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## Socio-economic conditions of Women Domestic Workers in Gurgaon, Haryana

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***Abstract:** This paper examines the socio-economic conditions of women domestic workers in Gurgaon (Haryana). This research paper includes primary data collected from 60 women domestic workers in Gurgaon. Across the world domestic work is a rapidly growing source of employment for women and girls. It has been shown by Evidences that domestic work as a womanly occupation in a universal city Gurgaon. many kinds of domestic works are taken up by domestic workers within other people's homes. Most women provide domestic services for low pay, such as sweeping and cleaning, washing clothes and dishes, shopping, cooking, children and elderly care, and looking after the disabled. Based on the findings, we argue why it is important to create a comprehensive social security system for domestic workers in India. This research paper covers themes such as basic demographic features, work profile of the domestic workers nature of services, access to social security, consumption of edible items, health conditions of workers, union awareness, time use, household assets and liability, wages of domestic workers, attitude of domestic workers towards gender and domestic violent behavior.*

***Keywords:** socio-economic, domestic, worker, occupation, security, gender, system*

### **Introduction**

In this paper, we disagree why it is important to create a inclusive social security system for domestic workers in India. Domestic work is rising as an important possibility of work for women in India, one that is able to take up untrained and lowly educated women. against the background of working and living conditions of domestic workers. Domestic workers are usually women and girls who perform a variety of domestic acts within and for households. The kind of task they are very different, it changes from cooking, cleaning, and looking after

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children and sometimes they are asked to perform tasks that they shouldn't be asked to do. There are tens of millions of domestic workers all over the world from Australia, Asia, and Latin American, Europe to Africa. In some countries domestic work represents up to 10% of total employment (Domestic workers across the world: Global and regional statistics and the extent of legal protection, 2013) In this literature review I will mainly talk about domestic labor and workers, and the question I'll be answering throughout my paper is: in what ways domestic labor is diffusing nowadays and what are the problems they face? It will be divided as the following; all the subtopics all be discussing through this paper, will mainly serve the main idea and answer the question. Firstly, I'll explain the term domestic violence, and then I'll talk about the role played by the United Nations in improving the state of domestic workers. Additionally, I'll explain the diffusion of the domestic workers nowadays in the world, later I will specify it the Middle East, especially in Egypt. In addition, to make the literature review more variable I will include six interviews including two foreigner maids, two Egyptian maids, and two householders. Moreover, I'll relate to the topic with our course by talking about the book *Doméstica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence* by Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo. Finally, I'll talk precisely about migrant domestic workers and what other problems they face. Some householders treat their workers in a very bad way. Slavery becomes very much alike. Domestic workers manage sometimes to escape but some are trapped, unable to leave, and can't contact or call their families. They some times manage to claim their rights by the help of some organizations. Domestic violence is when a person tries to control or use power over someone. It can be physical, psychological, sexual or financial. In most cases, they are held by men and suffered by women. Any woman can be a victim and it can happen in any home. (Tatum, 2000) In the domestic workers field, the most common abuse is physical, financial and psychological. The physical abuse can result in physical injury and in some cases it may be a threat to life. It does not always leave visible marks or scars. Over time, things often get worse, it might include, being beaten, slapped, be hit with a stick or a belt. Financial abuse is a form of domestic violence where the abuser uses money to control someone. This strategy is used, to make sure that domestic workers can never leave and become financially independent. Psychological abuse is an emotional abuse that is very effective to destroy someone mentally. This form of abuse is as damaging as physical abuse. It often includes threats, sexual abuse or physical and being constantly criticized. Domestic workers are a very important part of the global work power. They are considered in the informal sector and are

among the most vulnerable categories of workers. Domestic workers are employed by private householders often without any appropriate and suitable employment contract. Currently, there are at least fifty-three million domestic workers worldwide, excluding child domestic workers and eighty-three percent of them are women. (Domestic workers, 2014) That number is increasing in developed countries.

