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**ST. JOSEPH’S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), BANGALORE-27**

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| **V SEMESTER BA: WRITING FOR JOURNALISM & CREATIVE WRITING**  **JN 5218: Indian Politics and Society for Development Journalism** |
| **Time: 2 HOURS Max Marks- 70**  **Instruction:**   1. **This paper is meant for V semester students of BA-EJP course who have opted for the Development Journalism elective.** 2. **You are allowed to use a Dictionary.** 3. **You will lose marks for exceeding the suggested word-limit.** 4. **This paper contains FIVE pages and THREE sections.** 5. **Read the following article by Dr.** [**Sylvia Karpagam**](https://www.newslaundry.com/author/sylvia-karpagam)**, and answer the questions that follow.**   The mid-day meal provided in government schools cannot be taken lightly by anyone who claims to care for the young citizens of the country—its children.  As per the National Centre for Health Statistics (NCHS) standards, a boy of age 14 should ideally be around 147 centimetres in height and weigh around 47 kg while a girl of the same age should be around 159 centimetres and weigh around 48 kg. However, according to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 4th round (2015), Karnataka has an alarming number of children who are shorter, thinner and weighing less than what is ideal.  The data in Table 1 is self-explanatory. This has a direct impact on mortality and morbidity rates due to communicable diseases in childhood and non-communicable diseases in adulthood.    ***Table 1 – NFHS4 data on nutritional indicators in Karnataka***  The other objective of the mid-day meal (MDM) is to [increase](http://mhrd.gov.in/mid-day-meal) school attendance. The logic is simple: children who have eaten a proper meal are able to concentrate better. It is also often an incentive for children, who come from impoverished families and who may not be provided with a full meal at home, to attend school. The government becomes liable if it fails to meet the nutritional standards of the mid-day meal as legally [mandated](http://pib.nic.in/newsite/mbErel.aspx?relid=128354) by the National Food Security Act, 2013.  One mid-day meal in the government school, can, by no stretch of the imagination, provide all the nutritional requirements of the child. However, if provided based on scientific and nutritional norms (Table 3), it can make a small dent in improving the nutritional status of children.    ***Table 3 – Nutritional standards of the MDM as per the NFSA 2013***  To meet the intake of calories, proteins and other requirements, the mid-day meal has to be scientifically planned and implemented. As per the Indian Food Composition [Tables](http://ninindia.org/ifct_2017.htm) published by the National Institute of Nutrition, 100 grams of egg provides 13 grams of protein and 170 kilocalories of energy as well as most of the other vitamins and minerals required for proper functioning of the body—except for Vitamin C. Since each egg weights approximately 60 grams, it would provide around 100 kilocalories of energy and 8 grams of protein.  These proteins are of superior biological value. Eggs have not been provided by the State government for the last seven to eight years citing religious reasons. Therefore, a simple means of providing calories and proteins are lost to the children. The National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) recommends consumption of at least three eggs per week in view of several nutritional advantages. There have been [demands](https://thewire.in/7654/are-akshaya-patra-kitchens-what-they-are-made-out-to-be/) for eggs in the mid-day meal from civil societies, parents and children across several states of India. If eggs are not provided to children, the nutritional needs have to be made up with an addition of milk, milk products, dark green leafy vegetables and fruits in adequate proportions to meet the requirement of proteins, vitamins and minerals.  Children also have to eat around 100-150 grams of cereal at the MDM to be able to meet the calorie requirement of 450–700 kilocalories. If children eat less, they do not get the required calories.  Akshaya Patra has [recently](https://theprint.in/governance/why-onion-and-garlic-have-become-too-hot-to-handle-for-karnataka/166172/) been in the limelight for refusing to comply with government guidelines for food preparation, a move [criticised](https://www.counterview.net/2018/12/karnataka-ngo-akshay-patra-not.html) by the Right to Food and the Right to Health (Jan Swasthya Abhiyan) campaigns. The vegetarian food [provided](http://www.cag.gov.in/sites/default/files/audit_report_files/Union_Performance_Civil_Mid_Day_Meal_Report_36_2015_2.pdf) by Akshaya Patra does not meet nutritional criteria. As [stated](https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/akshaya-patra-mid-day-meal-controversy-will-food-commission-meeting-iron-out-issues-93616) by the Food Commission of Karnataka, children do not drink even the one glass of milk provided by Akshaya Patra because it is cold and often gets spoilt on heating. Apart from this, the sambar is watery and does not have adequate vegetables. Nutritional assessments should not be conducted on single ingredients but for the meal as a whole.  A more important point about MDM supplied by Akshaya Patra is that children are consuming less than recommended 100-150 grams of rice, which means that children are consuming even less of the food which is already of low nutritional quality. So they get neither quantity nor quality. Here is where the issue of onion and garlic come in. Onions and garlic contain minerals and vitamins and are a source of essential oils, flavonoids, carotenoids and phytochemicals, all necessary to boost immunity. Very few labs have the facility to analyse all these ingredients. It is not so much about the nutritional value of these ingredients as much as how they are related to cultural eating practices which directly affect taste. If children are provided food that they find tasty, they are likely to eat more. Otherwise, children just eat enough to suppress hunger which is inadequate and takes away from the whole purpose of the MDM. The Supreme court also says that the MDM should be cooked taking into consideration local preferences and tastes.  Policymakers should make wise decisions on the quality and quantity of the MDM. Arguments that those who don’t like the taste can eat at their homes undermines the very intent of the MDM. For some of the poorest and malnourished children in Karnataka, the MDM may often be the most nutritious meal in the day. How we plan and implement this meal is crucial to decide the course of the health and nutritional status of children of the State—no religious, caste or class preferences should come in the way of providing children with adequate quantity and quality of a well-balanced mid-day meal.  **I.A. Answer ALL of the following questions (150 words EACH) (3x10=30)**  1. Using the data in Table 1 write a report on the difference in growth among children of different castes/tribes and religions.  2. The writer says, ‘Supreme court also says that the MDM should be cooked taking into consideration local preferences and tastes.’ Do you agree with this statement? In your own words discuss the importance of food preference and taste in the MDM scheme  3. Frame **TEN** questions for an interview with the Minister of Human Resources and Development seeking the governments rationale on the MDM scheme. |

