

# A STUDY ON THE PROBLEMS AND WORKING CONDITIONS OF UNORGANISED WORKERS WITH REFERENCE TO DOMESTIC WORKERS IN TIRUNELVELI CITY

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**ABSTRACT:** A domestic worker seems to be the last resort for the poor and disadvantage people. Domestic worker comprise a significant part of the global workforce in informal employment and are among the most vulnerable groups of workers. They work for private households, often without clear terms of employment, unregistered in any book, and excluded from the scope of labour legislation. Currently there are at least 67 million domestic workers worldwide, not including child domestic workers and this number is increasing steadily in developed and developing countries. 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. In this paper A Study on the Problems and Working Conditions of Unorganised Workers with Reference to Domestic Workers in Tirunelveli City. The aim of the study is to examine the problems faced by unorganized women domestic workers, to study the reasons why women domestic workers enter into labour market, to know the occupational diseases of women domestic workers, to analysis the working conditions of women domestic workers, to suggest the recommendations for uplift the status of women domestic workers. The study based on primary and secondary data. The paper deals A Study on the Problems and Working Conditions of Unorganised Workers with Reference to Domestic Workers in Tirunelveli City, government policy measures and suggestion for improvement of the unorganised workers refers to domestic workers.

**Keywords:** Domestic workers, Health, disease, wage, working conditions, etc.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Women in our society have so far had only a secondary status. Female domestic workers are a neglected group among the unorganized sector. For decades they have been exploited and only in recent years NGOs are taking up the cause of women domestic workers. They are unorganized workers; there are no labour laws to protect them or to set out their service conditions. Lacking unionization, they are left to the mercy of the employers. There are no laws to fix their wages; they have no basic rights, no amenities or social security, not even leave or a paid holiday as in any other jobs. They are also denied rights to health care, education, justice, human dignity and respect of all unorganized labour, the domestic worker is closest to us in our homes. They are unorganized workers; there are no labour laws to protect them or to set out their service conditions. Lacking unionization, they are left to the mercy of the employers. There are no laws to fix their wages; they have no basic rights, no amenities or social security, not even leave or a paid holiday as in any other jobs. They are also denied rights to health care, education, justice, human dignity and respect of all unorganized labour, the domestic worker is closest to us in our homes.

The unorganized sectors are facing many problems such as unemployment, low wages, and irregular payment of wages, non availability of social security and welfare facilities, and exploitative working conditions. The unorganized women workers particularly domestic workers are facing several problems, such as poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, sickness, low wages and irregular payment of wages. Their socio-economic and health conditions are actually bad. This study is an attempt to assess the work related problems faced by unorganized domestic women workers in Tirunelveli city. Being a research based on survey method, it presents the problems faced by the unorganized women workers engaged in different occupation. The working condition and problems faced by the unorganized domestic workers are grouped into personal, financial, work related and social.

### Definition of Domestic Workers:

Pertaining to the house or home. A person employed by a household to perform various servant duties. Any household servant, such as a maid or butler. Relating to a place of birth, origin, or domicile.

## II. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

People who are engaged in Domestic work are facing serious problems including poverty, health hazard, family problems, poor housing facilities, insufficient nutritious food, unhygienic the environment, illiteracy, physical stress and debts etc. The researcher is keen to learn about the problems and working conditions of unorganized women workers in Tirunelveli city. The findings of the study will be useful to identify the working conditions and problems are faced by the unorganized domestic women workers which will help the government to formulate policy to improve their life.

### III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Williams (2010)** highlights the role that government provision, funding or support for child care can play in facilitating and promoting women's engagement in the paid labour market by relieving their unpaid care burden.

**Rajadhyaksha (2011)** It has also been working towards the acceptance by individual states of equal rights legislation and has gained some ground in states such as Kerala, Rajasthan, Bihar and Maharashtra, which include the Minimum Wage Act (ibid). However, these acts and programs are only being implemented slowly, and in some cases, not at all: government registration of domestic workers into the formal labour system, in which their rights and entitlements are guaranteed, has yet to begin.

