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IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC SITUATION ON MAIDS IN MUMBAI

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Abstract: In India maid workers are classified under the categories of unschooled and unskilled job. Eventually due to downslope of joint families and very good increase in count of women into the employment sector has elicited to need for a supporting hand to work inside the home. On the other hand maids are providing financial security to the lower middle class poor families. But, due to Covid-19 pandemic situation the maid workers, who are financial backbone to the smooth functioning of homes, are facing apprehension. The Covid-19 pandemic situation affected their bread and butter due to lack of social safety. They are in threat of deprivation from job when not reporting to their work in fear of infection of COVID-19. Maids belong to Slumdog is one the main reason to discharge them from their job. Thus, this piece of work tries to find out the impact of COVID-19 pandemic situation on maid workers.

Key words : Maid Workers, Unorganized Sector, Starvation, Livelihood.

I. INTRODUCTION

Maid – The Domestic worker, which is as old as democratic civilization and goes under the category of informal occupations. Household chores like cleaning, washing, cooking etc is considered as a traditional domain of the female members of the society. A maid is a domestic worker who cleans and performs various other tasks may be full time or part time. The work of maid is mostly centres around the cooking, cleaning, washing and other types of care-works which is overlooked and devalued. Therefore it is categorised under unschooled and unskilled job for which maid workers are not recognized, reward or appreciated for their hard work. Maids are the domestic workers who do not have any safety net - no access to healthcare, can be fired any time and have no sick leave most are paid below minimum stipend, and get their pay cut for every day they take off. As the government announced lockdown due to Covid-19 this announcement has hit all the sections of the society, but maids the domestic worker of society has suffered a lot. Till 25, March 2020 maids were the supporting hand to work inside the home but in COVID-19 pandemic situation maids become most not required part of the society. Most of the maids got their March salaries since they had worked for 25 days. But since April, some have got half of their wages while many have been fired from their work.

Maids who were financial backbone for the family were now with zero wages. Most of maids have to return back to their hometown as they have nothing to do now. COVID-19 pandemic has pushed them in the battle of basic livelihood. Maids are the helping hands who do not have any leave or a paid holiday as in any other jobs, even there are no government act to fix their earnings, they have no basic rights, no facility or pension. They are one of the disgraced part of the society. For centuries they have been abused and only in recent years many different NGOs like NATIONAL DOMESTIC WORKERS MOVEMENT (NDWM), H.O.P.E, Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) are taking up the cause of women domestic workers. Maids have several problems in their personal and occupational life. They very strongly take burden of family on their shoulder. Everything was going properly but the outbreak of lockdown due to COVID-19 had put maids in the situation of Life v/s Livelihood.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Numerous studies highlight about domestic workers, female domestic workers, the problem they are facing daily in their personal and occupational life. Many studies also highlight the impact of COVID-19 focusing on economic decline, emigrants but outbreak of lockdown to control the spread of COVID-19 corona virus, maids fail to draw attention of politicians or policy maker as they are most neglected section of society. They were easily removed from their work. Maids in the pandemic situation with the family responsibility of the shoulders were fighting for sustenance every single second. Hence, this study tries to find out the impact of COVID-19 pandemic situation on this vulnerable or insecure group of female workers.

III. OBJECTIVITY OF THE STUDY

- i) To study impact of COVID-19 pandemic situation on maids
- ii) To study financial background of maids.
- iii) To study problems they face at their workplace.
- iv) To study future of maids.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The piece of study mainly focused on understanding the problems maid faced in COVID-19 pandemic situation. Mumbai city was selected for data collection and the sample size constituted of 50 respondent from different areas of Mumbai city .Due to restricted mobility in lockdown data is collected through a structured telephony interview session .The interview was conducted in either of three languages Marathi, Hindi ,English and the respondent where first properly explained with the aim of the study to obtain their consent . If they fell hesitate or unwilling to answer any of the question at any point of interview the respondent where not under any obligations to complete the interview .Data collection was done according the convenience of the respondent. No questions were asked that may hurt the sentiments of respondent or any family member of the respondent.

V. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The Demographic Profile of the respondent is given below:

The data collected from different area of Mumbai it is been studied that 44 percent of maids are from the age group of 20-30 and 20 percent are from the age group of 31-40 ,26 percent of females from the age group 41-50, 10 percent are above 51 age still working to get the basic needs of family.

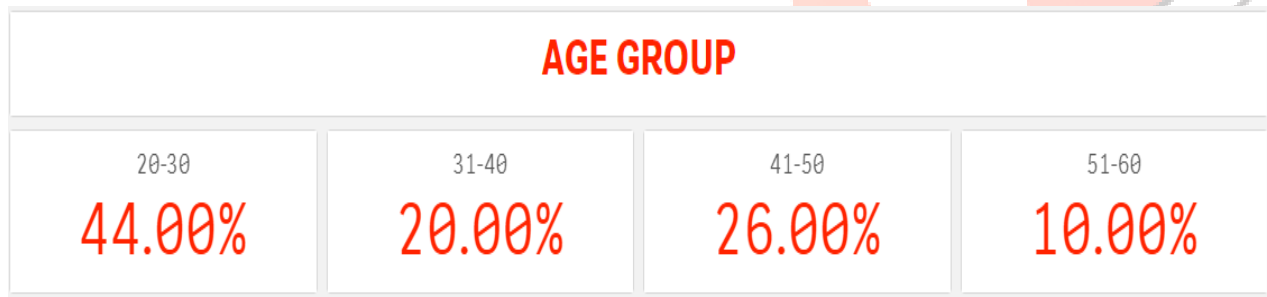


Diagram-1 AGE GROUP OF RESPONDENT

The 22 percent of maids are widow whereas 10 percent of maids are divorced The average family size of the respondent is 4 to 8 .Data reveals that maids are very strongly and bravely taking responsibility of family on their own shoulder

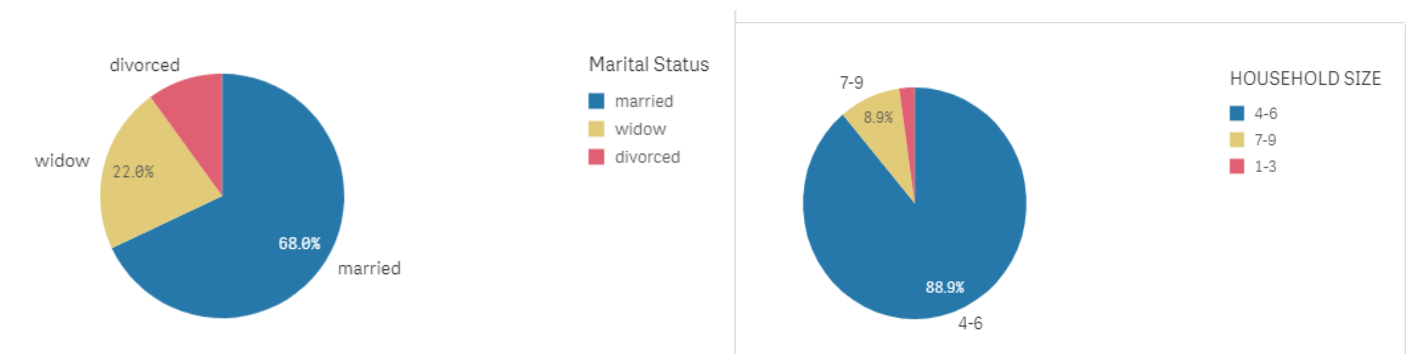


Diagram-2 MARITAL STATUS AND HOUSEHOLD SIZE OF RESPONDENT

Data reveals that only 14 percent of maids are working as full time for 6hrs to 7 hrs doing household chores like cleaning house, washing utensils and clothes, caring of small children, cooking etc. and 84 percent of maids working in 2 to 3 houses daily as part-time work doing cooking, cleaning, washing. It is been studied that the respondent are working for 4hrs to 7 hrs daily doing cleaning, cooking taking care of someone’s loved one , washing utensils, washing clothes and many other work to overcome the problem of bread and butter ,again same work they have to do it at their own living home too.

full-time	part-time
14.00%	84.00%

Diagram-3 JOB TIME OF RESPONDENT

When respondent where asked about their education most of the maids are educated upto primary level 6 percent respondent are illiterate. Beside due to financial problem they have not taken any skilled activity training.

