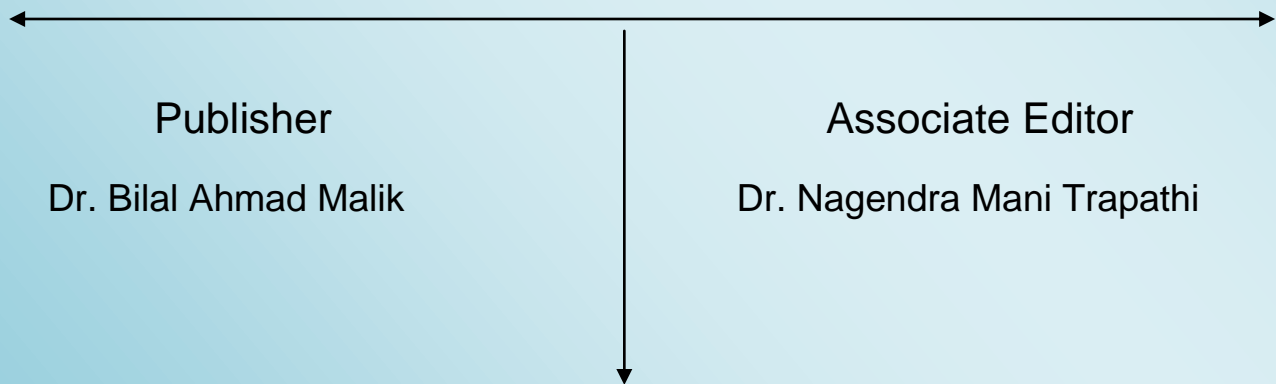


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QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS ON THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF WOMEN DOMESTIC WORKERS

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Abstract

Women play an important role in the management of economic and food security in the family. Domestic Work is one of the earning sources for the poor women and she get income through working as Domestic Servant. This paper delineates how the women earning money through self-employment by working as Domestic servant. This study was conducted among the Women Domestic Servants in Kadapa- a district headquarter in Andhra Pradesh. The main aim of this paper is to assess the living conditions of the women domestic servant. This study is an empirical qualitative research study.

Keywords: *Women Domestic Workers, Qualitative analysis.*

INTRODUCTION

The studies in Anthropology always find new challenges in the contemporary issues, developmental, social, cultural and religious evermore of the human beings. The present paper is an Anthropological approach which discusses on the problems and living conditions of the Women Domestic Workers in Kadapa-a district head quarter in Andhra Pradesh. This study is a new in its insight and reveals the new things than the existing studies based on in-depth Anthropological study.

The institution of domestic service is not of recent origin. Domestic work has strong links to the histories of all civilizations from the ancient to the present. Domestic service has been the commonest and also normally the first occupation in all the countries. The general meaning of the term 'Domestic Worker' is- a person who works in other's home for return of the wages or food is known as domestic worker. The other terms such as Domestic Servant, Domestic Helper and Domestic maid are the similar terms to the Domestic Work.

According to the existing literature, there are two types of domestic workers i.e. Part time Domestic Workers and full-time servants. Part time Domestic workers are worked at one or more than one houses and return to their home. The full time Domestic servants are worked at one house only either stayed at patron's house or stayed at her home. These full time workers engage the work whole time in patron's home house and do whatever work is assigned to them. In the present paper women domestic workers refers to a women residing in their own residence or patron's home and who employed to do house hold duties either as part time or full time. The present paper is particularly discusses about women domestic workers.

According to Human Development Report (2015), globally an estimated 53 million people in the age of 15 and older is in paid domestic work. Of these, 83 percent are women. Across the most countries in all regions, women work more than men. Women are estimated to contribute 52 percent of global work, men 48 percent. Globally women earn 24 percent less than men. The Report of the Ministry of Labour, Government of India, on

Working Condition of Domestic Servants in Delhi reveals nearly 90% of domestic workers are women. According to the National Survey conducted by the School of Social Work, women constituted 87.09 percent of domestic workers in Karnataka, 82.38 percent on Ranchi, 75 percent in Kerala and 90.78 percent in Andhra Pradesh.

