



## SOICO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE DOMESTIC WORKERS

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**ABSTRACT**

India has experienced high GDP growth in the last decades. In the period of accelerated growth, the contribution of informal sector to the GDP was highly significant. One of the most visible changes has been the increase in participation of women in the informal sector. This change in the composition of the informal sector is not only due to the growing opportunities but also related to the move being made by unskilled male workers to semi-skilled and skilled jobs. This has enabled sections of the population to benefit from the growth around them. Today, over 86 per cent of workers are in the unorganized sector and as such the contribution of this sector makes to the current growth cannot be ignored. A profession that is supporting the growth in more ways is domestic work. Demographic changes such as aging populations, decline in welfare provision, increasing labour force participation of women and the challenges of balancing working life and family life in urban areas and developed countries contribute to greater demand for domestic workers. Today, paid domestic work is the fastest growing sector of employment for women. It is the availability of paid (and unpaid) domestic work that enables households to run smoothly thereby allowing them to engage in the labour market and tap the developments around them. In this aspect a modest attempt has been made to examine the socio economic conditions of the domestic workers.

**KEYWORDS** : Domestic work, Welfare provision, Informal sector**I. Introduction**

India has experienced high GDP growth in the last decades. In the period of accelerated growth, the contribution of informal sector to the GDP was highly significant. One of the most visible changes has been the increase in participation of women in the informal sector. This change in the composition of the informal sector is not only due to the growing opportunities but also related to the move being made by unskilled male workers to semi-skilled and skilled jobs. This has enabled sections of the population to benefit from the growth around them. Today, over 86 per cent of workers are in the unorganized sector and as such the contribution of this sector makes to the current growth cannot be ignored. A profession that is supporting the growth in more ways is domestic work. Demographic changes such as aging populations, decline in welfare provision, increasing labour force participation of women and the challenges of balancing working life and family life in urban areas and developed countries contribute to greater demand for domestic workers. Today, paid domestic work is the fastest growing sector of employment for women. It is the availability of paid (and unpaid) domestic work that enables households to run smoothly thereby allowing them to engage in the labour market and tap the developments around them.

The invisibility and low social status awarded to this sector is compounded by the fact that a large number of domestic workers belong to lower caste or ethnic minority communities. Currently, domestic workers are not properly covered under any labour laws and there are no legal and policy regulations to ensure the protection of workers employed in this sector. Collecting accurate and comparable data on the number of domestic workers throughout the world is difficult because of high incidence of undeclared domestic work, under-reporting and the varying definitions of domestic work in statistical surveys.

Work is central to people's well-being. In addition to providing income, work can pave the way for broader social and economic advancement, strengthening individuals, their families and communities. People's access to amenities to lead a productive and healthy life is intricately related to their employment and as such on the labour laws and how they treat regulation of work conditions, such as health insurance, maternity benefits, old age pension, and disability allowance etc In India, close to 45 labour legislations exists for 7% of the organized sector workers. However, the vast majority i.e. 93% of the unorganized sector workforce remains unprotected and vulnerable because of lack of similar regulatory or welfare mechanisms.

**II. Review of literature**

Jyoti Bharat <sup>1</sup>(2008) has made an attempt to study on Socio-economic status of the women domestic workers. The required primary data have been collected by using a two stage random sampling technique. In the first stage thirty slums from each of the five townships were selected. In the second stage ten women per slum were selected. It was suggested that the working and living condition of domestic workers to be improved.

Sathiyashiela and Jeyakodi<sup>2</sup> (2013) have analyzed the socio economic status of women domestic workers and the various problems faced by them. By using convenient sampling thod, the required primary data have been collected from data from 50 sample respondents in Madurai City. The collected data have been analysed with percentage analysis and Likert's scaling techniques. It was suggested that the government should take steps to bring the domestic workers under the Minimum Wage Act of 1948. All the domestic workers may become a member of Domestic Workers Association. .It is observed that the domestic workers feel that they do not have enough time to take care of their children. Hence, the employer may consider them as human being and allow weekly off to them.

