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RURAL CHILD WORK, LABOUR AND  
DAILY PRACTICES: A TIME USE  
SURVEY-BASED ANALYSIS

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## **RURAL CHILD WORK, LABOUR AND DAILY PRACTICES: A TIME USE SURVEY-BASED ANALYSIS**

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*This paper highlights the potential for understanding children's work participation more comprehensively through the adoption of time use survey (TUS) techniques. Children, as also women, are involved in a host of economic activities. However, many of these remain uncounted or under-enumerated as these activities are interspersed with household or non-economic activities. In addition to this, there are many activities pertaining to the household maintenance and care economy, which are included in the extended SNA (System of National Accounts) activities within TUS, which are excluded in standard, conventional secondary data enumeration procedures. Often, the limitations of conventional definitions and methodologies of data collection prevent a comprehensive coverage of children's labour contributions. In the study<sup>1</sup> on which this paper is based, TUS methods were adopted in addition to the household survey by using questionnaires to capture child work participation and understand the nature and intensity of such labour inputs.*

The issues of child labour and examination of work undertaken by children are difficult areas to study due to the nature of rural children's involvement in various self-employed and household tasks. Issues pertaining to an understanding of these kinds of work participation, the extent in terms of actual hours and effort of work, and the recognition or not of work as economic activity influence how such child work is treated, and whether it is categorised as labour or not. Other issues related to this subject are those of the socio-cultural context of rural India within which this work is carried out and the perception regarding children's participation in such work within the social and familial context. The benefits of adopting TUS techniques in eliciting information on child work and related insights on the subject are highlighted in this paper.

Where the work is in the nature of extension of an occasional helping hand in times of crisis-driven need, the involvement of children may hardly be akin to work which can be categorised as child labour. However, if the work is undertaken on a more or less regular basis by the children, be it paid or unpaid, for assisting a household enterprise of any kind, then this work contribution cannot be overlooked. In other words, the regularity of child work involvement in tasks concerning economic activities or extended SNA, and household

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\* This paper is based on the survey findings of the IDPAD project completed in 2006 on "The Nowhere Children: A Study of Daily Practice and Hidden Concerns" undertaken jointly by the University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands and the Institute for Human Development, New Delhi.

Table 1  
Child Labour as Defined for the Purpose of Global Estimates

Age group	Forms of work			
	Non-hazardous work (in non-hazardous industries and occupations and < 43 hours/week)		Worst forms of child labour	
	Light work (< 14 hours/week)	Regular work <th>Hazardous work (in specified hazardous industries and occupations plus &gt; 43 hours/week in other industries and occupations)</th> <th>Unconditional worst forms (Trafficked children; children in forced and bonded labour, armed conflict, prostitution and pornography, and illicit activities)</th>	Hazardous work (in specified hazardous industries and occupations plus > 43 hours/week in other industries and occupations)	Unconditional worst forms (Trafficked children; children in forced and bonded labour, armed conflict, prostitution and pornography, and illicit activities)
5-11				
12-14				
15-17				

*Note:* The shaded areas are considered as child labour in need of elimination as per ILO Conventions No. 138 and 182.

*Source:* ILO, 2002, p. 33.

maintenance-related tasks, implies that this work is being delegated to the child. It has become the responsibility of the child to complete this task and hence the burden of this is on the child's shoulders (Lieten and Rustagi, 2006). It also implies that the child has to forego either play or other free time available to be able to complete these tasks. Such work then has to be evaluated on basis of the number of hours it takes, on a regular basis for children to undertake the stipulated tasks.

It is in this context that the conduction of an elaborate TUS becomes essential, since without this, it would be difficult to estimate the number of hours of work put in by the children. ILO, in its document (ILO, 2002) and for purposes of Conventions No. 138 and 182, defines child labour on the basis of age and extent of the work done in terms of the hours put in and the kind of work (hazardous or non-hazardous) undertaken. Children doing non-hazardous work for less than 2 hours a day or 14 hours a week are considered as doing light work, which need not necessarily be eliminated. This is so for children falling in the age group of 12 to 14 years. Among these age cohorts, if the children are found to be undertaking work for more than 12 hours a week, then their work is defined as child labour, needing elimination as per the global standards set by the ILO (see Table 1). For children in the younger age cohorts of 5 to 11 years, even those who undertake so-called light work are defined as child labourers.

This paper deals with the work profile of children across age cohorts, by sex and state as derived from the detailed survey. The household survey data and the TUS are both utilised to capture the children's work profile. Section I describes the background of the study and the methodological issues, including the areas surveyed. The Section II provides

the work participation rates (WPRs) of children across the surveyed states and their sectoral distribution. Section III discusses the findings of the TUS for children in the age group of 7 to 14 years.<sup>1</sup> The weekly time disposition across activities is presented in Section IV to highlight the length of time involvement. The comparison of working days and holidays to reflect the variations, if any, in children's work involvement over these two types of days is presented in Section V. Section VI brings out the manner in which time use is able to provide a nuanced understanding of child work as compared to the existing limited usual and subsidiary status worker category as defined by the secondary sources. The so-called 'non-workers' among children, in fact, necessarily end up putting in some hours of weekly time, on an average.

