

Hidden Helpers

Adolescents' Intra-Household Task Dynamics and Aspirations in Rural South Asia

Presenter: Archis Banerjee

**Co-authors: Neha Kumar, Purnima Menon, Agnes Quisumbing,
Samuel Scott**

Food and Nutrition Policy
International Food Policy Research Institute

Background and Objectives

Background:

- Adolescence is a key phase shaping health, aspirations, and long-term socio-economic outcomes.
- Gendered norms influence task participation and nutrition access, often overlooked in South Asian policies.
- Linking task participation to aspirations is crucial for equitable policies integrating food systems, nutrition, and gender.

Objectives:

1. Investigate how presence of adult male members in households moderates adolescents' intra-household task participation in rural South Asia.
2. Explore the relationship between adolescents' task participation and their career aspirations.

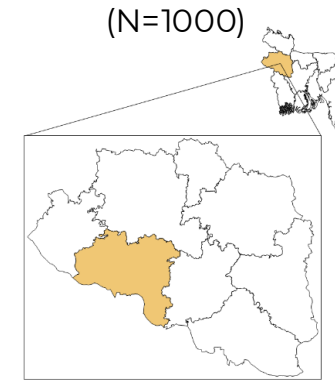
Data Overview: TAFSSA Local Agrifood Systems Assessment (2023)

- **Source:** TAFSSA CGIAR Initiative.
- **Coverage:**
 - Bangladesh: Rajshahi, Rangpur (n = 1000).
 - India: Nalanda (n = 1000).
 - Nepal: Banke, Surkhet (n = 1000).
- **Data Collection:** February to April 2023.
- **Respondents:** Adult male, adult female, and one adolescent per household.
- **Key Modules:**
 - Task Allocation: Gender- and age-based task patterns linked to the household roster.
 - Aspirations: Adolescents' career preferences, confidence, expectations, and agricultural aspirations.

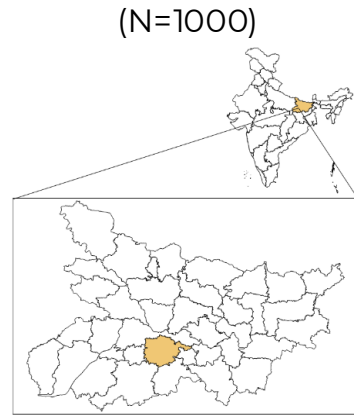
Rangpur, Bangladesh
(N=1000)



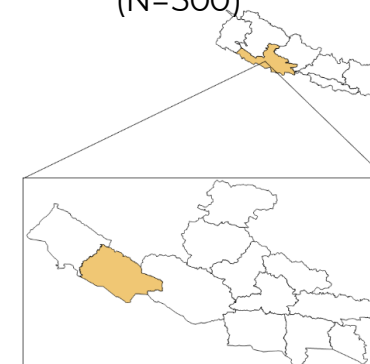
Rajshahi, Bangladesh
(N=1000)



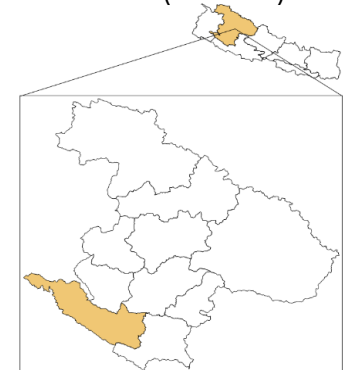
Nalanda, India
(N=1000)



Banke, Nepal
(N=500)



Surkhet, Nepal
(N=500)



Methods: Understanding Adolescents' Task Dynamics

Objective 1: Adolescents' Intra-Household Task Dynamics in Households With and Without Adult Males

- **Data:** TAFSSA Intra-Household Task Allocation Module.
- **Domains:**
 - Agriculture: 19 tasks
 - Food Preparation: 13 tasks.
 - Maintenance and Caregiving: 12 tasks.
- **Analysis:**
 - Objective 1: Gender-disaggregated descriptive statistics to compare adolescents' task participation across domains based on household composition (presence or absence of adult males).

