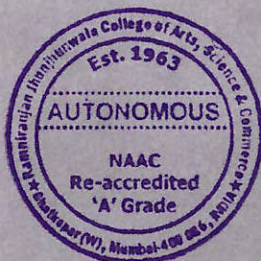


LABOUR MIGRATION: POST COVID 19

Editor
M. NAYAS




PRINCIPAL
RAMNIRANJAN JHUNJHUNWALA COLLEGE
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LABOUR MIGRATION: POST COVID 19

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CONTENTS

Chapter	Title	Page No.
I	MIGRANTS AND ECONOMY: A TWO FACES OF SAME COIN Prof. S.G. Gollagi & Prof. H.R. Zinage	1
II	IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON ENTREPRENEURS PERSISTENCE IN CRISIS SITUATION IN KARNATAKA Dr. Sony Hiremath & Veena Ishwarappa Bhavikatti	9
III	ESSENTIALS OF HOSPITALITY WORK FORCE POST COVID 19 I.M. Karthikeyan	15
IV	A STUDY ON EMPLOYEE WELLBEING & OCCUPATION ALSAFETY PRACTICES AT INDIA TOBACCO COMPANY LIMITED Dr. N. Siva Surendra & Mrs. A. Siva Naga Lakshmi	22
V	CORONA VIRUS CATASTROPHE: OPPORTUNITIES AND DISRUPTION FOR INDIA M.N. Prabadevi	29
VI	"THE HOMELESSNESS OF MIGRANT LABORS DURING LOCKDOWN: A 21 st CENTURY ALIENATION" V. Sabarinathan	34
VII	MIND CONTROL: PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT, WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH DURING COVID-19 K. Vigneshwar	40

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XIV	LABOUR WELFARE: POST COVID 19 Dr. D. Radha & S.R. Veronica Valli	241
XV	LABOUR WELFARE IN MODERN INDIAN CONTEXT: A REVIEW Dr. P. Balathandayutham	249
XXVI	IMPACT OF LOCKDOWN ON HOUSEHOLD HELPS IN INDIA AND PROBLEM FACED BY THEM Akash Gupta & Ketaki Goraksha	254
XXVII	REVERSE MIGRATION AND RURAL UNEMPLOYMENT AMID COVID-19 Augustine Joseph & Eva Mishra	270
XXVIII	MIGRATION AND REVERSE MIGRATION IN THE AGE OF COVID-19 Dr. Kalpana Naidu C & Dr. Kanchana Naidu	279
XXIX	"LABOUR MIGRATION ON H-IT-A-T- E DUE TO COVID-19" Mr. R. Balakrishnan & Mrs. K. Pavithra Balakrishnan	290
XXX	RE-EMERGENCE OF ENTREPRENEURS - POST COVID 19 R. Esther Hepziba & Dr. Florence John	301
XXXI	POST COVID-19 DISTRESS OF INTER- STATE LABOUR MIGRANTS: FAILURE OF LABOUR REGULATIONS IN INDIA EXPOSED Dr. Ritu Mathur Mitra	314
XXXII	SOCIAL SECURITIES OF MIGRANT WORKERS IN TIRUPUR TEXTILE INDUSTRY: POST COVID 19 Dr. V. Muthulakshmi	327

XXXIII	TEXTILE INDUSTRY WORKER AN OVERVIEW D. Rajasekar & Dr. M. Murasoli	345
XXXIV	THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON LABOUR MIGRANTS IN INDIA Dr. Sai Bhavani Sevela & Ms. Saileja Sevela	351

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**IMPACT OF LOCKDOWN ON HOUSEHOLD HELPS IN
INDIA AND PROBLEM FACED BY THEM**

(With Reference To Mumbai Metropolitan Region)

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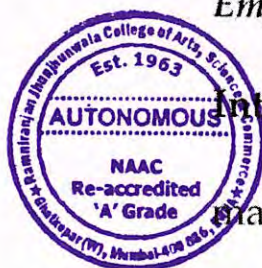
Abstract

Coronavirus is a new strain on humanity that has proven 'No one is safe until Everyone is safe'. The virus is taking its toll on the world, causing deaths, illnesses, etc., the Government had only one option left, to impose a lockdown to combat this deadly virus. During lockdown as movement of every person got completely restricted in general, this affected the domestic workers (household helps) as well. The domestic workers who are a vital functioning of our homes are facing acute financial hardships because of the lockdown. Domestic functioning in India has traditionally been situated at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy with low social status and institutional ignorance. Where domestic workers are now seen as carriers of the virus, it should be kept in mind the virus was first brought into the country by those who travelled internationally and this is not a disease only of poor. Perhaps 'Working from home has meant little to those who work in others homes'. Focusing on the prevailing lockdown situation during this pandemic situation the study highlights the 'Impact of lockdown on household helps in India and problems faced by them.'

Keywords: COVID-19, Lockdown, Domestic Workers, Household Employers.

Introduction:

Coronavirus is a communicable disease, spreading in many parts of the world including India, causing respiratory



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tract infections and illnesses ranging from common cold to severe diseases such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic on 11th, March 2020. Considering this the Indian Government has announced several defensive measures to reduce the entry and spread of coronavirus in the country & imposed a lockdown on 25th March, 2020. The Mumbai (MMR) region has topped the table when it comes to COVID-19 cases followed by Delhi, Chennai, Ahmedabad and Pune.

