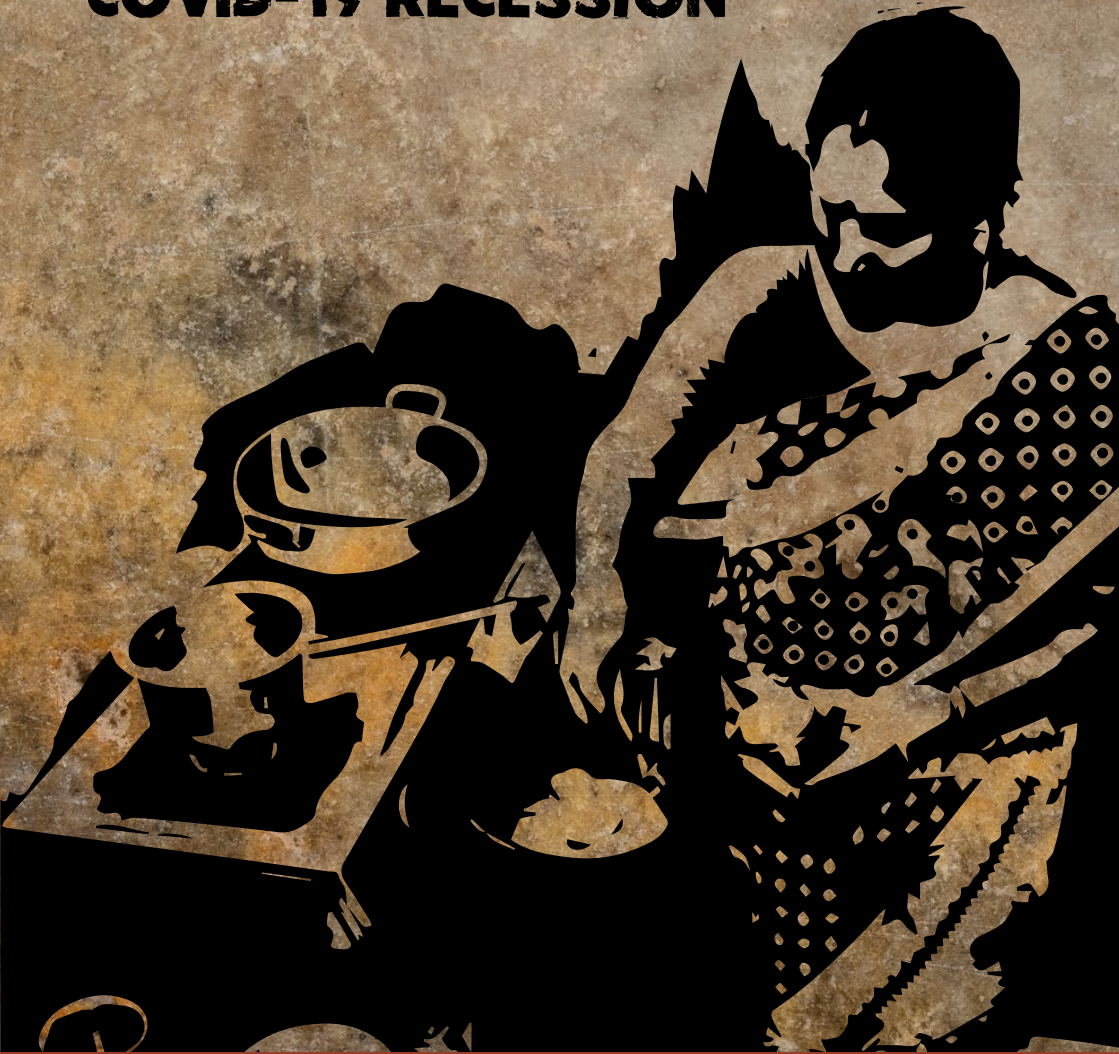




Visibilising the Struggles of the Invisible

# **DOMESTIC WORKERS AND COVID-19 RECESSION**



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# DOMESTIC WORKERS AND COVID-19 RECESSION

First Published in September, 2021

This report is a part of the report series published by SLD on the impact of COVID-19 on low-wage workers, working in different supply chains in India. Our next report will highlight the status of seafood workers in the pandemic.

