations, 2020). This paper explores the socioeconomic nature of rural and urban women, the time use behavior and the problems they face when trying to use their time.

Moreover, the time use pattern of other vulnerable groups - youths, the old, the informal sector and the female headed families- are not given much attention. New issues such as the effects of livelihood stress caused by climate change, digital labor requirements, and the lack of proper care infrastructure are also not adequately investigated. Such omissions undermine the establishment of good, contextual, and gender-sensitive policies (Esquivel, 2011; United Nations 2020). This work can help fill these gaps by providing an in-depth community - based examination in which the author points out the multifaceted and unequal time load of the urban and rural women in their various roles.

Intersectionality in Time-Use Studies

Recent scholarship also underlines the importance of an intersectional approach, which underlines the fact that the time use experiences of women are shaped by gender, class, education, income level, marital status, and place of residence. (Crenshaw, 1989; Folbre, 2023; UN Women, 2024). This view assists in understanding why rural women in Ondo State tend to have less education and have more family members, meaning that they have more time limitations than their urban and more educated counterparts because of the lack of infrastructure and accessibility to paid

jobs.

There has been evidence to show that some of the social inequalities such as household composition, socioeconomic status, and access to resources increase the burden of unpaid care on women and lead to time poverty. OECD (2022), Fawaz and Matei (2021) and Hochschild and Machung (2012) mention (Fawaz and Matei, 2021; OECD, 2022; Hochschild and Machung, 2012). Using an intersectional lens the analysis demonstrates that the combination of the disadvantages aggravates time stress that constrain women to generate income, leisure and develop as individuals; it is no longer the simplistic urban-rural comparisons.

Such lessons indicate that context-dependent, gender responsive policies, such as the enhancement of rural infrastructure, the extension of educational opportunities and the diminishment of unpaid care burdens, benefit time starved women better than the use of generic, one-size-fits-all policies.

(UN Women, 2024; Folbre, 2023). The inclusion of an intersectional methodology increased the originality and the capacity of the study to describe why the interaction between social and economic disparities affects women in their daily time utilization in the state of Ondo.

Methodology

The Study Area

The research was carried out in Ondo State which is a state in the south west of Nigeria. It shares borders with Ekiti and Kogi States to the North, Edo State to the East, Oyo and Ogun States to the West and the Atlantic Ocean to the South. The State covers a land area of 14,788.723 square kilometers and is completely in the tropics that lie between 4deg30 and 6deg East and 5deg45 and 8deg15 North (Omonijo and Matzarakis, 2014). Having been formed on 3 February 1976, out of the Western State, Ondo, which consists of 18 Local Government Areas (LGAs), has three agricultural regions, Ondo, Okitipupa, and Akoko. The State Bureau of Statistics projects the current population as 4,883,792 people consisting of

2,462,525 males and 2,421,267 females. The capital, Akure, was the capital of the Akure Kingdom until the period of history and it is still a cultural and administrative center. Yoruba is the most spoken language by the natives.

On the economic front, the State depends on petroleum production, cocoa growing, and asphalt mining with its long coastline facilitating its maritime. Agriculture is central to it, and the staple crops, including yam, cassava, maize, rice, plantain, and beans, are used, yet so are the cash crops, including cocoa and coffee (Ondo State Ministry of Information, 2016). The three agricultural regions represent regionalization in crop variety and it adds to the mixed State economy of extracting natural resources, agriculture, and the trading of the same. Such socioeconomic environment is likely to influence time-use patterns, especially in the rural regions where agricultural work and domestic duties overlap.

Sampling Techniques

The sampling procedure used in this study was a multistage sampling. The area of selection was random selection of four local government areas in Ondo state which had 18 local government areas. The LGAs include Akure North, Akure South, Ileoluji/Okeigbo, and Ifedore local government areas. The second stage involved a random selection of ten communities from the four LGAs. The various communities include: Ijomu/Obanla, Oshodi/Isolo, Oke -Ijebu, Alagbaka Extension, Igoba, Ile-Oluji/Oke-Alafia, Ileoluji 11, Irese, Imo Irese and Ibule/Isoro. Urban communities include (Alagbaka Extension, Ijomu/Obanla, Oshodi/Isolo, Oke-Ijebu and Igoba first gate) while the rural communities comprise of (Ile-Oluji/Oke-Alafia, Ile-Oluji 11, Irese, Imo Irese and Ibule/Isoro). A total sample size of 150 respondents was used for the study, with 15 respondents selected from each of the ten communities.