With lockdown being the need of the hour to tackle this crisis. It gave a completely new perspective of how world looks like confined within the four walls of our home. With lockdown having a life changing impact on the lives of several people. The one marginalized section of the society finding it hard to survive are the domestic workers. No work, No wages domestic workers remain worst affected in Mumbai (MMR) as it is one of the region's in country which has their highest population. Domestic workers in India are often forced to be dependent on their employers because they have no legal protection in a country with population of more than 135 crores, where around 6% of the population is employed as domestic workers.

There is no doubt that the coronavirus epidemic has affected all sections of society, but domestic help, which is in high demand in urban areas such as Mumbai MMR, is the most affected, most of them not receiving wages during the period of lockdown and many are being fired from their jobs too.

According to International Labor Organization (ILO) convention 189, a domestic worker is 'any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship'.

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A household worker may work on a full-time or part-time basis, may be employed by one or more domestic employers, may reside in the employer's home (live-in) or may reside in his or her own residence (live-out). A domestic worker may be living in other country of which he/she is not a national. As this work mostly centers around cooking, cleaning, washing and other types of care-works it becomes invisible and undervalued. Therefore it is categorized under informal and unskilled job without any constitutional guarantees. Due to lack of education, economic resources people mostly from socio-backward classes enter this domain of work. With now lockdown extending day-by-day these people are suffering from reduction in working hours, in some cases loss of jobs and facing a number of problems.

There are instances wherein they are not paid their salaries and dues of the month of March because of the unexpected lockdown. Many housing societies have restricted the entry of domestic workers and outsiders because of which they are not able to work as well as not allowed to work and employers have not paid the salaries of months of April, May & June as they don't have the option of paid leaves, due to absence of salaries it has become difficult for them to manage their basic household expenses like groceries, rentals etc., Some added expenses of sanitizers and essential medicines have made a hole in their pocket. Another serious problem is of workers facing social boycott and are being stigmatized for spreading the virus. In many cases women are more vulnerable as 90% of domestic workers are women and are the sole breadwinners of their family. Laid off from work, no salary and overload of expenses has a considerable impact on their mental health too. Uncertainty of future as they do not know how long the virus will be there and any chances of vaccine coming up are other stressful instances they face. Considering

this a study is conducted to analyze the impact of lockdown on domestic workers.

Review of Literature:

Impact of COVID19 Crisis on Loss of Jobs & Hours among Domestic Workers- International Labor Org (ILO), 15th June, 2020: The research highlights the countries, regions, territories coming under the coronavirus with a graph showing its rapid increase day by day and the lockdown imposed in various countries causing a significant impact on domestic workers in the current Covid19 scenario.

COVID Impact on Condition of Domestic Workers-Survey by Domestic Workers Sector Skill Council (DWSSC), 27th May, 2020: The survey focuses on the testimonials of the domestic workers in major metros across India. It also provides a statistical data of their population distribution and their migration pattern and states from which majority of them come from. It further highlights the rights of domestic workers.

Objective of the Study:

1. To study the impact of lockdown on the lives of domestic workers in the region of Mumbai (MMR).
2. To know about the socio- economic background of the domestic workers and analyze the impact of lockdown on their earnings.
3. To find out the problems faced by domestic workers during the lockdown period.
4. To suggest and recommend some effective measures to cope with any such situation in near future.

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Methodology of the Study:

1. Primary Sources:

The primary data has been collected from the 38 respondents through questionnaire by using a random convenience sampling method.

2. Secondary sources:

The data has been referred from some websites, articles published by the International Labour Organization, Times of India, Economic Times, The Hindu & India Today news telecast.

3. Limitations:

1. The data has been collected from the response received by the respondents, so it is purely subjective in nature.
2. The data has been collected from the respondents residing in the Chembur and its neighboring region which comes under the MMR.

Results and Discussion:

A) DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS:

1. **Gender:** All respondents are female i.e. all 38 respondents (100%) are female respondents.

2. Age :

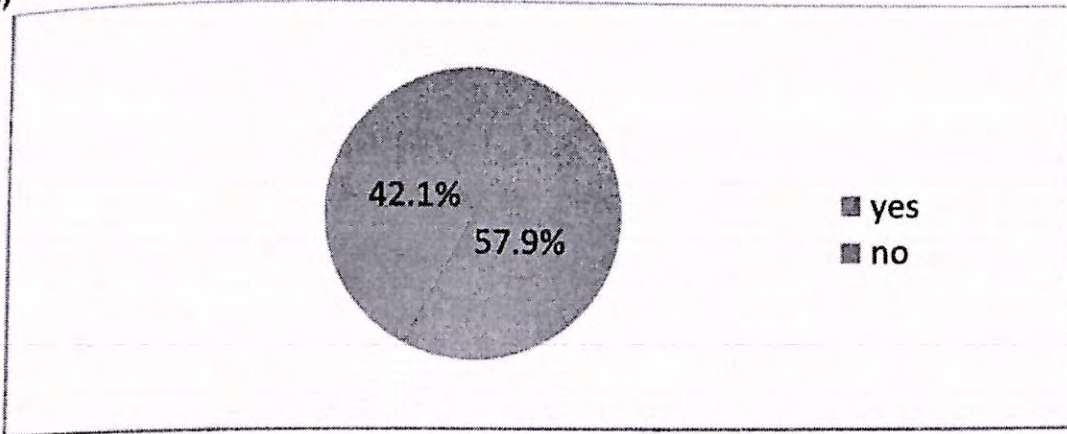
Age	No. of Household Helps	%
18-30	9	23.7%
30-45	24	63.2%
45 & above	5	13.2%

It is observed that a majority of household helpers belong to the age group of 30-45 years (24 out of 38) i.e. 63.2%.

