

# Dynamics of living with your in-laws

Exploring the influence of mothers-in-law on task allocation within household food environments in South Asia

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# Rationale

- Mothers-in-law (MIL) can affect domestic responsibilities of daughters-in-law (DIL) in traditional societies
- Higher burden of household production tasks on women
- MIL can impact DIL task burden through conflicting pathways
  - Relieving some of the task burden
  - Reinforcing traditional task norms

Anukriti S, Herrera-Almanza C, Karra M, and Valdebenito R (2022). Convincing the Mummy-ji: Improving Mother-in-Law Approval of Family Planning in India. *AEA Papers and Proceedings* (112), 568-572.

Bloom S.S., Wypij D., Das Gupta M (2001). Dimensions of women's autonomy and the influence on maternal health care utilization in a north Indian city. *Demography* 38 (1), 67-78.

# Objectives

- **To examine disparities in the distribution of household task burdens for married women living with and without their MIL in rural South Asia**
- Compared burdens for the following task categories:
  - Agricultural tasks
  - Household food environment related tasks
  - Domestic-household tasks

# Data

- Data source: Primary data collected from the TAFSSA Local Agrifood Systems Assessment
  - 5 districts across 3 countries (Bangladesh, India, Nepal) covered in 2023
- Focus: adult female questionnaire
  - Task allocation among household members
  - Data on primary person who does the task or persons equally sharing the tasks

## Agricultural tasks

- 1 Preparing land
- 2 Sowing/seeding
- 3 Weeding
- 4 Irrigation
- 5 Harvesting food
- 6 Post-harvest processing
- 7 Post-harvest storage
- 8 Taking the produce to the market to sell
- 9 Care for large livestock
- 10 Grazing for small livestock
- 11 Washing/cleaning livestock
- 12 Cleaning livestock shed/space
- 13 Handling livestock dung
- 14 Gather food for livestock
- 15 Cook food for livestock
- 16 Care for poultry
- 17 Taking livestock products to market to sell
- 18 Care for small fishponds
- 19 Care for large fishponds

## HH Food-related tasks

1. Purchasing perishable food
2. Purchasing non-perishable food (grains, lentils, oil, spices etc.)
3. Storing food at home
4. Fetching water for drinking or food preparation
5. Cleaning food before cooking
6. Obtaining fuel wood for cooking
7. Obtaining other fuel (e.g., LPG) for cooking
8. Making tea
9. Cooking food
10. Preparing food for little children (<2-year-olds)
11. Serving food
12. Dealing with leftovers
13. Dish washing

## Domestic HH tasks

1. Cleaning floors
2. Washing clothes
3. Minor repairs to the house
4. Major repairs to the house
5. Care for elderly
6. Care for ill household members
7. Feeding young children
8. Bathing children
9. Playing with children
10. Taking children to school
11. Watching children at home
12. Helping children with schoolwork

## Outcome: Average number of tasks performed by married women

- Main outcome: The total number of primary and shared tasks performed by married women aged >19 years living in the household
  - Bangladesh (n=1,925)
  - Bihar, India (n=960)
  - Nepal (n=961)
  - Pooled (n=3,846)

