



Women Domestic Workers and their Family Life in Education

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ABSTRACT

A domestic women worker is a person who works within the employer's family. Domestic work force perform a various of household forces for a family or an individual, from providing care for children and elderly dependents to housekeeping, including cleaning, washing and household maintenance. Other responsibilities may include cooking, laundry and ironing, shopping for food and undertaking other household errands. Such work has always needed to be done but before the Industrial Revolution and the advent of labour saving strategy, it was physically much harder. Mostly women are employed in domestic work. Though the domestic women workers rendering enormous service to their owner. Their situation is workers them to the unorganized workers, they work more but getting less pay. They were not allowed to take leave. According to their wish they were not consider as a workers. Hence in the current paper forces were giving to study the family life of domestic women workers.

Keywords: socio-economic conditions, Domestic Women Workers, Namakkal District.

INTRODUCTION

Some domestic workers live within their employer's household. In some cases, the contribution and skill of servants whose work encompassed complex management tasks in large households have been highly valued. However, for the most part, domestic work, while necessary, is demanding and undervalued. Although legislation protecting domestic workers is in place in many countries, it is often not extensively enforced. In many jurisdictions, domestic work is poorly regulated and domestic workers are subject to serious abuses, including slavery many domestic workers are live-in domestics. Though they often have their own quarters, their accommodations are not usually as comfortable as those reserved for the family members. In some cases, they sleep in the kitchen or small rooms, such as a box room, sometimes located in the basement or attic. Domestic workers may live in their own home, though more often they are "live-in" domestics, meaning that they receive their room and board as part of their salaries. In some countries, because of the large gap between urban and rural incomes, and the lack of employment opportunities in the countryside, even an ordinary middle class urban family can afford to employ a full-time live-in servant. The majority of domestic workers in China, Mexico, India, and other populous developing countries, are people from the rural areas who are employed by urban families.

Domestic work has a long history in India with both men and women working in others homes as servants. The affluent had servants; mostly men with loyalty obligation and patronage bring the salient aspects of this relationship. Caste defined the hierarchy – lower castes performed the dirty work of cleaning while higher caste men cooked. Though domestic work is not a new phenomenon in India, it cannot simply be viewed as an extension of historical feudal culture where the affluent employed 'servants'. Both in the urban and rural contexts, the nature of work and workers have been rapidly changing. The sector now primarily comprises women domestic workers who are not recognized as workers while their work is undervalued. This is primarily due to the gendered notion of housework; value is not ascribed to women's work in their homes, and by extension, even paid work in other's homes is not given any value or regarded as work. It is also undervalued because it is often performed by poor, migrant women from lower castes. All these contribute to the inferior states of their work, both in their own minds and in society. Domestic work, however, is still undervalued. It is looked upon as unskilled because most women have traditionally been considered capable of doing the work, and the skills they are taught by other women in the home are perceived to be innate.

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DOMESTIC WORK

The term domestic service is difficult to define, as the duties of the domestic servants are not so well defined. In common parlance, the term is defined as a person who is engaged in part time or full time domestic work in return for remuneration payable in cash or kind for a fixed period. The terms of employment may be expressed or implied. Domestic service is becoming a major and growing informal sector activity in the urban areas, especially in big cities. It is one of the informal sector activities where the conditions of work are disgusting with long working hours, low pay and absence of job

security. The modern system of domestic work is an outgrowth of the system of slavery, though its nature, functions and relations have undergone considerable changes over time. Historically, though the character of the industry did not change much, certain temporal and spatial distinctions could be traced. The definition of the 'domestic worker' needs greater clarity. The domestic worker is defined as a person employed to do the housework or allied activities in any household, thus excluding those involved in cleaning or cooking in offices, shops and other such premises.

DOMESTIC WORKER

"Domestic worker" means a woman who is employed to do the household work in any household for remuneration whether in cash or kind, either directly or through any agency on a temporary, permanent, part time or full time basis, but does not include any member of the family of the employer.

