

SURVEY OF DOMESTIC WORKERS

The unorganized sector workers comprise a substantial quantum, estimated to be approximately 93% of the total workforce of the country today, and domestic workers alone contribute over 20 million to this figure. Statistics show that out of this 20 million, 90% are women workers and 70% belong to slums and JJ Clusters, mostly poverty driven migrants from states such as Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, UP and Odisha. Most of these workers who come from economically backward sections of the society, are poorly educated and are unskilled since this entire sector is professionally unrecognized. The on-going COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed these domestic workers to potential harassment, discrimination, and exploitation. DWSSC (Domestic Workers for Sector Skill Council), the apex body for Domestic Workers in the country set up under the aegis of Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, is trying to help as many domestic workers as possible affected from the COVID-19 pandemic. DWSSC has been striving to organize the domestic workers of this country to empower, skill, and enable them to aspire for more in terms of the social space as well as economic progress.

During the lockdown domestic workers were disallowed to work although the government advised the employers to pay them for the period. Unfortunately, vast majority of these unorganized domestic workers being paid in cash have been deprived of their small earnings and livelihood, resulting in huge hardship and reverse migration. While the restrictions to work on domestic workers were lifted from May 4 2020 onwards, it has been reported from most parts of the country that the employers had refused to permit them to come for work. This has further worsened their already adverse economic situations.

Realising the immediate need to analyse the condition of domestic workers, DWSSC conducted a survey by contacting a random sample group of 200 relatively better off domestic workers of 8 states – Delhi, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Assam, West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Tamil Nadu. The findings of the survey are as follows:

1. 38% of the domestic workers mentioned that they are facing problem of arrangement of food as the stocks in the nearby shops are limited. Though not all but some also mentioned that they are facing problem in getting ration provided by Govt. as well.
2. 30% of the domestic workers told that they don't have enough money with them and this is the biggest challenge as they don't know how long they will be able to manage with

that. The majority of them are those whose employers are not paying them for the lockdown period.

3. 25% of the workers say that they are not facing any such specific problem of food and majority of these workers are those who have returned back to their native place or whose employers are paying them salary of the lockdown period as well.
4. 96% of the domestic workers are not going to work during lockdown while only 4% are still working.
5. 85% domestic workers mentioned that their employers are not paying for the lockdown period while only 15% are being paid. The majority of the workers of big cities are being paid by their employers.
6. 23.5% of domestic workers migrated back to their native place as their spouse/ fathers were daily wage workers like painters, mason etc. These workers are majorly from the big cities. 76.5% workers are still staying in the cities/ towns where they work as they are living with their families.
7. Only 41.5% of the domestic workers were aware about the Govt. Helplines to avail the facilities being provided during the lockdown period.
8. Majority of the domestic workers (98.5%) are aware about the precautions should be taken to be safe from COVID-19.