



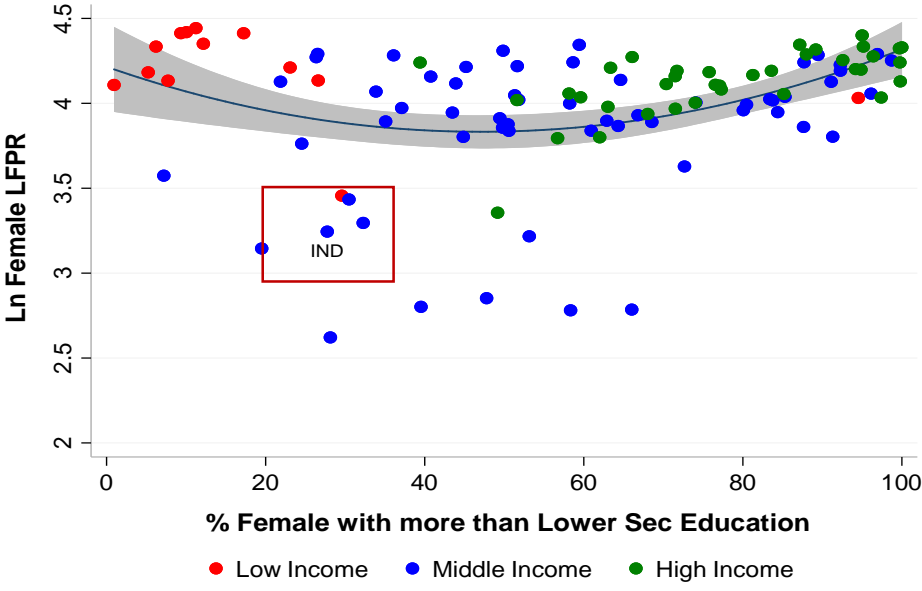
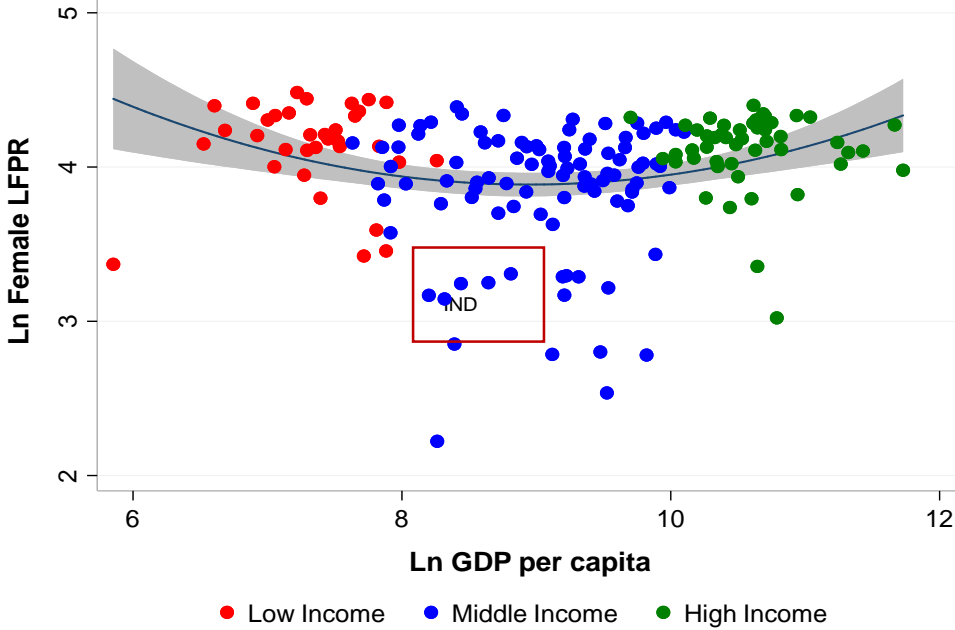
International
Growth Centre

Raising women's participation in the economy: What will it take?

