

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this project titled "Opportunity Cost of Unpaid Care Work among Indian Women- A Case Study" submitted by *Arshi Tabassum*, a student of 6th Semester of the Department of Economics, Raniganj Girls' College for the award of degree of *BSC Honours in Economics* has been carried out under my guidance and supervision.

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Title of the Project

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women- A Case Study”

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1. Introduction

An article titled “India’s Women Bear the Burden of Unpaid Work – With Costs to Themselves and the Economy” by Bansari Kamdar published in the online edition of “The Diplomat” dated 2nd November 2020, states, “when it comes to housework, on average, Indian women spent 243 minutes a day on domestic chores and household work, almost 10 times the 25 minutes that the average Indian man did in 2019”.

Unpaid work or more specifically unpaid care work includes household duties or domestic work such as cooking, cleaning, water collection, washing , collecting firewood, taking care of the children and the elders in the family and similar other chores performed by women of the family without any expectation whatsoever for any type of remuneration either in cash or kind . The same study reveals that the value of this unpaid domestic work of the Indian women accounts for almost 40 percent of the current Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country. One of the main reasons for women in the Indian society shouldering the lion’s share of the burden of household work has been found to be gender stereotyping which ultimately leads to gender bias and discrimination.

Objective of the study

The objective of this project is to

- determine the opportunity cost of unpaid care work like cooking with the presentation of a case study, and
- examine recommendations to sensitize the society against gender bias and discrimination.

Materials and Methods

The analysis in the project has been divided into different sections. The study starts with the discussion on unpaid care work and related issues on the basis of different reports. This is followed by presentation of a case study on the basis of a survey

carried out for twenty homemakers residing in a locality in Raniganj with the help of questionnaire and subsequent determination of opportunity cost involved in unpaid care work like cooking. Lastly, the study examines recommendations to sensitize the society against gender bias and discrimination. The section on References gives a list of the secondary sources that have been used to carry out this study.

2. Unpaid Care Work

Meaning of Unpaid Care Work

The authors (Ferrant, Pesando and others, 2014) in an article published by OECD Development Centre cited (Elson, 2000) to define *Unpaid Care Work*. According to the later, it refers to "all unpaid services provided within a household for its members, including care of persons, housework and voluntary community work. These activities are considered work, because theoretically one could pay a third person to perform them".

Gender Bias

In the article mentioned in the preceding paragraph, it is stated that in India, as compared to the six hours devoted by women for unpaid care activities, men devote only 36 minutes. Another author Kamdar (2020) reveals that men utilize 80 percent of the hours they are awake for paid labour as compared to women who use 84 percent of the same hours towards unpaid labour. The article by Kamdar also compares the time spent by men and women in a day behind different activities with the help of pie diagrams (shown as Figure 1 and Figure 2 in Appendix). These figures reveal that women spend 19.5% of their total time in unpaid work which included domestic work. In sharp contrast men spent only 2.5% of their total time in unpaid work. This helps us to infer that the division of labour behind household work in India comes with a gender bias. The women are expected to complete majority of the unpaid domestic work as compared to men in the household.

Gender stereotyping

Kamdar (2020) goes on to state that "Social norms expect women to perform unpaid labor in India and the consequences for straying from the norm can be harsh". This article refers to an Oxfam Survey carried out in 2019 on household care in India. This survey found that one in every three respondents felt that physical abuse to women is justified if there is any negligence in giving care to the children or an adult in the family who is ill. Thus we find that the gender

disparity in the family is a product of social norms and gender stereotyping. Here it is believed that each gender in the family has a specific role to play, especially women as the care givers and men as the bread earners. This gets reflected in a 2016 survey of Economic and Political Weekly (cited in Kamdar, 2020) where it was found that around 40 to 60 percent of people of either gender living in both rural and urban areas opined that “married women whose husbands earn a good living should not work outside the home”.

Technically unpaid labour or unpaid care work is termed as unproductive labour. Thus, even though the unpaid labour provided by the women is estimated to currently account for 40 percent of the GDP of the country (Kamdar, 2020), the valuation of this type of labour remains largely unaccounted in India.

3. Computing Opportunity Cost in Unpaid Care Work in a Survey

According to Chakravarty (2021), “the value of unpaid work can be estimated by calculating the amount of time spent on it – through time use surveys – and then putting a price on it by calculating the opportunity cost or replacement cost, or by measuring the labour inputs that go into the activity”.

