

A Study On The Living And Working Condition Of Women Domestic Workers In Ettimadai Village Of Coimbatore District

Sini Wanka Bamon¹**Dr.M.Nagalingam²**

ABSTRACT

Women domestic workers in the informal economy consist of the most susceptible working sections in society. The women domestic workers social and economic contributions are invisible to the society, the law and policies framed by the government. They face lots of problems in their day to day life because their rights to minimum standards of covered work are incessantly violated. The main objective of the study is to analyse the working condition and living condition of women domestic workers. For this study 30 women domestic workers were identified through snowball sampling technique from Ettimadai village of Coimbatore district. It is found from the study that domestic work profession is not helping them in improving their earnings. They are facing various health problems after adopting domestic work as they work at unhygienic places like toilet, drainage etc. It is suggested from the study that domestic workers should be given security and protection by law. The wages of the domestic workers should be fixed as per the minimum wages act and it should not be left to the discretion of the householder, i.e. employer and Free health care facilities should be provided by the government to the domestic workers.

Key Words: Living Condition, Working Condition, Women Domestic Workers.

INTRODUCTION

The humiliation devoted to domestic work has long been in-built in the approach of the Indian civilisation. Domestic work is seen as unskilled and impure occupation traditionally performed by people, mostly women and children, whose lives are still conquered by a caste system that allocated people his/her place in the society. Domestic workers work in private homes, carrying out various household tasks, such as cleaning (sweeping, swabbing and dusting), washing (clothes and dishes), or even placing the machine-washed clothes on the clothesline, folding them and cooking including preparations such as chopping vegetables or cooking a part of meal, ironing, housekeeping and activities outside the home such as shopping. Domestic work may also include childcare or Geriatric care. There are no standard norms for deciding the working condition and wages. Wages are decided by the employers according to the locality where they live in. Wages also depend on the bargaining power of the domestic worker and workers' desperation for work.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Gallin, Dan (2001), has made a study on "Propositions on trade unions and informal employment in times of globalisation". In this paper the author has examined the issues which are addressed in the organisation of the upcoming informal sector workers. Organisation of these workers presents a widespread challenge to the trade union movement. Unless the challenge is effectively addressed the union movement cannot stop the progress of its decline. It also has to undergo fundamental changes in culture, self-awareness and the approach how it is related to society to recover its potential as a global social force.

Goldman, Tanya (2003), worked on the area 'Organizing in South Africa's informal economy: An overview of four sectoral case studies'. This paper analysed the strategies adopted by workers' organizations, and to a lesser extent those adopted by employers'

¹ . Social Worker, Shillong, Meghalaya.

² . Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Madhya Pradesh.

organizations, to expand outreach and representation in South Africa's informal economy. For this study four sectors were identified which includes clothing, construction, street trading and taxi. This was done in order to cover a wide variety of conditions for organizing and organizing strategies.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the problems faced by the domestic worker in their work place?
- How many numbers of houses they are working in a day?
- What is the total amount of money they earned from all houses?
- What are the natures of household work?
- How well are they treated by their employer?
- To what extend the employer help them in cases of emergency or family crises?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To ascertain the living and working condition of domestic worker
- To analyse the level of satisfaction with the employer
- To examine their health condition
- To ascertain any extra monetary, non-monetary assistance from the employer

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design - In this study the researcher used descriptive design. **Universe and Sampling** -The universe of this study is the adult women who are working as domestic workers from Ettimadai village. For the purpose of the study snowball sampling technique is used to identify a sample of 30 women domestic workers of above 18 years of age from Ettimadai village of Coimbatore district. **Tools of Data Collection**- The Data has been collected from the selected respondents through self- structured interview schedule.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings of the study are discussed in this part. Based on it the conclusion is drawn.

Living and Working Condition

Table 1 describes about the living and working condition of the respondents taken for the study.

