WOMEN COMBINING PAID WORK AND HOMEMAKING: THE SECOND SHIFT

Hazir Ullah*, Waheed Chaudhry**, Ali Askar***, Afshan Khan****

ABSTRACT

Last two decades have seen a considerable increase in women entry into paid work in Pakistan. The common understanding is that this journey into the public domain has been the most significant empowerment trend since the inception of Pakistan. The main argument of this paper is that despite this progress the ideology around gender roles still persists in dual earning families. The study explores the difficulty and strains that working women experience in combining paid job and domestic chores. The study findings suggest that working women in Pakistan do not have the best of public and private domain as they still carry out all the domestic chores along with their full time job. The study takes feminist perspective as theoretical framework for analysis of the data. Data for the study comes from 150 married working women selected through stratified random sampling. The study is not intended to be "authoritative" but aims to open debate and stress academician and researchers to carry out more studies that look at how working women experience their paid job in the public domain and domestic chores.

Key words: Gender roles, two pay cheque families, public domain, and domestic chores.
Introduction

Pakistani society is still strictly divided along the axes of gender (Hazirullah, 2007). The ideology of family (men as breadwinners and women as caretakers) shapes the experiences and choices of women. The division of society into public and private domains and associating the former with men and the latter with women is dominantly believed as natural and result of biological differences between the two sexes (Hazirullah and Ali, 2012; Hazirullah and Nisar, 2011). Despite women’s achievements and considerable progress over the years, the responsibility for domestic chores and looking after children is still considered women’s natural role (Rubery, 1998). The belief about ‘appropriate gender roles’ has roots in industrial era that was characterized by the concept of separate spheres. Industrial revolution and market economy led to the distinction between paid and unpaid work, which, in turn, gave birth to the discourse of men’s and women’s work (Hattery, 2001). Men got engaged in the public sphere (paid work) while women were allocated the unpaid work in the private sphere (home). This belief in the sex based division of labor was legitimized on the basis of biological differences between men and women (Hattery, 2001; Boris & Lewis, 2006). Over the time, women were considered to be more suited for homemaking, procreation of and rearing of children while men were more believed to be more suited for the paid job in the public domain. Though both women and men kept looking after their children and families, but men’s jobs in the public domain was considered more important due to its association with economic value (Hattery, 2001; Moen & Sweet, 2003). It was this attachment of meaning with public and private domains that led to the emergence of ideology about gender roles and sex based division of labour in society that persists in contemporary world in general and in Pakistan in particular.

As a result of feminist movements and struggle in the west there is a vivid change in the world political economy (greater numbers of women have been entering in the jobs market around the world). Since 1960, women’s participation in job market is one of the most widely discussed issues in the western world (Hakim, 2004). This considerably more attention was/is due to high increase of women in the labour force (see Henslin, 1997). Women participation in the job market has been increasing while it has been drooping slowly for men (Henslin, 1997). It is acknowledged that women have achieved considerably over the past 50 years, and many people assume that women now occupy and hold an
equal position in the public sphere and that the ‘the battle of gender equality’ is over. This study, however, asserts that the progress that has occurred for women in job market does not indicate that this ‘battle is over’. Research in different parts of the world suggests that women are still invariably concentrated into low status and low paid work, there is still a substantial differential in the earnings of women compared to men (see Hazirullah and Ali, 2012; Hakim, 2004; Rege and 2003; and Henslin, 1997). Similarly, working women, along with their paid jobs, still carry out domestic chores and childrearing responsibility work (see Rege, 2003; Hochschild, 1997; Perry-Jenkins, 1994; Hochschild, 1989).

The fundamental presupposition on which this paper is based asserts that the increasing participation of women in the job market has not relieved and liberated Pakistani women from the burden of domestic chores. Women are burdened with domestic chores in their families as soon as they come back from their paid job in the public domain (Artis & Pavalko, 2003; Hochschild, 1989). Looking across classes, it is evident that working-class women carry out higher amount of domestic chores when the return from their full time employment in the public sphere (Perry-Jenkins and Folk (1994). Like many other developing countries, women in Pakistan are allowed to enter paid job market provided they don't cease to carry out their domestic chores and homemaking responsibility. This is because the primary responsibility of homemaking and childrearing is still believed as women natural role. Working women burden and subordination in the family is due to the terms and conditions under which they enter into paid job, which, in turn, put them at a disadvantage to males (Witz (1993). It is also argued that the entry of women into job market has not been accompanied by a comparable movement back into the home (Kimmel, 2004: p 133). It is because of this that married working women today face the biggest challenges to combine and or manage the responsibilities of first shift (paid job or career) and second shift (homemaking and family life). The concept “second shift” is coined and popularized by sociologist Arlie Hochschild. Hochschild (1989) argued that working women are expected to perform household chores and child care once they arrive home after their full time employment in the public domain. She further argues that working women in dual earning families perform fifteen hours more work each week than their husbands (Hochschild (1997). This working women work an additional month of 24 hours days in a year. This is amusing to listen that most married working women contribute to family economy, but men still continue to keep away from participation in domestic chores (Reskin and Padavic, 2002). As a result,
many working women have a *second shift* by combining meeting the
demand of their paid job in the public domain and unpaid work in
private sphere.

