



Men in Caregiving

Insights from India

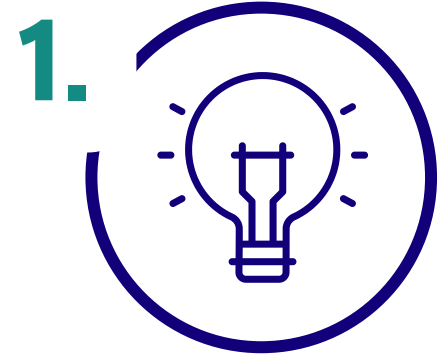


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Presentation Outline



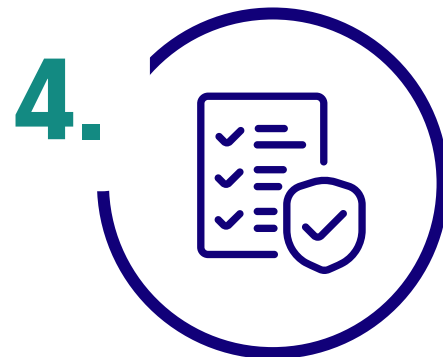
Introduction



**State of Fatherhood
in India Study**
Aims and Methods



Study Insights



Recommendations



Introduction



Why should we care about care?

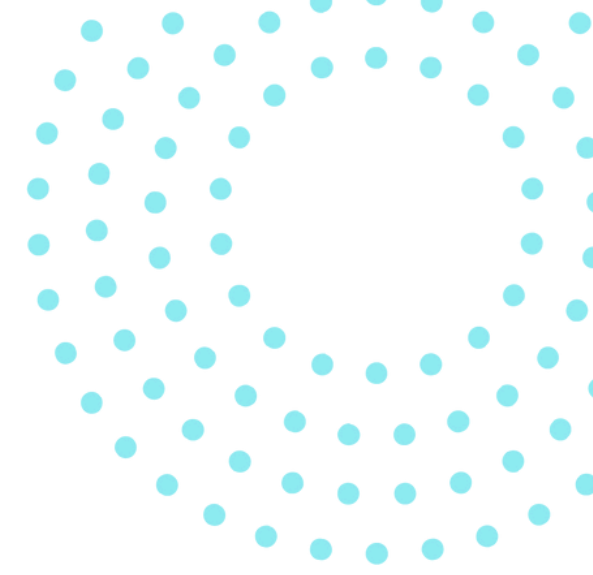
But care, both paid and unpaid, is and must be a universal responsibility.

According to the International Labour Organization, more than 16 billion hours of unpaid care work are performed daily – an amount that would account for 9 percent of global GDP, or around \$11 trillion per year, if paid at the minimum wage.

- More women (>90% of women) spend more time (On average, 297 minutes per day) on unpaid care work as against men (27% and on average 31 minutes per day) (ILO, 2018; NSSO, 2019).
- Feminists have been pushing for this change for many years, asking for care to be recognized, redistributed, and reduced in order to, among many other things, allow women to participate in professional and political life on equal terms with men.



Unpaid care load for women and men's contribution to care work are inextricably linked



“If men are to reclaim the essential goodness of male being, if they are to regain the space of open-heartedness and emotional expressiveness that is the foundation of wellbeing, we must envision alternatives to patriarchal masculinity. We must all change.”

- bell hooks



Putting care before profit, for all men and boys to center care as much as women and girls do.

- Too many men do not live or work in settings that encourage or demand them to do an equal share of the care work. As a result, too few workplaces support men's care, too few policies and politicians even consider men's caregiving, and too few boys grow up seeing it exhibited by their own fathers. Other men have to migrate for work for their families and must do their "care" as providers (van der Gaag, Gupta, Heilman, Barker & van den Berg, 2023).
- An intersectional feminist vision of a care economy needs men and boys – to value care work, both paid and unpaid; to do an equal share of unpaid care work in the home; and to advocate alongside women for care policies and attention to care equality in workplaces (Moore, 2023).

Men in Caregiving Study



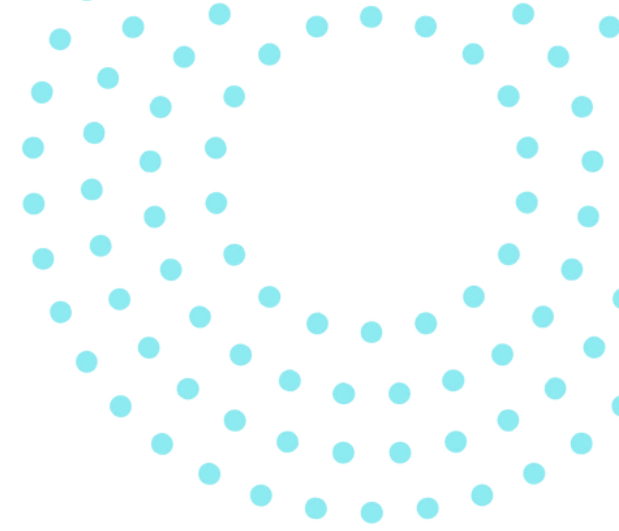
Aims and objective

This study aims to:

- Explore the meaning of caregiving for men and women in India
- Identify underlying factors that influence caregiving by men in India
- Create dialogue around the topic and engage key stakeholders to co-create solutions that can advance an advocacy strategy around men's involvement in caregiving



Methods



Mixed-methods data

Building on the State of World Father's 2023 Study, this study adding a qualitative component to further deepen the meaning of caregiving in the context

- Quantitative survey* (collected in Dec '22 to Jan '23)
 - Sample - 830 – 72% men and 28% women
 - Geography – Five states (MP, Rajasthan, Bihar, Jharkhand and Tamil Nadu)
 - Existing panel of men and women used to select sample
 - Telephone surveys conducted by Outline India (OI); structured survey developed by Equimundo and MenCare Partners Council
 - All enumerators trained by OI after extensive discussions with Equimundo about the survey to ensure quality checks
 - All surveys were translated and checked by Outline India

Profile of men participated in the survey

597 men participated in the survey

- Age - 36% - Under 30yrs; 27% - 30-39yrs; 37% – 40+yrs
- Education – 29% Graduate or above; 51% with schooling 6-12 classes
- Economic status – 69.7% are always or often able to afford important HH items (such as clothing, school fees or health care)

67% (n=403) living with partner

62% (n=372) father with youngest child age

- 0-4yrs – 26%
- 5-10yrs - 24%
- 11-19yrs – 35%
- 20yrs or more – 15%

65% (n=386) living with elderly people

Methods

- Qualitative methods (collected in May' 24)
 - Geographies - MP, Rajasthan, Bihar, and Jharkhand
 - 13 FGDs (6 with men and 7 with women) and 12 IDIs (4 with women and 8 with men)
 - Interviews and discussions were conducted in-person
 - Interviews and discussions were conducted in Hindi using guides
- Study used 'देखभाल' to denote care, and 'उचित' या 'बराबरी' for equitable.
- Examples of questions asked:
 - 'देखभाल' शब्द सुन कर आपके मन में क्या आता है?
 - आपके मन में किस प्रकार के काम आते हैं?
(कौन सा काम, कौन कर रहा है, व्यक्ति कैसा महसूस कर रहा है, वह व्यक्ति ऐसा क्यों महसूस कर रहा है)
 - जब मैं 'उचित' या 'बराबरी' कहता हूँ तो आपके मन में क्या आता है?
 - घरेलू जिम्मेदारियों के संदर्भ में आप 'उचित' या 'बराबरी' के बारे में क्या महसूस करते हैं?