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3. Earning Members in family
 i) Sole Earning Members.



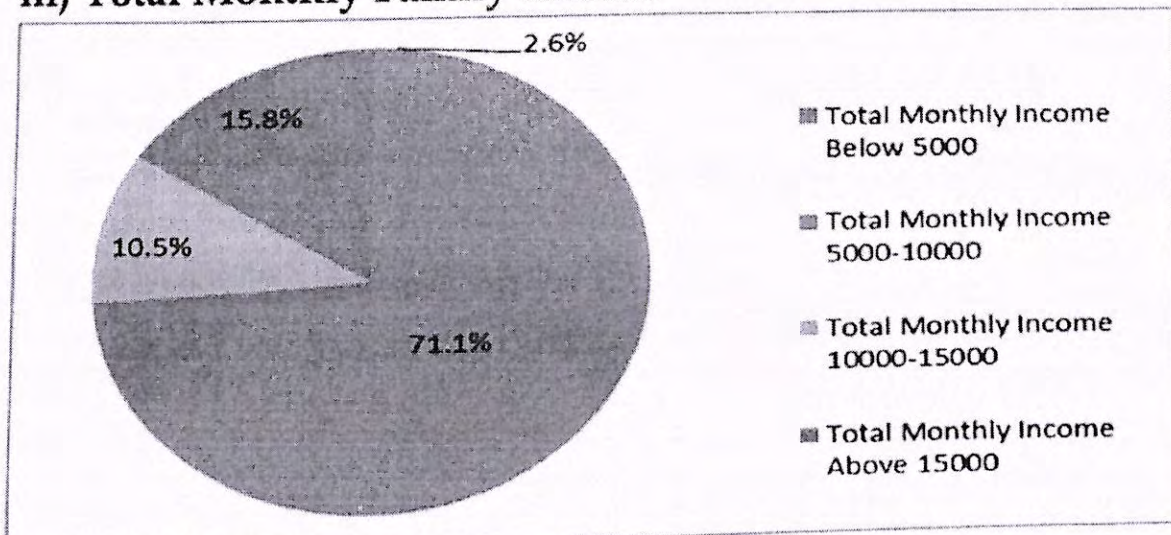
Majority of the household helpers are the sole bread winners in their family (22 out of 38) i.e. 57.9%

ii) More 2 Earning Members in family

Other Earning Members	No. of Household Helps	%
2	14	87.5%
3	2	12.5%
4	-	-

It is seen that other than the household helpers. Majority of them have 2 other earning members in their family (14 out of 38) i.e.; 87.5%

iii) Total Monthly Family Income



The data shows majority of the household helpers fall in the income group of 5,000-10,000 (27 out of 38) i.e. 71.1% followed by above 15,000; 10,000-15,000; below 5,000. (15.8%, 10.5%, 2.6% respectively)

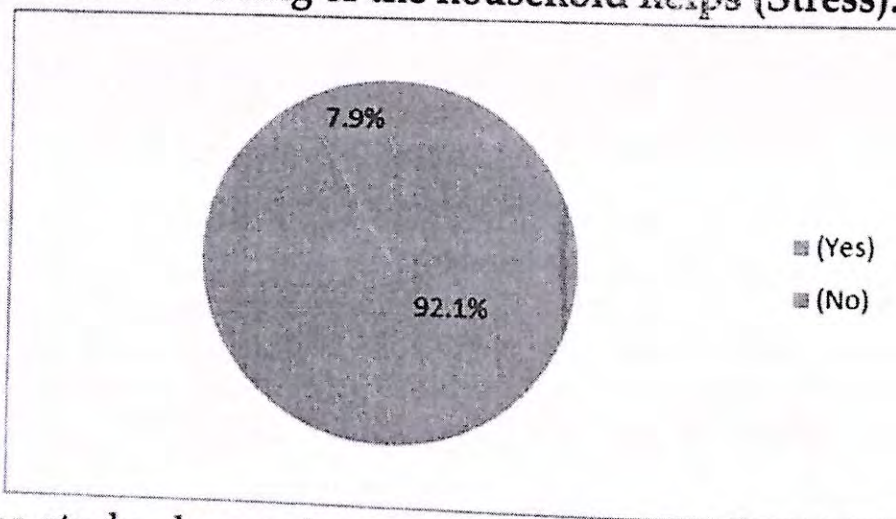
B) PERSONAL FACTORS (PROBLEMS FACED):

1. Number of households they work.

No. of households working	No. of Household Helps	%
Only 1	11	28.9%
2-3	23	60.5%
3 & above	4	10.5%

