

Socio-economic Conditions of Women Domestic Servants: A Study in Kalaburagi City



Social Science

KEYWORDS :

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ABSTRACT

Due to globalization and due to increasing unemployment in rural areas, the people are migrated to urban in search of employment and in this way, the employment in unorganized sector is increased in urban areas. Women domestic servants are playing important role in working in household chores. But, it is noted that women domestic servants are facing many problems with regard to their working conditions, working hours, wages paid, etc. The present paper highlighted the socio-economic conditions of women domestic servants in Kalaburagi city in North Karnataka. Totally 142 women domestic servants working in different households were interviewed to collect the primary data. The collected primary data clearly revealed that there is exploitation of women domestic servants by their employers. Hence, it is suggested to pass legislations to assure higher wages for women domestic servants.

Introduction:

There is no exaggeration in saying that the backbone of Indian work force is the unorganized sector. According to 1991 census, the total women work force of 87.77 million, their share in the organized sector was only 4.2 per cent while the rest of 95.8 per cent were in the unorganized sector where there are no legislative safe guards even to claim either minimum or equal wages along with their male counterparts. Thus the unorganized sector in India is the women's sector (Sathyasundaram, 1996).

The women domestic servants employed in household labour are playing a significant role especially in towns and cities 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. However, some studies bring about the information regarding the domestic servants in different parts of our country.

It is noted that there is an overwhelming 'feminization' of domestic work is well established and visible. According to the Shramshakti report (1998), there are 16.8 lakh female domestic workers in the country, as against 6.2 lakh male workers. This finding is reinforced by another study, conducted in the early-1980s, by the Catholic Bishops Conference of India, which says females constituted 78% of Domestic Workers in a 12-city study (Jena, 2004).

It is very difficult to define the term "domestic" because it is very vague. The term "domestic" denotes a class of "menials" which includes many types of workers, like ayah, kitchen helper, cook and sweeper. So the term Domestic Servants as "those servants who do cooking, care the children, cleaning utensils, washing clothes, cleaning and sweeping the houses in return for the payment of wages".

There are two types of domestic servants – Part-time servants and full-time servants. Part-time servants are those who are employed at one or more than one house to perform some definite duties and go away when the assigned work is over. They are not residential helpers. Full-time servants are attached to one house only. They are present for the whole day at employer's house and do whatever work is assigned to them.

Wikipedia (2015) defined domestic worker, domestic, serving-man, servingwoman, or servant is one who works, and often also lives, within the employer's household. They are distinguishable from serfs or slaves in that they are compensated, that is, they must receive payment (and, following labour reforms in the 20th century, benefits) for their work. They are also free to leave their employment at any time, although foreign workers may find these freedoms restricted by, for example, visa regulations. In large households, there can be a large number of domestic

workers doing different jobs, often as part of an elaborate hierarchy. However, most such employees work in middle class households, where they are the only such employed individual.

Domestic workers take care of the household and its dependent members. They perform domestic chores such as washing, ironing, buying foods and drinks, accompanying the head of the household for grocery shopping, cooking, and cleaning the house. For many domestic workers, a large part of their job is taking care of the children. If there are elderly or disabled people in the household, domestic workers may care for them as well. The present study is made on women domestic servants in Kalaburagi city.

Objectives of the Study:

The present study is made:

- To know about the level of social life satisfaction among women domestic servants;
- To assess the work satisfaction of women domestic servants;
- To look into the income of women domestic servants and their family members; and
- To analyze whether there is wage discrimination for the women domestic servants.

Methodology and Limitations:

As the majority of the women domestic servants are illiterates or under educated, Interview Schedules were used to collect the primary data from women domestic servants, who are working in different parts of Kalaburagi city. The author selected 142 women domestic servants to collect the primary data. The collected primary data is analyzed and tabulated as under.

Analysis and Discussion:

1. Age-wise distribution of the Respondents:

Age is a considerable factor while determining the domestic work. To a major extent, it is also a criterion to determine the wages that are paid to the domestic servants. As the present study covered about 142 women respondents, their age-group is as under:

Table No. 1. Age-wise distribution of the Respondents:

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Below 18 Years	26	18.31
19-25 Years	33	23.24
26-35 Years	28	19.72
36-45 Years	36	25.35
Above 45 Years	19	13.38
Total	142	100

The study covered about 26 (18.31%) respondents of below 18 years of age group, about 33 (23.24%) of the respondents are of 19-25 years, about 28 (19.72%) of the respondents are of 26-35 years of age group, about 36 (25.35%) of the respondents are between 36-45 years of age group and remaining 19 (13.38%) are of above 45 years of age group.

2. Marital Status of the Respondents:

Marital status of the respondents is an important factor in deciding the family background and such other information about the respondents. Hence, it was asked to the respondents about whether the respondents are single, married, divorcee or widow. The collected information is shown as under:

Table No. 2. Marital Status of the Respondents

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Unmarried	29	20.42
Married	89	62.68
Divorcee	04	2.82
Widows	20	14.08
Total	142	100

Of the total 142 respondents covered under the present study about 89 (62.68%) are married, followed by 29 (20.42%) of the respondents are unmarried, about 20 (14.02%) are widows and the remaining 04 (2.82%) of the respondents are divorcees.