For this a survey in the Raniganj locality was carried out with the help of a questionnaire. Twenty women who are mostly home makers and spent lion’s share of their waking hours in discharging the domestic chores of the household participated in this survey. They were mainly asked questions related to annual family income, average family size, number of hours spent by these women in cooking and so on. Going by the method suggested by Chakravarty, the opportunity cost for cooking in the locality was determined at Rs 2500/- (Rupees Two thousand and five hundred only) for cooking a meal for an average family of four members by working for one hour for each day in a month.

The findings from the survey were as follows:

- The number of hours spent by the homemakers behind cooking meals depends upon the family size. As evident from Table 1 when the average size of the family increases, the hours spent for cooking also increases. The Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient between the Average family Size and Hours Spent behind Cooking was found to be 0.905. This shows a positive and high correlation between the two variables namely; Average family Size and Hours Spent behind Cooking

- It is also evident from Table 1, that the opportunity cost of cooking for each respondent varies directly with the time spent behind cooking and the average size of the family
- The findings did not find any bearing of the annual family income on the opportunity cost computed for cooking as is evident from the Bar Chart in Figure 3.

4.Recommendatiois for Gender Sensitization

The authors (Dr.Jatinder Kumar Sharma, 2016 and Dr.S.Vasundhara,2020) in an article published on Wikipedia (last edited-March 14,2022) to define “Gender sensitization” goes on to state that “Gender sensitization is the teaching of gender sensitivity and encouragement of behaviour modification through raising awareness of gender equality concerns.”

The recommendations for gender sensitization are as follows:

Sensitization within the society

Children gain some significant knowledge from their nearby surroundings friends, school, neighbourhood, media, books, etc., gender sensitization within the society can start at an early age. Inequitable gender norms result in many types of inequalities between girls and boys and prove harmful for the children in the long run. However, while predisposition to gender stereotyping and subsequent gender bias and norms can affect all children, they are proven to affect girls disproportionately.

Sensitization at home

The role of the family is vital for gender equality and it begins at home. The children must learn that they are not expected to take on different role based on their gender like boys are more likely than girls to have maintenance chores like mowing the lawn or painting, while girls are given domestic chores like cooking and cleaning. This attitude of segregation of household labour leads to gender bias. It is necessary to engage children in making the home a gender bias free zone. Mutual respect for the opposite gender, and respect for unpaid domestic activities is the first step in eliminating gender stereotyping in the society.

Sensitization through education

Education is the important tool for bringing about gender parity and simultaneously catalysing national development. Education empowers the women and helps them realize their worth. It is the first stepping stone in eradicating gender bias from the society. The educators need to conduct gender awareness programme which help children explore who they are, and make

connections to people around them, learn to make choices and thereby gain self-confidence, peer acceptance and social support.

Women Path breakers

We need to recognize path breakers in the society like Mary Kom, Karnam Malleswari, The Phogat sisters and Mithali Doria Raj. These women have established themselves as role model for the women at large by breaking the traditional barriers. We need to motivate girls with their example in order to break the stigma of gender bias.

Role of media for gender sensitization

Media provide platforms for women and girls' voices to be heard. The burning social issues like declining sex ratio, rape, workplace sexual harassment, dowry-related crimes, domestic violence, molestation, eve-teasing and honour killings once again remind us that the media can play an active role in sensitizing the society in adopting a progressive and not repressive outlook towards the women.

5. Conclusion

- A survey was carried out with the help of twenty women living in a locality in Raniganj, are mostly home makers and spent lion's share of their working hours in discharging the domestic chores of the household participated in this survey. They were mainly asked questions related to annual family income, average family size, number of hours spent by these women in cooking and so on. The survey firmly establishes the fact that there is gender stereotyping and gender bias.
- This contribution of the women to their family leading to economic sustenance for the household as a whole remains mostly unappreciated.
- The opportunity cost for cooking in the locality was determined at Rs 2500/- (Rupees Two thousand and five hundred only) for cooking a meal for an average family of four members by working for one hour for each day in a month.
- The number of hours spent by the homemakers behind cooking meals depends upon the family size. When the average size of the family increases, the hours spent for cooking also increases. The Pearson's Correlation Coefficient between the Average family Size and Hours Spent behind Cooking was found to be 0.905. This shows a positive and high correlation between the two variables namely; Average family Size and Hours Spent behind Cooking

- The opportunity cost of cooking for each respondent varies directly with the time spent behind cooking and the average size of the family
- The findings did not find any bearing of the annual family income on the opportunity cost computed for cooking
- The recommendations examined help us to conclude that it is possible to motivate society to become free from gender bias.

