

Abilities of Indian Mother as Multitasker: Work, Family and Beyond

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Article Info.

E-ISSN: 2583-6528

Impact Factor (SJIF): 6.876

Peer Reviewed Journal

Available online:

www.alladvancejournal.com

Received: 25/Feb/2025

Accepted: 28/March/2025

Abstract

Indian mothers are considered as the backbone of the family because of their skilful management of their different roles. This essay explores the various ways that how Indian mothers are excellent examples of multitasking. This study intends to emphasize on the characteristics of the mother in India that allows them to balance their responsibility towards their work, family and society as well by examining historical, cultural, social and psychological viewpoints. The study takes in account that though modernity has affected traditional roles but still that changes the expectations not the responsibilities. Along with abilities this paper discusses about the struggle of Indian mothers and concludes by solutions to the situation.

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Keywords: Indian mother, abilities, multitasking, family, child, children, role of women, India, mother, social, psychological, support

1.0 Introduction

Multitasking simply means handling multiple tasks at the same time. It is an ability to switch between tasks rapidly, coordinating multiple tasks while focusing on each task. Mother is the first multitasking person introduced to us as she manages childcare and household responsibilities simultaneously, she coordinates schedules, meals and activities of the family, handles unexpected situations and emergencies while maintaining daily routines, balances personal and family needs and so on. This shows her ability of patience, flexibility, time management, organisation, love and devotion. But one should not forget that multitasking is not that easy as it brings a lot of struggle as well. Multitasking can lead to reduce productivity, increased number of errors and mental fatigue. The burden of responsibilities can lead to stress and impact on relationships, career, self-care, family and everything and everything is interconnected. Let's explore how Indian mothers are truly appreciated for their skilful management, their different roles, their struggle, how to support them and as time changes it changes the work but not the responsibilities.

1.1 Personality of a Mother in India

A selfless, caring and loved one figure of the family who is compassionate, empathetic and kind hearted is mother. When

we discuss specifically about Indian mothers one thing will be added that is devotion towards family. From ancient India till the time, the role of women primarily centred around the household. The concept of 'Grihini' itself shows a woman as the caretaker of the family, responsible for managing the home, raising children and supporting her husband. Actually underestimated in real life, we simulate the woman in our stories. A woman is considered as Durga (symbol of strength and multitasking), Annapurna (symbol of nourishment and care), Sarita (symbol of adaptability), Kalyani and Vidya (as auspicious and knowledgeable). Her personality is kind of a superwoman. As a mother she expertly prioritises tasks and manages time. As an emotional anchor she provides emotional support, stability and nurturing to her children and family members. One can also consider her as cultural ambassador as she preserves and passes on cultural heritage, tradition and values. Indian mothers are known for their ability of flexibility and adaptability in any situation. From the very beginning they are used to manage large family and so their responsibilities, many of them manage professional life as well along with family life.

1.2 Historical Context and Evolution of the Mother's role:

The way discussed above, the concept of 'grihini' shows the

role of women. In ancient India the role of women was actually centred around the household only. The traditional image of the Indian mother began to evolve, over centuries, the role of women in India has undergone significant changes. We saw women taking on more active roles outside the home, participating in social and political movements. However, even after their development, their roles expanded not changed. To be specific even after being active outside of the house, their core responsibility of managing the household and raising children remained the same and this thing requiring them to adapt to increasingly complex demands.

1.3 Responsibilities of a Mother

A typical day of an Indian mother can go around her house and family. The home remains the centre of activity for most Indian mothers. Preparing meals, managing household finances, supervising children's education and caring for elderly family members, each of these tasks requires a different set of skills from financial sharpness to emotional intelligence. But as Indian mothers can do it and manage it effortlessly as they are brought up in such way. From the very beginning as a daughter they learn such things from their elderly female family members like mother, grandmother, aunt, elder sister etc. Indian families develop their daughter with skills like adjustment, instant decision making and multitasking. Actually they have seen and managed situations as daughter and sister before becoming a mother. With the increasing participation of women, many Indian mothers are now working outside of the house. They are balancing their careers with their domestic duties. This dual role requires an ability of switch between the demands of the work place and the needs of their family. The ability to multitask in this context is not just about managing time efficiently but also about compartmentalizing and prioritizing different aspects of life. The rise of remote work and flexible job options has offered some respite, but it has also blurred the boundaries between professional and personal life, further complicating the multitasking role of Indian mothers. In addition to their domestic and professional responsibilities, Indian mothers often play a crucial role in their communities. Whether it's organizing religious events, participating in social welfare activities, or maintaining social relationships, these responsibilities add another layer to their multitasking abilities. The social expectations placed on Indian mothers to maintain family honor and uphold cultural traditions further complicate their roles. In this way it doesn't matter if she is working woman or just a homemaker, she is a multitasking school by herself. However, research suggests that multitasking can lead to certain errors.