Limitations of methods used

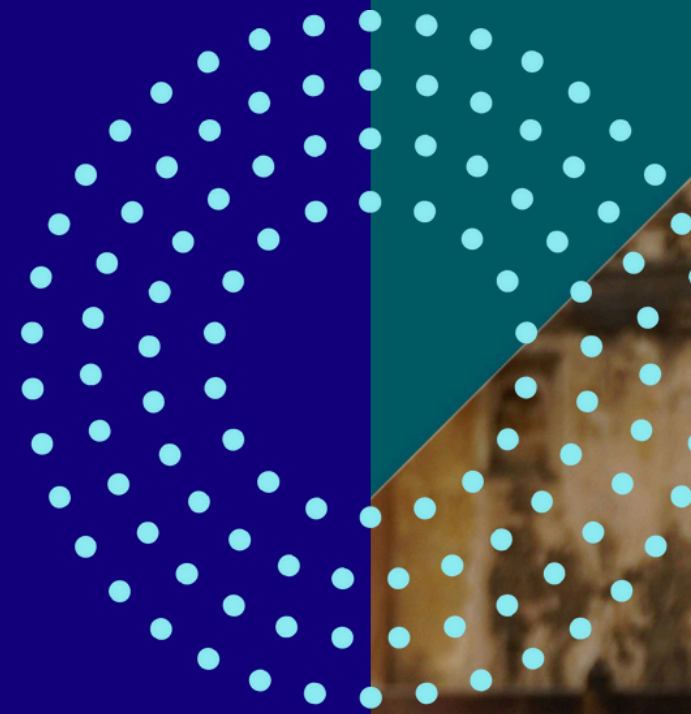
Quantitative methodology

- Not time use surveys
- Not aiming to be nationally representative given India's diversity
- Small samples in proportion to population of each state
- Rural and urban sites mixed and not equally distributed
- Telephonic surveys yield sampling bias in terms of access, time, resources that participants have

Qualitative methodology

- Rural and urban sites not equally distributed and mixed in
- The challenges of translating words like 'care', 'fair', 'equal' in multiple Indian languages
- Audio files were transcribed and translated that can sometimes lead to data lost in translation

Study Insights



Perceptions around care(giving)



What does 'care' mean to participants?*

Care for children, elderly and spouse includes

Assigned roles to women

- Cooking
- Feeding children
- Bathing children
- Cleaning
- Getting children ready for school
- Serving elderly

Assigned roles to men

- Providing physical support to elderly to manage their daily routine
- Dropping and bringing children from school
- Ensuring that school fee is paid on time
- Bring necessary items from market
- Providing medical treatment

*Qualitative interviews & discussions

What does 'equitable care' mean to participants?

- ➔ **Work assigned according to capabilities is perceived as fair or equitable distribution.**
- ➔ **While most considered gendered division of work important but sacrosanct, some questioned it using examples of changes in roles couples make when needed**
- ➔ **Limited recognition of the inequity in division of care work. Most men viewed their paid work as more challenging and time-consuming. The women have also internalized these notions undermine efforts put-in to care work.**

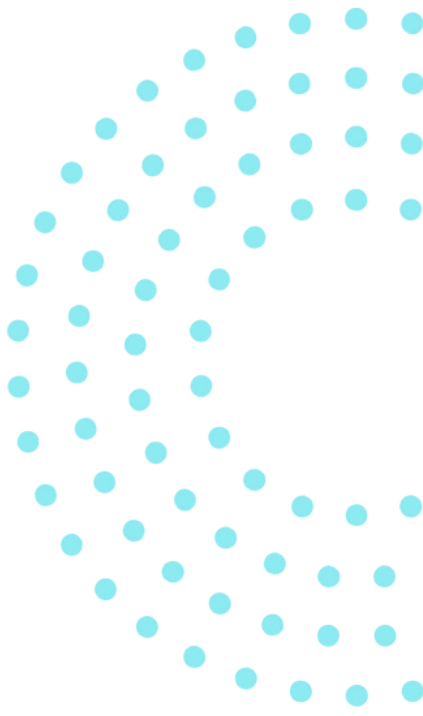
The kind of work one can do, that kind of work is given to them. The one who is doing farming work will only do that. Now suppose there is a lack of salt or oil in the house. Then sometimes even children are given that work... Now because someone has to do more and someone has to do less, it is not fair. But then there is no objection to this either. If a brother's work increases, we lend him a hand.

-FGDs, Men, 40-50yrs, Rural, Bihar

If wife has more work, it is also the responsibility of the husband to cooperate. There is no such work that only wife can do, it is also the responsibility of husband.

- Rajasthan_Rural_FGD (20-30) Female

Attributes of good fathers and mothers



- ‘Good father’ – associated with his capacity to earn and financially support his family
- ‘Bad father’ – alcoholism, violence and being unable to attend children’s financial needs
- Fathers seen as role models for children, and displaying violent or other bad habits considered to have a direct influence on the children.

“A good father's job is to fulfil whatever is lacking in the house, pay the child's fees, and timely supply pulses, rice, and rations. Take good care of your children and pay attention to their studies. A good father's job is to provide a good education to the child.”