Local Government Areas

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents by Local Government Areas. Table revealed that four (4) local governments was randomly selected from

the 18 local government areas. Ten (10) communities were sampled from the four local government areas. Fifteen (15) respondents were sampled from each of the ten communities. The urban communities comprise of seventy-five (75) respondents while the

rural communities comprises of seventy five (75) respondents. The whole sample size was One hundred and fifty (150) respondents.

Data Sources and Instrument of Data Collection

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Local Government Areas

LGA'S	Communities	Location	Number of Respondents
Akure south	Ijomu/Obanla	Urban	15
	Osdodi/Isolo	Urban	15
	Oke-Ijebu	Urban	15
Akure North	AlagbakaExtension	Urban	15
	Igoba	Urban	15
Ifedore	Ibule/Isoro	Rural	15
	Imo Irese	Rural	15
	Irese	Rural	15
Ileoluji/Oke-Igbo	Ile-Oluji	Rural	15
	Oke –Alafia	Rural	15
Total: 4 LGA'S	10 communities	10	150
Total		Urban = 5	75
Total		Rural= 5	75

Source: National Population Commission (NPC), 2006

A questionnaire was distributed to urban and rural women to gather data on their socioeconomic characteristics such as time use patterns, and occupations. The survey included a total of 150 questionnaires distributed across the selected communities, responses on household chores, voluntary work, care work, the labor market, and leisure activities. Also, data were collected on hours spent on daily activities and challenges faced by urban and rural women (financial constraints, social norms, access to technology, etc.). The questionnaire contains both open- and close-ended questions that cover various aspects of urban and rural women’s lives.

Method of Data Analysis

Analytical tools employed to achieve the specific objectives of the study included the descriptive statistics (frequency distributions and percentages,

mean, median, and standard deviation). Objective one: to determine the socioeconomic characteristics of the urban and rural women was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions, means, and percentages.

Objective two: to examine time-use patterns among respondents was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as (mean, median, standard deviation and variance).

Time use among women was quantified based on the total hours (0–24) dedicated each day to paid work, unpaid domestic tasks, caregiving, and community-related activities, analyzed through descriptive statistics.

Time-use was assessed based on the total hours women dedicated daily to key categories: domestic chores, labor market tasks, care work, and leisure.

Activities were categorized into individual-level tasks (market work, domestic chores), care work (caring for children, sick, disabled), community services (assisting households, community participation), and leisure/personal care activities.

The main activities urban and rural women spend their time that was examined include:

- a) Domestic chores: cooking, cleaning, washing, ironing, market, food processing, fetch water, fetch firewood, shopping, voluntary work.
- b) Care work: child care, caring for old/sick, caring for disabled, community activities, aid or other households.
- c) Work in labour market: wage employment, self-employment, work in farm or family business.
- d) Leisure /personal care: sleeping, resting, and recreation

Results and Discussions

Socioeconomic Characteristics

Table 2 presents the distribution of respondents based on their socioeconomic characteristics. Majority (32%) of urban women were between 41 and 50 years old, while an equal proportion (32%) of rural women also fell within this age range. The urban women in the research were of average age 37.9 years and rural women were older with a mean age of 44.6 years. In general, the average age of all the respondents was 41.3 years. This implies that they are at their best working age and have big burdens. These results are in tandem with the International Labour Organization (2023) that highlights that women in the productive age (usually the 25-54 years) are crucial in economic and home-based undertakings.

This Table also shows that most of the women living in urban areas (58) were married and 25.3 single, 8 widowed and divorced. Fifty two percent of rural women were married, 16% were single, 13.3% divorced, and 18.7% widowed. In total, 55.3 percent of the entire respondents were married. This means that

married women have been burdened with more time by the reproductive as well as productive activities, particularly in rural places where infrastructure is wanting. This is based on the observation by Kabeer (2008), which notes that married women tend to have more time constraints since they have to balance between their jobs and family.