Most of the household helpers work in 2-3 households followed by 1 household and 3 or above households (i.e. 60.5%, 28.9%, and 10.5% respectively)

2. Mental Well-being of the household helps (Stress).

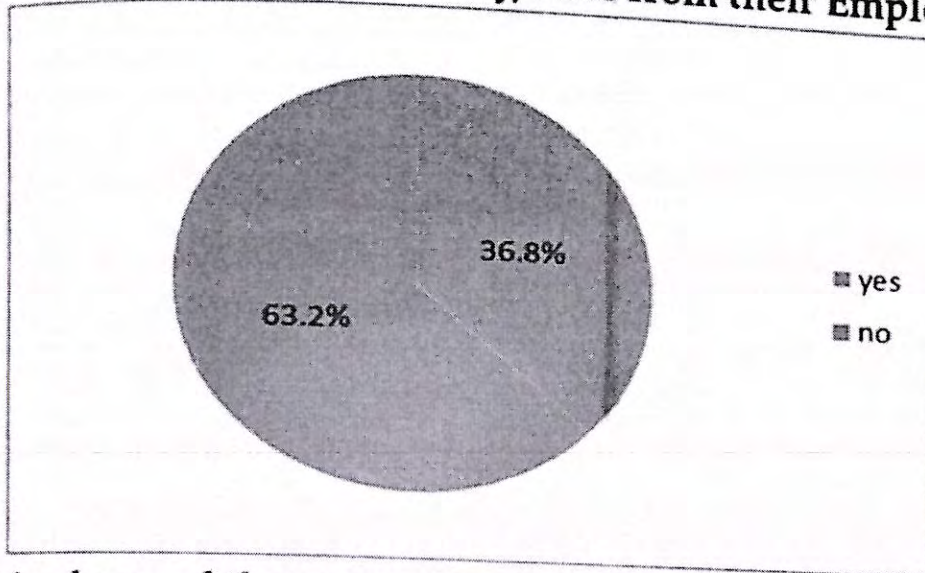


The study shows almost all of the household helpers felt stressful during the lockdown period (35 out of 38) i.e. 92.1%

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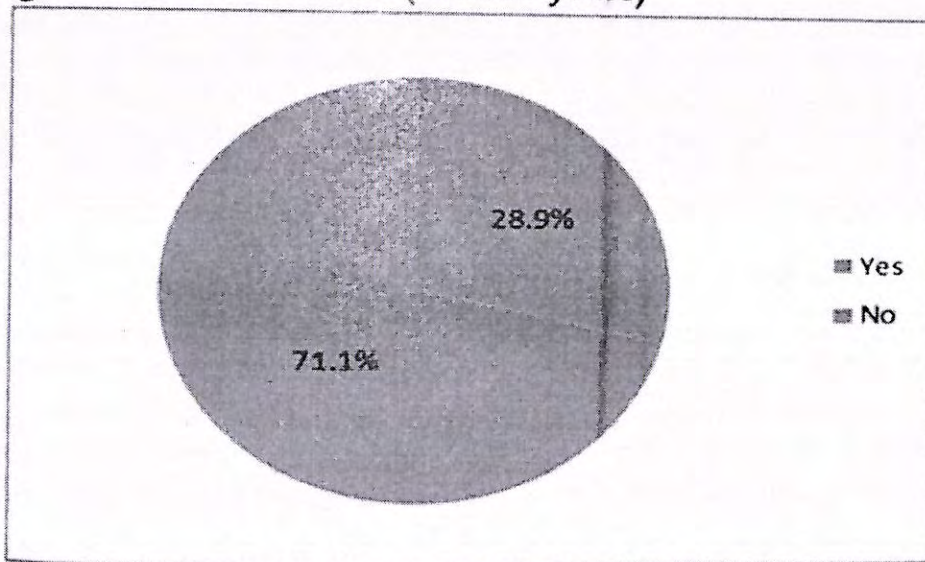
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3. Received any pending salary/dues from their Employer.



It is observed that more than half of the household helpers didn't receive any pending salary/dues from their employer (24 out of 38) i.e. 63.2%.

4. Employer paying salary or providing any financial aid during lockdown months (March-June)

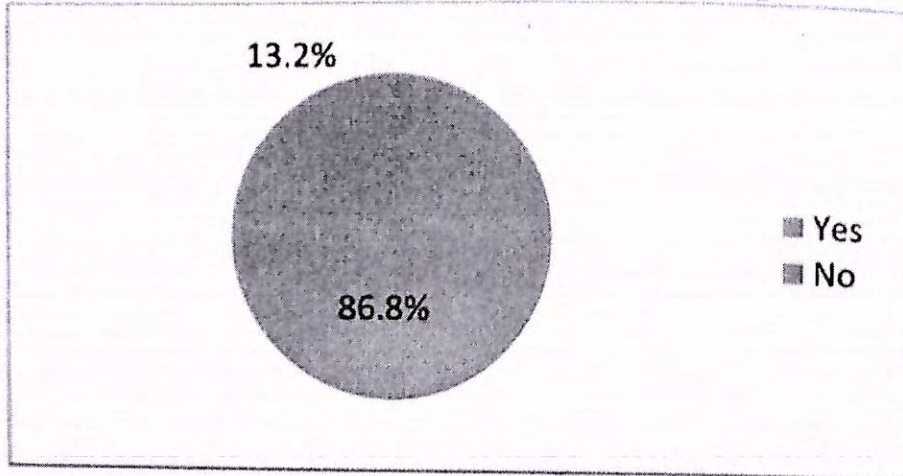


Data shows maximum of the household helpers were not paid by their employers during the lockdown months (27 out of 38) i.e. 71.1%.