Finally, to sum up, the concluding section reiterates how time use as a technique for eliciting child work and labour-related information, especially the number of hours of time spent in conducting the tasks, is critical for categorising children according to their ages into child labour. As of now, there is no other basis for identifying whether the work undertaken by any child is of such a nature that it can be carried out without affecting other developmental or educational pursuits of the child. It is crucial for all children to have adequate time at their disposal for pursuing their education, for playing, and also for recreation and rest.

## I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The study undertook both detailed questionnaire-based surveys<sup>2</sup> along with TUSs to better capture the daily practices and routines of rural children. An instance of this is the information on enrolment of children in schools that accompanies long hours of work routines, especially in certain seasons. This hints at non-attendance in schools, which was noted in the anthropological case studies undertaken by researchers. This element was also confirmed from the local schools' attendance registers and conversations with teachers. The TUS data facilitates eliciting of information on different categories of children with details of the time spent on various activities, thereby enabling a different categorisation for child work and labour.

The sample for the study consists of 1981 households selected from a total of 48 villages, from 17 blocks, in 8 districts in 4 states of India. The identification of the four states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan in different geographical regions of the country, which report high incidences of child labour and 'nowhere children', provides a wide canvas for analysis. Two districts were identified in each of the states, with one being a relatively developed one while the second was a relatively backward district. From these two districts, six villages were selected from two or three blocks, which formed the sample villages. In each village, approximately 40 to 50 households were covered in the sample.

The chosen districts in the four states are as follows: in Andhra Pradesh, West Godavari and Mahbubnagar; in Bihar, Bhojpur and Purnea; in Chhattisgarh, Durg and Surguja; and in Rajasthan, Kota and Jalore. In each of the states, the first district is the relatively developed one and the latter is the relatively backward district, respectively. In each district, six villages from two blocks formed the sample villages, except in the case of the West Godavari district

of Andhra Pradesh, where in order to maintain uniformity in the sample size across the different states, three blocks had to be selected for the survey. It may be noted, however, that the blocks chosen for selecting the villages had similar levels of development, that is to say, the block chosen in the developed district was either located in a remote area or was backward due to certain other reasons, which made the villages finally selected comparable to each other. Households having children within the ages of 5 to 14 years were identified for selection of the sample.

Do children work along with school attendance or is their education disrupted by the tasks performed? When and where is the work undertaken by children carried out? All these sets of information were collected from the household survey. Work-related details in terms of the children's participation in different categories of work, that is, self-employed, casual, part-time and full-time work, were elicited. The sectors where children work in, and whether as principal or subsidiary status workers, comprised the other sets of information collected.

The TUS of children from the sample households covered two days of activities for two children per household, with an effort to cover both sexes as well as an attempt to include one younger and another relatively older child. For the TUS, the two days covered included a normal, working day and another off-work day or holiday. This was done with the objective of capturing and understanding the differences in the nature of activities undertaken by the children in the sample villages and households. This part of the survey sought information on an hourly basis to provide details on the time spent by children in SNA, extended SNA and non-SNA activities by using the TUS codes as used in the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) pilot survey.

The total number of children covered in the TUS was 3563 in the age group of 7-14 years. A word of caution is mandated here regarding the data thus elicited. This TUS information cannot be used to portray the extent of child labour in terms of work participation rates and so on, since it is possible that such statistics are biased due to the coverage itself. While these sets of data provide insights into the extent and kind of work involvement of children, the magnitude of child labour itself is *not* to be calculated from such information.

## **II. SURVEY FINDINGS ON WORK-RELATED INFORMATION**

The survey questionnaire contained many queries to extract information on different and diverse dimensions of child work in order to ascertain the kind of work involvement and participation of young boys and girls. The query on work status generated information on the principal status and subsidiary status of work. However, another question on the exact occupation and nature of work undertaken, whether in agriculture or non-agriculture, as self-employed or casual labour, along with the nature of payment, whether paid or unpaid and whether full-time or part-time, elicited more information in greater detail. All tables in this section pertain to the household questionnaire-based survey undertaken during 2004-05.

The work participation rate (WPR) among the children in the 5-14 year age group as usual principal status is 10 per cent, while the UPSS-WPR (which considers both principal and subsidiary status) is higher at 28 per cent (see Table 2). While only 539 children are usual status workers, the inclusion of subsidiary status triples the numbers of children who are working. Are all these children, who constitute UPSS workers, out of school?

Table 2  
Work Participation Rate of Children (5-14 years) by UPS and UPSS

	UPS-WPR			UPSS-WPR		
	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total
All states combined	9	10	10	25	31	28
No. of working children	253	286	539	679	888	1567

Source: Household Survey.

Table 3  
Proportion of Children Working by Educational Statuses

Educational status	UPSS workers	Total children	%
Never enrolled	402	852	47
Enrolled but not regular	60	175	34
Enrolled but dropouts	365	486	75
Currently enrolled	740	4096	18
Total children (5-14 years)	1567	5609	28

Source: Household Survey.

A look at Table 3 reveals that the bulk of all UPSS workers are, in fact, currently enrolled for schooling. Needless to emphasise, most of these children are subsidiary workers. However, such information is not enough to know the extent of their time that goes into such work and whether it is a deterrent to their schooling or not. For gaining such insights, the TUS can provide better information, which will be discussed in Section VI.