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# INTRODUCTION

Domestic work accounts for a significant proportion of women's employment, particularly in urban India. Economic changes leading to increased inequalities, marked by declining workforce participation rates among women, agrarian distress, indebtedness, and rural-urban migration encouraged the growth of paid domestic work in the country (Neetha n.d.). Being part of the larger category of 'carework', which includes a broad range of tasks- cooking, cleaning, looking after elderly or children, guarding the house, driving children to school, gardening and beyond- an operational and statistical definition of domestic work is difficult to formulate. Therefore, the ILO Convention 189, supported the 'industry-based approach' that draws on the characteristic that is common to all domestic workers, namely, being employed in or by a private household or households (ILO 2013). Some domestic workers, often referred to as 'live-ins', reside on the premise of their employers, while 'live-outs' have the option of working with multiple employers. However, in the modern system of domestic work, there has been an increase in 'part-time' workers in India, and the phenomenon is typically associated with- a) Urbanization and the emergence of modern nuclear families, and b) The possibility of engaging cheap labour with no responsibility and easy hire and fire (Neetha 2008; 2013).

Paid domestic work is marked by three key aspects of carework- disproportionate presence of women, precarious nature of work and undefined workplace, and undervaluation of women's labour. This is partly because paid domestic work is virtually 'invisible' as a form of employment in many countries, including India. More generally, male-dominated public politics make identification and valuation of women's work difficult across sectors. This also explains why in India data pertaining to domestic workers is not maintained at the central level. However, macro data sources like the NSSO (2011-12) estimated that 39 lakhs people were employed as domestic workers in India, of which 26 lakhs were female. Besides ambiguities in statistical classification, invisibility of domestic work and consequent

exploitation and marginalisation of domestic workers is also attributed to their isolated and segregated existence in private confines of the 'home'. But what is private to the employer, is workplace for the domestic worker, calling to question the definition of the home as purely a 'private domain'. This indicates that employment relationships inside individual homes are complex and conditions of work highly informal with low wages and lack of social benefits and labour protection. The domestic employment relationship is not specifically addressed in many legislative enactments, thus, rendering domestic workers vulnerable to unequal, unfair and often abusive treatment (ILO 2010, pp. 1). Besides, the risks of employer abuse and humiliation is heightened when such work is performed by groups such as migrants or people with low levels of education and lack of awareness about labour rights.

The labour movement has been struggling to make decent work a reality for domestic workers by not only demanding their inclusion under core labour laws for adequate levels of protection, but also according legal recognition to domestic work as 'any other work'. In this regard, the adoption of the ILO Domestic Workers' Convention, 2011 (No. 189), a path-breaking legal instrument, set out to ensure that domestic workers enjoyed decent work equal to that of any other worker (ILO 2021). Since its adoption, 32 countries have ratified the ILO Convention and several countries have brought out progressive legislations protecting the interests of workers in the sector (*ibid.*). The Indian government also voted in favour of the convention, though not ratified, obligating the state to come up with legislative interventions to protect domestic workers. Due to the mounting pressure from organizations working among domestic workers, some states like Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Kerala, and Jharkhand have notified minimum wages for domestic work (Neetha 2015). Despite existing lacunae in effective implementation and coverage, the minimum wage legislation has been critical in making domestic work 'visible' by rendering domestic workers the status of workers.

# COVID-19 CRISIS

The COVID-19 pandemic has in a visceral way exposed existing vulnerabilities of informal sector workers, amongst which domestic workers form a large chunk. It led to devastating impacts on their lives and livelihoods across the globe pushing them to economic and social margins. ILO (2020) reported that while domestic workers both in formal and informal employment have been significantly affected by the global crisis, those in informal employment were at far greater risks of losing jobs, wages and working hours. Comparing the last quarter of 2019 to the second quarter of 2020, it was found that the number of domestic workers decreased drastically and at a higher rate compared to other employees (ILO 2021). In countries with strict levels of lockdown, like India, domestic workers had to face greater deprivation intensifying pre-existing inequalities and deep vulnerabilities of labour in India which is overwhelmingly unorganized and female. The fear of the pandemic and the stringent nation-wide lockdown imposed in India from 24 April 2020 until 25 May 2020 severely impacted domestic workers in terms of both livelihood and income (ISST 2021). Exacerbated by a lack of public transport, millions of migrant workers started walking back to their villages, precipitating a humanitarian crisis and domestic workers in Delhi were very much a part of this disaster (WIEGO 2020).