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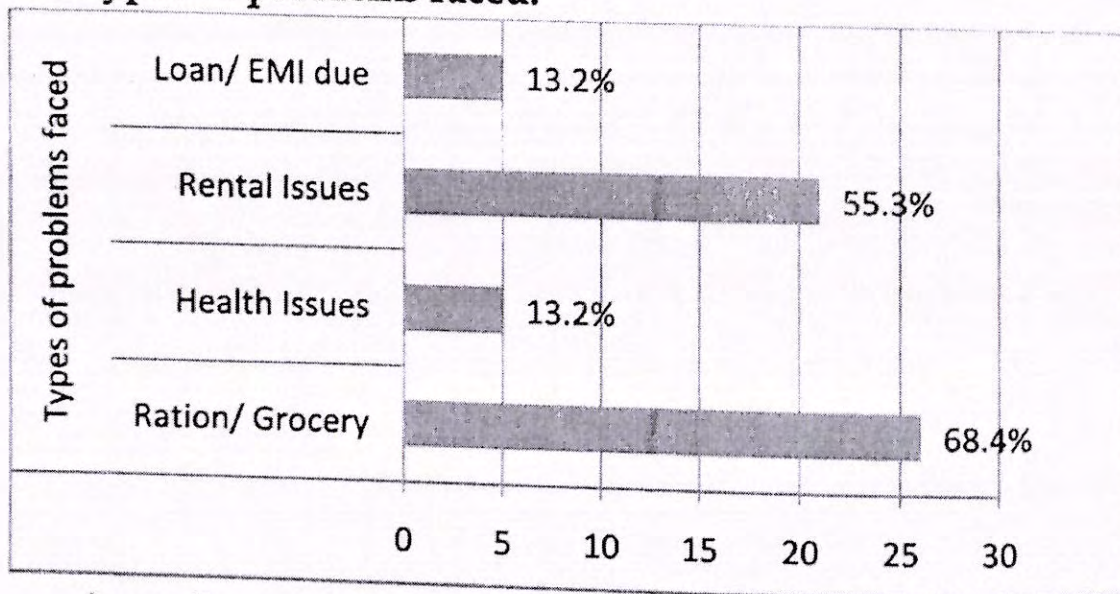
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5. Difficulty in managing their household expenses.




The study says majority of household helpers faced difficulties while managing their household expenses (33 out of 38) i.e. 86.8%.

6. Types of problems faced.

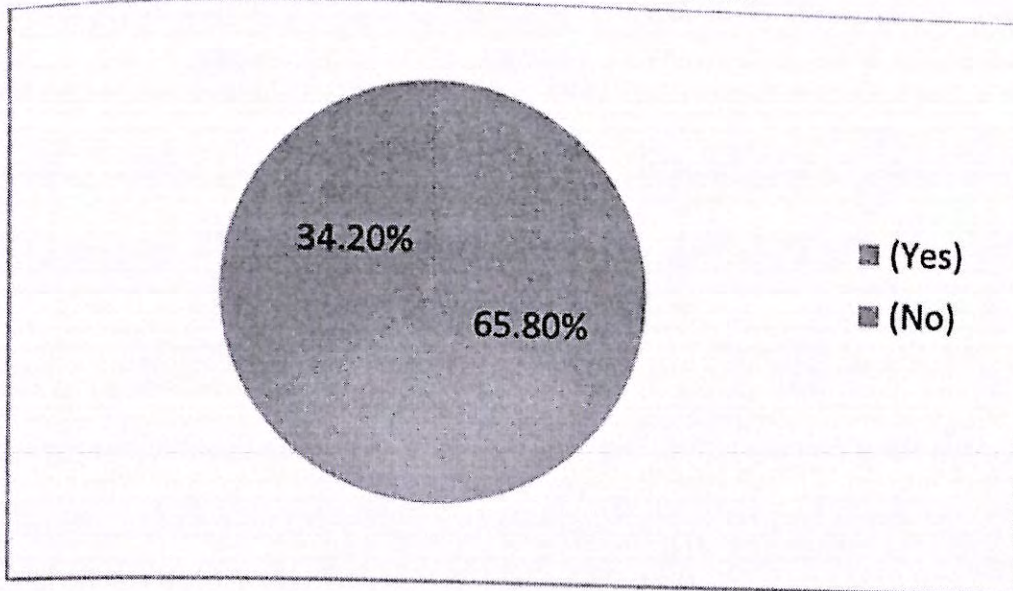


According to the study majority of the household helpers faced ration/grocery problems (26 out of 38) i.e. 68.4% followed by problems like rental issues, health issues, loan/EMI due (55.3%, 13.2%, 13.2% respectively)

