



***Learning from Cross Country Difference of Female Work  
Participation in Agriculture in the Eastern Gangetic Basin:  
The Macro and Micro Connections***

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# The Context for the Gendered Fields

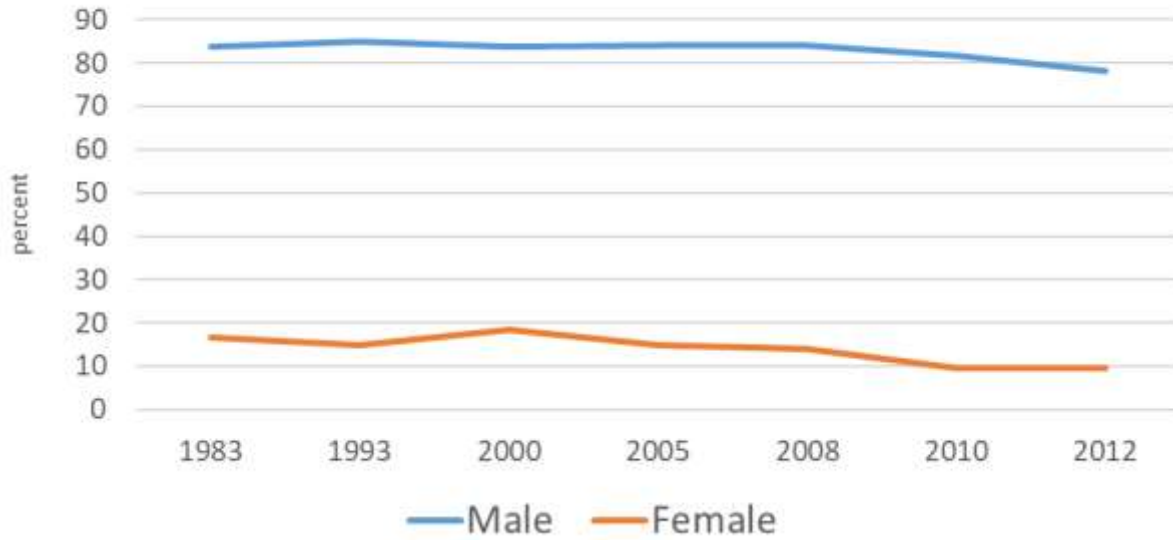
## First:

- Rural areas that provides distinct contexts for women and gender relations – inadequately conceptualised

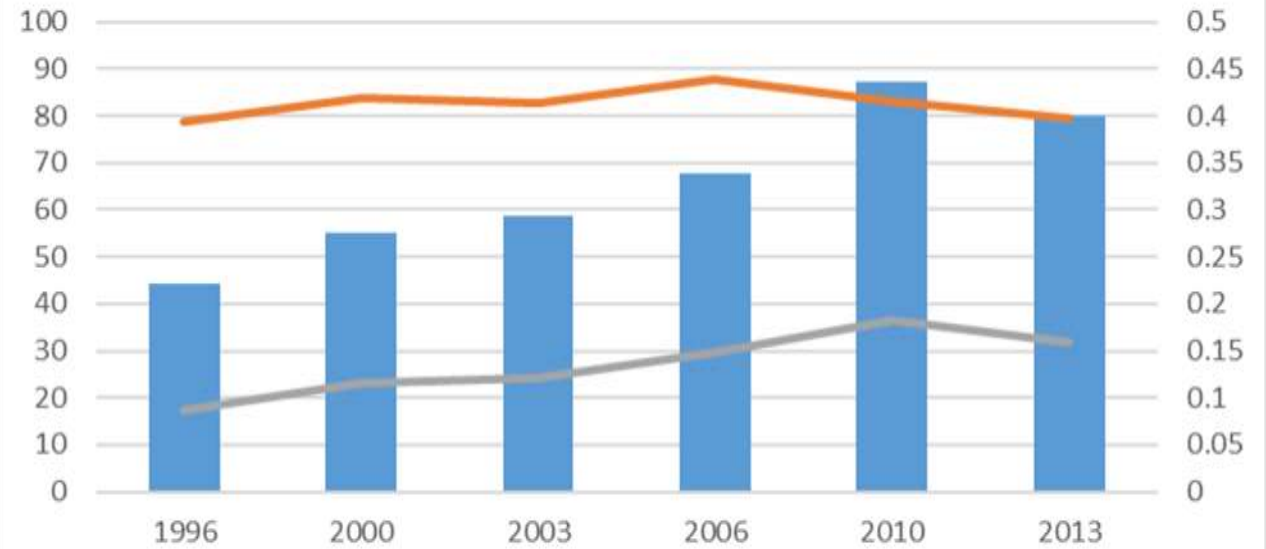
## Second:

- We assume a linear progression from rural to urban social relations. Uneven and disrupted development trajectories

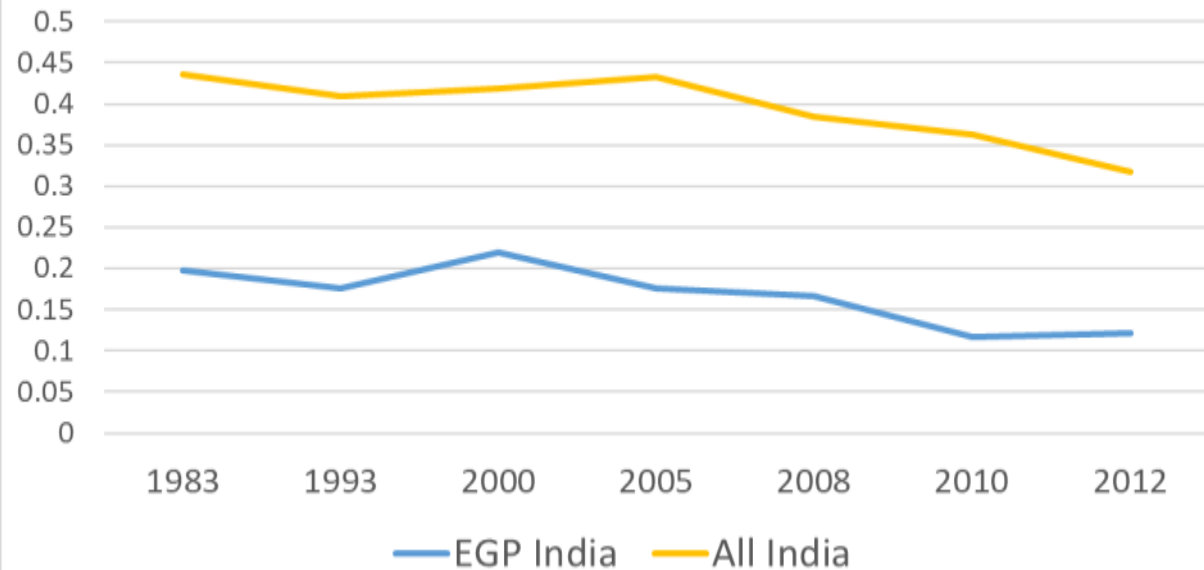
Work Participation Rates in EGP India



Trend of Work Participation in Rural Bangladesh

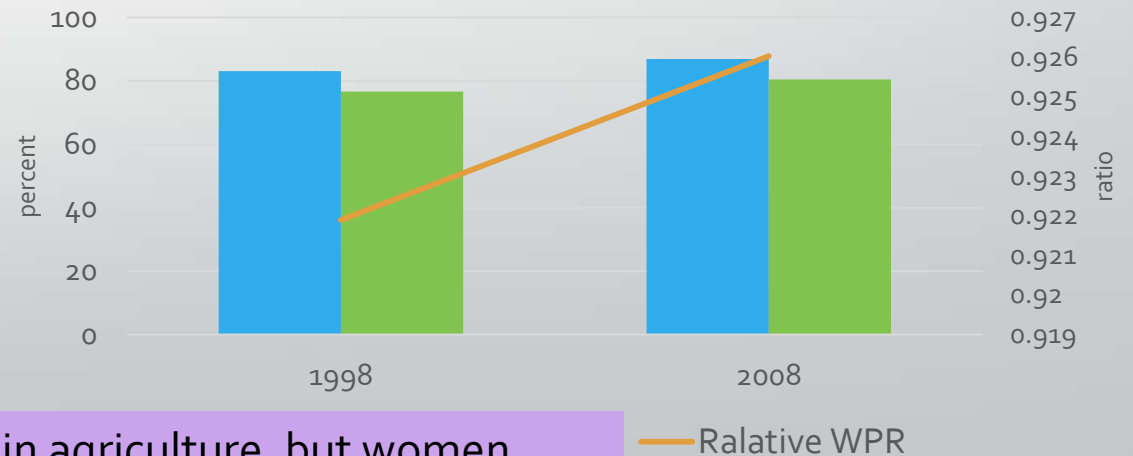


Relative Rural Work Participation Rates (15-59 age group)