WORKING CONDITIONS OF DOMESTIC WORKERS

The tasks performed by either category of domestic workers may include cleaning (sweeping, swabbing and dusting), washing (clothes and dishes), or even putting machine-washed clothes on the clothesline or/and folding them, cooking, or preparation for cooking such as chopping vegetables and making dough, or cooking a part of meal, ironing, housekeeping and extensions of these outside the home such as shopping. Domestic work may also include childcare or care of the aged. There are no standard norms that decide working conditions. By and large, employers decide wages though this is often the 'rate' of the area they live in. Wages also depend on the bargaining power of the domestic worker and workers' desperation for work. Experienced workers may be able to bargain for more while those desperate for work may be willing to work at lower rates. Other factors that influence decisions about wages include the type of tasks performed and the neighborhood. Rates vary according to the task (for example, cooking attracts more wages than cleaning) and the socio-economic profile of employers. These factors are not cast-in-stone as workers are made to perform extra work with no additional compensation, especially during festivals or when employers have guests. There is no guarantee of employment as employers can ask workers to leave with no prior notice or financial compensation. These studies also note that only a few workers get a weekly off; paid leave is often the result of difficult negotiations with the employers. Getting sick leave also depends on the good will of the employer. Instances of workers losing their jobs due to long leave taken at time of childbirth or ill health are often reported. Some also lose their jobs when they visit their villages. Deduction in wages for extra leave is a common practice among employers. Part-time workers are not allowed access to a toilet in the employers' homes. Many commute long distances and thus have no time to cook and carry food with them. They are often not provided with any tea or snacks and stay.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Domestic work refers to housework such as sweeping, cleaning utensils, washing clothes, cooking, caring of children and such other work which is carried out for an employer for remuneration. Domestic work provides an important livelihood source for illiterate women or those with very little education. Official statistics place the numbers employed in India as 4.75 million, (of which 3 million are women) but this is considered as severe underestimation and the true number to be more between 20 million to 80 million workers! However, numbers alone do not describe the importance of their work, or the hardships they face. Many of these workers do not even receive the minimum wage work extremely long hours and often do not get one day's rest. This varies based on the number of tasks, types of tasks, number of households and the locality where work is performed. Despite the benefits paid domestic work offers employers, the workers are slow to get recognition as workers and there are no law and policy to regulate and protect workers employed in this sector.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

This domestic work force has become 'an important element in the social life of a community, contributing to its general health and welfare. The wide varieties of tasks performed in the household by this class of workers are certainly vital to the conduct and well-being of family life. The domestic helpers share the burden of stress by performing the major daily tasks of the household and make the life of civilians more comfortable. Despite the growing importance of domestic workforce, the domestic workers in majority of the countries are undervalued, denigrated, unseen and denied the human rights they are actually entitled to. They are perceived as something lower than the standard work of the society by both the employers and the workers themselves. Often, it is tragedy or rare positive development that heaves our attention to the increasing population of this spectrum.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To know the socio-economic conditions of women domestic workers
2. To know the educational background of women domestic workers
3. To know the societies life of women domestic workers

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

A substantial number of women in rural areas have little skills and practically no education.

One of the low-ranking occupations assigned to the poorest classes of society is "domestic service". Employment of servants has become very common in the urban areas of any cities where a large number of housewives go out for jobs. The employment of servants saves much of the time and energy for the working housewives of modern cities. Domestic servants have proved to be a necessity for non-working housewives also. In urban areas, they commonly engaged domestic servants to keep them in carrying out their household chores, partly due to physical inability and partly due to lack of time. Moreover, in nuclear families there is no stand-by in the family, if the housewife falls ill. Also we can argue that the new middle classes have developed a life style which has increased the demand for domestic servants. Thus the maid servant employed in household labour is playing a significant role especially in small towns of India. It is difficult to gauge the exact number of women in the occupation, as workers in the category have not been enumerated as such by the census.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

