

Working and earning status versus domestic responsibilities: A reverse ratio for women

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ABSTRACT

The present study examines the impact of the working and earning status of women on their everyday domestic responsibilities from the experiences of a sample of 112 working women from Nashik city ranging in 23 to 56 years of age. A questionnaire with the basic demographic information, some close ended questions and a checklist of forty-two family chores were administered to the sample as research tools. Main findings reveal that in spite of the working and earning status of women the everyday domestic responsibilities of family living are not shared on fair basis by men and women. Some of the backbreaking 'everyday family chores' are not at all done by men in the sample population. This inequality in work distribution and shouldering responsibility could be an outcome of the prevalent patriarchal or male dominant family system in India. Nashik being a religious town seems to follow the traditional role-patterns of women and men even though due to the economic reasons women have taken up the additional function of earning for the family. The data were analyzed and mean, standard deviation and t-value were estimated. The present study was confined to the urban working women in the city of Nashik in Maharashtra, India.

Keywords: Working women, Earning status, Family chores, Domestic responsibility

Introduction

With globalization and changing trends of economy, women in cities have to work outside home in order to earn extra income and to have better resources for the family. Their working status has offered an economic relief to their families. It has also given women a sense of autonomy and some purchasing power at their disposal, as they have become economically independent. Most of the middle class women work because their families need the money they earn. Hence, women

face challenging responsibilities to work as well as to look after the family. And it is a very difficult task to completely satisfy these twin demands. Blom (2011) reported that women had higher general life stress than men.

'It's an accepted and a natural way of life for the Indian working women to do housework. From the time they are born, the conditioning starts. House work first starts like a game with dolls and toys that consist of a set of pressure cooker, gas-stove, mixer etc. As she grows up, her gradual initiation into household chores is a natural progression. The middle and lower class working women, it's a daily, non-stop 5 am- 11pm routine for most part of their lives...with no domestic help either in the form of maids or in-laws at home.' (Iyengar, 2013)

Significance of the study

We have around 50% women in Indian democracy. Education and employment is increasingly becoming a common course of life for women in India. These recent sociological developments have brought with it many changes. Change in socio-economic and educational status of women, her responsibilities, her roles, comforts in life-style, causing a plethora of demands that strain human body and mind. Today, women face competing obligations to work and to look after the family. Working Woman is the one, who is employed for a salary, fees or wages and producing or generating any income for herself and her family.

It is a general observation that in spite of the working status of women they have to carry out most of the household responsibilities in the family. While working men can relax and recoup their energies at home, women shift from completing their responsibilities at work from undertaking their duties at home. The present effort would give headway to many other relevant issues concerning working women such as status of working women in Indian families, burden of domestic responsibilities on working women, causes of stress creation and its management by working women, health concerns of working women, harassment of working women at home and at workplace, etc. to bring due realization of factual situation.

Review of related studies

According to Yapp (2014) women still have to do the lion's share of housework despite going out to work in ever increasing numbers. He found out that women put in three times more time and energy for domestic chores, such as cooking, cleaning and washing, than their partners, One in five men admitted to doing nothing at all around the home, the average working time at home was 17 hours a week for women as compared to just under six hours for men. However, more than 25% of women spend more than 21 hours a week on domestic chores excluding childcare, which is also traditionally seen as a women domain. He further added

that women would not achieve equal opportunities at work until their men-folk contributed more to looking after the home. Sifferlin’s (2014) reveals that on an average day, 83% of women and 65% of men spent some time doing household activities such as housework, cooking, lawn care, or financial and other household management. On an average day, 19% of men did housework—such as cleaning or doing laundry—compared with 49% of women. 42% of men did food preparation or cleanup, compared with 68% of women. On an average day, among adults living in households with children under age 6, women spent 1 hour providing physical care (such as bathing or feeding a child) to household children; by contrast, men spent 26 minutes providing physical care. Strasser (2012) reiterated that in spite of 59.4% of working-age women are currently in the American workforce and with 80% of women are the primary or co-bread winner for their household; most women are still left doing the majority of the house work. This disproportionate burden of housework on women shows that a ‘second shift’ still exists for those women who work.

Methodology

Data for the present study were collected by employing ‘Descriptive Survey Method’. ‘Descriptive research is devoted to the gathering of information about prevailing conditions or situations for the purpose of description and interpretation. (Salaria, 2012) A questionnaire with the basic demographic information and a checklist of forty-two family chores were administered to the sample. Sampling was done using stratified purposive sampling technique. (Cohen, 2006) The sample included 112 working women from Nashik city, aging from 23 to 56 years.