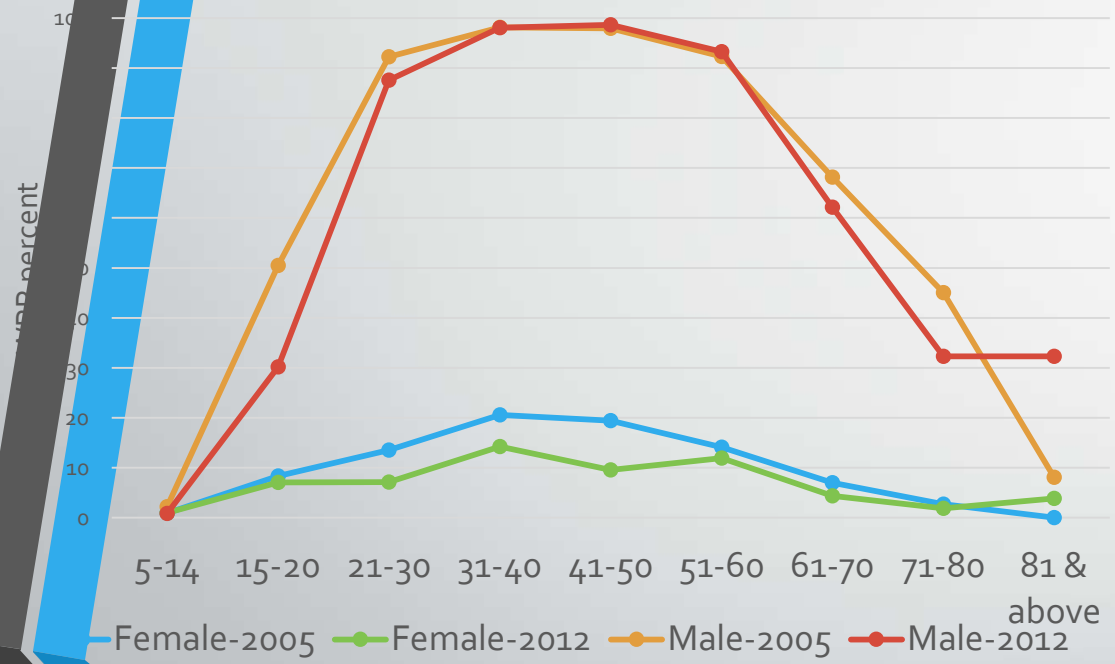
Relative WPR Male WPR Female WPR

Nepal EGP Rural Work Participation

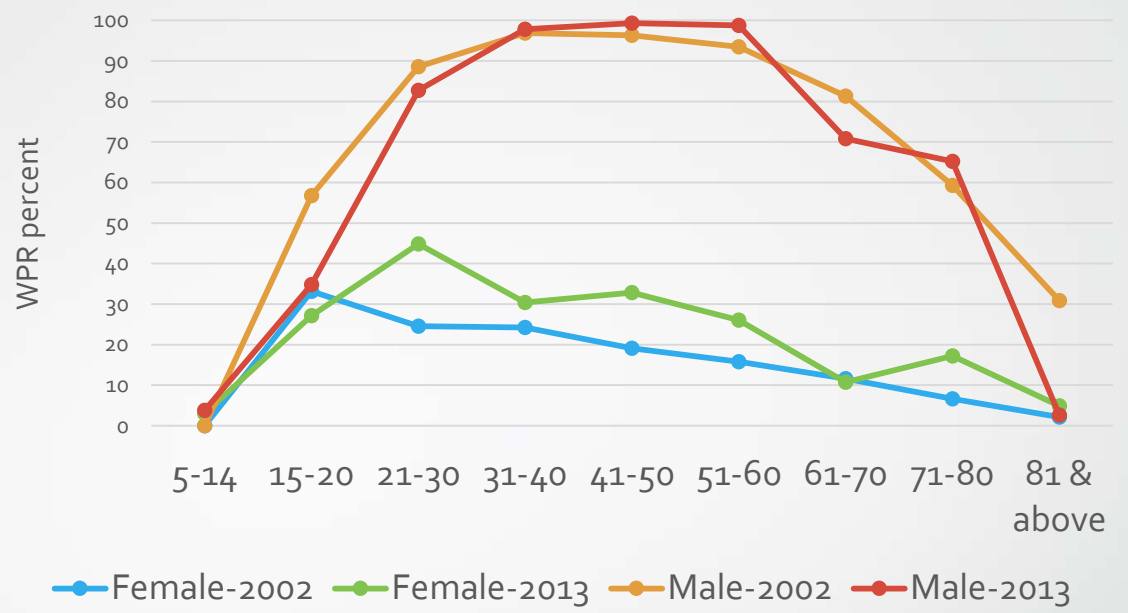


**Trends:** Defeminization in India, not