

## Driving Factors for Participation in Domestic Work

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### ABSTRACT

Despite of increased labour force participation worldwide women are still performing most of the house work. This article focuses on factors which formulate the guidelines for division of domestic work between couples. Factors like educational status and employment derive husbands to participate less and wife to more. Husbands and wives having more available time perform more. Lower difference between salaries of partners results in equal division of domestic work. There are few less explored factors like psychological job involvement, marital control and occupational prestige which can contribute more to this unequal division. This article ends with portraying the actual challenges for equal division of domestic work.

**Key words:** Domestic work, Division of domestic work, Time availability, Relative resources.

### INTRODUCTION

Interest in equal division of domestic work has been ignited by the massive entry of women in paid labour force. While women with children performing well in paid labour market men are still lagging behind in participating in domestic work. In last few decades domestic work and division of domestic work between dual earners has been a topic of research. Domestic work researchers have typically examined a set of tasks: cooking, cleaning, washing utensils, house and garden maintenance, shopping, laundry, ironing, paying bills and caring of child and old persons. Simply household labour is unpaid work completed by family or household members to keep the family and home operating efficiently. [1] Household labour has also been referred to as unpaid labour, [2] Unpaid work, [3] Domestic labour, [4] Household tasks, [5] Household work, [6] Housework, [7,8] Family

labour, [9] Domestic tasks, [10] and Domestic work. [11] Despite the diversity in terminology, the term “Domestic work” will be used in this paper to avoid ambiguity.

Few recent studies have shown that few factors were affecting the old gendered division of domestic work. For example women who have more education tend to do less household labour than other women [12, 13] but men who have more education tend to do more household labour than other men. [12,13] Like this other factors that is time availability, [14] employment status [15] and number of children [16] also has an effect on division of domestic work. Thus in this paper, we will review unequal division of domestic work and factors predicting it. In brief we will discuss related resources and time availability which can determine the division of domestic work between husband and wife.

## DIVISION OF DOMESTIC WORK

Table no – 1 Country wise distribution of research studies showing imbalanced division of domestic work

S.No.	Author and Year	Country	Results
1	Habib, Nuwayhid and Yeretizian (2006)	Lebanon	Women continue to do larger share of work regardless of their involvement in paid market.
2	Lewin- Epstein, Stier and Braun (2006)	Germany	Men devote far fewer hours to housework than do women.
3	Lewin- Epstein, Stier and Braun (2006)	Israel	Wife's housework hours are more than husbands.
4	Romano and Bruzzese (2007)	Italy	Wife does most of the domestic work
5	Mannino and Deutsch (2007)	England	Women do more housework and childcare than their husbands.
6	Claffey and Mickelson (2008)	USA	Wife does larger share of housework than husband
7	Bjarnason and Hjalmsdottir (2008)	Iceland	Adolescent's egalitarian attitude regarding division of domestic work is decreased.
8	Goni-Legaz, Ollo-Lopez and Bayo-Mortiones (2010)	Spain	On an average only 12 per cent women share household responsibilities equally with their partners.
9	OECD (2011)	India	Women do all the household work.
10	Oshio, Nozaki and Kobayashi (2012)	China	Chinese Husbands do 29per cent of housework.
11	Oshio, Nozaki and Kobayashi (2012)	Japan	Husbands do 9.4per cent of the housework
12	Oshio, Nozaki and Kobayashi (2012)	Korea	Only 18.6 per cent of housework done by husbands.
13	Mikula, Reiderer and Bodi (2012)	Switzerland, Germany and Austria	The mean of the division of domestic labour indicates that the division is imbalanced to the disadvantage of wives.
14	Bredtmen (2014)	Germany	Women perform more unpaid work than men.
15	Dong and An (2014)	China	Women spend more time than men on unpaid work.

