

Campaigns of Domestic Workers:

Informality is increasing across Globe. ILO estimates at around 53 million of domestic workers worldwide based on national surveys and/or census of 117 countries. However, experts claim that due to the fact that this kind of workers are often hidden and unregistered, the total number of domestic workers could be as high as 100 million. Accordingly, to the same estimate, in developing countries, they make up to at least 4 to 12 per cent of wage employment. Currently, in India 94% of the total workforce is in informal sector. More and more workers are turning to informal economy to earn their livelihoods due to lack of formal jobs. One such trade where more and more semi illiterate, poor, self-employed workers are turning to earn their livelihood is the Domestic work. So, there are high numbers of the domestic workers in India. According to ILO more that 83% of these workers are women or girls and many are migrant workers.

There are many types of the domestic workers- formalised i.e contractual, informal, full time, part time, migrant and so on.

Domestic workers are very scattered, unorganized and reluctant to get organized because they are not aware of their identity as workers and are always down trodden and fearful to come in public. It is very difficult to organize these workers. They are not aware of their identity as the workers. There is a need to explain to them that they are workers.

Main issues faced by domestic workers are lack of identity, lack of organization and visibility- as they are scattered, no protection under law, different rates of wages in different areas- Lack of similar wages, lack of social security, long hours of work, no employer-employee relationship as they work under different employer, no sustainability of work, meagre Wages – Wages according whims of the Employers and areas. In sophisticated area the wages are high as compared to mediocre area, sexual exploitation in some cases. many a cases employers put false offences of theft on the domestic workers

In some of the states Police also pressurise the employers to give photos and other details of the domestic workers and in many cases the worker loses her work due to lengthy police procedures.

There are lot of migrant workers have entered this field so the local workers lose their work. Due to lack of requisite protection under law, it is often seen that in many cases the employers refuses the payment of the worker even though he has done the work. The worker is enabling to file the case in court of law as he has no written evidence that she has done the work and she is in employment of that employer

System Gaps

- Domestic workers are very scattered, unorganised and reluctant to get organised and are not aware of their identity.
- The COVID-19 Pandemic have gravely affected the domestic workers.
- Socially the domestic workers were treated as untouchables as the householders feared that they might get affected simply by their presence
- Wages was the greatest issue.
- There are several cases of domestic violence and mental stress.

- SEWA had advocated successfully at the International level for C 189. But the same is not ratified in India
- In India the National Policy and Act for domestic workers are drafted but still not enacted
- The Central /States Government have no data on the domestic workers.
- These workers have no social protection.
- In case of cross borders/ interstate migrant domestic workers, they lose connection with the home town and family members. They have no means of communication if they or their family members suffer.

Major short term and long term campaigns

1. Organise, strengthen collective bargaining and capacity building of these workers
2. Make them aware of their dignity and fundamental rights as domestic workers.
3. Protect the rights of the domestic workers by advocating with Central and state Government
4. Advocate registration systems and facilitation centres for the domestic workers both at home town and at the work destination with the local/ state/central government and labour department's for coordination in both the states
5. Advocate for grievance redressal mechanism for the domestic workers especially for women which is accessible and inclusive in terms of language and distance especially addressing the sexual exploitation and abuse instances.

Short terms

1. Issuance of identity cards
2. Linking them to livelihood
3. Ensuring proper wages through negotiations with concerned householders
4. Linking them with social security