

SOCIO ECONOMIC STATUS OF DOMESTIC WORKER: CASE STUDY OF DOMESTIC WORKERS IN GOREGAON (MUMBAI)

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Abstract

Domestic workers comprise a significant part of the global workforce in informal employment and are among the most vulnerable groups of workers. Even though a substantial number of men work in the sector – often as gardeners, drivers or butlers – it remains a highly feminized sector; 80 per cent of all domestic workers are women. Women have always been given a secondary place in Indian society. While women are currently making progress in many fields, yet their situation is extremely difficult in some fields. In case of domestic workers, the similarly, the condition of domestic workers worrisome. There are many laws for women. Yet there are many areas that are operating without any law. This is an attempt to assess the current economic and social status of such maids.

Key Words –

Mumbai-Women- Eco-Socio Condition- Unorganized sector

Introduction

Section: I

Women have been very hard working since ancient times. Women have always tried to fulfil their family needs without any complains. From the discovery of agriculture to the discovery of music, women have a huge contribution. If the man was a wanderer, the woman would stay in one place and observe the situation around her. Therefore, woman is the mother of many inventions.

Traditionally, household work is considered a woman's responsibility. However, in the last few decades, growing participation of women in office jobs has boosted the income level of India's middle class. With the changing scenario, the need for domestic workers has also increased. Talking of big cities, young couples and single working professionals are dependent on maids or 'didis' as they are often referred to. According to data, Indian homes have witnessed a 120% increase in domestic workers in the decade post liberalization. While the figure was 7,40,000 in 1991, it has increased to 16.6 lakh in 2001. Today, it has become a norm for a family to depend on a maid.

Mumbai is the financial capital of India. On one hand it is a dream of making Mumbai Shanghai. But, on the other hand the socio-economic life of Marathi women working in those tall buildings is definitely different from that of women in the corporate sectors. The percentage of women working in unorganized sectors is nearly 94%, still they are not counted anywhere. Also the compensation and the treatment given to them is not taken into consideration. They are not even paid properly for their labour.

According to 2019 data from Salary.com, the domestic workers should get their annual earnings of at least \$178,201. The position of women in the capitalist economy seems to be worse than ever. 94% of women working in the unorganized labour sector are working without any labour law. At present, domestic workers

often face very low wages, excessively long hours, have no guaranteed weekly day of rest and at times are vulnerable to physical, mental and sexual abuse or restrictions on freedom of movement. Exploitation of domestic workers can partly be attributed to gaps in national labour and employment legislation, and often reflects discrimination along the lines of sex, race and caste.

Objectives of the Research

1. To elaborate legal rights of domestic workers
2. To understand the socio-economic conditions of domestic workers
3. To access the working conditions of domestic workers

Research Methodology

Qualitative research methodology has been used to assess the socio-economic status of women living and working in Goregaon. 4 women working as housemaids and 1 social worker (In total 5 people) have been interviewed for this work. From which One of them is married, one is unmarried, one is a widow, one is a single mother and one is a social worker. The social worker is working for women's rights in "domestic worker's union".

Importance of Research

Women are the most important factor in the society also they are the one who are exploited the most. Looking at the lives of women in this society, the socio-economic status of women in Goregaon was noticed through this research. In this 21st century, these women are running their houses with very insufficient amount of money. If a woman is alone, then the problems she faces are more painful. Even in such a tough situation, these women are trying to take out a way and are living their lives.

Section: II

What does the Indian law say about domestic workers and their rights?

1. The Act provides that every domestic worker who has completed 18 years of age,

but has not completed 60 years of age, and is engaged in any domestic work for not less than 90 days in the preceding 12 months, can be registered as a domestic worker. (Section 16)

2. All registered domestic workers should be paid minimum wages as per the Minimum Wages Act, 1948. (Section 22)
3. They should get daily rest period of at least 10 consecutive hours between ending and recommencing work.
4. Any person knowingly sends, directs or takes any girl or woman domestic worker to any place for immoral purposes or to a place or in any manner sexually exploited. Such a person shall be subjected to imprisonment for a minimum period of 6 months which may extend up to 7 years and fine up to Rs. 50000 or both. (Section 23)
5. With the passing of the domestic workers (Registration, social security and welfare) Act 2008 every registered domestic Worker is now slated to receive pension, maternity benefits and paid leave that is a paid weekly off.

Are these laws really implemented?

1. So the answer to this question is 'NO'.
2. Even today these laws are not implemented or carried out at many places.
3. This has made the working environment of the domestic workers unhappy, unfair, unsafe, etc.
4. Even today the women working as domestic worker had to face so many challenges.
5. Due to no rules and no laws implemented, they are unaware of their rights.
6. Many women had to face physical abuse.
7. They had to accept less salaries, as it is the only source and need of income.
8. They had to work more, no rest and no leave.

So these are few challenges domestic workers faces due to non-implementation of such laws.