Several researches and surveys have been conducted by the social scientists to analyze and improve the conditions of these domestic workers till now. Many writers and columnists have written about the status of domestic servants in the society of India. The efforts have been made by the social workers, government as well as the non-government agencies to preserve their rights; many laws have been passed by the government for their protection and security. However, no significant changes are observed in the disgraceful status of such large and important labour force of the nation. They are treated with 'No Terms and Conditions' attitude of the employers even today. There is a long list of the issues highlighting the problems and mal-treatment of the domestic workers. There is a requirement to analyse the trend of treatment received by the domestic workers from their employers that can help to draw guidelines for the betterment of the group.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There is lack of information to justify this study as a complete one. Very little literature was available at the websites and in other printed form and my approach to these concern authorities was not perfect to do a complete study in this subject. It would have been preferable if we could have conducted study in different towns of this district and the study population could have consisted of a large sample from different parts of the city so that the results could have been generalized to district as a whole. Another limitation of this study was financial and human resources that was essential to do a complete study on this subject. All research work from the beginning to be done by the single person, which is almost impossible in a perfect research work.

SUGGESTION

1. All women in India, women domestic workers tend to neglect their health. They must be made be aware of the importance of a balanced and nutritious diet. Support may be extended to them through the provisions of the National Food Security Act, 2013.
2. The wages they earn are less than Minimum Wages and woefully inadequate to meet daily needs, let alone plan for savings. In the light of the high cost of living seen in the present day and age, it must be ensured that employers pay the legally prescribed Minimum Wages so that domestic workers are not exploited and so that they may be able to lead a decent standard of living.
3. It must be ensured that they get extra remuneration for extra work done. A weekly holiday must be given so that they get to rejuvenate themselves once a week and also strike a worklife balance.
4. They must be granted paid holidays during major religious and national festivals. They must be extended 15 paid sick leaves per year.
5. Workers what so ever. They must be brought under the cover of all the social security measures that are extended to workers employed in the unorganized sector.
6. A considerable number of respondents reported that they did not feel respected at work. Domestic workers should not be referred to as servants. The traditional master-servant relationship must make way for a professional employer-employee relationship. The work done by domestic workers must be accorded dignity and respectability.
7. Measures should be taken to prevent verbal/physical/sexual abuse at the workplace. Employers must be made aware of the importance of developing and maintaining healthy employee-employer relations.
8. Govt. should increase the employment opportunities so their husbands and family members can get good jobs which will increase their monthly income. The people or owners should give the respect and security to their domestic workers. Owners should fulfill their rights.
9. The fact that domestic work is work and that those who do it are workers with the rights that all workers have should be recognized.
10. The government and the society at large should recognize the economic and social contributions that women domestic workers make.

CONCLUSION

Women domestic workers, against the backdrop of working and living conditions of work belonging to this occupational category. In the emerging global economic order, characterized by global cities, new forms of division of work and change in demographic composition, paid women domestic work,

mainly supplied by the poorer families, in particular women, tends to substitute unpaid production activities and services within a family such as cooking, cleaning utensils, washing clothes, caring children and old aged and so on. This makes domestic work as a pivotal occupation in determining the linkage between family and the dynamics of open economy. Across the globe, although this linkage is quite vivid, reflected in ever expanding demand from families for domestic worker's service, provision of entitlements to this occupational category. Having systems of social security for domestic workers, some of large transition economies are yet to come up with system of entitlements for women domestic workers. In Indian context, the enormity of informal work is quite a discernible phenomenon; for which they are not entitled to any of social security benefits. Moreover, these workers tend to receive relatively lower wages than formal workers get. Going by patterns generated from employment data published by National Sample Survey Organization, Government of India, persons with more years of schooling (close to ten years), appear to have higher chances of getting formal work which makes them eligible for entitlements like social security, while persons with less years of schooling may end up in lower echelons of labour market, earning lower wages and that too without social security. Quite importantly, the dichotomy of formal-informal work coexists with glaring low labour force participation of women.

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