

## **Wives, Husbands and Sharing of Household Works in Indian Villages**

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### **Abstract**

*There is a general belief that nowadays men share household works and there is a change from the tradition. The main objective of the paper is to analyse whether husbands shares the household works in rural areas and the study was conducted with 450 respondents in 26 villages in India. The study reports that the findings are not encouraging as projected or anticipated and suggests NGOs NGOs and SHGs should take role in sensitising men to assist in the household works since sharing of household works by men is considered as an indicator of women empowerment.*

**Keywords:** Households-sharing-SHG- NGOs-HDI-GDI

### **1. Introduction**

In general women take care of the household works thought the world, in developing countries where poverty is common, women plays important role not only in household works but also earn additional income by involving in farm, non farm activities and micro enterprises. UN in its latest report (2010) stated that there is no active participation of men in the domestic works of households where women are fully employed. In Indian villages women traditionally play the key role on household works such as nurturing the children and old people, cooking, housekeeping, fetching water, maintenance of cows etc and nowadays their work load also increased. Previously sharing of house hold works were as considered as it may reduce the work load of women but now it is considered as a indicator of women empowerment. This paper analyses the sharing of household by the husbands in Vellore

District in Tamil Nadu in four sections, section I deals the Review of Literature, section II explains the Research Methodology, section III analyses the results and final section deals with conclusions and suggestions.

Though sharing of household works by men are widely discussed but very limited literature is available. Gary Backer (1965) perhaps was the first economist to talk about unpaid work in his theory of allocation of time and he considered a household as a small factory. However, he neither discussed sharing of work between men and women in a household nor its sharing by different socio-economics groups at the macro-level. Friends of Women's World Banking (2001) reported that in South India there is no evidence of men sharing household responsibilities. MYRADA (2002) study in 4 southern states reported that 67.7 % husbands share some household works. Loyola (2004) reported that in Kerala 89% of the women opined that there was no change in the attitude of men in helping women in their household work. Mala (2004) observed that husband's participation in household tasks was seen to be very marginal in Haryana, Punjab and UP. ENERGIA International Network (2006) reported that increased income opportunities for women have induced husbands to share household duties in Bangladesh and Nepal. Kelkar and Dev (2006) reported that there have been some changes in the sharing of domestic work by men in Bangladesh. Ghosh and Malik (2010) studied the sharing of household among Santhala tribal in West Bengal and reported, women on the other hand, in addition to supporting their husbands in agricultural activities and animal husbandry, perform all the household work The latest report of UN(2010) is interesting one and it gives a global picture. O sharing of household work by the husbands, reported that in the more developed countries, women spend an average of almost five hours a day on domestic work, whereas men spend on average less than two and a half hours a day on this, in countries like Italy, Japan, Portugal, Spain the difference is even greater, with women spending three to four-fold the amount of time spent by men on domestic work. The study also informed, men perform far less domestic work in Asia, in Pakistan and Turkey, the time men spend on domestic work is not even a fifth of what women spend, evidence from Latin America and Africa is weaker, as there are data for only a few countries is available.

Hence it may be concluded from the available literature that husbands share zero percent to 67 per cent of household works in India

**2. Research Methodology**

**2.1 Study area**

With the backdrop of the review of literature the study was conducted in Vellore district of Tamil Nadu in India to know to what extent men shares household works in rural areas. Vellore district lies between 12 15’ and 13 15’ of the Northern Latitude and 78 20’ and 79 50’ of the Eastern Longitude and is one of the biggest districts in Tamil Nadu. Its total geographical area is 5920 Sq. Km. All villages in the district have access to electricity and are connected by roads. The distribution of population in Vellore District indicates that it is a rural based district since 62 percent of its population lives in rural areas. There are 594028 rural families in Vellore district of which 200925 families live below poverty line, which is 33 percent. It may be said that one third of the families in the district is poverty stricken. Two blocks viz. Nemili and Natrampalli which are located in the opposite ends the Vellore district were selected for the study.

The Human Development Index (HDI) for the State is estimated at 0.657 by the Planning Commission of Tamil Nadu. This value ranges from 0.584 to 0.757 at the district level and the HDI value for the Vellore district is 0.658. The Gender Development Index (GDI) for the district is 0.655 and the GDI value for the Tamil Nadu is 0.654. (GDI value ranges from 0.582 to 0.766 at the district level) In HDI and GDI values the Vellore district ranks eleventh position in the state. (The comparison between HDI and GDI shows that if the GDI rank is less than the HDI value in a district, the position of women in that district is very poor compared to men. If the GDI is greater than HDI, there will be greater gender equality in human development.) .

