

# Socio-Economic status of Female Domestic Workers of Meerut

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**ABSTRACT:** *With the process of development, the status of female in the Indian society have also changed Today, besides her household duties her contribution in the workforce has increased . Working women of the middle –class, in cities try to fill care and household chores gap with the support of domestic workers. These domestic workers have become an indispensable part of their daily life. This study is an endeavour to focus on Socio-Economic status of female domestic workers of Meerut city. These workers face unfavourable working and living conditions in their life. Long working hours, low earnings, job insecurity and inferior social status increase the intensity of their suffering. Moreover, the issues of class, gender and ethnicity heightens the problem of weak bargaining power of these workers. Therefore, there are multiple reasons for which they need more attention of the society.*

**Key Words:** *Female Domestic Worker, Informal Sector, Socio-Economic Status.*

## Introduction

Female has always been an inseparable partner of male in the process of development. The changing pattern of progress has resulted into diverse modulations in the society, reflected not only in the structure of the family but also in the duties of the female too. Today, besides her household duties her contribution in the workforce has increased. With the introduction of new technologies, she has to prove her compatibility. This has created a vacuum in care work and household chores. Working women of the middle –class, in cities try to fill this gap with the support of domestic workers. These domestic workers have become an indispensable part of their daily life. As per Human Development Report (2015), globally an estimated 53 million people ages 15 and older are in paid domestic work, of these, 83% are women. According to the Report of International Labour Organisation (2015), In India 3.05 million women are involved in domestic work. Domestic worker as defined by International Labour Organization include, “Any person engaged in domestic work, within an employment relationship.” Domestic work is an avenue of employment expanding rapidly for the poor, illiterate, unskilled women in the informal sector. Domestic work is influentially female dominated sector, which is poorly regulated and unprotected by labour laws. They perform different tasks mopping, cleaning, laundry and child care in the private sphere encountering poor working conditions.

## Review of Literature

Yeoh, Huang and Gonzalaz III (1999), examine the impact of migrated domestic labourers over the economy of Singapore. They discuss that globalization process has resulted into increasing demand for domestic workers in Singapore, which already faces acute labour shortage problem. Migrated domestic help have become indispensable for the smooth functioning of household chores and for maintaining the quality of life. Being an advanced economy, females remarkably become part of human resource. This process of transformation has various serious effects over the economy and an earnest government concern is desired to tackle the issue. Feminisation has been the pivot of this cycle specifically. To control the situation government has imposed different checks but even then, it is flourishing day by day. The researchers ponder over the threat that could result into long term economic and social cost for the country.

Elias (2010), in her work exhibits the role of migrant female domestic workers in Malaysian economy as a key player due to marketization of social reproductive relations. Middle-class households in Malaysia fill the care-gap with the help of these vulnerable workers. These are actually veiled workers bound to work in informal sector, deprived of basic human rights and exposed to gender base inequality in workplace. Further she explores the position and capacity of institution of international recognition, International Labour Organisation, United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM) along with Malaysian local NGO's like Women's Aid Organisation (WAO) in resolving the problems and issues of this under class of workers facing

gender and racial based discrimination. While conducting the researcher emphasizes on the ratification of the socio-economic rights of these invisible workers.

Gothoskar (2013), inquires the transformation of female labour from unpaid domestic work to paid domestic work. During the process of industrialisation and globalization it has become inevitable for the lower income class, to survive without female's economic contribution to the family. Marketization of domestic work has provided an opportunity of betterment to these vulnerable workers. Historically female in India have been intentionally confined to household chores in form of social and cultural boundaries formed by the patriarchal society. Non – recognition of female's work, gender based inequality and female empowerment has been the major issues of feminist movement. Domestic work sector is flourishing day by day, known by multiple names for instance care work, emotional labour, globalization of mothering migration and globalisation from below etc.