Nagaraj Badiger and Raghavendra Gudagunt<sup>3</sup> (2014) have examined socio-economic conditions of the domestic workers and their working conditions, the problems of domestic work and their limitations. The study concluded that women and children have been employed as domestic workers. They usually come from lower caste, with very little education and are often unaware of their rights. Within India, many women and children domestic workers are continue to suffer various kinds of abuses and violation of their human rights.

<sup>1</sup> T. Sathiyashiela and Dr. K.Jeyakodi(2013)“Socio-Economic Status of Women Domestic Workers in Madurai City”, Shanlax International Journal of Arts, Science & Humanities 117 , Vol.1 No.1 ,PP.117-122

<sup>2</sup> Nagaraj Badiger<sup>1</sup> and Raghavendra Gudagunti (2014), Problems And Prospect Of DomesticWorkers: A Critical Approach, Indian Streams Research Journal ,Volume 4, Issue 9, October,pp.7-13.

**III. Objectives of the study**

- 1) To examine the socio-economic conditions of the women domestic workers.
- 2) To offer suggestions for the welfare of the domestic workers.

#### IV. Sampling design and methodology

The present study is confined to Erode District of Tamil Nadu. It is based on both primary and secondary data. The required primary data has been collected from 200 sample respondents by using the convenient sampling technique during the period between December 2014 and September, 2015.

#### V. Frame work of analysis

The collected data has been analysed with the tool Chi-square test, at 5% level of significance.

#### VI. FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

- It is found that 54% of the respondents are illiterates, hence it is suggested that the NGOs and other social service groups must take an initiative to provide basic education to these workers and also there is a necessity to create a strong public awareness to enable domestic workers to achieve a healthy recognition in society by encouraging participation and leadership in the hands of domestic workers.
- It is found that 67.55% of the respondents belong to the group in which no. of earning member is one. Hence it is suggested that to improve the economic conditions of the families of the respondents, the Self-Employment Scheme must cover the poor families of these workers. Further, the government should also introduce some additional employment schemes in the area, so that their husbands and children can get some profitable work.
- 69.5% of the respondents depend on other mode (private chit funds). Hence it is suggested that the importance of savings can be explained to the domestic workers. They must be educated the benefits of investing in banks and post offices instead of chits and private finance.
- It is found that 43% of the respondents belong to the Group B (working 3 hours to 6 hours per day) and also found that 84% of the respondents were not getting fixed holiday during their employment. Hence it is suggested that the domestic workers also must be covered by the Workman's Compensation Act of 1923, The Weekly Holiday Act of 194, The Maternity Benefit Act of 1961, The Personal Injury Act of 1963, Gratuity Act of 1978 and Minimum Wages Act.
- 98.5% of the respondents were not offered any social security by their employer. Hence it is suggested that there should be a provision to cover Provident Fund scheme (PF) and (Employee's State Insurance) to the domestic workers also.
- 56% of the respondents are getting food at their work place. Hence, it is suggested that there is a provision to ensure the quality of the food offered by the employer.
- 63.5% of the respondents were asked to perform the extra work by their employer. Hence it is suggested that the employer must provide equitable extra wages for extra workload due to arrival of guests on holidays and festivals.
- 99% of the sample respondents were not entered into any written contract with their employer. Hence it is suggested that the labour law board must draw a policy to emphasize the written contract by the employer keeping in mind the workload in a house for a day or so, their wage rate and the increments in their wages from time to time.

#### VII. Conclusion:

The domestic workers are forced to work long hours for mere wages. There is no job security for them. At times of crisis like physical illness, the domestic workers struggle a lot to meet their basic requirements. Therefore, the government has to design appropriate policies and programmes to protect their job, to ensure fair wages and extend credit facilities suitable for them. Domestic workers are not aware of their legal rights. So, legal awareness programmes must be implemented to create their rights.

At the present situation, it is very difficult to lead one's life without the help of domestic worker. It is the most wanted service in the present situation. If it is done in an organized way, this job will get its

due recognition. Domestic work is an open job market which gives income with job for any number of people. The joint effort of NGO's, domestic workers and employers will uplift the quality of the life of domestic workers.

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