



## Multiple Responsibilities of Women in the Modern Era: A Social and Economic Perspective

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### Abstract

In the modern era, women perform multiple roles that are essential to the well-being of families, the growth of the economy, and the development of society. In addition to their traditional responsibilities at home, women actively participate in earning income, caring for family members, providing emotional support, and contributing to community life. These combined roles make women key contributors to social and economic stability. However, their efforts are often not fully recognized due to existing gender norms, unequal sharing of responsibilities, and limited access to resources and opportunities. This study follows an exploratory research design and is based on a review of secondary data from different social and cultural contexts. Using feminist and social perspectives, the study examines how gender roles and inequalities influence women's lives. The findings show that women's multiple roles help strengthen family relationships, improve economic conditions, and support social development. At the same time, many women experience challenges such as heavy workloads, limited decision-making power, fewer economic opportunities, and increased physical and mental stress. The study also finds that when women have better access to education, employment, and leadership roles, their confidence and independence increase, and they contribute more effectively to family and society. The paper concludes that recognizing and supporting women's diverse roles is important for building strong families and a healthy society. It highlights the need for gender-sensitive policies, equal opportunities, and social work interventions that promote empowerment, inclusion, and overall well-being.

**Keywords:** Women's Multiple Roles, Unpaid Care Work, Family Well-Being, Economic Contribution, Gender Equality, Social Development

### Introduction

In contemporary society, women play a dynamic and multidimensional role in shaping family life, economic development, and social transformation. Over the years, the position of women has evolved significantly from being limited mainly to domestic responsibilities to becoming active participants in education, employment, leadership, governance, and community development. Rapid changes brought by globalization, technological advancement, urbanization, and increased access to education have created greater opportunities for women to participate in public and professional spheres. Today, women contribute not only as caregivers and homemakers but also as professionals, entrepreneurs, policymakers, and social reformers. Their growing participation in different sectors has become an important factor in promoting sustainable development and social progress. According to the United Nations (2023) [10],

women's active involvement in social and economic activities is essential for achieving inclusive and sustainable development goals. Despite this progress, many women continue to experience gender-based discrimination, unequal opportunities, limited access to resources, and social expectations that make it difficult to balance personal and professional responsibilities effectively (World Bank, 2022; UN Women, 2021) [13, 11]. Therefore, examining women's multiple roles has become increasingly important for understanding their contributions and the challenges they encounter in modern society.

Women's role within the family remains central to the functioning and stability of society. They contribute significantly through childcare, emotional support, household management, and the care of elderly family members. In many households, women preserve social, cultural, and moral values while ensuring the emotional

well-being of family members. Much of this caregiving and domestic work is unpaid, yet it forms the foundation of family welfare and social development. The International Labour Organization (2023) <sup>[5]</sup> emphasizes that unpaid care work performed by women is a crucial but often invisible contribution to the economy and society. Alongside their domestic responsibilities, women actively participate in economic activities across sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, education, science, administration, business, and technology. Their contribution to the workforce has improved family income, reduced poverty, and strengthened national economic growth. The World Bank (2024) <sup>[14]</sup> notes that women represent a substantial proportion of the global workforce and continue to contribute significantly to economic productivity and inclusive development. Similarly, the OECD (2022) <sup>[8]</sup> highlights that women's participation in employment and leadership enhances innovation, equality, and social progress. However, the responsibility of balancing work and family often creates stress, fatigue, and role conflict among women. Boserup, Tan, and Toulmin (2020) <sup>[1]</sup> argue that unequal distribution of household responsibilities and lack of institutional support continue to limit women's opportunities for equal participation and advancement.

In addition to their contributions within the family and economy, women play an influential role in promoting social justice, equality, and community development. Across the world, women have actively participated in social movements, human rights advocacy, environmental protection, political leadership, and welfare initiatives that contribute to democratic and social progress. Their involvement in governance and civil society has strengthened efforts toward equality, peace-building, and sustainable development. UN Women (2023) <sup>[12]</sup> recognizes women as important agents of social transformation and inclusive governance. Despite these achievements, women continue to face numerous challenges, including wage inequality, workplace discrimination, underrepresentation in leadership positions, and gender-based violence. According to the World Economic Forum (2024) <sup>[15]</sup>, gender disparities remain visible in employment opportunities, wages, and leadership representation across many countries. Such inequalities demonstrate the continuing need for supportive social policies, equal opportunities, and gender-sensitive institutional mechanisms. Therefore, this study aims to explore the multiple roles performed by women in the modern era and to examine their contributions to family welfare, economic growth, and societal development. The study also seeks to understand the challenges women face while balancing various responsibilities and highlights the importance of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment for achieving sustainable and inclusive social progress.

