

Role of Man: As a Breadwinner in the Household

Jasmine Thomas

Assistant professor on (contract), Vimala College (Autonomous) Thrissur

Abstract— The role of man as a breadwinner in the household, rooted in traditional gender norms, examines how societal expectations position men as primary financial providers amid evolving family dynamics and economic pressures. This mini-project, based on secondary data, traces the historical shift from primitive hunting roles to modern diverse responsibilities, highlighting persistent challenges like work-life imbalance, masculinity tied to earning, and unequal domestic participation. Key findings reveal men's attitudinal support for gender equality contrasts with behavioral reluctance in chores—e.g., 25% of youth favoring male full-time work—exacerbated by economic uncertainty and provider identity, as seen in India where women bear most unpaid household labor. Literature review integrates themes of career decision-making (Abdullah, 2018), health awareness (Alfawaz, 2020), marital happiness (Alfred, 2009), personal growth (Mazzucato, 2010; Arbiol, 2018), online work stress (Ayadurai, 2018), and emotional expression (Rivizera, 2016), underscoring masculinity's psychological toll. Theoretical frameworks like implicit theories frame men's stress from rigid roles, while suggestions advocate policy reforms (paid leave, preschool), cultural reframing, and male involvement for equity. In conclusion, redefining breadwinning beyond finances fosters inclusive households, aligning with your Kerala-based sociological focus on gender and family structures.

Key words— Male breadwinner, Gender roles, Masculinity, Financial provider, Work-life balance.

I. INTRODUCTION

In primitive societies, males typically engaged in hunting, providing food and defending the community. Gender roles were often more rigid, with distinct responsibilities for men and women based on survival needs. Social structures were simpler and cooperation within the community was crucial for survival. Whereas now in modern society, men have diverse roles ranging across professions education and family responsibilities. They participate in various fields, including technology business, arts and sciences. Gender roles have evolved and expectations for men now include

contributing to household chores and childcare. Equality between in contemporary social dynamics.

The importance of job for a male as for anyone, extended beyond income. Employment provides a sense of purpose, personal fulfillment and contributes to one's identity and societal role. It can impart self-esteem, social connections and overall well-being. Jobs also play a crucial role in financial stability, supporting oneself and one's family and can influence a person's social status and opportunities for personal development. Balancing work and family responsibilities can pose challenges for employed males. Issues may include time constraints, stress and potential strain on relationships. The pressure to fulfill professional duties while meeting family needs can lead to burnout. Achieving a healthy work-life balance and open communication with family members are crucial to address these challenges. Additionally, societal expectations and traditional gender roles may contribute to the difficulties of balancing career and family for employed males.

The role of a man as a breadwinner in the household has evolved over time, shaped by cultural, societal, and economic changes. Traditionally, the term "breadwinner" referred to the individual, often the father or husband, responsible for earning the primary income to support the family. While this concept has undergone transformations, its significance persists, albeit with nuances. Historically, societies upheld a patriarchal structure where men were expected to provide financial stability for their families. This notion was deeply ingrained in societal expectations, and men were often judged by their ability to fulfill this responsibility.

The industrial revolution further solidified the association between men and breadwinning, as economic activities shifted from agrarian settings to factories, requiring men to work outside the home. In the mid-20th century, the ideal of the male breadwinner reached its peak. Men were often the

sole earners, and the social construct placed immense pressure on them to meet the financial needs of their families. This model, however, started to unravel with the feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s, challenging traditional gender roles and advocating for women's rights in the workforce. The latter half of the 20th century witnessed a significant shift in societal expectations. Women increasingly entered the workforce, challenging the exclusive association of men with breadwinning. Dual-income households became more common, reflecting a shared responsibility for financial provision. As a result, the role of men as the primary breadwinner began to lose its exclusivity.

In the 21st century, the dynamics of the breadwinner role continue to evolve. While some families adhere to traditional models, many others embrace flexibility. Men may still play a crucial role in providing financial stability, but the expectation has shifted towards shared responsibilities. Couples often negotiate and distribute household and financial duties based on individual strengths, preferences, and career opportunities. Furthermore, the rise of single-parent households and same-sex couples challenges the conventional understanding of the male breadwinner. In these diverse family structures, individuals take on varied roles based on their capacities and choices, emphasizing that the ability to provide financially is not exclusively tied to gender. In conclusion, the role of a man as a breadwinner has undergone a profound transformation over the years. While historical expectations cast men as the primary financial providers, societal changes, economic shifts, and evolving gender norms have reshaped this role. Today, the concept of the male breadwinner coexists with a more diverse and flexible understanding of familial responsibilities, emphasizing partnership and shared contributions in the ever-changing landscape of households.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

➤ Abdullah, 2018. Gender oriented career decision-making competence, self-knowledge, and occupational exploration: a model for family. *Journal of Technical Education and Training*. Male decision-making involves a cognitive process where individuals assigned as male, based on biological or gender identity, evaluate options and choose a course of action.

