

An Inter-linkage between women employers and female domestic workers

Sanghita Bhattacharjee^{1,2}, Bhaskar Goswami²

¹Department of Economics, Women's College, Calcutta, Kolkata-700 003, India

²Department of Economics, University of Burdwan, Burdwan- 713104, India

¹b.sanghita@gmail.com, ²mailbhaskar08@gmail.com

Abstract

Objectives: To assess the significance of paid domestic work as an important income earning activity for poor households and to explore the linkage between women employers and female domestic workers.

Methods/Analysis: The study was conducted on 334 domestic workers and 154 employers between January and June 2016 in the district of South 24 Parganas, West Bengal, India. The employers were classified into working (104) and non-working (50). The selection of the district was spurred by the development of south Kolkata on the one hand and the significant role of manual labour in the process of urbanisation on the other. While studying the labour supply determinants, wage was taken as a dependent variable for the linear regression analysis to capture the factors responsible for the choice of decision. Based on their need for domestic workers, a comprehensive distinction was made between the working and non-working employers.

Findings: With growing urbanization and economic growth, life has become more challenging giving much impetus to education and employment of women. This has led many women to join work-force. The breakup of the traditional joint family system and increased involvement of educated women in the formal labour market necessitates organising all work inside the home through domestic workers. Disadvantaged females do domestic work in the middle-class and upper-middle-class households in urban and suburban areas, releasing employers to join work. The study reveals that insecurity of work and unstable income of the household head is an important reason for the choice of domestic work apart from other determinants like illiteracy and lack of skill. On the demand side, we see that distinct strategies are adopted by distinct households. A segment of the employers is guided by reliance while others hire domestic workers because they are used to domestic assistance, or it has something to do with status and peer pressure.

Novelty/Improvement: We believe that this study will provide better insights on determining factors that contribute to the linkage between the 'Mistress' and the 'Maid'.

Keywords: domestic work, socio-economic status, women empowerment, linkage, South 24 Parganas, West Bengal

1. Introduction

Literature is available documenting the history of the affluent having domestic help as a custom, but that was seldom correlated with the work status of the wife [1] illustrates how significant changes in the society and labour market, in the last few decades, have seen women coming out of their distinct household duties to join remunerative work outside the home. The breakup of the traditional joint family system and women taking up a job has differentiated women's work in new ways. A large number of women are hired for domestic work. They take care of the aged and children and does cooking, cleaning, etc. in the house of the employer allowing more women to have professional careers. Significance of paid domestic work has been largely documented as a sector of employment for a number of poor, illiterate and unskilled women with high wage/income insecurity. In [2-3] underlined incidences of domestic service in West Bengal since colonial times. In [4] indicated 30% increase of women's share in domestic service during 1971-1991 in urban West Bengal and stated it's evolvement as the main source of informal work for women. The paper has three broad aims. First, we seek to study the socio-demographic profile of the two target groups – the employers and the domestic workers.

The employers were either working or non-working and the domestic worker could be categorized as part-time full-time or live-in based on the working hour and type of employment. Secondly, this article explored the supply determinants of a female domestic worker (FDW) and finally, we sought to establish the inter-linkage that exists between the two groups of women.

1.1. The survey area and the sample

South 24 Parganas District is the second most populated district (18.17%) in West Bengal, India with an area of 9960 sq. km. Once dismissed as non-lucrative, growth and expansion of the suburban areas of the district has gained momentum with the developers acquiring land for construction of real estates. Over 15 years, the population in these areas has skyrocketed. The gradual rise of the middle and upper-middle-class population in these areas are intensifying the need for domestic workers. Local and rural female workers in the dire need of sustaining livelihood can take advantage of the minuscule wage gradient with the development of transport and better connectivity. 75.4% of the workers work in the surrounding area. This certainly features that South 24 Parganas' development and extension have created informal job possibilities; especially for the zonal workers in the domestic labour market.