The forty two ‘Everyday Family Chores’ listed in the checklist were sub divided into five categories namely, Kitchen and food related Chores, cleaning related chores, chores related to daily routine and maintenance, chores concerning children and elders in family and finally, work outside home.

Findings

Out of sample population of 112 working women, 72 (64.28%) were salaried, 29 (25.89%) were self-employed and 11 (09.82%) were professionals such as lawyers and doctors. The sample belonged to a monthly family income ranging from ₹ 15, 000/- to ₹ 60,000/- and above. More than 90% of the respondents (102 women-91.07%) were coming from nuclear families and in about 90% of the cases (98 women-87.50%) both the partners were gainfully employed. More than 80% of the respondents (91 Women- 81.25 %) were educated with at least graduation.

The forty two ‘Everyday Family Chores’ listed in the checklist were broadly divided into 5 categories as shown in table no. 1.

Table 1. Categories of Everyday Family Chores:

Sr. No.	Kitchen, food related	Cleaning	Routine and Maintenance	Related to children and elders in family	Work Outside home
1	Changing the Cylinder	Washing the utensils	Washing of Vehicle	Teaching children in the family	Dropping Children to School
2	Buying Vegetables	Washing clothes by hand or in machine	Servicing or repair and maintenance of vehicle	Looking after the elders in family	Taking children for haircut
3	Filling drinking water	Performing <i>Dev-puja</i>	Maintenance of garden	Bathing small children in the family	Taking patients to the doctor
4	Grinding of grains to make flour	Cleaning the kitchen platform	Watering the pants	Taking children for leisurely walk or to play in garden	Buying cloths or other fabric accessories
5	Buying Grocery	Cleaning the dining table	Hospitality of guests	Looking after children	Paying bills
6	Cooking	Brooming or Sweeping the house	Simple stitching		Routine Banking transactions
7	Preparing Tiffin for family members	Dusting or Cleaning furniture	Looking after patients in the family		
8	Buying Fish, Mutton, Chicken, etc.	Cleaning the lofts	Going to the cobbler for repair work		
9	Buying milk	Cleaning the bathroom and toilet	Arranging or Cleaning Cupboards		
10	Serving the food	Wiping the floor	Ironing the cloths		
11			Folding the dried cloths		
Total 42	10 = 23.80 %	10 = 23.80 %	11 = 26.19%	5 = 11.90%	6 = 14.28%

Table 2. Percentage related to Everyday Family Chores

Sr. No.	Total family chores	Usually done by Male	Usually done by Female	Responsibility of Male	Responsibility of Female	Responsibility of Both
1	Changing the Cylinder	26= 23.21%	86= 76.78%	8= 7.14%	88= 78.57	16= 14.28%
2	Buying Vegetables	31= 27.67%	72.32%	13= 11.60%	67= 59.82%	32= 28.57%
3	Filling drinking water	8= 7.14%	100= 89.28%	4= 3.57%	90= 80.35%	18= 16.07%
4	Grinding of grains to make flour	19= 16.96%	56= 50.00%	16= 14.28%	83= 74.10%	13= 11.60%
5	Buying Grocery	21= 18.75%	81.25%	5= 4.46%	68= 60.71%	39= 34.82%
6	Cooking	2= 1.78%	110= 98.21%	0= 0.00%	100= 89.28%	12= 10.71%
7	Preparing Tiffin for family members	1= 0.89%	111= 99.10%	0= 0.00%	103= 91.96%	9= 8.03%
8	Buying Fish, Mutton, Chicken, etc.	36= 32.14%	47= 41.96%	65= 50.03%	5= 4.46%	13= 11.60%
9	Buying milk	11= 9.82%	20= 17.85%	16= 14.28%	12= 10.71%	3= 2.67%
10	Serving the food	2= 1.78%	77= 68.75%	3= 2.67%	102= 91.07%	7= 6.25%
11	Folding the dried cloths	16= 14.28%	96= 85.71%	2= 1.78%	110= 98.21%	0= 0.00%
12	Teaching children in the family	12= 10.71%	34= 30.35%	12= 10.71%	20= 17.85%	14= 12.5%
13	Looking after the elders in family	19= 16.96%	82= 73.21%	22= 19.64%	39= 34.82%	40= 35.71%