only in agriculture, but women missing from work in rural India; feminization in Nepal and Bangladesh

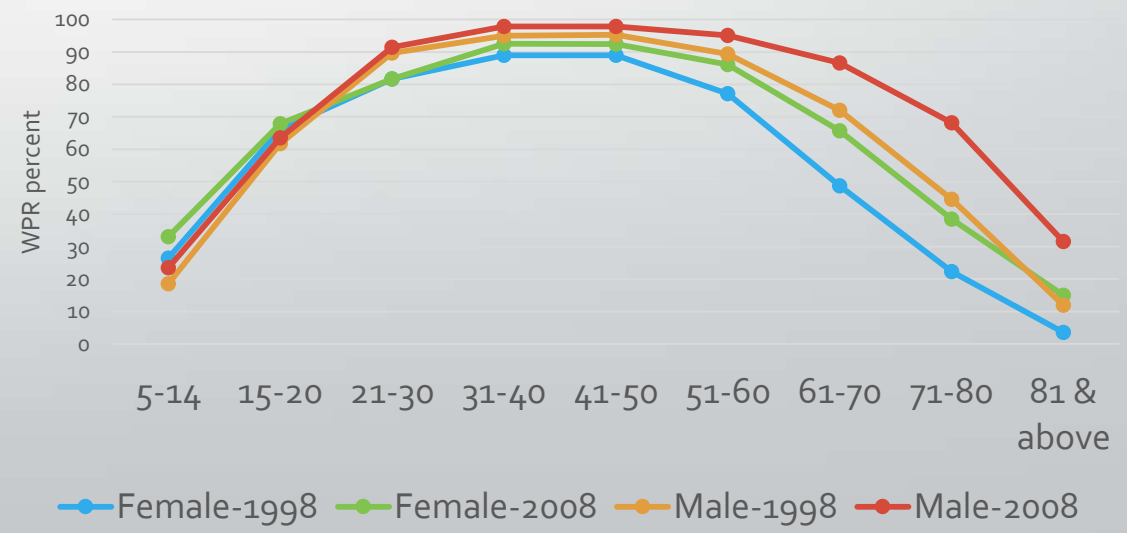
Age wise WPR (EGP India)  
(2005 and 2012)