Farzana Afridi
Indian Statistical Institute (Delhi)

IGC at 10 Conference
Delhi (10 September)

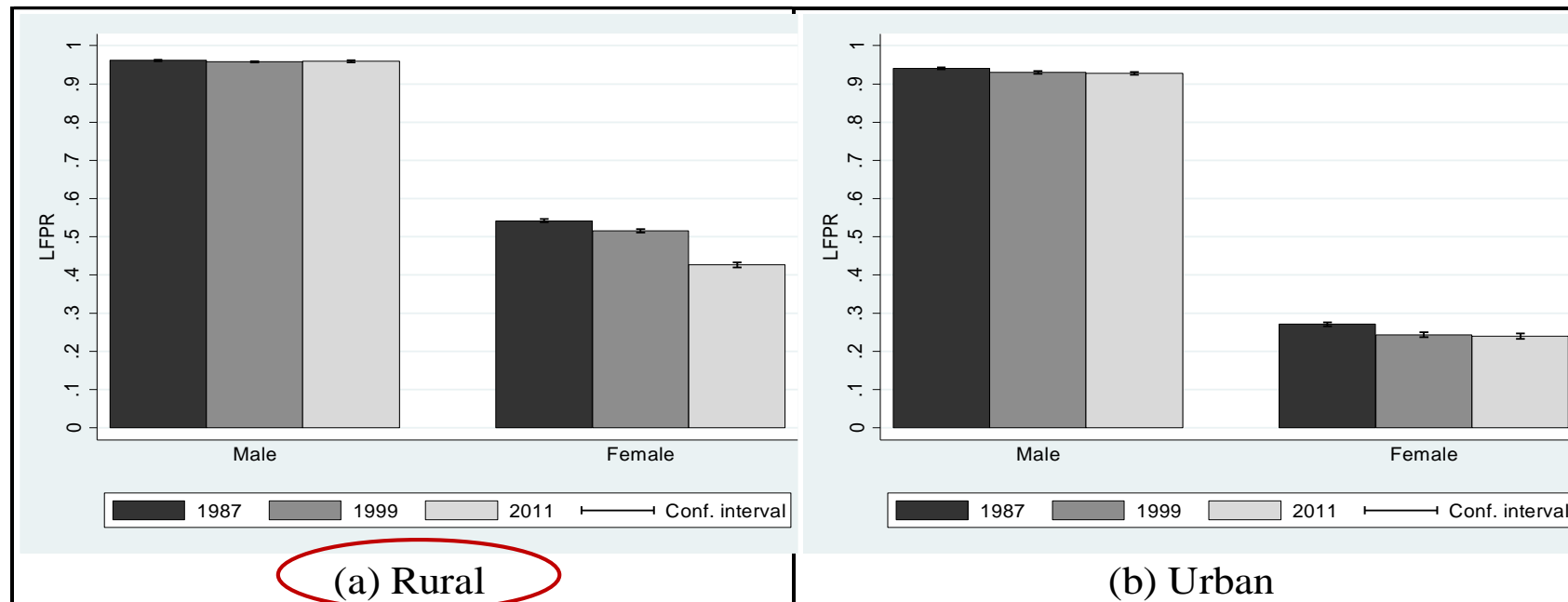
India: an outlier on women's work force participation



World Development Indicators (World Bank, 2011)
Source: Afridi, Bishnu and Mahajan (2019)

Women's LFP falling in rural and stagnant in urban areas

Figure 2. Labor Force Participation Rates (LFPR) over time by gender
Sample of 25-65 year olds