**Linda Burnham Nik Theodore (2012)** opines that the survey revealed that substandard working conditions are pervasive in the domestic work industry. Wage rates are low, the work is often hazardous, and workers rarely have effective recourse to improve substandard conditions.

A study is conducted by **Dey Soumi (2014)** on domestic work is undervalued. They are not recognized as workers as their effort does not take place in a factory or an administrative center or organization, but inside a home. Their performance does not justify to labour market values. The home is not acceptable as a formal workplace, even more as the domestic workers work in several residences; it is difficult to claim any rights or privileges as formal workers. Moreover, occupational health and safety for domestic workers will be difficult to achieve.

### IV. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study intends to pursue the following objectives:

- To examine the problems faced by unorganized women domestic workers.
- To study the reasons why women domestic workers enter into labour market.
- To know the occupational diseases of women domestic workers.
- To analysis the working conditions of women domestic workers.
- To suggest the recommendations for uplift the status of women domestic workers.

### V. METHODOLOGY

The Study on Problems and Working Conditions of Unorganised Workers with Reference to Domestic Workers in Tirunelveli City is based on primary data. Collected from questionnaire method through the respondents. Random sampling is used to collect the primary information from the respondents. A random of 100 samples selected from the study area to analysis problems and working conditions of unorganised workers with reference to domestic workers in Tirunelveli City. The secondary data is collected from various books, journals, articles and e-resources.

### VI. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF STUDY

**Table 1. Age wise classification of the Respondents**

Sl.No	Age	No. of Respondents	Percentage %
1	Below 20	5	5
2	21 – 40	45	45
3	41 – 60	35	35
4	Above 61	15	15
Total		100	100

Source: Primary data

From the above table 1. explains that 5% of the respondents belong to the age group Below 20 years of age, 45% of the respondents belong to the age group 21-40 years of age, 35 % of the respondents belong to the age group 41-60 years of age and the remaining 15% of the old people come under the age group of above 61 years.

**Table 2. Educational wise classification of the Respondents**

Sl.No	Educational Level	No. of Respondents	Percentage %
1	Illiterate	26	26
2	Below Secondary	48	48
3	Secondary	25	25
4	Higher Secondary	1	1
Total		100	100

Source: Primary data

The above table 2. presented that 26% of the respondents are under the category of illiterate, 48% of the respondents are under the category of below secondary, 25% of the respondents are under the category of Secondary, 1% of the respondents are under the category of Higher Secondary.

**Table 3. Marital Status wise classification of the Respondents**

Sl.No	Marital Status	No. of Respondents	Percentage %
1	Married	62	62
2	Unmarried	21	21
3	Widow	17	17
Total		100	100

Source: Primary data

According to this table 3. 62% of the respondents are married, 21% of the respondents are unmarried and 17% of the respondents are widow in the study area.

**Table 4. Family Size of the Respondents**

Sl.No	Size of Family	No. of Respondents	Percentage %
1	1 to 3 members	51	51
2	4 to 6 members	28	28
3	More than 6 members	21	21
Total		100	100

Source: Primary data

From the above table 4. reveals that the 51% of the respondents are have 1 to 3 members, 28% of the respondents are have 4 to 6 members, 21% of the respondents are have more than 6 members.

**Table 5. Earning member of family of the Respondents**

Sl.No	Earning Members	No. of Respondents	Percentage %
1	One	62	62
2	Two	24	24
3	Three	12	12
4	More than Three	2	2
Total		100	100

Source: Primary data

From the above table 5. explain that the 62% of the respondents are have one earning member in their family, 24% of the respondents are have two earning members in their family, 12% of the respondents are have three earning members in their family and 2% of the respondents are have more than three earning members in their family

**Table 6. Reason for taking up domestic work of the Respondents**

Sl.No	Reasons	No. of Respondents	Percentage %
1	Economic Reason	58	58
2	Bread Winner	12	12
3	Safe Work Environment	12	12
4	Non – Marketable skill	8	8
5	Flexible working hours	10	10
Total		100	100

Source: Primary data

According to the above table 6. explain that 58% of the respondents are have selected domestic work due to economic reason like, poverty unemployment are the basic reason for this attitude, 12% of the respondents are have selected domestic work due to bread winner because they have no other sources, 12% of the respondents are have selected domestic work due to safe work environment, 8% of the respondents are have selected domestic work due to non-marketable skill, 10% of the respondents are have selected domestic work due to flexible working hours.