This paper discusses the working and living conditions of the female domestic workers of Gurgaon. This category of workers has been chosen because it is known that the overwhelming majority of domestic workers are women who are socially and politically construed to provide a wage substitute for unused labour, which has been traditionally considered as women's work.

Although across age groups, female work participation rate is much lower than male work participation rates, in some occupations female far exceeds male. For instance, this is quite evident for the occupational category 'domestic work'. As it appears from data, domestic work seems to be a feminine occupation for which significant part of demand for labour comes from the urban sector.

In fact, discrete outcomes of this nature punctured the organic growth in organizing domestic workers, one of the reasons why domestic work remains as an occupation not entitled to rights such as minimum wage and social security. However, ongoing legislative initiatives such as Unorganized Sector Workers' Social Security Bill, which covers a broad range of security schemes for workers in the informal sector, including domestic workers, is a major break-through with a potential for desirable improvements in working and living condition of domestic workers. While pervasive deficits in working and living conditions remain scary, inducing voices of dissent against lack of volition from the state to assure decent work for domestic workers, India lags behind other nations in extending rights to domestic workers. As shown in ILO (2010a), India is yet to provide core entitlements for decent work like maternity benefit. On the other hand, 26 nations, including developed and developing countries provide 12-14 weeks of maternity leave for domestic workers. However, states, members of federal union, may fix minimum wage for domestic workers within their territory. Another important deficit is lack of social security to domestic workers in India while there have been noteworthy initiatives by other countries to provide different types of social security to domestic workers – occupational safety and health, workers' compensation for employment injuries, general health care, pension and unemployment insurance. In fact, for women engaged in domestic work, in particular in urban India, even

generating subsistence level income entails a complex process of scheduling of activities since they tend to work with multiple employers, who prefer flexible forms of labour contracts like parttime engagement of domestic workers. Unfortunately, these workers, incurring the risk of working in indecent conditions, are enmeshed in a system with excess supply of workers; they tend to offer services to relatively well-off households, who are likely to have much better availability of rights and entitlements.

We discuss fundamental socio-economic aspects of female domestic workers in urban India, with special reference to sprawling urban agglomeration at Gurgaon.

### **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:**

The regular women work force in urban area has been increased by 15 per cent over the period from 2001 to 2015. So we can argue that the rapid process of urbanization led to such an increase in the number of urban work force. Human Resources Development Report points out some common problems faced by the domestic servants which are; Deplorable wages, High level of insecurity, Illiteracy and lack of marketable skills, Lack of confidence in securing other productive jobs, Long and unregulated working hours, No paid holidays, No paid sick leave, Immense work load, No maternity benefits, Health problems and Social exploitation. Also elements of stigma of degradation are very much there is in this occupation. This stigma is the main reason for lack of standardization. Domestic service in our country is individualistic and unorganized to a certain extent and gives no norms to the workers who take it up. NGOs have an important role in creating economic organizations for them. SEWA has helped their members to form economic organizations and find a wide variety of organizational forms depending on the area, the activity and the capacity of the members. But, in our country only very few domestic workers come under such organizations. Under this situation, there arise certain questions such as what sort of people engaged in domestic service relations? What is the background of employers and domestic workers? And which are the socio economic factors responsible for choosing this occupation and thus earning low wage income? No more studies have been made to analyse the socio economic status of women domestic workers and problems faced by them. The present study is an attempt on that way.

### **OBJECTIVES OF STUDY:**

The study has been fulfilling the following objective.

- To know the demographic profile of women domestic workers.

