



Socio Economic Conditions Of The Domestic Workers Of The Slum Areas Of Kharagpur Municipality

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ABSTRACT – Domestic workers in most parts of India are still unrecognized. The domestic workers minimize their identities due to the extreme stigmatization of their occupation. Domestic workers are never satisfied with their living and working conditions because they are often exploited in the name Job. The domestic workers are in a vulnerable situation having limited access to human and physical capital which acts as a major constraint in the way of better jobs or proper growth or to be in a self- employed situation. This report is based on the workload and stresses of domestic workers in the slum areas of Kharagpur Municipality. This paper advocates the adoption of specific International Labour Standard and Promotes decent work for domestic workers along with social protection.

KEYWORDS - Domestic Workers, Domain, Harassment, Exploitation, Unorganized sector, Stress, Vulnerability, Campaigns, Policy, Eviction.

INTRODUCTION - Unorganized sector always play a vital role in terms of providing employment opportunities to large segments of the workforce in India. Near about 92% of the total employment in the Indian economy during the period 1999-2000 was accounted for by the unorganized informal sector (NSSO 55th round 1999-2000). In west Bengal 89% male workers and 94% female workers were organized workers. Domestic work is not recognized as Labour. Specific regulations for such work are in most of countries either nonexistent or not applied. Domestic workers therefore have little legal or social protections. As a result they are exploited ill-paid and in some cases not even paid at all. Because of little economic social and cultural recognition domestic workers are accorded little respect; they suffer from a lack of self-esteem and are often dispirited. Child domestic workers, particularly girls are common in many developing countries.

STUDY AREA – Kharagpur is one of the most important towns in Bengal and it is the biggest municipal town on the district of Paschim Medinipur. Kharagpur Municipality first started in 1954 with five wards now it is expanded up to 30 wards. The area of the town is now 3558 sq. Km with population about 207984 in 2001 census. Kharagpur came into existence in the first decade of the present country as a railway settlement. Kharagpur is one of the most important Railway Junctions in the Eastern Regions. This town is linked to south western part of India by N.H 6. Such this location makes it is a very important character for trade and commerce and Industrial activities. Kharagpur growth was mainly from two occupational areas transportation and trading in agricultural products. One of the basic factors for urbanization of kharagpur was therefore agriculture. Transport and trade caused the stiff rise in the city's population. Thus the town is very higher order of education, health, culture and public and semipublic use. So development projects are implemented in this area to meet the basic need of urban life.

OBJECTIVES –

The Objectives of the present work are as follows :

- To assess their work load.
- To examine their working environment as well as family environment.
- To appraise their physical and mental health status.
- To realize their problems and bring out some proposal for their betterment of their future.

HYPOTHESIS – The domestic workers, who are mainly women with poor educational background and unorganized in nature, are much unaware about their rights and their future generations are also victimized and cannot enjoy a better status in the society. The present study will try to establish this real problem.

RESEARCH METHOD –

- (i) Pre Field Survey
- (ii) Field Survey
- (iii) Post Field Survey: After the questionnaire survey the data will be arranged

systematically. By using standard statistical and cartographic techniques those information's will be analyzed and ultimately conclusion will be drawn on the basis of the result.

REVIEW OF THE PAST LITERATURE – The handbook “The Right to Unite” A handbook on Domestic Worker Rights across “ASIA” written by Philippa Samles, captures the contexts of ten centuries in the region in relation to domestic worker rights. This handbook clearly indicate the disadvantages and discrimination that domestic worker including foreign domestic worker face. Bipul Hazarika, Saswata Ghosh, Aparajita Chattopadhyaya, Amlan Majumdar and Sunit Kumar in their collaborative work published as “Women Domestic Worker's Their Life, Problem and Dream” portrayed the working and living environment of the domestic

workers. Amit Kundu In his paper “conditions of work and rights of the female Domestic Workers of Kolkata” did a through micro level study to investigate the conditions of work and rights of the female domestic workers of Kolkata by dividing the sample domestic workers in to two parts Part time and Full time workers. The West Bengal Govt. also deprived them from getting the benefit of state assisted scheme of provident fund of unorganized workers. The book “House Girls Remember Domestic Workers ” edited by Margaret Rodman, Daviela, Kracmer, Lissmat, Bolton and Jean Tarisesei University of “Hawaii” press Honolulu, is based on the same topic. Invisible Servitude: An In depth study on Domestic workers in the world. The paper “Female labour participation in Rural and urban India : Does housewives’ work count?” written by Wendy Olsen and Smita Mehta has described the complete situation levels is caused by a mixture of economic and cultural factors.