Table 4  
Sectoral Distribution of Child Workers (UPSS) by Sex

Sector	Boys		Girls		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Agriculture, etc.	758	85.4	617	90.9	1375	87.7
Mining and quarrying	9	1.0	5	0.7	14	0.9
Manufacturing	12	1.4	14	2.1	26	1.7
Construction	18	2.0	10	1.5	28	1.8
Trade, hotel and restaurant	58	6.5	13	1.9	71	4.5
Transport, etc.	4	0.5	0	0.0	4	0.3
Finance, business activities, etc.	21	2.4	7	1.0	28	1.8
Public administration, education, commercial service	8	0.9	13	1.9	21	1.3
Total	888	100	679	100.0	1567	100

Source: Household Survey.

What are the kinds of work undertaken by the children included in the sample household? A majority of the children are expectedly involved in agriculture and related tasks falling in the primary activities. Animal husbandry-related activities, and grazing of animals are the prominent tasks in which the children are involved (see Lieten, *et al.*, 2005). As in the case of the adults in the villages of India, even among the children aged 5 to 14 years, both boys and girls are predominantly involved in agricultural activities. While the proportion of boys in agriculture and related activities is 85 per cent, that of girls is higher at 91 per cent.

Nearly 7 per cent of the boys among the children who are working as either principle or subsidiary workers, are involved in trade, hotels and eateries, while the proportion of girls engaged in these tasks is lower at 2 per cent of the total girls working. The participation of male children in services sector activities exceeds that of girls in these categories of work.

The sectoral distribution of child workers (UPSS) reveals the predominance of agricultural activities. The other sector, which has some 5 per cent of the children working, is that of trade, hotel and restaurants. This use of child labour in small rural eateries is visible commonly across the villages and even in the towns and cities of India. The magnitude of boys among this sector of hotels and eateries as well as trading is prominent as compared to that of girls (see Table 4).

The other sectors, which employ a smaller proportion of all child workers, that is less than 2 per cent, are those of services, construction and manufacturing. The participation of girls as workers is higher as compared to that of boys in the agriculture and manufacturing sectors.

A look at the nature of work undertaken by the children in terms of whether it is full-time or part-time work, and paid or unpaid work, is useful for understanding the extent and kind of involvement of the children in the work they do. One-half of all work undertaken by children is of an unpaid part-time nature (see Table 5).

Table 5  
Work Status—Paid/Unpaid and Part/Full Time (%)

Category	Male	Female	Total
Paid full-time	19.65	29.99	24.15
Unpaid full-time	15.97	24.72	19.78
Paid part-time	4.84	7.53	6.01
Unpaid part-time	59.54	37.77	50.05
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Household Survey.

The distribution of work across self-employed and casual labour in both the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors clearly reveals a higher concentration in the unpaid category of work, that is self-employed activities (see Table 6). A comparison of the full-time work in the self-employed category and casual labour reveals a slightly higher number of children undertaking full-time casual labour in agriculture and non-agriculture. Among the part-time workers, the self-employed category, which signifies unpaid work, is predominant.

Table 6  
Distribution of Work across Sectors by Category (paid/unpaid and Full/part time)

	Full-time			Part-time		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<b>Self-employment</b>						
In agriculture	105	127	232	256	136	392
In non-agriculture	60	70	130	359	165	524
Total unpaid	165	197	362	615	301	916
<b>Casual labour</b>						
In agriculture	95	161	256	33	44	77
In non-agriculture	108	78	186	17	16	33
Total paid	203	239	442	50	60	110

Source: Household Survey.

Table 7  
Children Undertaking Multiple Jobs

	Two jobs			Three jobs		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
All states	88	63	151	6	10	16

Source: Household Survey.

The information on these details of work participation of children provides useful insights and has also been able to capture more children as workers than the first question on employment status. During an examination of the specific sets of information, it was found that some of these children are involved in multiple tasks.

Even after accounting for these multiple activities, certain children provided information on specific queries, which brings out their labour participation that was not hitherto captured. In other words, another 80-odd children turned up as workers over and above the already categorised ones, as per the usual principal and subsidiary status (UPSS).

The responses elicited at the household level generated 1567 children in the age group of 5-14 years, with principle or subsidiary status of work. However, the separate question on the work of children covered an additional 80 children, taking the total number of working children up to 1647.

Of these, there are a few children who are involved in multiple jobs. While 16 children undertake three different activities, another 151 of them are involved in at least two jobs (see Table 7). Such work engagements are again are not very uncommon in rural environments. However, a mere enumeration of the number of workers can obliterate such insights, as only one prominent work activity is recorded, given the data collection methods and definitions adopted. The number of hours spent on categories of work would, however, provide more detailed information on the amount of time that children devote to all such involvements.

### III. TIME USE SURVEY

This section covers the findings of the TUS, which covered selected children from among the households included in the study. In the TUS, a total of 3563 children were covered, including 1745 girls and 1818 boys in the age group of 7-14 years. While the total number of

girls is fewer as compared to the boys, both within the sample as well as when the worker status is deciphered from usual principal and subsidiary statuses, the time use data reveals a far higher proportion and number of girls involved even in the SNA activities, which are the primary production activities. This may be expected for the extended SNA activities since girls are often involved in household maintenance and care activities as an extension of their gender stereotypical roles within families. However, the fact that a larger number of girls were reported as being involved in SNA activities across most ages and during the week is noteworthy.

Table 8  
Children Involved in SNA and Extended SNA Activities

Activities	Percentage of total children (7-14 years) covered in TUS		
	Male	Female	Total
SNA	62.71	77.59	70.00
Extended SNA	30.20	88.94	58.97
Total no. of children	1818	1745	3563

Source: Time Use Survey.