Women have a significant role in the management and leading the family by making decisions and planning various things. Domestic work contributes a substantive type of employment and generation of earnings for many women (Kothari, 1991). The Women Domestic Workers are a constantly growing section of workers in the informal sector of urban India. The last three decades have seen a sharp increase in their numbers, especially in contrast to male domestic workers (Neetha 2004). According to the existing literature, the researchers revealing that the demand of domestic workers has raised in a few decades. The increasing importance of domestic service has been seen as a result of transformations in class relations and the development of new life style. Some decades ago only the rich class people were dependents on the domestic servants for exhibiting their status and sometimes due to lack of time to spend their time for finishing their own works. But, now the middle class has seemingly developed a life style which has increased the demand for domestic service. In urban setting, majority of the families living with nuclear families in this regard these families sometime must depend on domestic helpers for caring their children, cooking and cleaning of the homes etc.,. The urbanization is also one of the major reasons for encouraging the growth of domestic service, for this regard the migration occurred from rural to urban in search of domestic work.

Domestic workers make up of significant role in informal labour force. The Domestic servants are unorganized workers, there are not having any labour laws to protect them or to set out their service conditions and no laws to fix their wages, no basic rights and they are not having authorized social and economic security. In particular, Women Domestic Workers are a neglected group among the unorganized sector and they are vulnerable to human rights abuses with respect to their working conditions. They often work for excessively long hours, with little low wages, and with almost no access to social protections. National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector (NCEUS. 2007), Stated about the working and living condition of women domestic workers as they working in the unregulated domain of a private home, mostly without the protection of national labour legislation acts, allows for female domestic workers to be maltreated by their employers with impunity. Women are often subjected to long working hours and excessively risky tasks. They may be strictly confined to their places of work. The domestic workforce is excluded from labour laws such as conditions of work, wages, social security, provident funds, old age pensions, and maternity leave. The workers in unorganized sector remain unprotected by law. They are the most vulnerable section of the society and they enjoy no job or income security with little bargaining power (Satyasundaram.1996).

The International Labour Organization (ILO) carries out to promote and improve the living conditions of domestic work through policy advisory services, technical assistance projects, research and knowledge development and policy advocacy campaigns to create awareness among domestic workers including policies and programs regarding working time of domestic workers that safeguards their health and safety, work-family balance and adequate rest, wage protection, authorized terms and conditions in employment of domestic workers.

There are some other organizations and unions working for support workers in addressing some these challenges and for the development of domestic workers. International conventions such as the International Labour Organization Convention Concerning Decent work for Domestic Workers, which entered force in

September 2013 for establishing standards for the rights of doestic workers worldwide. The International Trade Union Confederation and the International Domestic Workers Federation, National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector (NCEUS) are working on uniting global workers.

Against this background, the study was conducted among women domestic workers in Kadapa in Andhra Pradesh.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The existing literature reveals us that the paid domestic work is an important means of income for millions of workers. It is necessary to conduct some more in-depth studies to identify the hidden problems of these vulnerable populations and give adequate suggestion for providing them the appropriate protection in work place, social and economic security, special policies and schemes for empower them and uplift their families from poverty. This attempt is in this regard.

Anthropological studies on Women informal sector particularly on Women Domestic Workers are absent. The findings of the existing studies shows only based on the quantitative analysis. There are no systematic in-depth studies to explore the problem and living conditions of the women domestic servants accordingly to them. This study is unique than the existing studies and it provides complete information which were collected from the women domestic servants by using qualitative Anthropological research techniques.

The main objectives of the study are to understand the socioeconomic conditions, living conditions and working conditions of the women domestic workers and analyse the factors conducive for women domestic servants.

DATA COLLECTION

An Anthropological research majorly constitutes two methods of data collection i.e. Qualitative and Quantitative. The Qualitative research method is in descriptive or theoretical in nature and the Quantitative research is based on numerical data. The present paper developed based on the empirical Qualitative data which was collected through Interviews, Observation Case studies from the Women Domestic Workers in Kadapa-a district head quarter of YSR Kadapa district in Andhra Pradesh. After the collection of the data the researcher analyzed and drawn the findings of research study based on content analysis. For the collection of data women domestic workers was randomly selected from Kadapa urban. The interviews were conducted among 50 Women Domestic workers.

LIVING CONDITIONS OF WOMEN DOMESTIC SERVANTS

The qualitative analysis of the living conditions at their work place as well as in their residences are discussing based in the interviews, case studies and observation as follows.