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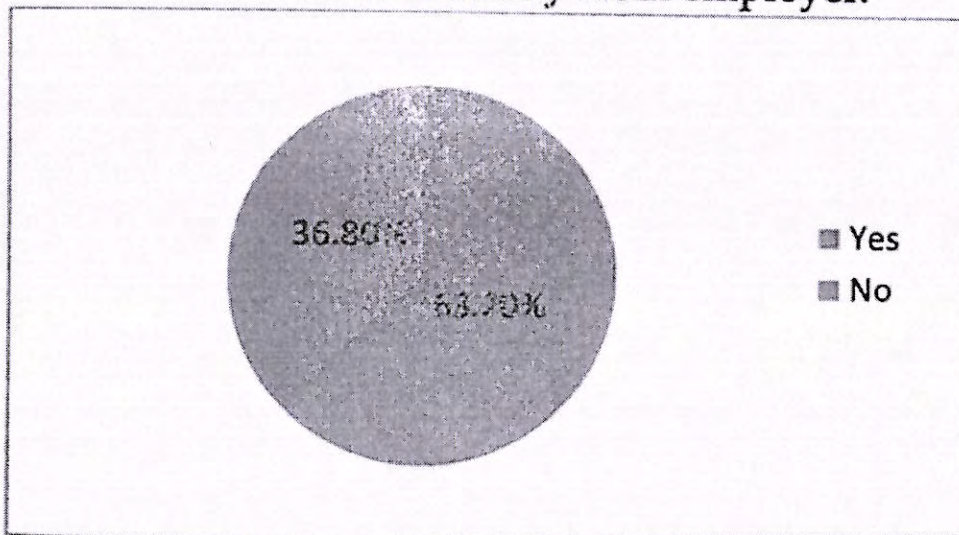

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7. Dependence on free ration distributed.




Majority of the household helpers are dependent on free ration distributed (25 out of 38) i.e. 65.8%.

8. Whether asked advance salary from employer.



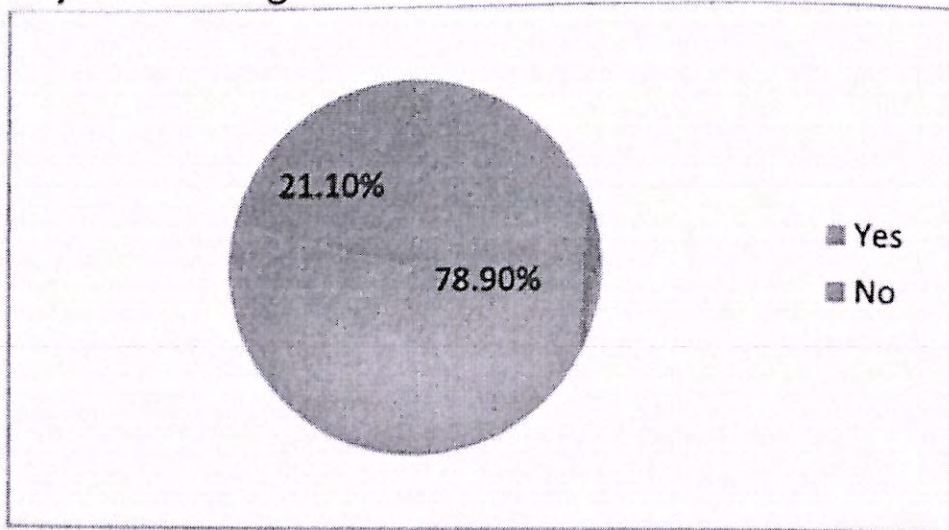
Majority of the household helpers had asked for advanced salary from their employers (24 out of 38) i.e. 63.2%.

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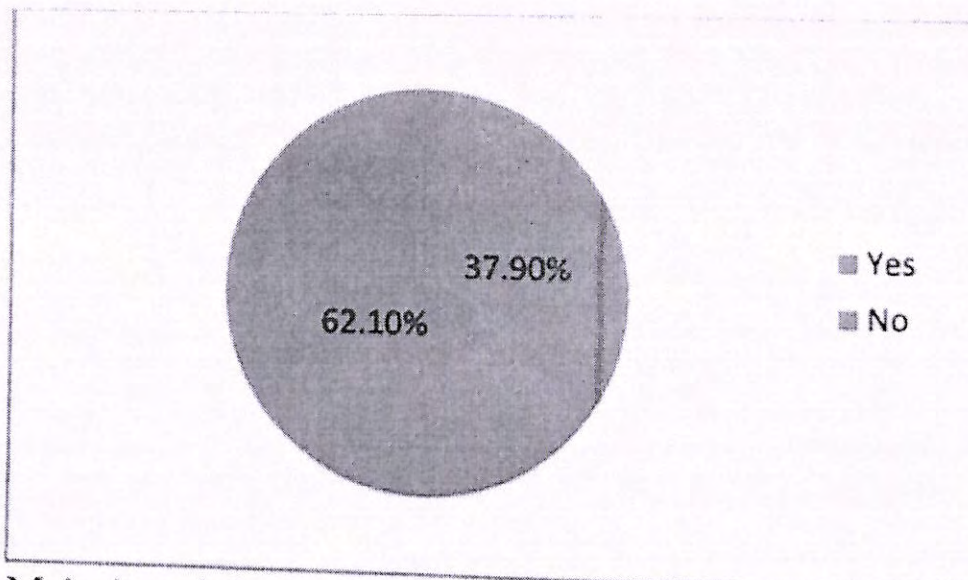
9. Residing in rental home

i) Yes/No residing in a rental home.




