



# ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Social Science

## A STUDY SITUATION ANALYSIS OF WOMEN WORKING IN UNORGANISED SECTOR WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO DOMESTIC WORKERS

**KEY WORDS:** Women domestic workers, wage, Occupation, Safety, Health

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### ABSTRACT

Situational Analysis of Women Working in Unorganised Sector with Special Reference to Domestic Workers in Selaiyur Women domestic workers are who works within the employer's household. Domestic workers perform a variety household service for an individual or a family from providing care work and household maintenance, known as housekeeping. The study is descriptive in nature which includes quantitative method of research. The universe of the study includes women domestic worker living in Selaiyur of any age group with an experience of at least five years' experience in domestic work. The sampling size of the study was fifty and the sampling technique adopted was snow ball sampling. A structured interview schedule was used to collect the primary data from the respondents. Most of the domestic worker living in this area are unregistered domestic worker and do this work for earning their livelihood. The study contains five specific objectives that is the situation analysis of socio-economic profile of the domestic women workers, understand their occupation and wage, examine the discrimination and harassment faced by them in work place, study the health, safety and working condition of women domestic workers and study the awareness level of scheme/ board/ policies and acts of domestic workers among the women domestic workers living in Selaiyur. Interview schedule was used to collect data from the respondents. The data collected from the respondents were interpreted and analysed. Main findings were found out through data analysis and interpretation of data collected. The study reveals that major of the domestic workers are illiterate which push them to take up the menial job, the earning for the work is very low that they are not able to save anything for the future and work load is very heavy and they are not paid according to the work done. As government has made many provisions in legislation for the domestic workers but still the domestic workers are not aware of such board, policies and acts implemented by the government. This shows that the proper action plan was not framed to reach out the targeted population. Suggestions were given to social workers, government and NGO's working for domestic workers based on main findings.

### INTRODUCTION

Under the International Labour Organisation Convention 189 (2011), a domestic worker is "any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship". A domestic worker may work on full-time or part-time basis; may be employed by a single household or by multiple employers; may be residing in the household of the employer (live-in worker) or may be living in his or her own residence (live-out). A domestic worker may be working in a country of which she/he is not a national.

### STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Domestic Workers are mostly economically backward and highly exploited. They are paid below the minimum wages as they are illiterate, ignorant and unskilled. So, they are exploited by their owners. Only middle class and high-class people can afford to have a domestic helper and wage paid to them are usually found to be very low. They have no regular working hours, no proper wage for the work done, have little time for recreation and holiday on festival while weekly holiday is very rare, discrimination, harassment, faced occupation related physical health issues like leg pain, back pain, repetitive strain injury, skin problem as they use detergent. They do not get paid for their medical expense and no proper awareness about the acts, boards and schemes of government for domestic workers.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study focuses on the women working in unorganised sector with special reference to female domestic servant and various aspect like socio-economic condition, wage structure, nature of work, safety, working condition and the awareness level of government Acts and welfare boards. As this study aims to reflect the above conditions of the women domestic workers, the researcher felt the need for the study as important and it will be used for those who would like to work with these workers and improve the condition.

### GENERAL OBJECTIVE

- A study situation analysis of women working in

unorganised sector with special reference to domestic workers

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To analysis the socio-economic profile of the domestic women workers.
- To understand their occupation and wage.
- To examine the discrimination and harassment faced by them in work place.
- To study the health, safety and working condition of women domestic workers.
- The study the awareness level of scheme/ board/ policies and acts among the women domesticworkers

### HYPOTHESE

**H1:** There is a significance association between number of houses work done and wage of the respondents

**H2:** There is a significance association between age of the respondents and years of experience in domestic work.S

### FIELD OF STUDY:

The researcher has done the study on women Domesticworkers living in Selaiyur. Selaiyur is town which comes under Tambaram taluk of Kanchipuram district. Most of the women domestic worker living in this area are unregistered domestic worker and do this work for earning their livelihood.

### UNIVERSE

The universe of this study is women domesticworkers living in Selaiyur with five years' experience in domestic work.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher has used quantitative research methodology as it helps to know the issue that a women domestic worker face through various aspect such as socio-economic background, wage and type of work, discrimination, harassment at work place, safety and working condition and the awareness of act, policy and scheme among women domestic workers.

