



AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON THE SOCIO- ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF FEMALE DOMESTIC WORKERS IN THE URBAN AREA OF DAVANGERE AND BELAGAVI, KARNATAKA.**Smt. Govindamma M. A.¹ and Dr. Suchitra S.²****¹Research scholar, Department of Studies in Economics, Davanagere University, Davanagere. Karnataka.****²Professor, Department of Studies in Economics, Davanagere University, Davanagere Karnataka.****ABSTRACT**

This empirical research investigates the socio-economic conditions of domestic women workers in the districts of Davanagere and Belagavi, Karnataka. Domestic work, predominantly undertaken by women, remains one of the most undervalued and informal forms of employment, often lacking legal recognition, job security, and social protection. The study is based on primary data collected from 300 respondents 150 from each district through structured interviews and questionnaires. It examines critical variables such as age, education, employment status, working hours, family size, and housing conditions. Statistical tools, including the chi-square test, were employed to identify significant associations between socio-economic variables and geographical differences. The results indicate widespread economic hardship, irregular income, poor working conditions, and limited access to health and social security services among domestic women workers. Notably, the findings highlight regional disparities, with Belagavi workers facing relatively better wage levels. The study concludes that domestic women workers form an essential yet marginalized section of the urban informal workforce, requiring urgent policy attention, legal safeguards, and inclusion in welfare programs to ensure their socio-economic empowerment and dignity at work.



KEYWORDS: Domestic women workers, socio-economic status, informal employment, working age group, working conditions.

INTRODUCTION

Domestic workers are the most neglected group of workers in unorganised sector whose labour plays a vital role in serving the economy. The policies, acts, rules and regulations amended for their benefit has not helped them due to lack of awareness and major pot holes in its implementation. They often face psychological abuse, economic and emotional exploitation, verbal assault, bonded labour where some are even literally imprisoned. Even a Basic pay is deferred to employees. (Jacob, 2020)Wages Of majority of workers remain below minimum wages.

The economic contributions of domestic women workers form a critical, yet often underappreciated, segment of the labor market. In Karnataka, as in many other regions, domestic work predominantly involves women who operate within the informal sector. This sector is characterized by low wages, lack of social security, minimal legal protection, and often, poor working conditions (Chen et al., 2005). According to Neetha (2009), the persistence of traditional gender roles has meant that

domestic work is predominantly performed by women and is not recognized as 'real work' deserving of adequate compensation or labor rights. The economic dimensions of domestic women workers are multifaceted and complex. These workers often face economic insecurity due to the informal nature of their employment. The lack of formal contracts means that domestic workers do not have access to benefits such as health insurance, paid leave, or pensions, which are typically available to formal sector workers. This leaves them vulnerable to exploitation and financial instability. Agarwala (2013) highlights that the informal sector in India, which includes domestic work, is marked by precarious employment conditions, low wages, and limited bargaining power.

In Karnataka, the situation is compounded by regional economic disparities and social hierarchies. The state's diverse socio-economic landscape includes urban centers like Bengaluru, where demand for domestic workers is high due to rapid urbanization and the growth of the middle class, as well as rural areas where poverty and lack of employment opportunities push women into domestic work (Rao, 2011). The intersection of gender, class, and caste further complicates the economic realities of domestic women workers. Lower-caste women, in particular, often find themselves in the most exploitative and low-paying segments of domestic work (Neetha & Palriwala, 2011). The informal nature of domestic work in Karnataka is reflective of broader national trends. According to the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) data, a significant portion of the workforce in India is engaged in informal employment, with women disproportionately represented in this sector. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that domestic workers in India are predominantly female, with a considerable number of them being migrants from rural areas or other states (ILO, 2016). This migration often results in additional layers of vulnerability due to lack of local networks and support systems.