3. Satisfaction in Social Life:

Social life and its satisfaction is one of the essential factors in every person's life. It will accelerate the economic life and work of the people. Hence, it was asked to the respondents, whether they are satisfied with their social life. The women domestic servants covered under the present study are responded as under:

Table No. 3. Satisfaction in Social Life

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Fully Satisfied	46	32.39
Satisfied to a Greater extent	37	26.06
Not Satisfied	59	41.55
Total	142	100

Of the 142 (100%) respondents covered under the present study, about 46 (32.39%) of the respondents are stated that they are fully satisfied with the social life, about 37 (26.06%) of the respondents stated that they are satisfied to a greater extent in their social life and the remaining 59 (41.55%) of the respondents are not satisfied in their social life.

4. Equality in Marital Relations:

In many families, there is no equal status for women, as a sister, wife, daughter, mother or even granddaughter. In society, still the male members are preferred as superior having more authority in the family. Women are treated are subsidiary and unequal in the families. Hence, it is necessary to know whether the women domestic servants are treated as equal to husband in their families. For this purpose, it was asked to the women domestic servants that, whether women domestic servants have equal partnership in marital relations between their husbands and themselves and also whether both husband and wife (respondents) respect each other equally in their families. The collected data is presented in the following table:

Table No. 4. Whether equal in Marital Relations with Husband:

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	29	25.66
No	84	74.34
Total	113	100

It is noted from the above table that of the married women domestic servants covered under the present study, only 29 (25.66%) of the respondents are treated equal with husband in their families and the remaining 84 (74.34%) of the respondents are not treated equal in their families with their husbands.

5. Work Satisfaction of Women Domestic Servants:

To do any work, there is need for work and job satisfaction. Unless there is satisfaction in the work, the work done will not be good. Hence, work and job satisfaction play an important role in hard work, efficiency, productivity of any worker. The work satisfaction as stated by the women domestic servants covered under the present study is stated as under:

Table No. 5. Work Satisfaction of Women Domestic Servants:

Particulars	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Highly Satisfactory	22	15.49
Satisfactory	57	40.14
Not Satisfactory	63	44.37
Total	142	100

The above table made it clear that relatively major portion of the women domestic servants covered under the study expressed that they are not satisfied with their work. In particular, about 63 (44.37%) of the women domestic servants covered under the study stated that they are not satisfactory about their work, followed by about 57 (40.14%) of the respondents stated that their work is satisfactory and the remaining 22 (15.49%) of the women domestic servants are stated that their work is highly satisfactory.

6. Monthly Income:

Monthly income of the women domestic servants, their husbands and their family helps to know about the standard of living of the respondents. Hence, it is necessary to know about the monthly income of the respondents and their relatives. In this respect, collected information is stated as under:

Table No. 6. Monthly Income of the Respondents and their Family Members:

Particulars	Respondents' Income (Rs.)		Resp. Husband's Income (Rs.)		Family Income (Rs)	
	No's	%	No's	%	No's	%
Less than Rs. 1500	111	78.17	48	53.93	38	26.76
Rs.1500-2500	31	21.83	23	25.84	44	30.99
Rs. 2500-4000	--	--	12	13.48	33	23.24
Rs. 4000-6000	--	--	06	6.74	27	19.01
Above Rs. 6000	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total	142	100	89	100	142	100

It is interesting to note from the above table that of the women domestic servants covered under the study, major portion that is 111 (78.17%) are getting less than Rs. 1500 per month as wages and the remaining only 31 (21.83%) of the respondents are getting the wages between Rs. 1500-2500 per month.

Of the respondents who were married and living with their husbands (89), about 48 (53.93%) respondents stated that their husband's income is less than Rs. 1500, followed by about 23 (25.84%) of the respondents stated that their husband's income is between Rs. 1500-2500, about 12 (13.48%) of the respondents stated that their husband's income is between Rs. 2500-4000 and only 06 (6.74%) of the respondents stated that the income of their husband's is between Rs. 4000-6000. It is interesting to note that none of the respondents stated that the income of their husband is above Rs. 6000.

On their family income, about 38 (26.76%) of the respondents stated that their family income is below Rs. 1500 per month, about 44 (30.99%) of the respondents stated that their family income is between Rs. 1500-2500 per month, about 33 (23.24%) of the respondents stated that their family income is between Rs.

2500-4000 per month and the remaining 27 (19.01%) of the respondents stated that their family income is between Rs. 4000-6000 per month. None of the respondents have their family income level of above Rs. 6000 per month.

Conclusion:

Above discussion made it clear that, though women domestic servants are working for more than 10 hours in a day, their family income (including income of husband and other family members) is less than Rs. 4000 per month. It shows that there is exploitation of women domestic servants by their employers. Hence, it is suggested for passing legislations and executing the legislations such as Minimum Wages Act, so that the wages should be paid according to rules. Further, it is also needed to extend other facilities such as maternity benefits, leave, etc, in unorganized sector in general and for women engaged in domestic work in particular.

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