Illiteracy

Illiteracy is one of the negative aspect for the development of every nation. Worldwide 780 million adults and 103 million young people are the ages between 15 to 24 years are illiterates. In the developed countries 160 million people are functionally illiterates (UNDP-Human Development Report.2015). Majority of the women in the present study are illiterates and it is negative point to adopt as women domestic worker. According to the

interviewed data of domestic workers, even in the shops asking minimum reading and writing skills in the local language to work in their shops. Due to illiteracy we are working as domestic servant because to do this works in the house not necessary the literacy.

Nature of works

The observations in the Kadapa study made that the women domestic servants are possessing the works in the patrons home like Care works: it includes caring of children, taking the children to schools and feeding lunch; caring of old aged people, diseased or physically challenged persons; caring of pets for bathing and taking out for walking; sweeping; cooking; washing clothes; cleaning utensils and fetching household commodities from the market. The Human Development Report (2015) reveals some 53 million paid domestic women workers are addressing the care needs of people.

There are two types of workers were identified. They are Full-time servants and part time workers. These two involved in the above said works. The working hours are depends on the tasks of the work an approximately 3 to 10 hours daily. Some times when the celebrating any social events in their patrons house it includes restless work. For working in that special occasions the patron give additional amount and also food materials and clothes. It depends on the mercy of the patrons.

Wages

The wages of the domestic servants varied from work to work. Majority of women workersopines they are not getting affordable wages. In case of full time work they getting 3000-5000 thousand rupees per month. The part time workers are receiving an amount of 400-1000 rupees per month. It depends on less or more working hours. The part time workers spend at least 2 hours for a day.

Leisure less work

Rest and sufficient sleeping provides good health, in this regard it is necessary to know about these factors. Some women in the interviews revealed they are not having leisure to take rest because they work continously 3-6 houses for a day. Sometimes they spent more time at one house and occurred some delay to go another houses. They go house with late nights also when the patron's conduct any special events like birth days, marriages etc.,. According to women workers, the leisure less work shows the impact on sleeps as well on the health thus they suffering from health hazards. There are no leaves and holidays for them. Even at the time of festivals they must go work because in those festivals everybody cleans entire house due to devotional *pujas*. At the time of festivals they work more hours in their homes as well as their patron's house. If the worker not attended to work, the patron cut wages.

Health hazards

More are less 60 percent of the servants are suffering from health problems. The common health problem is related to joint and vertebral problems. Besides, they suffer from asthma, headache due to leisure less work.

Wages

The wages depends on the nature of work and hours of work. For example if the women wash only clothes then they receive rupees 300-1000 based on the members of the patrons family. If she works as monthly salary she will get 2000 to 5000 rupees per a month. Majority of women domestic workers are not satisfied with their wages. They feel that they doing more work but receiving low wages.

Working Environment

The women domestic workers were expressed different opinions regarding the working environment. At overall they are not fully satisfying with the behaviors of the patrons due to they seen them as socially and comically inferior. Sometimes they abuse with inferior discourse. Some of the domestic workers revealed they have a good attachment and cordial relationship with our patrons. They treat me as a human being and also they give extra money during the health obstacles and also in the special events such as marriages, festivals etc.,

Loans and Savings

The main sources of borrowing loan are private call money lenders, pawn brokers, banks and government loan schemes like Velugu/Sthreenidhi. If they need money suddenly according to them it not easy process to get loan from government schemes because it will take some time to process in this regard mostly depend on private moneylenders, pawn brokers. They put their gold jewelry for rupees 3 to 5 interest per 100. The saving behavior of domestic servants is as shown in some cases. Among the 50 sample women domestic workers 20 members are had savings in private chits, 12 persons depositing their savings in post office and 8 women workers had savings in Sthreesakthi. Only 4 women workers are had a LIC policies.

CONCLUSION

The domestic service is an unorganized and unregulated form of work comes under informal sector. The demand for domestic servants has been increased due to formation of nuclear families, lack of time due to women employment and also due to the emerging modern lifestyle among the urban dwellers.

Women domestic servants are belonged to the economically disadvantaged poverty group. Their getting wage structure is not in uniformity. The dilemma of the women domestic workers is miserable as they working with extremely low wages compared to the work them doing and working totally unprotected by any government labour legislations. They are not the members of any political party or workers union. They were not aware of their rights and not united. They treated socially and economically lesser at the working place. However, they were adopted this job because of illiteracy as well as poor financial background.

In this context, there is a need to bring special laws and government policies for domestic workers for recognizing them as members of the formal sector with the necessary protective rights and benefits and ensuring their safety and security.

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