The total number of girls involved in SNA activities amounts to 78 per cent of all girls in the age group of 7-14 years covered for TUS, while among the boys, 63 per cent of them are undertaking primary production activities. The non-recognition of women's work is starkly depicted even in case of economic work undertaken by girls' which is captured through time use surveys.

Given the gender stereotypes, girls, as expected, are, in most cases involved in the household maintenance and care activities. In the total sample, 89 per cent of the girls reported undertaking these tasks, while the boys involved in these extended SNA activities constitute a low 30 per cent only (see Table 8).

Table 9  
Age-wise Total Number and Percentage of Children Involved in  
SNA and Extended SNA Activities

Age group	Activities	Male	Female	Total
7-8	SNA	34.46	52.38	42.51
	Extended SNA	19.95	70.48	42.65
	Total no. of children	386	315	701
9-10	SNA	58.02	75.05	66.28
	Extended SNA	22.43	85.34	52.92
	Total no. of children	486	457	943
11-12	SNA	72.27	84.04	77.90
	Extended SNA	36.13	94.04	63.85
	Total no. of children	512	470	982
13-14	SNA	81.80	89.66	86.02
	Extended SNA	41.01	99.01	72.15
	Total no. of children	434	503	937

Source: Time Use Survey.

The pattern of gender-based disposition with regard to activities remains similar across age cohorts, with the proportions increasing with age for both boys and girls. The preparation for marriage and managing of household duties that is given significance in the case of girls as they attain puberty, around the ages of 11 to 14 years, is witnessed, as almost all girls in these age groups undertake household duties on a regular basis. In the age cohort of 13 to 14 years, 99 per cent of the girls are involved in such work (see Table 9). The shares of boys involved in such work within similar age cohorts are far lower than those of the girls. Only 41 per cent of the boys in the age group of 13 to 14 years have been found to be participating in household work.

If the percentage weekly time disposition is considered across activities for all children in the age group of 7 to 14 years, 8 per cent of this time is spent on SNA and 6 per cent on extended SNA activities (see Table 10). The boys were found to have spent 8 per cent on SNA tasks and a negligible one per cent on household maintenance activities, while the girls spent more weekly time on both SNA and extended SNA tasks. An estimated 9 per cent of the girls' weekly time goes into primary production activities and 10 per cent into extended SNA activities.

Table 10  
Weekly Time Disposition Across Activities by Sex

Category	Male	Female	Total
SNA	8.01	8.77	8.38
Extended SNA	0.91	10.33	5.52
Non-SNA	91.09	80.90	86.10
Total weekly time	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Time Use Survey.

The involvement of girls in extended SNA activities, even when they are barely 7-8 years old, is quite significant in terms of the proportion of girls involved in such work. Nearly 71

Table 11  
Percentage Weekly Time Disposition across Activities by Age and Sex

Age group (years)	Activities	Male	Female	Total
7-8	SNA	2.61	3.78	3.14
	Extended SNA	0.72	5.41	2.82
	Non-SNA	96.67	90.81	94.04
9-10	SNA	5.62	6.03	5.82
	Extended SNA	0.71	7.85	4.17
	Non-SNA	93.67	86.12	90.01
11-12	SNA	8.85	9.91	9.36
	Extended SNA	0.96	11.16	5.84
	Non SNA	90.19	78.93	84.80
13-14	SNA	14.48	13.32	13.86
	Extended SNA	1.22	14.88	8.55
	Non-SNA	84.30	71.80	77.59

Source: Time Use Survey.

per cent of all girls in this age group undertake household maintenance work, while only 20 per cent of the boys are involved in similar work. Going a step further, examining the time spent on such activities reveals much more in terms of the percentage of weekly time spent on SNA and extended SNA. While boys spent a negligible 0.7 per cent of their average weekly time on extended SNA, girls, including those who are just 7-8 years old, have been found to undertake similar activities for 5.4 per cent of their average weekly time (see Table 11).

The time available with girls for self-maintenance and personal care, which includes development elements for all children, is thereby reduced and lower than that available for boys. While boys have 91 per cent of their weekly time for personal development, girls have 10 per cent lesser time, that is, only 81 per cent of their weekly time.

The clear depiction of work allocation across gender even among children is made feasible through an analysis of the time disposition. Across age cohorts also, a similar distribution of time is witnessed, except for the children aged 13-14 years, who are involved in SNA work, wherein the percentage weekly time spent by boys in such work exceeds that of the girls.

As expected, the younger children spend lower proportions of their time on SNA as well as on extended SNA activities. The percentage of time dispensed on both activities increases progressively with age. However, as already pointed out, stark gender differences come to the fore when the time spent by boys on SNA and extended SNA activities is compared to the corresponding time spent by girls in these activities. The involvement of boys in household tasks remains negligible as compared to that of girls, who devote higher percentages of their time for economic work as well as in comparison to the time devoted by boys for household maintenance work.

#### IV. CONSIDERATIONS OF TIME

##### 1. Length of Work Involvement

Of the total children involved in SNA activities, 33 per cent undertake more than 21 hours of weekly work. Out of 2494 children, on an average, 822 work for more than three hours a day. This clearly rules out their being considered undertaking light work, as per the new definition of the ILO, which has set the global standards of child labour as two hours per day.