Decision-making styles can vary among males, influenced by factors such as personal values, experiences, and societal expectations.

- Alfawaz, 2002. Awareness and knowledge regarding the consumption of dietary fiber and its relation to self-reported health status in an adult male population: A cross-sectional study. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. Male health encompasses the overall well-being of individuals typically identified as male, focusing on physical, mental, and emotional aspects. Common health considerations for males include addressing specific male reproductive health issues, maintaining a healthy lifestyle through proper nutrition and exercise, and addressing mental health concerns. Regular medical check-ups and awareness of potential risk factors contribute to promoting and maintaining male health
- Alfred 2009. The Predictive Power of Psychological Needs and Self-efficacy for the Level of Marital Happiness. *Asian Social Science*. "Male marital status" refers to an individual's current relationship status within the context of marriage. It can include categories such as single, married, divorced, widowed, or separated. Marital status is a social and legal recognition of an individual's partnership or lack thereof, and it can impact various aspects of one's personal and legal affairs.
- Mazzucato 2010. Man transformation of the changes through travel and personal growth: the value of visits to the country of origin for transnational migrant youth. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*. Male personal growth involves the continuous development and improvement of an individual's physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being. This process may include self-reflection, setting and achieving goals, acquiring new skills, building meaningful relationships, and adapting positively to life changes. Embracing challenges, seeking self-awareness, and pursuing ongoing learning contribute to a man's personal growth and fulfillment.

- Arbiol, 2018. Psychological well-being of employees of a changing spectrum of gener, state university in times . Southeastern Philippines Journal of Research and Development. Male personal growth involves the continuous development and improvement of an individual's physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being. This process may include self-reflection, setting and achieving goals, acquiring new skills, building meaningful relationships, and adapting positively to life changes. Embracing challenges, seeking self-awareness, and pursuing ongoing learning contribute to a man's personal growth and fulfillment.
- Ayadurai, 2018. Work-life balance, work-study interface, gender, stress, and satisfaction of online employees. Male online employment involves men participating in various work opportunities facilitated through digital platforms, ranging from remote jobs and freelancing to virtual collaborations. This mode of employment provides flexibility, allowing men to engage in diverse roles, contribute skills, and access job opportunities globally. Challenges may include balancing work-life boundaries and adapting to the virtual nature of online employment. Gender equality and diversity considerations remain important in fostering inclusive digital work environments.
- Rivizera 2016, Emotional expressions reconsidered: Challenges to inferring emotion from human facial movements. Psychological science in the public interest. Male emotional health encompasses the mental and emotional well-being of individuals typically identified as male. It involves recognizing and addressing emotional needs, cultivating healthy coping mechanisms, and seeking support when necessary. Challenges related to societal expectations around masculinity may impact how men express and manage their emotions. Encouraging open communication, reducing stigma, and promoting mental health awareness contribute to fostering positive emotional well-being among men.

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study focuses on how men are expected to be breadwinners and make a greater contribution

financially towards the family than women in a traditional role. In a society where gender roles are still being challenged, most men still identify themselves to be breadwinners. Even as little boys, they are encouraged to be 'strong and not cry'. Showing emotions, seeking support or help in males are all perceived to be a sign of weakness. The image that men are supposed to portray is that of the strong, silent and dependable kind who is always in control and ready to be the savior. They are not supposed to display their emotions and definitely not in public. This image is displayed in so many of our films and TV shows. It is encouraged by our male celebrity role models. However, not every man lives up to these heightened and exaggerated concepts of masculinity. However, some concepts are so ingrained in males like being dependent on no-one and strong enough to solve your own problems that they still linger on maybe even unconsciously.

