

## Job Satisfaction among Domestic Workers

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### ABSTRACT

The present study was aimed to investigate the job satisfaction among domestic workers in Mysore city. For the purpose of this study, the researcher adopted the Descriptive Research Design. Using a random sampling technique 50 domestic workers from Mysore city were selected for the purpose of this study. An interview schedule developed by a researcher was used to collect the data. The result showed that most of the domestic workers (68%) have felt an average level of job satisfaction, (8%) have felt very high level of job satisfaction, (20%) felt that they have very less job satisfaction and only (4%) respondents felt that they are completely dissatisfied about their work.

**Keywords:** Domestic workers, Job satisfaction

### INTRODUCTION

A domestic worker is a person who works within the employer's household. Domestic workers perform a variety of household services for an individual or a family, from providing care for children and elderly dependents to cleaning and household maintenance, known as housekeeping. Responsibilities may also include cooking, doing laundry and ironing, food shopping and other household errands. Some domestic workers live within the household where they work.

The conditions faced by domestic workers have varied considerably throughout history and in the contemporary world. In the course of twentieth-century movements for labour rights, women's rights and immigrant rights, the conditions faced by domestic workers and the problems specific to their class of employment have come to the fore. In 2011, the International Labour Organization adopted the Convention Concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers, which covers decent work conditions for domestic workers. Recent ILO estimates based on national surveys and/or censuses of 117 countries, place the number of domestic workers at around 53

million. However, the ILO itself states that "experts say that due to the fact that this kind of work is often hidden and unregistered, the total number of domestic workers could be as high as 100 million". The ILO also states that 83% of domestic workers are women and many are migrant workers (International Labor Organization, 2011).

Asia and the Pacific employed more than 21 million domestic workers in 2010, or 41 per cent of the global total. Most are women, internal or international migrant workers, and a substantial number are child domestic workers. Legal protection for domestic workers has been particularly weak in Asia with 61 per cent of domestic workers excluded from any protective labour legislation. However, this situation is now progressively changing (International Labour Organization, 2011).

In India, there are nearly 5 million people working in the homes of others-most of them are women. The number of these domestic workers has swelled by more than 200 per cent in recent years, yet society in general continues to pay little attention to working conditions and the lack of social protection afforded

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to those in domestic work. The ILO Office in India, along with its constituents and partners, has launched an awareness rising and advocacy campaign to address these issues.

Among the disadvantages of working as a domestic worker is the fact that women working in this sector are working in an area often regarded as a private sphere (Arat-Koc, 1989).

## JOB SATISFACTION

Job satisfaction is usually defined as an affective or emotional response toward one's job (Kreitner and Kinicki, 1992). From an economic perspective, job satisfaction is a unitary concept, which tends to be explained in purely monetary terms (Lazear, 2000). It is assumed that individuals like rewards but dislike effort. As a result, a better salary, for an identical level of effort, will determine the decision to quit and a higher level of satisfaction. From the lens provided by psychology and sociology, however, the employment relationship is about much more than the exchange of labour services for a pay-check. It is an economic relation in part, but it is a potent social and psychological one as well (Baron and Kreps, 1999). Thus, a person can be relatively satisfied with the absolute monetary rewards he or she receives and dissatisfied with how they fare relative to others (Festinger, 1954; Adams, 1965), or with other aspects of his or her job, either because they do not allow to fulfill his or her needs (Salansik and Pfeffer, 1977) and values (Locke, 1976) or because they do not meet his or her expectations.

**Aim:** The present study aimed to study the job satisfaction among domestic workers in Mysore city, India.

**Research design:** For the purpose of this study, the researcher would adopt the Descriptive research design.

**Universe and sampling:** The present study has to be carried out at the selected places of Mysore city.

Hence, Mysore city constitutes the whole universe. Using a random sampling method 50 domestic workers from Mysore city were selected for the purpose of this study.

**Research tool:** For the purpose of the study, the researcher used an interview schedule to collect data from the respondents through which data was collected by meeting each domestic worker separately.

## PROCEDURE

Primarily, the investigator made a questionnaire based on job satisfaction categories. Then he went to the areas where domestic workers inhabited and interviewed them separately. Since these domestic workers were not so literate to answer the questions, the investigator had to read the questions for them and collect the data as a schedule.

## RESULTS

Table 1 shows level of job satisfaction in domestic workers. As shown, 4 respondents (8%) have very high level of job satisfaction, 34(68%) respondents have felt that they have an average level of job satisfaction. On the other hand, 10(20%) respondents felt that they have very less job satisfaction. Only 2(4%) respondents felt that they were completely dissatisfied about their work. As shown in the below table, the result indicates that most of the social workers there have felt that they have an average level of job satisfaction.

**Table 1: Level of job satisfaction**

Level of job satisfaction	Number of respondents	Percentage
Very high	4	8
Average	34	68
Very less	10	20
Completely dissatisfied	2	4
Total	50	100

Other findings of this study are as follows:

- The study clearly showed that 86% respondents were females.
- Majority, that is, 70% of the respondents were illiterate.
- The study showed that, 76% of the respondents have been working for more than 4 years.
- More than 60% of the respondents have been working for more than 6 hours a day.
- The study revealed that 64% of the participants stated that they have got adequate time to take rest every day. The workers usually went to work in the morning hours and completed all their engagements by afternoon.
- Income of domestic workers is really a matter of concern. 22% were availing less than 1000 rupees as their wage and 36% respondents are receiving wages between 1000 and 2000 rupees.
- 48% of them performed activities such as housekeeping and washing clothes as a routine job, only 22% did perform three different activities like washing clothes, cooking and housekeeping.
- None of the domestic workers have been provided with separate place for rest at workplace. The organised employers sectors are expected to provide a separate place to avail rest for all their employees.
- Only 8% of respondents expressed that they have very high level of satisfaction about their work. However, majority, that is, 68% felt that their job satisfaction is just average.
- More than 80% respondents inhabited in houses nearby slums.
- 74% participants revealed that they got adequate care by their employers whenever they were sick. It is a good trend; at last the employers are becoming more philanthropic.
- The study showed that 74% respondents got adequate leave, food and clothes, provided by their employers, 20% respondents still did not get any facilities from their employers.
- Astonishingly, the study has revealed, 80% respondents have become members of their professional associations.