Table 12  
Age-wise Percentage of Children Involved in SNA Activities

Age groups (years)	Male	Female	Total
7-8	11.7	12.2	11.9
9-10	24.7	25.3	25.1
11-12	32.5	29.2	30.7
13-14	31.1	33.3	32.3
7-14	62.7	77.6	70.0
No. of children involved in SNA activities	1140	1354	2494
Total no. of children	1818	1745	3563

Source: Time Use Survey.

While less than 1000 of these children take up only one hour per day of SNA work, nearly 500 more children put in an additional hour of work, making their work just short of 2 hours per day or 14 hours per week. Interestingly, among those undertaking primary production-related work for less than two hours a day, the proportion of girls is higher than the boys. In other words, the boys involved in primary production-related kind of work are putting in more hours of labour. The analysis here considers 3 hours per day and 21 hours per week as the cut-off point for light work to account for the inaccurate time reportage in rural areas, especially where children's activities are concerned.

Table 13  
Age-wise Percentage of Children Who Spend 21 Hours or Less of Weekly Time on SNA Activities

<i>Age group (years)</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
7-8	14.3	14.7	14.5
9-10	27.4	29.8	28.8
11-12	34.0	28.3	30.8
13-14	24.3	27.1	25.9
7-14 (% of total children involved in SNA activities)	64.6	69.1	67.0
No. of children	736	936	1672

*Source:* Time Use Survey.

The share of children putting in more than 43 hours per week, that is, in fact more than the accepted global standard for adult working hours per week, is about 17 per cent (that is, 421 children). The boys who undertake long hours of work constitute 18 per cent of all children involved in SNA activities, while the corresponding figure for girls is 16 per cent. This implies that almost an equal proportion of boys and girls are involved in work for more than 43 hours per week.

It is ironical that these children who work for long hours, irrespective of the work they carry out, are not only the older children, that is, those aged 12-14 years. Although a progression in the share of children is noted with age, nevertheless, children in the age group of 7-9 years have also been found to be undertaking such work involving long hours. Albeit, the proportion of such children is small, as only 6-8 per cent of all children are involved in SNA activities.

Table 14  
Age-wise Percentage of Children who Spend more than 43 Hours of Weekly Time on SNA Activities

<i>Age group (years)</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
7-8	3.4	5.0	4.3
9-10	13.3	9.6	11.4
11-12	31.0	32.6	31.8
13-14	52.2	52.8	52.5
7-14 (% of total children involved in SNA activities)	17.81	16.10	16.88
No. of children	203	218	421

*Source:* Time Use Survey.

The length of the time put in for any task is one variable that may be considered for understanding the burden of work on children. The discussion on the nature of work carried out—that is, whether it is strenuous, hard or harmful to the child—becomes irrelevant. Even the consideration that such work may be treated as training and part of the socialisation process, whereby the child learns to become a responsible adult, cannot be accepted since the hours of work put in are too long. Such work oriented or intended merely to familiarise and develop the child's aptitude for it, must neither be regular nor undertaken for lengthy periods. Only short and intermittent periods can be considered to prevent such work from being categorised as child labour.

The consideration of extended SNA activities, that is, the unpaid, unrecognised household maintenance work, which is not categorised as 'economic' in standard definitions used to measure labour participation further enhances the number of hours of work put in by children. The total number of hours put in for both SNA and extended SNA activities is, therefore of relevance in the consideration of children's work participation. Since children are often involved in such work, this affects their seeking schooling as well as their overall development. The scenario across gender also necessarily gets altered when both the unpaid, and unrecognised and recognised segments of work are considered together. Girls are likely to be involved in larger numbers and for longer hours when their time disposition for both sets of activities is considered.

## 2. SNA and Extended SNA

If both SNA and extended SNA activities are considered together, the time spent by children increases tremendously. Among all children covered for the TUS, 82 per cent are involved in either SNA or extended SNA or both types of work. Of these children, the number or proportion of children undertaking light work, which is defined as non-hazardous work being undertaken by children for less than 3 hours per day or 21 hours per week) is a little over half of all the children.

However, of the 2910 children involved in either SNA or extended SNA activities or both, 49 per cent of the children work for more than 21 hours per week. Nearly 17 per cent of these children actually work for more than 43 hours per week in both SNA and extended SNA activities.

Table 15  
Age-wise Percentage of Children Involved in SNA and Extended SNA Activities

Age group (years)	Male	Female	Total
7-8	13.3	15.3	14.4
9-10	24.3	25.6	25.1
11-12	32.4	28.1	30.0
13-14	30.0	31.0	30.5
7-14	71.4	92.4	81.7
<u>No. of children</u>	1298	1612	2910

Source: Time Use Survey.

**Table 16**  
**Age-wise Number of Children who Spend Less than 21 Hours of**  
**Weekly Time on SNA and Extended SNA Activities**

<i>Age group (years)</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
7-8	16.5	24.7	20.0
9-10	26.4	33.4	29.4
11-12	33.8	25.3	30.2
13-14	23.3	16.6	20.4
7-14	66.3	39.7	51.5
No. of children	860	640	1500

*Source:* Time Use Survey.