The project is not above limitations. All the literature related to unpaid care work for Indian women could not be covered due to limited scope.

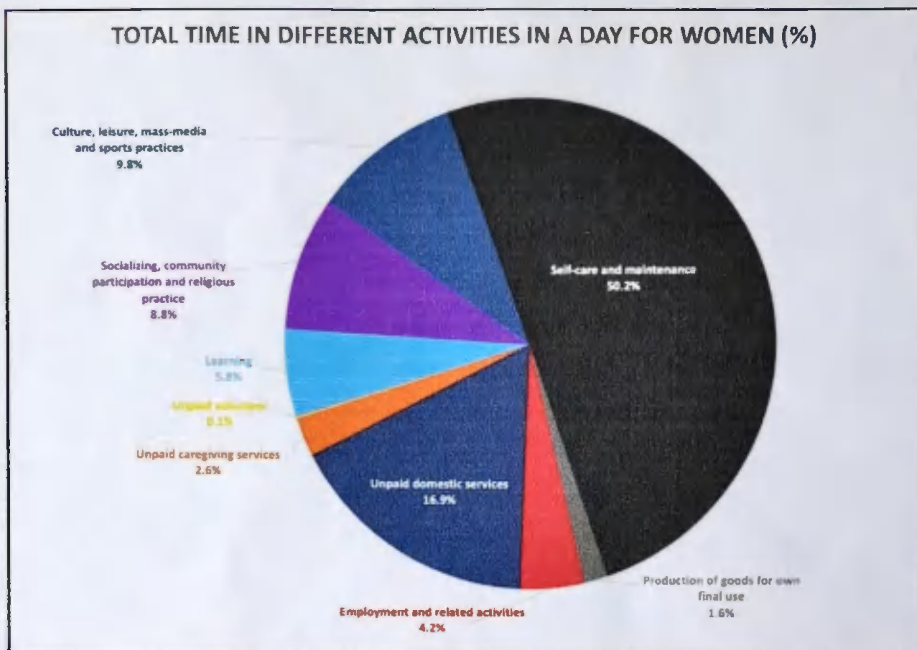


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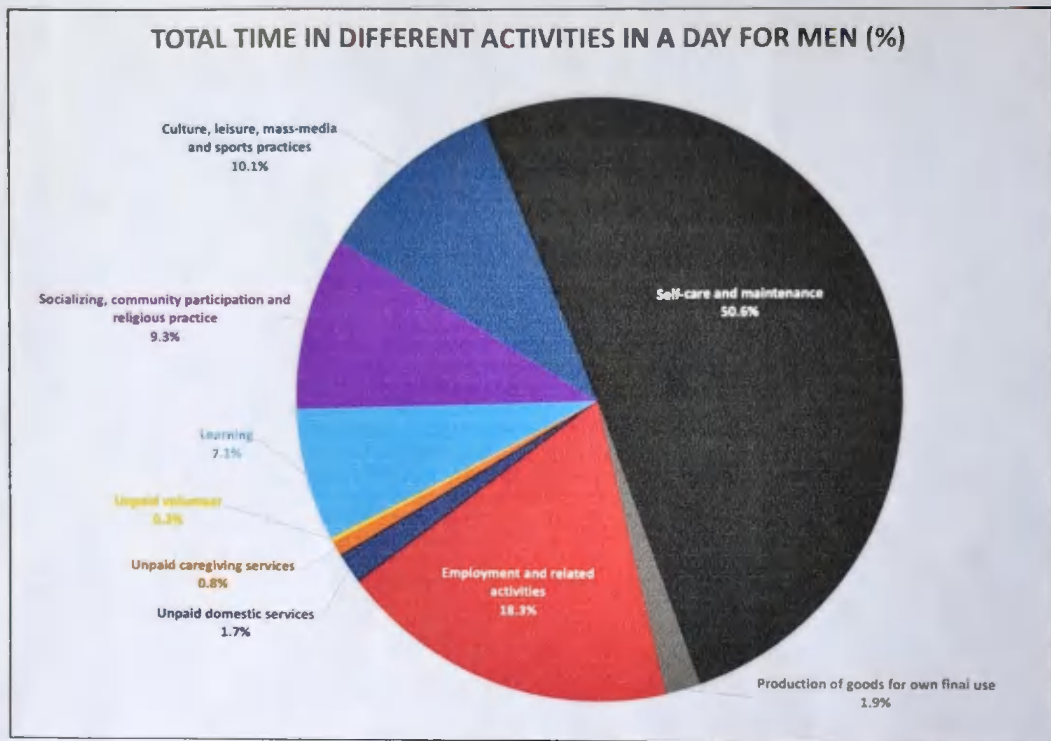
7. Appendix

