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SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF WOMEN DOMESTIC SERVANTS IN KALABURAGI CITY

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ABSTRACT: -

Like other unorganized sectors, domestic service also accommodated majority of women in India. It is estimated that more than 90 million girls and women are working as domestic servants. Like other occupations in unorganized sector, women domestic servants are facing many



of the problems and challenges such as lower wages, discriminatory wages, longer working hours, exploitation, sexual harassment from employers, etc. Due to all these problems, the women domestic servants are with poor socio-economic conditions. To study the socio-economic conditions of women domestic

servants, a sample survey of 500 women domestic servants working in Kalaburagi city of Karnataka is made. The paper described the details of the study.

KEYWORDS: Socio-economic Conditions , Women Domestic Servants , exploitation , sexual harassment .

INTRODUCTION :

Women workers in the informal economy consist of the most vulnerable working segments in society. They came from a marginalized population whose legal, economic and political status limit their ability to demand their rights. These women include domestic workers whose social and economic contributions to society are invisible to the public, the law and policies of the country. They face challenges because their work is not considered rural work so that their rights to minimum standards of decent work are continually violated. The unique feature of their work place, which is the home of their employer, makes them vulnerable to abuses and exploitation. This is because the state would always be reluctant to consider a home a workplace that they can regulate. The lack of capacity, support and unity as that in organized sector make the challenges they face doubly difficult (John, 2013).

Domestic servants are the largest sector in India after agriculture and Construction. Most of the employment in Domestic workers is migrant labour. The working hours are from sunrise to sunset. The working day of women often stretches from 14 to 16 hours, combining house work and working in others houses, women are paid very less wages. The work place is unsafe. The workers have no social security, compensation to injuries, access to drinking water, and health care. There are 20 million domestic workers mostly migrants from rural India. Regular streams of new migrants, leaving behind. They are desperate to join the army of domestic workers. They are willing to work for much less than those who are already working. They are victims of constant verbal and sexual abuse, working without any grievance redressal mechanism. Worsening their situation are the local Governments brutal eviction drives - dislocating and destabilizing the lives of the very people without whom the cities would come to a crippling halt (Madhumathi, 2013).

As per the statistics given by Fatima Sultana Begum (2015) more than 90 millions of Domestic workers are working in India. The tribal women and weaker sections of people are the main victims of Domestic Workers. However, the laws and policies are not properly protecting these Domestic workers in India. Most labour laws face the challenge of implementation but amongst the most difficult must surely be the ones linked to domestic work. To begin with, there are no clear statistics of the number of people working as paid labour in people's homes. The estimated number of domestic workers in India is 90 million but this is probably an underestimate as there has been no systematic study to document such workers throughout the country. From the data that exists, it is clear that the overwhelming majority of domestic workers are women and girls. There has been considerable documentation of the abuse young girls, in particular, suffer at the hands of their employers. Every day, changes in the economy and developmental policies are pushing more people into domestic work. With extended families being replaced by nuclear families, there is increasing demand for domestic workers.

From the above discussion that is published in various secondary literature, it is clear that, many of the women domestic servants are facing many of the problems at their work places, families and society. Hence, the present study is made to look into the socio-economic conditions of women domestic servants working in Kalaburagi city.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The present study is made:

- + To study the working conditions of the women domestic servants in Kalaburagi city.
- + To look into the status gained by women domestic servants at their own families and society.
- + To study the economic conditions of women domestic servants that is expressed in terms of wages, hours of work, wage discrimination, etc.

METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS:

The study was begun with secondary literature search and the author searched the books, research journals, web sites, etc to collect secondary data. The study is mainly field based and the author has prepared interview schedule and interviewed total 500 women domestic servants working at various areas of Kalaburagi city. Kalaburagi city is located in Hyderabad-Karnataka region of Karnataka State. The collected primary data is analyzed, interpreted and discussed as under:

Analysis, Interpretation and Discussion:

1. Age:

Age of the respondents helps to know about the level of awareness and knowledge of the respondents on different aspects such as work aspects, family, conventions, etc. Hence the information collected on the age of the respondents is presented in the following table.

Table No. 1. Age

Particulars	No's of Respondents	Percentage
Less than 18 Years	33	6.6
19-25 Years	144	28.8
26-40 Years	239	47.8
41-55 Years	76	15.2
More than 55 Years	08	1.6
Total	500	100

The age group of the respondents shows that, 239 (47.8%) are from the age group 26 to 40 years, followed by 144 (28.8%) are between 19 to 25 years, 76 (15.2%) are of the age between 41 to 55 years, 33 (6.6%) of the respondents are below the age of 18 years and only about 8 (1.6%) are above 55 years. It is emphasized

from the collected information that a great majority of the respondents are of middle age that is between 19 to 40 years.

2. Caste:

The castes of the respondents also play an important role in determining the culture, social practices and conventions in the society. Hence the information on the caste of the respondents is collected and presented in the following table.