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## RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design used by the researcher is descriptive research design. This design will help the researcher to study information in detailed way to understand the issue faced by the women domestic workers

## SAMPLE SIZE

The researcher selected the sampling size of the study as 50.

## SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The researcher has used Snowball Sampling technique for the purpose of selecting the sample from the universe because the population of the women domestic work is not defined. So, the researcher did networking with the women domestic work in the area to find the respondent. The researcher does not want to identify respondents through the non-government organisation working for domestic workers, because the need of the identified domestic worker is protected by the non-government organisation, but whereas the need of domestic workers not belonging to any non-governmental organisation are not met.

## SAMPLING CRITERIA

- The respondent should be working as a domestic worker for more than 5 years.
- The respondent should be living in Selaiyur and part time women domestic worker.

## TOOL OF DATA COLLECTION

The researcher used Interview schedule for the purpose of collecting information from the respondent. The interview schedule was developed based on the specific objectives of the study.

## PILOT STUDY

The pilot study was done by the researcher to get the knowledge of the field and the respondent on 6th May 2018. The research found out that the area is feasible for doing the study.

## PRE-TEST

The researcher did the pre-test on 24th of June 2018 among three respondents and an option was added in the 4th question

## DATA COLLECTION

Data for the research was collected by the researcher on 1st July, 2018, 7th July 2018 and 8th July 2018.

## Definition of terms

### DOMESTIC WORKER

#### CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION

International Labour Organisation Convention 189 (2011), a domestic worker is "any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship".

#### OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

In this study, Domestic worker is a woman who does cooking washing and cleaning for a pay under an employer in selaiyur with five years of experience in domestic work.

### UNORGANISED SECTOR

#### CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION

According to Unorganised workers' social security Act 2008, unorganised sector means an enterprise owned by an individual or self-employed worker and engaged in the production or sales of goods or providing service of any kind.

#### OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

In this study, unorganised sector means a self-employed woman who works in households as a domestic worker with

low wage.

## ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Health, safety and working conditions of the women domestic worker at workplace

**TABLE 1: DETAILS ON PHYSICAL HEALTH CONDITION OF THE RESPONDENTS.**

Physical health issues	Number of respondents	Percentage
<b>Backache</b>		
Suffering	23	46
Not suffering	27	54
<b>Leg pain</b>		
Suffering	39	77
Not suffering	11	22
<b>Chest pains</b>		
Suffering	2	4
Not suffering	48	96
<b>Skin Problems</b>		
Suffering	10	20
Not suffering	40	80
<b>Respiratory problems</b>		
Suffering	2	4
Not suffering	48	96
<b>Flu</b>		
Suffering	3	6
Not suffering	47	94
<b>Repetitive strain injury</b>		
Suffering	12	24
Not suffering	38	76

**TABLE 2: SHOWS THE DETAILS OF PHYSICAL HEALTH CONDITION OF THE RESPONDENTS.**

Table 2 shows that forty-six percentage of the respondents were suffering from backache, seventy-seven percentage of the respondents were suffering from leg pain, four percentage of the respondents were suffering from chest pain, twenty percentage of the respondents were suffering from skin problem, four percentage of the respondents were suffering from respiratory problems, six percentage of the respondents were suffering flu and twenty-four percentage of respondents were suffering from repetitive strain injury. Majority of the respondents were suffering from leg pain which is seventy-seven percentage as compare to other physical health issues.

**TABLE 3: DETAILS ON SAFETY AND WORKING CONDITION OF THE RESPONDENTS**

Availability of first aid at workplace	Number of the respondents	Percentage
Yes	14	28
No	36	72
<b>Injuries suffered during work</b>		
Yes	30	60
No	20	40
<b>Medical treatment provided</b>		
Yes	8	16
No	42	84

Table 3.1 shows the availability of first aid service at workplace of the respondents. The table shows that twenty-eight percentage of the respondents had first aid availability in their work place and seventy-two percentage of the respondents didn't had first aid availability in their work place.

Table 3.2 shows the injury suffered by the respondents in the work place. The table shows that sixty percentage of the respondents had suffered injury in their work place while performing the work and forty percentage of the respondents didn't not suffered any injury at their workplace while performing the work.

Table 3.3 shows about the medical helped provided by the employer to the respondents. The table shows that sixteen percentage of the respondents had receive medical treatment from the employers while getting injured and eighty-four percentage of the respondents don't receive any medical treatment from the employer while getting injured.

