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Perception of husbands regarding household chores: A survey of Bihar

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Abstract

Society always considers women as the care givers and men as the bread earner of the family. Generally men keep themselves away from household activities and women do most of the household work even they are employed. Why do men have less involvement in household activities? This question needs to be answered. The purpose of the study was to analyse perception of male regarding household chores. The present study was conducted in two towns of Bihar namely; Chapra and Patna. These towns have been selected purposively. 100 married male members from each town have been selected randomly for collecting the required data. Thus sample size comprised of 200 respondents. Data based on socio economic profile of the respondents revealed that 58.5 per cent husbands belonged to 40 to 50 years old and 95.5 per cent were either graduates or post graduates. Profession wise data showed that 62.5 per cent husbands were government employees followed by 27.5 per cent having business as main profession while 10.0 per cent husbands had private jobs.

Further, data pertaining to type of family revealed that about 68.5 per cent husbands belonged to nuclear family and rest were from joint families.

Data related to perception of husbands regarding household activities showed that about 42.5 per cent husbands assumed household activities as women's responsibilities followed by 25.5 per cent husbands mentioned household chores unproductive because of unpaid nature of work while 12.5 per cent husbands said that household activities should be shared both by husband and wife.

Again, It was very surprised to know that about 12.0 per cent husbands thought that once they helped in household activities it would make their wives more demanding and rest 7.5 per cent husbands' perception was that getting involved in household activities would degrade their reputation.

Thus, it may be inferred that a nearly 50.0 per cent of husbands considered household chores as women's responsibility and one fourth of husbands considered household activities unproductive.

Keywords: Care givers, bread earner, overburdened, empowered, perception

Introduction

It is a general perception that female are the real care givers of the family irrespective of their education or job profile. However, for the last few decades role of women are not confined to home/family only but they are working outside the home and sharing economic responsibilities of the family too. Women's participation in workforce has increased and they are playing very active role in country's economic development. In spite that stereotypes attached to women at household front remain unchanged. Gender discrimination still exists not only in India but other parts of the world also. Being female, major responsibilities of household activities lie on their shoulders. Many studies have been conducted in this regard and on the basis of findings it was documented that over two-thirds of Indian women feel, there exists inequality at home Singh Namrata (2015) [1]. A report of Nielsen India's study reveals that about 70 per cent of married Indian women feel they spend more time on household work than with their husbands. The report also documents that about 85 per cent of working Indian women feel they have two jobs, one at work and another at home. Many researches and studies reported the changing attitude of male towards female but when the matter comes at household level traditional values dominate. Donner (2020) documented that in the U.S., women used to spend about four hours a day on unpaid work, compared with about 2.5 hours for men. She also mentioned that younger opposite-sex couples were no more likely to divide home chores equitably than older couples. Similar situation has been observed in many other countries of the world.

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Several researches done in past highlighted few probable reasons of less involvement of husbands in household chores like patriarchal society, household activities comes under unpaid work, most of husbands assume household chores as feminine task etc.

The purpose of this study was to analyse the perception of husbands regarding household activities which may be helpful in knowing the possible reasons of less involvement of husbands in household activities.

Objectives

The present study was conducted with the following objectives:

1. To study the socio-economic profile of the husbands under study.
2. To analyze perception of husbands regarding household chores.

Review of literature

- Rajendran *et al.* (2010) ^[9] conducted their investigation in Vellore district of Tamil Nadu and the investigation showed that nearly 25.0 per cent of the husbands share miscellaneous domestic works. About 9.6 per cent husbands take care of their children to the schools, 7.6 per cent helps their wives to reduce their workload and only 4.2 per cent shares the work of woman so that they can participate in SHG.
- Carrim (2017) ^[2] made investigation on cultural identity work of husbands and wives settled in South Africa related to housework and children. Findings based on research revealed that Indian husbands and wives living in South Africa who occupied top management positions had not engaged in household chores and childcare from the time they got married. Further, the study explored that some couples in senior management were from middle – class who upheld the norm that wives had to engage in household chores and cooking. However, the wives indicated that their husbands assisted them to some extent with household chores and childcare when assistance was needed.
- In the study it was also reported that some husbands didn't share responsibility for household chores and children because they believed that wives are responsible for household chores and children.
- Dhillon (2020) documented results of a survey conducted by NSO from January to December 2019. The study was carried out to see participation of male in household activities on daily basis and it was reported that male living in Punjab and Haryana had less involvement in household chores due to Patriarchal state. The report of survey also disclosed that male residing these states had been discouraged by their family members, peers and neighbours if got involved in household activities.
- Further, it was also documented that in the north eastern states, participation of male in household activities was found comparatively higher because people residing in these states had gender-neutral outlook.
- India Today (2020) published results of a survey conducted by the national Statistical Office and in that report it was found that only 10 per cent Indian men