PHYSICAL ASPECT IN AND AROUND THE STUDY AREA - Owing to its geographical position Paschim Medinipur is one of the most varied as regards physical aspects. The North and North- West embrace a position of eastern fringe of Chotonagpur Plateau and consists of hard laterite formations. The eastern and south –eastern portions have been formed out of the alluvial deposits. To the west the district is undulating reminiscent of the high lands of central India.

- **LITHOLOGY**: In Paschim Medinipur district the parent rock is a mixture of metamorphic rocks of rudimentary origin and igneous rocks both basic and acidic. In the present study area maximum area is covered with lateritic track.
- **SURFACE CONDITIONS**: Elevations of the district ranges from more than 300mt to less than 10ft. The present day study area kharagpur municipality has an elevation between 10 to 50 Mt. It contains mostly flat surface.
- **DRAINAGE** : There are many perennial and non-perennial river flow in the district. They are mainly Silabati, Tamal and Kubai, kansabati, Keleghai, Subarnarekha.
- **CLIMATE**: The climate is characterized by aggressive dry heat in hot weather and short cold weather and a moderate rainfall.
- **SOIL**: Laterite the characteristics formations of the districts occupies a large part. In the present study mainly two types of soils are found Laterite and Older Alluvium.

POPULATION & FAMILY TYPE - In the 2011 census Kharagpur urban Agglomeration had a population of 293,719 out of which 150,487 were male and 143,323 were females. The survey shows that 56% family is nuclear, joint family is 32%, 8% is the extended and 4% family is single headed.

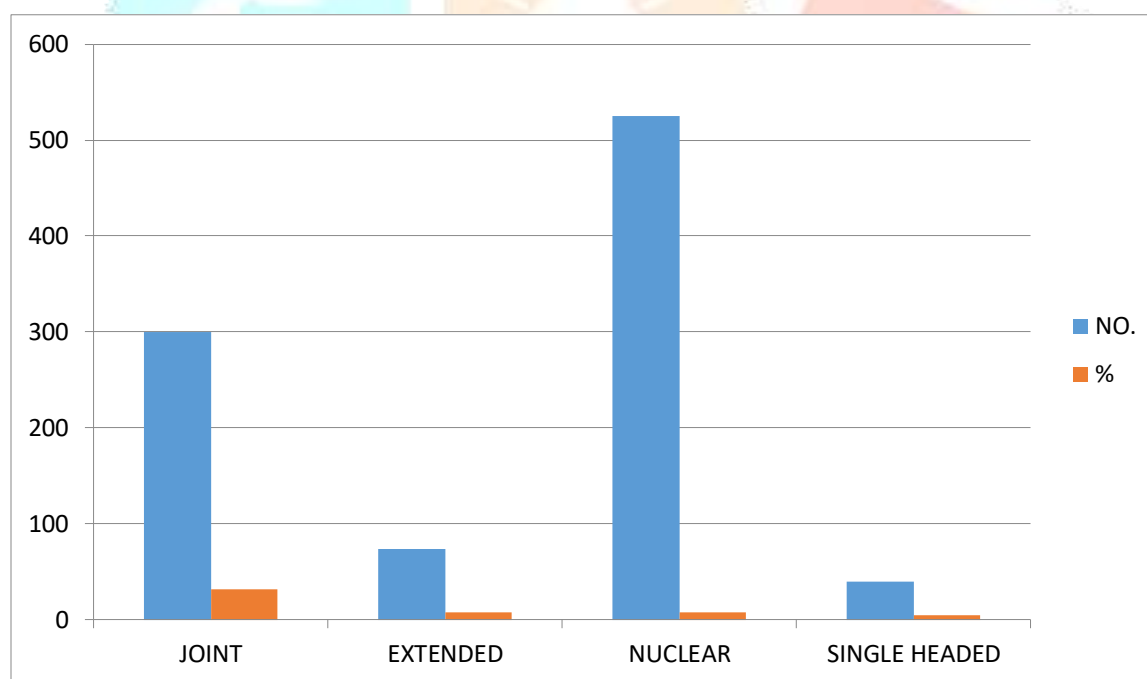
TABLE NO. 1

FAMILY TYPE

JOINT	EXTENDED	NUCLEAR	SINGLE HEADED	TOTAL
300	74	525	40	935
31.95	55.51	7.88	4.26	100

Source: Household Survey (Random Method)

FIGURE NO.1



SEX RATIO - The age sex pyramid of the concerned area does not confirm the typical pyramid structure of the developing countries.