The survey was carried out between January 2016 and June 2016 for a period of six months. The purposive snowballing technique was used to identify 104 women working in different sectors like Information Technology, education, banking, financial services, retail, health and wellness. Most of these sectors are known to experience long hours of work. Stratified random sampling was applied to select a control group of 50 non-working women. Stratification was done on the basis of age and income. Some household hire domestic workers to run the machine of everyday existence, while it was customary to have a domestic worker for others. The necessity enhanced with the presence of children and elderly parents. Recent trends show middle class and upper-middle-class households employing more than one domestic help to ease out daily activities and to maintain an alternative arrangement in the absence of a maid. We had 334 part-time workers associated with 154 employers, mostly in the ratio 3:1 or 2:1 for households having income hierarchy and 1:1 for households with lower family income or where women were non-working. The sample consisted of workers from different areas - rural, suburban and urban and could be categorized into locals, slum-dwellers and commuters according to their place of stay.

2. Methodology

This section deals with the selection of indicators, different data sets and the analytical method adopted to demonstrate the importance of the indicators. This research was based on primary as well as secondary data. Secondary data about the district were collected from the District Census Handbook. The data on domestic workers as well as their employers were collected through a semi-structured questionnaire consisting of short, close-ended questions. This gives us an understanding of socio-economic parameters, as well as individual and collective experiences of people living within the household. All information were displayed in the necessary segments in tabular form. Secondary data on infrastructure and availability of basic amenities were collected from the district census handbook. In studying the determinants of labour supply, wage of the worker was taken as a dependent variable for the linear regression analysis to capture the rationale behind the choice of decision. Based on their need for domestic workers, a comprehensive distinction was made between the working and non-working employers. Factors effecting demand for workers and the existing linkage between the target groups were explored.

3. Findings of the preliminary survey

The data collected from respondents and their analysis have been arranged in three sections. Section 1 studies the demographic and socio-economic profile of the female domestic workers and classifies employers with the unique characteristics of working and non-working. Section 2 studies the labour supply determinants of a domestic worker. Section 3 illustrates the interlinkage between employers and female domestic workers.

3.1 Profile of the female domestic workers

Most of the current domestic work literature has been from the perspective of the vulnerability of workers, labour rights etc. The present work is a regional study based on a sample population. A tabular presentation of certain observations and issues in the life of a domestic worker are documented in Table 1. The social and demographic feature of the workers show some noticeable patterns. Economic compulsion and meagre assets of very low skills are major push factors for them. Workers between the ages of 22 and 60 years work part-time in multiple houses on an hourly basis. The convenience of an active informal network makes their entry in residential households and apartments in the nearby areas accessible. Their priority issues are the enhancement of household income, educating children and managing health issues with negotiable wage.

Table 1. Profile of the domestic worker

Sector	Age	Education	Rationale for Employment	Working hours	Priority Issues	Wages	Organising Challenges
Domestic Workers	22 to 60 years	Mostly illiterate or has primary education	Financial pressure, Unemployment insurance, Unskilled, Easily available through Active Network	1 hour - 8 hour	Employment opportunity, improving living conditions, Child Education, Health care	Negotiable	Invisible in homes, Physical assault, The anxiety of job loss, No Labour laws

Source: Primary Survey, 2016

The respondents were classified into four age groups. 41.6% of workers were between 30 and 40 years, 23.8% workers were between 20 to 30 years and 40 to 50 years as well and only 10.8% workers were above 50 years of age. 40.6% of the respondents never attended school (21.3% were illiterate and 19.3% were literate without schooling) and 20% had only been to primary schools. Women with secondary or post-secondary education merely formed 2%. The lack of education is negatively associated with household decision making. In [5] showed that education supplements women's autonomy, empowerment and gender equality and that is visible through their participation in the social and economic decision for the welfare of their household. But though a low level of education is negatively associated with household decision making, availability of work in our survey area enhances their bargaining power in the workplace.