- To know the socio-economic background of women domestic workers.
- To know the working and living conditions of women domestic workers.
- To know the work profile of women domestic workers.
- to know their problem at workplace and home

## **DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGY:**

### **STUDY AREA/ DATA COLLECTION:-**

The study has been conducted in four areas of Gurgaon city, namely Shivaji Nagar, Rajiv Nagar, DLF colony and Heritage city. The study was based on primary data collected from the domestic workers by direct interview. A schedule had been prepared by including the questions regarding their socio-economic factors. Our total sample size is 100 domestic workers were selected from City area by purposive sampling method. Samples are chosen randomly, 25 from each of the four areas mentioned above. Interviews are taken either at working place or at the residence of the domestic maids. The questionnaire that we prepared is a combination of structured and unstructured questions. To know the incidence of the respondents' life, their feelings and ideas emphasis has been given on unstructured interviews. Study are conducted to know all aspects of life of the domestic maids in details, giving due emphasis on the emotional side, which could have not been extracted by interview techniques. Since the secondary information regarding the workers was not available and this was a pilot study, we depended on purposive sampling method.

**METHODOLOGY:** Simple arithmetic tools like percentage, average etc. have been used throughout the study. Chi-square test has been executed for examining the association between wage rate and education, wage rate and age, wage rate and experience etc.

To analyse the significant of variables like age, education, marital status, experience in domestic service and health status on monthly income of workers, regression model has been fitted.

$$Y_i = B_0 + B_1 X_{1i} + B_2 X_{2i} + B_3 X_{3i} + B_4 X_{4i} + B_5 X_{5i} + U_i$$

Where,  $Y_i$  = Monthly income

$X_{1i}$  = Age

$X_{2i}$  = Education

$X_{3i}$  = Marital status

$X_{4i}$  = Experience in domestic service

$X_{5i}$  = Health status

$U_i$  = Random disturbance term.

## **PROFILE OF DOMESTIC WORKER**

As an occupation, the field of domestic work is quite diverse covering profiles such as child care, cooking, cleaning and hospitality at home. Viewing the focus of this paper, women domestic worker in urban sector, we need to lay focus on occupational profiles which are compatible with characteristics like ‘being woman’, ‘domestic work being a core activity rather than a subsidiary activity’ and ‘mainly urban based occupation’. In this section, we outline salient features of domestic workers in India, mainly demographic, socio-economic and labour market related aspects. First, we merged household and personal level data across district. Second, we did a search for domestic work related occupation profiles from National Classification of occupation (NCO) 1968. We found that eight (codes) occupational titles which carry at least some elements of paid work which substitutes household chores. Out of these, after assessing gender, nature of activities and sector–urban composition, we narrowed down our search to the occupational category ‘Domestic workers (NCO 1968 code - 531). Third, we filtered out occupational categories other than ‘domestic servant’ from the database. Finally, the database consisted of household and personal information of persons who belong to this occupation, with a sample size of 60 workers who are from different area of city. Here, we present percentage distribution of the following variables: sector, sex, age, marital status, religion, social group, educational attainment and features of employment. This Chapter deals with the Socio economic status of domestic workers. Since the sample includes both part- time workers an attempt has been made to compare the status of both with respect to each characteristic, viz; religion, marital status, role in the family, age, education, wage rate, income, savings etc. Also their housing conditions health status, working environment and their personal problems have been studied.

**CATEGORY WISE COMPOSITION:** The domestic workers were classified according to their category in table no.1. It shows that majority of them were scheduled caste and backward caste 59.32 percent of domestic workers. Scheduled tribes were 15.25 percent and others community 25.42 percent.

**TABLE NO. 1. COMMUNITY WISE DOMESTIC WORKERS**

<b>COMMUNITY</b>	<b>SAMPLE N=60</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>	<b>VALID PERCENTAGE</b>
<b>SC</b>	18	30.00	30.50
<b>BC</b>	17	28.33	28.82
<b>ST</b>	09	15.00	15.25
<b>OTHER</b>	15	25.00	25.42
<b>NO RESPONSE</b>	01	1.67	–
<b>TOTAL</b>	60	100	100

**RELIGION WISE COMPOSITION:-**

The domestic servants were classified according to their religion in table no. 2. It shows that majority of them were Hindus 81.36 percent. All other religions (including Sikh, islam, jain, Christian etc.) constitute 18.64 per cent only.