Table 2 also points out the household size distributions among the respondents, in rural women 94.7% and urban women 88.0% as in 91.3% of the pooled sample the household size is between 1-4 members, with an average household generating 5 members. Women in rural areas are slightly more concentrated to be in mid-sized households than the women in urban areas. The bigger families are associated with increased demands on care-giving and domestic management, which worsen time poverty, especially in the rural women whose access to infrastructure (e.g., childcare, clean water) and social services is limited. In comparison, urban women might have a relatively reduced time constraint because of the improved access to resources, including the labor-saving technologies. These trends coincide with the ILO (2020), which emphasizes how insufficient infrastructure and size of household disproportionately accentuate the time poverty of women in rural settings. Such inequities need to be dealt with through specific policies, including the expansion of rural childcare provision and the infrastructure, to reduce gendered unpaid work inequities.

Table 2 also gives details of the level of education of the respondents in the study. The Table has shown that there is the disparity between the urban and rural women; 54.67% of the urban women were tertiary educated compared to 34.67% of the rural ones. On the whole, the all respondents reported on tertiary education at 44.67. Such data reveal that urban women tend to be better educated than rural women, which is also in line with Makama (2013) study that identified urban imbalances in time management as the underlying cause of lower education levels among rural women.

Table 1 also covers the breakdown of the respondents

according to primary occupation. The Table outcome showed that the highest percentage (49.33) of the urban women respondents are occupied in trading, and are self-employed whereas a higher percentage (41.33) of the rural women respondents are occupied in trading. These conclusions are consistent with Makama (2013), who repeats the importance of women in the socio-economic development. Table 1 also illustrates the distribution of respondents by their monthly income. According to the Table, a larger percentage (69.3%) of urban women respondents fall within the income range of (less than 50001 - 100000), with an average monthly income

of ₦55,554.10, whereas rural women had an average income of ₦44,121.60 and 84% fall within the range of (less than 50,000 - 50000) naira. Furthermore, all respondents earned an average of ₦49,838.90. This means that urban areas have higher income levels than rural areas. This is consistent with Vickery (1977) finding that households require income to maintain non-poor consumption levels.

Time-Use Patterns of Urban and Rural Women in Ondo State, Nigeria

Table 3 shows the time spent (mean hour/day) on all activities by the urban and rural women. The result

Table 2: Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variables	Urban		Rural		All	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age (in years)						
21 – 30	27	36.0	8	10.7	35	23.3
31 – 40	16	21.3	28	37.3	44	29.3
41 – 50	24	32.0	24	32.0	48	32.0
51– 60	4	5.3	7	9.3	11	7.3
61 – 70	4	5.3	8	10.7	12	8.0
71 & above	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	75	100.0	75	100.0	75	100.0
Marital Status						
Single	19	25.3	12	16.0	31	20.7
Married	44	58.6	39	52.0	83	55.3
Divorced	6	8.0	10	13.3	16	10.7

Widowed	6	8.0	14	18.7	20	13.3
Total	75	100.0	75	100.0	150	100.0
Household Size						
1-4	66	88.0	71	94.7	137	91.3
5-8	57	76.0	55	73.3	112	74.7
9-12	7	9.3	2	2.7	9	6.0
13-16	2	2.7	2	2.7	4	4.0
Total	75	100.0	75	100.0	150	100.0
Educational Level						
No formal Education	7	9.3	12	16.0	19	12.7
Primary Education	6	8.0	13	17.3	19	12.7
Secondary Education	18	24.0	23	30.7	41	27.3
Tertiary Education	41	54.7	26	34.7	67	44.7
Others	3	4.0	1	1.3	4	2.7
Total	75	100.0	75	100.0	75	100.0
Primary Occupation						
Farming	3	4.0	26	34.7	29	19.3
Civil Service	13	17.3	5	6.7	18	12.0
Private services	6	8.0	5	6.7	11	7.3
Artisan	5	6.7	3	4.0	8	5.3
Trading	37	49.3	31	41.3	68	45.3
Others	6	8.0	3	4.0	9	6.0
None	5	6.7	2	2.6	7	4.7
Total	75	100.0	75	100.0	150	100.0

