



SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF UNORGANIZED DOMESTIC WORKERS IN NAGPUR CITY

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ABSTRACT

Urban life cannot be imagined without domestic workers. The whole family can go out and engage in economic activities only because a domestic worker is responsible for taking care of the household chores. Domestic women workers are one such class of workers, whose exploitation continues even today. To say that even if they are workers, they are considered as maids. Some of them work in several households, some work for a limited time in one household, and some work full-time in one household. These domestic women workers are subjected to various kinds of cruelty, atrocities, and exploitation. Cases of atrocities against women domestic workers keep coming to the fore. But such cases often come to the fore only when there is a big or frightening incident, otherwise, the cries of most of the women workers are left suffocating in the four walls of the brothels. Due to the fear of snatching their livelihood, they are unable to even complain about the violence against them. In this research paper, the socioeconomic problems of the unorganized domestic workers of the unorganized sector in Nagpur city have been studied.



KEYWORDS: Domestic Workers, Female Domestic Workers, Unorganized Sector, Nagpur City, Socio-Economic Problems

INTRODUCTION :

There has also been an increase in the demand and supply of domestic workers, especially women. In the 1931 census, 2.7 million of the country's population was marked as 'domestic workers'. At the same time, in the 1971 census, this number decreased to just 67,000. However, between 1991 and 2001, there was a sudden increase of 120 percent in the number of domestic workers. The

maximum increase was seen in the number of women working outside the home. According to official figures, between 2001 and 2011, the number of women aged 15-59 working as domestic workers in the country increased by 70 percent. In 2001, where the number of female domestic workers in the country was 1.47 crore, in 2011 this number increased to 2.5 crores.

The number of women registered in the Domestic Labor Board in Nagpur district is more

than 1 lakh 14 thousand. Most of these working women are widows, abandoned women, and many other distressed women. These domestic working women can be divided into three categories, first, those who work in multiple households, second those who work for a limited time in a single household, and third those who work full time in a single household. . 35 types of work are edited by these women. The work of domestic women workers is very difficult. Most of

them work in multiple households and have to work continuously from morning to evening to earn a living. Not only this, apart from this, they also have to do their household work.

Firstly, the Domestic Workers (Conditions of Work) Bill was made in 1959, but due to non-implementation, it remained in history. At present, the bill regarding unorganized sector workers (including domestic workers) has been introduced and passed in the year 2004. But scholars say that due to the inadequacy of its provisions, it does not see the possibility of getting any special help to women doing domestic work. The National Commission for Women has sent a draft to the government after consultation with various stakeholders. This law also includes provisions for the regulation of placement agencies and providing social security to women domestic workers, but the process of practical implementation of this law requires more discussion and mutual consultation. The Maharashtra government passed a law in the year 2008 for these women domestic workers. Under this law, considering them as salaried employees, they have also been given the eligibility for paid leave. It has also been talked about making available the facility of loans, health insurance, and provident fund on easy terms. There is also a provision for the establishment of the District Welfare Board for the implementation of these laws.

According to statistics, there are 47.5 lakh domestic workers in the country. Interestingly, only 10 out of 31 states and union territories have made domestic workers part of the schedule of the Minimum Wages Act. The Periodic Labor Force Survey classifies domestic work as "informal". While wages for domestic workers range from Rs 1,000 to Rs 10,000 in rural Nagpur, it ranges from Rs 2,000 to Rs 13,000 in urban Nagpur. In the year 1980, the domestic workers in Pune went on strike and after that, they together formed the Pune City Molkarni Sanghatana. The organization demanded an increase in salary and sick leave. Presently there are many domestic workers' unions in Pune, Nagpur, and Mumbai.

Official figures say that there are lakhs of domestic workers in the country. But according to the 68th round of NSSO-2011-12, about 39 lakh people work as domestic workers in private households, of which 26 lakhs are women. Census figures say that around 1.25 lakh children in the country are forced to work as domestic workers or at dhabas. International Labor Organization after analyzing NSSO and employment and unemployment surveys says that in 2009-10 two-thirds of domestic workers were working in urban areas. Most of them are illiterate or have little education and are also unskilled. They are one of the poorest and most exploited groups in the country. They must depend on their employers as they do not have any legal protection under the labor laws of India.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The research paper has depended on secondary data.