**Table 7. Nature of Employment of the Respondents**

Sl.No	Nature	No. of Respondents	Percentage %
1	Full Time	57	57
2	Part Time	43	43
Total		100	100

Source: Primary data

In this above table 7. shows that 57% of the respondents are have work in full time, 43% of the respondents are have work in part time

**Table 8. Nature of Hours worked of the Respondents**

Sl.No	Working Hours	No. of Respondents	Percentage %
1	1 – 3 Hours	24	24
2	4 – 6 Hours	11	11
3	7 – 9 Hours	8	8
4	Full Time	57	57
Total		100	100

Source: Primary data

It is clear from the table 8. that 24% of the respondents work for 1-3 hours per day, 11% of the respondents work for 4-6 hours per day, 8% of the respondents work for 7-9 hours per day and 57% of the respondents work on full time basis.

**Table 9. Income of the Respondents**

Sl.No	Income	No. of Respondents	Percentage %
1	Less than 2000	20	20
2	2001 – 4000	11	11
3	4001 – 6000	27	27
4	More than 6000	42	42
Total		100	100

Source: Primary data

The above table 9. shows that 20% of the respondents earn their monthly income less than 2000, 11% of the respondents earn 2001-4000 as their monthly income, 27% of the respondents earn 4001 - 6000 as their monthly income, 42% of the respondents earn more than 6000.

**Table 10. Expenditure Pattern of the Respondents**

Sl.No	Expenditure	Percentage %
1	House Rent	26.6
2	Grocery	50.9
3	Clothing	0.8
4	Loan Repayment	9.8
5	Education	10.4
6	Health	0.3
7	Savings	0.7
8	Miscellaneous	0.5
Total		100

Source: Primary data

The above table 10. shows that 26.6% of the respondents of their income for paying the house rent, 50.9% of the respondents of their income on grocery items, 0.8% of the respondents of their income for clothing, 9.8% of the respondents of their income is spent for the purpose of repayment of loan, 10.4% of the respondents of their income for education of their children, 0.3% of the respondents of their income for Health, only 0.7% of the respondents of their income for savings and 0.5% of the respondents of their income for paying miscellaneous expenditure.

**Table 11. Experience of the Respondents**

Sl. No	Experience	No. of Respondents	Percentage %
1	Less than 5 years	27	27
2	6 – 10 years	34	34
3	11 – 20 years	24	24
4	More than 20 years	15	15
Total		100	100

Source: Primary data

From the above table 11. reveals that the 27% of the respondents are have less than 5 years of experience, 34% of the respondents are have 6-10 years of experience, 24% of the respondents are have 11-20 years of experience and 15% of the respondents are have more than 20 years of experience.

**Table 12. Occupational Disease of the Respondents**

Sl.No	Disease	No. of Respondents	Percentage %
1	Back pain / Leg pain	17	17
2	Skin disease	4	4
3	Anemia	16	16
4	Wheezing	15	15
5	Ulcer	14	14
6	Rheumatic Problem	9	9
7	Other Disease	12	12
8	No Disease	13	13
Total		100	100

Source: Primary data

In this above table12. shows that 17% of the respondents are have back and leg pain, 4% of the respondents are have skin disease, 16% of the respondents are have anemia, 15% of the respondents are have wheezing, 14% of the respondents are have ulcer, 9% of the respondents are have rheumatic problem and 12% of the respondents are have other disease.