Drawing on the above assertions and researches, the fundamental
questions that this study seeks to address are: Has women’s entry in the
paid jobs produced gender equality between men and women at home?
Are working women in Pakistan strained and oppressed, or they enjoy
the best of public and private domain? The study findings suggest that
working women in dual earning families have not succeeded in
bargaining with their husbands in making them willing to
share household chores which, in turn, have pushed women to experience
great stress and strain in combining paid jobs and domestic chores.

**Methodology**

The data for this paper comes from a larger study conducted in the Twin
Cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The target population for the study
was married women who have full time paid employment in Fatima
Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi and Women Campus of
International Islamic University Islamabad. Data was collected from a
total 150 respondents (75 from each university) who were selected
through stratified random sampling technique. Structured questionnaires
were administered / employed for collecting data from the selected
respondents. Analyses were carried out with the help of widely
employed Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). It is important
to mention here that there has been very little research on working
women in Pakistan. This study, albeit focused on micro-analysis of two
universities and not on the country wide statistics, may be a useful
understanding of how working women manage their paid work and
homemaking.

**Data Presentation and Discussion**

**Gender roles awareness among working women**

Sociologists distinguish between *gender* and *sex*. *Sex* is biological
distinction between male and female; whereas *gender* is about socio-
cultural roles and behaviour that is deemed socially accepted for men
and women (see Hazirullah and Ali, 2012). Sex, therefore, is biological
characteristic and gender is a social construct (Hazirullah and Skelton,
2012; Holmes, 2007). See Mary Holmes’ book *What is Gender?* for the
essentialists and social constructionists debate about gender. The focus
here is to know the awareness about gender roles as these are understood by working women in Pakistan. A considerable majority (66 per cent) of the study’s respondents were knowledgeable about gender and gender roles. They understood that ‘gender appropriate roles’ are purely the consequence of how they are socialized and accepted in society. They argued that gender identities are fixed by early family socialization and reinforced by micro and macro level patriarchal structures (family, mass media). Women with this ideology believed that husbands should share the domestic chores with their wives if their wives are full time employees in the public domain. Contrary to the above respondents, the notion “domestic chores as women natural roles” were buttressed by 34 per cent respondents. They believed that there are biological differences between the sexes which make women best suited for the domestic chores. Although these women constitute only 34 percent of the respondents, but need serious attention as their belief naturalize hegemonic masculinity and feminine subordination by reinforcing the stereotypical gender roles and domestic ideology. At the surface level there seem a vivid difference of approach among working women towards gender roles, however, in practice both categories of the respondents revealed that they carry out almost all domestic chores as part of their daily routines. Our assertion here is that women themselves are unwilling to challenge the patriarchal structure and move away from traditional gender roles.

**Dual earning families and the issue of second shift**

Analyzing the phenomena with gender lens, women in Pakistan are still associated with the traditional three “C”: cooking, cleaning and child caring (see Henslin, 1997). The study findings reveal that 82 percent of working women cook, 70 per cent look after and care their children and 52 per cent clean and sweep their houses along with their full time employment. Similarly, 57 per cent respondents revealed that they help their children in homework, 52 per cent were carrying out washing etc by themselves (Annexure-II gives a succinct picture of respondents beliefs and actual practice of gender roles).

Deconstructing and interpreting the above statistics, our argument then is that women’s contribution in the family income has not relieved them from domestic chores. We also assert that working women have failed to trade upon their economic (job) and cultural (education and domestic competence) capitals. Husbands, as 73 per cent wives reported, were unwilling to move away from socially created and accepted traditional
gender roles (see Khan, 2010). They (husbands) avoid domestic chores by expressing appreciation to their wives, or taking children out to the park which, we argue, advantage them in term of health and leisure time. Keeping this in view, we assert that women in dual earning families have not succeeded in bargaining with their husbands in making them willing to share household chores. The study findings demonstrate that the establishment of an egalitarian family relationship among dual earning couples is still a dream.