involved in household chores. This survey comprised of 4.5 lakh respondents. The collected data further showed that 84.0 per cent women's working hours are spent on unpaid activities while for men the reverse was true i.e. 80 .0 per cent of their work time was for paid activities

The survey report also disclosed that only 8 .0 per cent men participated in house cleaning and just 3 per cent in washing clothes. The survey also disclosed that unpaid nature of household work was one of the reasons of getting male less involved in household work.

- Katarki (2020) ^[5] mentioned a report of E Times Lifestyle Twitter account, which revealed that during the lockdown women were more stressed than men because of dual responsibilities of household as well as of office work. During the pandemic women lacked much support from their partners. Dr. Samir Parikh, Director of Mental Health and behavioural Sciences, Fortis Healthcare also supported this finding. This has resulted from the absence of any self-corrective measures to correct gender responsibilities. The report also gave emphasis on need to introspect the rigidity around gender responsibilities in the traditional meaning of the term.

Kumari *et al.* (2021) ^[6] in their study on Involvement of Husbands In Household Chores documented that 49.0 per cent husbands obliged their wives after extending assistance in household activities while 30.0 per cent didn't express any obligation.

Research method and materials

As Research method and materials is very important for any research work because it gives detail description of procedure and tools used in carrying out the investigation.

Locale of the study

The present study was conducted in two towns of Bihar namely; Chapra and Patna. Chapra town falls in Saran district while Patna town comes under Patna district. The two districts were selected randomly while towns were selected purposively for conducting the study.

Sampling procedure

The towns were selected purposively and 100 married male from each town have been selected randomly for getting all the required information related to the objectives.

Variables

Age, education, occupation, family type and perception of husbands regarding household activities were the variables.

Tools and Techniques of Data Collection

Required data was collected through pretested schedule. It consists of two parts, first part included questions on socio-economic profile of the respondents and second part of the schedule includes questions based on perception of husbands regarding household chores.

Statistical Tools used

Frequency, percentage, rank and bar diagram have been used for analysing and interpreting the collected data.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Socio-economic profile of the respondents under study area N=200

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age (years)		
Less than 40	39	19.5
40-50	117	58.5
More than 50	44	22.0
Gross Total	200	100
Education		
Matriculation	4	2.0
Intermediate	5	2.5
Graduation	97	48.5
Master and above	94	47.0
Gross Total	200	100
Occupational status		
Private job	20	10.0
Government job	125	62.5
Business	55	27.5
Gross Total	200	100
Types of family		
Nuclear	137	68.5
Joint	63	31.5
Gross Total	200	100

Above table describes socio-economic profile of the respondents under study and it shows that 19.5 per cent respondents were less than 40 years old followed by 22.0 per cent more than 50 years while 58.5 per cent husbands belongs to 40 to 50 years age group.

Thus, it may be concluded that nearly sixty per cent of husbands under study were in the age group of 40 to 50 years.

Data pertaining to educational background showed that 48.5 per cent husbands were graduates and about 47.0 per cent were having master or higher degrees.

Further, the table clearly showed that 2.5 per cent husbands were intermediate pass and only 2.0 per cent husbands

completed their matriculation.

Thus, majority of husbands i.e. 95.5 per cent were either graduate or post graduate.

Again profession wise data revealed that 62.5 per cent male respondents were government employee followed by 28.0 per cent having own business while only 9.5 per cent were working in private organization.

Thus, majority of study sample were government employee.

Data related to family type showed that about 68.5 per cent husbands belonged to nuclear family while 31.5 per cent were from joint family.