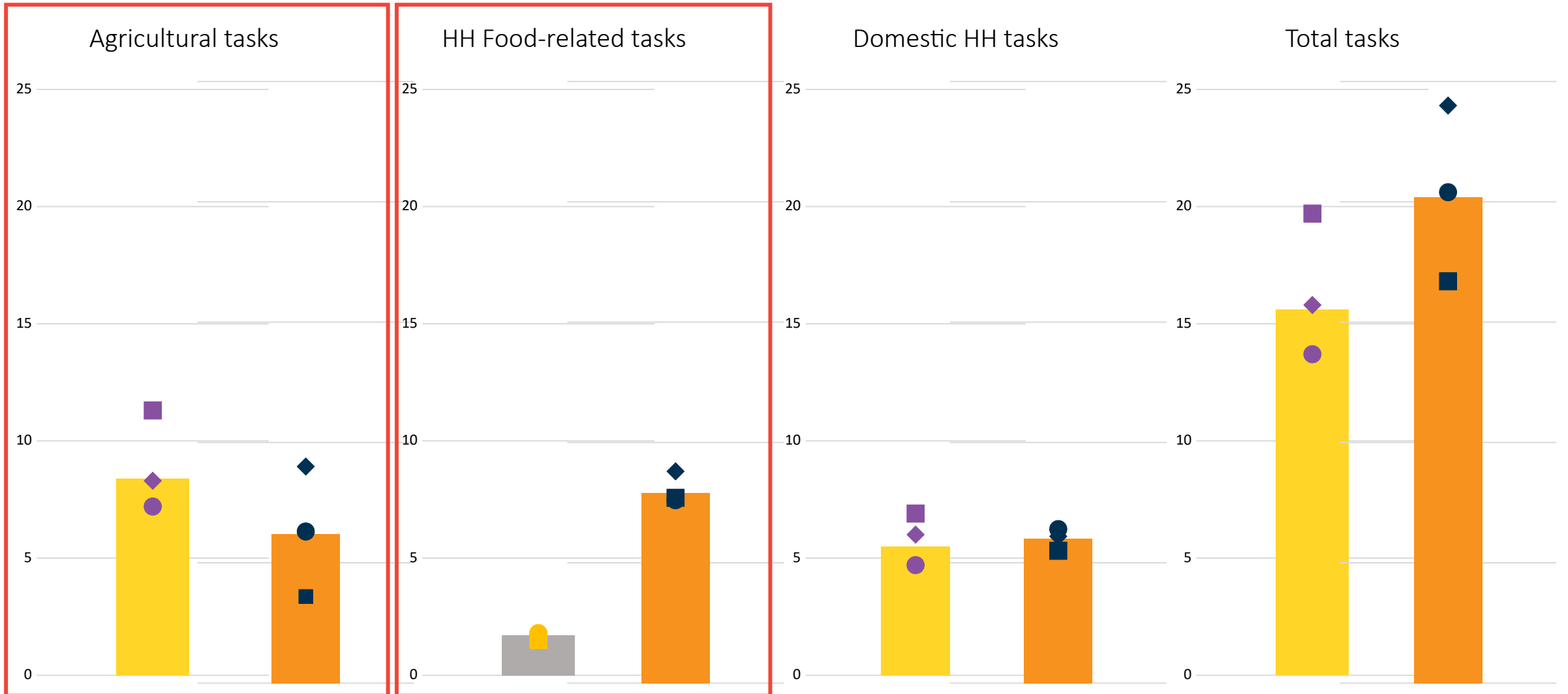
Outcome 1	Agricultural tasks
Outcome 2	Household food-related tasks
Outcome 3	Domestic household tasks
Outcome 4	Total tasks

# Exposure: DILs living with MILs

- A binary variable with value 1 if DIL lives with MIL and 0 otherwise
- 23% of married women lived with their MIL