Monthly Income (in Naira)									
≤ 50000	52	69.33	63	84	115	76.7			
50001 - 100000	11	14.67			6	8			
100001 - 150000	7	17		11.3					
150001 - 200000	2	9.33	4	5.33	11	7.3			
200001 - 250000	3	28.57			1	1.33	3		
		2.0							
		4		1	1.334	2.7			
Total	75	100		75	100	150	100		
Total income (in Naira)	4,546,000		3,365,500		38,201,000				
Average Income	55,554.10		44,121.60	49,838.90					

Source: Computed from field Survey 2024.

showed that urban women spent a mean hour of 15.7 hours/day on various activities while rural women spent a mean hour of 16.6 hours/day on various activities, with the overall mean of 16.2 hours/day on various activities. According to Charmes (2019), rural women in Tanzania spent 13.2 hours per day on unpaid and paid labor compared to 11.1 hours per day that were spent by the urban women. This correlates with the results of the present research, which have provided that the amount of money spent by women in the region under study was an average of 16.6 hours per day by the rural women and 15.7 hours per day by the urban women. This conforms to Tadesse and Wondimagegn (2024) that observed that women in rural Ethiopia have very little time to engage in non-farm employment due to domestic chores that were not paid, as well as agricultural activities which were labour-intensive, which impacted the economic empowerment of women and their general well-being.

According to the study, there is a noTable time poverty gap between women in urban and rural areas

where women in rural areas are exposed to more time burden because of unpaid work and lack of access to infrastructure and technologies. Such a consequence means that women in cities have more time-saving facilities and services whereas rural women lack adequate time to rest, have leisure time to develop their skills. This aligns with ILO (2023) that points out that rural women spend more time as they have to work without remuneration and inadequate access to infrastructure with the expectation of specific policies to reduce time poverty.

The average urban women took a mean hour of (0.68 hours/day) on cleaning, rural women took a mean hour of (0.72 hours/day), and the total mean of cleaning was (0.70 hours/day). Rural women spend more hours cleaning as compared to urban women because of the inaccessibility of cleaning technologies, yet it has received no significant difference between cleaning hours of urban and rural women. It is consistent with Adeyeye (2021) who demonstrates that rural Nigerian females have to struggle more with time because of their inability to access labor-efficient technologies,

which influences both productivity and well-being, especially in cleaning services.

The mean time taken by urban women on washing was (1.15 hours/day), whereas rural women spent (1.17 hours/day) on washing with an average time on washing (1.16 hours/day). The research indicates that there might be no significant differences between urban and rural environments as regards to washing habits, yet in the urban areas, women have the possibility of having electricity, washing machine, and water. This is congruent with World Bank (2021) who demonstrates that there is a substantial difference in electricity access between urban and rural regions across the world with 83.9 percent of urban populations having access to it, whereas 24.6 percent of rural populations do.

Urban women spent an average hour (0.23 hours/day) of time ironing and rural women spent an average hour (0.12 hours/day) of time ironing with a total mean of (0.17 hours/day) of time ironing. There is a noTable difference between the time of ironing of urban women, which might be due to the availability of electricity, professional, or social demands, or increased engagement in formal jobs or introduction to the community. This can be compared to the report by UN Women (2018) that indicates that women have limited access to resources especially in rural regions that impact their work and unpaid care in the home and the necessity of quality public services and infrastructure.

The mean amount of time women in the urban setting spent in the market was a mean hour of (1.06 hours/day) with the mean hour in the rural setting being a mean hour of (1.16 hours/day) with the overall mean of hours per day in the market standing at (1.11 hours/day). According to the study, there is a slight difference in rural-urban in market time spent by women where rural women spend slightly more on market time because of market length and distance whereas urban women spent less market time because of convenience and infrastructure. There is no significant difference in market hours between

urban and rural women. This is in line with FAO (2024). FAO states that rural women tend to have few resources, services, and infrastructure, and it can be added that they live in an environment where they spend a lot of time on different activities, including those in the market.