Sengupta and Sen (2013), in their work focus on diverse aspects of wage determination. Beside the role of economic, social and cultural factors focal point of the study is wage calculation and standardization have been investigated. This work represents the findings of a research project conducted in Kolkata consisting sample size of 154 female domestic workers. Determination and standardization of wages of these workers is an uphill task due to the nature of this job. There are multiple problems such as variation in wages, multiple employers and multiplicity of wages in practice, lack of formal contract etc. Role of recruiting agency and status of unionising among domestic workers has also been critically examined, the former acts just as an inter-mediator and unionisation is in the stage of infancy bringing no benefits to these workers.

### Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to analyze the Socio-Economic status of part time female domestic workers of Meerut.

### Methodology and Area of the Study

The present study is based on descriptive research design. Non-randomized convenience sampling technique is adopted. Required information from 150 part time domestic maids of Meerut of Uttar Pradesh is collected with the help of structured interview schedule. Relevant data have been classified and tabulated under different heads as per requirement. The results have been presented in Percentage and charts.

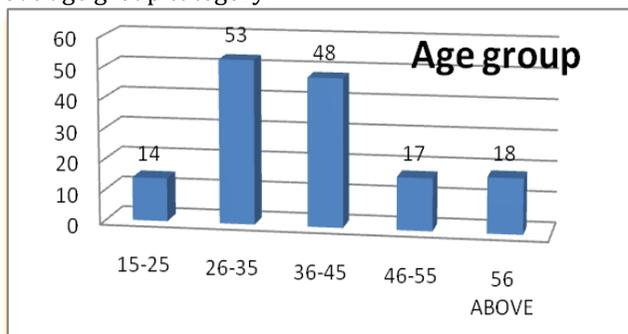
### Results of the Study

**Table 1: Age of the respondents**

FACTORS	PARTICULARS	NO.OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
AGE	15-25	14	9.33
	26-35	53	35.33
	36-45	48	32.00
	46-55	17	11.33
	56 ABOVE	18	12.00
TOTAL		150	100.00

**Source: based on field survey**

Table 1 presents age structure of the female domestic workers. 9.33% the workers are in the category 15-25, 35.33% are of 26-35 age group, 32% falls in the 36-45 age group, 11.33% are in category 46-55 and 12% are found in the 56 and above age group category.



**Figure 1**

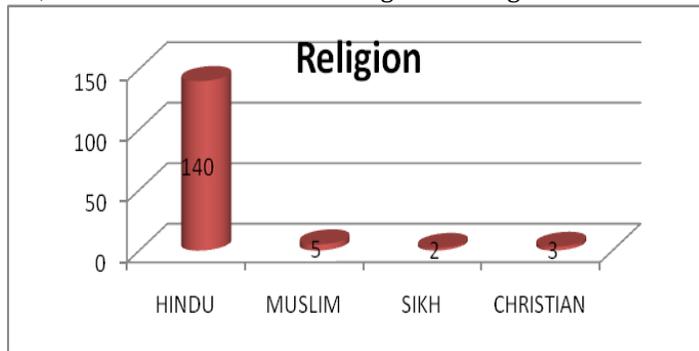
Figure 1 exhibit that highest numbers of workers belong to the age group 26-35 and lowest number falls in the age category 15-25.

**Table 2: Religion of the respondents**

FACTORS	PARTICULARS	NO.OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
RELIGION	HINDU	140	93.33
	MUSLIM	5	3.33
	SIKH	2	1.33
	CHRISTIAN	3	2.00
TOTAL		150	100.00

Source: based on field survey

Table 2 describes the religious composition of female domestic workers. Majority of the workers 93.33% are Hindu, 3.33% Muslims, 1.33% are Sikh and remaining 2% belong to the Christian religion.



