A Socio and Economic study of Domestic Helpers in Mangalore city

Dr. Suresh

Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, University College Mangalore - 575001
Email: sureshkumbhashi@yahoo.co.in

ABSTRACT

Domestic helpers make up a sizable, unorganised sector with low financial literacy and significant levels of poverty in most of the developing nations. Especially women who work as helper are particularly at risk, if they are the sole providers of money, are single mothers, or do not receive a lot of financial assistance from their spouses. The goal of this study is to shed light on the socioeconomic situation of domestic workers employed in the Mangalore city region. Mangalore the headquarters of Dakshina Kannada District in the state of Karnataka, is well-connected by land, sea, and air and has the potential to become one of the major hubs for international trade. Additionally, Mangalore has a seaport, which benefits both the local economy and the country's overall growth. There are a lot of domestic assistants' requirement because of the ever-expanding nature of the city. The socioeconomic circumstances of helpers across several categories are highlighted in this effort through data collection via questionnaires.

Key Words: *Socioeconomic, Domestic, Mangalore, Helpers, Employed.*

1. Introduction

The socioeconomic circumstances faced by domestic workers constitute a noteworthy domain of interest in the wider framework of labour rights, gender inequality, and social justice. Women, who are disproportionately from marginalised socioeconomic situations, perform most of the domestic work, which has historically been undervalued and frequently excluded from legal labour laws. Even though these workers perform necessary tasks like cooking, cleaning, raising children, and caring for the elderly, they continue to be among the most marginalised and exploited groups in the workforce. Low pay, long hours, and unstable working conditions are common characteristics of informal, unregulated domestic work in many nations. The socioeconomic standing of female domestic workers is influenced by various variables, including restricted educational opportunities, unfavourable working environments, discrimination based on gender, and non-payment of social security payments. The interlocking disadvantages that many women in this industry experience due to their caste, race, and immigration status make them more susceptible to abuse and exploitation.

With an emphasis on their working conditions, income levels, access to healthcare and education, and social protection, the present study aims to investigate the socioeconomic circumstances of female domestic workers. The study intends to shed light on the lived realities of these workers by analysing the obstacles and vulnerabilities they confront and to promote legislative changes that guarantee improved working conditions, equitable pay, and extensive legal protections. In addition to addressing gender-based labour disparities, this research is essential for advancing more social and economic justice for one of the most underappreciated yet vital labour sectors.

In cities where men and women in a family are part of a working group, domestic help is a given. Women make up most domestic workers. In the society, domestic work is seen as an informal working group, and in cities, domestic assistance is crucial. The goal of this study was to investigate the socioeconomic status of the female domestic workers in Mangalore.

2. Review of Literature

Domestic work is a large – and in some countries growing – sector of employment, especially for women. The latest conservative estimates find the number of domestic workers increased from 33.2 million in 1995 to 52.6 million in 2010 – or 3.6 percent of global wage employment (ILO and WIEGO 2013). However, since domestic workers are undercounted in labour force surveys, the number could be far higher.

Low levels of education and few marketable skills also play a role. However, some domestic workers who migrate from places such as the Philippines and Eastern Europe have medium or high levels of education, Ramirez-Machado 2003.

Studies by Ordonez and Kalipeni (2017) emphasize that many domestic helpers are migrants, seeking better economic opportunities to support their families back home. The educational background of domestic helpers is

another critical aspect. According to the World Bank (2017), many domestic workers have limited formal education, which restricts their opportunities for skill development. This situation perpetuates their socio-economic status and limits their ability to transition into better-paying jobs.

Domestic helpers frequently experience exploitation and abuse in their workplaces. A comprehensive study by Anti-Slavery International (2018) reveals that many workers endure long hours, low pay, and lack of legal protections. This vulnerability is exacerbated for migrant workers, who may face language barriers and limited access to support networks.

The remittances sent home by domestic helpers significantly contribute to their families' economic stability. A study by Adams and Page (2005) found that remittances help improve education and health outcomes in sending countries. However, the emotional toll of separation can strain family relationships, creating a complex interplay between economic benefits and social costs (Mazzucato & Schans, 2011).

3. Objectives of the study

➢ To present the socioeconomic characteristics of the city of Mangalore's domestic workers.
➢ To investigate the demographic makeup of female domestic workers in Mangalore region.
➢ To investigate the issues that domestic help faces.

4. Methodology and Sources of data

Both primary and secondary data are used for the study. Primary data is collected with the help of a questionnaire through interviews. Secondary data are collocated from GOI publications, NSSO, books, journals, magazines, articles, media reports and Government portals of Make in India, Skill India, etc.