The mean time taken by urban women to fetch water was 0.44 hours/day and rural women had a mean time of 0.66 hours/day to fetch water with the general mean time of 0.55 hours/day to fetch water. Infrastructure disparity is said to be one cause of urban-rural disparity; as a result of poor infrastructure, women have had the inability to earn a living or take leisure activities due to inability to access water and inability to fetch water. The difference between the urban and rural women in drawing water is very high. This is following the UNICEF and WHO (2023). As it has been mentioned in the WHO and UNICEF report, women and girls between the age of 15 and above do the water collection in 7 out of 10 households that lack on site water sources and this type of women and girl involvement imbalances their health, safety and personal development.

Urban women took an average hour of (0.04 hours/day) on collection of firewood whereas rural women spent an average hour of (0.70 hours/day) on collection of firewood, and the all round mean hour was (0.38 hours/day). The women in the urban areas can enjoy the benefits of cooking fuels which are more modern, and they do not have to spend much time on collecting firewood, whereas rural areas have to make use of traditional biomass because of the absence of other energy sources, which occupies much of their time. Urban and rural women have a great difference in the fetching fire-wood. This conforms to that of the International Energy Agency (2023). The International Energy Agency (IEA) focuses on universal clean cooking by 2030 based on its health, environment protection and gender equality aims and seeks to save 1.5 hours per day to household.

Urban women had a mean hour of 0.59 hours/day on voluntary work, rural women had a mean hour

of (0.58 hours/day) on voluntary work with the total mean of (0.59 hours/day). The total average is 0.59 hours/day which means that the activities of both groups are hugely engaged by paid labour, care giving and other chores, which leaves voluntary work as a small proportion of the working day. In urban and rural women there is no noteworthy difference in voluntary work. This concurs with the World Bank (2021). The report highlights the necessity of a detailed information about time use in order to enhance economic opportunities of women and deal with the issue of time poverty.

The urban women had a mean hour of 6.87 hours per day of domestic chores and the rural women had a mean hour of 6.46 hours per day domestic chores and the mean hour in the domestic chores was 6.46 hours per day. The difference in urban and rural household chores is an indication that rural women could be having more work or inefficient structures because they do not have easy access to time-saving facilities and energy efficient means of cooking. In urban and rural women, there is a great disparity in household work. This follows the opinion of Craig and Brown (2017). According to a study conducted by Craig and Brown, women tend to be more unhappy with their work and family lives, although more female workers tend to join the paid labor force, because of unequal household duties.

The average urban female spent 0.44 hours/day on child care and rural female spent 0.26 hours/day on child care and with a mean of 0.35 hours/day spent on child care. This indicates that women in the urban areas spend more time on child care than the women in the rural areas which may be because of the availability of services and support enabling them to do other unpaid work or economic tasks. Child care between urban and rural women has a huge difference. This is in accordance with the World Bank Women Business and the Law (2021). According to the report of the World Bank, Women, Business and the Law 2021, childcare availability is essential in the economic participation of women, and the excessive number of

responsibilities that are not paid in childcare.

The mean hours that were spent by urban women on child care was 0.17 hours/day on child care and rural women on child care was 0.24 hours/ day on child care with the mean stand at 0.20 hours/day on child care. This means that women living in rural areas are observed to invest more time taking care of the elderly and the sick, and this could be as a result of differences in the accessibility of caring infrastructure, social support networks and cultural demands. Caring to old/sick is no better than it is among urban and rural women. This agrees with Crouch *et al.* (2017). However, Crouch *et al.* (2017) discovered that rural caregivers tend to be low socioeconomic status, which means they have less income, education, employment opportunities that may create more caregiver strain.

The average amount of time spent by urban women on child care was 0.26 hours/day and rural women had 0.52 hours/day on child care with an average of 0.39 hours/day on child care. Time differences exist between urban and rural women regarding their care giving, which may be as a result of structural variations in the resources, cultural norms, and economic activities. The women in urban areas might have greater support and be more active in paid employment than to take up the unpaid caregiving roles. The caring of the disabled between the urban and rural women differs greatly. This conforms to Nancy Folbre (2020). Research done by Nancy Folbre indicates that unpaid care work has a severe role to play in economic opportunities and gender inequity among women and disparities exist in the responsibility of caregiving.

