

WORKING CONDITIONS OF WOMEN DOMESTIC WORKERS: AN OVERVIEW

Puspha Agadi*
Hanamagouda C**

ABSTRACT

Women domestic workers constitute majority of the workforce in unorganized sector in India. They facing gender inequality, poverty, illiteracy, lower wages, over workload, exploitation, discrimination, job insecurity, lack of leave facilities, absence of benefits such as ESI and PF. Majority of the women domestic workers were married and of middle or old aged. Due to low-education, they are not getting good employment opportunities. Some are generating their own income, majority of them have not owned any properties in their personal names. The present paper made an attempt to know the working condition of women domestic workers in Haveri city. Simple Random sampling method was used and 150 interviewed women domestic workers with the help of interview schedules.

Keywords: *Women Domestic Workers, Unorganized Sector, Sociology of Gender, ESI, PF.*

Introduction

Domestic work is most popular and it's grouped under unorganized sector, which is undertaken by many of the men and women in India. Most of domestic workers are belonging to the weaker section of the society. Due to these workers are poor, low educated, gender inequalities, little awareness about their rig, lack of marketing skills, and easily available so they rushed in to this work. They work various activities such as cooking, washing clothes, sweeping, child caring, gardening, etc. but domestic workers earn the low wage compare to the other worker, due to wage are depending on the type of domestic work that is particular employers is entrusted with domestic workers work has constitute three to four task each house in daily they work from 9 to 10 hours in a day its burden for them, they also face some problems at work place such as exploitation, harassment, caste discrimination from their employers, gender inequality that is prevailed in their families. The present research Paper is an attempt to reveals the working conditions of women domestic workers in Haveri city of Karnataka state.

Methodology

The present paper is micro level study carried at the Haveri district in Karnataka state consists of eight talukas, namely, Ranibennur, Haveri, Hanagal, Hirekerur, Shiggaon, Savanur, Rattihalli and Byadgi. The study was conducted in 2019. Simple random sampling method was used; the 150 women domestic workers are selected as respondents in Haveri city of Karnataka. The collected primary data was analysed manually by coding and tabulation.

Results and Discussions

The socio and working conditions of respondents like age, marital status, types of work, hours of daily work etc. were used to analyse in the paper.

Age

Age is a biological factor, but it is playing significant role in various activities of every individual. In case of young women domestic workers, they are energetic and curious to learn different activities of modern household in which they are working in households activities. Then they have better experience about their conventional work and perform their duties at households systematically within minimum time. Hence, age is important factors which influence the occupation.

* Research Scholar, Department of Sociology, Karnatak University, Pavate Nagar, Dharwad, Karnataka, India.

** Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Karnatak University, Pavate Nagar, Dharwad, Karnataka, India.

As revealed that, the considerably more number that is (40.00 percent) of the women domestic workers belongs to 41 to 60 years of age groups followed by (32.67 percent) these respondents belongs to 26 to 40 years, young age group who are(24.67 percent) between 18 to 25 years and the remaining only (2.67 percent) are of more than 60 years.

Marital Status

During the field survey researcher has collected the information of the marital status of domestic worker. Out of 150 most of 76 percent of respondents were married 12 percent of workers were widow rest of the part 8.67 percent of respondents were unmarried only 3.33 percent of the respondent workers were divorced. It's found that most of the married workers involved domestic work due to their economically support their family. Few of respondents those who were divorced and widow workers work as domestic work due to their get easily available still some respondents whose were unmarried due to their economic condition is poor. So, support their parents or family.

Type of Work

It is noted that, almost women domestic workers are working in more than one household and a few of them are working in even more than five households. It shows that, their workload in these households is more and even they are doing different types of works in each of the households in which they are employed. A major type of work includes washing clothes, cleaning utensils, sweeping, mopping, cooking, and caring of infants and children and such others. The primary data were collected on various type of works in which the women domestic workers were engaged in different households is shown as under;

Table 1: Type of Work

Type of Work	Respondents	Percentage
Washing clothes	20	13.33
Cleaning Utensils	20	13.33
Sweeping and Moping	15	10 .00
Cooking	04	2.67
Caring of Child	02	1.33
Washing clothes and cleaning vessels	38	25.34
Other	18	12 .00
Washing clothes and cleaning vessels and sweeping	33	22.00
Total	150	100.00