In India division of tasks among female domestic workers is regulated by caste categories till date. Women from backward castes are largely confined to work that involves cleaning utensils, washing clothes, mopping and sweeping the floor and so on, while upper-caste women get an easy entry into the kitchen. Thus the segregation of work a part-time domestic worker does, bring forward the vertical gradation in the remuneration they receive and the type of work they perform. In our sample, the caste-wise distribution show that 42.51% of the workers were either scheduled castes or scheduled tribes, 11.68% are from the OBCs and 29.04% of the respondents were from general category. However, of late, the nature of domestic work has become flexible with urbanisation. Given the social transformation of urban centres and ever-increasing demand for domestic workers, young professional couples employ women workers from all sections irrespective of religion, caste and social category. In such apartment complexes, workers set their own wage norms and enforce their own wage terms with their employers. In south 24 Parganas district, though formal data on the percentage of households in paid domestic work are not available, literature [6] suggests that domestic work is considered to be an important employment option for many poor households.

Domestic work, as well as availability of alternative arrangements, often attract commuters and migrant workers to the urban areas of the district. It is noteworthy that the average monthly income is more for families with less mouth to feed. 5.69% of the households with two members have an average monthly income between INR 5800 to INR 6700. Often the workers combine cooking with other piece-rate work. As the hourly wage rate is high for cooking, a workers daily schedule consists of cooking at least in one house and sometimes even more. A cook's work is perceived to be more rewarding because of the higher wage they get. Classification of workers into rural, suburban and urban becomes clear with the expansion of South 24 Parganas and mushrooming growth of residential complexes, which provides many women with work.

When work is available in the surrounding areas, workers can shoulder their own household responsibilities and save their commuting time as well. In urban areas, workers have access to diversified opportunities in off-farm jobs and have better access to services like education and primary health care facilities. Thus poor people make intra-district movements to tap such opportunities by either settling down in urban and suburban areas or commuting on a daily basis.

Table 2. Socio-economic profile of the domestic workers' household

Characteristic	Number of Respondents
Place of Stay	
Locals	117 (35.03)
Commuters	84 (25.15)
Slum-dwellers (Migrants)	76 (22.75)
Squatter Settlers (Temporary Migrants)	57 (17.07)
Religion	
Hindu	278 (83.23)
Muslim	56 (16.77)
Caste	
General	97 (29.04)
SC/ST	142 (42.51)
OBC	39 (11.68)
Household Size	
1-3	56 (16.77)
4-5	254 (76.05)
6-7	24 (7.19)
8-9	-
Monthly Per-capita Household Income (in Rs)	
800-1700	35 (10.48)
1800-2700	84 (25.15)
2800-3700	117 (35.03)
3800-4700	52 (15.57)
4800-5700	27 (8.08)
5800-6700	19 (5.69)

Note: Figures in parenthesis denotes percentages

Source: Primary Survey, 2016

3.2 Categorising female employers

Employers are of two types - working and non-working. Working employers were identified from different sectors like IT, education, banking, financial services, retail, health and wellness. Most of these sectors are associated with long hours of work.

1. IT industries have work pressure, long working hours and has to meet project deadlines.
2. BPO industries have long working hours, rigid work rules and very few leaves. Work being done in shifts create health issues in the long run.
3. Jobs in the healthcare and wellness industries are stressful as well as demanding. Doctors have very busy schedules and work for months without breaks. Nurses, caregivers and other administrative staff working in healthcare industries do not experience time constraints like doctors but have demanding work schedules as well.
4. Private bank employees usually work for long hours and have more work pressure than nationalized bank employees.
5. Retail shops and shopping malls have long working hours and are open most of the time in a year.
6. Education institutions and colleges fare a lot better in terms of work-life balance in comparison to other service industries. However, work pressure is more in private management institutes and colleges.
7. In this group, we also include 11 domestic workers from our sample who employ domestic workers for cleaning work in their house.