Awareness Level of Scheme/ Board/ Policies and Acts

**TABLE 4: DETAIL ON AWARENESS OF SCHEMES/ POLICIES AND ACTS AMONG RESPONDENTS**

<b>Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers Welfare Board</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Aware	-	
Not aware	50	100
<b>Domestic Workers Welfare and Social Security Act 2010</b>		
Aware	-	-
Not aware	50	100
<b>The Unorganized Workers Social Security Act, 2008</b>		
Aware	-	-
Not aware	50	100
<b>Minimum Wages Act 1948</b>		
Aware	-	-
Not aware	50	100
<b>Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013</b>		
Aware	1	2
Not aware	49	98
<b>Maternity Benefit Act</b>		
Aware	15	30
Not aware	35	70
<b>Part of any association</b>		
Yes	-	-
No	50	100
<b>Aware of domestic workers union</b>		
Yes	2	4
No	48	96
<b>Willing to be a part of any association</b>		
Yes	47	94
No	3	6

Table 4 shows about awareness level of respondents regarding the government boards, schemes and acts.

The table shows that cent percent of the respondents were not aware of the domestic workers welfare board, Domestic Workers Welfare and Social Security Act 2010, Unorganized Workers Social Security Act, 2008 and Minimum Wages Act 1948.

It shows that ninety-eight percentage were not aware of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act and two percentage of the respondents were aware Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act and that seventy percent of the respondents were not aware of Maternity Benefit Act and thirty percent of the respondents were aware of Maternity Benefit Act.

The study shows the willingness of the respondents to be a part of association. The table shows that ninety-four percent of respondents were willing to be part of an association and six percent were not willing to be part of an association.

## DISCUSSIONS OF MAIN FINDINGS

Socio-demographic profile of the respondents.

More than half of the respondents were belonging to the middle age group of forty-fifty years which indicate that they were strong and physically fit to do hard work. Regarding the marital status, the study shows that sixty-eight percentage of the respondents were married and twenty- six percentage of the respondents were widows. Majority of eighty-five percentage of the respondents were belonging to nuclear family system. Fifty-six percentage of the respondents were illiterate. These indicate that the profession of domestic work did not require any education qualification expect some experience.

The study reveals that forty-eight percentage of the respondents belong to backward caste (BC) and thirty-four percentage of the respondent belong to most backward caste (MBC), according to a study most of the domestic workers belong to schedule caste that is around 56 percentage and 38 percentage of domestic worker belong to BC and MBC and the reason of selecting domestic work as a profession is due to poverty (Dhinakaran, 2016). Ninety-four percentage of the respondent were belonging to Hindu religion.

Less than half of the respondents live in pucca house and half of the respondents live in semi pucca house and less than two third of sixty of the respondents live in rented house.

Less than half of the respondents do domestic work to support their family and half of the respondents have 5-10 years of experience in domestic work. Fifty percentage of the respondent's family income are between Rs 5000-10000 and three fourth of the respondents don't save any money.

## OCCUPATION STRUCTURE AND WAGE STRUCTURE.

A high majority of the respondents do housekeeping work like cleaning, Washing and sweeping. More than two third of the respondents work place is between 0 to 2km. A high majority of the respondents walk to reach their work place.

The researcher found less than half percentage of the respondents work between 1-2 houses a day and forty-four percentage of the respondents work up to 3-4 hours. Half of the respondent's income is between Rs 3000-4000. An absolute majority (96%) of the respondents don't receive any increment in wage for their work. More than two third of the respondents receive no bonus for their work and half of the respondents receive loan without interest apart from wage. Three fourth (78%) of the respondents can avail leave from the work place in which half (58%) of the respondent's wage will be deducted if they take leave. A high majority of (88%) of the respondents are not satisfied from the wage they receive.

Discrimination and harassment faced by the respondents.

The researcher found that an absolute majority (96%) of the respondents don't have back door entry but 4% respondents have back door entry and one third of the respondents are not allowed to sit in furniture. An absolute majority (92%) of the respondents don't face such kinds of discrimination of eatable offered in separate utensil. Considerable proportion of the respondents faced verbal insult (16%) and sexual abuse (2%) at their workplace.

## HEALTH, SAFETY & WORKING CONDITION OF THE RESPONDENTS.

Vast Majority (77%) of respondents were suffering from leg pain as compare to other physical health issues. The



researcher also found more than two third (72%) of the respondents don't have first aid availability in their work place. Less than two third (60%) of the respondents have suffered injury in their work place while performing the work among them only a considerable proportion (16%) have received medical treatment while getting injured.