Sources: Compiled from the field study data

From the above table, it is clear that, most of the women domestic workers are doing the same work that is commonly washing of clothes and cleaning utensils. Particularly, as stated by the women household workers, similar proportion of these workers are washing clothes (13.33 Percent) cleaning utensils (13 33 Percent) in various households. Only few of them (10.00 percent) are just sweeping and mopping the households. Meager numbers of women household workers (2.67 percent) are engaging in cooking. Rarely, such workers of these workers are engaging in child care activities (1.33 Percent) in households. Compared to these women domestic workers, (25.34percent) more workers are doing in both work i.e. washing clothes and cleaning vessels, only a few (12.00 percent) workers are engaging other type of works and the remaining women domestic workers (22.00 percent) are engaging in almost works such as washing clothes, cleaning vessels and sweeping.

It shows that, the women domestic workers are engaging in diverse type of works in households. Of which, it is observed that, cooking and child care is made by only meager portion of the women domestic workers as there is need for expertise and experience and even caste barriers to engage in such type of activities.

Work Experience

Work experience plays significant role in determining the socio-economic status of women domestic workers. It is noted that, if the women domestic workers are working for longer period, which is more than 10 years, then they are more experienced and hence, they may get more wages. Consequently, they may have more social status as compared to other domestic workers. On the other hand, if the women domestic workers are new to this occupation, they may unaware about the situation, norms and conditions of their work and hence, they may get lower wages. In this way, work experience determines the socio-economic status of the women domestic workers.

It reveals that, work experience of women domestic workers is diverse and varied. As stated by women domestic workers covered under the present study, There are working since 02 years of (8 Percent) of the respondents workers have work experience .(19.33 percent) between 02 to 05 years, work experience (14 Percent) of respondents between 06 to 10 years . Work experience (25 Percent) between 11 to 15 years, work experience (29.67 percent) between 15 to 20 years. And workexperience (3.67 Percent) between 20 to 25 years. It shows that, majority of the respondents are working for longer period in domestic work and have better experience and even may have more wages also. The work experience of women domestic workers doesn't influence on deprivation significantly.

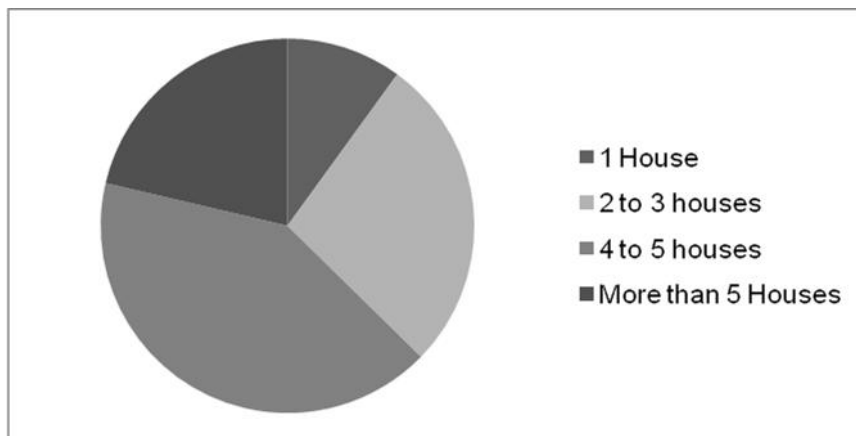
Hours of Daily Work

It is found that, almost women domestic workers are part time workers and doing work in more than one household. As such, depending on the number of households in which they are working and their working hours are also more. Hours of work determines the wages or income of women domestic workers. It is highlighted that, the majority i.e. (36.67percent) respondents are working in 3 to 5 hours in daily, they are also working (22 percent) in 1 to 3 hours in daily. Only few (12.67 percent) respondents are working for 5 to 6 hours in a day, few (4.67 percent) respondents are also working for 7 to 9 hours. More (24.00 percent) respondents are working for more than 9 hours it means they are working for full time. It's observed that, the majority of the women domestic workers are working for more hours in daily.

Number of Households Workin Every Day

As discussed above, the majority women household workers have agreed that they are part time workers. In case of such part time workers, they are compelled to work in more than one house, it was asked to these respondents on the number of households in which they are working in every day.