**Table 17**  
**Age-wise Number of Children who Spend more than 21 Hours of**  
**Weekly Time on SNA and Extended SNA Activities**

<i>Age group (years)</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
7-8	7.1	9.1	8.4
9-10	20.3	20.5	20.4
11-12	29.5	29.9	29.8
13-14	43.2	40.5	41.3
7-14	33.7	60.3	48.5
No. of children	438	972	1410

*Source:* Time Use Survey.

## **V. COMPARISON OF WORKING DAY AND HOLIDAY TIME DISPOSITION OF CHILDREN**

The study examines the time disposition of children separately for working days and holidays in order to discern whether there are any differences in their work contribution. The school-going children may display a different pattern of work across weekdays and holidays. Similarly, children working for others as opposed to those doing unpaid work for their own households, especially those who have to go elsewhere to work, may be having a different work schedule for holidays. On the other hand, among children who are working for household activities, be it agriculture or services, there may be instances when the work contribution hardly undergoes any alteration. Another practical reason for eliciting information on these different days is to facilitate the calculation of the weekly time spent on work, which is done by aggregating the working day into six days of the week plus one holiday.

The number of children involved in SNA activities during their off-days increases in comparison to the corresponding figures for working days. This is true for both primary production activities and household maintenance chores. The proportion of boys undertaking SNA work during Sundays increases slightly as compared to that of the girls. This higher proportion of male participation also holds true in the case of the extended SNA tasks. As opposed to 46 per cent of the boys involved in SNA activities during the working days,

Table 18  
**Percentage of Children Involved in SNA and  
 Extended SNA Activities by Sex during Working Days and Holidays**

Activities	Working days			Holidays		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
SNA	45.98	65.73	55.66	58.91	73.64	66.12
Extended SNA	16.01	80.97	47.82	22.83	85.27	53.41
Total no. of children	1818	1745	3563	1818	1745	3563

Source: Time Use Survey.

the proportion increases to 59 per cent on holidays, signifying a rise of 13 points. The corresponding figures for the girls, on the other hand, are 66 per cent for working days and 74 per cent for holidays.

The net increment of male child workers during the off-days is more than that of the girls. However, it is also true that the proportion of girls involved in SNA and extended SNA activities during working days and holidays is far higher than those of boys. Who actually undertakes more work can be assessed in two ways, on the basis of either the quantum or difficulty of work or the length of time spent on it. In case of children and the work they undertake, generally the kind of tasks determine, to some extent, the nature of work from the point of view of how strenuous or hazardous the work may be. Since this survey has measured the time use pattern of children, a detailed account of the length of time spent on the work carried out by girls and boys is available for studying. This is one of the useful parameters, which will provide information on the children's involvement and allow for comparison of the time spent by boys and girls separately. There are also differences across age cohorts.

Table 19  
**Percentage of Children Involved in SNA and  
 Extended SNA Activities by Age Cohorts and by Sex during Working Days and Holidays**

Age group (years)	Activities	Working days			Holidays		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
7-8	SNA	19.95	36.51	27.39	31.35	49.52	39.51
	Extended SNA	10.88	60.32	33.10	14.77	65.08	37.38
	Total no. of children	386	315	701	386	315	701
9-10	SNA	38.27	59.74	48.67	54.73	71.12	62.67
	Extended SNA	11.32	74.18	41.78	16.87	80.74	47.83
	Total no. of children	486	457	943	486	457	943
11-12	SNA	54.30	73.62	63.54	68.75	80.00	74.13
	Extended SNA	19.53	87.23	51.93	26.56	90.64	57.23
	Total No of children	512	470	982	512	470	982
13-14	SNA	67.97	82.11	75.56	76.50	85.09	81.11
	Extended SNA	21.66	94.23	60.62	32.26	97.02	67.02
	Total no. of children	434	503	937	434	503	937

Source: Time Use Survey.

Of the children within each age cohort, there are tremendous variations in participation levels across ages, as well as in terms of the work undertaken by girls versus boys, which has been discussed elsewhere. Here, the differences across working days and holidays are being examined. Even among the relatively younger children in the age group of 7 to 8 years, 13 per cent more children get involved in SNA work on Sundays. The participation of these 7-8 year-old children in extended SNA activities in terms of their numbers increases from 33 per cent to 37 per cent. About 20 per cent of the boys within the age cohort of 7 to 8 years are involved in primary production-related activities on working days, while on holidays their proportion increases to 31 per cent. Similarly, among the girls in this age cohort, 37 per cent are involved in SNA activities on working days, while one-half of all girls in the 7-8 year age group undertake primary production-related tasks on holidays.

Among the older age cohorts of children, since a larger number of girls are participating in SNA as well as extended SNA activities, the variations across working and non-working days is witnessed much more in the case of than girls. Primarily, this kind of gender involvement pattern reflects the patriarchy-based stereotypes and role divisions. However, this also relates, to some extent, to the variations in the school-going proportions among the age groups of both males and females. The number of girls attending school is much less than that of boys.

The variations across gender are very prominent for the extended SNA work involvement, with a lot more girls being involved in these tasks across ages and irrespective of the days. The proportions of boys involved in extended SNA activities are far lower than those undertaking SNA work, while the reverse holds true in the case of work participation by the girls.

This aspect comes through more clearly when the time disposition is considered across activities by boys and girls for both working and non-working days. While boys have been found to spend four hours of their average time on any working day in carrying out production-related tasks, the girls spend three hours on similar activities. On non-working days, the average number of hours put in by boys increases to five, while corresponding figure for the girls increases marginally, thereby remaining close to the same number of average hours.