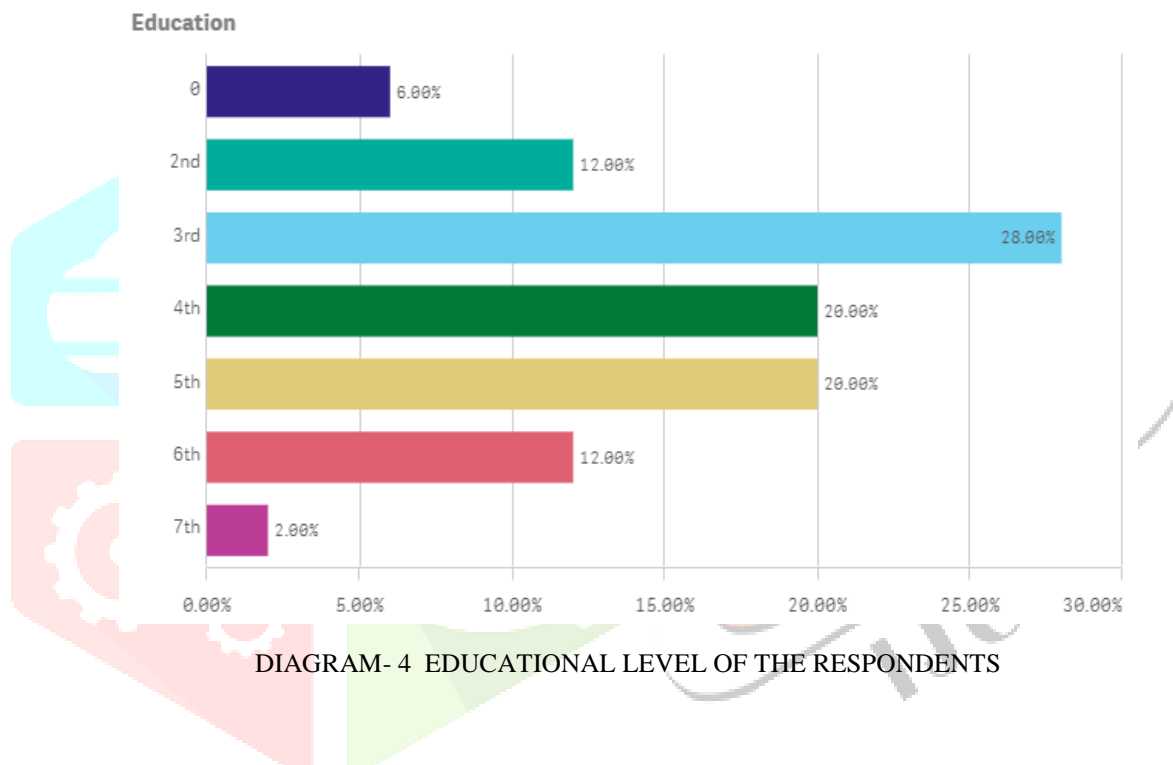


DIAGRAM- 4 EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF THE RESPONDENTS

In COVID-19 pandemic situation most of the respondent lost their work only 6 percent of maids got their salaries for all the working months ,8 percent of got their march and April month salary . whereas 84 percent got march salary and only 2 percent of maids where paid for may also .Whole pandemic situation they were surviving on their saving. Data reveals that maid are contributing lion share to their family finance ,every strongly they are handling financial problem of the family on their own shoulders.