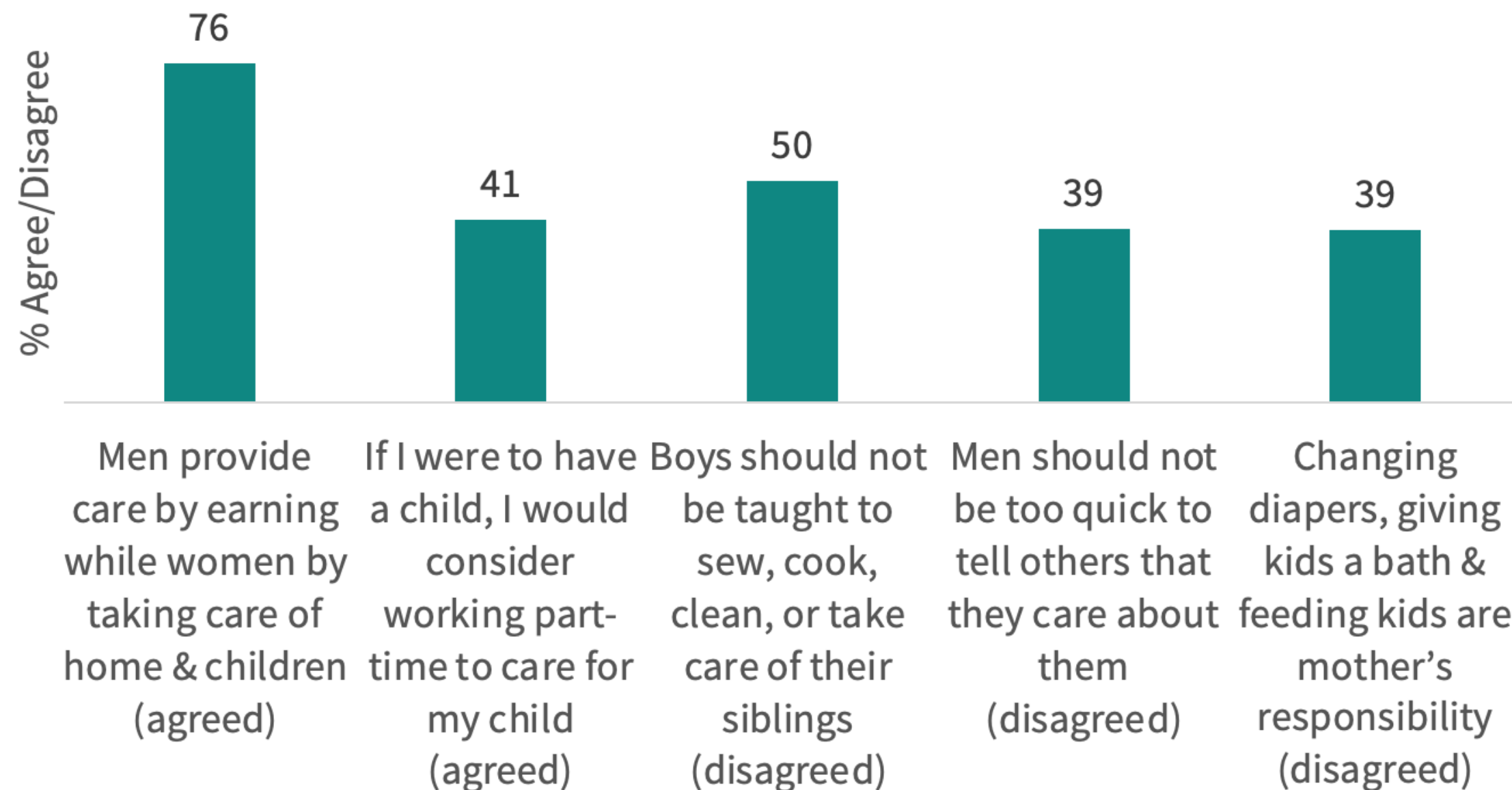
-FGD, Rural Men, 40-50yrs, Bihar

“A good mother is one who teaches children good things and gives good knowledge, good values, a good father is one who understands their needs, fulfills them on time, motivates the children to move forward, takes care of whatever inconvenience they have. The father should also pay attention to the children's studies.”

-FGD, Rural, Women 20-30yrs, MP

Perception of men towards caregiving

Three-fourths of men agreed that men provide care by earning while women by taking care of home & children; yet 40-50% supported learning skills and being involved in care work

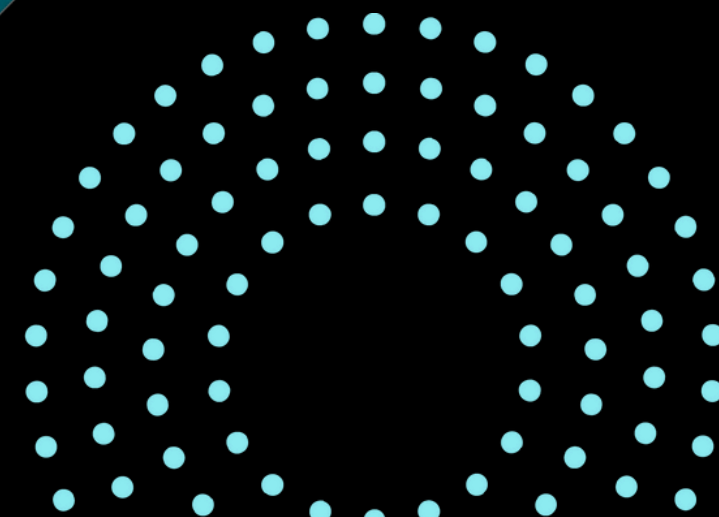


Other studies:

Fathers expressed inadequacy and lack confidence in handling childcare duties, particularly in responding to their child's distress (Nair et al., 2020).

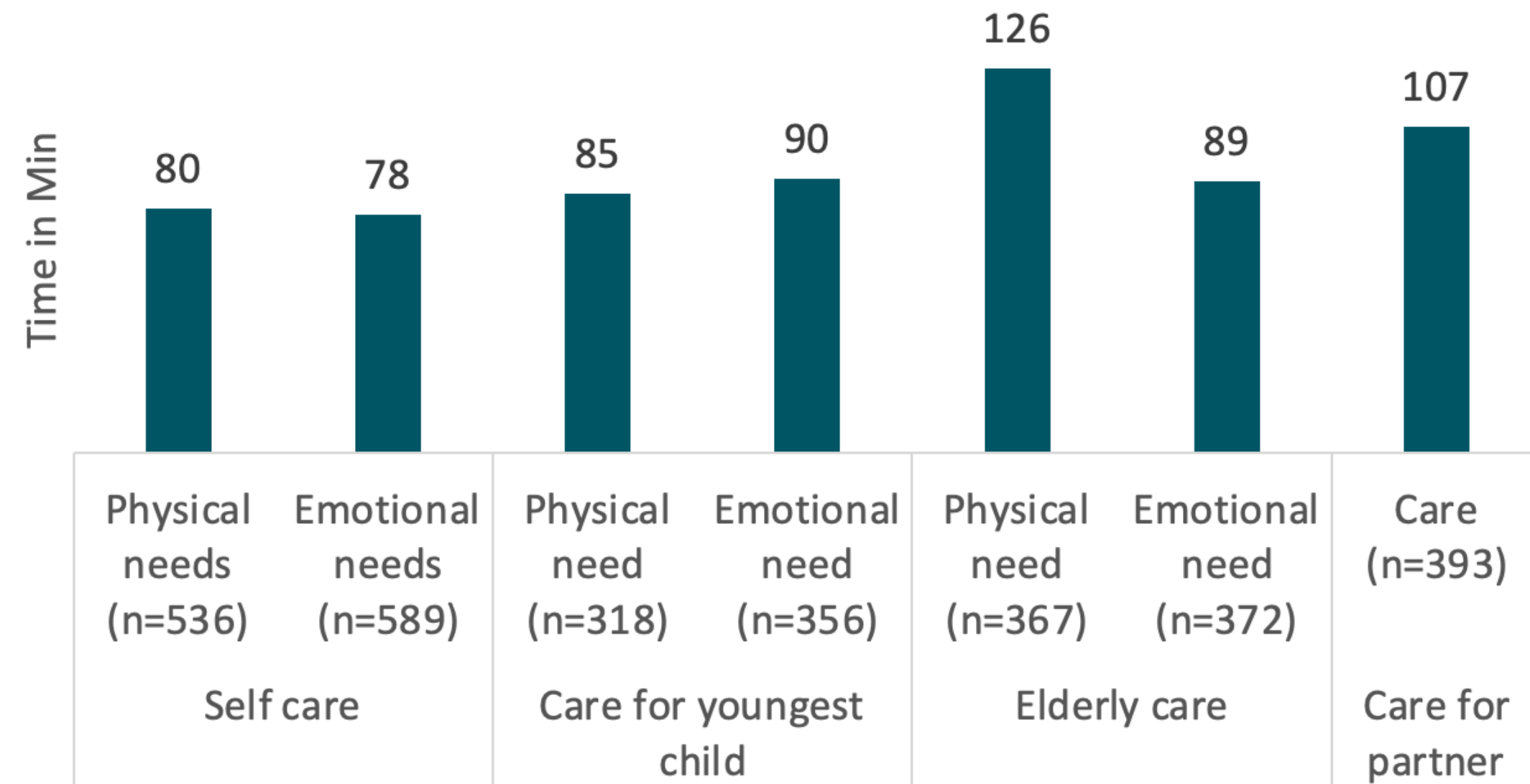
Societal beliefs that women are inherently more sensitive to children and better at caring for them contributed to these perceptions (ibid).