TABLE NO.2

AGE STRUCTURE

AGE GROUP	MALE %	FEMALE %
0-5	4.40	2.87
5-15	9.54	9.23
15-30	17.09	19.31
30-45	10.57	11.85
45-60	5.96	4.53
ABOVE 60	2.40	1.50
TOTAL	49.90	50.10

Source: Household Survey (Random Method)

LITERACY & DROP OUT– If we look at the literacy level 45.28 % of respondent are totally illiterate 6.70% just knows to write their name. Only 15.70% have gone to primary school while 16.42% have gone to junior school. 9.355 % have crossed the higher secondary level of education and 10.61% reach up graduation. So most of them are illiterate or are just literate. Insufficient funds are the main reasons behind the drop outs which is in 56% of cases. Due to social problems 32.95% and for economic causes 55.58% drops out.

A CASE STUDY OF DOMESTIC WORKER - Domestic work is not recognized as Labour. Specific regulations for such work are in most of countries are either non-existent or not applied. Because domestic workers are accorded little respect ; they suffer from a lack of self-esteem and are often dispirited. Because of little economic social and cultural recognition Child Domestic workers particularly girls are common in many developing countries.

AGES OF DOMESTIC WORKERS - The ages of the domestic workers ranges from 10 to 80 years. That means a wide range of female section either willingly or unwillingly is incorporated in this Job.

TABLE NO.3

AGES OF DOMESTIC WORKERS

LESS THAN 14 YEARS	10	0.95357
14-30	429	43.7425
30-50	419	43.1466
LESS THAN 50	119	12.1573
TOTAL	975	100

Source: Household Survey (Random Method)

STRESS - To assess the stressed condition of the household workers, causes for domestic working, their daily working hours and shift of working members and dependent family members are considered.

DEPENDENT POPULATION : Domestic workers are forced to do more work due to their large family member burden. In study if we go through the ratio of earning and dependent members the result does not show very poor condition.

TABLE NO. 4

NO. OF DEPENDENT POPULATION

DEPENDENT	1347	42.2035
EMPLOYED	1859	57.7964
TOTAL POPULATION	3206	100

Source: Household Survey (Random Method)

WORK LOAD OF OWN FAMILY : Most of the domestic workers have mentioned that apart from the doing domestic work in different private houses simultaneously they have to take total responsibility of their own family and only the part-time work allows them to do that.

CAUSES FOR DOMESTIC WORKING – There are various causes but below listed are major reasons.

1. Monthly income is not stable.
2. Miss use of the major part of the income by the family heads.
3. To meet educational and medical expenses.

WORKING HOUR AND SHIFTING – In the study area the day generally start at 4 a.m. and the first employers work start 6 a.m. And ends at 12:30 P.M generally. In the present research almost 37% of the domestic workers work for more than 8 hours per day among which 16% are forced to work for 11 hours per day.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT - The living and working conditions are often harsh and are virtually never inspected by any independent authority. For the female domestic workers the physical conditions of the work places and the place and timing of work is important. To assess the environment of work of kitchen parameters like no. Of windows,tap,water facility etc. Have been considered whereas i n case of cleaning and washing location,position,facilities have been considered.

TABLE NO.5
WORKING ENVIRONMENT

GOOD	MODERATE	BAD	TOTAL
884	497	0	1381
64.32	35.67	0	100

Source: Household Survey (Random Method)

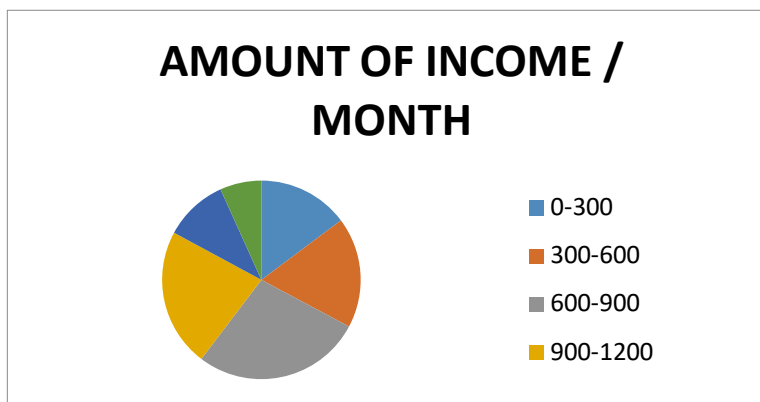
INCOME – If we consider the govt. Recommended wagebar, almost all domestic workers are getting less than the recommended minimum wages.

