

# Importance of affordable and quality Childcare

**Evidence and policy recommendations**

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# Diverse gendered effects of UCDW on women in ASEAN (including Indonesia)



# Childcare is important for WEE

- Care of children affects women's choices
  - Nature of employment (formal, informal, self-employed or home-based)
  - Number of hours worked
  - Quality of work
  - Earning potential
  - Stability of employment
- Age of children and number of children affect this decision

# Women's perceptions of childcare: evidence from south Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa

- Social norms predicated the role of women in childcare

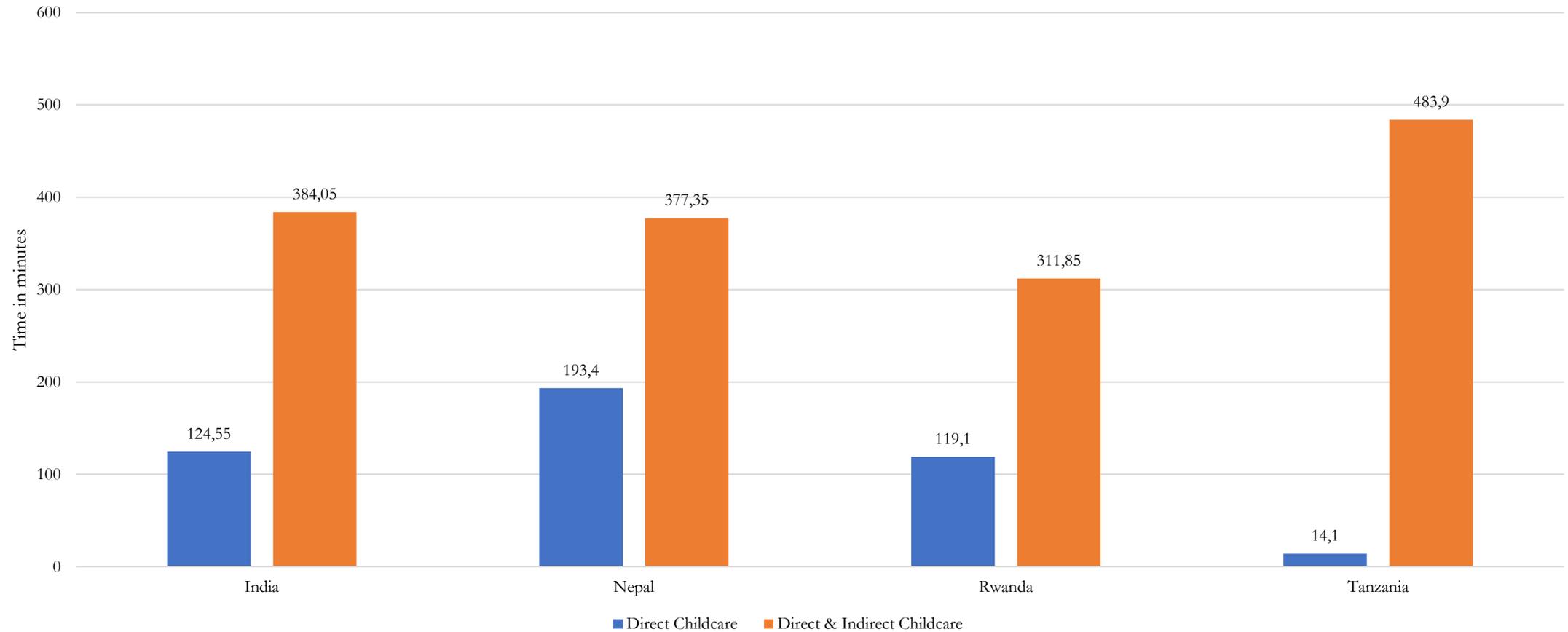
*It would be easy if he would do more...I tell him that and he replies saying that these work are to be done by women and he will just help me a little. (Woman in Mahentada, Nepal)*