Over the last decade, Society for Labour and Development (SLD) has been engaging with livelihood issues of workers employed in different sectors of the economy focusing primarily on two key aspects: a) The plight of women workers and, b) Raising their levels of consciousness about workers' rights. The study aims to document and assess the impact of the pandemic and the subsequent lockdown on women domestic workers in Delhi NCR and also map how these workers were affected at different levels in pre and post lockdown scenarios. 60 women domestic workers were interviewed for the purpose of the study. The domestic workers interviewed were members of the network 'Gharelu Kamgar Sanghathan' (GKS), a women workers' organisation promoted and supported by SLD.

## About Gharelu Kaamgar Sangathan (GKS)

Gharelu Kaamgar Sangathan (GKS) or Domestic Workers Organization was established in 2012 to organize and mobilise domestic workers in Gurugram and Delhi/NCR, to address problems faced by them and work for their rights.

Delhi/NCR and Gurugram in the last few decades have been growing as an industrial hub with drastic expansion of human settlements. As a result, the demand for domestic workers has increased manifold. The region experiences a huge influx of domestic workers from several states of India like West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Assam for a decent survival. Meagre income coupled with poor economic conditions and mounting expenses in the source states compel many young women to migrate to the metropolitan in search of work and to maximise their survival strategies. Under such situations of distress, Delhi/NCR and Gurugram in North India emerge as lucrative options for a large majority of this migrant population.

Low wages, heavy workloads and long hours, lack of humane working conditions, absence of paid leave, or medical benefits/insurance are not only routine, structural exploitation facing domestic workers, but these have become an intrinsic part of their job description, especially when their job role (listing of tasks) is not appropriately defined by employers. They also face graver dangers of abuse and violence from agencies and employers alike. Despite being on high demand, they have no job and income security, and the pandemic doubled their precarity by posing added challenges. Most of the domestic workers have no formal education or job training. They have little or no access to social security even though they are an important segment of the service sector within the Indian economy. This explains that their vulnerabilities are further accentuated by the informality of their occupation, which got severely hit with the onset and spread of the covid crisis.

Under the prevailing conditions of domestic workers in the country - in Gurugram and Delhi/NCR, GKS emerged as a Domestic Workers Collective to 'promote, protect and preserve' the rights of the domestic workers. Campaign for legal regulations using different medium and forum is organised to signify the 'Dignity of Labour' for domestic workers. Till date

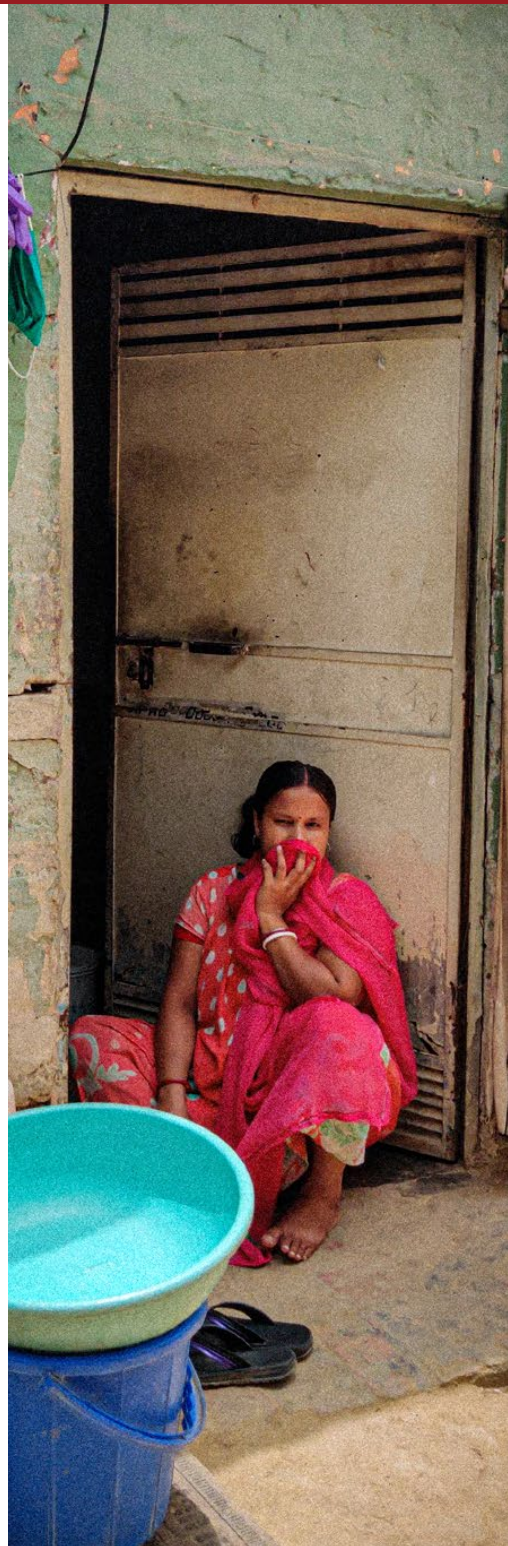
GKS embarked on a journey for the cause of domestic workers as a social movement from the grassroots level - helping domestic workers to come out of the shadows of 'invisible work' and an 'invisible workforce' to work with dignity like other workers within the country. Through this study, SLD aims to inform various stakeholders on the plight of this 'invisible workforce' during the pandemic.