The mean length of hours spent per day on care work was 0.95 hours/day by urban women and 1.03 hours/day by rural women, and the mean amount of time spent on care work was 0.9 hours/day. The analysis shows that there is a minor difference in the amount of time that urban and rural women spend on care work. The average time of care work by rural women is 1.03 hours per day as compared to urban women who have 0.95 hours per day. This corresponds with

that of the United Nations Women (2023). The reports by UN Women in 2023 indicate that women around the world spend more time caring and doing domestic chores than men, especially in rural regions with poor infrastructural facilities and time-conserving gadgets. Women in the urban setting also take a little more time on these activities.

City women enjoy greater access to infrastructure and childcare opportunities, which decreases the amount of time they use on caring, whereas rural women depend on their labor more when it comes to caring. No serious distinction of care work is observed between urban and rural women. This is in Crouch *et al.* (2024). According to Crouch *et al.* (2024), rural children are less likely to receive preventive care and uninterrupted coverage of the health insurance system, which also demonstrates that there are inequalities in the access of healthcare between the rural and urban population.

The research indicates a noTable wage employment gap in between the urban and rural women whereby the urban women spend more time (2.15 hours/day) than the rural women (0.50 hours/day). The reason why the workday of urban women is 1.33 hours a day is because of the increased rate of urban women in wage jobs. This means that women in urban areas have the advantage of infrastructure, education and access to the market whereas women in the rural areas have fewer job opportunities and logistics thus domestic work over earning a paycheck, therefore, being time starved. The wage difference in urban and rural women has been significantly different. This follows the international labour organization (2023). According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), the rural workers receive 24 percent less than urban workers, half of which is attributed to the disparity in education, experience, and occupation. ILO recommends that minimum wage acts and equal opportunities acts be introduced so as to minimize such inequalities.

The results show a low urban-rural difference in the time spent on self-employment. Self-employed women spend almost the same hours in rural women

(4.06 hours/day) and urban women (3.98 hours/day) with an average of 4.02 hours/day. The rural women spend more time doing self-employment because they have fewer formal job opportunities and access to fewer resources which causes them to concentrate in doing agricultural work or informal market. Self-employment among women in urban and rural areas does not have a substantial difference. This conforms to International Fund For Agricultural Development (2023). The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) lays stress on self-employment in the rural economies and helps to strengthen rural micro-enterprises with technical and technological and marketing support, boosting income-making activities of rural women.

The results show that there is a big urban-rural difference in the duration taken working in a farm or family business. The Rural women dedicate over twice the time (3.16 hours/day) to such activities than the urban women (1.52 hours/day) an average of (2.34 hours/day) is obtained. The rural women are mostly dependent on agriculture and family-based economic activities to earn their living as they are unlikely to be engaged in formal employment whilst urban women are more diversified in their sources of income, such as wage and self-employment, and they are less dependent on these activities. The urban and rural women have a great disparity in work in their farms or family run businesses. This is in line with FOA (2023). According to the 2023 report of the Food and Agriculture Organization women play important roles in agriculture, but interventions need to be targeted at enhancing their productive resources access.

The results indicate that urban-rural difference is insignificant in the time women work in the labor market with urban women spending 7.65 hours/day and rural women spending 7.72 hours/day. The general average is 7.69 hours/day which indicates that participation level in labor market activities and economic necessity of women in the respective settings are almost equal given that both groups are participating in household income generation

activities. Urban women might be formally employed, whereas rural women might be informally employed in the labor markets, which might lead to time poverty since they work unpaid, lack access to infrastructures and have low productivity. This follows the international labour organization (2023). According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) there is a massive disparity in the labor force participation among women with a percentage of 51 compared to that of men (74) particularly in the rural regions.