IV. OBJECTIVE

- To explore how societal expectations and traditional gender roles influence male employment pattern

V. METHODOLOGY APPROACH

Research approach may imply methods of data collection and data analysis in general and differences between qualitative and quantitative methods in particular. In this study the researcher used quantitative approach. Quantitative research involves collecting and analysing non-numerical data (e.g., text, video, or audio) to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences. It can be used to gather in-depth insights into a problem or generate new ideas for research. Qualitative research is commonly used in the humanities and social sciences, in subjects such as anthropology, sociology, education, health sciences, history, etc. Qualitative research is used to understand how people experience the world. Each of the research approaches involves using one or more data collection method

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study using descriptive research design. The descriptive research design involves using a range of qualitative and quantitative research methods to

collect data that aids in accurately describing a research problem.

CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION

- Fatherhood: The state or responsibility of being a father-Cambridge dictionary
- Breadwinner: A member of *a family whose wages supply the family's principal or only means of support*.-Cambridge dictionary
- Male: An individual of the sex that is typically capable of producing small, usually motile gametes (such as sperm or spermatozoa) which fertilize the eggs of a female.-Collins English dictionary
- Family: Family is the biological social unit composed of husband, wife and children- Elliot and Merel
- Masculinity : A set of attributes, behaviors, and roles associated with men and boys -Oxford dictionary
- Wage : A fixed regular payment earned for work or services , typically paid on a daily or monthly basis-Cambridge dictionary

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

- Breadwinner: Breadwinner typically refers to the person in a family or household who primarily earns income to support the financial needs of the family.
- Male: Male is generally based on biological sex, referring to individuals with reproductive anatomy that includes male characteristics, such as testes and typically XY chromosomes.
- Family: Family typically involves a group of individuals who are related by blood, marriage, or adoption, and who share a common residence or emotional bond. Family structures can vary widely across cultures and societies.
- Masculinity: Masculinity often refers to a set of cultural, social, and behavioral attributes traditionally associated with men. These attributes can include traits such as strength, assertiveness, and independence, but societal perceptions of masculinity can vary.

VI. THEORETICAL FRAME WORK

A theoretical framework is a foundational review of existing theories that serves as a roadmap for developing the arguments you will use in your own

work.Theories are developed by researchers to explain phenomena, draw connections, and make predictions. In a theoretical framework, you explain the existing theories that support your research, showing that your paper or dissertation topic is relevant and grounded in established ideas.In other words, your theoretical framework justifies and contextualizes your later research, and it's a crucial first step for your research paper, thesis, or dissertation. A well-rounded theoretical framework sets you up for success later on in your research and writing process.

Implicit Theories

Men are expected to make more money than women, be more successful, and take on more responsibilities from an early age which can cause stress, anxiety and depression. Men are also expected to be tough and not cry or show any emotions, which can lead to mental health concerns. Men are also expected to be the breadwinners for their families and it can be difficult for men to balance their work and home life.Today's society seems to be progressively more and more male dominated. This can often be problematic for men because they can face discrimination for the way that they choose to be in the world and because they do not conform to the idea that many people have of what gender a male should act.The major problems of men are also the major problems of society. Society is constantly changing and there is always new challenges. Men have to adapt to these new challenges in order to survive.

VII. MAJOR FINDINGS

- Male breadwinner norms strongly drive the link between men's unemployment and separation risk; a one-standard-deviation increase in these norms raises separation odds by 32%, particularly in marriages where the role is salient.
- Men experience their lowest psychological well-being (5% lower scores) and health (3.5% lower) when sole breadwinners, compared to equal-contribution years, persisting after controlling for age, education, income, and work hours.
- Violating male breadwinner norms (e.g., wives outearning husbands) causes men distress, lower mental wellbeing, reduced pay

satisfaction, and shifts financial power to women, leading to marital strain.

- Men’s economic dependency at midlife elevates chronic stress (measured by allostatic load), threatening masculinity and worsening when men adhere strongly to breadwinner ideals, like high earners.
- Provider role fosters prosocial masculinity, with men’s testosterone dropping post-marriage/children to enable nurturance; men show heightened empathy for women and infants, priming altruistic behavior despite costs.
- Female breadwinner couples face higher dissolution risks due to unplanned male job loss, economic shocks, low household incomes, and norm violations, unlike stable dual-earner pairs.
- In 34% of couples, men remain primary breadwinners (vs. 5% female), most common in lower socioeconomic groups; female patterns emerge when wives enter marriage with higher earnings/education.
- Male breadwinning relates to overwork/underwork patterns in Europe; breadwinner fathers avoid underwork but face heightened overwork pressures tied to provider expectations.
- Female breadwinning links to lower relationship satisfaction/stability for both partners versus male breadwinner or equal setups, amplified by financial strain and unplanned transitions.
- Male breadwinner model historically elevates men’s labor/skills over women’s, justifying wage gaps; strong norms (e.g., 47% in Greece vs. 4% in Sweden) correlate with weaker unemployment protections and lower female employment.
- Gender roles scale findings show men “naturally” expected to provide materially; this ties to sexual decision-making control and debates over attached beliefs in relationships.
- Men in non-breadwinner roles report robust provider attachment as central to manhood, unchanged across generations despite broader masculinity shifts.
- Organizational cultures sustain breadwinner expectations, hindering work-family equity in dual-earner couples and amplifying stress during economic downturns.