The economic dimensions of domestic work include not only the direct wages earned but also the broader economic impact on the workers' households. The income generated through domestic work, although often meager, is crucial for the survival of many families. However, the irregular and unpredictable nature of this income exacerbates financial instability. As Mehta and Awasthi (2020) discuss, the financial instability faced by domestic workers often leads to indebtedness and limited access to credit, which can perpetuate cycles of poverty. The working conditions of domestic women workers in Karnataka vary widely but are generally characterized by long hours, heavy workloads, and poor working conditions. Many domestic workers perform a range of tasks including cooking, cleaning, childcare, and elderly care, often without adequate rest or compensation. These harsh working conditions take a toll on their physical and mental health, further entrenching their economic vulnerabilities (Ghosh, 2020). Legal frameworks in India have made some strides in recognizing the rights of domestic workers, but implementation remains weak. The Domestic Workers' Welfare and Social Security Act, 2010, for instance, aims to provide social security and regulate employment conditions for domestic workers, but its enforcement is limited. The lack of awareness among workers about their rights and the absence of effective mechanisms to enforce these rights exacerbate their economic exploitation (John, 2013).

In recent years, there has been increasing attention to the plight of domestic workers from both academia and policy makers. Research by scholars such as Bhattacharya and Pal (2017) has emphasized the need for comprehensive policy interventions that address the unique vulnerabilities of domestic workers. The economic dimensions of domestic women workers in Karnataka are shaped by a complex interplay of historical, socio-cultural, and economic factors. These workers occupy a vital yet precarious position within the labor market, characterized by informal employment, low wages, and lack of social protection.

Overview of Domestic Women Workers

Domestic women workers in Karnataka form a critical yet often overlooked segment of the labor force. This group comprises women engaged in a variety of household tasks, including cooking, cleaning, caregiving, and other forms of domestic labor within private households. Their contributions, while indispensable to the functioning of many households and the broader economy, remain largely

undervalued and unrecognized. This section provides a comprehensive overview of domestic women workers, examining the nature of their work, the socio-economic conditions under which they operate, and the challenges they face.

Nature of Work

The work performed by domestic women workers is diverse and multifaceted. It ranges from routine household chores such as cleaning, washing, and cooking to more specialized tasks like caring for children, the elderly, or individuals with disabilities. Despite the essential nature of these services, domestic work is often perceived as low-skilled and is thus inadequately compensated (Neetha, 2009). This undervaluation is rooted in traditional gender norms that regard domestic tasks as extensions of women's natural roles rather than professional services deserving of fair remuneration (Hirway, 2010). Domestic workers typically engage in either live-in or live-out arrangements. Live-in domestic workers reside with their employers, providing round-the-clock service, while live-out workers commute to their employers' homes daily. Both arrangements come with their own sets of challenges. Live-in workers often face longer working hours and greater restrictions on their personal freedom, while live-out workers must manage the logistics and costs associated with daily travel (Kodoth & Varghese, 2012).

Socio-Economic Conditions

The socio-economic conditions of domestic women workers in Karnataka reflect broader patterns of inequality and marginalization. Most domestic workers come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, with limited access to education and alternative employment opportunities. This economic vulnerability is compounded by their status in the informal labor market, which lacks the regulatory protections afforded to formal sector workers (Gothoskar, 2013). Domestic work is predominantly informal, characterized by the absence of written contracts, social security benefits, and legal protections. This informality exposes workers to various forms of exploitation, including underpayment, delayed wages, and abusive working conditions. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), only a small fraction of domestic workers globally enjoy the same legal protections as other workers (ILO, 2013). In India, the situation is particularly dire, with domestic work remaining largely outside the purview of labor laws and regulations (Neetha, 2008).

Challenges Faced

Domestic women workers face numerous challenges that hinder their economic and social well-being. One of the most pressing issues is the lack of legal recognition and protection. In India, labor laws such as the Minimum Wages Act and the Employee State Insurance Act do not adequately cover domestic workers, leaving them without access to basic labor rights and social security benefits (Raghuram, 2016). Additionally, domestic workers often experience exploitation in the form of low wages, long working hours, and poor working conditions. A study by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) found that domestic workers in India earn significantly less than the minimum wage in other sectors, highlighting the systemic undervaluation of their labor (NSSO, 2013). The lack of formal contracts and the informal nature of their employment further exacerbate their vulnerability, making it difficult for them to claim their rights or seek redress for grievances (Sen & Sengupta, 2016). Health and safety are also major concerns for domestic workers. The physically demanding nature of their work, combined with long hours and inadequate rest, often leads to health problems. Furthermore, domestic workers are at a higher risk of experiencing physical, emotional, and sexual abuse due to the isolated and private nature of their work environment (Neetha, 2009).