## DISCUSSION

As the urban couples are increasingly becoming independent, nuclear and dual career families in the recent times, they are heavily depending upon the domestic workers to take care of their routine household activities. The demand for domestic workers is increasing day by day. Hence, domestic workers constitute a sizable population in the modern urban communities. However, unfortunately they represent the unorganised sector. Presently, we can make a rough estimation of existence of 3000–5000 domestic workers in Mysore city. The socio-economic, cultural and educational status of these populations is really pathetic and intact, they are leading a very difficult, inhuman and poverty-stricken life and hence, they represent the marginalised category.

However, while overall female share of such work is not as high as in some other countries, the rate of feminisation of such work has been increasing, especially in urban India. Over the decade of the 2000s, 75 per cent of the increase in the total number of domestic workers was accounted for by women. Domestic work also became more important in the total employment of women, especially in urban India. Of the total increase in the number of women workers in the entire decade, nearly 15 per cent was accounted for by domestic work. This suggests that more remunerative and desirable work is simply not available even for women who wish to enter the labour force, and they are forced to seek this employment as the only alternative. The continuing perception is that such work, especially when performed by women, essentially adds to family incomes rather than is the main source. This further operates to reduce the reservation for women workers and reduce the potential for increased wages and better working conditions.

Surprisingly, not many researches have been done in the field of domestic workers in Mysore city. Even, social workers, policy makers, welfare administrators and NGOs have not yet taken up the issues of domestic workers either at micro level or at macro level to bring some optimistic changes in their conditions of life and their job satisfaction. There is a huge scope for further research studies to be done in this field. Social workers have got a vital role to play in the domestic workers' community. Social work interventions like, case work, group work, community organisation and social action can be practiced regularly and consistently to bring effective changes in their life style.

The growing significance of domestic work in paid employment in India makes it all the more imperative to ensure that such work is given dignity and occurs under decent conditions with adequate pay. At the moment, because of the personalised nature of such work, the informality of most contracts and the difficulty of monitoring conditions, as well as the generally adverse labour market conditions, most of such work take place under extremely difficult and oppressive conditions, with low pay, little or no limits on working hours, lack of autonomy and respect for the workers, and almost nothing in the form of worker protection or social security.

There are occasional horror stories in the media about the poor treatment meted out to domestic workers, but given the unequal power characterising the relationship and the lack of other work options in many places, these may well be the tip of the iceberg.

The sheer difficulty of monitoring what is essentially an informal arrangement makes matters much worse. It is unfortunately the case that as long as overall productive employment generation remains so sluggish, there will be continuing pressures on both male and female workers that can force them to accept working conditions that are poor and even sometimes degrading.

However, both public policy and labour mobilisation

can play roles in improving such conditions even when the overall employment scenario is bleak. At present, domestic workers are unprotected by almost all labour legislation. None of the main national labour laws are applicable to them, although they have recently been included in the Unorganized Workers' Social Security Act, 2008.

Admitting domestic work under the provisions of minimum wages legislation can play some role in improving the remuneration of these workers. It is true that such minimum wage legislation is more honoured in the breach in India, where the conditions of excess labour supply and poor generation of decent work opportunities have combined to create desperation on the part of those engaging in such work. Even so, coverage under the minimum wage laws increases the bargaining power of domestic workers and can begin to contribute the improvement in their job satisfaction.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The above study has revealed very important factors with regard to job satisfaction and other working conditions of the domestic workers. As domestic workers belong to the unorganised sector, the problems faced by the workers are very high and alarming. If the same trend continues, no doubt, the employers will start exploiting their domestic workers very badly; on the other hand if the exploitation level goes up, the domestic workers might start revolting leading to the occurrence of frequent conflicts. Therefore, based on the research findings, the researcher has given the following recommendations;

- The policy makers should plan and implement a better legislation with regard to the enhancement of educational status of the domestic workers. Local Social Welfare Officers have to be directed to take initiatives to create strong awareness regarding the significance of education among the disadvantaged group.
- The Government should enact suitable

legislations with regard to limiting the working hours of all the domestic workers to 'eight hours work per day norm' which is prevailing in the organised sector, and can also be extended to this unorganised lot. This will definitely lead to social equality and social justice.

- The researcher strongly suggests that a separate place has to be earmarked for the workers to avail their rest during work.
- As, majority of domestic workers are slum dwellers, the Government should take extra initiative towards improving the health and hygiene aspects, housing policy can be enacted and implemented so as to distribute houses to the slum dwellers.
- The social workers should work with the citizens, creating in them, the feelings of humanity and philanthropy towards their workers. Social workers can play a vital role in motivating all the employers to provide adequate leave, food, clothing and also raising their salaries whenever required.
- Social workers should identify those domestic workers who have not yet obtained the membership of their professional associations,

create awareness among these people about the importance of being united and finally, enable them to be active members of professional associations.

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