A total of 450 women respondents were selected for the study, 225 respondents from each blocks (13 villages from each block) and pre tested questionnaire was used as a tool to collect

primary data. Simple statistical tools viz. frequency, per cent and ANOVA were used to analyse the data using SPSS (18).

**3. Details of Respondents**

**3.1 Age**

450 women respondents, comprising 225 women from Nemili block and 225 from Natrampalli block, were selected for the study.

Table 3: Age of the respondents

S. No.	Age	Frequency	Per cent
1	Below 25 years	57	12.7
2	26 to 30 years	111	24.7
3	31 to 35 years	88	19.6
4	36 to 40 years	87	19.3
5	41 to 50 years	90	20.0
6	Above 51 years	17	3.8
	Total	450	100.00

Source: field survey during 2007-2009

**3.2 Education**

Illiterates constitute nearly 34 per cent of the respondents. According to census 2001 report, the level of illiteracy among women is 44.80 per cent for the Vellore district In Nemili block, it is 43.73 per cent and in Natrampalli block it is 46.16 per cent.

Table 4: Education of the respondents

S. No	Details	Frequency	Per cent
1	Illiterate	154	34.2
2	Up to S.S.L.C	266	59.1
3	Higher Secondary	21	4.7
4	Degree	9	2.0
	Total	450	100.00

Source: field survey during 2007-2009

The table 4 shows that most of the respondents (59.1 per cent) have studied up to 10<sup>th</sup> standard and nine respondents (2 per cent) are graduates. Following table 3.3 shows the comparison of age and education of the respondent

From the table 5 it is evident that out of 266 respondents, 215 respondents who are within 40 years studied up to tenth standard (S.S.L.C). So it may be stated that relatively younger age women have better formal education than others.

Table 5: Education and age of the respondent

S. N.	Education of respondents	Age of the respondents						Total
		Less than 25 years	26 to 30 years	31 to 35 years	36 to 40 years	41 to 50 years	Above 51 years	
1	Illiterate	8	20	30	42	45	9	154
2	Up to S.S.L.C	39	81	52	43	43	8	266
3	Higher secondary	6	7	4	2	2	0	21
4	Degree and above	4	3	2	0	0	0	9
	Total	57	111	88	87	90	17	450

Source: field survey during 2007-2009

### 3.3 Family size

It is evident from the study that most of the rural women adopt small family norms. Following table 6 explains the family size of the respondents.

Table 6: Family Size

S.No	Family size	Frequency	Per cent
1	Up to 4 members	257	57.1
2	5-6 members	174	38.7
3	7-8 members	16	3.6
4	9 members and above	3	0.7
	Total	450	100.00

Source: field survey during 2007-2009

The table 6 shows that most of the respondents (57.1 per cent) have only two children and their families consist of only 4 members followed by respondents having 5-6 members in the family. The table 7 analyses the impact of education on the family size of the respondents

Table 7: Family size and education of respondents

S. N.	Family size	Education of respondents				Total
		Illiterate	Up to S.L.C	Higher secondary	Degree and above	
1	Up to 4 Members	80	155	15	7	257
2	5-6 Members	67	100	5	2	174
3	7-8 Members	6	9	1	0	16
4	9 Members and above	1	2	0	0	3
	Total	154	266	21	9	450

Source: field survey during 2007-2009

From the table 7 it is evident that 155 women who studied up to tenth standard have less than 4 members in their family whereas only 80 respondents who are illiterate have 4 members in the family which shows that education is having some impact on the family size of the respondents

### 3.4 Age of the spouse

The husbands of most of the women respondents are in the age group of 41 to 50 years followed by 36 to 40 years. Table 8 shows the age of husbands of the respondents.

Table 8: Age of the Spouse

S.No	Age	Frequency	Percent
1	Widow	18	4.0
2	Less than 25 years	3	7.0
3	26-30 years	39	8.7
4	31-35 years	81	18.0
5	36 to 40 years	92	20.4
6	41 to 50 years	141	31.3
7	Above 51 years	76	16.9
	Total	450	100.00

Source: field survey during 2007-2009

### 3.5 Education of the spouse

Spouses of most of the respondents (58.9 percent) have also studied up to S.S.L.C. followed by illiterate category (29.1 per cent) and it is presented in the table 9.