Table no. 1 is clearly showing that researches done from years 2006 to 2015 depict imbalanced division of domestic work between spouses across many countries. Habib, Nuwayhid and Yeretizian (2006) [17] in Middle East specifically in Lebanon asked 5,998 individuals and concluded that women perform continuously more housework than men. But women's load of housework is decreased as they joined the labour market and men's contribution to domestic labour is increased with involvement in paid labour. In a comparison between Germany and Israel by [18] Israeli couples were found to be slightly more egalitarian than German households regarding division of domestic work. But in both countries men spent less hours on housework than do women.

In another work in 2007 done in England using both childcare and housework tasks with 7 point rating scale shown that wives do more housework and childcare than their husbands.

Sample of 121 married or employed mothers with high socio economic status from USA reported performing nearly two thirds of the household labour. [19] Iceland ranks among the most egalitarian nations in the world. But in 2008 adolescents of

Iceland reported that same-sex attraction hold more egalitarian division of domestic work. These adolescents also reported slight decrease in their egalitarian attitude. [20]

In Spain in 2011 only 12per cent dual earner couples share household responsibilities equally. [21] On the other hand Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2011) conducted a study in India and released data that Indian men spend 53 minutes a day for helping in household work which is actually 4per cent of a whole day and women do all the household. Oshio, Nozaki and Kobayashi (2013) [22] examined the division of domestic work in three countries Japan, Korea and China. They found that among three countries Chinese husbands do 29.4per cent of the housework which is more than Japanese and Koreans but still women are responsible for domestic chores more than men. In China, Dong and An (2014) [23] again proved that women perform more unpaid work than men. Similarly in Austria, Germany and Switzerland division of domestic work is imbalanced to the disadvantaged to women. [24]

In all the above countries women are performing more domestic work than men from the year 2006-2014. So it is very

important to look after the main reasons behind this imbalance as women are also performing paid work but still responsible for unpaid work which is resulting in double burden on them. [25]

### **RELATIVE RESOURCES AND DIVISION OF DOMESTIC WORK:**

The relative resource theory or resource-bargaining theory [26] suggests that the division of labour in a marriage is based upon power relations between spouses. [27] This conceptualizes the division of housework as reflecting the resources men and women bring to relationships. [1] According to this explanation, the individual with the most resources (education, earning and occupational prestige) uses those resources to negotiate his/her way out of housework. [28] Relative resources are usually measured by doing comparison between husband wife's education, salary and occupational prestige. Few theories assume that domestic work and child care are undesirable activities to be avoided and that the person with handsome resources will have more decision power and do less work. For example individuals with more resources e.g. education, earnings and occupational prestige use these resources to negotiate his/her way out of house work. [28] This approach shows that both men and women see domestic work as tasks which should be avoided and motivated to reduce their share of it.

### **Educational level of spouse:**

Most researchers find that men's educational level is positively associated with their participation in domestic work [29,30] and negatively associated with their spouse household labour time. [1] Few studies found their results against this theory that the variable among all "education of women" was not found significant with household work allocation. [15] Lewin-Epstein and Stier (2006) [18] also concluded that among all the predictors effect of education is not significantly related to household labour. But few found that

women who are more educated have greater time autonomy in China. [23] In Spain, Alberdi(2003) found that couples with a higher educational level tend to prefer a more egalitarian family model and divide housework accordingly. [31] Higher the educational level obtained by the individuals, the less traditional and more egalitarian they are but longer hours in market reduce their time availability to perform housework. [32] If women belong to lower educational level they are most likely to be involved in unpaid work. [21,33] Not only the woman but adult sons and daughters of an employed woman also hold egalitarian attitude. [34]

### **Employment status of spouse:**

One way that women's entry into the labour market may influence housework allocation patterns by increasing women's ideological support for an egalitarian division of household labour. Women's location in the social structure has changed dramatically as increasing proportions of women have entered the paid labour market in recent decades. [35] Women's paid employment may influence their ideological support for gender equality by increasing their exposure to occupation-based networks that are supportive of gender equality and by providing them with a greater stake in improving women's economic position. [34, 36]