Involvement in care work



Time spent in caring for self and others

Men spent 1-2hrs in taking care of physical and emotional needs of their children, partners and self. Time spent on childcare is not significantly different by child's age. Higher proportion of men reported spending more time on taking care of physical needs of elderly.



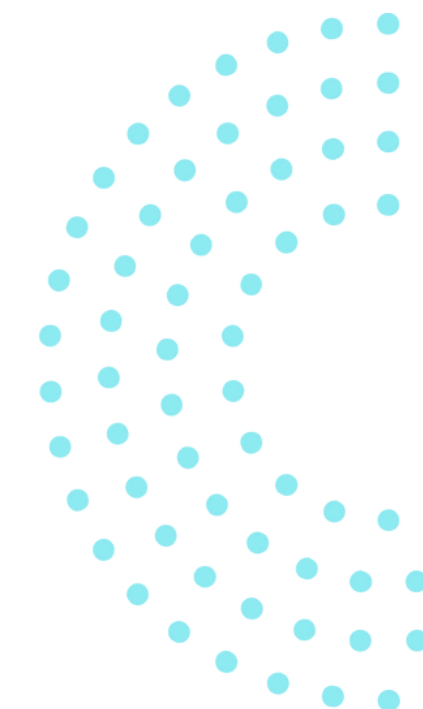
Men with better economic status (Always able to afford basic* and important** household items) are able to spend more time on caring for physical and emotional needs of their children than those who are unable to afford always.

*Basic HH items – food and shelter;
 ** Important items – clothing or school fees or health care

Time Spent in managing household responsibilities

On an average men spend one to two hours daily in

- planning logistics of family life,
- cleaning house (such as doing dishes, cleaning the floors, washing the clothes, etc)
- taking care of household's food need (such as purchasing groceries, preparing food, etc)



Men's involvement in care work

"We are responsible for child and elderly care. Men mostly do work outside. However, in case of physical care of elderly parents, men get involved. they lift them, make them sit, take them for a walk, bathing them. Rest women do. As sons get older, they take outside responsibilities."

– MP_Rural_FGD (20-30) Female

"Dropping the children to school and bringing them from there, looking after their fees, looking at their copies and books, looking after all the household responsibilities, bringing things, we have to do everything. We have to look after the shop as well... men and women have equal responsibilities."

– FGD, Rural Men, 40-50yrs, MP

Younger men appeared to be more involved in care work, such as cutting vegetables, playing and feeding the children, and putting them to sleep (Bihar & Jharkhand).

Other study:

Fathers often engage in playtime with their children rather than undertaking tasks that challenge traditional gender norms, such as cooking or bathing the child (Nair et al., 2020).

Supportive contexts for caregiving

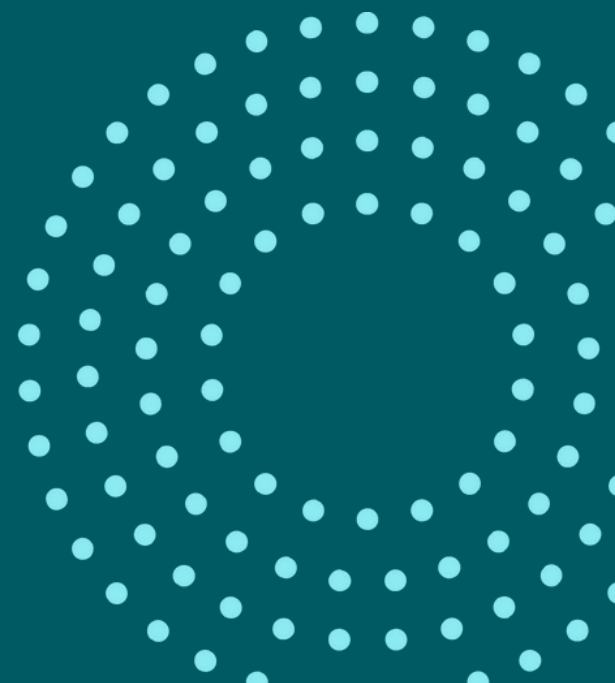
- 93% men reported they have enough time for care work (such as taking care of partner, house, children, elderly parents) due to*
 - Support from the family (92%)
 - Living in joint family (51% men)
 - Partner take care of responsibilities (33%)
- During the interviews and discussions, most of the men acknowledged increased responsibilities on women after childbirth.
- Most considered women have ability to fulfill those

*n=597

“As soon as the child is born, it becomes necessary for parents to pay attention to everything. As he grows up, one has to think about his education. Before marriage, whatever money man has, he spends on himself. But after having children, he thinks of children before spending on himself.”

– FGD with men, Urban, Bihar

Opportunities for change



Narrative: Satisfaction with life and work

“Doing care gives self-satisfaction, instead of asking someone else, if we do it ourselves, we will be able to do it properly, like children will also see and learn that they should do their own work. We should do keeping in mind challenges of others. If we see parents facing difficulty, then we should give them breakfast, bathe and wash them on time, take them for a walk. If there are children, then remind them to study, prepare them for school on time.”