Table 2: Perception of husbands regarding household activities N=200

Perception of husbands			Percent (%)	Rank
1	Household activities are mainly the responsibilities of home makers	85	42.5	1 st
2	Household activities are unpaid job so assume it as unproductive	51	25.5	2 nd
3	Once getting involve in household chores makes wives more demanding	24	12.0	4 th
4	In joint family husbands avoid to get involved in household chores because it may degrade their reputation	15	7.5	5 th
5	Should share household activities together	25	12.5	3 rd
Gross Total		200	100	

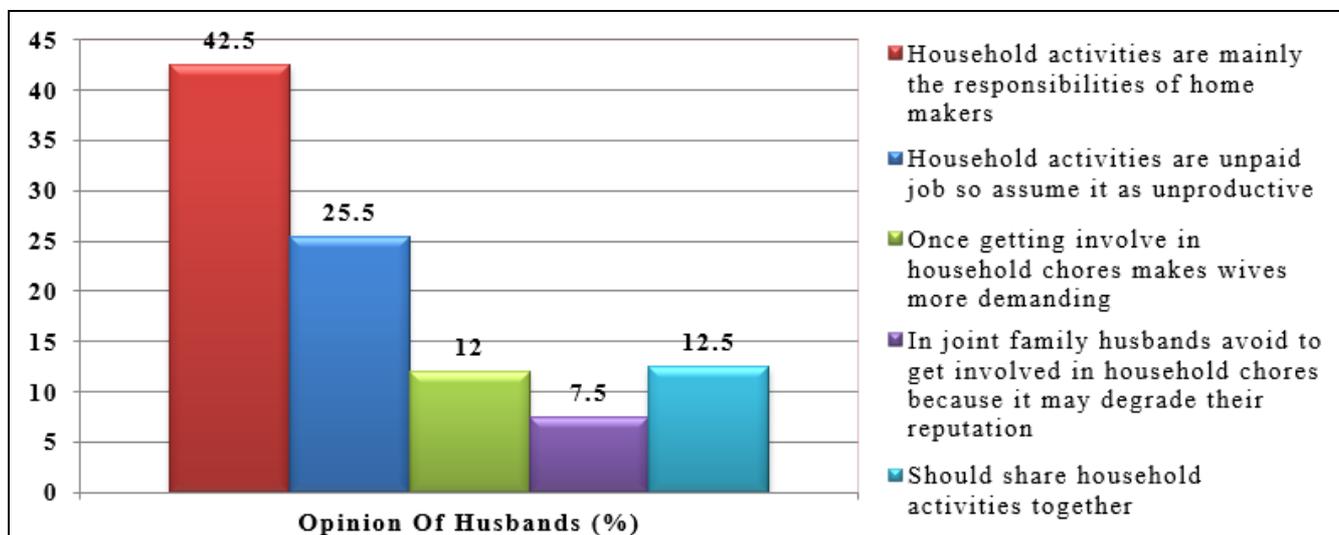


Fig 1: Perception of husbands regarding Household Chores (%)