Age wise WPR (EGP Bangladesh) (2003 and 2013)

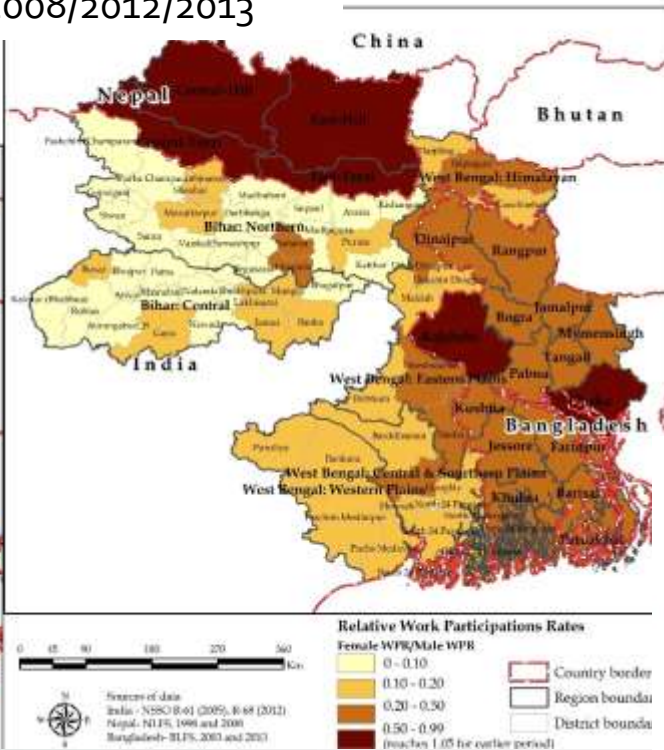


Age wise WPR (EGP Nepal) (1998 and 2008)