# Outcome distribution: Average number of tasks performed (primary and shared)

- Living without MIL
- Living with MIL
- Bangladesh
- Bihar, India
- Nepal





# Analysis

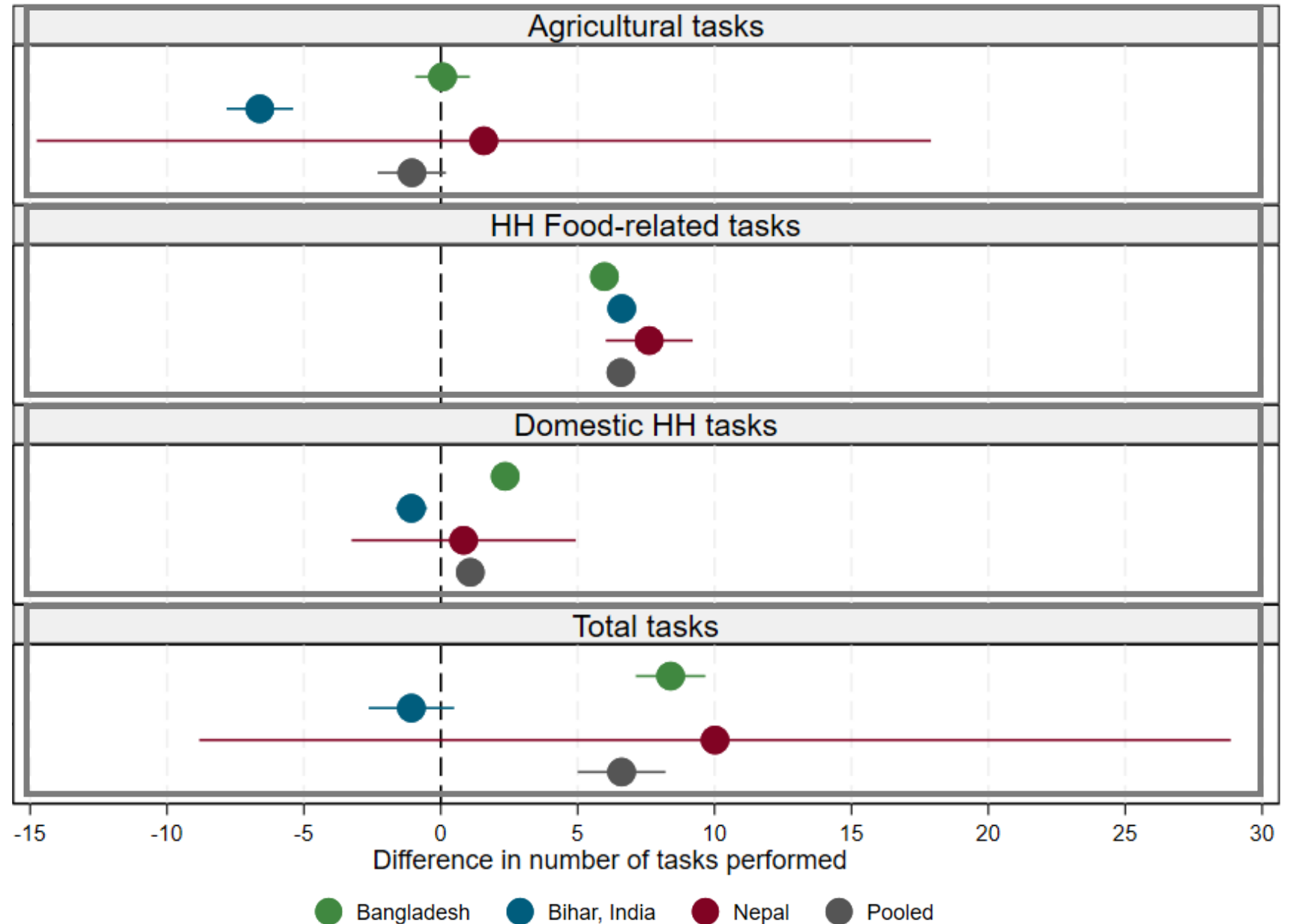
Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) linear regression model

Controlled for

- Education (yr)
- Age (yr)
- Household size
- Religion (Hindu, Muslim, etc.)
- Female-headed households (binary)
- Presence of adult males in the household (binary)
- District fixed effects

# Results:

Linear regression estimates of difference in tasks performed



# Implications

- Married women living with MIL had
  - Higher domestic HH task burden in Bangladesh
  - Lower agricultural and domestic HH task burden in India
  - Higher total task burden across countries
- Living with the MIL had strongest impact on household food related task burdens for married women in all countries

Thank you!