Review of Literature:

During the colonial era, domestic workers were subjected to significant wage disparities and exploitation. British employers often paid meager wages to their Indian domestic workers, reflecting the broader racial and class hierarchies of the colonial society. This exploitation was exacerbated by the

absence of legal frameworks to protect the rights of domestic workers, leaving them vulnerable to abuse and economic deprivation (Mukherjee, 2004).

Despite these policy initiatives, domestic workers in Karnataka continue to face significant socio-economic challenges. Wage disparities remain a critical issue. Studies have shown that domestic workers often earn wages significantly below the prescribed minimum wage due to weak enforcement of labor laws (Hamid, 2006). The informal nature of their employment exacerbates economic insecurity, with many workers lacking formal contracts and social benefits such as health insurance and pensions (Kabeer, 1999).

The informalization of the workforce has significant economic implications for domestic workers. Informal employment typically involves low wages, irregular income, and lack of job security. Domestic workers in Karnataka often earn below the minimum wage, reflecting the undervaluation of their labor. The absence of formal contracts also means that these workers do not have access to paid leave, health insurance, or pensions, exacerbating their economic insecurity (Hamid, 2006).

The perception of domestic work as "women's work" significantly impacts the wages of domestic women workers. This undervaluation leads to wage disparities where domestic workers are paid significantly less than their counterparts in other sectors, even when the work requires similar or greater levels of effort and skill (Hamid, 2006). Studies have consistently shown that domestic workers, despite working long hours, receive wages that are often below the minimum wage stipulated by law (Mitra, 2017).

The economic activities of domestic workers have a multiplier effect on the national economy. The income earned by domestic workers is spent on goods and services, thereby stimulating local economies. This spending supports various sectors, including retail, education, and healthcare, creating a positive economic ripple effect (Ghosh, 2020). The multiplier effect underscores the broader economic significance of domestic work beyond direct employment.

Employment Conditions

The study found that domestic workers in Davangere were predominantly employed in informal settings, with no formal contracts or job security. They worked long hours, often exceeding 10-12 hours a day, and were paid below the minimum wage prescribed by the state government. Many workers reported experiencing exploitation and abuse, with limited recourse to legal protection due to the informal nature of their employment (Shetty & Rao, 2021).

Working conditions for domestic workers in Chikkaballapura were found to be harsh and exploitative. Workers often performed multiple tasks, including cooking, cleaning, and caregiving, without additional compensation. Many reported facing verbal and physical abuse from employers, with limited avenues for redressal. The study called for stricter enforcement of labor laws and the establishment of grievance redressal mechanisms to protect the rights of domestic workers (Kumar & Shankar, 2019).

Gender-based wage disparities are prevalent among domestic workers in Karnataka. Women domestic workers often receive lower wages compared to their male counterparts for similar tasks, reflecting broader gender inequalities in the labor market. These disparities are further exacerbated by the informal nature of their employment, which provides little scope for negotiation and redressal (Kabeer, 1999).

OBJECTIVES:

1. To study the socio economic status of domestic women workers in Davangere.
2. To analyze the participation and contribution of DWW's in economic activities.

Hypothesis of the study:

1. Socio-Economic status of domestic women workers in Karnataka is below ILO standards.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data is collected from the sample respondents with the help of a well structured pre-tested interview schedule designed for the survey conducted in Davangere city. The secondary data is collected from the various books, Journals and websites. The present study has been conducted in Davangere city and 150 female domestic women workers were randomly chosen for the study. The variables selected for the study are Domestic service is a highly scattered and unorganized activity, hence, purposive sampling techniques could be used in selecting the sample workers. In view of this, the scope of the study was limited to selected localities. The study is based on primary survey. A purposive sample of 150 female domestic workers from various parts of the city was selected. The data were collected using a structured questionnaire pertaining to the socioeconomic profile of the women domestic workers' living conditions, working conditions, wages received, their participation in decision making process, etc. Data were analyzed through SPSS. Simple statistical tools such as measures of central tendency, chi-square test, correlation techniques, etc. have been used for analysis. The data were collected during .

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

"This section reports the main findings from 300 domestic women workers surveyed in Davangere and Belagavi, organized under four themes: demographics, working age group, caste, education and marital status.