– IDI with a rural man, Jharkhand

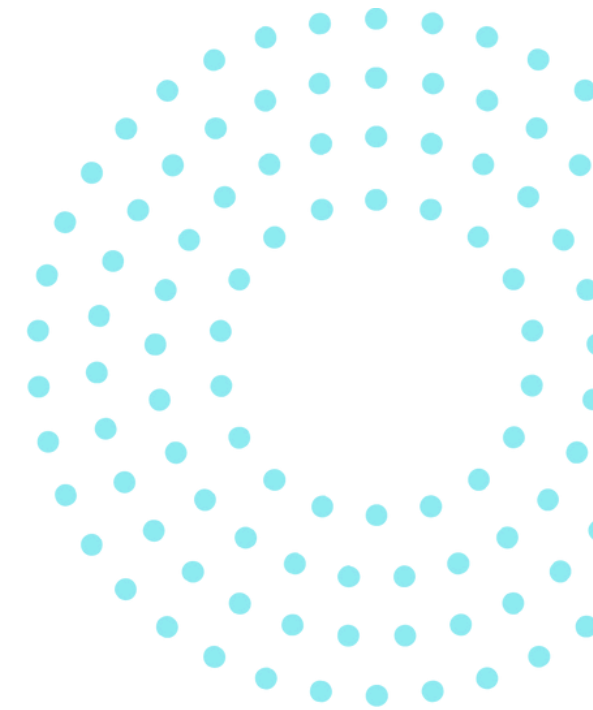
Survey findings corroborate this.

- Spending 1-2hrs or more in caring for partners → 2 times more likely to feel satisfied in their partner relationship
- Spending 2-4hrs or more in caring for emotional need of child → 2 times more likely to feel satisfied in the way they are involved in caring for their child

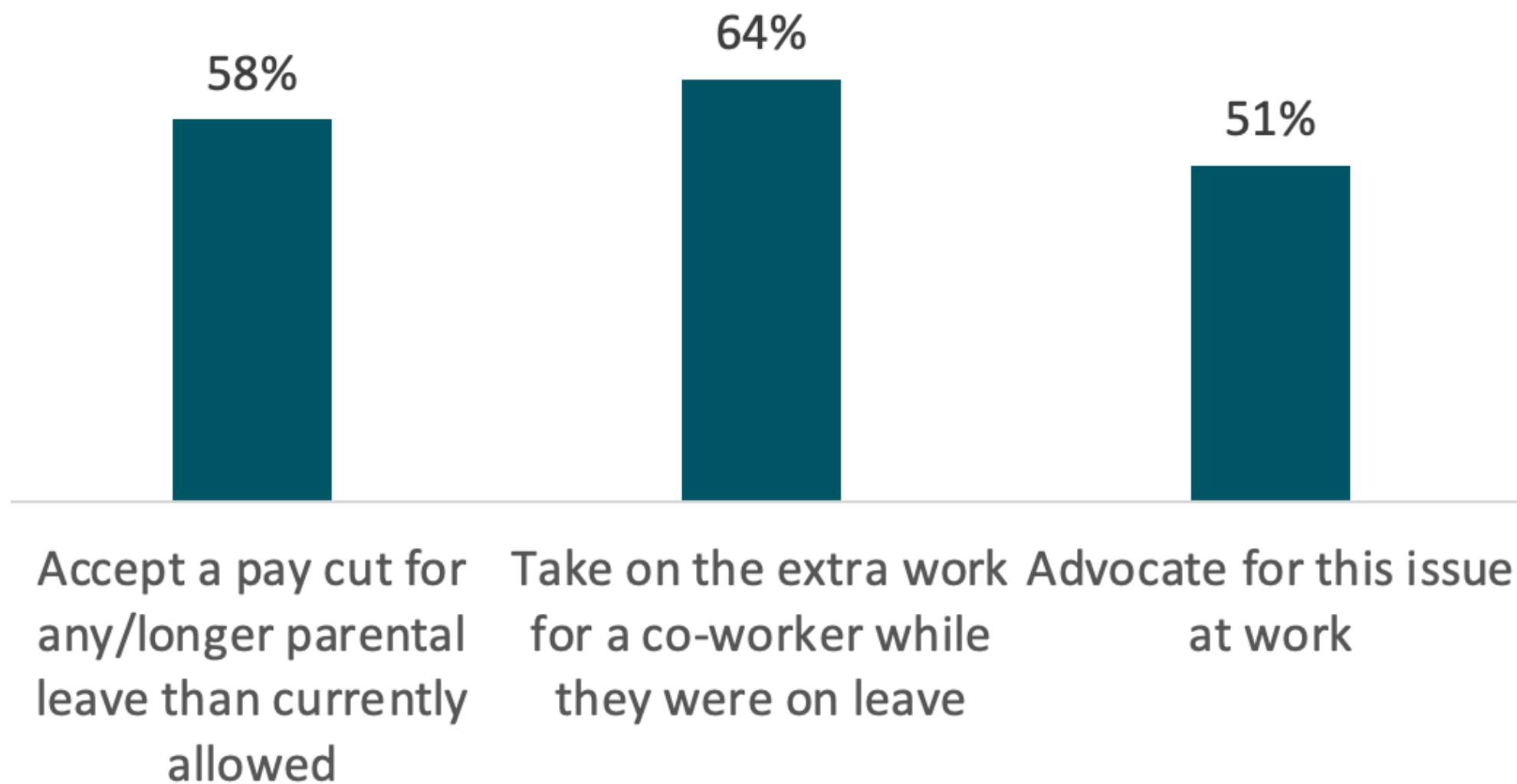
Value of parental leave as perceived by men

- **If men get any/more parental leaves:**
 - It would be beneficial for their partner and children- 72%
 - Increase bonding between father and child(ren) - 64%
 - Unable to make use of it - 39%
- **If partners (of men) able to take parental leave,**
 - It would be beneficial for men and their children - 67%
 - Increase bonding between partners - 45%