Table No. 2. Caste

Particulars	No's of Respondents	Percentage
Scheduled Caste	208	41.6
Scheduled Tribe	25	5.0
OBC	216	43.2
Others	51	10.2
Total	500	100

The castes of the respondents revealed that, 208 (41.6%) are belonged to Scheduled Castes, 25 (5.0%) are scheduled tribes, 216 (43.2%) belongs to Other Backward Classes and the remaining 51 (10.2%) are from other castes or forward castes. It is highlighted from the table that the weaker sections such as scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward classes are dominated domestic work.

3. Marital Status:

Marital status of the respondents helps to reveal the family background of the respondents. Further, it is a major factor in assessing the family relationships among the different family members. Hence, the information collected on marital status of the respondents is presented in the following table.

Table No. 3. Marital Status

Particulars	No's of Respondents	Percentage
Unmarried/ Single	19	3.8
Married	419	83.8
Widow	51	10.2
Divorcee/ Separated	11	2.2
Total	500	100

The marital status of the respondents revealed that, 419 (83.8%) of the respondents are married and living with their husbands followed by around 51 (10.2%) are widows, 19 (3.8%) are still unmarried and the remaining 11 (2.2%) respondents are divorced and separated from their husbands. It is emphasized that a great majority of respondents are married and living with their husbands.

4. Years of Domestic Service Experience:

The nature of work of domestic servants is unskilled and don't need any education or special skills. Still it was asked to the respondents to provide information about their experience as domestic servants and the collected primary data is as under:

Table No. 4. Years of Domestic Service Experience

Particulars	No's of Respondents	Percentage
Below 5 years	191	38.2
6-10 years	232	46.4
11-20 years	67	13.4
Above 20 years	10	2.0
Total	500	100

The work experiences of women domestic servants revealed that, 232 (46.4%) are having the experience between 6 to 10 years, followed by 191 (38.2%) have the experience below 5 years, about 67 (13.4%) have the work experience between 11 to 20 years and the remaining 10 (2.0%) of the respondents have domestic work experience of more than 20 years.

5. Decision Making in Family:

Decision making in the family shows that the authority and status of persons who are making the decisions. In families, where women also participate in decision making with their husbands, then it can be said that the women have higher status compared to those families, where husband or other elders only makes the decisions. As such information on the decision making in the family was collected and presented in the following table.

Table No. 5. Decision Making in Family

Particulars	No's of Respondents	Percentage
Parents in Law & Parents	79	15.8
Husband	258	51.6
Yourself	25	5.0
Husband and Yourself	123	24.6
Any Others	15	3.0
Total	500	100

Among the total respondents covered under the study, 258 (51.6%) have stated that their husbands are making the decisions followed by, 123 (24.6%) have expressed that they are making decisions along with their husbands, about 79 (15.8%) have stated that their parents and their parents in laws are making the decisions, about 25 (5.0%) have stated that they are making the decisions on their own and the remaining only 15 (3.0%) have expressed that others are making the decisions pertaining to families of the respondents. It is surprising to note from the collected data that even though the respondents are working outside equal to men, they do not have independent power to make the decision making in their families and even major portion of the respondents do not have decisions making authority with their husbands in their families.

6. Dual Role of Working Women Leads to Conflicts and Quarrels:

Due to different aspects such as illiteracy, orthodox ideas and conventional practices, still women are restricted from going outside and working outside freely. There are restrictions for working women to a greater extent in unorganized sector from their family members. Such restrictions and work life of women leads to role conflict in the family and outside work. As a result, there are conflicts and quarrels in their families. Hence, it was asked to the respondents that whether they agree that the dual role of working women leads to conflicts and

quarrels and collected responses are tabulated as under.

Table No. 6. Dual Role of Working Women Leads to Conflicts and Quarrels

Particulars	No's of Respondents	Percentage
Agree	296	59.2
Disagree	156	31.2
Don't Know/ Can't Say	48	9.6
Total	500	100

Among all the respondents, 296 (59.2%) have agreed that the dual role of working women leads to conflicts or quarrels in the family, whereas 156 (31.2%) have not agreed that the dual role of a working women leads conflicts and quarrels in the family and the remaining 48 (9.6%) have not expressed their opinions.

7. Working Women fulfill their Husband's Socio-economic Psychological and Sexual Needs Satisfactorily:

Due to the outside work tensions, it can be generalized that the working women can't able to give proper attention to their families including their husbands. As such it may become not possible for working women to fulfill their husband's socio-economic, psychological and sexual needs satisfactorily. Hence information was collected from the respondents on the same and presented in the following table.

Table No. 7. Working Women fulfill their Husband's Socio-economic, Psychological and Sexual Needs Satisfactorily

Particulars	No's of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	389	77.8
No	111	22.2
Total	500	100

It is concluded that, 389 (77.8%) have agreed that the working women can satisfy the socio-economical, psychological and sexual needs of their husbands, whereas the remaining 111 (22.2%) have not agreed to the same. It is satisfactory to note from the above table that even though the women are working outside, majority of them are able to fulfill the socio-economic, psychological and sexual needs of their husbands satisfactorily.

8. Average Monthly Income:

Monthly income of the respondents reveals their standard of living and economic status. Of course, many of the respondents have expressed that they do not have work throughout the year. For this purpose, information on average monthly income was collected and shown in the following table.