Table 20  
Average Hours Spent on SNA per Working Day and Holiday by Sex

	Average Hours Spent on SNA Activities during Working Day					
	Male		Female		Total	
	SNA	Ext-SNA	SNA	Ext-SNA	SNA	Ext-SNA
All states	3.91	1.21	3.12	2.95	3.45	2.65
<i>Average hours spent on SNA activities during holiday</i>						
All states	4.54	1.57	3.32	3.55	3.88	3.12

Source: Time Use Survey.

The number of hours spent on household maintenance activities, on the other hand, reflects a different picture, with girls putting in more hours, on an average, both during working and non-working days. This is a reflection of how there is little change in the chores that women are responsible for, and girls start shouldering this burden from the early years in their lives.

Boys, on an average, spend only one hour per day on household activities, while girls are involved in such work for an average of three hours on working days. On non-working days, both boys and girls spend another extra hour on household maintenance-linked tasks.

## VI. NUANCED UNDERSTANDING THROUGH TIME USE: CAPTURING CHILD WORK

Of the 3563 children covered in the TUS, 1259 are UPSS workers. In other words, nearly two-thirds of all children included in the TUS are those who did not report working status in the household questionnaire-based survey. However, of these 2304 'non-working' children, nearly half of the children (1265 in number) reported and were classified as being involved in some kind of SNA work, that is, 55 per cent of those who are otherwise not considered and therefore not captured as UPSS workers, are, in fact, involved in economic activity.

While the average time spent by a UPSS worker on SNA activities is 32 hours per week, apart from another 19 hours of weekly time on extended SNA work, the children among 'non-workers' spend only 9 hours of weekly average time on SNA and 14 hours on intended SNA activities.

Table 21  
Age-wise Number of Children Involved in SNA Activities and  
Weekly Average Time Spent by UPSS Workers and Non-Workers

Age group (years)	UPSS worker		Non-worker		Total	
	Number	Average time	Number	Average time	Number	Average time
7-8	78	22	220	9	298	12
9-10	227	26	398	9	625	15
11-12	393	31	372	8	765	20
13-14	531	36	275	10	806	27
7-14	1229	32	1265	9	2494	20

Source: Time Use Survey.

The children reporting working status as per usual or subsidiary involvement (UPSS category) clearly undertake longer hours of work in SNA activities, as expected. The children who are UPSS workers put in, on an average, 32 hours per week on economic activities, while the 'non-workers' spend, on an average, 9 hours per week only. This takes the overall average time spent by children in SNA activities to 20 hours per week.

Table 22  
Age-wise Children's Involvement in Extended SNA Activities by Number of Children,  
Average Weekly Time Spent Among UPSS Workers and Non-workers

Age group (years)	UPSS workers		UPSS Non-workers		Total	
	No.	Average time	No.	Average time	No.	Average time
7-8	44	13	255	11	299	11
9-10	121	16	378	12	499	13
11-12	248	18	379	14	627	15
13-14	371	20	305	19	676	20
7-14	784	19	1317	14	2101	16

Source: Time Use Survey.

The number of children across ages among UPSS workers increases with age, as the older children put in more hours of work in SNA activities per week. This is, however, not true for the ‘non-workers’ category of children in terms of the number of children involved in SNA work during the weekly time spent by them. While the UPSS workers among the 7-8 year-old children are lower in number, this is clearly not so in the case of the ‘non-workers’ children’s involvement in SNA activities. In terms of the average time spent per week, the workers put in more time as compared to the non-workers (see Table 21).

Consider the involvement of UPSS workers and ‘non-workers’ in extended SNA activities in terms of the age-wise number of children and the average weekly time spent, and a certain pattern of involvement emerges. While in both categories of children, the number of average hours spent per week on household maintenance increases with age, the number of children among UPSS workers remains lower in the younger age groups as compared to those of the ‘non-workers’. However, it is interesting to find that, on an average, the ‘non-workers’ spend a slightly lower number of weekly hours on extended SNA activities than the UPSS worker children. In other words, the households wherein children are working (as UPSS workers) tend to put in substantially larger numbers of work hours in total and also in extended SNA activities.

Table 23  
Involvement of UPSS Worker and ‘Non-Workers’ Children in  
SNA Activities (Percentage Weekly Time Disposition)

Age group (years)	UPSS worker		UPSS ‘Non-worker’		Total	
	% Weekly time		% Weekly time		% Weekly time	
	SNA	E-SNA	SNA	E-SNA	SNA	E-SNA
7-8	12.35	4.24	1.90	2.63	3.14	2.82
9-10	14.75	4.97	2.87	3.91	5.82	4.17
11-12	18.28	6.54	3.20	5.36	9.36	5.84
13-14	21.03	8.31	4.06	8.89	13.86	8.55
7-14	18.41	6.86	2.90	4.79	8.38	5.52

Source: Time Use Survey.

Table 24  
Percentage Weekly Time Spent by School Going UPSS Worker and  
Non-worker Children in SNA and Extended SNA Activities

	Male	Female	Total
UPSS worker			
SNA	9.62	8.96	9.44
Ext. SNA	0.68	10.84	3.41
Total	10.30	19.80	12.86
UPSS Non-workers			
SNA	1.87	2.94	2.41
Ext. SNA	0.62	6.62	3.61
Total	2.50	9.57	6.01

Source: Time Use Survey.