According to the study, there is a small urban-rural difference in the personal care time, with urban women having a low difference of 1.09 hours/day, as opposed to rural women who have a low difference of

1.02 hours/day. The general mean of 1.05 hours/day, suggests that personal care is not a significant part of the daily routine of both urban and rural women, with urban women having more hours because they have greater access to self-care activities and time spent in the facility whereas rural women may have less hours because of their lack of access to resources. Personal care of urban and rural women does not differ significantly. This is as expected by the United Nations Development Programme (2023). UNDP 2023 study reveals minimal urban-rural disparity in personal care time, with urban women spending slightly more due to better facilities and routines, while rural women may spend less due to limited resources.

Table 3: Time Spent (Mean hour/day) on All Activities by the Urban and Rural Women T test for Difference in Mean Hours and Standard Deviation.

Activity	Urban Mean Hour/day	Rural Mean Hour/day	All Mean Hour/day	T test for difference in mean hours (t- statistics)	Two-tailed p-value
A. Domestic Chores					
Cooking	1.8 (0.64)	1.8 (0.64)	1.8 (0.64)	0.06	0.94
Cleaning	0.68 (0.24)	0.72 (0.16)	0.70 (0.20)	1.22	0.22
Washing	1.15(0.52)	1.17(0.47)	1.16 (0.49)	-0.35	0.75
Ironing	0.23 (0.34)	0.12 (0.09)	0.17 (0.25)	2.74***	0.007
Market	1.06(0.51)	1.16(0.41)	1.11 (0.47)	-1.29	0.19
Fetch water	0.44(0.33)	0.66(0.27)	0.55(0.32)	-4.274*	5.71197E-05
Fetch firewood	0.04(0.16)	0.70(0.44)	0.38(0.46)	-12.63*	4.78E-20
Voluntary work	0.59(0.53)	0.58(0.41)	0.59(0.47)	0.19	0.84
Total Domestic Chores	6.46(1.98)	6.87(1.94)	6.46(1.98)	-2.59**	0.01
B. Care work					
Child care	0.44(0.61)	0.26(0.42)	0.35(0.53)	2.14**	0.03
Caring for old/sick	0.17(0.37)	0.24(0.47)	0.20(0.43)	-1.06	0.28
Caring for disabled	0.26(0.85)	0.52(0.45)	0.39(0.69)	-2.37**	0.02

Total Care work	0.95(1.06)	1.03(0.75)	0.9(1.06)	-0.87	0.38
C. Work in Labour Market					
Wage employment	2.15(3.39)	0.50(1.74)	1.33(2.81)	3.67*	0.00
Self-employment	3.98(3.92)	4.06(3.80)	4.02(3.85)	-0.12	0.89
Work in farm or family business	1.52(2.66)	3.16(3.36)	2.34(3.13)	-3.41***	0.00
Total Work in Labour Market	7.65(2.15)	7.72(2.02)	7.69(2.07)	-0.23	0.81
D. Leisure					
Personal care	1.09(0.68)	1.02(0.75)	1.05(0.71)	0.64	0.51
Total Leisure	1.09(0.68)	1.02(0.75)	1.05(0.71)	0.64	0.51
Total Domestic Chores	6.46(1.98)	6.87(1.94)	6.46(1.98)	-2.59**	0.01
Total Care work	0.95(1.06)	1.03(0.75)	0.9(1.06)	-0.87	0.38
Total Work in Labour Market	7.65(2.15)	7.72(2.02)	7.69(2.07)	-0.23	0.81
Total time	15.69(3.37)	16.64(3.29)	16.17(3.34)	-1.77*	0.08

*Note: Standard deviation in parenthesis. The t test compares the hour spent on each activities. Ho: There is no significant difference between the average working hour for all activities per day for urban and rural women. Null Hypothesis (H₀): urban = rural (Hypothesised mean =0). Alternative Hypothesis (H₁): There is a significant difference between the average working hour per day for all activities of urban and rural women. H₁: urban ≠ rural. Significant at 10 = *; 5% = **; 1% = ****