**Figure 2**

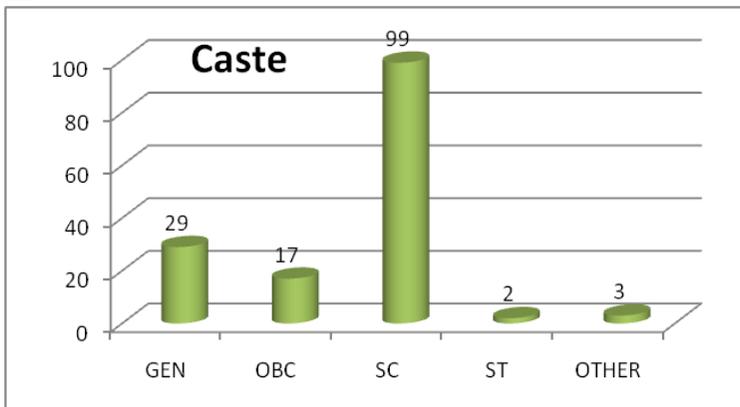
Figure 2 depicts that substantial number of workers belong to Hindu religion while Muslims, Sikh and Christian constitute a meagre section of the workers.

**Table 3: Caste of the respondents**

FACTORS	PARTICULARS	NO.OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
CASTE	GEN	29	19.33
	OBC	17	11.33
	SC	99	66.00
	ST	2	1.33
	OTHER	3	2.00
TOTAL		150	100.00

Source: based on field survey

Table 3 highlights the caste composition of the female domestic workers. 19.33% belong to Gen Category, 11.33% to OBC category, 66% to SC category, 1.33% to ST Category and remaining 2% were migrants, Bangladeshi and Nepali.



**Figure 3**

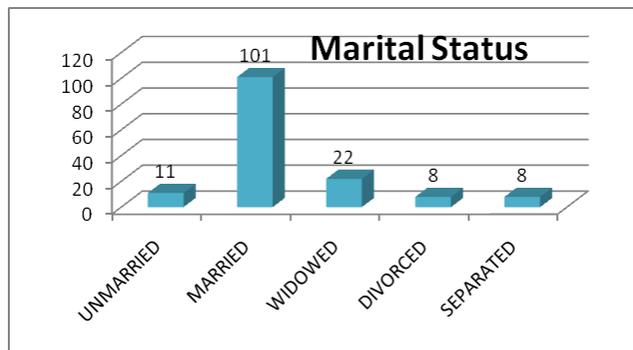
It is evident from the figure 3 that lions share is constituted by SC category of workers and Bangladeshi and Nepali workers are also working in the city.

**Table 4: Marital Status of the respondents**

FACTORS	PARTICULARS	NO.OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
MARITAL STATUS	UNMARRIED	11	7.33
	MARRIED	101	67.33
	WIDOWED	22	14.67
	DIVORCED	8	5.33
	SEPARATED	8	5.33
TOTAL		150	100.00

Source: based on field survey

Table 4 discloses the marital status of the female domestic workers. Out of total workers 7.33% are unmarried, 67.33% are married, 14.67% are widow, 5.33% are divorced and remaining 5.33% are separated from their spouse.



**Figure 4**

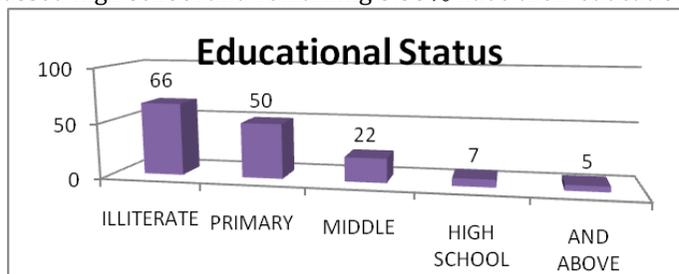
Figure 4 shows that majority of the workers are married and are trying to supplement their family income, while widowed, divorcee and separated workers are single breadwinner in the family fighting alone against all odds.

**Table 5: Educational status of the respondents**

FACTORS	PARTICULARS	NO.OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
EDUCATION	ILLITERATE	66	44.00
	PRIMARY	50	33.33
	MIDDLE	22	14.67
	HIGH SCHOOL	7	4.67
	AND ABOVE	5	3.33
TOTAL		150	100.00

Source: based on field survey

Table 5 reveals that 44% of the workers are illiterate, 33.33% have primary education, 14.67% are middle pass, only 4.67% have passed high school and remaining 3.33% have their education above high school.