**Table 13. Problems of the Respondents**

Sl.No	Problems	Percentage %	Ranking
1	Lack of job security	11	V
2	Sexual exploitation	15	III
3	Abuse	17	II
4	Poor wage	25	I
5	Heavy workload	13	IV
6	Long duration of work	4	VIII
7	Occupation disease	8	VI
8	Lack of leave	5	VII
9	Lack of medical facility	2	IX
	Total	100	

Source: Primary data

It is clear from the table 13. reveals that lack of job security is a major problem for 11% percent of the respondents, 15% of the respondents are started that sexual exploitation is their chief problem, 17% of the respondents are consider abuse as an acute problem, 25% of the respondents are says the poor wage is the basic problem, Heavy workload seems to be a major problem of 13% of the respondents, long duration of the work is a crucial problem for 4% of the respondents, occupational disease seems to be a great threat for 8% of the respondents, lack of leave facility is the biggest problem for 5% of the respondents and lack of medical facility is the biggest problem for 2% of the respondents in domestic workers in the study area.

From the above table 13. is the outcome of Garrett ranking calculation. In order to identify the important factors which were considered by problems are faced domestic workers in their area, the Garrett ranking technique is adopted. While apply this technique 9 important factors were given to the respondents in the form of statement and they were asked to rank them. In this analysis it is identified that the highly viewed problems among the domestic workers are poor wage problems, abuse problems and sexual problems and they secured the ranks of first, second and third. The feebly inferred issues are Heavy workload problems, lack of job security problems occupation disease problems and lack of leave and they secured the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh ranks. Rest of Long duration of work and lack of medical secured eighth and ninth place. The ranks obtained through the Garrett ranking technique provide that the crucial issues are poor wage problems, abuse problems and the sexual exploitation problems.

## VII. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- ❖ Majority of the domestic works in the study area belong to the age group of 21-40 years.
- ❖ The study shows that most of the domestic workers are educated below secondary level.
- ❖ It was found out that 62% of the respondents are married.
- ❖ Most of the respondents (51%) have 1 to 3 members in their family.
- ❖ It is clear from the study that most of the respondents are (62%) have one earning member in their family.
- ❖ 58% of the women domestic workers have taken up domestic work mainly due to economic reason.
- ❖ The study shows that 57% of the respondents are have work in full time, 43% of the respondents are have work in part time.
- ❖ It was found out that most of the domestic workers work for full time.
- ❖ The personal income of most of the domestic workers range from more than 6000 per month.
- ❖ The study shows that huge portion of their income on rent and grocery. 26.6% of the respondents of their income for paying the house rent, 50.9% of the respondents of their income on grocery items.
- ❖ The study shows that mostly 17% of the respondents are have back and leg pain, 4% of the respondents are have skin disease, 16% of the respondents are have anemia, 15% of the respondents are have wheezing, 14% of the respondents are have ulcer, 9% of the respondents are have rheumatic problem and 12% of the respondents are have other disease.
- ❖ In this analysis it is identified that the highly viewed problems among the domestic workers are poor wage problems, abuse problems and sexual problems and they secured the ranks of first, second and third. The feebly inferred issues are Heavy workload problems, lack of job security problems occupation disease problems and lack of leave and they secured the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh ranks. Rest of Long duration of work and lack of medical secured eighth and ninth place.

## VIII. SUGGESTIONS

- ❖ A separate act should be passed by the Government of Tamilnadu to regulate the employment of domestic workers.
- ❖ The domestic workers in Tirunelveli City should create awareness among themselves to form Union so that they could fight for their problems.
- ❖ Minimum wages of domestic workers should be fixed by the Government on the basis of cost of living index in Tirunelveli city and the employers should be compelled to contribute towards Provident Fund and Gratuity benefit of the workers.
- ❖ Maternity leave should be provide to the women domestic workers.
- ❖ The domestic workers should compulsory take insurance policy at least for a small amount.
- ❖ The employers should be instructed by the labour office to pay the remuneration of domestic workers through bank or post office.

## IX. CONCLUSION

The domestic workers remain the most exploited even after five decades of independence. Women workers have dual responsibility. On one hand they have to look after their children and managing the affairs of their house and on the other hand they have to manage their occupation. As most of the women are going for any work to fetch some income to the family, they are facing a lot of problems financially, socially and work related too. If the domestic workers are given the same status as of regular workers, there will be betterment in their working conditions which in turn would lift their status in the society. This study exposed the problems and working conditions of unorganised workers with special reference to domestic workers in Tirunelveli city.

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