Table 3. Socio-demographic profile of the employers

Category:	Working (67.53) and Non-Working (35.06)
Type of working Employers	Information Technology (19.00), Health and Wellness (5.25), Bankers (14.00), Post Office (7.25), Teachers (16.25), Private Office (11.50), Retail (12.00), Domestic workers (7.20), others (8.20)
Age:	28 - 75 years (retirement age of a working woman is 60 years. This implies women above 60 years represent non-working women)
Education	Primary education (7.14), Middle (13.24), Graduate (37.40), Post-Graduate (27.00), Technical (15.22)
Religion	Hindu (80.62), Muslim (16.33), Christian (2.31), Sikh (0.74)
Location	Urban (63.00), Sub-Urban (37.00)
Living Condition	Own House (32.00) {Kutcha(1.00), Pukka (31.00)}, Residential Apartments (68.00), electricity (100.00), LPG (100.00)
Family Size:	1-3 (39.00), 4-5 (45.75), 6-7 (5.25)

Note: Figures in parenthesis denote percentages

Source: Primary survey, 2016

Women in dual-earner families while working parallel to men at workplace, also play multiple roles in their respective homes as child rears, parents, teachers, caretakers of their elderly parents, and many more, which become very much strenuous for them. It is the added responsibility and burden of chores that add to daily hassles. Work-life balance can be maintained when the employees have social support as well as support from the family and organization. This support helps the employee in satisfactorily fulfilling her family roles. Empirical evidence suggests that family involvement creates conflict between work and family and is negatively related to job commitment. In [7] a research study among female executives to investigate the beneficial spill-over of work and family domain, concluded that worker's involvement in family roles helped them to be more effective in their managerial roles. But it was important to assess the amount of social support available to them. A study among working mothers by [8] stated that greater involvement in family roles make it difficult for the employee to devote sufficient resources towards work, thus creating conflict. The control group of fifty non-working employers had women of different ages. A significant difference was found between both the groups (working and nonworking women) in the level of education and family income as shown in Table 4 respectively.

Table 4. The distinction between working and non-working female employers on the basis of education and family income

Features	Working	Non-Working
Education		
Primary	11 (10.58)	0
Middle	2 (1.92)	6 (12.00)
Graduate	21 (20.19)	36 (72.00)
Post-Graduate	54 (51.92)	8 (16.00)
Technical	16 (15.39)	0
Family Income		
10,000-15,000	11 (10.58)	0
16,000-35,000	0	0
36,000-55,000	0	1 (2.00)
56,000-75,000	4 (3.85)	6 (12.00)
76,000- 95,000	5 (4.81)	9 (18.00)
96,000- 1,15,000	12 (11.54)	7 (14.00)
1,16,000- 1,35,000	19 (18.27)	10 (20.00)
1,36,000- 1,55,000	21 (20.19)	8 (16.00)
1,56,000 and above	32 (30.78)	9 (18.00)
Total	104 (100.00)	50 (100.00)

Note: Figures in parenthesis denote percentages

Source: Primary Survey, 2016

Data shows that 10.58% of working women have mere primary education and 1.92% have completed education up to middle level. It needs to be noted that this group of working women are domestic workers who work to sustain livelihood and their family income is also low, ranging between 10,000 INR to 15,000 INR per month. Average monthly income of such households is negligible because of the large family size. Non-working women are more at the graduate level. But post graduates are more among working women and 15.39% of working women have a technical education. Measuring income level of households, we get 78.24% of families in the working women category, earning more than one lakh rupees per month as against 66% among non-working female households. In the non-working group, there are families, where the household head is associated with high profile jobs paying good returns. We also have households in business, white-collar jobs and pensioners, not to forget the households in petty ventures and small business. Households with pensioners have aged people who are compelled to keep domestic workers, and even cooks because of their old age and deteriorating health. Households in the family income hierarchy, having children or elderly parents to care for are inclined towards employing workers to act as substitute homemakers. This arises out of the caregiver role of women within the family.

3.3 Factors influencing domestic female workers to take the job

Low earnings, unstable income sources and unemployment constitute the main source of poverty for the majority of workers involved in informal activities. As per the Socio-Economic Caste Census 2011, the rural scenario all over India indicated that cultivation and casual manual labour seemed to draw more women than domestic work. But such work is entrusted with very meagre earnings especially under the purview of gender discrimination. The poor households in urban or sub-urban setup, by default, are exempted from engaging in agricultural work (they do not have agricultural land of their own). Therefore, unevenness within society is protected through women engaging in paid domestic work.