Regression Model: Task Dynamics and Aspirations

Objective 2: Associations Between Adolescents' Task Dynamics and Aspirations

- **Regression Specification:**

$$A_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot T_{agri,i} + \beta_2 \cdot T_{food,i} + \beta_3 \cdot T_{care,i} + \beta_4 \cdot M_i + \lambda \cdot X_i + \theta \cdot C_i + \varepsilon_i$$

- **Variable Descriptions:**

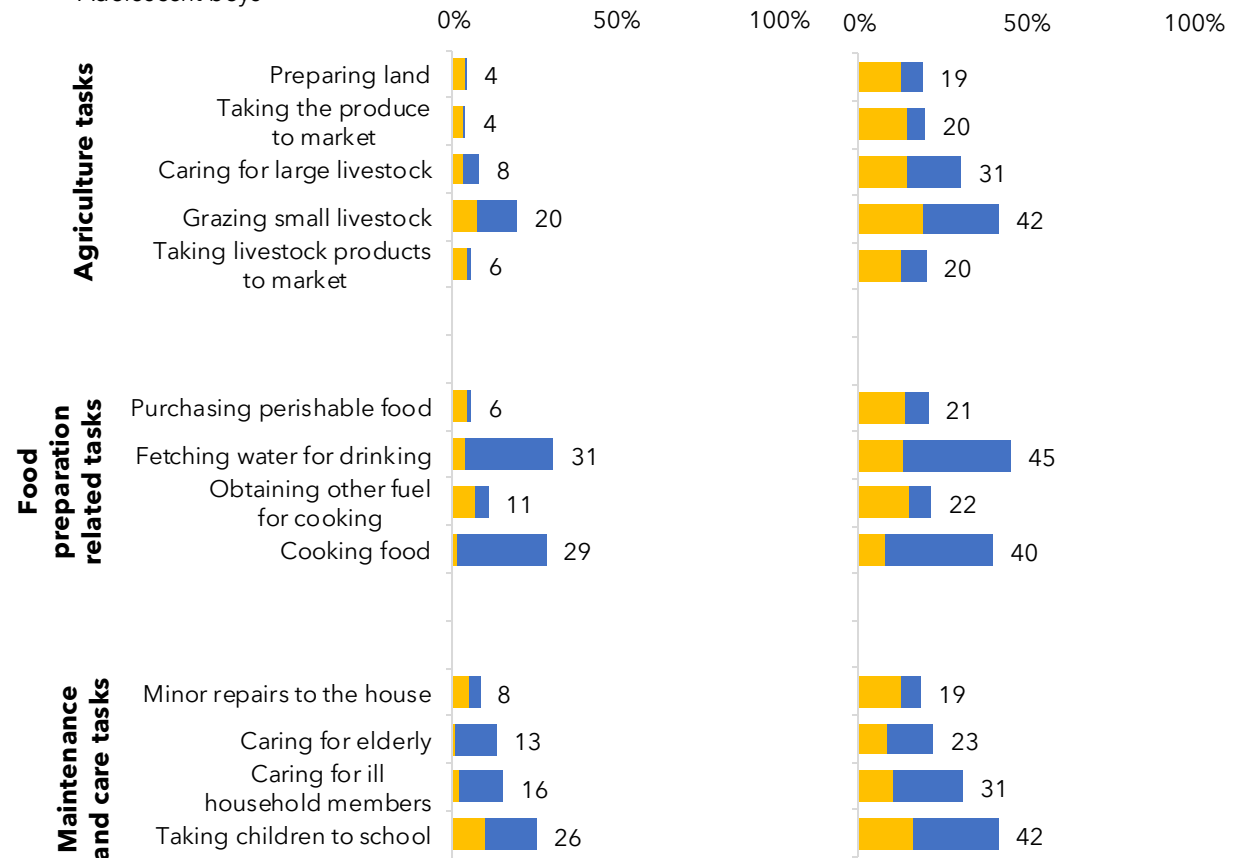
- Dependent Variable (A_i): Aspirations (ordinal: none, aspiration, confident aspiration).
- Key Independent Variables:
 - $T_{agri,i}$, $T_{food,i}$, $T_{care,i}$ and M_i : Task participation in agriculture, caregiving, and food preparation; presence of adult male members.
- Control Variables (X_i): Adolescent-, household-, and community-level controls.
- Country Fixed Effects (C_i): Bangladesh, India, Nepal.

Objective 1: Adolescents' Intra-Household Task Dynamics by Household Male Presence

- Expanded Roles in Households Without Adult Males:** Boys take on additional on-farm and market tasks, while girls increase their involvement in livestock rearing.
- Persistent Gender Norms:** Girls continue to dominate food preparation and care tasks, such as fetching water and child feeding, regardless of male presence.
- Amplified Adolescent Burden:** Male absence increases household responsibilities for adolescents, with boys experiencing a sharper rise in workload.