**Figure 5**

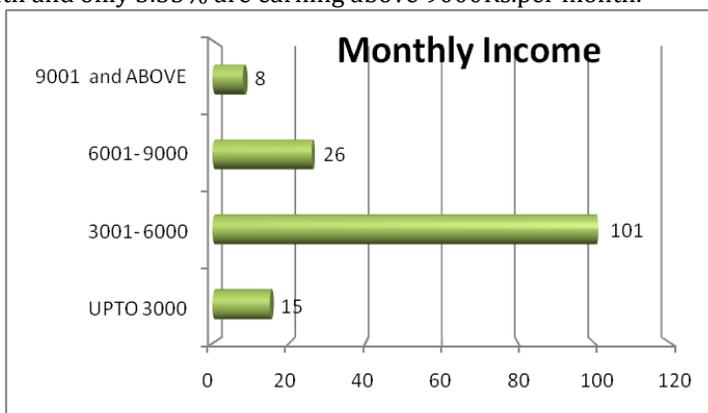
Figure 5 presents educational attainment of the workers. Majority of the workers belong to illiterate category while very few have received high school and above high school level of education.

**Table 6: Monthly Income of the respondents**

FACTORS	PARTICULARS	NO.OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
MONTHLY INCOME (Rs.)	UPTO 3000	15	10.00
	3001- 6000	101	67.33
	6001- 9000	26	17.33
	9001 and ABOVE	8	5.33
TOTAL		150	100.00

Source: based on field survey

Table 6 highlights the monthly income based categorization of the workers. 10% of the workers are earning up-to 3000Rs.per month, 67.33% falls in the category 3001-6000Rs.per month, 17.33% have income up to 6001-9000Rs.per month and only 5.33% are earning above 9000Rs.per month.



**Figure 6**

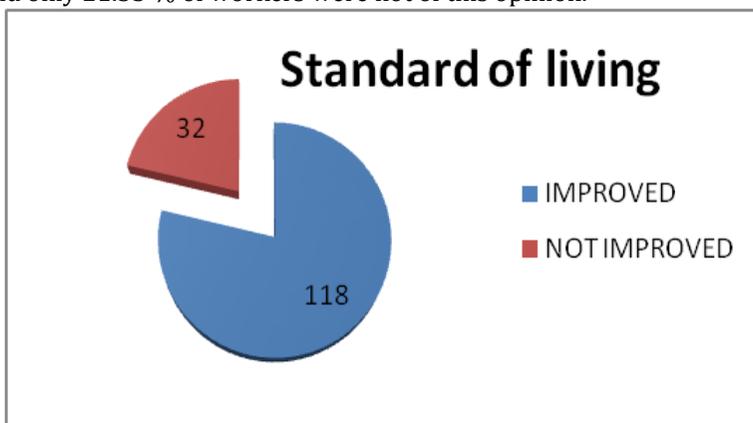
It is evident that highest numbers of workers are earning in the category 3001-6000 Rs. Per month while highest income category workers are few.

**Table 7: Standard of living of the respondents**

PARTICULARS	NO.OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
IMPROVED	118	78.67
NOT IMPROVED	32	21.33
TOTAL	150	100.00

Source: based on field survey

Table 7 represents the improvement in living standard of female domestic workers after their entry in this job. 78.67 % workers experienced improvement in their living standard, after they started working as domestic workers and only 21.33 % of workers were not of this opinion.



**Figure 7**

Figure 7 shows that majority of the respondents accepted improvement in their standard of living while a meagre section disagreed to this.

### Conclusion

Domestic work is one of the fastest developing informal sector activities, which is dominated by unskilled or under-skilled females, coming from the impoverished section of the society. Lack of proper education and training, insufficient income of husband, hampered by caste and creed barriers and moreover compelled by basic needs they are pushed into this invisible and non-recognised work. Absence of cohesiveness among workers and exclusion from the labour laws expose them to different type of exploitation. Therefore it becomes imperative for the government to take proper initiatives for the betterment of this vulnerable class of workers.

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