



A Study on Working Conditions of Unorganised Domestic Workers

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ABSTRACT

The system of employing Domestic workers is prevalent in most cities. A domestic worker is a person who works within the employer's household. Domestic workers perform a variety of household services for an individual or a family, from providing care for children and elderly dependents to cleaning and household maintenance, known as housekeeping. Responsibilities may also include cooking, doing laundry and ironing, food shopping and other household errands. Some domestic workers live within the household where they work. The conditions of employment of domestic workers are not conducive. Their human rights are violated in many forms. The working conditions are also not defined and uniform. The work is unorganized in nature accurate data are not available on total population. The present study is conducted at Neyveli. 40 samples were drawn from the universe. The study reveals the dismal conditions of domestic workers.

KEYWORDS

crumb rubber, utilization, compressive strength, low cost, sustainable

INTRODUCTION

The Indian Labor market is dominated by Unorganised or informal labor. It is reported that more than 93% of the working population in India is coming under the class of informal or unorganized sector. The Government of India, The Ministry of Labour, has classified the unorganized labour force into four distinct group in terms of Occupation, nature of employment, specially distressed categories and service categories. The Domestic workers are placed under the service category of the unorganized sector. Domestic workers are one of the layers of unorganized workforce. These workers are drawn from the lower stratum of the society. As these domestic workers are unorganized and illiterates their legal rights are violated in many forms. Many of their problems remain unnoticed even in the eyes of law. They are ill treated and exploited within the four walls. Laws are made but are hardly communicated and rarely implemented. It's unbelievable that the Indian society is taking the services of around eighty crore people for granted. Domestic workers form an integral part of the elite group whose income is considerably high. Employment of domestic workers in India is at an alarming rate as the nuclear family is gearing up at the village level. Employment of spouse is the root cause for the increase of domestic workers. The conditions faced by domestic workers have varied considerably throughout history and in the contemporary world. In 2011, the International Labour Organization adopted the Convention Concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers which covers decent work conditions for domestic workers. Recent ILO estimates based on national surveys and/or censuses of 117 countries, place the number of domestic workers at around 53 million. But the ILO itself states that "experts say that due to the fact that this kind of work is often hidden and unregistered, the total number of domestic workers could be as high as 100 million". The ILO also states that 83% of domestic workers are women and many are migrant workers.

DEFINITION OF DOMESTIC WORKER

According to Domestic Workers (Registration Social Security Welfare) Act, 2008 : "Domestic Worker" means, a person who is employed for remuneration whether in cash or kind, in any house hold through any agency or directly, either on a temporary basis or permanent, part time or full time to do the Household work or allied work

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The census of 1991 shows that number of women workers in India is 91 million out of a total workforce of about 315 million. Majority of these women are engaged in the unorganised sectors such as agriculture, cotton and tea plucking, pottery, handloom, construction and domestic services. To substantiate the fact, Pareira's (1984) study reveals that 78% of domestic helpers in 12 cities were female. In another study by Dighe and Choudhury (1988) it was found that there was as increase of 21.3% in the number of female workers in the Union Territory of Delhi from 1971 to 1981. These women who are occupied in domestic work sector belong to the lowest stratum of society and are often considered as cheap labour. Leela Kasturi in her paper discusses the issue of migration related to female domestic workers of Delhi. She has argued that migration among the poor domestic workers is sought as a 'coping strategy' for the survival of the families.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Domestic workers around the country face a host of problems. They have no security of tenure, little bargaining power over wages, no regulation of working hours or entitlement to paid leave. They have to face number of problems and because of their inexperience and lack of skill they become easy victim of exploitation. The problems of women domestic workers are multifaceted, it should be studied holistically covering economic, legal, social, physical and psychological aspects.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main object is to study the socio economic and working conditions of the domestic workers with an ancillary insight in to their problems faced at work. To study the employment of the girl children at domestic work and analyse the sexual abuse and harassment at work.

AREA OF THE STUDY

Neyveli Township which consists of 23,000 well constructed houses allotted to the employees of NLC Limited. The study was confined to the women workers employed in the accommodation allotted to the higher grade employees.