n=490, men who are full time or part time employee or self-employed



Willingness to make efforts to get better care leave from employers



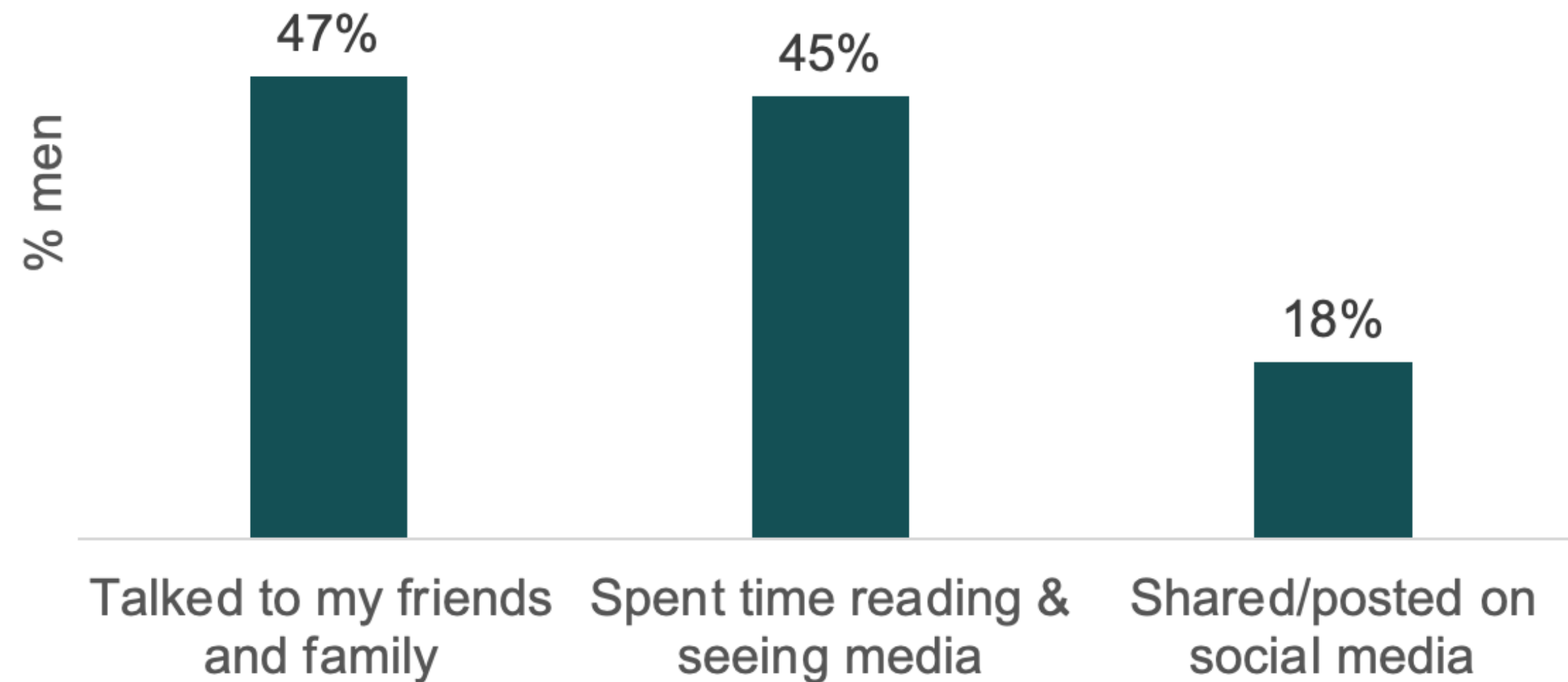
n=223 men who are full time or part time employee

39% men are willing to give petition to the government to support better childcare subsidies.

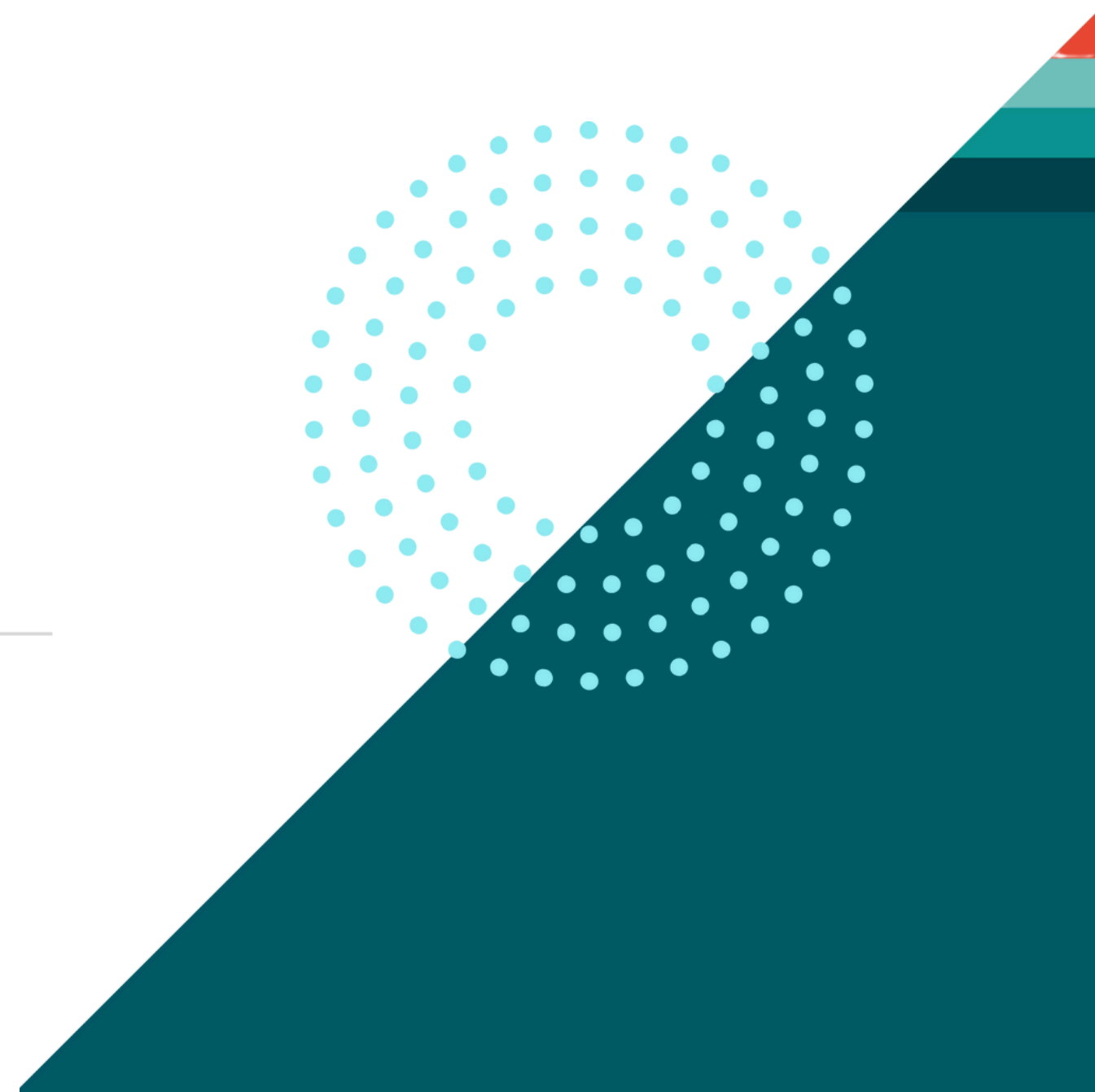
55% men willing to vote for a politician who advocated for longer parental leave.