### Review of Literature

Boserup, Tan, and Toulmin (2020) <sup>[1]</sup> observed that women make significant contributions to both family and economic development through their involvement in household responsibilities, employment, and community activities. The study explained that even though women actively participate in productive work, they still face difficulties in balancing family duties and professional responsibilities because of

traditional gender expectations and unequal social systems. The International Labour Organization (2023) <sup>[5]</sup> highlighted that women carry a major share of unpaid care work such as childcare, household management, and caring for elderly family members. This invisible labor plays an important role in maintaining the well-being of families and society. The report emphasized the need for supportive workplace policies and social support systems to help women maintain a healthy balance between work and family life.

The United Nations (2023) <sup>[10]</sup> stated that women are important contributors to sustainable development and social progress. Women's participation in education, governance, economic activities, and community development strengthens society and promotes equality and inclusive growth. The report also emphasized that empowering women is essential for achieving long-term social and economic development.

The World Economic Forum (2024) <sup>[15]</sup> pointed out that gender inequality still exists in areas such as wages, employment opportunities, and leadership positions. Despite progress in women's empowerment, many women continue to face discrimination and limited opportunities in professional and public life. The report stressed the importance of stronger policies and social awareness to achieve gender equality and ensure equal opportunities for women.

### Methodology

This exploratory study utilizes secondary data to investigate the diverse roles of women in family life, economic development, and societal progress. Data was gathered from authoritative sources, including articles, books, and reports from organizations like the UN and World Bank. A qualitative approach was employed to analyze themes related to women's contributions to family well-being and their challenges in balancing various responsibilities. Since the research relies solely on existing literature, the findings are constrained by the availability of published information.

### Women's Contributions to Family Life

Family is the basic foundation of society, and women play an important role in maintaining its emotional, social, cultural, and economic balance. Traditionally, women have been responsible for managing the household, caring for children, supporting elderly family members, and maintaining harmony within the family. In modern society, women continue to fulfill these responsibilities while also participating in education, employment, business, and public life. Their ability to manage both family and professional responsibilities reflects their strength, dedication, and contribution to overall family welfare and social development (UN Women, 2023; World Bank, 2022) <sup>[12, 13]</sup>. Women not only provide physical care to family members but also contribute emotional support, moral guidance, and social values that strengthen relationships and create a healthy family environment.

One of the most important roles performed by women within the family is child nurturing and socialization. Mothers contribute significantly to the emotional, moral, and personality development of children through care, affection, discipline, and guidance. Women also help preserve cultural traditions, family values, and ethical

practices from one generation to another. According to the International Labour Organization (2023) <sup>[5]</sup>, women perform a large amount of unpaid care work, including cooking, cleaning, caregiving, and emotional support, which is essential for the smooth functioning of families and society. Although this work is extremely valuable, it often remains unrecognized and economically undervalued (Folbre, 2020) <sup>[2]</sup>. Women's caregiving responsibilities create emotional stability within families and contribute to the overall well-being of society.

Apart from domestic responsibilities, women also contribute to the economic stability of families through employment, self-employment, agriculture, and business activities. Their participation in economic activities helps improve family income, children's education, healthcare access, and living standards. In countries like India, women's employment has become an important factor in reducing poverty and improving family welfare (NSSO, 2023). However, women often face difficulties in balancing work responsibilities and household duties, leading to stress, fatigue, and role conflict. Boserup, Tan, and Toulmin (2020) <sup>[1]</sup> explained that the unequal distribution of domestic responsibilities creates a "double burden" for women. Therefore, supportive family structures, equal sharing of household work, and family-friendly workplace policies such as childcare support, flexible working hours, and paid leave are necessary to improve women's well-being and empowerment. Recognizing and valuing women's unpaid domestic work is essential for achieving gender equality and sustainable social development.

### **Women's Economic Contributions in The Modern Era**

In the modern era, women have become important contributors to economic growth and social development. With increased access to education, employment opportunities, and technological advancement, women are actively participating in various sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, education, business, banking, information technology, and entrepreneurship. Their growing involvement in economic activities has improved family income, strengthened national productivity, and contributed to sustainable development (World Bank, 2024) <sup>[14]</sup>. Women today are not only homemakers but also professionals, entrepreneurs, and decision-makers who play a significant role in shaping modern economies.