14	Bathing small children in the family	0=	56=	0=	50=	6=
		00.00%	50.00%	00.00%	44.64%	5.35%
15	Taking children for leisurely walk or to play in garden	12=	29=	11=	9=	28=
		10.71%	25.89%	9.82%	8.03%	25.00%
16	Looking after children	11=	87=	10=	64=	24=
		9.82%	77.67%	8.92%	57.14%	21.42%
17	Dropping Children to School	36=	12=	34=	10=	12=
		32.14%	10.71%	30.35%	8.92%	10.71%
18	Taking children for haircut	40=	16=	40=	10=	6=
		35.71%	14.28%	35.71%	8.92%	5.35%
19	Taking patients to the doctor	65=	36=	58=	10=	33=
		58.03%	32.14%	51.75%	8.92%	29.46%
20	Buying cloths or other fabric accessories	33=	78=	13=	38=	60=
		29.46%	69.64%	11.60%	33.92%	53.57%
21	Paying bills –Rent, water, electricity, etc.	82=	28=	80=	12=	18=
		73.21%	25.00%	71.42%	10.71%	16.07%
22	Routine Banking transactions	85=	23=	59=	2=	51=
		75.89%	20.53%	52.67%	1.78%	45.53%
23	Washing the utensils	0=	110=	0=	99=	13=
		00.00%	98.21%	00.00%	88.39%	11.60%
24	Washing clothes by hand or in machine	10=	34=	2=	98=	12=
		8.92%	30.35%	1.78%	87.5%	10.71%
25	Performing <i>Dev-puja</i>	30=	55=	25=	27=	60=
		26.78%	49.10%	22.32%	24.10%	53.57%
26	Cleaning the kitchen platform	0=	92=	0=	106=	6=
		00.00%	82.14%	00.00%	94.64%	5.35%
27	Cleaning the dining table	10=	88=	9=	83=	20=
		8.92%	78.57	8.03%	74.10%	17.85%
28	Brooming or Sweeping the house	0=	34=	0=	102=	10=
		00.00%	30.35%	00.00%	91.07%	8.92%

29	Dusting or Cleaning furniture	2= 1.78%	78= 69.64%	2= 1.78%	100= 89.28%	10= 8.92%
30	Cleaning the lofts	4= 3.57%	89= 79.46%	4= 3.57%	104= 92.85%	4= 3.57%
31	Cleaning the bathroom and toilet	0= 00.00%	86= 76.78%	0= 00.00%	112= 100.00%	0= 00.00%
32	Wiping the floor	0= 00.00%	33= 29.46%	0= 00.00%	112= 100.00%	0= 00.00%
33	Washing of Vehicle	33= 29.46%	18= 16.07%	78= 69.64%	12= 10.71%	22= 19.64%
34	Servicing or repair and maintenance of vehicle	87= 77.67%	10= 8.92%	99= 88.39%	2= 1.78%	11= 9.82%
35	Maintenance of garden	13= 11.60%	20= 17.85%	3= 2.67%	5= 4.46%	25= 22.32%
36	Watering the plants	10= 8.92%	47= 41.96%	6= 5.35%	31= 27.67%	20= 17.85%
37	Hospitality of guests	33= 29.46%	78= 69.64%	11= 9.82%	12= 10.71%	89= 79.46%
38	Simple stitching and mending	2= 1.78%	98= 87.5%	0= 00.00%	100= 89.28%	2= 1.78%
39	Looking after patients in the family	13= 11.60%	87= 77.67%	13= 11.60%	67= 59.82%	32= 28.57%
40	Arranging or Cleaning Cupboards	18= 16.07%	91= 81.25%	3= 2.67%	92= 82.14%	17= 15.17%
41	Ironing the cloths	14= 12.5%	30= 26.78%	5= 4.46%	77= 68.75%	30= 26.78%
42	Going to the cobbler for repair work	10= 8.92%	24= 21.42%	10= 8.92%	33= 29.46%	30= 26.78%

Table 1, shows the distribution of the 42 ‘everyday family chores’ divided into five categories. Out of these the major three categories that constituted almost three fourth of the ‘everyday family chores’ by contributing about one quarter portion each are namely, Kitchen and food related work (23.8%), cleaning related chores (23.8%), and routine maintenance work (26.19%). ‘Routine maintenance work’ emerged as the biggest category of everyday family chores with 11 chores listed under the same, while the chores related to children and elders in family appeared as the smallest category with only 5 chores listed in it.