Table 9: Education of the spouse

S.No.	Education of the husband	Frequency	Per cent
1	Not applicable (Widow)	18	4.0
2	Illiterate	131	29.1
3	Up to S.S.L.C	265	58.9
4	Higher Secondary	18	4.0
5	Degree	18	4.0
	Total	450	100

Source: field survey during 2007-2009

### 3.6 Land owned

Most of the respondents are poor people who are either landless or small farmers and the table 10 shows the land owned details of respondents:

Table 10: Land owned by the respondents

S. No	Details	Frequency	Per cent
1	No land	218	48.4
2	Up to 1 acre	136	30.2
3	1-2 acres	67	14.9
4	2-3 acres	15	3.3
5	3-4 acres	9	2.0
6	Above 4 acres	5	1.1
	Total	450	100.00

Source: field survey during 2007-2009

From the table 11 it is evident that 48.4 per cent respondents are landless followed by 30 per cent respondents having one acre of land and 45 per cent of respondents have land up to 2 acres.

Table 11: Land Owned and Age of the Respondents

S. No	Land owned	Age of the respondents						Total
		Less than 25 years	26 to 30 years	31 to 35 years	36 to 40 years	41 to 50 years	Above 51 years	
1	No land	28	49	42	40	46	13	218
2	Up to 1 acres	18	47	22	23	24	2	136
3	1-2 acres	10	11	16	17	13	0	67
4	2-3 acres	0	4	3	3	4	1	15
5	3-4 acres	1	0	3	3	2	0	9
6	above 4 acres	0	0	2	1	1	1	5
	Total	57	111	88	87	90	17	450

Source: field survey during 2007-2009

Table 11 shows that 100 respondents who are less than 40 years have land up to one acre and 49 respondents in the same age have two acres, but 26 respondents above 41 years have land up to one acre and 13 respondents beyond 40 years have land up to two acres. It is concluded that respondents who are relatively younger have more land than other respondents.

**4. Results and Discussions**

**4.1 Sharing of house work by husband**

The study reported that 52.2 percent women informed that their husband is sharing the household work and 47.8 percent respondent’s husbands are not sharing household work and a major difference in this aspect was observed in the two blocks ,though the socio economic conditions remain almost similar.

Table 12: Sharing of house work by husband

Sharing of household works by husbands	Block		Total	%	F	Sig.
	Nemili	Natrampalli				
No	50	165	215	47.8	158.842	.000
Yes	175	60	235	52.2		
Total	225	225	450	100.0		

Source: field survey during 2007-2009

It is evident from the table that in Nemili block, husbands share more household works than their counter parts in Natrampalli block and there is a significant difference between the blocks regarding sharing of household works by the husbands.

**4.2 Sharing husbands and the household works**

Nearly 25 percent of the husbands shares miscellaneous domestic works such as getting water, going to provision shops, purchasing medicines etc and they are not sharing in a systematic manner and according to situation they help and share some works, 9.6 per cent of the husbands take care of children to the schools and 7.6 per cent helps their wives to reduce their work load and 4.2 per cent shares the work of women so that they can participate in SHG

activities. 2.7 per cent husbands shares their household works expecting reciprocation from women. Table 13 explains the opinions of the respondents

Table 13: Husbands are sharing the household works

S.N.	Responses	Frequency	Percent
1	Husbands does not share household works	215	47.8
2	Takes children to school	43	9.6
3	Helps in purchasing vegetables	15	3.3
4	Helps to reduce work load of wife	34	7.6
5	Husbands helps so that wife can attend SHG	19	4.2
6	Husband helps so that women will help him in his work	12	2.7
7	Husband helps to some extent only	112	24.8
	Total	450	100

Source: SPSS Output

**5. Conclusions**

Age of the women and family size do not influence the husbands in sharing their household work. But there is a relationship between the age of the husbands and sharing of household works, men in the age group of 41 to 50 years significantly shares household works. Similarly household work was shared by husbands in the household who have landed property, there is a positive correlation between the land holding and sharing of works. There is no relationship between the family size and sharing of household work by husbands. The study concludes that the educational level of the husbands strongly influences the sharing of household works, there is a significant relationship between the education of men and sharing of household work. The study concludes that sharing household works by husbands in rural India is not encouraging one and only 25 per cent of husbands effectively shares the household works in real sense.

Table 14 Analysis of relationship

Variables	F value	Significance
Relationship between the age of the women and sharing of household work by husbands	.800	.550
Relationship between the education of the women and sharing of household work by husbands	2.887	.035
Relationship between the family size and sharing of household work by husbands	.336	.799
Relationship between the age of men and sharing of household work	1.918	.076
Relationship between the education of men and sharing of household work	8.099	.000
Relationship between the land owned and sharing of household work	4.261	.001

Source: SPSS Output

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