Figure 1: Time spent on different activities in a day for women



SOURCE: TIME USE IN INDIA 2019, NATIONAL STATISTICAL OFFICE

Figure 2 : Time spent on different activities in a day for men



SOURCE: TIME USE IN INDIA 2019, NATIONAL STATISTICAL OFFICE

Table 1: Survey Table based on results of survey on Unpaid Domestic Activity (Cooking)

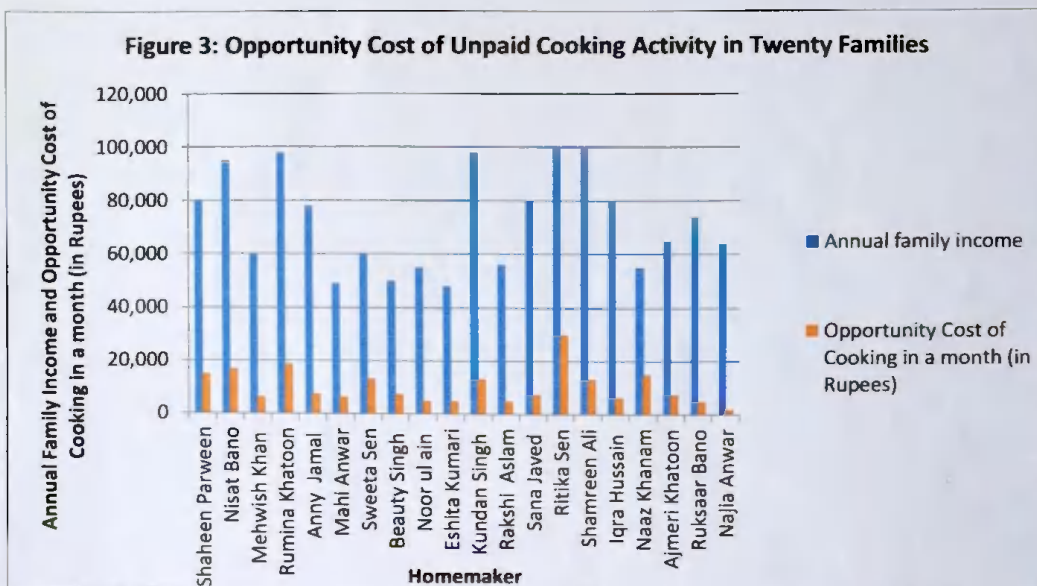
Computation of Opportunity Cost for Cooking of twenty different households in a month					
Name of the House Maker	Average family size	Total number of meals cooked (per day, three times a day)	Hours spent behind cooking (per day)	Annual family income (in Rupees)	Opportunity Cost of Cooking in a month (in Rupees)
ShaheenParween	8	24	3	80,000	15000
NisatBano	9	27	3	95,000	16875
Mehwish Khan	5	15	2	60,000	6250
RuminaKhatoon	10	30	3	98,000	18750
Anny Jamal	6	18	2	78,000	7500
Mahi Anwar	5	15	2	49,000	6250
Sweeta Sen	7	21	3	60,000	13125
Beauty Singh	6	18	2	50,000	7500
Noor Ul Ain	4	12	2	55,000	5000
EshitaKumari	4	12	2	48,000	5000
kundan Singh	7	21	3	98,000	13125
Rakshi Aslam	4	12	2	56,000	5000
Sana Javed	6	18	2	80,000	7500
Ritika Sen	12	36	4	100000	30000
Shamreen Ali	7	21	3	100000	13125
Iqra Hussain	5	15	2	80,000	6250
NaazKhanam	8	24	3	55,000	15000
AjmeriKhatoon	6	18	2	65,000	7500
RuksaarBano	4	12	2	74,000	5000
Najia Anwar	3	9	1	64,000	1875

SURVEY : OPPORTUNITY COST OF PAID COOKING IN THE LOCALITY: MEALS COOKED FOR AN AVERAGE FAMILY SIZE OF 4 WORKING 1 HOUR EACH DAY IN A MONTH IS RS 2500/-

Statistical Estimation

Pearson's Correlation Coefficient

	Average family size	Hours spent behind cooking (per day)
Average family size	1	
Hours spent behind cooking (per day)	0.904866597	1



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10.5.2022