Table No. 1 -Living and Working Condition of Women Domestic Workers

Factors	Description	No.	Per cent
Age Group (years)	18-23	4	13
	23- 28	8	27
	28-33	15	50
	33-36	3	10
No of Members in a Family	3	6	20.0
	4	8	26.7
	5	11	36.7
	6	5	16.7
Monthly Income (Rs.)	3000 -4000	4	13.3
	4000 -5000	5	16.7
	5000 -6000	11	36.6
	6000 -7000	8	26.7
	7000-8000	2	6.6

Ownership of House	Own house	24	80.0
	Rented house	6	20.0
Type of House	Pakka house	23	76.7
	Katcha house	7	23.3
Dine along with the Employers	Yes	20	66.7
	No	10	33.3
Consumption of same kind of food	Yes	20	66.7
	No	10	33.3
Permission to use the rest room	Yes	25	83.3
	No	5	16.7
Leave Availed	Once in a week	10	33.3
	Once in a month	2	6.7
	Depend on the situation	18	60.0
Rest taken during Working Hours	Yes	9	30.0
	No	21	70.0
Type of Work Performed	Cleaning, Mopping and Washing	24	80.0
	Cleaning and Cooking	4	13.3
	Cleaning, Cooking and Mopping	2	6.6
No. of House Managed in a Day	1	3	10
	2	8	26.7
	3	11	36.7
	4	5	16.6
	5	3	10

From the above table it is inferred that majority 50 per cent of the respondents belong to the age group between 28-33 years, 36.7 per cent of the families have 5 members, and 36.6 percent earn Rs.5000-6000 per month, 80 percent of the respondents stay in their own house, 76.7 percent live in pakka house.

It is found that 66.7 percent of the respondents dine along with their employer; of the respondents consuming the same kind of food with their employer is 66.7 percent. 83.3 percent of the respondents use their employer rest room, 60 percent of the respondents avail leave depending upon the situation. 70 percent of the respondents cannot take rest during working hours, 80 per cent of the respondent performed the same kind of work at their work place, such as cooking, cleaning, washing, mopping, and 36.7 percent of the respondents were able to work in 3 houses per day.

Level of Satisfaction with the Employer

The table examines the level of satisfaction of respondents with their employer

Table No. 2 -Level of Satisfaction with the Employer

Factors	Description	No.	Per cent
Abuse at Work Place	Yes	0	0
	No	30	100
Support from Employer during work	Yes	11	36.7
	No	19	63.3
Relationship with the Employers	Very friendly	17	56.7
	Not so friendly	12	40.0

	Not at all friendly	1	3.3
Willingness to do the Profession	Yes	27	90.0
	No	3	10.0
Reason for not liking the Profession	Because of over load of work	1	3.3
	Because this work is too hectic	1	3.3
	Too much of responsibilities	1	3.3
Improvement in Earning	Yes	13	43.3
	No	17	56.7
Satisfaction from Monthly Income	Yes	18	60.0
	No	12	40.0
Appreciation from the Employers	Yes	25	83.3
	No	5	16.7
Continuation of work with the same Employers	Yes	16	53.3
	No	14	46.7

From the table no. 2 it is inferred that all the respondents did not face any form of abuse at their work place, 36.7 percent of the them were able to get help from their employers during working hours, 56.7 percent of the employers were very friendly with them, 90 percent of the respondents like domestic work, whereas 10 percent feels that it is too hectic and work load is too much for them in a day and also so much of responsibilities one has to take, 56.7 percent feels that this profession does show any improvement in their earnings, 60 percent of them were fully satisfied with their monthly income, 83.3 percent of the respondents were getting appreciation from the employer for the work that they performed, 53.3 percent of the respondents would like to continue working with their present employer in future.

Health Condition and Problems

Table No. 3 describes about the health conditions of the respondents taken for the study.