Consider the school-going children covered by the TUS. The number of UPSS workers among these 2752 enrolled children amounts to 653, accounting for a total of 24 per cent. All the rest are non-working children as per the household level information. The TUS provides information on the SNA and extended SNA involvements of the 'non-worker' children. Of the 2099 'non-worker' children, 70 per cent are involved in either SNA or extended SNA activities or both.

A majority of the non-worker children, in fact, do undertake some work, be it paid or unpaid, economic or care-related. Among the non-workers as per the UPSS category, girls end up putting in more hours of weekly average time on both SNA and extended SNA activities. Among those who were enumerated as UPSS workers, boys put in marginally more hours of work in SNA activities, while girls undertake 11 per cent of the extended SNA work. To sum up then, this paper highlights some of the significant parameters that can be drawn to measure and understand children's work. The very definition of who is involved in work as child labour and requires protection from such exploitation is dependent on the extent of time spent on such activities. The damage that such involvement can have on the overall development of the child can be assessed better if the time utilisation profiles of children are available.

Table 25  
**Involvement of Dropouts in SNA and Extended SNA Activities (Number of Children)**

Activity	Girls	Boys	All
SNA	220	137	357
Extended SNA	224	49	273
Total Dropouts	227	142	369

Source: Time Use Survey.

Table 26  
**Involvement in SNA and Extended SNA Activities by Dropouts who Reported UPSS Working Status**

Activity	Girls	Boys	All
SNA	157	130	287
Extended SNA	156	44	200
Total no. of dropouts working	158	131	289

Source: Time Use Survey.

Table 27  
**Percentage Weekly Time Spent in SNA and Extended SNA by All Dropouts and Those Who Reported UPSS Working Status among Them**

Category	Percentage weekly time spent by dropouts		
	All Dropouts	Working Dropouts	Non-working Dropouts
SNA	24	28	8
Extended SNA	13	10	21

Source: Time Use Survey.

Is there a big difference among those who are enrolled and working when compared with those children who have dropped out from school in terms of their work involvements in SNA and extended SNA activities? An examination of the information collected through

the TUS provides useful insights in this area. Of the total of 369 dropouts covered, 289 are working and reported so in the household survey itself. Only 80 children were non-working dropouts. However, further exploration of what these 80 children do during any week revealed that 77 of them were involved in either SNA or extended SNA work or both though the time spent, on an average, was lower, totalling only 14 hours per week of SNA work and 35 hours of household maintenance and care work. Thus, in all, these so-called non-working dropout children were putting in 49 hours every week, that is, 29 per cent of their weekly time on some kind of work.

## **VII. CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The study based on TUS provides insights on children's work participation, which would have been difficult to arrive at through the alternative standard survey methodologies. Even PRA exercises and case studies can only hint at certain patterns for specific children identified for the purpose. These techniques are not amenable to quantification of the kind that TUS permits. In terms of the number of hours of work and leisure, historically, this method has been adopted for the collection of information on people's lives for aspects not covered in any other alternative sources (Hirway, 2002).

This paper also highlights the additional information that was collected through the TUS on children's work schedules. Details of the number of hours spent per day and the percentage weekly time utilised in undertaking economic (SNA) activities, both paid and unpaid, reveals that more girls are involved in these chores than boys. The potential for eliciting improved estimates of women's participation through TUSs has always been a point in its favour for capturing unpaid work (Rajivan, 1999). However, the estimates from these four states, which are characterised by a higher incidence of child labour than other states, show that many more girls than boys are involved in not only unpaid work but also paid work, irrespective of the time they put in. Rustagi (2002) notes, in her district level analysis, that work participation rates for girls exceed that of boys in many areas, with these figures being determined by calculating sex ratios among child workers. Girls exceed the boys in all categories in terms of the work they undertake— among the out-of-school children; among the dropouts; and among the child workers, especially when these figures are analysed through time use statistics. Such information can aid in gender sensitisation processes and the formulation of appropriate policy interventions as well, and therefore necessitates policy attention.

Efforts to eliminate child labour and enhance the human capital endowments of the future labour forces by ensuring a greater number of years of schooling (Dev and Ravi, 2002; GOI, 2005) in order to improve their adult labour participation cannot be fructified unless the use of children in various activities is minimised. Just working towards ensuring universalisation of elementary education as undertaken by the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), which has led to a higher enrolment of children, is inadequate in preventing the incidence of child labour. Retention of children in schools is critical. This requires improvements in the levels of schooling quality, in terms of physical infrastructure, curriculum, teachers, and

so on. The findings of this study also highlight the problem of dropouts. A majority of the children who have dropped out of schools are found to be working. Even the non-workers among them are involved in SNA and extended SNA work.

In conclusion then, it may be stated that the TUS reveals critical information and insights on the status of working children, which are beneficial for understanding children's work participation. The extent of work put in by these children in terms of the number of hours constitutes an important input. Since the total time available is fixed and all activities have to be completed within the same time, children who work in economic or household maintenance activities are compelled to squeeze the time available for relaxation, play, rest and overall development. This can prove detrimental to the child, and in turn, to the family, society and nation as a whole.

#### **Notes**

1. Although the study considered all children aged 5-14 years, who work as child labourers, for the purposes of the time use survey data-based analysis, only the 7-14 year-old children were considered.
2. The survey period began in February 2004 and continued up to January 2005.

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