5. Sample size and Statistical tools used

Sample size is 51 and random sampling method is followed. Various statistical tools such as tables, charts are used for the study. Mainly percentage method is used to analyse the collected data. Information is collected from the Domestic workers of Mangalore.
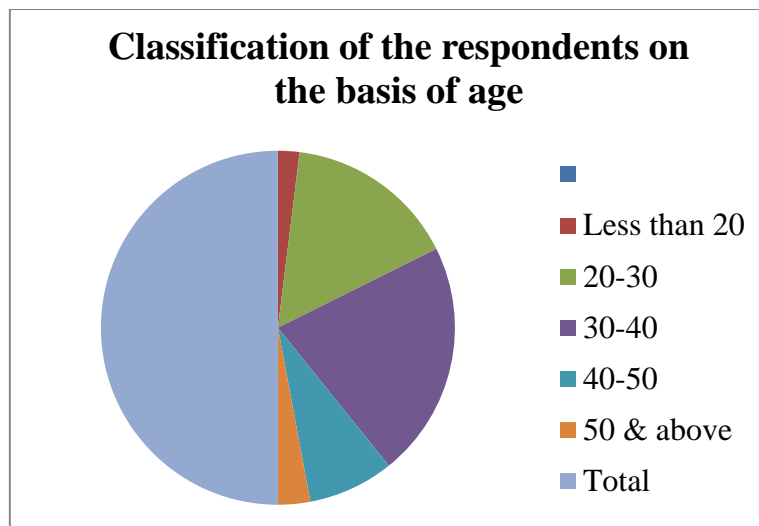
6. Data analysis and interpretation

6.1. Table 1. Classification of respondents based on age

Age group	No of respondents	Percentage
Less than 20	2	3.92
20-30	16	31.37
30-40	22	43.13
40-50	8	15.68
50 & above	3	5.88
Total	51	100

Source: Field Survey

The respondents are categorized based on age in Table 1. The data indicates that 3.92% of respondents belongs to under-20 age group, while 31.37% of respondents are in 20–30 age group. 43.13% of respondents belong to the age group 30-40. The age range of 15.88% of responders is between 40 and 50 years old. Merely 5.88% of the population is above 50 years old.
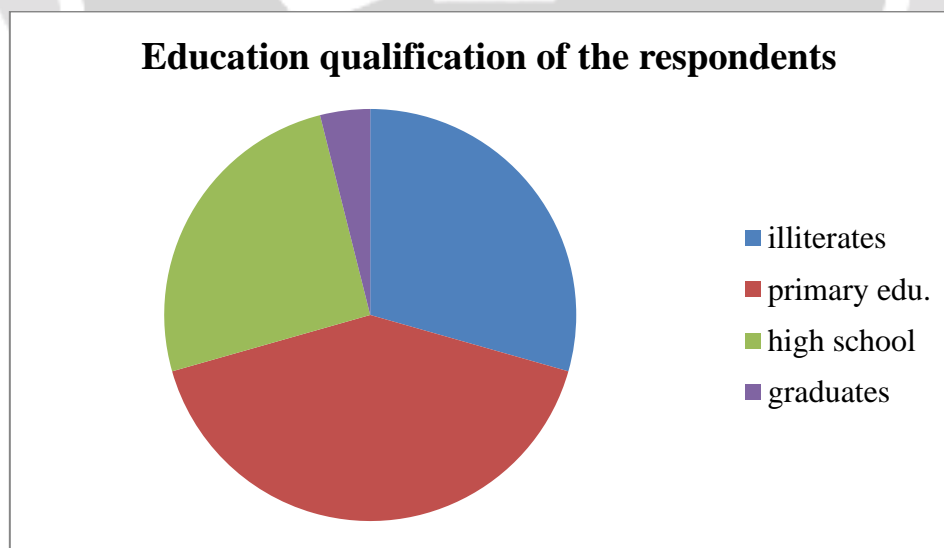
Classification of the respondents on the basis of age

- Less than 20
- 20-30
- 30-40
- 40-50
- 50 & above
- Total

6.2. Table 2. Classification of respondents based on education qualification

Educational qualification	No of respondents	Percentage
Illiterates	15	29.41
Primary education	21	41.17
High School	13	25.49
Graduates	2	3.92
Total	51	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 2 demonstrates that 29.41% of the participants lack literacy. Primary education is held by 41.17% of the respondents and 25.49% have finished their high school education. The table makes it evident that even graduates take on domestic help when they have no other choice.

Education qualification of the respondents

- illiterates
- primary edu.
- high school
- graduates

6.3. Table 3. Classification of respondents based on Type of the family

Type of family	No of respondents	Percentage
Joint family	15	29.41
Nuclear family	34	66.67
Extended family	2	3.92
total	51	100

Source: Field Survey

The above table shows that 29.41% of the respondents are living in a joint family. 66.66% are living in a nuclear family. 3.92% are part of extended family.