Majority of the household helpers reside in rental homes (30 out of 38) i.e. 78.9%.

ii) (If yes) If residing in a rental home, did they face cooperation from their landlord

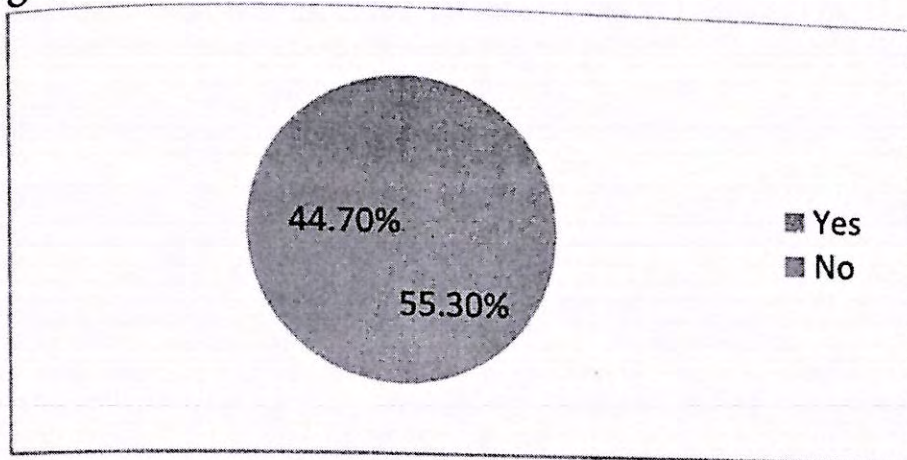


Majority of the household helpers didn't face cooperation from their landlord (18 out of 38) i.e. 62.1%.

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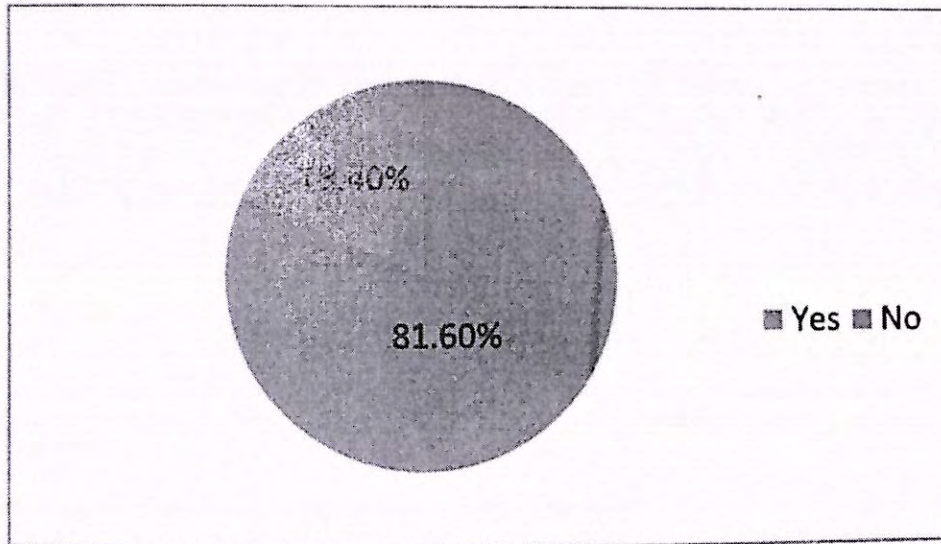
10. Possession of any savings to fulfill their basic needs during lockdown.



Here the data shows no major difference between the household helpers who have savings where 55.31% have no savings and 44.7% have savings.


c) Social Factors

1. Restrictions faced while visiting housing society/their workplace.

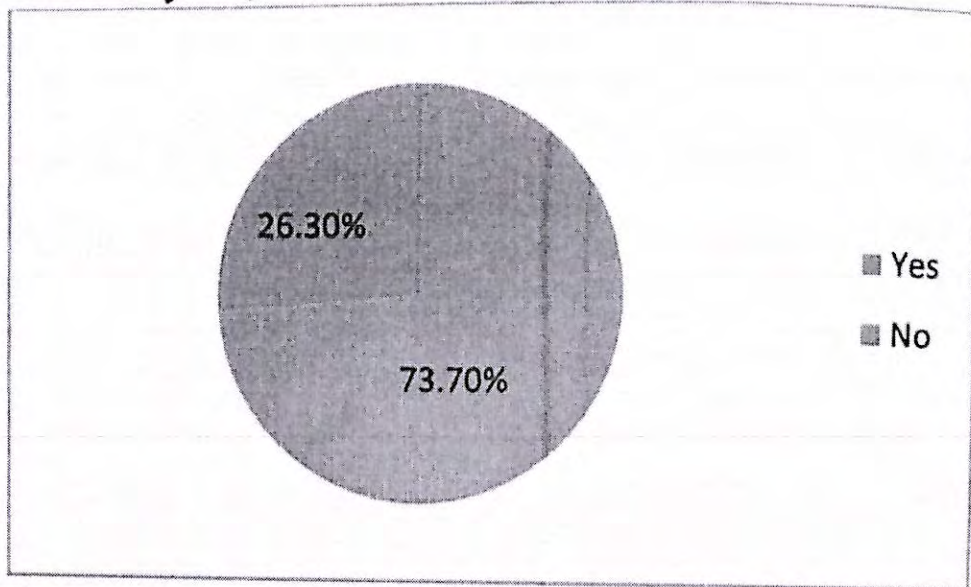


Majority of the household helpers faced the restrictions (31 out of 38) i.e. 81.6%.