Age is one of the important factors that decide the work efficiency. The association between age and domestic women workers was tested with chi-square and found significant at 5 percent probability level. Age was classified into three groups as below 30, 30-45 and above 45. In **Belagavi**, a large portion of domestic workers (41.3%) are **younger, under 30 years**, which may indicate that **younger women are entering domestic work early**, possibly due to early school dropout, poverty, or lack of job alternatives. In contrast, **Davangere has more middle-aged workers (30-45 years)** at 56%, suggesting that women there may enter domestic work **later in life**, possibly after marriage or childbirth. This could reflect **different life cycle entry points into labor** in the two districts.

The **caste distribution** among domestic women workers shows **significant variation**. In Davangere, Scheduled Castes (SCs) form the largest group (48.0%), while in Belagavi it is slightly lower at 40%. This reflects that domestic work is **disproportionately represented by SC women**, confirming that the occupation is still **caste-bound and linked to social stratification**. ST representation is higher in Belagavi (26%) than in Davangere (20%), suggesting some **regional demographic variation**. OBC participation is almost equal in both districts. The chi-square value confirms the **association between caste and region is significant**, suggesting that social identity plays a role in the labor participation of women in domestic work.

There is a **significant difference** in the educational backgrounds of women workers between the districts. In **Davangere, 38% are illiterate**, which is notably higher than in Belagavi (27.3%). This reflects **greater educational deprivation in Davangere**, likely due to economic or cultural factors. Primary education is the **most common level** in both districts. However, secondary and college education levels are low across the board, confirming that **education beyond primary school is largely inaccessible** to these women. The association is statistically significant, and it highlights how **low education is both a cause and consequence** of domestic work participation.

Marital status also shows a **statistically significant association**. A majority of domestic workers in both districts are **married**, but Belagavi has a slightly higher percentage (78.7%) compared to Davangere (73.4%). The number of **unmarried women** in domestic work is marginally higher in Davangere. Widowhood among domestic workers, although low, is slightly higher in Davangere (5.3%), possibly indicating **economic necessity post-spouse loss**. These findings show that **marital responsibilities and economic survival** are key reasons for engaging in domestic work.

Demographic Profile

Variable	Category	BELAGAVI	DAVANGERE	Total	Chisquare
Working Age Group	Below 30	62(41.33)	37(24.7)	99(33.0)	12.622**
	30-45	55(36.67)	84(56.0)	139(46.33)	
	Above 45	33(22.0)	29(19.3)	62(20.67)	
	Total	150(100.0)	150(100.0)	300(100.0)	
Caste	SC	60(40.0)	72(48.0)	132(44.00)	23.442*
	ST	39(26.0)	30(20.0)	69(23.00)	
	OBC	51(34.0)	48(32.0)	99(33.00)	
	Total	150(100.0)	150(100.0)	300(100.0)	
Education	Illiterate	41(27.33)	57(38.0)	98(32.66)	6.913*
	Primary	75(50.0)	68(45.33)	143(47.66)	
	Secondary	27(18.0)	15(10.0)	42(14.00)	
	College Education	7(4.67)	10(6.7)	17(5.68)	
	Total	150(100.0)	150(100.0)	300(100.0)	
Marital Status	Married	118(78.67)	114(73.4)	232(77.34)	6.704*
	Unmarried	27(18.0)	29(21.3)	56(18.66)	
	Widow	5(3.33)	7(5.3)	12(4.00)	
	Total	150(100.0)	150(100.0)	300(100.0)	

Source:

This section presents the comparative socio-demographic characteristics of domestic women workers in **Belagavi and Davangere districts**, based on primary survey data from 300 respondents (150 from each district). The results are analyzed using the **Chi-square test of independence** to assess significant differences between the two regions. The threshold for statistical significance is $p < 0.05$. This analysis shows that **caste, education, age, and marital status significantly shape the entry and status of domestic women workers**. These factors must be considered when formulating policies for their welfare, skill training, and social security.