Table No. 3 - Health Condition and Problems

Factors	Description	No.	Per cent
Tiredness while performing work	Never	4	13.3
	Sometime	20	66.7
	Most of the time	6	20.0
Facing Health Problem due to Working Condition	Yes	16	53.3
	No	14	46.7
Types of health problem	Back pain	7	23.3
	Back pain, headache	2	6.7
	Back pain, physical weakness	1	3.3
	Body pain	1	3.3
	Headache	1	3.3
	Headache, back pain	2	6.7
	Headache, body pain	2	6.6
Medical Check-up	Once in a blue moon	6	20.0

	Depend on the situation	11	36.7
	Never	13	43.3
Precaution used while working in an unhygienic area	Yes	5	16.7
	No	25	83.3
Assistant during illness	Yes	24	80.0
	No	6	20.0

It is inferred that 66 percent of the respondents get tired sometime, 53.3 percent of the respondents faced some kind of health problem after adopting domestic work, 23.3 per cent of them stated that back pain is the major health Problem, 43.3 percent of the respondents did not go for medical check-up at all, 83.3 percent of the employers does not provide any precaution for their maid while working in unhygienic area, 80 percent of the employers do give assistant to the respondents during sudden illness.

Monetary and Non-Monetary Assistance

This table describes about the monetary and non-monetary assistance given by the employer to the respondents.

Table No. 4-Monetary and Non-Monetary Assistance

Factors	Description	No.	Per cent
Monetary Support	Yes	10	33.3
	No	20	66.7
Compensation Of Work Due To Monetary Support	Yes	4	40
	No	6	60
Non-Monetary Support	Yes	8	26.7
	No	22	73.3
Type Of Non-Monetary Support	Advice	5	62.5
	Emotional support	1	12.5
	Motivation	2	25
Support During Family Crises	Yes	10	33.3
	No	20	66.7

It is inferred from the above table that, 66.7 percent of the employers do not give any monetary support to the respondents, 60 percent of the respondents need not have to compensate at their work place even after getting monetary support from their employers, 73.3 percent does not get any non-monetary support from the employers, 62.5 percent of them are receiving non-monetary support from the employers in term of advice, 66.7 percent of the respondents do not get any support from the employers during their family crises.

SUGGESTIONS

- Domestic workers need to be sensitised on the available legal protections for them.
- Being in an unorganised sector, the domestic workers should be given the minimum labour rights.
- The minimum wages prescribed by the government need to be implemented to the domestic workers.

CONCLUSION

From the study, the researcher found out that more than one-third of the respondents were into domestic work during their middle age. Majority of them were living in nuclear family, one-third of them earned around five to six thousand rupees per month, and more than three-fourth of them lived in concrete house and majority of them have access to electricity. The researcher also found out that 70 per cent of the domestic workers were not able to take rest during their working hours. It was also found out that domestic workers lack health care and protection, the researcher also found that they were facing health hazards such as back pain, physical weaknesses, headache, etc due to their nature of work. But in spite of their suffering they never went for medical check-up, they rather prefer self-medication because they feel that going for medical check-up will cost them a lot. They are facing various health problems after adopting domestic work as they work at unhygienic places like toilet, drainage etc. It is suggested from the study that domestic workers should be given security and protection by law. The wages of the domestic worker must be fixed as per the rules of minimum wages act and it should not be left to the discretion of the householder, i.e. employer and Free health care facilities should be provided by the government to the domestic workers.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- **Gallin, Dan** (2001) 'Propositions on trade unions and informal employment in times of globalisation' *Place, Space and the New Labour Internationalisms* - books.
- **Goldman, Tanya** (2003) 'Organizing in South Africa's informal economy: An overview of four sectoral case studies' *SEED Working Paper 60*.
- **Oxenbridge, Sarah** (2000) 'Trade Union Organisation Among Low-wage service workers: Lessons .From America and New Zealand' *ESRC Centre for Business Research, University of Cambridge, Working Paper No 160*
- **Parreñas, Rhacel** (2001) 'Servants of Globalization: Women, Migration and Domestic Work' Stanford: Stanford University Press
- **Smith, Peggie R** (2000) 'Organizing the Unorganizable: Private Paid Household Workers and Approaches to Employee Representation' *NCL Rev.*, - heinonlinebackup.com