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Indian Housewife's! Unsung Contributors to Indian Economy: A Case Based Analysis

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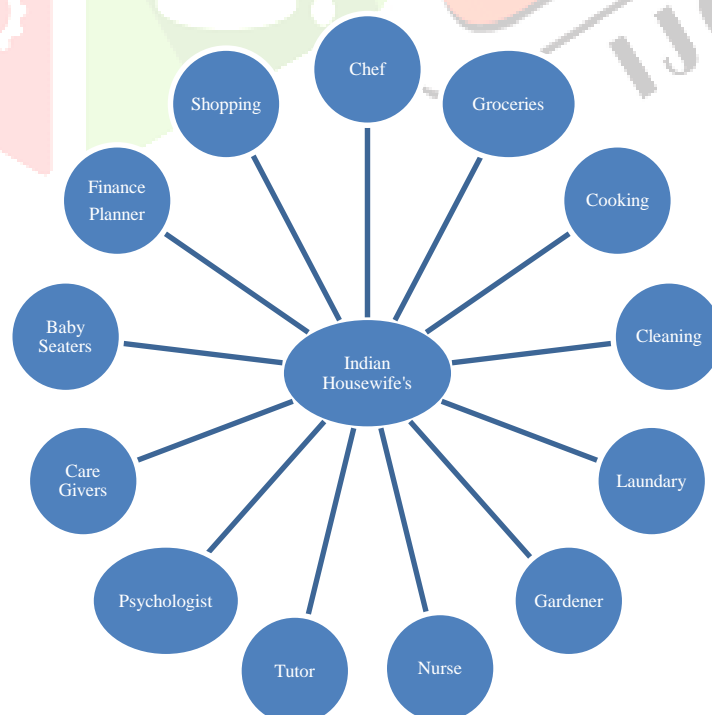
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Backdrop of the Study:

Indian housewives are that pillar of the Indian society around whom the each family revolves. Being a home maker is the most difficult task a person can takeover. Sacrificing own needs and wishes for forever and giving one direction support, care and love to family, is something which Indian housewives are born with. In India housewives are the largest workforce in the country who works 24*7 without questioning and in return paid nothing. In short housewives are hugely overworked, but often she does not get the appreciation as much she deserves. The daily task of the housewives includes:



Author's Compilation

Therefore, whatever we call them a homemaker, a stay-at-home mom or domestic goddesses, being a housewife is a full time job. Even without adding childcare to the mix, today's successful housewife is a highly-skilled professional with a mind-boggling job description. Her daily responsibilities range from chemistry to carpentry-and her pay check is her family's well-being (S. Siva, 2018). Recently, lot have been said and discussed about the housewives and there actual contributions towards nation build up. But it is the perception of the each member of the society regarding their existence. *It has been seen that in many social gatherings a very common question have been raised before women that what are you doing? If the answer is I am a house wife, then most prominently the reply returns on a very serious note, Oh! You are doing nothing and that's the situation.* A housewife is a good hard worker and a planner like any professional; it's only that she doesn't get paid. Every Indian housewife works at the cost of no worth of work and mental exhaustion of insecurities of not having freedom of doing things her way both financially and morally (K. Taunk, 2017).

Purpose of the Study:

There, is extensive discussion upon about the contribution of women towards Indian economy. In India very small percentage of the women are actually doing job and getting paid. Most of the women cover them with the responsibility of almost all household chores and such women do not add anything directly to the income of the household. The annual wealth of the country's wealth in the name of GDP includes the income in which the money was transacted. Thus, here question arises what is the importance of a housewife in a family and society. Considering her work to be unproductive does not only reduce her status, but also destroys the very existence and identity. While the work of domestic working women looking after the home and maintaining the family is far from career rat race, on the other hand it is a very complex, laborious and most important job, but ironically, there is no evaluation of it at the family level or GDP level.

Thus, motivated by such insecurities the present paper tries to search the place of housewives within the society and their involvement in present scenario.

Housewives Daily Routine:

Living simple and thinking family wellbeing is how the daily routine day starts with. The routine of housewife's involves "zones of time" that each part or hour of the clock involves certain working types. Waking up in between 6:00 to 6:30 a.m everyday is how the high- energy day begins. The day starts with removing the window and door curtains and sipping a cup of coffee or tea, seems to be only luxury for them.

Most of the Indian household witnesses that the, mainstream day starts with worshipping God, where, it is believed that a housewife pray for family health, prosperity and progress. Laundry segregating and putting them into soap water is the next step followed by the preparation of breakfast. She prepares the breakfast for whole family keeping in mind the timeline of other family member and as well as their likings and disliking of food. While other family members get ready for school and office purpose, she starts doing kitchen part of the daily house tidy routine. Washing dishes and cloths and putting them for drying places leads to the time zone called early afternoon (Berry.K, 2020).