## The study covers

- » Impact on the livelihoods of women domestic workers as a result of the pandemic
- » Discrimination and inequality faced during the pandemic from different actors
- » Access to social security benefits, including additional support from the state and central governments
- » Experiences of domestic workers on the state of affairs and the need for a humane treatment

## Method

The study covered 60 women domestic workers based in Delhi NCR - specifically in the Gurugram area. The workers for the study were selected through convenience sampling method. Prior permission was taken from the workers before the interview. As an organizational practice, it was informed





to the workers that their identities would be kept confidential. Names of workers have been changed in the report to ensure anonymity.

Semi-structured interviews and key informant interviews using a standardized questionnaire were employed to understand the conditions of domestic workers during the lockdown and post lockdown period. Telephonic interviews were conducted as it was difficult to organize physical meetings due to strict lockdown restrictions. Workers were requested for their available time, and accordingly phone calls were made. Each questionnaire took around 20-25 minutes to complete.

The interviews were conducted between August-September 2020 in three areas of Gurugram.

## **Limitations of the study**

During the pandemic the workers were locked up in their homes with other family members. It was observed, in course of the interview, that the workers were not able to express themselves freely. They could not clearly share their miseries or the treatment they received from their employers or openly respond to questions with respect to their safety at home or about issues of domestic violence. Very few workers reported facing domestic violence as they were also locked up in their homes with their perpetrator (male counterparts/husband/partner or relative) and sharing incidents of intimate partner violence was not easy for them, lest they face retaliation.

The study covered only 4 live-in domestic workers as it was difficult to interview them considering the fact that their lives were closely monitored by their employers. Live-ins were made to work overtime - round the clock and provided extra care services during the lockdown. Absence of a detailed listing of tasks in case of domestic workers, anyways, allows for further extraction of their labour. This situation aggravated during the period of the pandemic for many live-in workers where their burden of work further increased with no commensurate increase in wages.

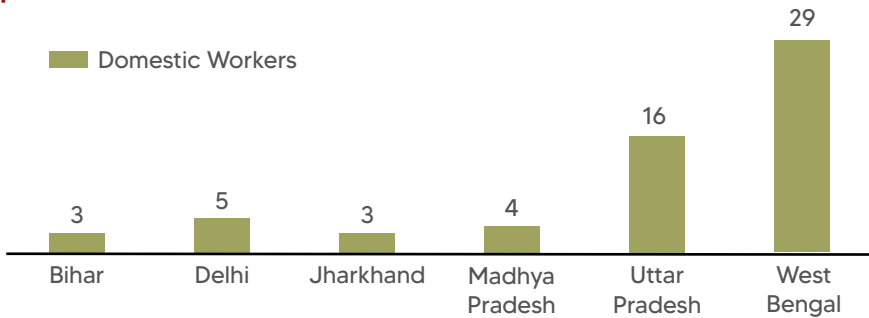
# KEY FINDINGS

## Profile of the workers

The study revealed that Gurugram - National Capital Region (NCR) witnessed a huge influx of migrants from different states in search of a better life. With the city overlooked by a ring of high-rise buildings and gated society complexes, the study finds that paid domestic work seemed to be the only option for most of the illiterate, low-skilled migrant population, predominantly female. Paid domestic labour, thus, became crucial to the smooth functioning of middle and upper-middle households in urban India.

The study sample of 60 domestic workers revealed that all were migrant workers from different regions of India. Women workers belonged to the age cohort between 18- 60 years, the average age being 33.33 years. The domestic workers interviewed belonged to the category of 'live-outs'/ 'part-time' workers due to the methodological challenges discussed above. The migration pattern revealed that a majority of the migrant domestic workers were from the states of West Bengal (48%) followed by Uttar Pradesh (27%), Madhya Pradesh (7%), Jharkhand (5%), Delhi (8%) and Bihar (5%) workers). It was crucial to understand the migration pattern of the workers - state level information is always not sufficient to understand the socio-economic situation in migration prone districts in the respective states.