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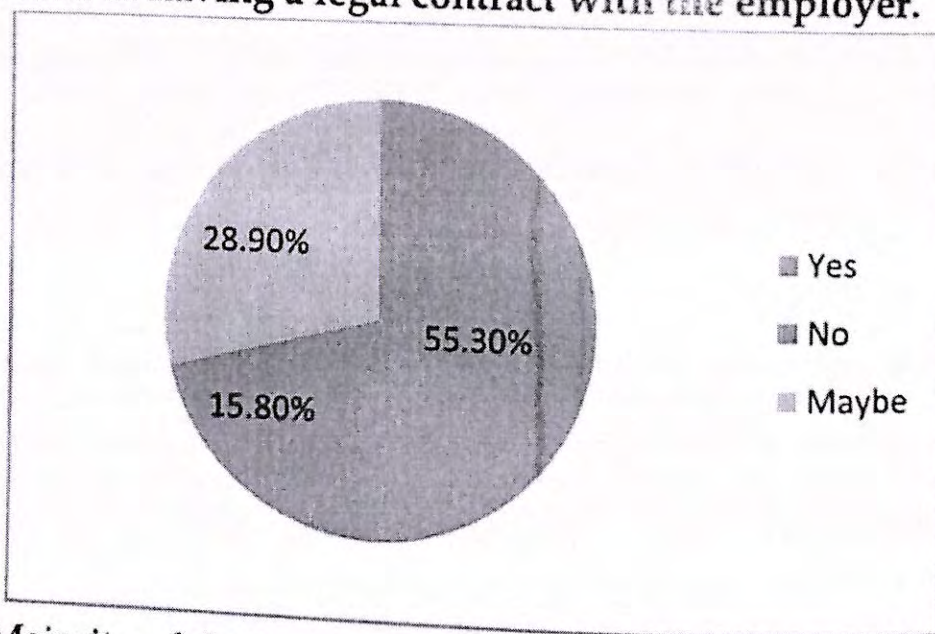
2. Social boycott/bias from employer/society.



The data shows many of the household helpers faced the social boycott/bias (28 out of 38) i.e. 73.7%.

d) Legal Factors

1. Need of having a legal contract with the employer.



Majority of the household helpers feel the need of having a legal contract with their employer (21 out of 38) i.e. 55.3%.

Findings:

1. Maximum household helpers i.e. above 70% are working in or more than 2 households.

2. More than half of the household helpers are the sole bread winners in their family.
3. It is seen that 70% of household helpers have a total monthly family income between Rs 5,000- 10,000 only.
4. Majority of household helpers didn't received any pending salaries/dues from their employer during the lockdown.
5. More than 70% of household helpers weren't paid their salaries or provided any financial aid during the lockdown months.
6. Majority of household helpers found it difficult to manage their household expenses. Most of them faced major problems such as ration/grocery issues followed by rental, health, loan/EMI issues respectively.
7. As most of the household helpers reside in rental homes they didn't face cooperation from their landlord regarding their rentals.
8. Majority of household helpers faced restrictions while visiting housing societies/their workplace and social boycott from the society/ employer.
9. Almost all household helpers felt stressful during the lockdown, which impacted their mental well-being too.
10. Half of household helpers feel the need to have a legal contract with their employer.

Suggestions:

1. To sensitize domestic workers about good financial habits and highlight the importance of savings to deal with any such situation.
2. To create awareness about the Government welfare schemes like Jan Dhan Yojana, Pradhan Mantri

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Suraksha BimaYojana etc. among the domestic workers.

3. The Employer should try offering them some financial aid or a loan to overcome their financial problems.
4. Employer should also make some provisions regarding domestic workers leave or one day off a week.
5. The Government must make some provisions regarding the the Protection of the Rights of the domestic workers.
6. The Government should make arrangements for some kind of Stress Management programs for the domestic workers.
7. The Society should not stigmatize the domestic workers as the carriers of virus, rather should treat them equally with dignity and respect they deserve.


Conclusion:

The Covid19 outbreak is impacting people all around the world, disrupting economies etc. The nationwide lockdown has fuelled up the plight of domestic workers. They work in this unorganized sector because of their low literacy level & poor socio-economic background. During the lockdown they have faced a lot of hardships. Even though they were willing to work, they were unable to work. The Covid19 lockdown was definitely not easy for this section of the society to live with. Right from absence of salaries, to difficulty in managing their households, to getting stigmatized for spreading the virus and facing a social boycott and suffering mental stress, they have suffered a lot hardships. Their silent contribution has always been invisible and undervalued in the eyes of society. It is high time now to think for everyone regarding the safeguarding of their rights.

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