Fig. 1: Number of Households Work in Every Day



Sources: Compiled from the field study data

Fig 1 found that, meager women domestic workers (10.00 percent) are working in only one household and it shows that, they include full time workers. Similarly, more (27.33 percent) of the respondents are working in 2 to 3 houses in a day, comparatively most of the respondents (41.33 percent) of the women domestic workers are working in 4 to 5 houses and only few (21.33 percent) of the women domestic workers are working in more than five households.

It shows that, majority of the women domestic workers are working in more than 03 households and such as, their quantity and type of work in these households is more. Of course, few of them may get more wages due to their work in two or more households.

Distance from Home to Work Place

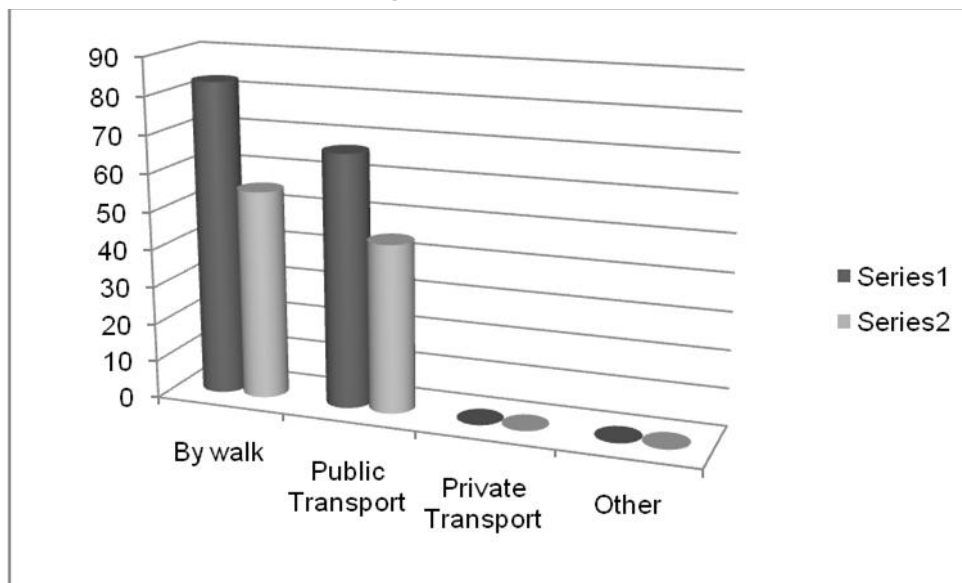
Generally, it is found that, the women domestic workers are earning lesser wages and hence, they can't afford to spend more money on transportation. Considering this factor, many of the women domestic workers are living near the households in which they are working. It is also noted that, due to rural unemployment, decrease in rains consequently decline in agricultural activities, many of the women's are living nearby villages are also coming to cities for daily to undertake domestic work. In this way, the distance of the houses of the women domestic workers varies depending on their convenience.

As described above, comparatively more (32.00 percent) of the women domestic workers are living nearby places to the households in which they are working and similarly, more (28.00 percent) of the women domestic workers are daily travelled from nearby villages to undertake their domestic work in different households of employers. It is found that, rarely (9.33 percent) women domestic workers are living in less than 1 km from their employers' households. Further, only a few (12.00 percent) of the women domestic workers are living 1 to 2 kms distance away from their employers' houses and few (18.67 percent) of the women domestic workers are also living 3 to 4 km away from their employers' households. It shows that, near workplaces or rural unemployment has determined the work places of women domestic workers.

Mode of Travel

It reveals that, many of the houses of women domestic workers are located at a distance of 1 km to even more than 4 kms away from their employers' households. As such, it has become essential for few workers have travelled in daily to such long distances so as to save their time for the domestic works. It is highlighted that, women domestic workers are poor and getting lower wages and such as, they can't able to travel in costlier private transport. Hence, information was collected from the women domestic workers on the mode of travel to their work places or households or their employers from their homes.

Fig. 2: Mode of Travel



Sources: Compiled from the field study data

The mode of travel as expressed Fig no.2 by the women domestic workers reveals that, majority (55.00 percent) of the women domestic workers are coming from their house to work places by walk, whereas only few (45.00 percent) of them are coming to their work places by public transport or through Government Buses. It shows that, women domestic workers are poor and getting lesser wages and as such, they are unable to travel in private vehicles, which are costlier. Due to this reason, majority of them are visiting to their work places by walk and few of them by public transport.