We consider a linear regression analysis to capture the decision-making factors that guide a female to begin working as a domestic worker, that is, the rationale behind choosing this work. Wage is taken as the dependent variable. The explanatory variables and hypothesis are as follows:

Age (AGE) – A significant determinant of monthly income is the age of the female domestic worker. The maid becomes more experienced in her job with rising age and also gets a reasonable concept to negotiate for her rightful wage. We hypothesize that the dependent variable and the age of the worker is positive.

Number of Children below 15 years (NOCH_15) – Small children in household restrict the movement of the mother. Preparation of food and taking care of the child comes under her gender role. We hypothesize that small children in the household are negatively associated with the wage of the worker. Expenditure on education (EDU_EXP) – Expenditure on education is positively related to the monthly income of the mother. They take up more work to preserve the cost of child education. Working women in poor households do not attempt to compromise with her kid's education.

Year of schooling (YOSC) – Educational attainment is not a necessity for a domestic worker. Her experience and type of work enable her to increase wage in this type of occupation. Her years of schooling can have an impact on getting a better job. Therefore, we hypothesize that years of schooling has no impact on the wage of a domestic worker.

The income of other members (IOM) – Rise in household income reduces the labour supply of the female domestic worker. A female labour supply curve lies in the backward bending part, where other family members' income have an adverse effect on the involvement of women in the workforce. Hence, we hypothesize that the relationship between the income of other members and wage of the domestic worker is negative.

Total Household Expenditure (HHEX) – Total household expenditure includes only the consumption expenditure of a household. It does not include expenditure on schooling and medicine. While it is seen that the head of the family bears the spending on consumption, but with the head's unstable income, often the responsibility of consumption expenditure falls on the female of the house. We, therefore, hypothesize that monthly income must rise as household expenditure rises.

Medical expenditure (EX_MED) – It is also hypothesized that there is a positive relation between medical expense and wage of the female worker.

3.4 Results of Multiple linear regression

With the above set of hypothesis, we present the results of the multiple linear regression analysis in Table 5. Results of regression are mostly in line with the hypothesis outlined.

Table 5. Linear regression results of determinants of wages of a domestic worker

Explanatory Variables Estimated Coefficients	Dependent Variable: Wage	
	Equation 1	Equation 2
AGE	31.343* (3.597)	37.26* (4.619)
NOH	734.966* (16.144)	737.687* (16.133)
IOM	-.093* (-3.637)	-.097* (-3.802)
NOCH_15	-417.247* (-2.730)	-408.293** (-2.664)
YOSC59.113***	-(-1.764)	-
THHEX	.112** (2.729)	.109** (2.662)
EX_EDU	.663** (2.394)	.650** (2.342)
EX_MED	.531* (2.961)	.495** (2.768)
Constant	528.255 (1.174)	170.633 (.424)
Adjusted R2	0.533	0.53
F- Value	48.54	54.68
No. of Observations	334	334

Note i) Figures in parenthesis are estimated t-coefficients

ii) $p^* < .01$, $p^{**} < .05$, $p^{***} < .10$

Source: Primary Survey, 2016

The regression results show that the coefficients of all the explanatory variables have expected signs. Total household expenditure, age of the worker, number of houses serviced, the income of other members, number of children below fifteen years, and medical expenditure are all significant at less than 1% level. Expenditure on education is significant at less than 5% level and year of schooling is significant at less than 10 % level. The results are not at all surprising. It is expected that as the number of houses serviced rise, it is obvious that their wages would. As total expenditure, education expenditure and medical expenditure rises, she will increase the number of houses serviced, thereby increasing her wage.