Table No. 2 shows that some of the ‘everyday family chores’ are not at all done by men of the sample population, such as, cleaning the bathroom and toilet, wiping the floor, brooming or sweeping the house, cleaning the kitchen platform, washing the utensils and bathing small children in the family and works like simple stitching and mending, cleaning the lofts, dusting or cleaning furniture, serving the food, preparing Tiffin for family members and cooking are done by less than 5% men in the sample population. On the other hand, buying milk, dropping children to school, taking children for haircut, washing of vehicle, servicing or repair and maintenance of vehicle, maintenance of garden are the less popular chores among women and less than 20% women found doing them with ‘servicing or repair and maintenance of vehicle’ being the least liked work done by only 8.92% women. However, as a fact not a single ‘everyday family chore’ was not done by women. Cooking, preparing Tiffin for family members and washing the utensils were done by more than 98% women in the sample population in spite of their gainfully working status.

Surprisingly, uncomplicated ‘everyday family chores’ like simple stitching and mending, bathing small children in the family, preparing Tiffin for family members and also backbreaking ‘everyday family chores’ of washing the utensils, cleaning the kitchen platform, brooming or sweeping wiping the floor, the house and wiping the floor were not considered at all the responsibility of men and the major (more than 90%) responsibility of these chores is assumed by women in the family. ‘Everyday family chores’ such as filling drinking water, buying grocery, serving the food, folding the dried cloths, washing clothes by hand or in machine, dusting or cleaning furniture, cleaning the lofts, maintenance of garden, arranging or cleaning cupboards, ironing the cloths, were also not assumed a man’s responsibility with less than 5% respondents declaring it a man’s liability.

Out of the 42 ‘everyday family chores’ only four chores namely, buying cloths or other fabric accessories (53.57%), routine banking transactions (45.53%), performing *deva-puja (daily rituals)* (53.57%), hospitability of guests (79.46%) were considered as responsibility of both men and women by nearly half (45%) of the respondents. In the true sense only ‘hospitability of guests’ was considered a shared responsibility among all the listed ‘everyday family chores’ with almost 80% (79.46%) sample agreeing to it.

Men were considered accountable for only five outside the house chores from 42 listed ‘everyday family chores’ like buying fish, mutton, chicken, etc. (50.03%), taking patients to the doctor (51.75%), paying bills –rent, water, electricity, etc. (71.42%), routine banking transactions (52.67%), washing of vehicles (69.64%). While, only 2 chores of servicing or repair and maintenance of vehicle (88.39%) and paying bills – rent, water, electricity, etc. (71.42%) were seen as mainly a man’s liability by majority i.e. more than 70% women under study.

Table 3. Mean values of Everyday Family Chores

Total family chores	Usually done by Women	Responsibility of Women	Usually done by Men	Responsibility of Men	Responsibility of Both
42	60.90 (Mean)	58.71 (Mean)	20.40 (Mean)	17.64 (Mean)	20.64 (Mean)
Percentage	54.38 %	52.42 %	18.21 %	15.75 %	18.43%

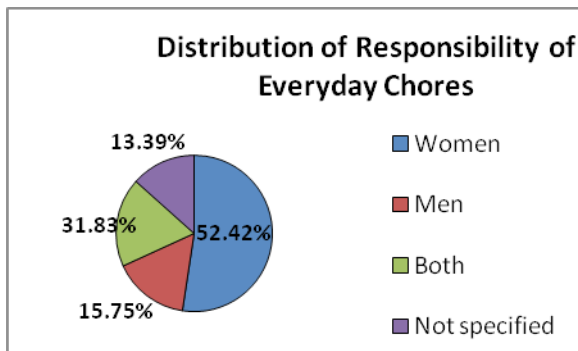
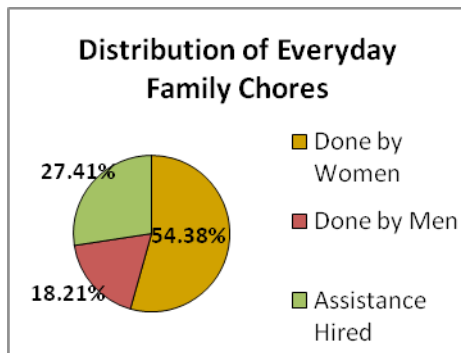


Figure No.1: Distribution of Everyday Family Chores and their responsibility

Table No. 3 and figure No. 1 indicate that on an average, gainfully working women of the sample under study, actually carried out and assumed responsibility of more

than 50% of the ‘everyday family chores’. In contrast, only 18% ‘everyday family chores’ were done by men and responsibility of only 16% of ‘everyday family chores’ was held by men.

