

**DIGITAL WALL MAGAZINE**  
**“SPOTLIGHT”**  
**OF**  
**THE DEPARTMENT OF**  
**ECONOMICS**  
**ISSUE 2022-23**

*on*

**One Cooked Meal**

# Editorial

*It has been customary and an honour for the Department of Economics, Raniganj Girls' College to publish their Wall Magazine "Spot Light" on contemporary social issues.*

*The theme "One Cooked Meal" is based on the issue that the care work or domestic chores in a household are very often associated with gender stereotyping. Gender stereotyping in turn creates gender discrimination. Only empowerment of the women can break this social stigma of gender discrimination based on gender stereotyping*

# Contents

<b>SECTION</b>	<b>SLIDE NUMBER</b>
<b>The story of Kalyani</b>	<b>4-5</b>
<b>Gender stereotyping-the basis of Gender Discrimination</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Kalyani's realization</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Unpaid Care Work</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>A Survey</b>	<b>9-10</b>
<b>Need to change the social attitude</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>How can a woman empower herself?</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>13</b>

# The story of Kalyani



This is **Kalyani**.

**Kalyani today is 81 years old learning to read and write in a literacy programme run by an NGO for the elderly at night.**

**She wants to become literate and independent**

**She is a widow, and dependent upon her sons and their families**

**She belonged to a very poor family and was sold to her future in-laws at 13 years of age by her father to repay the family debt.**

**Her name was changed to *Kalyani* after marriage and today she does not remember her maiden name**

# The story of Kalyani

- **After marriage her husband became her “malik” (owner) and ever since she knew him by this name.**
- **Immediately after marriage, she learned to get up early in the morning before sunrise. Because Kalyani had to walk 5 kms to fetch drinking water for the entire family of 6 people. She also cooked 3 meals each day, washed, tended the cows, fed the hen, looked after the children and saw to it that they attended school.**
- **Kalyani’s sons and grandsons are against the idea of seeing their mother/grandmother becoming literate. They jeer at her for attending the night school**
- **They still want to limit her role to doing household chores.**
- **Kalyani’s thoughts started changing when by chance she watched a road side skit on women that was performed in her village.**
- **She realized for the first time that she can think independently and has a will of her own. She also realized that she has always been dependent on one or the other male member of the family for her existence.**

# Gender stereotyping- the basis of gender discrimination

- **‘Gender stereotyping is the practice of ascribing to an individual woman or man specific attributes, characteristics, or roles by reason only of her or his membership in the social group of women or men’. (OHCHR)**
- **In the Indian society, men are expected to be the main bread winner, handle expenses, take decisions for the family.**
- **Women are expected to be docile and respectful to the husband, take care of the children, take care of the elderly and attend to the daily household chores which includes cooking, washing, cleaning and so on.**
- **During a child’s growing stage these ideas are unfortunately presented to the innocent mind first by the family and later by the society and the environment in which the child is brought up**
- **The usual dictum, “Girls do this and girls don’t do that”.**
- **This becomes the basis of *gender discrimination*.**

# Kalyani's realization

- **Kalyani is not alone. There are many like Kalyani in India.**
- **Just imagine the if the household chores she performed were paid service, what would be the situation?**
- **This is what Kalyani realized by watching the road side skit that day.**
- **People do not respect the unpaid care work that is performed by millions of home makers all over the world.**

# Unpaid Care work

- “Unpaid care work 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” (OECD).
- In an article published in the digital version of ET dated Feb 12, 2023, it is stated that “on an average, Indian women spend 7.2 hours of their daily time for such work while men spend 2.8 hours”.



# A Survey

- In a survey conducted by the students of the Economics department, it was found if a woman is engaged in cooking three meals per day for 6 people, she is cooking 18 meals per day.
- If she got married at 18 and now she is 40. Then she has been performing this task now for approximately 22 years.
- If she spent on an average three hours per day for cooking three meals. Then she has been cooking for 66 hours of her life and cooked approximately 1,44,540 meals
- At current prices, the minimum market price of one cooked meal (thali) is Rs 100/-
- At this current market rate the woman added Rs 14454000/- to the GDP of the country for cooking the meals

# A Survey

- **If paid services are hired for cooking meals by an household, then locally today the opportunity cost is Rs 3000/- per month.**
- **This means the same family will be paying Rs 36,000 as remuneration to the cook they hire for a year**
- **This translates into Rs 6,48,000 for 18 years.**
- **Thus observing the cost of paid services for cooking, at the prevailing market rate, it can be concluded that the homemaker is saving the family lakhs for rendering care work for the family all throughout the year just by only “One Cooked Meal”**

# Need to change the social attitude

- **Generally, the homemakers are disrespected and abused indiscriminately for their contribution to care work in the household.**
- **This social stigma must change. The society must start respecting the homemaker, the woman and her contribution to unpaid care services.**
- **This respect starts first by respecting the woman in me and realizing that the domestic chores I perform in the household are not demeaning or shameful.**
- **Respect for the self comes only with *Empowerment***

# How can a woman Empower herself?

**Women's empowerment has five components:**

- **women's sense of self-worth;**
- **their right to have and to determine choices;**
- **their right to have access to opportunities and resources;**
- **their right to have power to control their own lives, both within and outside the home;**
- **and their ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.**

Source: <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1102>

# References

- [https://www.oecd.org/dev/development-gender/Unpaid\\_care\\_work.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/dev/development-gender/Unpaid_care_work.pdf)
- <https://www.ohchr.org › women › gender-stereotyping>
- <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/women-spend-7-2-hours-on-unpaid-domestic-work-compared-to-2-8-hours-spent-by-men-iima-profs-research/articleshow/97837422.cms?from=mdr>
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# Contributors

## Students of the Department

- Bandita Kumari (Sixth Semester, Economics Honours)
- Divya Burnwal (Sixth Semester, Economics Honours)
- Kajal Kumari Singh (Sixth Semester, Economics Honours)

## Teachers of the Department

- Dr Swarbhanu Mitra, Associate Professor, Department of Economics
- Dr Pritha Goswami, Associate Professor, Department of Economics