Our findings indicate that the number of child under the age of fifteen is negatively linked to the dependent variable, while the spending on education has a positive impact on the worker's wage. Our sample includes 82 children under the age of fifteen. Small children generally restrict the mobility of the mother. In addition, children who has reached school going age usually go to government schools that provide free primary education. Therefore, the workers' desire to enhance wage is less. But when the child is in higher classes (there are 56 children in this category), the part-time worker has to supplement educational expenses such as purchase of books, remuneration of private tutors, etc. by simultaneously working in more houses to increase wage as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Distribution of school and college going children in female Domestic Workers' Household

Age in Years	FDW	Household Head	Other Members	Total
<=15			82(20.40)	82(16.57)
16-21			56(12.44)	56(5.27)

Source: Primary Survey, 2016

3.5 Inter-linkage between employers and workers

In the context of urban India, domestic workers, especially the female domestic workers, are constantly growing in number. In [9] revealed that the last three decades have seen a sharp increase in the number of domestic workers. There has been an increase of about 222% in 2004-05 as compared to 1999-2000 [10]. This rise in domestic workers is an outcome of a shift of the Indian economy from agriculture to a manufacturing and service-based economy. The growth of the urban middle class and an increase in the number of women participating in the job market has propelled employment of cheap and available domestic labour. In [6] stated the complexity in the employer-employee relationship that persists along with domination, dependency and inequality. The nature of the demand for a domestic worker is based on household characteristics, women's work status and their preference for a sort of job agreement.

This section provides pragmatic evidence of various suggestions made in the literature regarding the demand for domestic work. On the demand side, for instance, as mentioned by [11] distinct strategies are adopted by distinct families. A section of the working employers are guided by dependence, others employ domestic workers because they are used to domestic help, or it has something to do with status and peer pressure. Factors influencing demand for domestic workers and the existing linkage between the target groups in our study area are categorised below:

3.6. Working women and full-time worker/s

Full-time workers can be categorized into live-in and live-out or day workers. Working women generally hire full-time workers for a child or elder care. The hiring of such workers is channelized through private agencies even though the cost increases by 100% to 120% (based on an NSSO report conducted in July 2011 to June 2012). Hiring through agencies are hassle-free and risk-averse. In a typical city household, when both husband and wife leave for work, they would want a trained and responsible person to take care of their children. For such households, affordability is not a factor. 12% of women in our sample has a full-time day worker. Workers conduct diverse tasks of cleaning, cooking, washing utensils/clothes, marketing and other activities related to a household systematic and smooth functioning. Care of children includes fetching and dropping children from/to school. In our sample of 104 working women, 8% has small children and are in the cohort of 28-32 years. The other 4% include women between 42-48 years with an aged person in the house. Being a senior in work, they are more liable to the organization. Organisational commitment is indirectly proportional to family involvement and so a working woman is comfortable with the arrangement of having a full-time worker. But such arrangements are not permanent and varies with time.

3.7. Working women and part-time domestic workers

Most working women prefer to hire more than one worker like a cook, a cleaner, etc. Such workers are hired through informal personal or social networks. The part-time system allows employers to hire suitable workers as per requirement and permissible budget. This arrangement helps in distributing the workload between workers. That way the employer saves time besides retaining an alternative arrangement when one worker is absent. There is a strong inter-linkage between working women and female domestic workers.

3.8. Forward Linkage

1. It involves the release of urban educated women from unpaid household work by the women domestic. That way income is generated by diametrically opposite groups of women, there by contributing to household income.
2. The female employee when capable of managing her family role effectively with support from domestic workers can dedicate effective time towards work.
3. Long term nexus with employer's household sometimes helps family members of domestic maids to find some work (security personnel in residential apartments, as cleaning and maintaining staff) in the vicinity as an outcome of trust-building.

4. New entrants to domestic work are introduced to employers by a host, who herself is a domestic worker. Thus active networking provides an intended worker by securing an initial job in domestic work, where from her search for future jobs initiate.

