

# **Sociological analysis of issues faced by domestic working women: A case study of Hyderabad, Sindh**

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## **Abstract**

*This research paper explores the social and economic problems of domestic workers in Sindh. Study intends to achieve the following objectives to find out the social problems of domestic working women's life and to know the economic problems faced by domestic working women. Qualitative research approach is adopted. Data is collected through focus group discussion. Thematic Data analysis technique is applied to draw the Result of FGD. Social problems that are faced by domestic working women are harassment in the houses where they work, in streets and by the owners of houses that they have rented. Domestic working women do extra work which is not paid, blamed of stealing things, insulted if they go on leave. Even at their homes not respected. Under economic problems theme women are faced with issues like all salaries are taken by husbands or fathers, for their expenses they have to do extra work, borrow money, are ask for money in charity. In spite of, doing work day and night women feel dependent on men. At the end recommendations are forwarded as (i) domestic work is also employment not slavery so they must be given right to work as defined by UDHR. Right to periodic leaves, fixed working hours for each activity (ii) people who keep domestic workers to serve them have to ensure them favorable working conditions. (iii) Harassment is issue of all working women so the domestic workers, should be treated strictly. (iv) adult education programs, programs on awareness on women rights can help to solve socio-economic problems of domestic working women. (v) Government, especially ministry of women affairs should formulate such a legislation that protects domestic worker women.*

**Keywords:** Social, Economic, Problems, Domestic worker

## **Statement of the Problem:**

Women at their workplace whether it is in government organizations, non-governmental organizations, industry or other's home place face number of problems. Scholars and academia's have always focused socio-economic problems of working women in government or non-governmental organizations but the women working in houses as a laborer are always neglected. This paper aims to analyze the socio-economic problems of domestic working women. Addresses issues of salaries, behavior of male/female



households, neighbored/relatives, street going people and owners of rented houses, say in decision making at home, spending money on health and education and other economic problems faced by domestic working women.

According to International Labour Organisation (ILO,2016) Domestic work is “A work performed in or for one or more households. There are about 53 Million domestic workers in world and 83% are female. Domestic workers may be fulltime are part time working as servants, cooks, gardeners, housemaids and caretakers.

Hyderabad is 2<sup>nd</sup> largest city of Sindh where domestic worker women have lots of demand. People come from Badin, Naushahro Feroze, Umerkot, Matli and other cities of interior Sindh to get employed in houses. Uneducated women and poor women come in cities like Hyderabad along with families to get employed. Domestic work is easily available and requires no education or other criteria.

### **Research Questions:**

1. What are the social problems faced by domestic women in their life?
2. What are the economic problems faced by domestic women in their life?

### **Objectives:**

1. To find out the social problems of domestic working women's life.
2. To know the economic problems faced by domestic working women.
3. To offer recommendations for the welfare of domestic workers.

### **Literature Review:**

Gender discrimination at workplace is seen in all public as well as private organizations which has a negative impact on employer. It increases stress level among employers. (Channar, Abbasi, & Ujan, 2011). In Pakistan women are aware of their rights, sexual harassment acts and about the Protection against Harassment of women at the Workplace Act 2010 but in spite of that women are frequently harassed at their workplace. Women don't take action and remain silent because they are bread earners of their families. (Sadrudin, 2013).

Trend of keeping domestic workers is increasing in cities due to increasing unemployment, illiteracy and poverty. Female of age groups 19 to 40 years are mostly engaged in domestic work.75% of respondents belonged to nuclear families and 70% respondents had salaries RS.3000/month. (Augustine & Singh, 2016)

Study conducted on migrant population who were working as domestic workers in Faisalabad found that 43.3% population were engaged in work of dish washing. Married and young domestic workers were facing more problems than older and unmarried workers. Study also revealed the fact that educated domestic workers were facing less number of problems, and newly migrated population were facing more issues. (Nazir, 2011)

Women have key contribution in world economy. They are doing all types of jobs but have little control over their income and resources. Especially domestic working women have little bargain power, are verbally harassed by male members. There is no written contract between employer and domestic worker and no minimum wage limit. Lack of awareness of legal rights among domestic workers is main hurdle in the exploitation of their rights, (Poulouse, 2017)

**Research Methodology:**

Qualitative research is conducted to know the socio-economic problems of domestic working women. Universe of the study is selected District Hyderabad. Sample size is selected 12 for FGD. In FGD 12 working domestic women participated.

**Analysis of FGDs:**

Focus group discussion was held and 12 domestic working women participated. All females actively participated and discussed their socio-economic issues in detail. All the scored points are discussed below.

**Social Issues:**

- Domestic worker women when they go to work, mostly male members pass different types of comments. But, in the houses where they work are not harassed by owners.
- If domestic working women are young and beautiful then they are harassed in the houses where they work and also outside in streets.
- In the houses where domestic workers are employed they face different types of behaviors. Some worker's was of the opinion that behavior of house hold women is harsh with them. Especially when they ask for leave.
- In some houses they have to do extra work, for which they are not paid. For example, dusting, bringing grocery, vegetables or fruits, filling and putting bottles in fridge etc.
- In some houses they experience kind behavior. For extra work they are paid extra and also they get used dresses and other things. They get money in charity. Especially in holy months they get Fitra, Zakat and sadqas.
- Domestic workers are also blamed for stealing things from houses, for that they face harsh and insulting behavior.

**Economic issues:**

- Mostly rates of work are fixed in areas, and workers are satisfied with their salaries. Rs. 1000/month for washing dishes, Rs. 1000/month for cleaning houses, Rs.1500/month for washing clothes of houses having nuclear families or having homes on area of 80-120gz. For houses more than 200gz or in large families

usually salaries are Rs. 1500-2000 for washing dishes, cleaning houses and washing dishes. In most of houses women are fulltime employed and in such houses domestic workers take 10000-15000/month.

- Whatever women are earning they give all money to husbands or fathers. Even for daily expenses they don't keep some money with themselves.
- If they need money for creams, sweet suparis or other things of their use, they ask house hold women to rent them, give them in charity some amount or pay them in return of some extra work.
- Economically women are not dependent on their men. They live in rented houses and mostly the women pay rent and bear all expenses of their children.

### **Conclusion:**

Numbers of socio-economic problems were addressed by respondents in FGDs. In social problems women working in other's houses are harassed by neighbors, street passengers, and male members of family where they work and by owners of houses that they take on rent. Respondents reported insulting behavior of some women, and no pay for extra house chores in some houses. In other houses domestic workers are given respect, extra pay for extra work and additional money and stuffs in sadqa/zakat. All the respondents were satisfied with their pay, which is fixed for work according to house size. But women had to give all of her earnings to husbands/father or brother. For daily expenses working women had to ask for extra pay or charity. Analyzed data has shown domestic working women face more socio-economic at their own houses.

### **Recommendations:**

- i) Domestic work is also employment not slavery so they must be given right to work as defined by UDHR. Right to periodic leaves, fixed working hours for each activity
- ii) People who keep domestic workers to serve them have to ensure them favorable working conditions.
- iii) Harassment is issue of all working women so the domestic workers, should be treated strictly.
- iv) Adult education programs, programs on awareness on women rights can help to solve socio-economic problems of domestic working women.
- v) Government, especially ministry of women affairs should formulate such a legislation that protects domestic worker women.
- vi) Associations and unions fight for the rights of members, therefore, there is need to give awareness to domestic workers to form unions to protect their rights.

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