#### Awareness Level of Scheme/ Board/ Policies and Acts

The researcher found that cent percentage of the respondents are not aware of the domestic workers welfare board, Domestic Workers Welfare and Social Security Act 2010, Unorganized Workers Social Security Act, 2008 and Minimum Wages Act 1948. Majority (98%) were not aware of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act and more than half (70%) of the respondents were not aware of Maternity Benefit Act.

The researcher found that cent percentage of the respondents were not part of any association and absolute majority (96%) of the respondents were not aware of existence of domestic workers union and these respondents were willing to be part of an association.

### SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

#### INTRODUCTION

The researcher has provided suggestions based on the main findings found in the research. These suggestions will serve as a solution and betterment of domestic workers.

#### INCOME

Half of the respondent's income where is less than Rs 5000 and their family income is below Rs 10000. This highlights the financial position of the respondent. This shows that there should an effective improvement in the existing wage of the women domestic workers. The domestic workers should be paid according to the amount of work done. Women domestic workers' have a right for a decent wage includes labour law, contract to achieve good working condition and access to social benefits like pension etc.

#### SAVINGS

More than two third were not able to save money as their wage is very low or unaware to save money for the future need. Therefore, the domestic workers should be trained in family saving and budgeting.

#### TRAINING

Domestic worker is considered as 'unskilled' work and therefore the women domestic workers are treated as unskilled worker and the service provided by them is considered as menial. The women domestic worker should be provided with professional training in housekeeping service. So, that the work will be recognised as a profession by government and NGO's working for domestic workers

#### HOURS OF WORKING

Women domestic worker do not have a stipulated working hour in their workplace. The hour depends on the work of the day. This result in long working hours without rest. Therefore, the efforts must be taken to regulate the working hours of the women domestic workers and the number of houses they work should be limited to two or three houses only.

#### FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

As most of domestic works do these works to support the family and they cannot opt other work as most of them are illiterate and few had primary education. Therefore, it is necessary provide financial assistance through bank especially for domestic workers.

#### HEALTH

Most of domestic workers face health hazard due to the work done, physical health issue like repetitive strain injury, leg

pain and leg pain. Provide health care and monthly check-up to the domestic workers by the government. Health camp should be conducted by government in collaboration with Ngo's working for domestic workers and provide awareness on basic self-care. (avoiding use of harsh detergent while washing cloths and utensils) and use gloves to avoid problem.

#### WELFARE BOARD

Tamil Nadu domestic worker's welfare board should give awareness to the domestic workers through media it should make other domestic worker aware of the existence of such board through which they can become the member of the welfare board and avail facilities like the minimum wage, benefit of increment, leave and medical benefit.

Functioning of the welfare board should be governed by the local body welfare committee.

#### LEGISLATIVE PROVISION FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS

The domestic workers are now covered into the Minimum Wages Act (1948) but still these domestic workers are not paid according to the above act. The main reason for this is most of the domestic workers are live-out domestic worker who go do their work and come back. And the minimum wage is framed according to the live-in domestic worker. The new minimum wage for the live-out domestic workers should be made with classification of work and the wage. The government should make special provision to address the issues of fixing fair wage, working condition, protection from physical and sexual abuse and make the employer register along with domestic worker before employing, with agreement.

#### NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION

There some organisation working for domestic workers. Efforts must be taken to unionise the domestic workers. Awareness must be created among the women domestic workers to registration themselves and to get a domestic workers identity card from the government. NGO's should Providing legal aid to the domestic workers. Mobilise and organize skill training to help women domestic workers to form their own association and union. And train the employer to treat domestic worker with worth and dignity not as machine.

#### CONCLUSION

Domestic work remains as a readily available livelihood option for many women who are illiterate and take the work to support their family due to poor economic condition. As domestic work involves large number of women, it is important to look into it as women are marginalised and vulnerable group of the society.

The right issue of domestic worker includes wage, working condition, safety. Government should address the key issues like fixing fair wage according to the category of domestic work i.e. live-in and live-out domestic workers and the amount of work done. As a social work profession deals with people and their issues, the role of social workers is to address the problem faced by women domestic workers like no paid holidays, no paid sick leave, immense work load, health problems and social exploitation.

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