6.4. Table 4. Classification of respondents based on Family head

Family head	No. of respondents	Percentage
Male	35	68.63
Female	14	27.45
Both	2	3.92
Total	51	100

Source: Field Survey

Table 4 reveals that 68.62% of the respondent's families have male as a head. 27.45% of respondents said female is the head of the family. Only 3.92% of the respondents said both males and females head their family.

6.5. Table 5. Classification of respondents based on Type of house

Type of house	No of respondents	Percentage
Owned	10	19.62
Rented	35	68.62
Govt. provided	5	9.80
Any other	1	1.96
Total	51	100

Source: Field Survey

Out of a total of 51 respondents, 19.60% of the respondents are living in their own house. 68.62% of the respondents are living in a rented house. 9.80% of the respondents are living in a govt. provided house and one respondent is living in a house provided by the owner of a house where she performing domestic work.

6.6. Table 6. Classification of based on Type of domestic work performed.

| Type of Domestic Work	No of respondents	Percentage
Cleaning vessels	28	54.90
Moping	31	60.78
Washing clothes	27	52.94
Cooking	13	25.49
Total respondents	51	100%

Source: Field Survey

Out of 51 respondents 54.90% perform domestic work of cleaning vessels. 60.78% of the respondents are doing moping. 52.94% are washing clothes. 25.49% are cooking. It means majority of the respondents are performing more than one work.

6.7. Table 7. Classification of based on monthly Income of the respondents

Income range	No. of respondents	Percentage
Less than 1000	2	3.92%
1000-5000	23	45.09%
5000-10000	25	49.01%
10000 & above	1	1.96%
Total	51	100

Source: Field Survey

Study shows that 3.92% of the respondents are earning less than 1000 rupees. 45.09% of the respondents are earning income ranging in between 1000-5000. 49.01% of the respondents are earning income more than 5000 and less than 10000. 1.96% of the respondents i.e. only one respondent is earning more than 10000 for a month.

Monthly income of respondents

- less than 1000
- 1000-5000
- 5000-10000
- 10000 & above
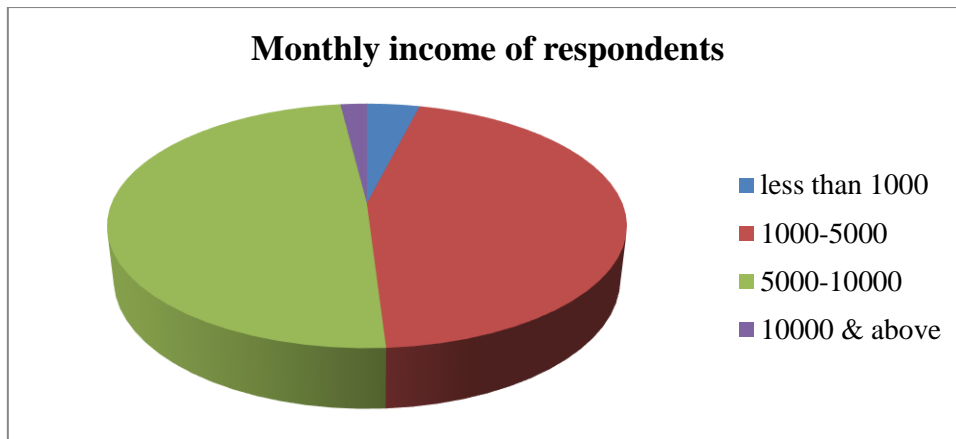
6.8. Table 8. Classification of based on respondents plans for better future

Future plans	Respondents	Percentage
Health policy	2	3.92%
Insurance/LIC	16	31.37%
Children's education	19	37.25%
Any other	2	3.92%
No future plans	12	23.52%
Total	51	100

Source: Field Survey

Only 39 respondents out of 51 said they plan for better future. 3.92% of respondents plan for future by having health policy. 31.37% of respondents said they have insurance policy. 37.25% of the respondents said they save money for children's education. It is alarming to note that 23.52% said there is no future plan made to face the difficulties of life.