**TABLE NO. 2. RELIGION WISE DOMESTIC WORKERS**

<b>RELIGION</b>	<b>SAMPLE N=60</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>	<b>VALID PERCENTAGE</b>
<b>HINDUISM</b>	48	80.00	81.36
<b>SIKHISM</b>	01	1.66	1.70
<b>ISLAM</b>	05	8.33	8.48
<b>JAINISM</b>	01	1.66	1.70
<b>CHRISTIAN</b>	02	3.33	3.38
<b>OTHER</b>	02	3.33	3.38
<b>NO RESPONSE</b>	01	1.66	–
<b>TOTAL</b>	60	100	100

**AGE COMPOSITION:** Age composition of domestic workers is shown in table no. 3. Most of the workers (79.66 per cent) included in the age group between 19 and 54. Only 10.17 percent domestic workers came under the age group of below 18 and 10.17 percent servants belonged to the old age group of above 55. However, majority of the sample servants were constituted by young or middle aged persons

**TABLE NO. 3. AGE OF DOMESTIC WORKERS**

<b>AGE GROUP</b>	<b>SAMPLE N=60</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>	<b>VALID PERCENTAGE</b>
<b>0-18</b>	06	10.00	10.17
<b>19-36</b>	22	36.67	37.29
<b>37-54</b>	25	41.67	42.37
<b>55-60</b>	02	3.33	3.39
<b>60-ABOVE</b>	04	6.67	6.78
<b>NO RESPONSE</b>	01	1.66	–
<b>TOTAL</b>	60	100	100

**MERITAL COMPOSITION:**

Merital status of domestic workers is shown in table no. 4. The sample consisted of married, unmarried, widowed and divorcees. It shows that majority of them were married (57.15 percent), unmarried domestic workers constituted 19.65 percent, and the remaining 23.2 per cent were widows or divorcees.

**TABLE NO. 4. MERITAL STATUS OF DOMESTIC WORKERS**

<b>MERITAL STATUS</b>	<b>SAMPLE N=60</b>	<b>PERCENT AGE</b>	<b>VALID PERCENTAGE</b>
<b>MARRIED</b>	32	53.34	57.15
<b>UNMARRIED</b>	11	18.33	19.65
<b>WIDOW</b>	08	13.34	14.28
<b>DIVORCES/ SEPRATED</b>	05	8.33	8.92
<b>NO RESPONSE</b>	04	6.66	–
<b>TOTAL</b>	60	100	100

**EDUCATION:**

Domestic servants are classified according to their education in table no.5. In this table 16.95 percent of them were illiterates and 44.07 percent had got only primary education and 23.73

percent is got upper-primary education .we can see that workers who were educated at S.S.L.C. or above constituted 15.25 percent of the total. Though 40 percent of the workers were educated at lower primary level, they were not able to read, write and comprehend things well.

The workers who were educated at S.S.L.C. or above constituted 8 per cent of the total. However, it has been found out that 18 persons were satisfied with their low level education while the others were not satisfied. They cited certain reasons for their lower education, viz; financial problems and other family problems. But 34 per cent of the servants were educated at a lower level because of their unwantedness. The workers educated at S.S.L.C. or above, were interested to continue their studies. But the financial difficulties hindered them. However, most of them have realized the importance of getting well educated. They responded that if they had a good education, they could get a better job. About 80 per cent of them were interested for further education, but they had no time to spent on that because of their work load.

