

An Overview of Problems Faced By Women Domestic Workers In India

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ABSTRACT

In India, most of the women are found to be employed in agricultural activities and in the unorganized sector. The employment of women is high in the unorganized sector such as part time helpers or maids in households, construction of buildings, tanneries, beedi industries and match and crackers industries. The highest Indian Constitutional Document provides equality to all human beings with dignity, but it is not seen in the case of women domestic workers. A domestic worker not only provides the service to the needy persons of the society but also uplifts their family in all grounds. The issues of a domestic worker are a very strong concern in the present situation which is longing for a positive solution. The present study will be an eye-opener for the policy makers and the public.

I. INTRODUCTION

In total workforce of India Women workers constitute one third. Majority of women workers are engaged in the unorganized sectors such as agriculture, construction, domestic services etc., the remarkable majority of domestic workers are women and girls.

A domestic worker is who someone carries out household work in a private household in return for wages define International Labour organization (ILO). To provide for living for themselves and for their families millions of workers across the country take to domestic work in view of limited opportunities available to them. The demand for domestic workers have a tremendous growth for the last few decades which has led to the trafficking and other forms of exploitation of millions of women and children. The exploitation is in many forms starting from low wages to maltreatment and sexual abuse by the employees that remain outside the purview of any legislative control.

More women in India are receiving an education than ever before and the country has recorded consistent economic growth. Despite this, India continues to have one of lowest rates of female workforce participation in the world.

Close to 54 percent of working age women between the ages of 15 to 59 are not available for work because of household responsibilities or domestic work. In addition, they undertake tasks such as fetching wood and water which goes towards the care and sustenance of their family. Such work is called many things – unpaid care work, reproductive work, and social care functions and so on.

Hired domestic workers ease the burden of individual households by undertaking household chores in return for remuneration. The tasks include the care of children and the elderly, cooking, driving, cleaning, grocery shopping, running errands and taking care of household pets, particularly in urban areas. However, despite the benefits this work brings to individual households, domestic workers are often not recognized as workers by society.

CURRENT SITUATION AROUND THE WORLD

Throughout the world, most domestic workers are from the same country in which they work. They may live at home, though they are usually "live-in" domestics, meaning they receive room and board as part of their salaries. 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 total number of domestic workers in Asia and the Pacific is hard to estimate, though it's believed their labours account for as much as 2.5% of total employment in developed countries, and as much as 10% in some developing countries. In China the number of domestic workers is estimated to be around 20 million, in Thailand around 700,000. The vast majority are women – mainly under the age of 40 – and in too many cases, children are still found working in the homes of others.

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. In Guatemala, it is estimated that eight percent of all women work as domestic workers. They hardly have any legal protection. According to Guatemalan labour law, domestic work is "subject neither to a working time statute nor to regulations on the maximum number of working hours in a day". Legally, domestic helpers are only entitled to ten hours of free time in 24 hours, and one day off per week. But very often, these minimal employment laws are disregarded, and so are basic civil liberties.'

FACTORS THAT DRIVE THEM INTO THIS LABOUR

PUSH FACTORS

Problems like natural calamities, extreme religious factors, family problems, failure of government programmes, domestic violence , labourers face lots of problems.

PULL FACTORS

Thses factors include cheap labour, increase of nuclear familes, child labour, women's unequal status, consumerism, lure of city life and inaccessibility of education.

CONDITIONS OF LIVE-IN DOMESTIC WORKERS

Live-in Domestic Workers are most vulnerable to exploitation because they are isolated from their families and friends and are at the mercy of their employers. They are unable to refuse work and are punished when they make mistakes. They work on an average of eighteen hours a day and are practically on call at all hours. Domestic Workers experience a tremendous sense of aloneness because of the solitary nature of the work. This loneliness is compounded by the fact that most have no or very little time off and because they are unable to communicate with far-away friends and relatives due to illiteracy. The employer restricts the freedom of the live-in domestic worker. She is disallowed from leaving the building at will and her movements are greatly restricted within the house. Often they are not allowed to use the telephone and are prohibited from socializing with friends and relatives who are living and working in the same city. Their sleeping hours are irregular. Often they are underpaid or unpaid. They get no holidays or days off. They are illiterate and have no means to contact their families. Because of isolation, live-in Domestic Workers face an increased risk of verbal, physical and sexual abuse. To compound matters, many Domestic Workers are illiterate or semi-literate. They have to adapt to an alien environment, culture, and language.

REASONS FOR MIGRATION WITHIN INDIA

Migration from rural areas to big cities naturally occurs due to debt bondage, poverty, sudden death in the family, rural and male unemployment. The glamour of city life acts as a further "pull" factor inducing young girls and women to migrate. Working in cities is seen as a solution to poverty and villagers are unaware of the difficult working conditions and poor remuneration of domestic workers. Additionally, a large number of domestic workers come from areas, which have been subjected to natural disasters and man-made crisis situations.

CURRENT SITUATION IN INDIA

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According to estimates by the International Labour Organization (ILO), there were at least four million domestic servants in India. Domestic work as an economic activity is too massive and employs too many employers who remain unregulated. Many people choose domestic work because of their low literacy level and also the turn down of employment opportunities in the

agriculture and manufacturing sectors. The work has no reputation and generally considered as a menial work in exchange of some amount.

Apart from daily routine, structural exploitation, in the form of low wages, heavy workloads and long hours are the serious issues of women domestic workers. They face serious dangers, as is evident from cases of employers confining and assaulting them coming to light with frightening regularity. The inequality of domestic workers' circumstances was drawn attention to the fact that their place of work was surrounded by the privacy of the homes of people that are invariably more privileged than they are. Although successive governments have drafted policies, they are yet to become law. India is a member of the International Labour Organization's 189th convention, known as the „Convention on Domestic Workers“, but has not ratified it yet. Daily and weekly rest hours, minimum wage payment and the choices of choosing the place of living and enjoying the leave facilities are the measures suggested by the convention.

Women are recognized as a powerful instrument of the economic development of a country as well as the growth of the society. The growth of women becomes necessary in any place of the world, in particular in the service sector, which is the income rising sector, especially in GDP rising sector of an economy. In India, the domestic service comes under the service sector and at the same time got importance in the growth of the households also in the growth of the country.

II. CONCLUSION

In urban areas, the demand for domestic servants has been increased due to the lack of time and physical inability of the housewives and also due to the emerging modern way of life among the city habitants. Nowadays, people are very much in need the help of these domestic workers, but the recognition is not given to them and to their job. Thus, the importance of domestic workers is definite in an economy. But the value is not given to their job. The job of domestic workers is not recognized in the economy.

The domestic workers themselves were not aware of the significance and worth of their job. Even Domestic women workers are not normally considered as workers as compare with other working professionals and their working conditions remain unregulated. This is also one of the jobs, which should be recognized and which should be esteemed and respected and considered to be a job under organized pattern. So the necessary step to be taken by the Government to regard as this job as highly regarded one. It is also in the hands of the public in the country to respect these domestic workers as human beings.

III. REFERENCES

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