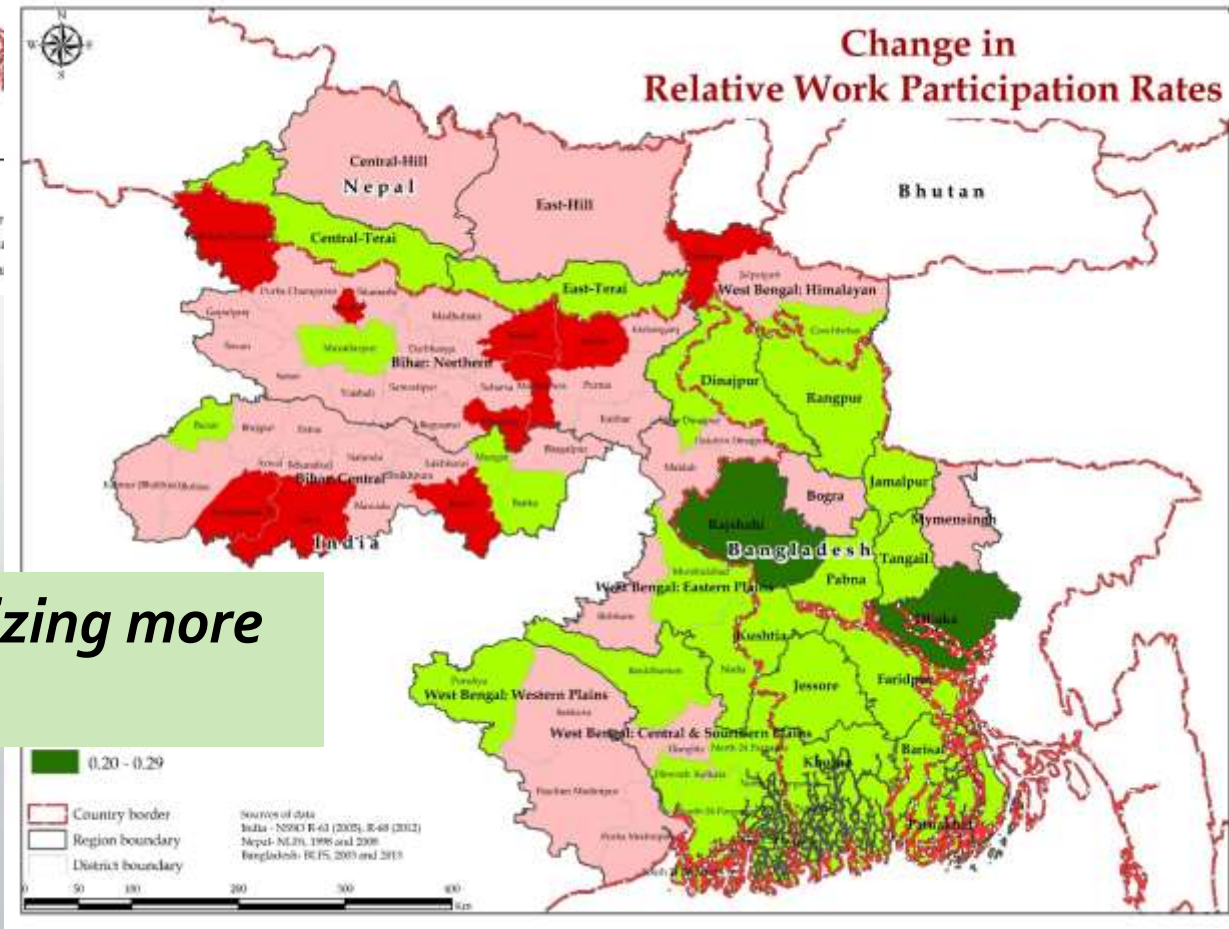


# Relative Work Participation Rates

2008/2012/2013



1998/2005/2003



***A more distressed outmigrating Bihar defeminizing more extensively than West Bengal***



# Space as a Framework for Understanding Visibility of Gendered Levels of Work Participation

- River valleys → historically better *quality of* → higher value of land.
  - Demand for labour- men stayed back, also hired male labour who migrated (Datta 2011). Property rights extremely skewed in favour of men, skewed gender relations.
- The rugged spaces → less constricting influence on the gender mobility for work
  - Poorly connected, low fertility, sparsely populated- lower value of land- higher outmigration of men.
- River valleys historically creating patriarchal heartlands and its peripheries with somewhat muted patriarchies (Krishna 2009).

# Processes underlying feminization in Nepal and Bangladesh

## NEPAL

**Male selective outmigration**

## BANGLADESH

- **Change in definitions**
- **Increased women's participation in livestock activities and post-harvesting activities**
- **Male outmigration**

# NEPAL

## Dhankuta, Bhojpur





# BANGLADESH

## Manikgunj



# Explaining defeminisation in India

## In existing literature

1. Education related (?)
2. Prosperity induced withdrawal (?)  
Poorer women withdrawing more than richer women (class gender intersects)
3. *Mechanization and displacement*

## Unexplored Processes in Literature

1. CPR degradation and privatization – burden on women (water, fodder fuel collection)
1. Unemployment in urban areas and men coming back to agriculture often seasonally, replacing women

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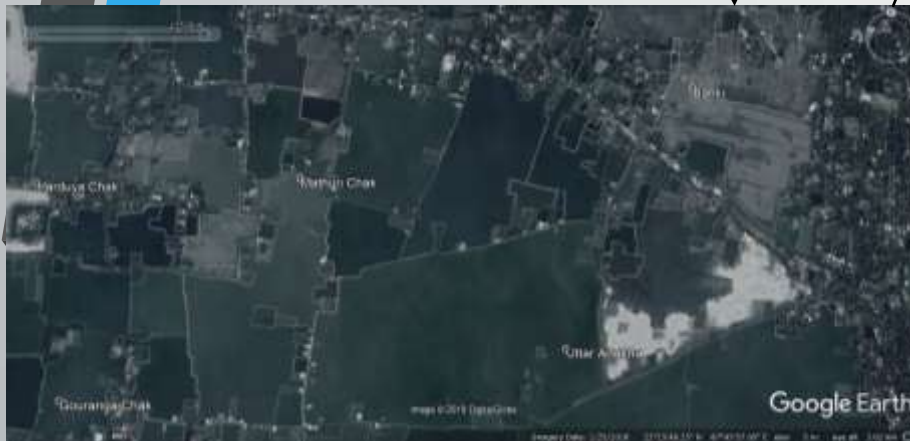