Table No. 8. Average Monthly Income

Particulars	No's of Respondents	Percentage
Less than Rs. 2500	78	15.6
Rs. 2501 to Rs. 3500	146	29.2
Rs. 3501 to Rs. 5000	193	38.6
More than Rs. 5000	83	16.6
Total	500	100

It is observed from the above table that, only 78 (15.6%) of the respondents are getting monthly income of less than Rs. 2500, 146 (29.2%) are getting monthly income between Rs. 2501 to Rs. 3500, 193 (38.6%) are getting monthly income between Rs. 3501 to Rs. 5000 and only 83 (16.6%) are getting monthly income of more than Rs. 5000. It is surprising to emphasize that only few of the respondents are earning more than Rs. 5000 per month. Comparatively the wages earned by the respondents is very low in domestic work.

9. Daily Working Hours:

Working hours vary from work to work and employer to employer. As such, the working hours in case of unorganized sector work is not fixed. As such, the information on the working hours of the respondents in a day is collected and presented as under.

Table No. 9. Daily Working Hours

Particulars	No's of Respondents	Percentage
Less than 6 hours	16	3.2
6 to 8 hours	370	74.0
8 to 10 hours	114	22.8
More than 10 Hours	--	--
Total	500	100

Above table made it clear that, 370 (74.0%) are working for 6 to 8 hours daily followed by, 114 (22.8%) are working for 8 to 10 hours and the remaining 16 (3.2%) are working for less than 6 hours. It is interesting to note from the above table that majority of the respondents are working for 6 to 8 hours in a day and more than one-third of the respondents are also working between 8 to 10 hours in a day. It shows that the working hours for the women workers in domestic work are long.

10. Status in Family:

The status of women in general and status as domestic servants is significant to recognize in the family. The status of women domestic servants in their families may be higher as working women and in few educated families, such status of women domestic servants may be lower due to illiteracy or low-education and working labour in unorganized sector. As such it was asked to the respondents to give information about their status in their families and collected information is shown in the following table.

Table No. 10. Status in Family

Particulars	No's of Respondents	Percentage
Higher	136	27.2
Lower	84	16.8
No Change	70	14.0
Satisfactory	210	42.0
Total	500	100

The status of the respondents in their families revealed that, 201 (41.7%) are having the satisfactory status in their family as a mines' worker followed by, 133 (27.6%) responded that their status has gone high since they have started working as a domestic servants, about 80 (16.6%) are having lower status in their family and the status of the remaining 68 (14.1%) of the respondents is not changed. The status of the women domestic servants is satisfactory in the family and in few families their status is higher or lower.

11. STATUS IN SOCIETY:

Of course, the family members may give more or less satisfactory level of respect to the women domestic servants. But the status of women domestic servants as working women is significant as it counts for assessing the social status of the respondents. Hence the information on the status of the women domestic servants in the society was collected and presented in the following table.

Table No. 11. Status in Society

Particulars	No's of Respondents	Percentage
Higher	29	5.8
Lower	207	41.4
No Change	158	31.6
Satisfactory	106	21.2
Total	500	100

Among the total respondents covered under the study, 207 (41.4%) have expressed that their status is lower in the society as they are engaged in domestic works, followed by 158 (31.6%) have not experienced any change in their status, 106 (21.2%) have the satisfactory level of status in the society as a mines worker and the remaining 29 (5.6%) have responded that their status has gone high in the society. Comparatively major portion of the women domestic servants have lower status in the society, even though working outside. Further, there is no change in status due to their outside work as expressed by few respondents.

12. Wage Discrimination:

The main drawback of unorganized sector workers is wage discrimination. That is wage is not fixed for a particular work to a greater extent, the wage rates vary from employer to employer and worker to worker. Hence, the information was collected from the respondents whether they are being discriminated in payment of wages and the collected responses are tabulated as under.

Table No. 12. Wage Discrimination

Particulars	No's of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	424	84.8
No	76	15.2
Total	500	100

As stated by the women domestic servants, 424 (84.8%) are discriminated in receiving wages, whereas the remaining only 76 (15.2%) are not being discriminated in receipt of wages from their employers. An overwhelming majority of the respondents have agreed that there is wage discrimination in the domestic work, whereas the remaining only few have not agreed to the same. Wage discrimination is a greatest problem for the unorganized sector workers.

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

To conclude, women working as domestic servants are facing many of the problems. They are poor as wages earned by them are lower and discriminatory. Further, they are forced to work for long hours. Above all, the women domestic servants are facing exploitation, discrimination and sexual harassment from their employers. Hence, it is essential to curb such problems and challenges faced by women working as domestic servants. For this purpose, it is essential to increase awareness of women in domestic service on social security schemes and legislations such as the Minimum Wages Act, Maternity Benefits, Insurance Benefits, facilities to be provided under the Factories Act, Medical Care, Sickness Benefits, Employment Injury Benefit, Old Age Benefit, Disability Benefits, unemployment benefits, etc. The NGOs should take initiation to spread awareness of the rights of women workers, so that their problems are solved.

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