Households with adult male (N1=3,278)

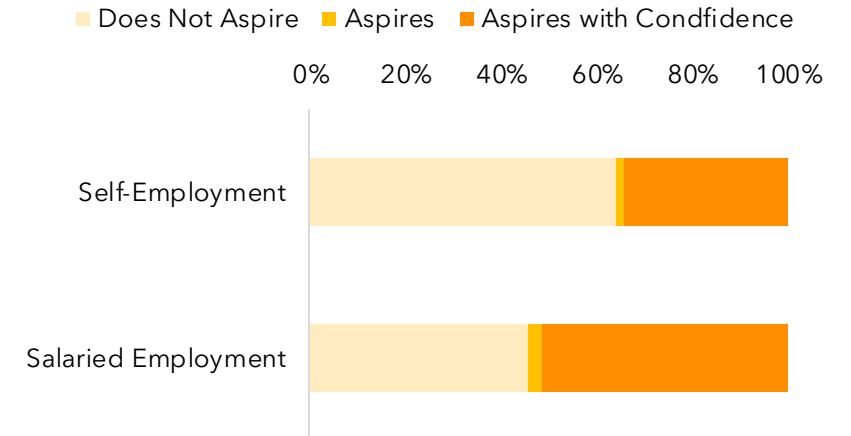
■ Adolescent girls
■ Adolescent boys



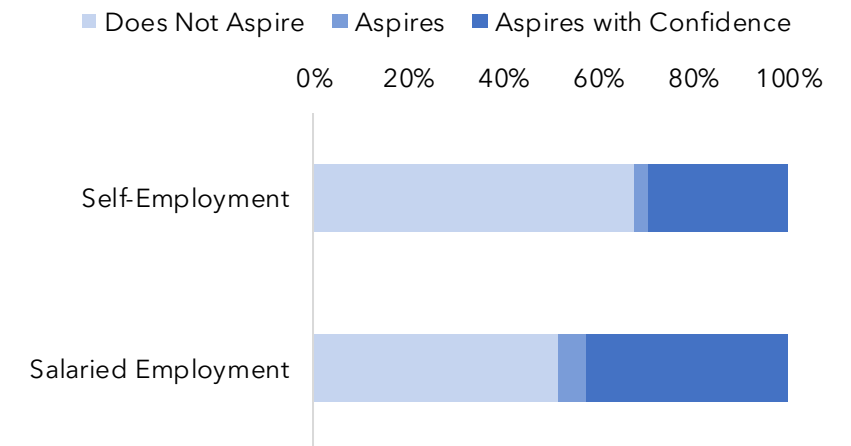
Objective 2: Adolescents' Aspirations as the Outcome

- **Definition:** Aspirations are ordinal variables across self-employment and salaried employment.
- **Construction:** Combines career goals with confidence levels, e.g.:
 - Self-Employment: Independent professionals, business owners.
 - Salaried Employment: Public/private sector, foreign jobs.
- **Levels:**
 - 0: No aspiration in the domain.
 - 1: Aspires to achieve the goal (e.g., self-employment, salaried employment, or farming).
 - 2: Aspires with confidence in achieving the goal.