FAMILY BACKGROUND:

Variable	Category	Belagavi	Davangere	Total	Chisquare
Size of the Family	Below 4	61(40.7)	41(27.3)	102(34.0)	7.123*
	Above 4	89(59.3)	109(72.7)	198(66.0)	
	Total	150(100.0)	150(100.0)	300(100)	
Type of the Family	Joint	78(52.0)	97(64.7)	175(58.33)	4.951**
	Nuclear	72(48.0)	53(35.3)	125(41.67)	
	Total	150(100.0)	150(100.0)	300(100.0)	
Ownership of House	Own	39(26.0)	21(14.0)	60(30.0)	6.750*
	Rented	111(78.0)	129(86.0)	240(80.0)	
	Total	150(100.0)	150(100.0)	300(100.0)	
Rooms Available	1(no bedroom)	75(50.0)	89(59.3)	164(55.34)	7.978**
	2(hall+kitchen)	56(37.3)	45(30.0)	99(33.0)	
	3(1 bedroom)	19(12.7)	16(10.7)	35(11.66)	
	Total	150(100.0)	150(100.0)	300(100.0)	
Separate	Yes	52(34.67)	69(46.0)	121(40.34)	4.003**

Kitchen	No	98(65.33)	81(54.0)	179(59.66)	
	Total	150(100.0)	150(100.0)	300(100.0)	
Vehicle	2 Wheeler	73(48.7)	68(45.3)	141(47.0)	4.538**
	3 Wheeler	14(9.3)	23(15.3)	37(12.33)	
	4 Wheeler	3(2.0)	7(4.7)	10(3.33)	
	Not Available	60(40.0)	52(34.7)	112(37.33)	
	Total	150(100.0)	150(100.0)	300(100.0)	

Source:

The analysis is based on a **sample of 300 households** (150 from each district), using **chi-square tests** to determine the significance of regional differences.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

This section presents a detailed socio-economic profile of domestic women workers in Belagavi and Davangere districts. The analysis includes six household variables, each compared across the two regions, and assessed for statistical significance using the Chi-square test.

Size of the Family

The analysis of family size reveals that a greater proportion of domestic women workers in Davangere (72.7%) come from families with more than 4 members, compared to Belagavi (59.3%). On the other hand, smaller families (below 4 members) are more common in Belagavi (40.7%) than in Davangere (27.3%). The chi-square value of 7.123* indicates a statistically significant difference between the districts. This suggests that domestic women workers in Davangere are more likely to belong to larger households, potentially resulting in greater economic strain and dependency within the family unit.

Type of the Family

With regard to family structure, joint families are more prevalent in Davangere (64.7%) than in Belagavi (52.0%). Conversely, nuclear families are relatively more common in Belagavi (48.0%) than in Davangere (35.3%). The chi-square value of 4.951** confirms that this difference is statistically significant. The results indicate that joint family systems continue to dominate among domestic women workers in Davangere, possibly due to traditional cultural practices or economic compulsion to share housing and responsibilities in low-income households.

Ownership of House

House ownership among domestic women workers is **markedly low**, with a vast majority in both regions residing in **rented accommodations—86.0% in Davangere and 74.0% in Belagavi**. Only 26.0% in Belagavi and 14.0% in Davangere own their homes. The **chi-square value of 6.750*** indicates a **significant association** between location and house ownership status. The trend reflects **housing insecurity** and **low asset possession** among domestic women workers, especially in Davangere where ownership is notably scarce.

Rooms Available in the House

Housing space is another key indicator of economic condition. In Davangere, **59.3%** of respondents live in **single-room (no-bedroom)** accommodations, while in Belagavi this proportion is **50.0%**. Two-room homes (hall + kitchen) are more common in Belagavi (37.3%) than in Davangere (30.0%). Three-room dwellings are rare in both regions. The **chi-square value of 7.978**** shows a **highly significant difference** in housing conditions. The data

strongly suggests that **domestic workers in Davangere live in more cramped and inadequate housing**, likely due to lower income levels and high rental costs.

Availability of a Separate Kitchen

Only **34.67%** of respondents in Belagavi have access to a **separate kitchen**, compared to **46.0%** in Davangere. This means that the **majority in Belagavi (65.33%)** cook in common or multipurpose spaces, indicating **poorer housing infrastructure**. The chi-square value of **4.003**** shows a statistically significant difference. While conditions are slightly better in Davangere, in both districts, a **lack of basic amenities such as a separate kitchen** reflects substandard living environments among domestic women workers.