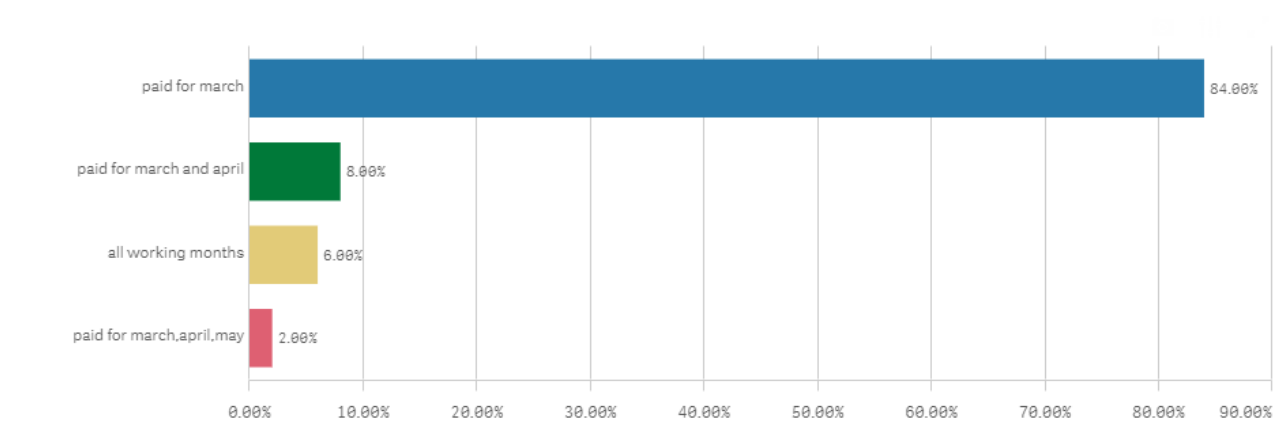


DIAGRAM- 5 PAID MONTH OF RESPONDENT IN PANDEMIC

VI. IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC SITUATION ON MAIDS

My neighbour told me about this new disease I was shocked. If I will not work then what about my family My husband is working as a labourer in the Chembur. Due to lockdown his work and income was stopped It became very difficult to arrange daily meal for the family.

"I'm single parent of 3 children . I am working in four houses in nearby society .Due to COVID-19 lockdown I lost my work from all the four houses . One house paid me whole wages for the month of March, April .First three months of lockdown we were able to survive on little saving and groceries I have . But now it is very difficult to survive ,no work, no money, nothing to eat. So I have taken hand loan to feed my children"

My husband is sweeper in society and in same society I work in two houses. Due to lockdown we both lost our work .First five-six months was very hard Now I have started a tea stall next to my home Through that stall only I am able to overcome the situation."

I work in 2 houses and have a vada pav stall in morning. My Husband is detected with liver damage .my mother-in law 80 year old . I have 2 daughters , elder one is 4years old and younger is one and half years old So I have to take the burden of 5 members on my shoulder. Due to COVID-19 pandemic situation I lost my works and I have close my stall as well. First few months somehow I would manage my husband's and mother-in-laws medicines with my little savings. But I have nothing now so I have borrowed Rs 5000/-.

VII. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Maids are the most ignored part of the society. They are most exploited group of workers. Majority of maids come from their far villages and settle in slum area fighting every single moment for bread and butter. They live and work in a state of consistent fears that they will be fired from work without any notice They are treated as an object non person ,since there is no law for them .they are voiceless powerless community of society .Maids works under oppressive condition with very less pay, no working hours limit ,lack of dignity no protection no security no bright future. Many maids are sexually harassed still they are voiceless since our legal system has no law for labours. Majority of maids are illiterate, unable to read or write During COVID-19 pandemic situation they have to face double depreciate. This is high time to consider their contribution to society and enrol them as paid labour.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Maids are educationally backward group of society. The agency, NGOs engaged in this particular slum can arrange for adult literacy program for the maids workers.Their are no rules or bills for maids security or for their future .Rules can be made for the working hours , basic salary . Loan facilities can be arranged by the for the government for maids. Maids are facing various health issues which are ignored but them because of financial issues and family responsibility

NGOs or agency can organize skill training activities or health camp centre every month. Even the college students (NSS,NCC) or street theatre can give some awareness programme to the people with regard to health of maids. The researcher hopes the findings of the study can improve the condition of women in this area.

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