Adolescent Boys' Aspirations



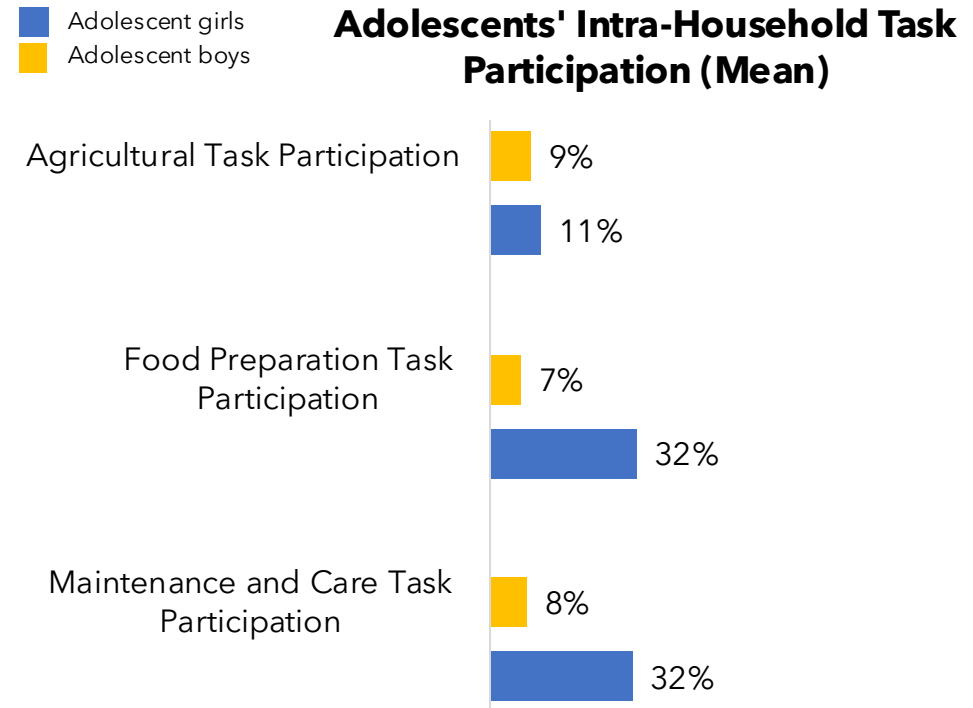
Adolescent Girls' Aspirations



Objective 2: Predictors of Adolescents' Aspirations - Task Dynamics

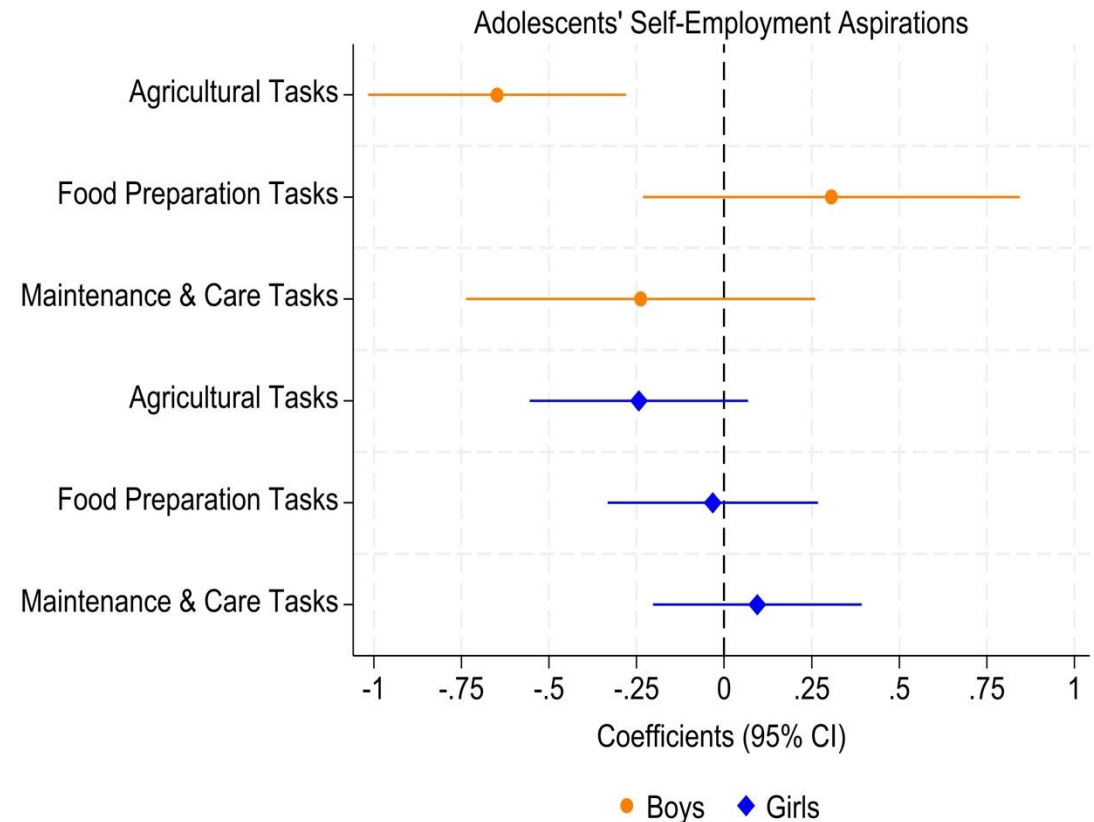
- **Agricultural Task Participation:** Proportion of 19 tasks adolescents engage in.
- **Food Preparation Task Participation:** Proportion of 13 tasks adolescents engage in.
- **Maintenance and Care Task Participation:** Proportion of 12 tasks adolescents engage in.

(Participation = tasks involving an adolescent ÷ total tasks in each category performed by their household.)