- Paid work had a massive, negative impact on women's childcare

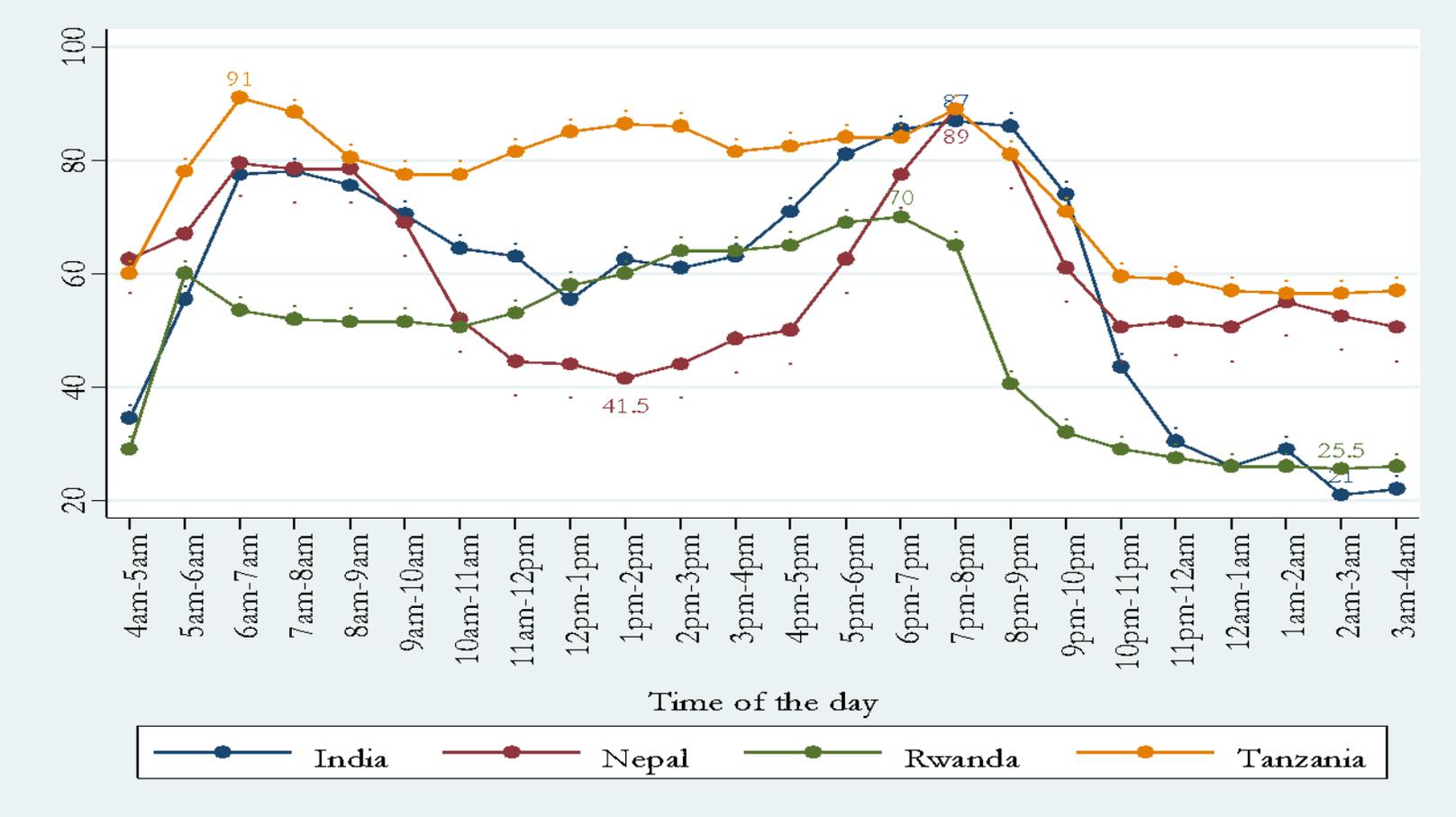
*The effect on my children is that I do not give them much of my time as a mother; they do not get me when they need me since I am always busy with paid and care work which may not necessary mean that I am with them all the time. (Woman in Musanze District, Rwanda)*

- Childcare is not the only form of care/ unpaid work that women do

# Direct childcare v/s Supervisory childcare



# Multi-tasking alongside childcare



Tempogram depicting % women multi-tasking during the day

# Women's labour market choices are determined by 4 factors

- Economic status of family
- All other care tasks – domestic work; water and fuel collection
- Unpaid work tasks (caring for livestock, land, family farms and shops).
- The support that they got for childcare:
  - Family
  - State
  - Market

*'[If there was a child care facility] ...I could have done my work properly if there was a person to look after my child. Now, I worry about my child while working, I'm worried that the child would fall. I cannot concentrate on my work. (Woman in Nepal)*

*"We don't have a crèche here, it is important to have one here. If the kids were going to a crèche, I would have been able to do my work." (Woman in India)*

*"Both my parents help me... mostly, my mother cooks more than me, she looks after my daughter as I come for work here. She bathes her, washes her clothes, combs her hair, sends her off to school, makes snacks in the afternoon and feed her". (Single woman in Mehelkuna, Nepal)*

# Indonesia: findings from UNESCAP study

- During the pandemic, women reported spending more time on shopping, food preparation and cleaning
- Difficulties in access to safe water and sanitation, health care infrastructure – amplified during COVID 19
- Stereotypes of women mainly responsible for Care – reinforced
- BUT young women increasingly aspire to share in care giving and breadwinning role with their partners
- Indonesia's FLFP has increased; but still lower than ASEAN average
- Positive policy environment; increased spending allocated to Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child protection

# What does a care sensitive policy response look like?



## Care services

- Universal, public childcare centres that are easily accessible and affordable
- Integrated personal care arrangements for elder care from the home
- Institutional care of vulnerable groups like terminally sick, disabled, abandoned, orphans, etc.



## Employment-related care policies

- Gender equitable care leaves for a variety of care responsibilities of workers including sick children, elderly, terminally ill, disabled persons etc.
- Shared and gender equitable parental leave for early childcare.
- Offering creche facilities support either onsite or near homes as appropriate.

# Care Sensitive Policy responses



## Care infrastructure

- Piped water especially to rural populations
- Hygienic sanitation facilities with a focus on menstrual health for all women and girls
- Clean sources of fuel and energy used for cooking and other domestic purposes



## Care-related social protection

- Social assistance via unconditional cash transfers
- Non-contributory social insurance for vulnerable women and those employed in the large informal sector
- Social welfare schemes like public works programs, subsidies and vouchers or school meals

# In conclusion, investing in childcare is essential because...

- Affordable childcare required to address inequality and include vulnerable and marginalized populations, as wages cannot cover market-price childcare costs
- Women's time is freed up from the unpaid care economy so that they can engage in the market economy (care and non-care sectors)
- Multiplier effects of investing in childcare sector: paid care sector as the growth engine of the economy (care-led recovery has superior employment potential than investment in infrastructure – Henau and Himmelweit, 2021).
- Quality childcare is critical for uptake; and for building human capacity in the future