During this phase of the day preparation for lunch beings and doing the messier rooms tidy. Even the housewives also act as the economic force of the house. As 95%of the modern housewives are their

family's primary grocery shopper and 94% their family's primary home essentials shopper (Agent. F, 2016).

Late afternoon, being alone in the house and after so much activity, it's time for giving her a good lunch treat and watching daily serials basically commands the time. In short, from a housewife point of view this time can be termed as "Me Time". The daily serials basically revolve around various themes like love, family and marriage etc. They often touch various women's issues. From teenagers to grandmothers the entertaining story lines of these serials have got the audience hooked up on to them. Indian housewives tries to mirror their life with these serials as these shows portrays relationships, emotions, festivities, customs, jewellery etc. The show also involves different issues and taboos present in our Indian society and raise questions about the time and again (Kandpal. A, 2014). Hence, these serials create stereotypes and influence the outlook and based on these it is often seen that housewives are judging and chit-chatting with each others.

Therefore, after watching the serial and finishing up the treat, it is time for putting the dried up cloths at proper place and cleaning the remaining utensils. Between 3:30 to 4:00 p.m, the time for a small mid-nap or the power- nap. Such nap is necessary to regain the lost energy and a little rest to aching body and busy mind (Saxena.R, 2017).

Ultimately, the time zone shifted to evening that is 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., the time for evening snacks and tea or coffee. A time of family get together, sweet talks and discussion of whole day activities and taking care of studies of kids. Eventually, the night falls and preparation of dinner begins. The dinner generally gets over within 10:00 to 10:30 p.m or sometimes 11:00p.m. After the dinner finished where the other family members go to bed and get cosy with the pillows and blankets, being a housewife and begin the sincere member of the family, she also prepare certain parts of next day upcoming activity. Before sleeping she checks the every room and locks the doors and open up the ventilators and at last goes to bed and the long day ends.

Hence, the goal is to make the home a comfortable place for her and other family members.

Evaluating the Housewife's Contribution to Economy:-

From the discussion of the daily routine of the housewife, one can term the housewife as super-achiever, wonder women, super women etc. These are some of the compliments taht a woman may get (Panicker, L. 2019). Thus, it is clear that the housewife activities are diverse and not easy to calculate financially. But ignoring the importance of her work is simply not fair. Besides, providing a general feeling of well-being and emotional support, economist's have long debated about setting an economic value to household services of women to arrive at a correct estimate of the country's gross domestic product (Reyar.A, 2018).

Recently, the governor of Reserve Bank of India, Dr. Raghuram Rajan, while raising a question mark over the way GDP is calculated in the country stated that "we get growth because people are moving into different areas". In economics, the distinction between productive and non-productive activities is crucial to the basic concepts of National Income Accounting. A productive activity in its broadest sense can be defined as one which involves the use of scares resources in the provision of goods and services to satisfy human wants. However, according to some economists, not all activities that result in human satisfying can be included in the definition of productive activities for the simple reason that it will make the concept too far-fetched to be subjected to any meaningful measurement. Thus, it would not be surprising to find that honest difference of opinion exists among experts (Prof. Guruprasad. M, 2016).

A woman has to play many roles during her life cycle and being the housewife is the most challenging task. A housewife generates a feeling of being wanted and loved. The family members get enough time, energy and purpose to pursue progress in his career without any hassle. In true sense, she is the trainer of a child from the child's infancy. All these jobs require lots of patience, tolerance and sense of responsibility. The silent economic contribution of house-wives is much more, if one has to engage professionals to undertake domestic work at home. This shows their potential and an invaluable unpaid resource and their contribution to society is invaluable (Mehta. N, 2020).

The above discussion has fuelled a lot of argument regarding house-wife's contribution to the economy. So here is an answer to the question- Should housewives be contributors to GDP (taking India's case)? Why? Why not?

Why they should be considered as contributors to GDP:

1. In order to promote the concept of women empowerment, especially in countries like India where a patriarchal setup is prevalent, we will first have to break through this superstition that 'being a housewife is no big deal' and 'her work is nothing as compared to the work done in corporate sectors'. The inclusion of housewives in GDP would add an inherent value to the work done by numerous women across India.
2. Giving housewives a place in the Gross Domestic Product calculations would help them to also earn wages. This would give them financial sustenance and a say in the financial decisions of the house. Moreover, this would help housewives have an elevated image in the society.
3. A very strong argument in giving the work of a housewife an official work status is that the very chores done by a housewife are paid when done by the domestic help. This implies that household chores also constitute a major part of our economy and add to the GDP but when done by a housewife the very same daily jobs of cleaning dishes and washing clothes go unnoticed and unrecognized. This seems to be a faulty system.