Objective 2: Key Associations Between Task Dynamics and Aspirations for Self-Employment

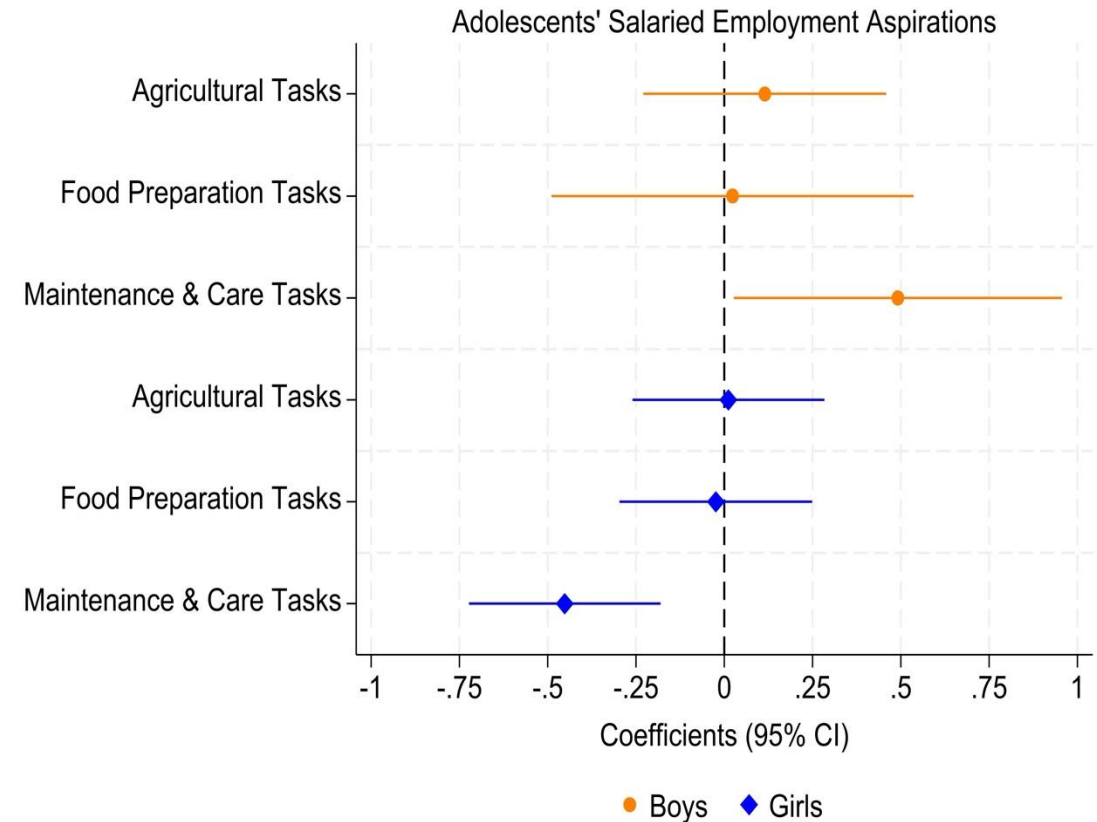
- **Agricultural Tasks:**
 - Boys: Lower aspirations (SS); Girls: NS.
- **Food Preparation Tasks:**
 - NS for either gender.
- **Maintenance and Care Tasks:**
 - NS for either gender.
- **Adult Male Presence:**
 - Boys: Lower aspirations (SS); Girls: NS.



Note: SS stands for statistically significant; NS stands for not significant.

Objective 2: Key Associations Between Task Dynamics and Aspirations for Salaried Employment

- **Agricultural Tasks:**
 - NS for either gender.
- **Food Preparation Tasks:**
 - NS for either gender.
- **Maintenance and Care Tasks:**
 - Boys: Higher aspirations (SS); Girls: Lower aspirations (SS).
- **Adult Male Presence:**
 - Boys: Higher aspirations (SS); Girls: NS



Note: SS stands for statistically significant; NS stands for not significant.

Key Takeaways and Limitations

Objective	Key Findings
Objective 1: Impact of Household Structures on Gendered Tasks	Absence of adult males increases boys' on-farm/market tasks and girls' caregiving, food preparation, and livestock duties.
Objective 2: Task Dynamics and Aspirations	<p>Self-Employment Aspirations: Boys: Lower aspirations linked to agricultural tasks and adult male presence (SS); Girls: NS.</p> <p>Salaried Employment Aspirations: Boys: Higher aspirations linked to maintenance and care tasks and adult male presence (SS); Girls: Lower aspirations linked to maintenance and care tasks (SS).</p>

- **Limitations:** Findings are correlational, self-reported, and context-specific.
- **Connecting Systems:** Policies should integrate adolescent well-being with gender equity across education, labor, and nutrition systems.

Note: SS stands for statistically significant; NS stands for not significant.

Thank you!