

BACKGROUND

Organised by the Women and Media Collective
in Collaboration with the Social Scientists' Association
in Sri Lanka

CONFERENCE ON EQUALITY AND EQUITY IN RECOGNISING UNPAID CARE WORK AND WOMEN'S LABOUR IN SOUTH ASIA

Date: 25 to 26 May 2022

Location: In Colombo for Sri Lanka residence. Online for others.

Participants: Researchers, Activists and Advocates
on Unpaid Care Work in South Asia

**Submission deadline for abstracts
EXTENDED till 28th MARCH**

The work of caring for the family is multi dimensional. It is woven into the socio-cultural fabric of the family irrespective of the number of individuals, their ages, their needs or genders of its members. Caregiving as a concept and as an activity remains associated with and largely confined to women. Over the last three decades, the focus on recognising the social, political and economic relevance of care within household has challenged these notions of gendered altruism and placed the issue of care as a central, tangible constituent of feminist discourses .

Feminist explorations and evidence building on unpaid care work have brought out dimensions of women's economic empowerment, gendered identities and the role of public policy. It has pushed for a recognition of the political economy of unpaid care work, the imperatives of valuing the labour of women within the household. It has brought to light the impact of global crises such as the Covid 19 pandemic on the women, in paid work but more importantly in unpaid care work in their households. The tasks of recognising, measuring for recognition, reducing and redistribution and measuring for redistribution of unpaid care work remains key in South Asia as in other regions.

The on-going discussion and debates on unpaid care work includes a continuous revisiting and deepening meaningful analyses of the relationship between women's engagement in paid work and inclusion in the national labour force and, the economic and social value of women's labour within the family and household. Most international development agencies now acknowledge the need for provision of care services including childcare, elder care and care for dependents with disabilities. A key concern remains on the budgetary allocations for the provision of care facilities for families with young children, for persons with disabilities and for elders.

Many South Asian countries have allocations in national budgets for social protection programmes for households designated to be in poverty. However, most such programmes are formulated with an implicit acceptance of the gendered provision of care within the family with women bearing the primary responsibility. The importance of enabling women to engage in income earning activities, to be part of the labour force are often presented as a panacea for growth in GDP. At the same time cultural norms and concepts of gender roles and gender relations are cited as the rationale for the continuation of domestic divisions of unpaid work. As more women in the region are joining the labour force, there is yet little policy recognition of the value of unpaid care work at the level of the household, the community and the national economy. Interventions such as introducing and implementing meaningful provisions such as paternity leave, or provision of well resourced care facilities accessible to households are among some of the concerns that arise from much of the policy making in the region.

The social and economic upheaval resulting from Covid-19 is highlighting the extent of the burden of unpaid care work that women bear. These factors strengthen the urgency globally and especially in South Asia for feminist researchers and activists to revisit discourses on women's labour and explore issues of equality and equity in recognising unpaid care work.

For more info: <https://womenandmedia.org/conference>

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■ THE CONFERENCE

Researchers, Activists and Advocates working on women's work, gender and the political economy and Unpaid Care Work in particular, are invited to apply as participants to the conference. The conference will consist of selected authors who will present their research and expert panelists who will lead the discussion on recognising unpaid care work in South Asia.

All participants to the conference are invited to apply by 20th March 2022 to the Women and Media Collective.

For abstract submission visit:
<https://womenandmedia.org/conference>

■ PAPER SUBMISSION

Please submit an abstract along with a provisional title. Selection of the abstract for the submission of a full paper does not guarantee the selection in the publication of the special issue on Unpaid Care Work in South Asia.

*Final manuscripts should not exceed 20 pages (double-spaced). The APA referencing style must be followed. All manuscripts will be checked for plagiarism and will be subject to a blind peer review process.

* Sinhala and Tamil submissions are welcome

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■ TIMELINE

28 MARCH	Submission deadline for abstract.
31 MARCH	Notification on the acceptability of abstract and invitation to present.
30 APRIL	Submission deadline for full paper
10 MAY	Final submission of revised texts.

■ EXPECTED OUTPUTS

- Identification of current challenges and strategies on recognising, reducing and redistributing unpaid care work.
- Partnerships for follow up activities and strategies for recognition of and increased advocacy on unpaid care work
- Publication of selected papers on unpaid care work.

■ OBJECTIVES

With the aim of promoting analyses and reflection on the issues highlighted above, the conference will provide a forum for the presentation and discussion of research findings, informed advocacy and strategies for policy interventions on unpaid care work in South Asia with focus on:

- Political economy of unpaid care work
- Time Use Surveys and Valuing Unpaid care work
- Public policy interventions
- Alliance building between research, advocacy and policy makers
- Social Media interventions and impact for recognition and care participation
- Impacts of Covid19 and strategies for restructuring the political economy of care work