[32] Presser (1994) reported that both women and men in professional couples spend less time on housework than women and men in other types of couples. Greenstein (1996) [4] said that as wife's employment hours increases husband's participation in domestic work also increases. Paid hours and income of both spouses are significantly associated with husband's participation in household work. [37] Demo and Acock (1994) found women's paid work hours negatively associated with their house work time. [38] Men increase their housework time when their wives increase paid work hours. [39, 40]

Table no -2 Effect of employment status of spouse on their participation in domestic work

S. No.	Author	Locale	Study instrument	Results
1.	Twiggs, J.E., McQuillan, J., Ferree, (1999)	Connenticut, USA	Likert type rating scale	Husband's participation domestic work is associated with wife's employment hours.
2.	Greenstein (1996)	North Carolina	Questionnaire	When husband's employment hours increases domestic work hours decreases. As wife's employment hours increases husbands participation increases.
3.	Coverman (1985)	USA	Survey method	Wife's employment and husband's less paid hours has effect on division of domestic work.
4.	Rizavi and Sofer (2008)	France	Time use booklet and questionnaire	Spouse's status of employment is significantly associated partner's participation in domestic work.
5.	Cunningham (2007)	Detroit, USA	Surveys with telephonic interviews	Woman's time spent in paid work is a stronger predictor of housework allocation than current employment status.
6.	Hook (2006)	20 countries (1965-2003)	National data of Survey	Men spend more time in domestic work where wives are employed.
7.	Tsuya, Bumpass, Choe and Ringfuss (2012)	Japanese	NSFH	Wives housework time decreases as employment time increases.
8.	Mannino and Deutch (2007)	England	Personal Interview	The more paid hours a women worked the smaller she share of housework.
9.	Lewin-Epstein, Stier and Braun (2006)	Germany and Israel	Questionnaire	The amount of time women spend in market work has a positive and significant effect on the sharing of household tasks.
10.	Habib, Nuwayhid and Yerezian (2006)	Lebanon	Interview	Women involved in paid work do significantly less housework than women not involved in labour market.
11.	Delaunay (2010)	Portugal	Interview	Full-time female labour force participation is associated with increasing odds of a more egalitarian allocation of household responsibilities.
12.	Bianchi et.al. (2012)	USA		Employed women least likely to spend time in housework.
13.	Ishii-Kuntz and Coltrane (1992)	USA	Questionnaire	Husband's greater participation in housework and child care is significantly associated with wife's employment for longer hours.
14.	Stohs (2000)	USA	Questionnaire	Women with greatest income are least likely to report task disparities in household labour.
15.	Erickson (2005)	Ohio, USA	Questionnaire	Both men and women, the more hours spent in paid employment, the less housework and child care they perform.
16.	Bexter and Hewitt (2013)	Australia	Time diary and questionnaire	Women's housework time is affected by women's relative earning.
17.	Hallerod (2005)	Sweden	Questionnaire	The relationship between duration of household and dependency rate is significant but it is negative.
18.	Killewald (2011)	USA	Survey method	Negative association between household chores and women's earnings.

According to some recent studies influences of multiple dimensions of women's employment on couples' patterns of housework allocation over a 31-year time span. [14] The research explicitly considered that wives' current employment status, current employment hours, relative earnings, and accumulated employment histories influence household work. The husbands of employed women perform a comparatively greater share of stereotypically female housework than the husbands of non-employed. Employed women increase their support for egalitarian roles for women and men than unemployed women. The results provided several

original contributions to our understanding of the way women's experiences in the labour market influence the gendered division of labour over the life course. In the same way wage status and salary of spouse is significantly co related with spouse participation. [15] The amount of time women spend in market work has a positive and significant effect on the sharing of household tasks. [18,17,41] Year's back same conclusion was drawn by [19] Berk (1985), [20] Shelton (1990) and [27] Coverman (1985), they also concluded that employed women spend less time on housework than do women who are not employed. Women who were more engaged in paid work likely to



share less housework. [42] But in contrast few studies also stated that there is no association between women's occupational status and their house work time. [43] Few quoted that there is a negative association between women's earnings and housework. [44,45] Thus this topic is still left unaddressed.