# WEST BENGAL Purba Medinipur

2015



2018



# What are the missing women from poorer households engaged in?

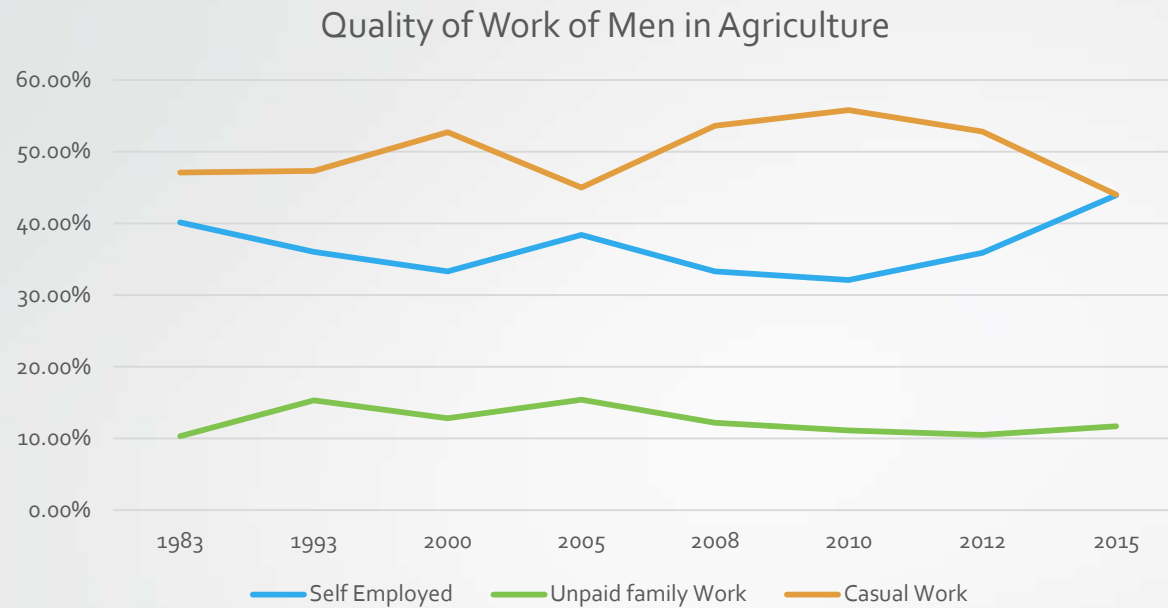
*Share of non-working women collecting fodder, fuel, water and NTFP*

Year	Poorest quartile	2nd quartile	3rd quartile	Richest quartile
2005	36.2	30.6	26.3	20.0
2010	38.7	31.7	25.4	18.7
2012	41.2	34.8	28.5	22.8
% point reduction	<b>5.0 (-10)</b>	<b>4.2 (-8)</b>	<b>2.1 (-5)</b>	<b>2.7 (-7)</b>



Caste-class-gender intersectionalities





***More men coming back to rural areas and agriculture from 2010, some in part-time capacity- can be understood in the context of growing unemployment in both urban and rural areas***

# BIHAR

## Katihar



# Time-space Geometries of Gendered Fields of EGP

- Pluralities in the space-time geometries of EGP, at times in a counter-intuitive pattern.
- Defeminization in India needs to be understood both from within and without of agriculture in the opening up of Indian economy with increased inequalities.
- Has to be understood as manifestations of gender-class and gender caste intersectionalities.
- Even within the larger scenario of defeminization, 2 points of reorientations of manifestations of gender relations through work:
  1. Casual wage work becoming a defining feature in women's work
  2. Increased (forced) mobility driven by CPR dependent work that is taking poorer women out of the domestic space.



***Acknowledgement:***

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