Source: Computed from Field Survey, 2024

Key Challenges Faced by Respondents in Managing their Time

Table 4 shows the distribution of respondents according to the key challenges faced in managing their time. The result from the Table revealed that (56%) of the urban respondents do not have access to time-saving technology while (90.7%) of the rural women do not have access to time-saving technology. This is in line with Food and Agricultural Organisation (2018) that rural communities in most developing countries are more disadvantaged due to poor infrastructure compared to their urban counterparts. The outcome of the Table showed that 94.7 percent of the rural

respondents had financial limitations and 21.3 percent of urban women had financial limitations. This means that the rural women are poor in terms of income compared to the urban women. This is in accordance with Food and Agricultural Organisation (2024) that rural women are exposed to various challenges to gaining independence and economic stability. The outcome of the Table indicated that most of the rural women (98.7 percent) lack time management skills as compared to their urban counterparts (78.7 percent). It follows the current thoughts introduced by Radhika Kapur (2024) according to which by setting priorities and avoiding procrastination, rural

women can be more efficient in their multi-tasking, which is essential in their personal and professional growth. This goes along with Kabeer *et al.* (2018), who explain that women in rural areas have to manage various tasks due to time poverty. The Table has shown that most women in the rural setting (96% of the total rural women) have difficulties with social norms, and (68% of the urban respondents) found difficulties with social norms. It is on the same note as Mzurana *et al.* (2021) report that time poverty among women is shaped by social norms, which are determining their roles and attitudes in the household and communities.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents According to The Key Challenges Faced In Managing Their Time

Key challenges Faced	Urban		Rural		All	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Access to time saving technology						
No access	42	56.0	68	90.7	110	73.3
Access	33	44.0	7	9.3	40	26.7
Total	75	100.0	75	100.0	150	100.0
Financial Constraint						
No	59	78.7	4	5.3	63	42.0
Yes	16	21.3	71	94.7	87	58.0
Total	75	100.0	75	100.0	150	100.0
Lack of time Management skill						
Yes	59	78.7	74	98.7	133	88.7
No	16	16.0	1	1.3	17	11.3
Total	75	100.0	75	100.0	150	100.0
Social norms						
Yes	51	68.0	72	96.0	123	82.0
No	24	32.0	3	4.0	27	18.0
Total	75	100.0	75	100.0	150	100.0

Source: Computed from Field Survey, 2024

Conclusion and Recommendation

The paper gives an in-depth examination of time patterns in urban and rural women, which indicated a wide gap mainly attributed to variations in infrastructure, availability of technological instruments of saving labor, and socioeconomic prospects. The rural women were also found to devote more of their time to daily chores (16.6 hours/day) than the urban women (15.7 hours/day) thus a greater time burden that may be used to strengthen time

poverty. This is consistent with the world literature (Charmes, 2019; Tadesse and Wondimagegn, 2024) revealing that rural women are more engaged in unpaid work as a result of the necessity to work in agriculture and lack of sufficient infrastructure.

There were great disparities in certain activities which included fetching water, gathering firewood, paid work, taking care of the disabled and household duties. Rural women always devoted more time to unpaid and labor-intensive activities whereas urban women had more opportunities to get access to electricity, water supply, and formal jobs. The results are similar to those of the international organizations, including the ILO, UN Women, UNICEF and the World Bank, which all agree that policy interventions are necessary to help rural women to access infrastructure and time-saving services.

Conversely, others such as washing, cleaning, voluntary working, and self-employment activities reported very little or no great dissimilarity, which indicated that there are some domestic routines that cross-cut across rural and urban environments. The steady difference in the time spent in wage employment, however, shows structural disparity where the urban women are more empowered in economic aspects than their rural counterparts.

All in all, the paper reemphasizes how important it is that there are time-use interventions that are specifically applicable to rural regions, namely, the development of infrastructure, making available of communal amenities (water, energy, and childcare), and job creation accordingly. It is necessary to reduce women time load not only to ensure their well being and productivity, but also to enhance gender equity and inclusive economic growth.

According to the study, there is a necessity of special interventions such as better rural infrastructure, childcare, part-time employment, time-saving appliances, clean cooking energy, and water services and economic empowerment programs in order to reduce time pressure and enhance women well-being,

particularly in the rural setting.

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