The districts that the domestic workers migrated from were Sitamarhi district in Bihar; some workers also travelled to Gurugram from South-west Delhi; Simdega district in Jharkhand; Sagar district in Madhya Pradesh; Eta, Etawah and Mainpuri districts in Uttar Pradesh; Malda, Murshidabad and Nadia districts in West Bengal. This information was crucial to understand the pattern of migration from the respective districts.

**FIGURE 1: MIGRATION PATTERN OF WOMEN DOMESTIC WORKERS**

Considering the fact that the workers interviewed were migrants, they chose to migrate due to the absence of viable work in their respective hometowns. The glitterati of the city gave them the hope of a better survival, but little did they know that they would have to live a life of subsistence without access to better and affordable housing, nutrition, safe drinking water, affordable and accessible healthcare and sanitation.



### CASELET 1

Seema hails from West Bengal. She came to Gurugram to work as a domestic worker. She was a part time worker earning INR 12 thousand a month. She worked for multiple employers. But the pandemic changed her life. Seven months since the lockdown, she is unable to find work. The demand for domestic workers declined, as most residents started doing housework on their own. Many employers did not return from their hometowns even after the lockdown was lifted. Now Seema is cutting down on her monthly expenses by reducing the number of meals per day. She is still looking for a job and trying to make her ends meet in this 'new normal'.



# IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON DOMESTIC WORKERS





## **EMPLOYMENT PATTERN: BEFORE AND AFTER LOCKDOWN**

The announcement of the National Lockdown on 23rd March created mayhem in the lives of the working community. The destination cities experienced a vast majority of reverse migration by the workers to their respective villages. Most of the workers were unaware of the consequences of the lockdown and it led to a state of panic. Domestic workers were not an exception to the rule, most of them migrate to the cities either with families or with their relatives and some of them have been living in the destination cities for many years – they knew that they will have some flow of work always, but they did not know that the lockdown will push them to a situation of joblessness and complete deprivation.

Table 1 clearly indicates that before the lockdown, domestic workers on an average worked in four houses. 23% of the workers (14 domestic workers) worked in four houses, one domestic worker did not work and one domestic worker worked in eight houses (the data showing the least, average and the highest variation).

After the lockdown there was a considerable decline in employment - 35% (21 domestic workers) of the workers lost their jobs as a result of COVID-19. On an average, the domestic workers worked in 2.5 houses after lockdown as compared to four houses before the lockdown, indicating loss of employment. Data reveals that while as high as 35% of workers (21 workers) were completely out of work, only one domestic worker was found working in five houses. This not only suggests pandemic induced joblessness, but also how the burden of household work disproportionately fell on a domestic worker working with multiple employers.

Only four out of 60 workers were working as live- in workers during the survey. Initially even those 4 workers were working as part time workers. GKS always focussed on live-out workers as they were more in number in the city. Stable sustenance was found to be the reason behind the shift to a live-in employment arrangement for the four workers in the sample. Employers were more confident in retaining live-in workers during the pandemic as they came in contact with a smaller number of people on a daily basis. Conversations with one live-in worker during the survey revealed that she was comfortable working round the clock in one employer's house where she had the assurance of a regular source of income as opposed to working in multiple houses. At the same time, she did acknowledge the fact that her mobility was restricted, and that she was made to do more work than usual without sufficient breaks.

Lack of job opportunities aggravated the vulnerability of domestic workers - there were situations when entire families had lost their source of income and had reached a stage of semi-starvation. In this situation, domestic workers in Gurugram began approaching Gharelu Kamgar Sangathan (GKS). Considering that Society for Labour and Development (SLD) is the financial and the technical sponsor of GKS, its staff provides pro-bono services to GKS to build its own pool of human resources and infrastructure. During the pandemic, GKS was housed as a programme of SLD to reach out to the deprived domestic workers. SLD mobilised funds for 320 domestic workers and their families who received food essentials that covered their needs for a period of one month (for a family of four members). The distribution was held from July 2020 to April 2021.