Political activism for care policies

38% men agree that political activism for better care leave policies is important; however, only few made specific efforts towards this



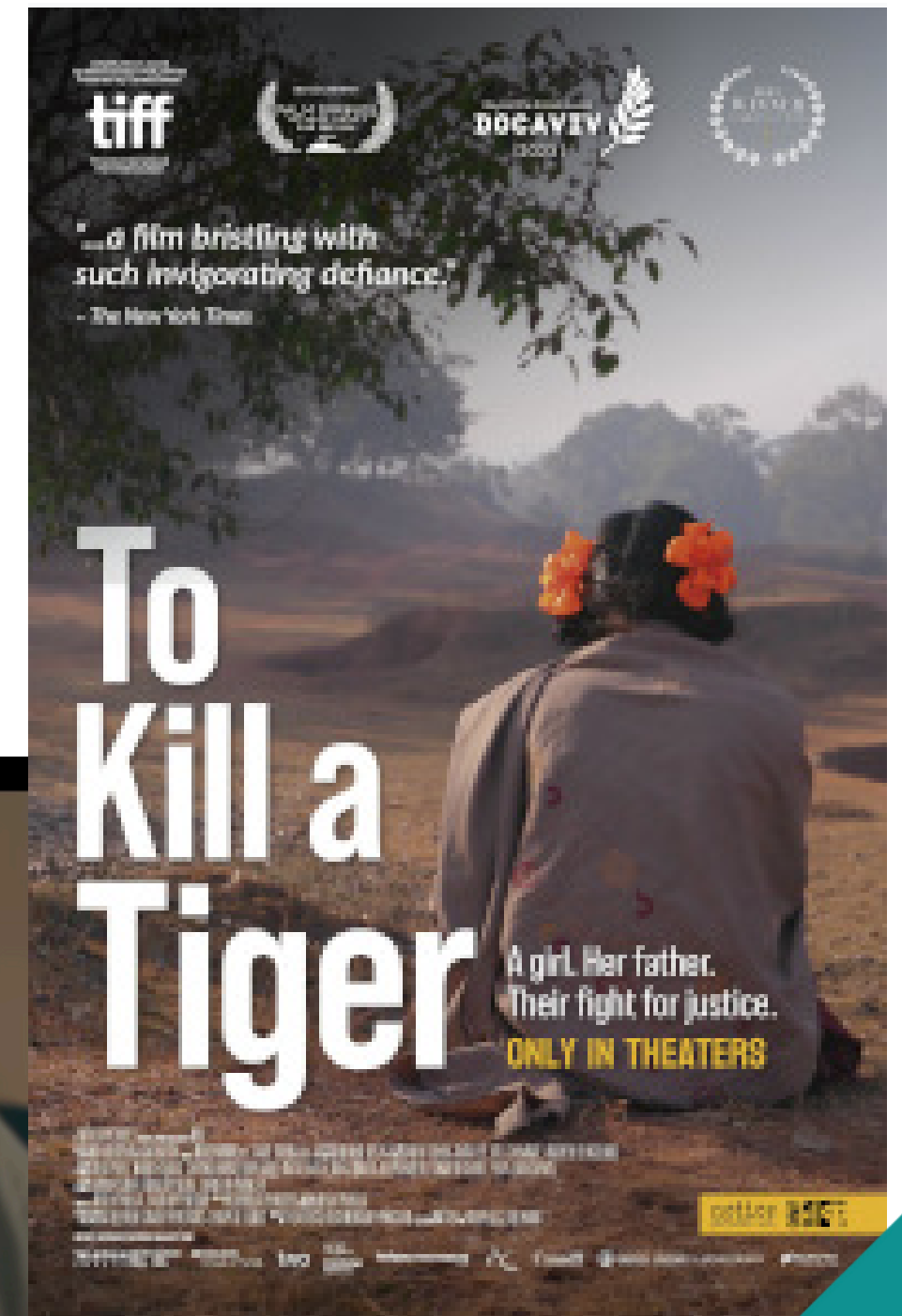
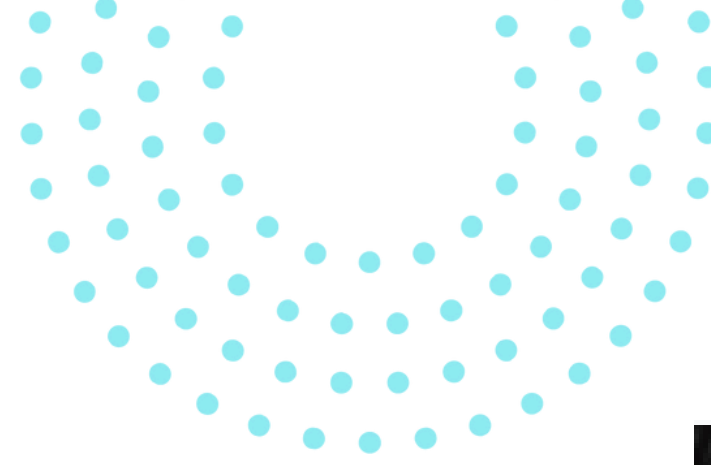
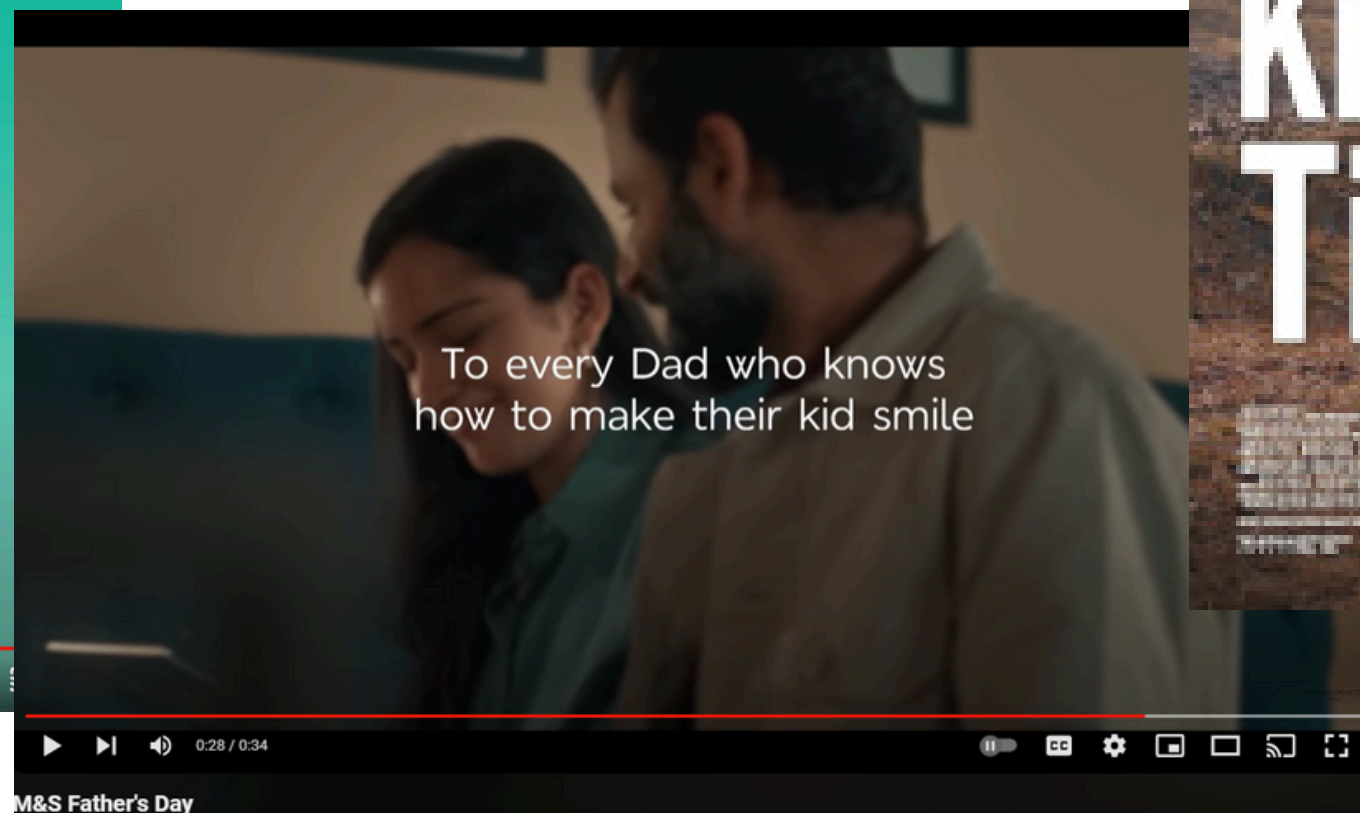
n=597