METHODOLOGY

The total universe is not certain as there is no correct statistics available. However the total population in respect of the

Type IV location is roughly estimated as 200 and 20 % of the estimated population was taken as sample. Stratified random sampling method was selected for the study. For the purpose the entire population is divided into four categories

a) Part-time worker i.e. worker who works for one or more employers for a specified number of hours per day or performs specific tasks for each of the multiple employers every day.

b) Full-time worker i.e. worker who works for a single employer every day for a specified number of hours (normal full day work) and who returns back to her/his home every day after work.

c) Live-in worker i.e. worker who works full time for a single employer and also stays on the premises of the employer or in a dwelling provided by the employer (which is close or next to the house of the employer) and does not return back to her/his home every day after work."

d) Girl Child Domestic workers: Child Domestic Workers are children below the age of 18 years who are employed within households to perform chores

DATA COLLECTION

Primary data is collected from the respondents directly through Interview Schedule. Close ended questions incorporating the information required according to the objective framed were employed. The researcher collected the information from the respondents by fixing the convenient timings of the respondents. 10 samples from each stratum were collected. The secondary data was collected from the books and internet resources.

STATISTICAL TOOLS

The present study is confined to the percentage analysis. To test the hypothesis Chi-Square analysis is applied for the study.

FINDING OF THE STUDY

From the study it was observed that the sector is dominated by the age group 20-40. The girl child workers constitute 11 % while the 17 % is in the age group between 50-60. Majority of the respondents are illiterates. 18 % of respondents in the age group 50-60 are employed as live in worker and their salary is comparatively lower than the other age group. Sexual abuse of child domestic workers remains at 4 % while the physical harassment remains high to an extent of 13 %. Sexual harassment against the Domestic workers is found to be 38 %. The rate of sexual harassment is higher among the age group 40-50. The part time domestic workers are required to work for more than three hours continuously with one employer and majority of the part time workers are employed with 2-3 employers in a day and their working hours exceeds the total 10 hours. Majority of the full time workers are required to work between 6 to 8 hours. Majority of the respondents are not satisfied with the working conditions and the wages paid to them. No intermediaries are seen in the employment in the study. None of the respondents are aware of their legal rights. None of them are registered with any registered trade unions. 12 % of the respondents are widows and 2 % of them are having no one to take care but residing alone. 56% of the respondents are married out of which 26 % reported that their husbands are in habit of consuming liquor and beat them at their home. 3 % of respondents are separated from their husbands. Majority of the respondents are required to undertake their routine family works after their jobs. Majority of the respondents are reported that they had changed their employers frequently for various reasons. Majority of the respondents reported that their work load is very high. Medical helps are not taken care by their employers. Only a few (3%) of the respondents are happy with the medical helps and other gifts by their employers during festive seasons. The rate of scour is very high in the domestic workers. The socio economic condition of the respondents has not improved despite the national and international laws and pro-

tection. The conditions of domestic workers remain in pathetic conditions. Their legal rights are violated in many forms. There is significant relation between child sexual abuse and age of the persons involved in the incident. There is no relation between the experience of the workers and wages paid. 3 % girl child of women members are to take care of their mother's part time works when mothers remain at rest during sick and menstrual periods. Social security benefits are not known to them. No statutory minimum wages are paid to the majority of the respondents. Working hours are irregular. Day of rest with wages are not extended to domestic workers. Maternity benefits are distant dream to them.

CONCLUSION

The problems of women domestic workers have still not received adequate attention by researchers, members of voluntary organisations and other social activists as yet. A collaboration frequent interaction and wider networking with the people and organisations working on the similar issue is required to intensify the movement of improving the overall condition of domestic workers. There is also an urgent need to sensitise the wider society regarding their attitude towards 'Servant-Master' relationship and change it into a respectable 'Employee - Employer' relationship. Therefore it is extremely important to create an environment where the domestic workers may enjoy their rights, duties and interests like other segments of the society. As the domestic workers are vulnerable group adequate attention is to be paid by the social workers to look into the problems at regular intervals to address and redress the issue in correct dimensions. The exploitation can be minimised through awareness camps among the domestic workers.

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