Pittman and Blanchard (1996) introduced another aspect that women's employment histories may moderate the influence of women's employment status but women's employment status may not exert substantial effects on the division of labour "unless the wives have made a long-term commitment to employment and breadwinning". [46] Their argument suggests a conditional hypothesis in which the influence of women's employment status on the allocation of routine housework is stronger among women with long work histories than it is among women with less work experience.

Another aspect is effect of parenthood on mother father's employment status. The rise in women's paid employment was widely expected to lead an increased participation of men in unpaid work, but it is still mothers than fathers who withdraw from the workforce, downgrade their occupation or job role, or limit their working hours to care for children when they are young. [47,48] Craig et.al. (2012) stated about self-employed mother and father that the quantity of time self employed mothers devote to each activity differs substantially from mothers who are employees, while fathers' time is relatively constant across employment types. [49] Results implied that mothers use self-employment as a do-it-yourself 'family-friendly' strategy to combine paid work and childcare activities, particularly through working at home, but that fathers' time priority is paid work regardless of employment type.

**Earnings of spouse:**

Table no -3Effect of spouse's earnings on division of domestic work

S.No.	Authors	Locale	Study instrument	Results
1.	Gupta (2006)	Massachusetts, USA	NSFH	Woman's housework is affected by wife's own earnings not by their husband's.
2.	Ishikuntz, Coltame (1992)	USA	Survey	Husband's greater participation in housework is significantly associated with their wives earning
3.	Luke, Xu, Thampi (2014)	Tea plantation workers, Tamilnadu, India,	Semi structured interviews	Husband's participation increases as woman contributes larger amount in household income.
4.	Twiggs, J.E., McQuillan, J., Ferree, M.M. (1999)	Connenticut	Likert type rating scale	Husband's participation domestic work is associated with wife's income
5	Presser (1994)			The lower the difference between the wages of partners the more equitable the division of household work.
6	Bianchi (2000)			Lower wage difference leads to higher equitable division of domestic work.
7	Stevens , Kiger and Riley (2001)	USA	Questionnaire	Women who were more economically dependent performed more household labour.
8.	Cunninghm (2007)	Detroit	Surveys with telephonic interviews	Women's earnings is a stronger predictor of housework allocation than current employment status.
9.	Rizavi and Sofer (2008)	France	Time use booklet and questionnaire	Spouse's income are significantly associated partner's participation in domestic work.
10	Knudsen and Waerness (2008)	34 countries	Questionnaire	There are marked effects of Income on division of domestic work.
11	Baxter and Hewitt (2013)	Australia	Questionnaire	Women's housework time is more strongly affected by women's relative earnings.
12	Dong and An	China	Time diary and questionnaire	Women receives higher wages have greater time autonomy.
13	Goni-Legaz, Ollo-Lopez and Bayo-Moriones (2010)	Spain	questionnaire	Women with higher wage have higher power to negotiate domestic work.
14	Mannino and Deutch (2007)	England	Interview	The more income a woman contributed to the family, the smaller her share of housework.
15	Dealalunay (2010)	Portugal	interview	Women with greater job earnings are associated with a propensity for a more egalitarian division of housework.

Spouse's relative earning is linked to changes in allocation of housework. [50] But Women's earnings are a direct outcome of their employment, and women's earnings are likely to influence the division of labour within households. Women's income is most commonly conceptualized in relative terms in studies of housework allocation, and the ratio of wives' to husbands' earnings is frequently interpreted as an indicator of power resources in marriages. [28,29] Women's housework time is strongly affected by women's relative earnings. [51] According to the relative resources perspective, women's ability to bargain over the performance of unpleasant household tasks is enhanced when their earnings are relatively larger compared with their spouses' earnings. Even if the wages are similar that also leads to equitable division of household work. [32,52] Although the influence of relative earnings at different levels of household income is debated, [53,54] most studies find that the greater the earnings of women compared with their male partners, the greater men's relative participation in routine housework. [55-57] So it can be predicted that husbands will participate in a relatively greater share of routine housework when their wives earn a greater share of the couples' income. Ishii-Kuntz and Coltrane (1992) reported that husband's greater participation in household work was significantly associated with their wives earning a larger proportion of the family income, being employed more hours, having more education and being more accepting of maternal employment. [40] In Portugal women with greater job earning and higher share of household income are associated with a tendency for a more egalitarian division of housework but this relative equal sharing between the partners is not due to increase participation of men in housework but due to decrease of women time spend on home by delegation of some housework. [41]