1.4 Dimensions of Multitasking

The way mothers are described-the Indian Mothers are described, as Multitasker, it is not that simple. It is way more difficult than it seems. Multitasking reduces productivity, increases errors, decreases focus etc. Managing work and family responsibilities can lead to physical and mental exhaustion, feeling guilty about not spending enough time with family or not meeting work expectations, juggling multiple responsibilities can lead to increased stress levels, strained relationships with family and colleagues due to divided attention all these brings uncertain psychological and emotional dimensions of Multitasking. Multitasking can lead to mistakes, missed deadlines, and career stagnation. Ignoring personal needs and self-care activities, dealing with societal expectations and judgment about being a working mother,

managing work and family expenses, potentially leading to financial strain, managing emotions, emotions of family members, and work-related emotions etc. asks a lot more than just multitasking. One can consider motherhood as the emotional labour. Indian mothers are expected to be the emotional anchor of their families, providing support and guidance to their children, husbands, and even extended family members. This emotional labour is a form of multitasking that requires a high degree of empathy, patience, and resilience. Moreover, the constant demands of multitasking can take a toll on the mental health of Indian mothers. Studies have shown that the stress of balancing multiple roles can lead to burnout, anxiety, and depression. However, cultural norms often discourage Indian women from seeking help for mental health issues, leading to a situation where they are expected to cope with these pressures in silence. The stigma associated with mental health in India further exacerbates this issue. Despite the difficulties, many Indian moms develop good coping mechanisms to meet the demands of multitasking. These may include time management techniques, dependence on social support networks, or religious or spiritual practices. Indian moms' fortitude is sometimes linked to their deeply held cultural and familial values, which give them a sense of purpose and courage in the face of tragedy.

1.5 Evolution Changes Roles not Responsibilities

The traditional joint family system in India is gradually being supplanted by nuclear families, particularly in cities. This move has had a profound impact on the Indian mother's position, as she now has fewer family members to share responsibilities with. While the nuclear family provides more privacy and autonomy, it also increases the pressure on mothers, who are frequently entirely responsible for handling both household and professional responsibilities. Technology has had a significant impact on Indian mothers' ability to multitask. On the one hand, technology has made certain activities easier, such as managing household finances through online banking or assisting children with schoolwork via educational apps. On the other side, the continual connectedness provided by smart phones and the internet has blurred the barriers between work and home life, making it more difficult for women to strike a healthy work-life balance. As India becomes more globalised, societal norms and expectations surrounding parenting shift. There is a rising realisation of the value of shared parenting responsibilities, and more fathers are actively participating in home and child-rearing tasks. However, societal expectations of motherhood remain firmly ingrained, and many Indian women continue to feel pressured to achieve conventional norms even as they face new problems.

1.6 Multitasking in Different Context

Here multitasking doesn't only means a woman who handles her household responsibilities and workplace duties well, or a woman handling her family's physical, emotional, financial, social and cultural needs at a time. Here we are studying rural Indian mother, urban working mother, single mother too, as responsibilities never asks about your age, personality or situations. In rural India, the mother's role is frequently complicated by poverty, a lack of access to education, and limited resources. Rural moms are often involved in agricultural work in addition to domestic obligations, which adds to their already heavy workload. Despite these obstacles, rural Indian moms exhibit great tenacity and inventiveness,

frequently devising novel ways to manage their various responsibilities. Urban Indian mothers confront unique problems, especially in juggling career and domestic commitments. Urban working women must be very organised and effective due to the demands of professional life and domestic management. Many metropolitan mothers rely on domestic help or family support to manage their multitasking responsibilities, although this involves some level of management and organisation. Single mothers in India confront special challenges because they frequently have to satisfy both parental tasks. Single mothers must shoulder more duties due to the absence of a spouse, ranging from financial support to important family decisions. The shame associated with single parenthood in India can also exacerbate the emotional stress, making single moms' multitasking roles especially taxing.

