

A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF DOMESTIC WORKERS: A VICTIM OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Dr. Sunita Kumar,

Associate Professor,
Department of Sociology,
N.S.N. P.G College,
Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.

ABSTRACT

Marginalization or exclusion of the downtrodden section of the society is a bitter reality. It is a process that occurs in one form or the other in every society around the world. We can see inequality and exclusion of various sections of society. In India, the exclusion is based on caste, culture, religion, region, gender and various other reasons which demarcate the people into upper or the lower strata of the society, into privileged or underprivileged. The process of exclusion leads to exploitation, deprivation, marginalization and subjugation of the few people of society.

The paper addresses the issue of domestic workers of India who are a must for running a household in urban society but are mostly the victim of social exclusion.

Keywords: Social exclusion, domestic workers, unorganized sectors.

INTRODUCTION

Social Exclusion

Social exclusion or discrimination refers to the process & outcome of keeping a social group outside the power centres and resources. Social exclusion or discrimination are collective process. It is an interactional process also. Further, exclusion and discrimination take different forms in different societies. Moreover, they adapt and change themselves according to the changing social realities. The term, 'social exclusion' has come into usage very recently. It is a social process that goes on in the Indian sub-continent with regard to social interaction, power equations, distribution of resources, equal opportunity, domination, subjugation etc. Social Exclusion is a created exclusion by the members of society.

According to wikipedia, "Social exclusion or social marginalisation is the social disadvantage and relegation to the fringe of society. It is a term that has been used widely in Europe and was first used in France in the late 20th century. Social exclusion is the process in which individuals are blocked from (or denied full access to) various rights, opportunities and resources that are normally available to members of a different group, and which are fundamental to social integration and observance of human rights within that particular group (e.g., housing, employment, healthcare, civic engagement, democratic participation, and due process).

In India , socially excluded groups can be identified at three levels :

1. Social groups : Dalits or Untouchables , Adivasi or Tribal, religious & linguistic minorities, the backward castes.

2. Sectorial groups : Agricultural labourers, marginalised farmers, child labourers, domestic workers, informal workers of unorganised sectors, contract workers, fisher communities, manual scavengers, rural & forest based communities, vernacular social groups.
3. Biological groups : People with disabilities and disorders, gender based exclusion, women, children.

So, on the basis of social, economic, biological differences, social exclusion is observed towards the above stated groups.

DOMESTIC WORKERS

It is estimated that there are millions domestic workers in India. They remain part of an informal and unregulated sector, obscured in private homes, not recognised as workers but rather as 'informal help'. Any person engaged by a household shall be classified as a domestic worker if the frequency of visits by the worker to the household is at least four days during the last 30 days and the goods and/or services produced by the worker are consumed by the members of the household against payment either through cash or kind.

The reality is that this guarantee and fight of equality have not reached many lower sections of society. The case of the domestic workers is evidence to the fact that despite the guaranteed constitutional rights their struggle for equality and survival continues. It is disheartening to note that domestic workers as a part of unorganized work force remain the most exploited ones even after six decades of independence. There is no legislative framework at all in India. The whole outlook on domestic workers is so 'feudal here. There are 90 million domestic workers in India, and it's sad there are no rules for them. Across Asia, 'domestic work' (e.g. work carried out in the homes of others) is a common occupation. Yet domestic work is usually not recognized in many societies as 'employment' and labour laws do often not protect the workers.

Domestic work is not recognized as labour and hence they have no rights such as fixed working hours, weekly offs, medical benefits or paid leave. They are not included in any labour law.

The paper attempts to analyse the process of social exclusion of domestic workers for their household where they work & how social exclusion focus on the relations process that cause deprivation. It refers to exclusion in economic, social & political sphere.

METHODOLOGY

The paper attempts to study the problems and challenges faced by domestic workers in Lucknow City, Urban area. The study makes an in-depth observation about the socio-economic background or factors that causing them to become domestic worker. The nature of the impact of interactions, exploitation on them by the employer at the workplace was taken up in the research. As the domestic workers have been falling under unorganised sector so the present study deals with nature of relationship and behaviour maintained between the employer and domestic worker and its impact on them that make them feel marginalised or excluded. The study is descriptive and diagnostic in nature. As a tool of data collection interview and observation method was adopted as most of the domestic workers were illiterate.

FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Mostly the domestic workers were migrants from rural areas off Sitapur, Barabanki districts.
2. They would usually live in slums, 'jhoppad patti', tents, without proper civic amenities.
3. Mostly they are either landless farmers or their land are unfertile.
4. Being underprivileged, backward, uneducated, unskilled, they take up the

work of domestic help in urban localities or colonies.

5. Most of them were treated badly by their employers, both mentally and physically.
6. Most of them were not given any facilities like toilets or sitting and resting place.
7. Usually they get the facilities only at the mercy of employer.
8. Mostly no work structure is framed or decided.
9. No sick leave or casual leave were granted.
10. Mostly no guarantee of Social Security is provided by the employer.
11. Occasional gifts are provided only on the basis of extra work.
12. Most of the domestic workers are of SC,ST or backward communities.
13. No Labour law are applied on them as they are of unorganised sector.
14. No trust is seen between most of the employer and the worker.
15. Most of the domestic workers are unaware of their rights.
16. They do not have any union or organisation.
17. Their residential space is also not fixed.
18. Their wages or working conditions are also not fixed.
19. Many domestic workers take money in advance for their family needs like marriage of their children, sickness, birth of child, construction of house etc. It is seen that they even have to borrow money for cremation of the family members also this create a bonded labour like equation with their Master.

CONCLUSION

The primary data collected by random sampling that is interview and observation was being analysed this leads to the conclusion that the domestic workers are mostly deprived of their rights, they are also deprived of the various opportunities for their progress or betterment it is seen that most of them are treated badly by the masters and are exploited both mentally and physically.

All these findings suggest that the domestic workers in rural areas our victim of social exclusion of another type. It is suggested that the Government Or NGOs must provide some training and grievance cell for the domestic workers so that they can work more productively for the betterment of their social economy and political security which will create better and symbiont society at large. For their social and economic inclusion they must be made aware of their rights and for this the government and NGOs must make them literate in this regard. The wages or payment must be done in their bank accounts so that they can be more economically stable.

REFERENCES

- 'Indian society themes and social issues' book by Nadeem Hasnain
- 'Social Problems in India' book by Ram Ahuja
- 'Social Exclusion: Concept, Application, and Scrutiny' book by Amartya Sen
- Social
- 'Social Exclusion and Justice in India' book by P. S. Krishnan
- 'Indian Social Justice: A Case for Review book by L. M. Khanna
- 'Methodology of research in social sciences' book by O.R. kri Krishnaswamy and N. Ranganatham