Gupta (2007) found that 914 married women's housework was affected only by their own earnings, not by their husbands

and not by their earnings compared to their husbands. [58] Another model provided support for hypotheses based on resource-based bargaining. Not only do women's relative earnings exert a substantial influence on the division of labour, the influence of women's employment hours is reduced to non-significance when relative income is included in the model. This finding suggests that women's relative earnings transmit the influence of their employment hours. Although the fixed effects models were unable to assess the influence of wives' relative income as a result of data limitations, the findings suggested that women's job-related earnings play a critical role in shaping the division of labour. [14] Wife's total household income is correlated with the division of work that means more income women earn, less housework she does. [42] In China women with more wages also have greater time autonomy that means more wage less housework burden. [23]

A few existing large-scale longitudinal studies on Australia, Germany, and the United States have explored the significance of women's relative economic positions versus gender role attitudes or gender norms. [57,59,60] However, these did not consider women's absolute earnings level which, according to Gupta (2007) may be a better measure of their ability to pay for childcare and to substitute or outsource domestic work. [58]

If a partner does not earn enough money to support him/herself (and potentially his/her children) independently, the lack of bargaining power can be seen as a form of dependency. [61] Because of their weak bargaining position, fuelled by their perception that they cannot afford to leave the relationship, these dependent partners (usually women) may end up with a disproportionately high level of housework. Even if women could theoretically be economically self-sufficient, they still rely on their partners for their current standard of living, which may be considerably better than what they could afford on their own.

[28] Women relative income is strongest predictor of household work allocation than her current employment status. [14] Similarly, are search in 34 countries, concluded that there is a systematic effect of Relative Income on division of domestic work. [62]

Rizavi and Sofer (2008) shown by their results that women's strong investment in career has a big effect on the division of household labour. [15] In most of the houses men were sharing household labour as wife was as much economically strong as husbands. Women's tendency to invest in her career is strongly affected by usual variables such as the presence of children in the household and by age and her education.

Few studies also have been reviewed conducted on dual earner and single earner families. Generally these studies found that women in dual earner households are still responsible for the majority of household labour. [63] But in another study women in dual earner households typically have less responsibility for such tasks than do women in single earner households. [64]

In Indian context Luke, Xu and Thampi analysed the division of domestic work in tea plantation workers and found no association between husband's earnings and their participation in domestic work this is contrary to all studies quoted above. [65] This study supported that husband's participation increases as woman contributed larger amount in household income. Thus it would be interesting to know that all the theories created by worldwide researchers are same in India or not? Is Indian division of domestic work affected by husband and wife's employment and earnings or not? There is a lack of work done on this scenario in India so it is highly recommended to measure division of domestic work of Indian couples with all their related variables.

#### **TIME AVAILABILITY AND DIVISION OF DOMESTIC WORK:**

Like relative resources couple divide their domestic tasks through some labour

allocation strategies. Couples assume domestic tasks and divide according to their available or free time. Available and free time is usually measured in relation to paid working hours or number of hours spent per week in employment. Whoever has more free time will do more domestic tasks. In Indian context where women labour force participation is very low they have more free time than husbands, they are continuously doing domestic work from ages. But now when wife is also earning husband should participate in domestic work and should divide it fairly with their wife but they are not doing it. Few studies suggested that allocation of domestic work strongly depends upon availability of time of both partners. One who spends more time at paid work do not get much time for home. [21,33] Hiller (1984) also quoted factors like time availability also co related with division of labour. [66] Consistent with theory [27,67] and prior research indicated that spouse's work hours were linked to their housework allocation. [12,50] Knudsen and Waerness (2008) also accepted that less time availability significantly reduces wife's time on housework. [62]