**TABLE 1: MIGRATION PATTERN OF WOMEN DOMESTIC WORKERS**

Domestic workers (in numbers)	Domestic workers (in%)	Work in households before Lockdown	Domestic workers (in numbers)	Domestic workers (in%)	Work in households after Lockdown
1	2	0	21	35	0
7	12	1	16	27	1
10	17	2	11	18	2
12	20	3	8	13	3
14	23	4	3	5	4
7	12	5	1	2	5
5	8	6			
3	5	7			
1	2	8			
<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>15</b>

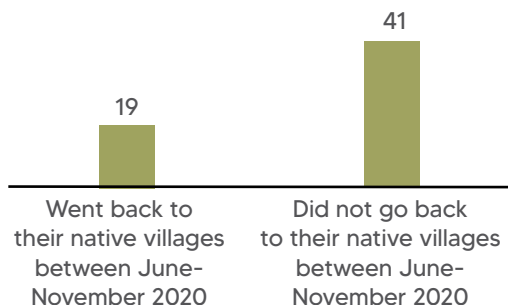
**FIGURE 2: REVERSE MIGRATION OF DOMESTIC WORKERS**

Figure 2 depicts the reverse migration pattern of domestic workers. Data reveals that while more than half, 68.3% of workers stayed back in Gurugram, 31.7% travelled back to their villages between June and November 2020 due to lack of job opportunities in the city.



## DECLINE IN INCOME

Domestic workers reported considerable decline in their income as a result of the pandemic. Table 2 shows that the average income of the domestic workers before the lockdown was INR 8700/-. However, there has been a considerable decline in income from April 2020 onwards with the announcement of the three-week national lockdown. Though a slight increase in income was reported in August 2020, but it is not the same as before the lockdown.

As reported, 78% (47 workers) did not receive wages during the period April to June 2020. The remaining 22% (13 workers) of domestic workers received partial wages from their employers. Employers were also apprehensive to take them back to work, for the fear of contracting the disease. Many workers also reported that they had gone back to their hometowns, and when they came back to work once the lockdown was lifted, they were already replaced by other workers.



An overwhelming 85% of the domestic workers did not receive any advance<sup>1</sup> from their employers during the lockdown. Only 15% (nine domestic workers) received advance payment from their employers, ranging between INR 1000 – INR 5500. Most of them have not been able to return the advance and one worker has been paying INR 1000 per month for an amount of INR 5000 that she borrowed from her employer. Three domestic workers in the sample shared that their employers supported them with dry ration, which included food essentials along with money assistance. The rest did not receive any assistance from their employers during the pandemic. They were left to fend for themselves. Additionally, employers often refused to pay their salaries as there was no work. The directive from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) stated that there will be no restrictions on the mobility of domestic workers barring containment zones, but still it was observed that employers were reticent to pay the domestic workers or call them back to work. On many occasions, the employers themselves had migrated back to their hometowns and were not in touch with their respective domestic workers

**TABLE 2: AVERAGE INCOME, IN RUPEES**

Declining Income	
Month (2020)	Average Income
March	INR 6848
April	INR 1190
May	INR 929
June	INR 895
July	INR 947
August	INR 1552

1. Advance was taken from the employers by the domestic workers to meet their household needs during COVID - 19 times, but it is not a usual practice.



## **CASELET 2**

Soni stayed in Gurugram during the entire period of the lockdown. Working in two households, she managed to earn INR 13000 per month. First month into the lockdown, one of her employers paid INR 1000 as advance. This was too meagre an amount for her to be able to survive for that period. Ration supply in the worker settlements was erratic because of which they were forced to buy daily essentials from the landlord's shop located in the building premise. Faced with lack of money, these workers borrowed ration on credit. Seven months after the lockdown, Soni has still not been able to repay the debt. She has a faint hope that someday life will get back to normal and she will earn as much as she did before the lockdown.



### CASELET 3

With the imposition of complete lockdown, Reshma went back to her village with her family. Four of her employers had not paid her wages. After a few repeated phone calls, one of the employers paid her through the digital payment method in another worker's bank account. Another employer denied meeting her in person for the fear of contracting the infection. But when she requested him to clear her dues so that she could meet her needs, they called Reshma outside their house and threw the money out of the window to avoid any physical contact with her. Reshma still feels humiliated for the way she was treated, and expressed that the employer could have avoided such unpleasant behaviour.

Workers were asked to follow simple precautions since March 2020. There were some relaxations in the initial phases when the lockdown was lifted, but later Resident Welfare Association (RWAs) and even individual employers imposed very strict safety protocols which is followed even till date. This also impacted the employment of domestic workers as many RWA's and individual employers were not in favour of re-employing them post lockdown. As a result, many domestic workers not only lost their jobs but also working hours, especially those working for multiple employers, both leading to a dramatic reduction in the total amount of wages received.