Women contribute to the economy in both rural and urban areas. In rural communities, women are involved in farming, livestock management, handicrafts, and small-scale industries, while urban women work in corporate sectors, educational institutions, healthcare services, and financial organizations. Many women are also becoming successful entrepreneurs through self-help groups and small business initiatives, creating employment opportunities and improving their economic independence (ILO, 2023). Women's earnings positively influence family welfare, especially in improving children's education, healthcare, and nutrition (FAO, 2022). Along with paid employment, women also perform unpaid domestic and caregiving work, which remains an essential but often unrecognized contribution to the economy and society.

Despite these contributions, women continue to face challenges such as wage inequality, workplace

discrimination, limited leadership opportunities, and the pressure of balancing professional and household responsibilities. The "double burden" of managing both work and family responsibilities often creates stress and emotional exhaustion for women (Boserup *et al.*, 2020) <sup>[1]</sup>. According to the World Economic Forum (2024) <sup>[15]</sup>, gender inequality in wages and career opportunities still exists in many sectors. Therefore, policies promoting equal pay, safe working conditions, maternity benefits, childcare support, and skill development are essential for women's economic empowerment and gender equality. Recognizing and valuing women's contributions, both paid and unpaid, is important for achieving inclusive growth, social justice, and sustainable development.

### **Women's Contributions to Society in The Modern Era**

In the modern era, women play an important role in social development and community progress. Their responsibilities have expanded beyond traditional household duties, and today women actively participate in education, healthcare, politics, social welfare, human rights advocacy, and community development. Increased access to education, technology, and leadership opportunities has enabled women to contribute significantly to building a more inclusive and progressive society (UN Women, 2023) <sup>[12]</sup>.

Women contribute greatly to education and social awareness as teachers, healthcare workers, social workers, and community leaders. Their involvement helps improve literacy, healthcare services, and public awareness, especially among marginalized communities (UNESCO, 2024) <sup>[9]</sup>. Women also participate actively in self-help groups, non-governmental organizations, and social movements that work toward reducing poverty, violence, and social inequality (ILO, 2024). Through these efforts, women strengthen democratic values, social justice, and community welfare.

Women's participation in leadership and governance has also increased in recent years. Women leaders contribute to policymaking, peace-building, and social reforms that support equality and sustainable development (UN Women, 2023) <sup>[12]</sup>. However, women still face challenges such as discrimination, gender stereotypes, violence, and underrepresentation in decision-making positions (IPU, 2024). Therefore, promoting equal opportunities, legal protection, and women's empowerment is essential for creating a just, balanced, and sustainable society.

### **Social Work and The Field of Women's Contributions**

Women play an important role in the field of social work and contribute greatly to social welfare and community development. In the modern era, women actively work to address social issues such as poverty, gender discrimination, domestic violence, child welfare, healthcare, education, and mental health. Through their involvement in social work, women promote social justice, equality, empowerment, and human dignity. Women serve as social workers, counselors, teachers, healthcare professionals, community organizers, and activists who support vulnerable and marginalized groups in society. They create awareness about education, health, women's rights, child protection, and social welfare programs, which helps improve the quality of life within communities. Women also contribute significantly through

self-help groups, non-governmental organizations, and community development programs that encourage participation, cooperation, and sustainable growth (United Nations, 2023) <sup>[10]</sup>.

In addition, women have played a major role in advocating for human rights and social reform by fighting against issues such as gender inequality, domestic violence, child marriage, and social exclusion. Despite their valuable contributions, women in the social sector often face challenges such as work stress, gender discrimination, and balancing family and professional responsibilities. Therefore, equal opportunities, supportive policies, and safe working environments are essential for strengthening women's participation in social work and community leadership.

### Conclusion

Ultimately, the transition from recognizing women's contributions to actively supporting them requires a multi-sectoral commitment. It is imperative that academic institutions, policymakers, and community leaders move beyond theoretical discourse to implement practical interventions, such as robust workplace flexibility, equitable wage structures, and community-based social work programs. By dismantling the systemic barriers that fuel the 'double burden,' society can ensure that women's multifaceted roles are not just a source of survival for the family, but a cornerstone of national progress and sustainable, inclusive development.

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