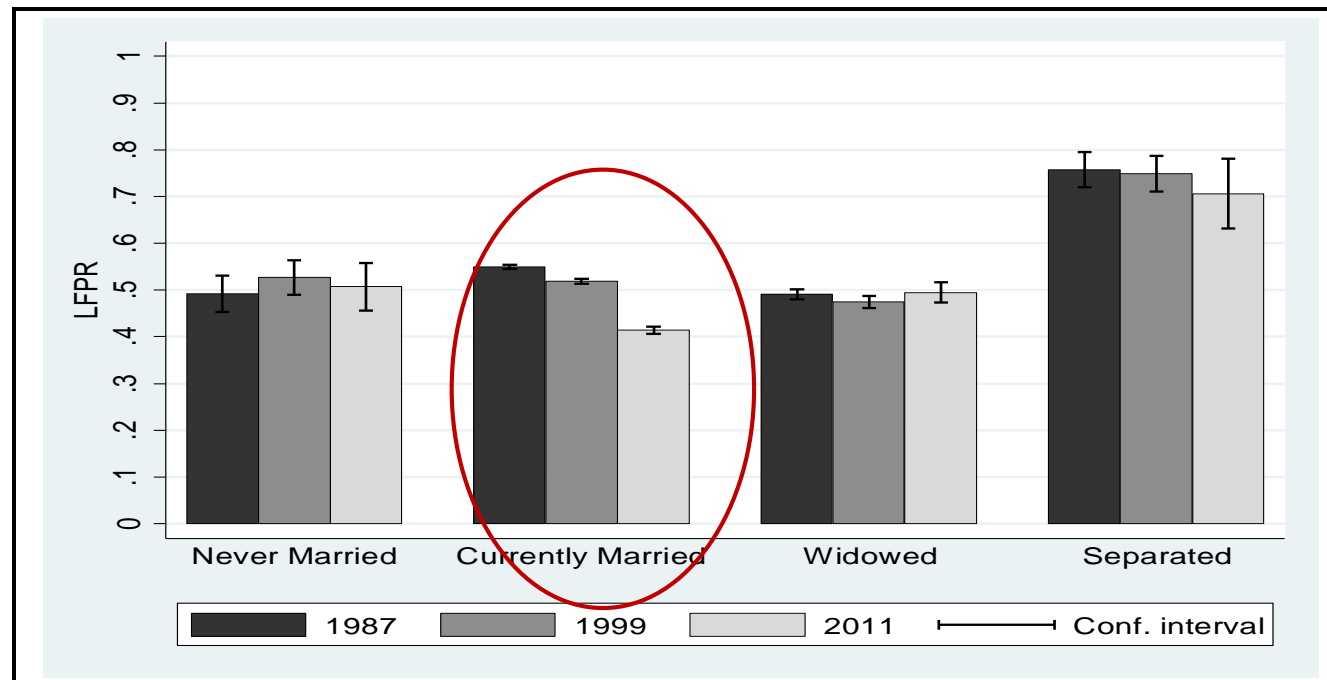


Source: NSS (1987, 1999, 2011) Employment and Unemployment Schedule (Authors' calculations).

² Afridi, Dinkelman and Mahajan (2018)

Women's LFP falling for married women

Figure 3. Female Labor Force Participation Rates (LFPR) over time by marital status
Rural sample



Source: NSS (1987, 1999, 2011) Employment and Unemployment Schedule (Authors' calculations).

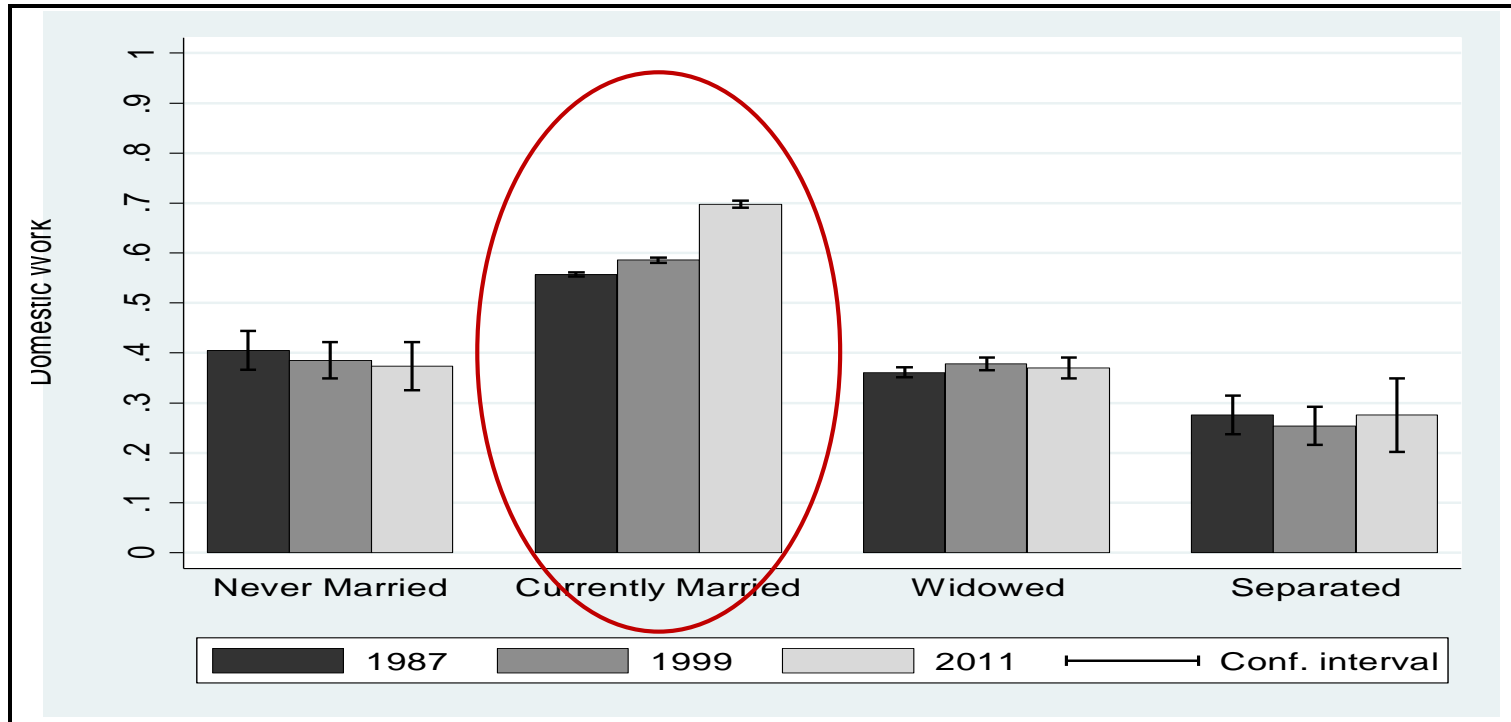
Note: The sample includes women aged 25-65 in rural India.