Why they should not be considered contributors to GDP:

1. Inclusion in GDP implies that this particular activity needs to be paid with proper wages, but the question is that whether in a huge country like India this would be ever possible?

For example-Who will determine whether cleaning utensils should be paid more than washing clothes? And what if a particular homemaker makes food but has hired domestic help for other chores?

(Resource: Sam. N, 2018)

Conclusion:

The Present study provides a detail discussion regarding daily working area. The study also focused upon the long going argument that is whether, the working of the housewife should be or not to be included in the economic terms. Though these study has the limitation as it mainly focuses on the housewives residing in India only, but still hope that it has the capacity to reflect the importance of the housewife in the society.

CASE STUDY

Hard work, Patience and Success: Case Study on Mrs. M. Chakraborty, a House-wife

Mrs. M. Chakraborty, a common Indian Housewife, belongs to the middle class Indian family. She got married at the age of 25 on 1986. During these phase she used to work as a Social Science Teacher of Kendra Vidhalaya (Central School). Her husband works at one of the established power sector of north-eastern region (NER) of India known as NEEPCO (North-Eastern Electric Power Corporation Ltd.). She started her career as government employee and after voluntarily quitting the job she made sure her

children get the full education opportunity and established by their own. Today her children are well settled and earning their own and her husband retired from a respectable position. Thus as a housewife and a mother she is sure success.

But was her life always this way? The short answer is....No. Soon after marriage her husband got transferred to Kopili Hydro Electric Project (KHEP), a unit of NEEPCO. Here she worked as a social science teacher for students of 10, 11 and 12 classes. At this time phase she stayed with her husband and a baby daughter. After that her husband got transferred to Tripura on 1996. She has to resign from the job as the workload increases and as well as her husband going to another state. As she has to move with her husband and the lion share of the packing task fall on her part. Reaching at new residence in the hope of digging herself out of huge responsibilities as unpacking things, cleaning, providing support to her husband for rejoining his new office etc. Here at this juncture she gave birth to a baby boy and now she has to raise two children and again has to resume her everyday tenacious work. Coming of relatives, taking care of relatives and friends, understanding their needs, likings and disliking of food while cooking, managing everyday household tasks, getting children ready for school, arranging the messed up room and ultimately taking care of herself being the daughter-in-law of the family is like hitting the rock bottom. At the year 2000, her husband again got transferred to Meghalaya, where, headquarter of NEEPCO office is established. The whole process of packing and shifting and daily routine again took a roller coaster route.

All these hectic life incidents sometimes make her sank into deep depression, getting little to nothing appreciation or accomplished within certain time. In the hope of discover herself out from such depression, she took the challenge head-on. The challenge called "Happy Home". Her goal is to struggle with everyday life to make the home atmosphere lovable and safe feeling. Therefore, despite numerous setbacks and challenges, she found solace in doing household tasks. In fact she found that this little solace was enough to be happy. She had ended up in exactly the position she wanted to be most as a housewife. There was not anything left to felt half-done, as presently all now her family members are well settled and encourage her for her scarifies and work done.

From these we can conclude that if anyone have a dream or a passion and one keep getting the hurdle in the life and running into getting nothing, don't let that stop you. If one is going through a tough time and working on something one really believe in don't give up.

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Biodata

Dr. Satabdi Roy Choudhury, born on 8th September 1988, is a Freelance Writer from Assam, India. She started her educational journey from Kendriya Vidyalaya and completed her Graduation from St. Edmund’s College, Shillong, Meghalaya. She is Credited with MBA degree in HR Major and Marketing Minor from EIILM, Sikkim. She holds the PhD from Assam Central University, Silchar (2018) with specific focus upon the Well-Being activities of the Indian Power Sector Enterprises for their employees and as well as their subjective opinion regarding these measures. She is the recipient of *The Real Super Women 2020* from Forever Star India Award (10th December, 2020) on the Category called Academic Skills. She is also the recipient of the award *Best Social Service to Education* from Brand Opus India, 2020. She is also Nominated as *Global Women Inspiration Award* and *Young Researcher Award* by I Can Foundation, Jaipur, India and Indian Institute, Bangaluru, India of Scholars respectively.

Mrs. Mitra Roy Choudhury, born on 5th November, 1959, is a House-Wife from Assam, India. She holds the M.A degree on Economics from Dibrugarh University (1984), Assam, India. She had worked as English Teacher at Kendriya Vidyalaya, Umrangshu, Assam. For the reaming life till now she devoted herself for the growth of her family. She remained the one hand support for her husband and her children. Her determination remained rock solid and today she is successful in her role as housewife.