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Section: III

Case Study No.1

Sarita Deepak Pote, a 38-year-old domestic worker, has completed her education up to Class IX and lives in Bhagat Singh Nagar -No. 2, Link Road, Goregaon (West). She is a single mother. she works as a cook. Her family consists of 4 members I.e. her grandmother, her sister and her son. Her son has studied till 14th class.

Of those, she is the sole earner. She gets a salary of Rs. 9,000 per month. They have no savings. Also, no one in their house has any insurance policy. When someone falls ill at home, they seek treatment at a municipal hospital. And During crisis, due to the need she has to borrow money from the owner of house where she works as a cook. And later on the owner cuts that particular amount from her salary.

Case Study No. 2

Priya Pramod Barat is a 42-year-old domestic worker who has completed her education up to Class VIII. She lives in Tribal Society, Motilal Nagar No. 2, Goregaon (West). She is a widow and works as a maid. she has a total of five members in her family I.e. Mother-in-law, brother-in-law, daughter and son. Her daughter has studied till 12th and is pursuing further education. And her son had studied till class 14th.

Out of them, only she and her son work and earn. He earns a salary of Rs.5000 and her son

earns Rs.6000 a month. Out of which it is impossible for them to do any savings. Also, no one in their house except her has an insurance policy. Only she has a policy of Rs.200/- per month. When someone falls ill at home, they seek treatment at a municipal hospital. And During crisis, due to the need she has to borrow money from the owner of house where she works. And later on the owner cuts that particular amount of money from her salary. Also they have to take money in the form of loans for their children's education.

Case Study No.3

Ashwini Abhimanyu Ballal, a 24-year-old domestic worker, is a graduate. She stays in Bhagat Singh Nagar no. 1, Panchavati Pragati Housing Society street no. 7, Link Road, Goregaon (West). She is unmarried. She has a mother and a brother in her family. All the members of her family are working. she had completed her education from Motilal Nagar Municipal Corporation school. They face many financial difficulties.

Her monthly income is Rs-5,000. Her mother's income is Rs. 4,000, and her brother's income is 10,000 per month. They have no savings. Also, no one in their house has an insurance policy. When someone falls ill at home, they seek treatment at a municipal hospital, but the biggest problem is that they had to take money from the landlord of the house where they work during any emergency. Later on the landlord cuts the particular amount from her salary.

Case Study. 4

Sushma Gangadhar Kasare is a 48-year-old married women. She is a domestic worker. She is educated till 7th standard and lives in Aarey Milk Colony Unit No. 3, Ekta Nagar, Goregaon West. She has 2 daughters and husband in her family.

Her husband earns Rs 15,000 monthly. And she earns a salary of 9,000. The eldest daughter is getting married and the they have no savings. Also, no one in their house has an insurance

policy. When someone falls ill at home, they seek treatment at a municipal hospital, but the biggest problem is that they had to take money from the landlord of the house where they work during any emergency. Later on the landlord cuts the particular amount from her salary.

Case Study. 5

Deepak Sonawane is a social worker based in Goregaon who works for the justice and rights of women domestic workers. He looks after the work of providing State and Central Government welfare schemes to women domestic workers. According to the information given by him, women who have done M. Com, M. A. are also working as domestic workers. He said that, the approach of the society towards these women is quite inferior. He added, some women are facing physical abuse as well.

Because the exploiters are financially strong, they are a little superior in the police station. And these women are not getting justice. For that, he says, it is important for the Vishakha Samiti to be at the local level. Although there is a Vishakha Samiti in various large companies, the law says it needs to be at the local level. But such committees are not at the local level. Giving information about the education of the children of these women, he said that there is a Motilal Nagar Municipal Secondary School in Goregaon West and the mothers of 95% of the children in that school are domestic workers. They should get a salary of atleast Rs 2,000 per month from one house. At present they get Rs 700 to Rs 800. If these women want to be taken to a big hospital, the help of Rajiv Gandhi Yojana or local corporators, MLAs, MPs is sought.

Conclusion

1. Out of the above four women, one is a graduate, one has studied till 7th, one till eighth and one till ninth standard.

2. These women get a monthly salary of Rs. 700 to Rs. 1000 per job. So they have to work in 2 to 3 houses.
3. Even though these women are domestic workers, they have tried to educate their children atleast till 12th standard and till graduation as well.
4. The savings of these women are nothing. So by the end of the month, they feel shortage of money.
5. Among all the women only one of these women has an insurance policy of Rs. 200 per month, the other 3 do not have any insurance policy.

Suggestions / Recommendations

1. A minimum wage law should be enacted for women working in the unorganized sector.
2. Special financial incentives should be given to the children of unorganized working women in education and health sector.
3. Special purpose of leave should be given to unorganized working women.
4. Special financial relief should be given to unorganized working women in private hospitals.
5. They should be given special discounts in Ration card.

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