OBJECTIVE OF RESEARCH:

- 1) To study the social problems of the unorganized domestic workers of the unorganized sector in Nagpur city.
- 2) To study the economic problems of the unorganized domestic workers of the unorganized sector in Nagpur city.
- 3) To study the present status of unorganized domestic workers in the unorganized sector in Nagpur city.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF UNORGANIZED DOMESTIC WORKERS OF UNORGANIZED SECTOR IN NAGPUR CITY:

Domestic work is a far more important source of employment for women workers than for men in Nagpur city. About 81 percent of women in Nagpur city work in this informal sector, which is double the share of any other informal employment. This work is often done by poor and unskilled migrant women from rural districts and marginalized communities. Domestic workers receive fewer wages, and legal or social protection than other workers in various informal sectors in Nagpur city. Very few domestic workers in Nagpur city work on a labor contract basis. They usually have no provision for

maternity leave, access to health care or monetary benefits, period leave, or pension. Today some Acts like the Unorganized Social Security Act 2008 and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act 2013 can prove to help protect them but till now there is no comprehensive law for the workers of this sector. It should be noted that for most women their workplace is someone's home. In such a situation, it becomes almost impossible for them to take advantage of this law for sexual harassment. Even before the pandemic in Nagpur city, domestic workers have been facing discrimination and exploitation based on class, caste, etc. In such a situation, there is a need for policy changes to improve and protect their living standards.

Domestic workers in Nagpur city have to work six low-wage jobs to realize the state's minimum wage. Cleaning, food preparation, maintenance, and the time spent performing these tasks determine workers' wages. However, on the downside, skill, reputation, and experience are not given much consideration while fixing the salary. Trustworthiness, hard work, and punctuality are the main aspects of recruitment. Due to the heavy workload of domestic workers, they often fall prey to back pain, tiredness, etc. Some tasks like washing dishes and washing clothes cause wounds in the fingers of the hands of women, yet they have to do the same work. Out of these, only 3 grams of hemoglobin was found in the blood of many women whereas its normal level is 11.5 grams to 15.5 grams. It is difficult for them to get medical treatment even when their health is bad because they do not have time to spend in public hospitals and they cannot afford to pay the cost of private medical care.

In Nagpur city in the past most of the women domestic workers were full time and working with the same family created a social and psychological bond between them and the family taking the work which provided them security in case of adversity. Now, due to working in many houses, she finds work near her residence and wants that there should be a minimum distance between the workplace and her residence. This is the reason why slums are also settled around the middle-class settlements in the city. In the process of beautification of the city, whenever efforts are made to remove them from there and settle them in new houses, they do not like to go there because these settlements are far away from the workplace. Due to unorganized and piecemeal work, the wages they get depend on their bargaining power. This is the reason why there is a lot of disparity in the rates of wages.

The most common reason for hiring domestic workers in Nagpur city is free time for caregiving/emotional tasks. Additionally, "frees up time for paid work/can keep a job" is also one of the most cited reasons. Female domestic workers working in affluent localities get relatively better wages. Due to the increasing number of maidservants, the variety of work, and the huge number of job takers, the task of giving legal protection to them has become necessary in today's circumstances even though it is quite challenging. Women workers have been neglected in our labor laws anyway. This is the reason why these domestic working women have been neglected in all the laws regarding minimum wages, working hours, protection from occupational hazards, etc.

Domestic workers in Nagpur city have no bargaining power due to poverty, illiteracy, and the unskilled. They cannot decide the terms of their work. That is why not even organized. Can the unorganized people think of any kind of strike? There have been many initiatives to make laws and regulations for domestic workers. In this regard, in 2015, BJP MP Kirit Bhai Solanki introduced the Domestic Workers (Excellent Working Conditions) Bill in Parliament. But that bill is still pending. In 2011, the International Labor Organization approved Convention No. 189 to protect domestic workers. India is yet to ratify it. The 2008 Act to provide social security to unorganized laborers in the country and the 2013 Act to prevent sexual harassment at the workplace also do not recognize the rights of domestic workers. Nor has the Child Labor Act of 1986 recognized domestic work as hazardous. The 2015 bill also prohibited the use of children in domestic work. At present, there is no such law at the national level, which sets rules and regulations for domestic workers. However, states such as Maharashtra and Kerala have set up domestic workers' welfare boards.