3.9. Backward Linkage

1. The backward linkage becomes evident when the domestic workers act as a catalyst in income generation by hiring labour for household work and childcare and are released to join duty only when their maids report for work. 11% of the local domestic workers in our sample hire maids, the wage rate is at par with the prevailing rates. A domestic worker who earns Rs 2000 per month hires someone to look after her child (say) at a rate of Rs 700 per month. The amount she saves is used to pay the rent for her house or buy necessary goods or for her child's education. This aspect is considered to be an important indicator of empowerment.
2. Migrant workers send back remittances to their ancestral house. It is generally found that respondents settling in squatter are temporary migrants and therefore prefer to keep back their children with grandparents in a joint family in their ancestral village. Supporting a family in the village is economical especially if the main source of income comes from a town or city.
3. With the availability of 100 days' work, the women under study try to grab it for their Mother-in-law / Daughter-in-law to earn some extra income for the household.
4. To avert loss of work due to absenteeism, a domestic worker sometimes assigns another worker or a family member to the place of employment.

3.10. Households with females who are not working

1. Highly educated women who are not willing to work.
2. Households where females are not allowed to work.
3. Households with elderly people.
4. Households with women who do not qualify for a job.

The probability of employing a domestic worker generally arises from the twin perspective of dependency and affordability. For non-working women in any household, choice and preference for domestic workers (either full-time or part-time) are guided by entirely different standards like status, peer influence, age and number of family members, which are discussed below:

3.11. Households having full-time workers

Most households in this category are economically well-off. Such households employ workers as a part of the practice. Several employers acknowledge the support of the domestic workers in maintaining big houses, larger families and varied tasks. Some feel the need for full-time live-in workers to assist them to manage household tasks throughout the day. In our sample of 50 employers in this category, we have one instance of a live-in worker, who has been staying with the family since she was a child. She is now a grown-up lady with expertise in household management. There are no instances of a live-out day worker in our sample.

3.12. Engaging part-time workers

Most women in this category keep workers to clean and wash utensils. Part-time workers facilitate the household tasks of employers, when the employer prefers to cook according to the taste of the members. 10 non-working women hire cooks. Higher household income, presence of school-going children etc. dominate as reasons for hiring such workers.

3.13. Households employing workers owing to age

There are few households where domestic work was previously done by household members. With time or with younger family members joining the workforce they were compelled to hire workers. The demand for domestic workers among such household is conditioned by the dependence of members of the households.

Table 7. Non-working employer and domestic workers

Age of employers	No	Type of work	Domestic Workers	Analysis
50 and above	15	Cook	2	The number of domestic workers is not mutually exclusive. The same employer may employ a cook and a cleaning maid. For those hiring a cook, the employer – domestic worker ratio is usually 1:1, or in some special cases 1:2
		Cleaning Utensils	13	
		Mopping and Sweeping	14	
		Washing clothes	3	
		Live-in	0	
		Live-Out	0	
41-50	17	Cook	8	8 households employ cooks. All the 17 households in this category have a worker for mopping and sweeping the floor. There is one live-in and one live-out worker. The live-in worker is not classified as a part-time worker.
		Cleaning Utensils	14	
		Mopping and Sweeping	17	
		Washing clothes	2	
		Live-in	1	
		Live-out	1	
31-40	14	Cook	6	6 out of 14 employers have a cook. All the employers have workers for cleaning utensils and mopping and sweeping. All piece –rate work is done by the same worker in 90 % households
		Cleaning Utensils	14	
		Mopping and Sweeping	14	
		Washing clothes	0	
		Live-in	0	
		Live-Out	1	
Less than or equal to 30	4	Cook	2	This is the youngest category of non-working employers. Two of them left job after they had children. Two employers are housemakers and have no plans to join paid work in the near future.
		Cleaning Utensils	2	
		Mopping and Sweeping	4	
		Washing clothes	0	
		Live-in	0	
		Live-Out	0	
Total	50			Domestic workers are mostly employed for mopping and sweeping by non-working category mostly employ domestic workers. 18 households hired cooks.