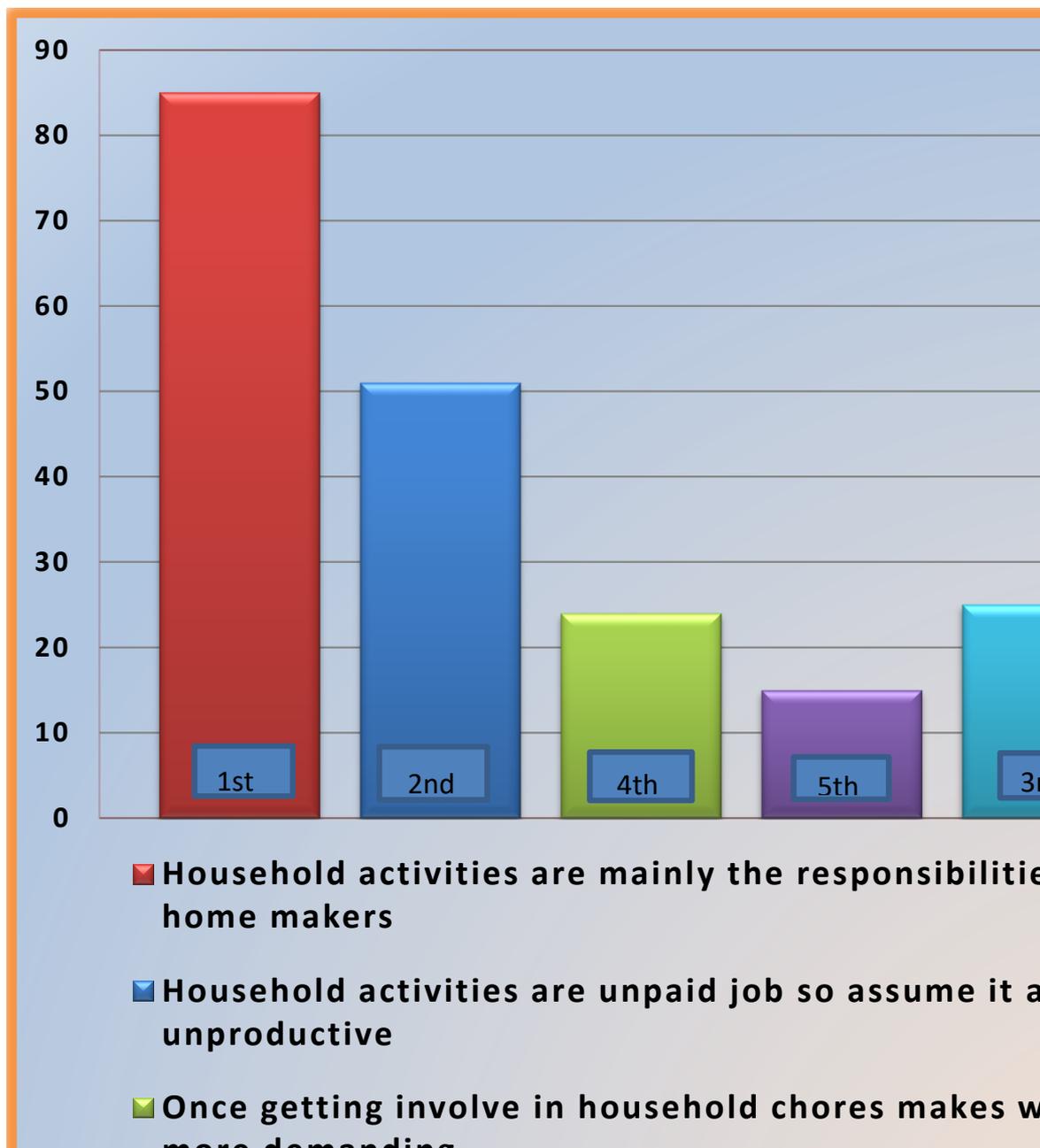


Fig 2: Ranking Based on Perception of Husbands

Table-2 describes perception of husbands on household activities and it is very obvious that approximately 42.5 per cent husbands thought household activities as main responsibilities of women followed by 25.5 per cent who put household activities into unproductive category. Again, only 12.5 per cent husbands accepted that household activities must be done by both husbands and wives together. It was also very surprising to know that 12.0 per cent husbands were found with this opinion that once they helped in household activities it would make their wives more demanding while 7.5 per cent husbands reported with the perception that getting involved in household activities would degrade their reputation.

Thus, it may be inferred from the above table that a big section of husbands assumed household activities as the responsibilities of women and about one fourth husbands considered household activities unproductive due to unpaid nature work. Only 12.5 per cent husbands think that household activities should be performed both by husbands and wives.

Conclusion

21st Century brought many positive transformation in women’s life. Their role didn’t remain confine to home and household responsibilities. They are playing very active role in almost all spheres of development. Their struggle start from morning and continue till they go to bed. Everyday day she tries to make a balance between personal and professional life. Everyone knows when a woman starts working outside, she is overloaded because she gets very less assistance from their partner in household chores. The present study was conducted to know the perception of husbands regarding household activities which may be helpful in knowing the reality behind less involvement of husbands in household work. Findings of the investigation showed that nearly 50.0 per cent male respondents assumed household activities as women’s responsibilities and one fourth respondents thought household chores unproductive because of unpaid job. It was also very surprising to know the fact that about 12.5 per cent husbands thought once they involved themselves in household work it would make their wives more demanding.

Further, about 7.5 per cent husbands disclosed that

involvement in household activities would degrade their reputation in their families and society.

Thus, after going through this investigation we may reach at this conclusion that majority of husbands think that women are mainly responsible for household activities and this perception got first rank, household activities as unproductive work attained second rank, household activities should be done by both husbands and wife achieved 3rd rank, once getting involved in household activities makes wife more demanding this perception got 4th rank and involvement of male in household chores degrade reputation of husband came at 5th rank.

Through this study we may conclude that these are the same reasons behind less involvement of husbands in household chores.

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