Women domestic workers in Nagpur city work continuously from morning to evening for livelihood. Due to the heavy workload, their health is badly affected, but they are not able to take leave due to the fear of wages being cut. It also becomes difficult to get treatment in case of ill health, because it takes a long time in government hospitals and more money is spent in private hospitals. There are

lakhs of women domestic workers in the country, but their work is classified as non-productive work. They do not have any fixed wages; it completely depends on the will of the employer.

According to an estimate, the number of domestic workers in the country is between 40 lacks to one crore, and in any civilized society and modern economy, such a large population cannot be kept out of legal protection. The Government of Maharashtra implemented a separate welfare act for domestic workers in the year 2008. Named 'The Maharashtra State Domestic Workers Welfare Board Act, 2008'. The fight of domestic workers is for the right-to-work law. Not only to implement welfare facilities but the nature of this law is to deprive the rights of the workers. This act came in 2008 and the board was established in 2011. Schemes such as scholarship schemes, honorarium schemes, computer schemes, etc. were given through the board; But they were not fully implemented. This board was dissolved in between. This board was not constituted by the government. At present, the Development Officers have been deputed as Single Member Boards for Domestic Workers. Since the inception of the Single Member Board, no new scheme has been launched except Aam Aadmi Bima Yojana for domestic workers. As a result, there was very little registration of domestic workers in the Welfare Board.

Most of the women domestic workers in Nagpur city are from economically and socially backward and underprivileged communities. This social status of theirs also creates opposite situations for them. Sexual harassment, accusations of theft, showering of abuse or denial of use of toilets, etc. inside the house, and untouchability are common with them. The problem is that they do not have any organization to raise their voice against the atrocities on them. Because of this, they are not able to negotiate with the employer regarding wages and facilities. If there is violence against them by the employer or any member of their family, then there is no other forum except the complaint to the police, where they can express their views.

There are more than two crore domestic workers in the state. However, till 2014 only 36 thousand 866 workers were registered. It is unfortunate that the work of the Domestic Workers Welfare Board, established in 2011 in the state, is still only on paper. While the central government is preparing to formulate a national policy for domestic workers, it is being speculated how the sufferings and problems of the laborers are being considered by the registration in the state.

There is a social security law for workers in the unorganized sector in the country, in which domestic workers are also included, but there is no such law at the national level so that their working conditions are better and they get the right wages. Most domestic helpers start working at a very young age and are paid less than the minimum wage prescribed by the government.

Currently, Nagpur city has the largest number of part-time workers in the country. These workers are domestic workers in closed rooms. Their employment, place of employment, and working hours are not fixed. Mall culture is now increasing the number of such workers. That's why there is a need to change the definition of domestic workers. However, due to the neglect of the government in terms of work and other facilities, the situation remains the same. Abusing, mental, physical, and sexual abuse is common among these women working as domestic help.

At present, 17 thousand 55 domestic workers members have benefited till 31 August 2014 under Janashree Bima Yojana in Nagpur city. 31 children of laborers got the benefit of a scholarship. After the death of a domestic worker, her family was given Rs 30,000. There were ten applications for maternity assistance. Out of these, only four people got the help of five thousand each. Nagpur is the sub-capital of the state. Despite this, Nagpur city is lagging far behind in the strict implementation of the scheme. Due to being poor, illiterate, and unskilled, they do not have much information. The government should bring a law for these laborers as soon as possible and enforce their working hours, salary, and right to organize.

CONCLUSION:

First, initiatives will have to be taken to include domestic workers among working women. The government has announced bringing a bill for domestic workers. If domestic workers get the status of workers, they will be able to lead a dignified life. Laws have been made for them in some states, but this has not happened across the country. Apart from this, the real fight is with the feudal mindset, without

ending discrimination and oppression cannot be removed. Mainly the apathetic attitude of the state has been held responsible for the plight of domestic workers. It is because of this indifference that the owners get a free hand to use almost judicial power. This type of dictatorial power was given to the owners in the early colonial period by the British as a quasi-punitive authority, in which the owners had full right to determine the work and to force the workers to quit or re-employ the labor relationship. The attempt was declared a criminal act. Undoubtedly, continuous non-payment of wages for several months and restrictions on leaving work make domestic work akin to a form of bonded labor. Therefore, serious efforts should be made to bring domestic workers under the ambit of social security.

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