**Dual earning families: the invisible third shift.**

Traditionally marriage is believed as the success and achievement for women. It is claimed that “their future is secured (Kimmel, 2004). With some responsibilities, it is thought the source of social, economic, and emotional fulfillment for women and an economic burden and restriction for men (Bernard, 1982). Contrary to the above perspective, marriage for working women in Pakistan, we argue, gives men more benefits than women. As argued earlier that marriage “is a better deal for men than it is for women” ” (Kimmel, 2004: p 128) as working women not only contribute to family income but also shoulder the burden of second shift. The responsibility does not stop with second shift but working women are expected to perform a third shift: purchasing kids and husbands clothes/dresses, buying grocery and kitchen etc, taking kids to doctors and maintaining their records (see Annexure-III). The study findings suggest that working women, in addition to the bulk of domestic chores, also purchase grocery (revealed by 67 per cent); shoulder the responsibility of shopping for their husbands and children as well as themselves (reported by 41, 49 and 73 per cent of the respondents respectively. Similarly, 65 per cent respondents said that they take their children to doctors and maintain their medical records and files. Similarly, 74 per cent respondents said that they spent a huge amount of their salaries on their offspring, family excursion and entertainment, family functions, personal and family medicine, family guests and their personnel needs (see Khan, 2010). It is important to mention here that our respondents reported enjoying high self-esteem than full time housewives, but were unhappy with the increase workload at home. Deconstructing and interpreting the above statistics, marriage is achievement for men than it is for women. We also argue married men’s high achievements and more earning may be the results of the domestic chores politics: wives contribute into family income and also carry out
second and third shift. This, in turn, allows married men to work longer hours and save more. The nub of the discussion then is that women’s paid work has relieved husbands from a considerable amount of financial burden. Husbands, on the other hands, continue to avoid sharing domestic chores. This, we argue, shows that the ideology around gender roles has not moved towards egalitarian model. Thus, marriage in which husbands do not participation in domestic chores ‘increases gender inequality not diminishes’ (Kimmel, 2004: p 128).

**Conclusion**

The study findings suggest that women participation in the paid public domain has not relieved them from the burden of domestic chores and parenting. *Second shift* is naturalized and legitimized on the basis of biological differences between the sexes. As revealed by the study, working women manage their paid work and homemaking with great difficulty and strain which, in turn, dwindles their health and true spirit of life. Drawing on Bernard, we argue that, in case of duel earning couples, the institution of marriage is “man’s marriage”, a marriage from which men get the maximum advantages and which pushes wives to affirm to culture belief of fulfillment and commitment to homemaking. This, Felice Schwartz (1989) would argue, leaves women to opt for *mommy track* in which women concentrate more on the family and less on the job. Thus *mommy track* encourages women to be satisfied with lower aspirations and fewer promotions. This pushes women into ‘job’ and men into ‘career’ which, in turn, becomes grounds for men superiority and women subordinate position in the family and in society. We further argue that the establishment of an egalitarian family institution will enable working women to combine their paid work and homemaking without difficulty and strain and will let them to enjoy the marital life like their husbands. It is deemed important to mention here that this study focused on working women and their strategy of combining paid work and homing without delineating the differences along class lines. We need more studies that help to unravel the complexities of combining paid work and homemaking by women belonging to different social classes.
Appendix

Annexure-I: gender roles awareness among working women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is domestic chores women’s natural role?</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Per cent age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Annexure-II: Working couples and domestic chores: women second shift

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major domestic chores</th>
<th>Doer of domestic chores/second shift</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking</td>
<td>123 (82%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning and sweeping</td>
<td>78 (52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care of non-school going children</td>
<td>105 (70%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping children in homework</td>
<td>41 (27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing children for school</td>
<td>48 (32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing and pressing clothes</td>
<td>78 (52%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Annexure-III: Dual earning couples: the invisible third shift

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women’s unrecognized Jobs</th>
<th>Wife</th>
<th>husband</th>
<th>both</th>
<th>Any other</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F (%)</td>
<td>f (%)</td>
<td>f (%)</td>
<td>F (%)</td>
<td>F (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grocery purchasing</td>
<td>101 (67)</td>
<td>22 (15)</td>
<td>21 (14)</td>
<td>5 (3)</td>
<td>1 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping for husband</td>
<td>61 (41)</td>
<td>47 (31)</td>
<td>34 (23)</td>
<td>8 (5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping for children</td>
<td>74 (49)</td>
<td>6 (4)</td>
<td>22 (15)</td>
<td>10 (7)</td>
<td>38 (25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping for themselves</td>
<td>110 (73)</td>
<td>10 (7)</td>
<td>28 (19)</td>
<td>2 (3)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking children to doctor</td>
<td>98 (65)</td>
<td>25 (17)</td>
<td>21 (41)</td>
<td>3 (2)</td>
<td>3 (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 2 see footnote

2 The responses under the heading ‘not applicable’ reveals 7 per cent respondents who were not responsible for Grocery purchasing, 8 per cent did not shop for the husbands because they were either divorce or their husbands being abroad. The 25 per cent who were free from the responsibility of children’s shopping were either having no children or their children were adult who buy their things themselves
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