Benefits apart from Wages

It is noted that, few of the employers are kind enough that, they provide free food, free clothes and such other benefits apart from their wages. In this way, the women domestic workers are also getting various benefits for their work from their employers. It reveals that, only few (14.67 percent) of the women domestic workers are getting free food from their employers and a few (5.33 percent) of the workers are getting clothes from their employers. But, the majority (80.00 percent) of the women domestic workers is not getting any benefits other than wages from their employers. Due to their and employers relationship is moderate, not so good, few of respondents report that, they have got clothes from employees on festivals time or any occasional time. The study clearly point out that workers are not any benefits, money apart from their wage.

Type of Reaction of Employers Whenever Committed Mistakes

Whenever the mistakes are committed by women domestic workers, many of the employers reacts and condemn such mistakes by scolding, beating, shouting, abusing, cutting or deducting the wages, etc. The types of reactions of their employers as stated by the women domestic workers are shown as under;

Table 2: Type of Reaction of Employers Whenever Committed Mistakes

Type of Reactions of Employers	Respondents	Percentage
Scold	42	28.00
Beat	00	00.00
Shout	30	20.00
Abuse	03	2.00
Any other	15	10.00
Not applicable	60	40.00
Total	150	100.00

Sources: Compiled from the field study data

Among all the women domestic workers, many (28.00 percent) of them have agreed that their employers scold them for their mistakes, a few (20.00 percent) of them have mentioned that their employers shout for their mistakes, meager (2.00 percent) of the women domestic workers have agreed that their employers abuse them for their mistakes, a few (10.00 percent) of them have agreed that their employers react in other ways such as deduction of wages and it is not applicable to some (40.00 percent) of the women domestic workers as stated that their employers don't react to the mistakes committed by them. Most of the workers reports that their employers scold on their mistake due to they do not know the how to use the electronic machine.

Relationship with Employers

Of the many factors those influence job satisfaction of workers, relationship with their employers plays significant role in determining efficiency and work of the workers. If the workers have cordial and better relations with their employers, then they work efficiently or vice versa. Hence, relationship of the women domestic workers with employers is essentially to be studied to assess the working conditions of women domestic workers. In this respect, the collected primary data is as under;

Table 3: Relationship with Employers

Relationship with Employers	Respondents	Percentage
Better	30	20.00
Good	48	32.00
Badly/ Not so good	05	3.33
Moderate	67	44.67
Total	150	100.00

Sources: Compiled from the field study data

It is noted that, nearly half (44.67 percent) of the women domestic workers have moderate relations with their employers. Only a few (20.00 percent) of the workers have better and some (32.00 percent) of these workers have good relations with their employers. Surprisingly, it is noted that, though working under their employers in unorganized sector, still meager (3.33 percent) of the women domestic workers have mentioned that their relationship with their employer is poor or bad or not so good.

Overall, it is summarized that, the relationship of women domestic workers with their employers is moderate and good.

Suggestions from the Study

Following suggestions are made from the present paper:

- The Government has to pass legislations that assure to fixing minimum higher wages to women domestic workers based on their workload.
- The employers to provide Employee State Insurance (ESI) and Provident Fund (PF) facilities to women domestic workers..
- The Government and NGOs may provide self-employment training and financial assistance to the women domestic workers, so that they can start their own self-employment and earn income for their families.

Conclusion

Women domestic workers constitute main constituent of unorganized sector. This is the micro level study its result applied to different parts of the country. Workers in different sector have minimum wages as per the Act (law) and other benefits such as medical facilities, ESI, Provident Fund, weekly leave, etc. Whereas women domestic workers are deprived from such facilities, therefore, it is essential to look into their working conditions of the women domestic workers and based on such studies at different parts of India, it is essential to formulate welfare policies and provide welfare schemes for the welfare of the women domestic workers. The women domestic workers have to form their own associations and organizations so as to fight for their rights. The employers should consider the over work load and lower socio-economic status of women domestic workers are working under them and based on such conditions, it is suggested to the employers to pay fair wages and such other benefits to women domestic workers.

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