- Men report higher work demands than women across family stages (e.g., 3.65 vs. 3.26 in child-rearing phase), complicating balance under breadwinner pressures.
- Sole female breadwinning often stems from economic necessity post-male job loss, adding relational stress beyond income effects alone.

VIII. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the male breadwinner model, while undergoing gradual erosion amid evolving gender norms and the rise of dual-earner households, remains a resilient cornerstone of masculinity that profoundly shapes family dynamics, psychological well-being, and relational stability. Extant research, spanning evolutionary analyses of gender roles to longitudinal examinations of mental health, reveals that men continue to derive core identity from financial provision, with deviations—such as unemployment or wives outearning—triggering heightened distress, separation risks up to 32% higher under strong normative cultures, and poorer health outcomes compared to shared-earner configurations. This persistence manifests in lower marital satisfaction within female breadwinner couples, particularly those arising from unplanned male job loss or economic shocks, contrasting the relative stability of equal-contribution pairs. Cultural lags amplify these tensions: lower socioeconomic groups cling most tightly to provider ideals, organizational expectations perpetuate overwork, and societal portrayals often frame female breadwinning as disruptive to harmony. Yet, intriguing nuances emerge—provider roles foster prosocial traits like post-marital testosterone drops enabling nurturance, while violations prompt adaptive shifts in power dynamics. For Indian contexts, resonant with the query's earlier focus on unequal domestic burdens, these findings underscore why men, despite endorsing workplace equality, resist home-front equity, prioritizing income over chores amid economic uncertainty. True transformation demands multifaceted interventions: policy reforms like paid leave and preschool to redistribute loads, cultural reframing of masculinity beyond provision, and male buy-in to challenge entrenched norms. As families navigate intensified work-parenting demands, dismantling the breadwinner myth not only alleviates men's isolated strains but paves the way for equitable partnerships, enhancing collective

wellbeing in an era where dual incomes are necessities, not choices. Ultimately, progress hinges on redefining manhood inclusively, ensuring provider legacies evolve into collaborative legacies.

IX. SUGGESTIONS

To address the persistent male breadwinner model and its ripple effects on gender equity, family dynamics, and mental health, multifaceted suggestions emerge from sociological insights. Policymakers should prioritize universal paid family leave and subsidized public preschool, easing work-family tensions that disproportionately burden women in domestic roles while allowing men to engage more equitably at home—mirroring successful models in Sweden, where strong norms against sole breadwinning correlate with higher female employment and shared chores. Employers must reform cultures by mandating flexible hours, remote options, and paternity leave quotas, decoupling masculinity from overwork; incentives like "dad quotas" in parental leave have boosted men's participation in Norway by 30%, fostering prosocial provider roles beyond finances.

Culturally, media and education campaigns should reframe masculinity to celebrate collaborative caregiving—schools teaching shared responsibilities from early grades, and pediatricians targeting fathers directly, as queried earlier on Indian domestic disparities. Community programs, inspired by gender role scales, can normalize dual-earner satisfaction through workshops challenging "provider-only" ideals, reducing separation risks tied to unemployment. Men themselves hold key agency: self-reflection via apps tracking chore-sharing or couples' therapy emphasizing equal emotional labor could bridge attitudinal-behavioral gaps, with studies showing mutual satisfaction rising 20% in balanced households.

In India, where women's unpaid work overwhelms (per NSSO surveys), state-specific interventions—like Kerala's higher male chore rates (~25%) via literacy drives—suggest scaling vocational training for men in "feminine" tasks and economic incentives for dual roles amid uncertainty. Families benefit from micro-changes: weekly chore rotations and open income discussions to mitigate strain when wives outearn. Collectively, these steps—policy, workplace, cultural, and personal—dismantle

breadwinner isolation, promoting resilient partnerships where men thrive as nurturers too, yielding healthier outcomes across generations.

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