

a Fact Sheet on...

Unpaid Housework

- Surveys about time use show that Canadian women spend about twice as much time on total unpaid household work, including child and eldercare, as men. They spend three times as long cooking and washing dishes, and nearly seven times as much time cleaning house and doing laundry.

- Unequal division of household labour means that employed mothers are able to provide less parental care and put in more total work hours at the expense of their sleep and free time. “Gender Equality in the Genuine Progress Index”, Ron Coleman, GPI Atlantic, Halifax, September 1999.

- Statistics Canada reports that “one out of three full-time employed married mothers suffered from extreme levels of time stress” and fully 70% “felt rushed on a daily basis”.

- At low replacement costs, unpaid work in the home would be worth \$8.5 billion each year to the Nova Scotia economy, or 51% of GDP at factor cost.

- In hours of work and economic value, the 3 largest sectors of the NS economy are:

1. Household food services
2. House cleaning
3. Laundry and shopping

- Work performed in households is more essential to basic survival and quality of life than much of the work done in offices, factories and stores. It is also a fundamental precondition for a healthy market sector.

- Unpaid housework is invisible because it appears nowhere in economic accounts and therefore is not properly considered in social policy.

- Women have doubled their rate of participation in the paid labour force, but their share of unpaid work in the home has hardly changed. “The Economic Value of Unpaid Work in the Housework and Childcare in Nova Scotia”, GPI Atlantic, Halifax, 1998.