**TABLE NO. 5. EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF DOMESTIC WORKERS**

<b>EDUCATIONAL STATUS</b>	<b>SAMPLE N=60</b>	<b>PERCENT AGE</b>	<b>VALID PERCENTAGE</b>
<b>ILLITERATE</b>	10	16.67	16.95
<b>1<sup>st</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup></b>	26	43.34	44.07
<b>6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup></b>	14	23.34	23.73
<b>9<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup></b>	8	13.33	13.56
<b>11<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup></b>	01	1.66	1.69
<b>DEGREE LEVEL</b>	0	00	00
<b>NO RESPONSE</b>	01	1.66	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	60	100	100

**Occupational and Wage structure:**

Domestic workers had to do the work such as cleaning the house, washing clothes, cleaning bath rooms, washing utensils, fetching articles from the shops etc. All part-time servants in

the sample were doing almost all works excluding kitchen work in the houses. So we could not classify them according to the nature of their works. Most of the part-time servants (81.35 percent) had served in more than one house in a day. About 71 per cent of them had worked in two or three homes daily. There were 10.17 percent of the servants who had worked in 4 or 5 houses daily. This is clear from table no.6.

**TABLE NO. 6. NUMBER OF HOUSES PER DAY SERVED BY DOMESTIC WORKERS**

<b>HOUSES</b>	<b>SAMPLE N=60</b>	<b>PERCENT AGE</b>	<b>VALID PERCENTAGE</b>
<b>1</b>	11	18.34	18.65
<b>2</b>	23	38.34	38.98
<b>3</b>	19	31.67	32.20
<b>4</b>	04	6.66	6.78
<b>5</b>	2	3.33	3.39
<b>NO RESPONSE</b>	1	1.66	–
<b>TOTAL</b>	60	100	100

### **WAGE STRUCTURE**

Monthly income of the domestic workers varied between the range of Rs.500 to Rs.4000 in which 71 percent of them was under the income group of 500 rupees to 2000 rupees. There was only 29 percent of the workers having an income of more than 2000 rupees per month. Table no. 7 reveals this fact.

**TABLE NO. 7. WAGES (MONTHLY) OF DOMESTIC WORKERS**

<b>WAGES</b>	<b>SAMPLE N=60</b>	<b>PERCENT AGE</b>	<b>VALID PERCENTAGE</b>
<b>LESS THAN 500</b>	03	05.00	5.09
<b>501-1000</b>	06	10.00	10.17
<b>1001-1500</b>	21	35.00	35.59
<b>1501-2000</b>	12	20.00	20.34
<b>2001-2500</b>	6	10.00	10.17
<b>2501-3000</b>	5	8.34	8.48
<b>3001-3500</b>	3	05.00	5.08
<b>3501-4000</b>	2	3.34	3.39
<b>ABOVE 4000</b>	1	1.66	1.69
<b>NO RESPONSE</b>	1	1.66	–
<b>TOTAL</b>	60	100	100

### **RIGHT TO WORK OF FEMALE DOMESTIC WORKERS**

It has already been mentioned that in most of the states of India, the domestic work is still unrecognised. So the domestic workers are deprived by the state law of occupational benefits including regular and fair wages, paid holidays, safe conditions of work, and pension, among others. This category of work has been totally ignored in the Unorganised Sectors Social Security Bill, 2005. The only few exceptions are the states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka. Karnataka became the first state to fix a minimum living wage for domestic workers in 2004. It was fixed at Rs.1600 per month for an eight-hour day of domestic work. But that cannot be called a living wage. In Tamil Nadu, domestic workers are recognized as part of the unorganised sector and can also form work unions. In Maharashtra, after intense lobbying, the State Labour Board issued guidelines for regularising the services of domestic workers. The service rule includes paid leave, travel allowance, fairer wages, etc. But this is criticized on the ground that the guidelines fail to tackle the problem of absenteeism. But in Haryana no proper guidelines have been framed for the female domestic workers. As regards the working and living conditions of female domestic workers, two distinct components have to be considered: physical conditions at the workplace and the timings of work. The physical conditions of the workplace include adequate space, ventilation, illumination, temperature, hygiene, and so on, all of which can affect the safety of a worker. The domestic workers of Gurgaon are almost free from these hazards because most of them are working in furnished