Source: Primary Survey, 2016

Most of the non-working employers (30%) interviewed are above 50 years of age, 28% are between 31 and 40 years, 34% are between 41 and 50 years and only 8% employers were 30 years or less. The requirement of a domestic worker for mopping and sweeping is highest for all age groups among the non-working category. There is also a great demand for workers cleaning utensils. Expenditure on employing a cook being more than other part-time workers working on piece rate, it was found that cooking in such households is mostly done by the female of the household. Calculating the odds ratio, our data reveal that working women are 13.63 times more likely to keep a cook than non-working women. Odds-ratio is defined in the following manner.

$$\text{Odds-ratio} = (\pi/1-\pi)/(p_0/1-p_0)$$

Where, π = working women employing cook

p_0 = Non-working women employing cook

4. Conclusion

There is a rising demand for domestic workers with economic growth and in a fast urbanising India which is a result of economic affluence and dependency. This study is a modest attempt to analyse the work participation of 334 poor and vulnerable women working as a helper in private households and the linkage with their employers. The nature of the demand for workers and the supply of labour by workers is summed up below.

1. We observed that all the workers from the sampled households earn a livelihood through physical labour, although income levels differ across residential areas and type of work. The average wage of the domestic worker is around INR 4000.

2. The demand feature for domestic workers differs between households with a working woman and those without a working woman.
3. The presence/absence within the family of the elderly and young children considerably influences the dependency need for domestic workers.
4. Female domestic workers preferentially release women employers in nuclear families to join the main workforce, which is concomitant with the creation of earning source for many women of poor families. Since the domestic workers associated with working women have to maintain time, they accommodate their domestic obligations or arrange for their children to be cared for during that time period by close kin who are paid for, or by employing a domestic worker.
5. Economic independence of female members not only fill the household gap between income and expenditure but also facilitates women empowerment in the respective society as a whole.
6. Increase in total time in paid work increases the work burden for both the target group. Average time spent in household work ranging between 3-4 hours. This aspect reflects the gendered nature of domestic work.
7. From the supply side, a wage of a female domestic worker is a function of age, hours of work, number of years in a particular household and type of work.

5. References

1. C. Hakim. Work-lifestyle choices in the 21 st century: preference theory. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. 2000.
2. N. Banerjee. Women workers in the unorganized sector – The Calcutta experience. Sangham book Private Limited:Hyderabad. 1985; 150.
3. S. Sarkar. women as paid domestic workers. *Journal of Social Sciences*. 2005; 11(1), 35-41.
4. D. Chakravarty, I. Chakravarty. Girl children in the care economy: domestics in Bengal. *Economic and Political Weekly*. 2008; 43(48), 93-100.
5. H.S. El- Halawany. Higher education and some upper egyptian women's negotiation of self-autonomy at work and home. *Research in Comparative and International Education*. 2009; 4(4), 423-436.
6. R. Ray, S. Qayum. Cultures of servitude: modernity, domesticity and class in India. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. 2009.
7. M. Ruderman, P. Ohlott, K. Panzer, S.N. King. Benefits of multiple roles of managerial Women. *The Academy of Management Journal*. 2002; 45(2), 369-386.
8. J.J. Opie, C.M. Henn. Work-family conflict and work engagement among mothers: Conscientiousness and Neuroticism as Moderators. *Journal of Industrial Psychology*. 2013; 39(1).
9. N. Neetha. Making of female breadwinners: Migration and Social Networking of Women Domestics in Delhi. *Economic and Political Weekly*. 2004; 37(17), 1681-1688.
10. C.P. Chandrasekhar, J. Ghosh. Self-employment as opportunity or challenge. *Business line*. 2007; 1-7.
11. R. Kaur. Migrating for work: rewriting gender relations. In S. Arya and A. Roy (ed.), *Poverty, Gender and Migration*, New Delhi: Sage Publications. 2006.

The Publication fee is defrayed by Indian Society for Education and Environment (www.iseeadyar.org)

Cite this article as:

Sanghita Bhattacharjee, Bhaskar Goswami. An Inter-linkage between women employers and female domestic workers. *Indian Journal of Economics and Development*. July 2019, Vol 7 (7), 1-11.

Received on: 08/07/2019

Accepted on: 22/07/2019