**II Read the following excerpt from an article by Archita Raghu and answer**

**the questions that follow.**

Feminist economists had long focused on time as a measure of work, or more specifically, as a measure of enumerating women’s work, even before we zoomed in on the endless time and labour women continued to expend on doing, doing, doing as the world ‘stayed at home’ during the pandemic.

Also coinciding with the pandemic were the results of the first-ever All India Time Use Survey (TUS) conducted from January to December 2019 by the National Statistical Office (NSO). The TUS recorded how men and women across the country spent their time in the 24 hours from 4 am on one day to 4 am the next. The survey, covering 4.5 lakh Indians (of the age 6 years and above) in 1.4 lakh households, found that if unpaid labour was taken into account, 95% of women and 85% of men worked. The survey also maps the time spent on leisure, self-care and maintenance, socialising, and learning, among other activities.

Crucially, behind this year long survey lies nearly five decades of feminist struggle to visibilise women’s work. The TUS underscored what feminists have been urging us to look at all along — millions of women work but go missing in national-level surveys as their work is mostly not counted either by their families, communities or even the state: in short, unrecognised in everyday life.

In 1982, feminist economists [Devaki Jain](https://lifestyle.livemint.com/news/talking-point/devaki-jain-s-adventures-in-feminist-economics-111602829569298.html) and Malini Chand published the first Time Allocation Survey (TAS), as it was called then, from data they collected in West Bengal and Rajasthan. They argued that to properly capture and enumerate women’s work, there was a need to rethink the idea of work and use time as a means of capturing this work. This meant that there was a need to first look and list all the activities undertaken by individuals and then to group productive and non-productive activities to “arrive at a wider definition of gainful activity” (gainful activities refer to those activities that are seen to have economic worth).

As Jain wrote in her 1996 paper, [Valuing Work: Time as Measure](https://www.epw.in/journal/1996/43/review-womens-studies-review-issues-specials/valuing-work-time-measure.html), “If women’s unpaid work were properly valued, it is quite possible that [they] would emerge in most societies as the main breadwinners – or at least equal breadwinners – since they put in more hours of work than men…”

Traditional survey methods render work done by women like processing paddy or taking care of a child as non-work or “as supplementary, subsidiary or secondary” work. Unlike traditional surveys, TUS interviewers ask respondents to recall what they did in the last 24 hours to track paid work, unpaid work and leisure. As Dr Shiney Chakraborty, research analyst at the Institute of Social Studies Trust (ISST), told The Third Eye, citing the example of women in rural India, “They spend 55 minutes fetching water and spend one hour or so in collecting firewood and if we start including these unpaid activities, it’s not that women are working less in India. It is quite the opposite.” She adds,

The results of the TUS prompt seemingly basic questions that have quite complex answers — what do we consider work and why?

As a child, I’d write in my school diary that my mother’s occupation was ‘housewife’, despite knowing she taught music to neighbourhood children on alternate days and worked as a part-time arts and crafts teacher at school. Another friend did the same even though her mother sold jaggery and stitched sari blouses for her friends in the summer. When asked, my mother would say that her job was to take care of the household and us. Surveyors asking women what work they do, run the risk of their citing one specific activity while they do multiple things in a day. Due to the conditioned understanding of work as something that is paid, more often than not the usual answer would be, “I don’t work.”