Vehicle Ownership

Mobility is limited for most domestic women workers. About **47.0%** own a **two-wheeler**, while **37.33%** do not own any vehicle. Davangere has **higher three-wheeler (15.3%) and four-wheeler (4.7%)** ownership compared to Belagavi (9.3% and 2.0%, respectively), which may point to marginally better mobility or multiple earning members in some households. The **chi-square value of 4.538**** confirms that this difference is statistically significant. However, the overall trend reflects **limited access to personal transport**, constraining both work and social mobility.

The chi-square analysis across all six variables shows **statistically significant differences** between Belagavi and Davangere. The key findings are:

- **Davangere** households are **larger, more joint, and live in poorer housing** (more rented homes and single rooms).
- **Belagavi** shows **slightly better access to housing amenities**, though a higher share lack a separate kitchen.
- **Vehicle ownership** is limited in both regions, though **Davangere fares marginally better** in 3- and 4-wheeler ownership.

These results highlight the **economic vulnerability and inadequate living conditions** of domestic women workers, with regional disparities reflecting **different degrees of deprivation**. This analysis can help guide **targeted policy interventions** for improving housing, transport, and family welfare support systems in both urban areas.

Working Environment:

variable	Category	Belagavi	Davangere	Total	Chisquare
Distance from Residence	<3 KM	69(46.00)	51(34.00)	120(40.00)	33.582*
	3-5 KM	52(34.66)	65(43.34)	117(39.00)	
	>5KM	29(19.34)	34(22.66)	63(21.00)	
	Total	150(100.0)	150(100.0)	300(100.0)	
Working Hours per Day	<4	39(26.00)	51(34.00)	90(30.00)	73.088*
	4-8	72(48.00)	86(57.33)	158(52.66)	
	> 8	39(26.00)	13(8.66)	52(17.33)	
	Total	150(100.0)	150(100.0)	300(100.0)	
Source of Employment	Through Known Contacts	106(70.67)	129(86.00)	235(78.33)	10.390**
	Others	44(29.33)	21(14.00)	65(21.66)	
	Total	150(100.0)	150(100.0)	300(100.0)	
Working Conditions	Long working hours	39(26.00)	13(8.66)	52(17.33)	15.776**
	Lack of standerdised breaks	47(31.33)	57(38.00)	104(34.66)	
	Physically demanding tasks	52(34.67)	66(44.00)	118(39.34)	
	Harrasement/Vulnerebilities	12(8.00)	14(9.34)	26(8.67)	
	Total	150(100.0)	150(100.0)	300(100.0)	

A Chi-Square test of independence was conducted to assess whether employment-related characteristics significantly differed between workers in Belagavi and Davangere. Analysis revealed that **distance from residence to workplace** ($\chi^2=233.58$, $df=2$, $p<0.05$) differed significantly: a higher proportion of Belagavi workers lived within 3km, while Davangere had more workers commuting beyond 5km. For **daily working hours**, the difference was highly significant ($\chi^2=73.09$, $df=2$, $p<0.05$), with Belagavi showing a greater share working over 8 hours per day. The **source of employment** (contacts vs. others) also varied greatly across districts ($\chi^2=10.39$, $df=1$, $p<0.01$), indicating that Davangere relied more heavily on personal networks. Finally, **working conditions** (e.g., long hours, lack of standardized breaks, physically demanding tasks, harassment) were significantly associated with district ($\chi^2=15.78$, $df=3$, $p<0.01$). These findings indicate that geographic location is strongly related to several employment outcomes and working environment factors.

CONCLUSION:

This comparative study of socio-economic dimensions among domestic workers in Belagavi and Davangere reveals deeply entrenched disparities shaped by geography and context. Consistent with broader trends observed across Karnataka where domestic workers often face poor wages, insecure employment, low literacy, and limited access to social security. Our findings show that workers in both districts contend with vulnerabilities typical of the informal sector. However, distinct local differences emerged: Belagavi's workers tend to live closer to their workplaces and endure significantly longer daily working hours, while in Davangere, domestic workers are more reliant on personal networks to secure employment and frequently encounter physically demanding tasks or irregular breaks. These patterns reflect the intersection of regional labor markets, social capital, and working conditions. Policy interventions such as minimum wage safeguards, formal recognition of domestic work, structured work hours, access to social security, and support networks are urgently needed to uplift their livelihoods and mitigate exploitation. Further research should explore caste, migration, and gender dynamics to fully understand and address the nuanced challenges these essential yet overlooked workers confront.

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