□

Afridi, Dinkelmann and Mahajan (2018)

While domestic work is going up...

Figure 4. Female Participation in Domestic Work over time by marital status
Rural sample

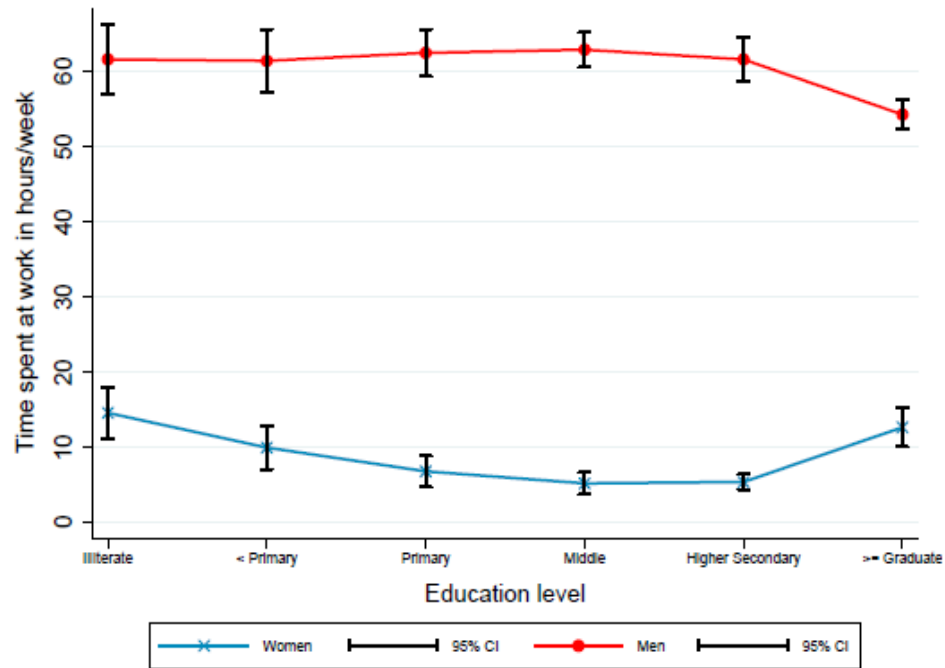


Source: NSS (1987, 1999, 2011) Employment and Unemployment Schedule (Authors' calculations).

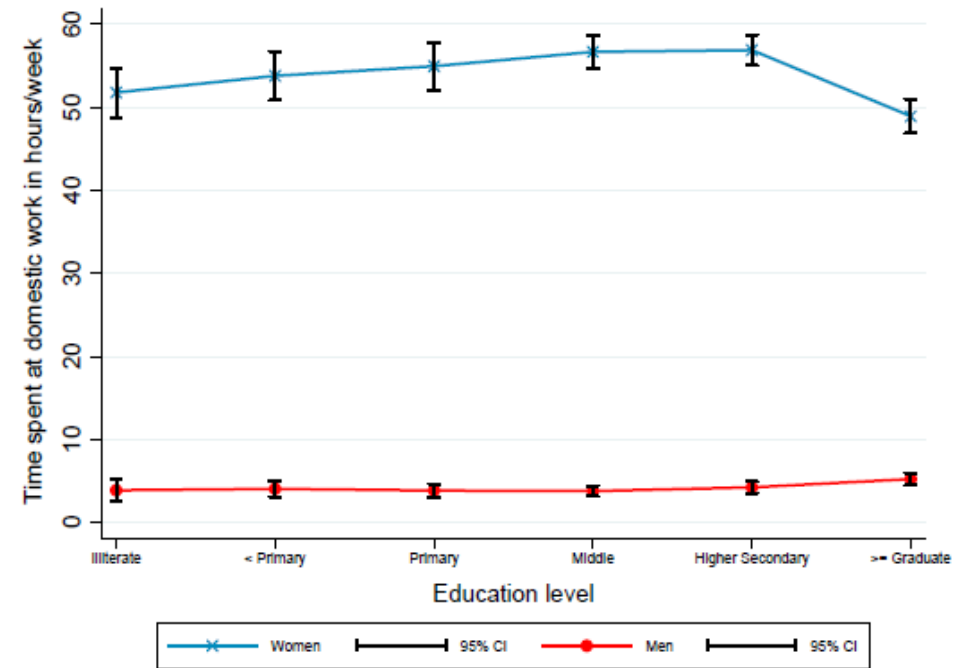
Note: The sample includes women aged 25-65 in rural India. The above graph reports proportion of women whose primary activity is domestic work.