Cunningham (2007) estimated the influence of women's employment status on men's participation in stereotypically female household tasks across the three waves of data collection: 1962, 1977, and 1993. [14] The findings provided tentative support for the time availability hypothesis. Specifically, women's employment hours were strongly related to increases in the share of stereotypically female housework that men perform. As women increase the number of hours they work in the paid labour force in Australia, they decrease the number of hours they spent on household tasks. If husband's labour force participation is more than their wife's they participate less in household labour. [9]

The time availability perspective assumes that couples make rational decisions to assign more housework to the spouses with more free time. Studies in support of this perspective nearly all have

focussed on between-couple variation which can easily be confounded with stable family characteristics or selection effects that are not accounted for this. [12,2]

Almost everywhere women spend more time than men in total work: more than one extra hour on average in eastern countries (Slovenia, Estonia and Hungary), nearly 45 minutes more in France. Only very few countries show a more equal division of labour: Norway with a difference between men and women of 1 minute, Sweden, which is the only country in the list (and probably the only one in the world) where men work slightly more than women. [15]

It can also be noted that domestic work represents between 56 per cent to slightly more than 70 per cent of women's total work while the corresponding figures for men are 35 per cent to 45 per cent of total work spent at domestic work. Note that these figures do not support the hypothesis of equal leisure consumption for men and women. [68]

Aside from socioeconomic resources and work hours, researches also highlighted the less understood links between spouses' marital control and psychological job involvement and the division of household labour. Although socioeconomic resources tap the financial aspect of power, they do not directly measure spouses' interpersonal influences on their partners. There are different ways to gain power in a marital relationship; providing affection and social support to a spouse who needs them, for example, can also engender dependence in the receiver and give power to the provider. [69]

Marital control is a more generic concept concerning spouses' overall ability to manage their partners' thoughts and behaviors and may constitute a better indicator of spouses' interpersonal power. [70]

Therefore, spouses who have more control over their partners should be able to enforce amore self-favoring division of household labour. [50] In a similar manner, although work hours mark the temporal aspect of availability, they do not

necessarily reflect the psychological significance of paid work to an individual i.e., psychological job involvement. [71]

Previous studies have shown that people who report higher levels of job involvement usually experience more work-family conflicts. [72]

## CONCLUSION

Massive entry of women in paid labour force triggered the researches in the field of unpaid labour. Women are performing well in paid work but men are lagging behind in unpaid work. The biggest reasons are relative resources and time availability. Women with fewer resources are still performing most of the housework alone. First is Educational status of spouse, since few studies have proved that educational status of spouse does not associated with division of domestic work but it does affect attitude of men and women which is directly related to how they divide their domestic work. Second, employment status of women is a strong predictor of their division of domestic work or to outsource it. Women's employment status influences their ideological support for gender equality. Men with employed wife perform more domestic tasks than with not. Third, equal income of spouse put couples on equal scale so lower difference between their salaries result in equal division of domestic work. Women's larger contribution in family's earnings makes a woman more economically independent that leads to higher equitable division of housework. Fourth, Time availability is a main predictor of division of domestic work couples divide their work as whoever has more free time will perform more as a golden rule.

So, basically division of domestic work is affected by series of factors which are also interrelated. Despite of this review many factors are also yet to be explored for example, some psychological aspects besides employment status. Factors like Psychological job involvement and occupational prestige can define division of domestic work more clearly rather than just



employment status of spouses. A factor like education of spouse is still not very clear whether it affects division of domestic work or not. Education of spouse should be studied more comprehensively by exploring its quality and type of education as traditional courses and professional courses because both students might possess different attitude.

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