Dr Ashwini Deshpande, founding director of the Centre for Economic Data and Analysis (CEDA) at Ashoka University, [has written about](https://www.theindiaforum.in/article/what-did-you-do-last-24-hours#:~:text=Ashwini%20Deshpande%20is%20Professor%20of%20Economics%20at%20Ashoka%20University.,-Drawing%20by%20Anujath&text=The%20first%20nation%2Dwide%20survey,that%20each%20of%20them%20do.) the importance of time use surveys in India, specifically where women do unpaid economic work such as on family farms and family-run stores. She also argues that this work would be of a paid nature if done by a man. She adds, “Time use research served the purpose of drawing attention to the multiple demands on women’s time. Researchers have been using this data to calculate the economic costs of women’s unpaid domestic work.”

The TUS 2019

In sharp contrast to the 2019 TUS, The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) of 2018-19 [recorded](https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1629366) the female labour force participation rate at a mere 18.6%. . .18% vs 95%. This gap appears because of biased methodology and enumeration in traditional surveys that continue to discount women’s unpaid labour.

The TUS 2019, as Chakraborty points out, also reveals that women spend six and a half hours a day on unpaid labour compared to men’s two and half hours. Women spend five and a half hours on paid activities compared to men’s nearly six and a half hours. Women spend 17% of their time on unpaid household chores and caregiving activities compared to men’s 7%. Men also get more hours for self-care, maintenance and learning than women.

Women often engage in simultaneous activities like, say, making packets of bindis at home while performing care activities such as looking after children or aged relatives and the TUS methodology brings attention to these multiple forms of labour. As Jain wrote in her 1996 paper, their labour is largely concentrated in work that is “the least skilled, worst paid, most time-consuming ones”.

And, as journalist Rukmini S [writes](https://www.livemint.com/news/india/your-caste-and-class-determines-how-you-spend-time-11602657834829.html), the TUS 2019 also recorded how caste, class and geographical location intersect with labour and leisure.

The survey found that upper caste women spend the most time on unpaid work. Upper caste men spend the most time on leisure while women belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes had the least time for self-care.

The lack of precision in methodology found itself in the Census as well. Feminist economist Maitreyi Krishnaraj in her 1990 paper [Women’s Work in Indian Census: Beginnings of Change](https://www.jstor.org/stable/4397066?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents) pointed out that the 1981 Census recorded that slightly over 13% of women worked. A piece of data that looked stranger given that the 1988 Report of the National Commission on Self Employed Women titled Shram Shakti found that 89% of women worked in the unorganised sector. The question that was asked in the Census 1981 was, “Did you work anytime at all last year?” and it excluded women as they rarely reported themselves as workers.

A small and significant addition by The United Nations Development Fund for Women (Unifem) project to this question changed some things. Thus the 1991 Census thus asked, “Did you work anytime at all last year? (Including unpaid work on family farm or family enterprise?)” This Census found over 20% of women worked — the increase was not much but the addition to just that question broadened the definition of work.

Understanding Women and Work

Deshpande writes that compared to labour surveys and household surveys, “the TUS is comparatively better. It is up to us whether to count them or not, at least we have the information.” She points out it is a step towards the right direction for understanding women and work. “However, for TUS to contribute to an accurate measurement of women’s economic work, it needs to internalize the framework [outlined](http://www.icssrdataservice.in/datarepository/index.php/catalog/142/overview) in the pilot TUS of 1998-99. In the meanwhile, data from TUS 2019, with all the caveats and disclaimers, is a stark reminder of the deep-rooted gender divisions at work and at home.”

On the other hand, Devaki Jain points out the focus which was initially to recognise women’s contribution to the economic domain has now drifted to recognising care work. She argues, “For me, it is first the bringing in of women who are actually labourers, workers of various kinds into the basket of the employed, before getting distracted by including their work in household work.” She points out that women directly contributing to the economy are not yet considered in our current understanding of “work”.

Despite the many criticisms, the pilot and the first national TUS have captured the difficulties of women and brought several changes on ground.

**II.A. Answer any TWO the questions that follow. (15x2=30) (250 words each)**

1. The writer says that “there was a need to rethink the idea of work and use time as a means of capturing this work.” Why is ‘time’ an important measure of capturing women’s work?

2. The writer says, ‘Due to the conditioned understanding of work as something that is paid, more often than not the usual answer would be, “I don’t work.” Is this something that rings true to you as well when you think of the women in your homes. What does the ‘I don’t work’ day look like for them?

3.The writer quotes Devaki Jain saying, “For me, it is first the bringing in of women who are actually labourers, workers of various kinds into the basket of the employed, before getting distracted by including their work in household work.” What is your understanding of this statement? Why does she include ‘care giving’ and household work a ‘distraction from actual labour? Do you agree with this distinction? Elaborate.

**III. Write a pitch for a magazine that looks at women’s issues. Write a short editorial for the first edition of your magazine and include headlines of FIVE stories the current issue would feature. Give your magazine a name. (1X10=10) (150-200 words)**

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