## MEETING ESSENTIAL NEEDS: FOOD, SHELTER, HEALTHCARE

Decline in household income impacted the lives of domestic workers – they were not being able to cover their food, shelter and healthcare costs. There were state orders<sup>2</sup> that gave directions to landlords not to demand rent for a period of one month from the workers, including migrant labourers. However, domestic workers were often pressurised to pay rent during the lockdown, failing which they faced innumerable abuses from their landlords.

A large proportion (66.7%) of the workers could not pay the rent of their accommodation and in 4 cases domestic workers were even asked to vacate the rooms. Only 28% (17 workers) managed to pay their rent during the pandemic.

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2. The order has been passed in exercise of powers available under Section 10(2) (i) of the Disaster Management Act of 2005, said the letter issued by the government. (Hindustan Times, 29th March) that declared that workers cannot be forced to pay the rent during the pandemic nor can they be evicted.



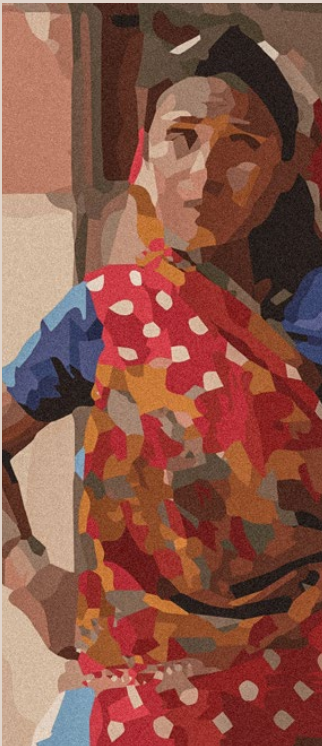
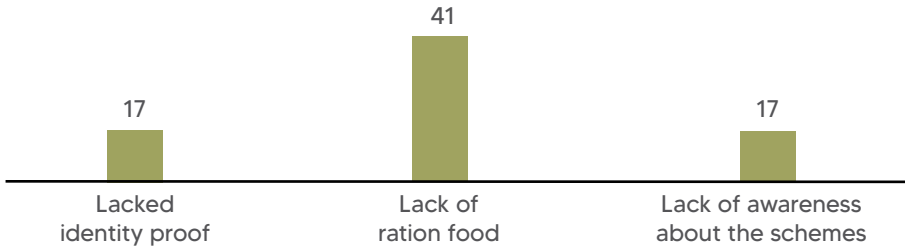
## CASELET 4

During the second phase of the lockdown, Tara, from Jharkhand moved back to her village. She was staying with her daughter and her husband on rent in Gurugram. Fearing that they would not be able to pay the rent, they decided to move out. But the owner stopped them. He asked her to leave only on the condition that she would lock up her room and return when the situation improved, as the unpaid rent was treated as moratorium. In the midst of uncertainty, Tara was not sure if she would ever come back to the city again. The burden of house rent added to the uncertainties gripping her life during the pandemic.

62% (37 domestic workers) in the sample shared that the unpaid rent was treated as moratorium.

Majority (86.7%) of workers did not receive any relief from the government. As depicted in Figure 3; 17 out of the 60 workers did not have an identity card. 41 out of the 60 workers did not have a ration card and 17 were not aware of the schemes offered by the government during the lockdown. 25 out of the interviewed 60 workers received food essentials from SLD during the month of May and June 2020. The remaining 35 workers did not receive additional benefits from other sources. It was only in nine cases that the domestic workers' family members fell ill during the lockdown and they went to private clinic for treatment.

**FIGURE 3: ACCESS TO SUBSIDIZED FOOD GRAINS**



#### **CASELET 4**

Shobha hails from Dinajpur in West Bengal. She has been working in Gurugram for nine years, but she could never make an identity card for herself. This compounded her difficulties further. During the lockdown when people back in her village were able to access government provided ration under PDS, Shobha was running from pillar to post to fend for herself in the city. Identity cards were either not made by the employers or the government authorities. House owners are usually reluctant to let domestic workers use their place of residence as proof. The COVID-19 crisis came down heavily upon many like Shobha, who were pushed to the brink of survival in the absence of any safety net.