Plans for better future of the respondents

- health policy
- insurance/LIC
- children's education
- any other
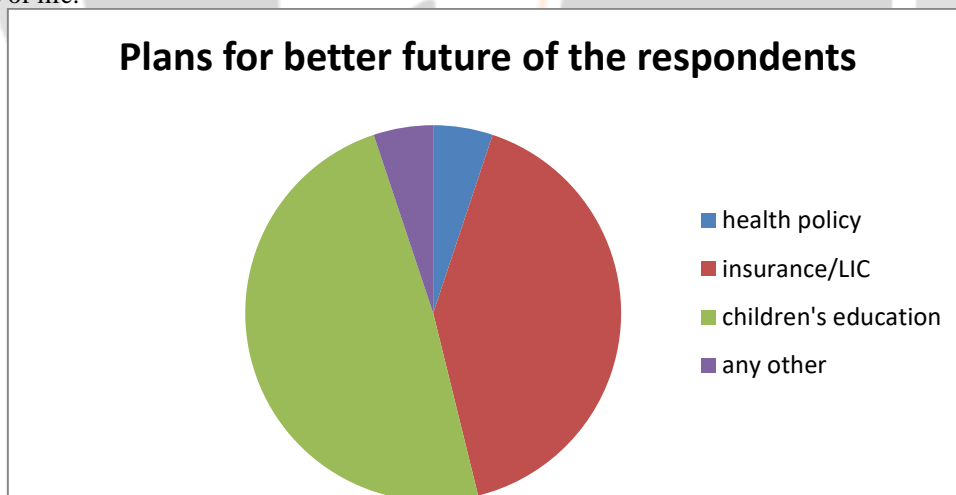
7. Findings of the study

➢ 1.The study reveals that young generation is not willing to perform domestic help work at others house because only 3.92% of the people belonging to the age group of less than 20 worked as domestic helpers.

➢ It is also observed that less educated (41.17%) respondents are more in domestic help. So, we can say that people who are graduates are absorbed in other occupations. Majority of the respondents are (66.66%) living in a nuclear family

➢ It is understood that there is dominance of male (68.62%) as far as heading the family and most of them are (68.62%) living in a rented house which indicates that their ownership of property is very less even though the perform multiple domestic duties.

➢ The monthly income of the respondents is very less as only 1.92% of the respondents are earning income more than 10000. That is the reason 23.52% of respondents did not have any future for their family. Majority (68.62%) have expressed that their income is not enough to manage the family expenditure.

➢ It is also important to note that all the respondents interviewed were Hindus, which means very a smaller number of members from other religion are domestic helpers. We may conclude that there is low economic prosperity of Hindus than the other religion in D. K. District.

➢ It is to be noted that 88.23% of the respondents have ration cards out of which 97.77% of the respondents own BPL holders.

➢ About 66.66% of the respondents revealed that they are respected in the outer world even being domestic helpers and 54.90% of the respondents revealed they are happy with their occupation being domestic help.

8. Challenges faced of Women Domestic Helpers

Domestic helpers face a variety of challenges in their work environments across the world, which often stem from the informal nature of their employment, lack of legal protections, and social marginalisation. Here we discuss some of the challenges faced by the domestic helpers.

8.1 Poor wage structure

Domestic workers are often paid far below minimum wage, and wage discrimination is rampant, particularly for migrant workers or those from marginalised backgrounds (ILO, 2016).

8.2 Long working hours

Many domestic workers are expected to work long hours without proper breaks or overtime compensation. This can lead to exhaustion and significant mental and physical health issues (Human Rights Watch, 2019).

8.3 Lack of social protection

Domestic helpers frequently lack access to basic social protections, including healthcare, maternity benefits, paid sick leave, and retirement plans (ILO, 2018). Many countries exclude domestic workers from formal social security schemes.

8.4. Job insecurity

Due to the informal nature of their employment, domestic workers are often subject to abrupt terminations without severance pay or unemployment benefits (Chen, 2021).

8.5 Verbal, physical & sexual abuse

Domestic workers, especially live-in workers, are highly vulnerable to various forms of abuse. Many reports verbal harassment, physical violence, and sexual abuse from their employers (Anderson, 2018).

8.6 Lack of legal recourse

Even when legal protections exist, domestic workers often face significant barriers in accessing justice due to a lack of awareness, restrictive labour laws, and fear of retaliation or job loss (Chen, 2021).

8.7 Poor living conditions

Live-in domestic workers often reside in cramped, unsanitary spaces provided by employers. They may have little privacy and are sometimes denied basic amenities such as adequate food or personal time (Amnesty International, 2019).

8.8. Discrimination

Domestic workers, especially those from marginalized ethnic or social groups, face significant societal discrimination. This discrimination can exacerbate their vulnerability to exploitation and limits their access to better opportunities (Anderson, 2018).

9. Conclusion

Domestic helpers are helping the working women of the city in a great way. We can say that they support working women in completing the household work. People who are illiterate or less educated opt to be domestic helpers and in the case of Mangalore, more than 80% of the respondents who are domestic workers are the migrated

workers. Their work is enabling them to earn their bread if not respect to 100% level but every work is equally respectable as workers are spearing their sweat to earn some livelihood.

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