²Afridi, Dinkelman and Mahajan (2018)

Big gender gaps in couples' time allocation



Market work



Domestic work

Supply side constraints

Cultural norms underlying the traditional role of men and women in the Indian households lead to:

- non-substitutability between male and female labor in domestic production activities.
- higher elasticity of women's market work, relative to men's

Easing supply side constraints: *The role of technology*

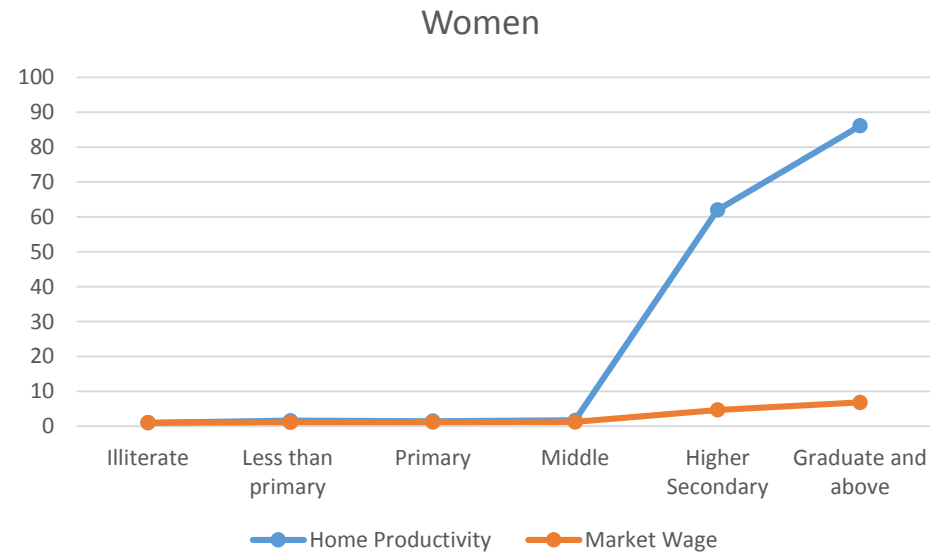
Preliminary results from ongoing RCT on raising awareness for using LPG for cooking in rural India:

- Having an *LPG connection reduces time spent on household chores - cooking and fuel collection by women.*
- Regular usage of LPG for cooking is associated with *more leisure time of women in better off households.*
- In households that are poorer, *LPG usage releases more time for income generating work (paid or unpaid) by women.*

Demand side constraints:

Low labor market returns

- As women's education improves their reservation wage rises.
- Productivity also increases at home with education.
- Returns in the labor market have to be higher than returns from domestic work for women to engage in market work.



Source: Afridi, Bishnu and Mahajan (2019); NSS -Time Use Survey

Easing demand side constraints: *Labor reforms and manufacturing sector growth*

Preliminary, qualitative findings from ongoing study in Delhi's industrial areas:

- Regulation of labor standards and legal redressal mechanisms for women factory workers.
- Principle of equal remuneration for equal work.
- Up-skilling and an expansion of work opportunities for women on the shop-floor and counter stigma associated with low-paid factory jobs.

Policy Implications

- The constraints women face exist both on the demand and supply side.
- Improving technology for domestic work can release women's time for remunerative work on the supply side while we chip away at changing sticky social norms.
- 'Decent' jobs with fair pay and work conditions in manufacturing sector are required as work opportunities in agriculture shrink.

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