Table 4. Statistical Validation

Everyday Family chores	Gender	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Level of Significance
Usually done by Women	F	42	60.90	31.79	6.72	0.05
Usually done by Men	M	42	20.40	22.65		Highly significant
Responsibility of Women	F	42	58.71	39.83	5.67	0.05
Responsibility of Men	M	42	17.64	24.91		Highly significant

The table value of t-test at 0.05% level of significance is 1.99 and the calculated value of t-test is 6.72 in case of ‘everyday family chores’ usually had done by women or men. This indicated that women usually did significantly more work than men. The calculated value of t-test, for responsibility of ‘everyday family chores’ assumed by women or men, was 5.67. This t-value was much higher than the table value which denotes a significantly high difference between the responsibility of ‘everyday family chores’ assumed by men and women. Women assumed considerably more responsibility of ‘everyday family chores’ in spite of their working and earning status.

Table 5. Women’s Share in Family Income

	Women’s Share in Family Income				
	Up to 20%	Up to 30%	Up to 40%	Up to 50%	More than 50%
No. of Respondents	21	25	42	16	08
Percentage	18.75 %	22.32%	37.50%	14.29%	07.14%

As per table No. 5 and figure No. 2, almost 40% (37.50%) women in the sample population earned 40% of family income. More than 40% (41.07%) women added below 30% revenue to their family income. 14% women contributed equivalent to their male counterparts and 7% women earned greater than their male partners. This determines that nearly 60% (58.93%) women were earning 40% and more monthly income for the family.

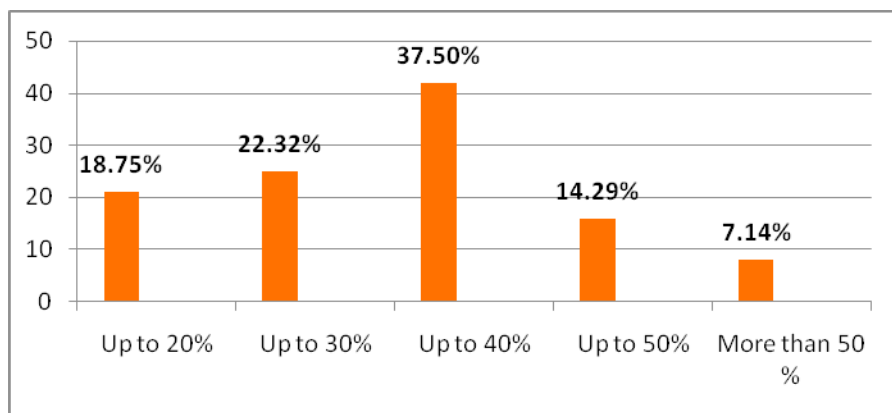


Figure 2. Contribution of Women to Family Income

Conclusion

The present research showed that in spite of the working and earning status of women the everyday domestic responsibilities of family living were not shared on fair basis by men and women. Some of the backbreaking ‘everyday family chores’ were not at all done by men in the sample population. Other low status or tedious domestic chores were done by a negligent percentage of men. On the other hand, as a fact the women did not desert even a single ‘everyday family chore’. Only four chores were considered as responsibility of both men and women out of the 42 ‘everyday family chores’ by nearly half of the respondents. Women were found assuming responsibility for more than 52% of the ‘everyday family chores’. Data reveal that more than 21% women earned equal income for the family as their male counterparts while nearly 60% women were earning 40% and more monthly income for the family. The statistical estimation showed a highly significant difference in the ‘Everyday family chores’ done and its responsibility assumed by women and men, even though the women are working outside home to earn a significant income for the family.

This inequality in work distribution and shouldering responsibility could be an outcome of the prevalent patriarchal or male dominant family system in India. Nashik being a religious town seems to follow the traditional role-patterns of women and men even though due to the economic reasons women have taken up the additional function of earning for the family.

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