TABLE NO. 6
AMOUNT OF INCOME

AMOUNT/MONTH	FREQUENCY	%
0-300	146	14.77
300- 600	176	17.99
600-900	263	27.53
900-1200	224	22.52
1200-1500	98	10.36
GREATER THAN 1500	68	6.75
TOTAL	975	100

Source: Household Survey (Random Method)

FIGURE : 2



This shows the workers is about 800 serving 2.5 numbers of households on a average. That means 60% of worker earn less than Rs. 900 per month and few of them who can serve more than five hours can earn Rs.1500 to Rs.1800 per month.

HARASSMENT – In the present research we found workers generally preferred to work in their locality. Thasts why chances of physical harassment is less here. But they have reported that they have to face verbal abuse from employers and some time mental harassment. study shows 97% of domestic workers are tortured physically in almost every night by their drunken husband. 99% of households workers are suffered from mental agonies caused either by their family members or outsiders.

HEALTH STATUS – 89% of respondent suffers from health problems. Only 11% said that they don't have any health problems. Maximum of them don't have any physical consciousness.

TABLE NO.7
HEALTH STATUS

YES	NO	TOTAL
872	103	975
89.44	10.56	100

Source: Household Survey (Random Method)

MAJOR FINDINGS- In the research we found the following problems

1. In the most of the states of India the domestic workers is still unrecognized deprived from the state law fare wages, holidays and safe conditions of work, pension and other benefits.
2. Domestic workers union is not legally recognized therefore unable to burgeon collectively.
3. Workers of this area are not happy with present wages.
4. Lack of alternative job facility forces the domestic workers to adjust with the negative salary and bad working conditions.

5. Female domestic workers are kept excluded from state assisted scheme of provident fund for the unorganized workers under the labour department 2001. Thus they fail to enjoy any type of social facility from the State Government.
6. Improper sewerage condition, housing problem, indifferent attitude of the Municipality and lack of medical facility.
7. They have to face frequently the criminal affairs too.
8. Unhealthy leaving environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS – According to the opinions of the respondents, local municipality should give more attention towards these slum dwellers. About 17% of respondents ask for Municipality help. Another 17% seek for free home facility. The study reveals that 38% of domestic workers have no electric connections, so about 16% of response is for good electric supply. 15% of respondent seeks monthly allowance whereas another 15% wants for free medical treatments, 12% of them need private water taps and 8% ask for free education facility for children. Their low educational qualification makes them unsuitable for better jobs. The domestic workers are not unified so often their demands remain unfulfilled. Major suggestion for better future are listed below.

1. Formulation of domestic workers union.
2. Initiation of micro-credit programme.
3. Implementation of laws regarding the welfare of domestic workers.
4. Inclusion in the state assisted scheme of provident fund.
5. Launching social alerts on violations of social and economic rights of domestic workers.
6. International campaigns on social and economic rights.
7. Collaboration with other organizations (NDWM covers 23 states and over 2 million domestic workers)

CONCLUSION – A major percentage of the urban female informal worker are domestic workers. In NSSO, Sarvekshana (vol :21, No.2, Oct-Dec 1997), it is observed that both rural and urban women already engaged in domestic duties in their own house also want to exchange in their work most of which are clearly economic and some beneficial to their own households. In west Bengal that percentage of urban women is 73.40. The employment status of a domestic worker is always insecure. Government of India is going to implement few regulations related with the better working and living conditions of the few unorganized workers both in the urban and rural areas but domestic workers are included in that domain (Kundu, 2008). The whole outlook on domestic workers is very much feudal here. Recently domestic workers welfare and society security act 2010 has been proposed. The beneficiaries under this act will get the following benefits

1. Immediate assistance in case of accident.
2. Financial assistance for education of children.
3. Medical expenses for the ailments of beneficiaries.
4. Maternity benefit to the women beneficiaries up to two children only.
5. Payment Funeral expenses to the legal heir.
6. Renewal of registration certificate.
7. Training, imparting skills to domestic workers.
8. Implementing welfare measures in collaboration with central and state board.

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