Media

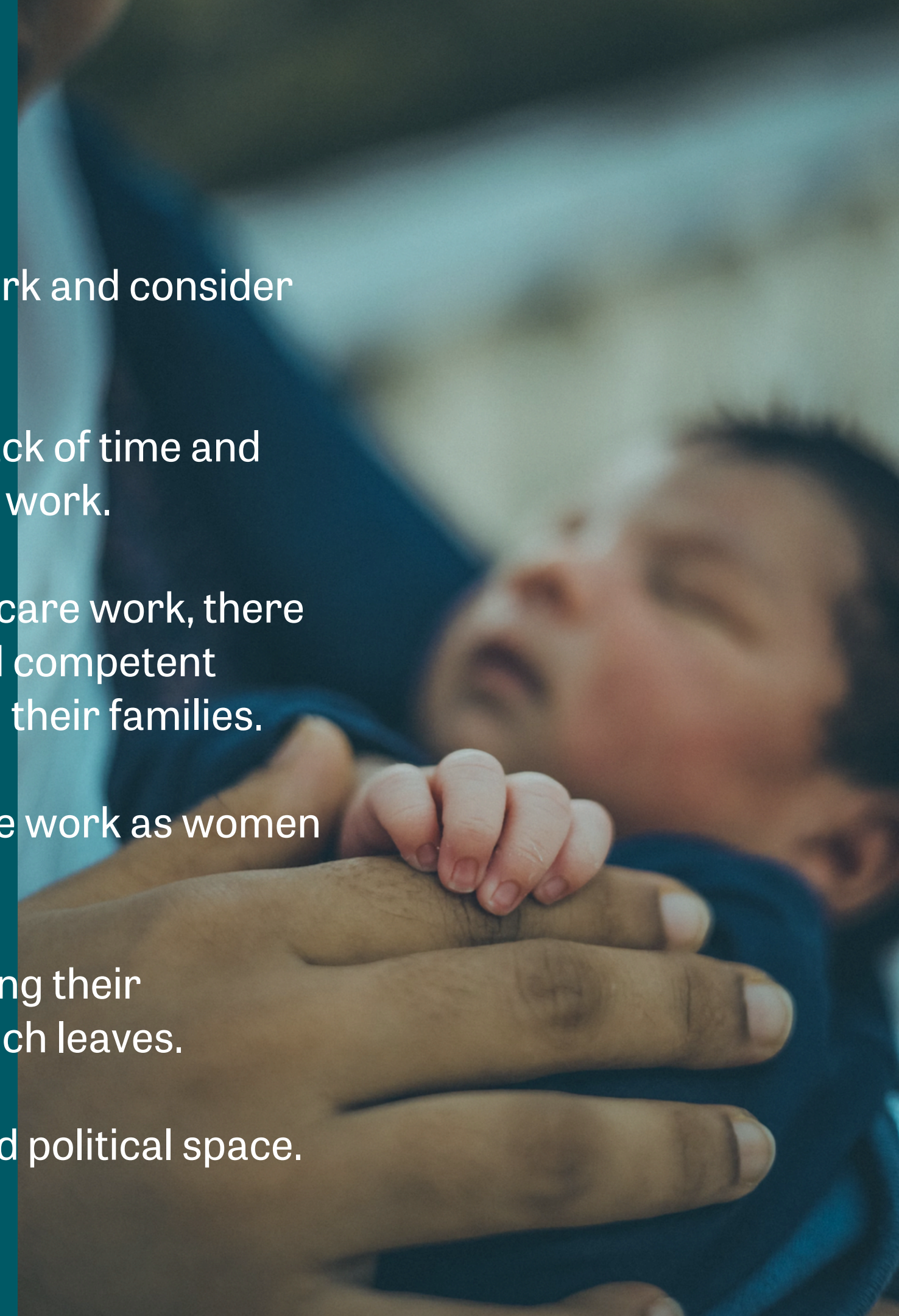
Time is ripe.

There is a potential for major narrative shift as even the media is sharing stories around emotionally and physically involved men in caregiving.



Conclusions

- Most men and women view care work within the gendered division of work and consider this division sacrosanct.
- Apart from the perception that men are not responsible for care work, lack of time and skills were mentioned as barriers preventing men from engaging in care work.
- Although most men and women are supportive of the current division of care work, there is potential for change through tangible examples of men as involved and competent caregivers and demonstrating the value of this involvement for them and their families.
- People also articulated the necessity of men's involvement in unpaid care work as women increasingly engage in paid work.
- While most men perceive parental leave to be important for strengthening their relationship with their partners and children, many are not entitled to such leaves.
- There is a willingness to advocate for care leaves within organization and political space.



Recommendations

Program and Evidence Building

- Need to create new narratives that portray men and boys as caring and competent caregivers and widely disseminate
- Need to design and implement programs on value of care, cost and consequences of gendered division of work with men and boys to promote shared care work, decision-making and communication.
- Existing gender programs with men and boys in schools and communities provide opportunities to implement and test such programs.
- Need to invest in building evidence on various aspects of care giving.

Policy and Programmatic Advocacy

- Advocate for responsive care policies.
- Advocate for a culture of care in all workplaces including normalization of equal, nontransferable parental leave for mothers, fathers and all caregivers and for care of all kinds.
- Build a male caregiver inclusion plan into social protection schemes/initiatives.
- Invest in developing affordable and quality public and private care institutions, focusing on the most marginalized.



Discussions and Reflections