apartments with all types of facilities. But most of the local domestic workers reside in the slum areas where they have to face poor housing conditions, exposure to excessive heat or cold, diseases, air and sometimes even water pollution. Lack of proper health education can also be observed among the domestic workers. In addition, they face gender discrimination in their own homes, which makes these women more vulnerable to various diseases. The prospect of high out-of-pocket medical expenditure also mostly prevents them from visiting doctors even when they need serious medical attention. Thus the domestic workers are also often exposed to different types of health hazards due to inferior living conditions in their residential places rather than workplaces.

The employment status of a domestic worker is always insecure. There is no legal contract between the employer and the employee, though the monthly salary of the worker is usually decided through bargaining between the employer and the employee. The bargaining power of the employee and the employer is not the same and totally depends on the supply of domestic workers in that locality. For example, due to a huge supply of domestic workers from the nearby fridabad district in the southern part of Gurgaon, the bargaining power of the employer is much higher here than in the northern part of Gurgaon where the supply of domestic workers is comparatively less. This is reflected in the salaries and nature of work in those two regions of Gurgaon. The monthly salary of a part-time domestic worker is around Rs.800 to 1000 in South Gurgaon whereas in North Gurgaon, it is around Rs.1000-1500. Still intra-region migration is not prominent among the domestic workers, as they generally prefer to work in a particular locality.

As regards the criterion of decent work, the working hours of a full-time worker should be 40 hours per week, with provision for overtime (Blackett, 1996). Considering eight hours as the standard number of working hours in a particular day with five working days in a week, it was observed from the field survey that most of the domestic workers are working more than eight hours in a day, and sometimes even seven days in a week. So they fail to enjoy any 'labour standard'. Most of the part-time workers in Gurgaon work for less than eight hours a day but that is out of choice. The labour law (recommended by ILO in 1996) is violated even in the case of the employment pattern of both part-time and full-time domestic workers. Following Blackett (1996), fixing of a minimum wage is necessary because domestic workers are typically unorganised or are associated with a union that is not legally recognised, are therefore usually unable to bargain collectively. In Haryana, the government has recommended that the minimum wage of an unorganised worker should be at least

Rs.280 per day or Rs. 35 per hour. The domestic workers of Gurgaon are also not satisfied with their present salaries or wages. They often complain of imposition of extra work burden by the employers and of delayed payment. They also claim that some employers deduct wages for absence from work while others subject them to verbal abuse. Lack of alternative employment opportunities, fear of deportation, financial obligations to their families, and their acute dependence on the available incomes force them to accept whatever salary and working conditions are ultimately decided by the employer who always enjoys higher bargaining power than the employee.

## **CONCLUSION**

Women domestic workers belonged to the economically disadvantaged group and most of them lived in slums areas or Scheduled caste colonies. There was not uniformity in their wage structure and their wage level was very low. However, they were compelled to do this job because of lower education or poor financial background. They were exploited at their working place and in some cases, even at their own homes. In this context, it is necessary to make an awareness of the exploitation faced by the domestic servants and inspire them to organize themselves for protecting their rights and also to work for implementing enactment of laws by the government. The domestic workers should also be encouraged to form a formal domestic workers' union, who can look after their interests. In addition, ensuring safety regulations, and provision of paid leave, and of housing and medical facilities are necessary for improving the working and living conditions of the domestic workers. A micro-credit programme should be developed for these workers, which can help them earn extra incomes by investing credit in any income augmenting activity after taking the funds from her respective group. This may help a domestic worker ward off any type of exploitation that she presently faces in the course of her work. But most importantly, domestic workers should be included under the State-assisted scheme of Provident Fund for unorganised workers. Only the implementation of these practices can help improve the economic and working conditions of the female domestic workers of gurgaon. Then only they can live with status and dignity equal to that of other members of the society.

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