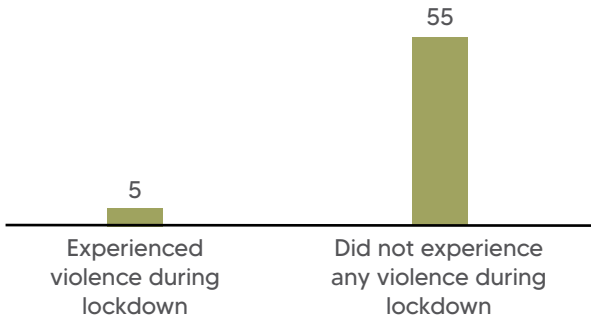
## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DURING LOCKDOWN**

Several studies pointed out the increase in the incidence of domestic violence during the lockdown. This study also intended to understand the plight of domestic workers locked in the lockdown. Only five out of 60 domestic workers shared that they had experienced violence at home during the lockdown. Four out of five shared that they had experienced verbal abuse and only one worker reportedly experienced both verbal and physical abuse.

The fact that data was collected over phone during the period, August to September, when most domestic workers were living with their families in one cramped room, it was difficult for them to share the forms of abuse faced and their relationship with the perpetrator/s. Two out of five women shared that the intensity of violence was more during the lockdown and the remaining mentioned that there was no difference in the intensity of the violence faced before and after the lockdown. Respondents were also

hesitant to disclose the identity of the abuser, and out of five, only in one case the victim reported the abuse to an authority.

**FIGURE 4:** VIOLENCE DURING LOCKDOWN







## CONCLUSION

The outbreak and spread of the COVID-19 pandemic have led to devastating consequences for the labour movement in India. While the pandemic has hit all sections of the society, domestic workers, who are otherwise on high demand in urban areas, have been significantly pushed to the peripheries. The informal nature of their work coupled with the invisibility and undervaluation of domestic labour adds to the precarity of their existence. The study revealed how the pandemic exacerbated some of these existing concerns. Even as domestic workers were struggling to establish their identity as 'workers' and access the benefits that are entitled to an organized sector worker, the pandemic prolonged their misery. They are not clearly included even in the social security schemes. This study provides a clear understanding that domestic workers are being affected at different levels. Even after eight months of lockdown, their financial miseries continued. Many businesses have started operations, but there is no clarity on the resumption of work by domestic workers. Such a situation of distress is adding to the woes of the migrant domestic workers who are being pushed to the brink of survival, either fending for themselves in the cities in the absence of any safety net or waiting for clarity from their employers to re-join work. The study showed a clear decline in work and income in the destination areas and how domestic workers are coping to make their ends meet in the 'new normal'.

Problems amplify when concerns of domestic workers do not necessarily fall in the ambit of government legislations and policies. While some states in India have extended minimum wages coverage to domestic workers, others leave much to be desired. Moreover, for those states where minimum wages legislations are applicable, wage rates vary and there exists compliance gaps. There have been collaborations among NGOs and trade unions to raise these concerns, but as long as domestic workers are outside the purview of core labour laws, even these platforms seem constrained to bring in any significant change in the broader labour movement.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## 1. Recognition of domestic work as work

With the second wave of the pandemic raging in the country, domestic workers have once again reached a stage of deprivation. There is an immediate need to focus on the rights of migrant domestic workers so that their lives can be protected and conditions of work regulated. There is a need to recognize domestic work and visibilize domestic workers as productive labour at the policy level.

## 2. Ensure access to social benefits

In view of the pandemic and subsequent lockdown, it is important that the government distributes free dry ration kit to domestic workers so that they do not reach a stage of near starvation, and monetary assistance so that their basic needs of survival are met. Given the precarious situation of migrant domestic workers, particular attention must be given to those stranded in destination states and those without ration cards. Registration of migrant domestic workers under the Social Security Act by the government can support them in addressing their existing concerns.

## 3. Ensure access to healthcare

Domestic workers, including migrants, must have access to affordable healthcare in the destination states. Public healthcare system should be made inclusive for all.

## 4. National minimum wage for domestic work

In order to make minimum wage rates uniform across states, the government should fix a national floor minimum wage. This has become especially crucial with the pandemic pushing most of the productive labour to the brink of poverty. The pandemic has exposed that existing wage rates for domestic work do not take into consideration the living needs of workers and their families.

## 5. Payment of overtime wages



In the post-lockdown situation when the demand for domestic work is on the rise to provide extra care services in the households, payment of overtime wages must become a policy issue in order to avoid exploitation of domestic labour. This is particularly true for live-in domestic workers. As they reside with their employers, they are expected to work round-the-clock with very few hours of rest. Therefore, it is very difficult to determine overtime wages for the work they do, leaving them underpaid.





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