Indian mothers, whether in rural or urban areas, face several challenges as they juggle multiple roles, from being caregivers to earning members. Indian mothers often struggle to find enough hours in the day to manage work, household chores, and childcare. This leads to physical and emotional exhaustion. For example a rural mother may wake up at dawn to tend to crops or cattle, cook for the family, and ensure her children attend school before working on other tasks like fetching water or helping with household chores. Many Indian mothers, especially in rural or low-income urban areas, face financial difficulties, which makes managing their homes and providing for their children even harder. For example A single mother working multiple jobs may still struggle to afford quality education or healthcare for her children, forcing her to make sacrifices. Healthcare access can be limited, particularly for rural mothers. This requires them to travel vast distances for medical assistance, adding another layer of stress to their already hectic lives. For example, a mother may need to take time away from work or home responsibilities to seek medical attention for her children or herself, disrupting her daily schedule. Women in Indian society are often expected to be primary carers, regardless of whether they work. This puts them under a lot of strain to juggle their responsibilities. For example, urban working mothers may face the burden of reconciling job goals with societal expectations to keep a clean home, raise well-behaved children, and satisfy extended family commitments. Many mothers lack proper support networks, such as nursery, family help, or flexible working hours, making it difficult to balance various duties. A single mother, for example, who does not have a familial support network, must manage job, children, and domestic tasks on her own, which causes emotional stress. Constant multitasking can cause stress, worry, and melancholy, particularly when moms believe they are not achieving expectations at work or at home. For example, a rural mother who works in the fields and maintains domestic tasks may have little time for rest, resulting in chronic exhaustion and emotional stress that cannot be managed well. A lack of education or literacy might limit rural women's career choices and make it more difficult to support their children's educational needs. For example: An illiterate mother may struggle to assist her children with their schooling or be unaware of better educational alternatives for them. Urban working mothers frequently have hard careers, and juggling professional obligations with home responsibilities can be difficult. For example, a corporate employee may have to choose between working late to meet deadlines and leaving on time to care for her children, causing stress and shame on both ends. Indian moms are under pressure to ensure their

children achieve in education, social behaviour, and extracurricular activities, often without much outside assistance. For example: A working mother may have to balance her employment with ensuring that her children attend private school, participate in extracurricular activities, and finish their homework. Mothers, particularly in rural or traditional urban contexts, may have to sacrifice career advancement due to family obligations, resulting in stagnated careers. For example, a working mother may decline promotions or opportunities that entail travel or additional hours because she cannot neglect her home responsibilities. Indian moms, particularly those who perform hard labour or home tasks, frequently experience great physical tiredness without adequate rest or leisure for themselves. For example, a rural woman who works in the fields, fetches water, and cooks for her family is frequently physically exhausted, leaving little time or energy for self-care. Reliable and cheap childcare is frequently unavailable, particularly for working moms in cities or rural mothers with few family members to support them. For example: An urban working woman may struggle to obtain a reputable creche for her child and may be forced to rely on intermittent assistance from domestic helpers. Many Indian moms are responsible for not just their children, but also their ageing parents or in-laws, which adds to their stress. For example, a woman who is caring for her elderly parents and children at the same time may find herself stretched thin, with little time for her own personal or professional interests. In many Indian homes, moms are expected to prioritise family before personal aspirations or job goals, which limits their liberty.

1.7 Education, Empowerment and Financial Independence

Education is critical in enabling Indian moms to better handle their multiple obligations. Educated women can make more educated decisions concerning their children's health, education, and economics. They are also more likely to work in professional roles, which, although increasing their duties, offers them with greater financial independence and autonomy. Financial independence is an important aspect that influences Indian mothers' multitasking ability. Mothers who are financially independent have more control over their life and can better manage the pressures imposed on them. This independence also allows them to make decisions that are beneficial for their family without relying solely on their spouses. Education provides women with knowledge and skills, allowing them to make better decisions and improve their family's well-being. It provides access to greater work prospects and aids in guiding their children to academic success. Empowerment increases confidence and self-esteem. When women are empowered, they can participate more actively in their communities and have a greater say in family and societal issues. This leads to more effective support systems and healthier family interactions. Financial freedom gives moms the ability to sustain themselves and their family. It lowers reliance on others while providing a sense of security. This financial stability ensures that they can buy necessities, invest in their children's education, and deal with emergencies calmly. Together, these elements form a cycle of improvement. Mothers who are educated and empowered, as well as financially independent, may better nurture their families, contribute to their communities, and create a more balanced and affluent existence for their children.

1.8 Support is the Solution

The notion of multitasking parenting has its origins in the conventional gender norms found in Indian families, where women are expected to perform a variety of roles. Women's roles have transcended beyond the home to include involvement in the job force in both rural and urban environments. Indian moms are thereby burdened with the responsibility of providing care as well as earning a living. Family support—here defined as help from relatives—is essential in reducing these stresses. Examples of these relatives include grandparents, in-laws, and siblings. The sociological idea of "familialism," which stresses the family as the main support structure for managing home responsibilities and mental well-being, is the foundation for this research. So, instead of finding flaws of a mother one should help her in whatever way he or she can. Indian women's life starts from her family and ends with her family only so the family has to be the first to support her.

Conclusion

Indian mothers are masters of multitasking, managing a wide range of responsibilities with both skill and perseverance. They handle household chores, work, and social duties with remarkable strength. Yet, all this juggling can also affect their mental and physical health. As India progresses and becomes more modern, it's important to understand the challenges Indian mothers face and give them the support they need to succeed. This means promoting gender equality, improving access to education and healthcare, and creating policies that help working mothers. By supporting Indian mothers, we can ensure they continue to play a crucial role in their families and society.

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