



THINK LABOR

To keep up with everything skilling and employment

TOWARDS DECENT WORK FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS

Originally published: International Labour Organisation.

Introduction

The report puts spotlight on the struggles faced by the domestic workers and their additional burdens caused by the pandemic. This report highlights the lacunae in the present state of affairs and urges the policy changes in favour of the domestic workers as 80% of them are women- the marginalised section of our society.



Key Highlights

- Domestic workers constitute 2.3% of the total employment worldwide, which accounts for 4.5% of the female employment worldwide. Whereas, domestic work makes up only 0.9% of the overall male employment even though men constitute nearly one quarter of the sector.
- The share of informal employment among them is twice that of other employees. Some main dimensions that fuel informality are 1. Exclusion from social security net 2. Lack of compliance with the labour laws 3. Inadequate legal protection. Out of 75.6 million domestic workers worldwide, 61.4 million are in informal employment.
- Asia employs the largest share of the world's female domestic workers i.e 52.1% of them. This is in contrast to the European and Central Asian countries where only 4.7% of the domestic workers are employed. The regional inequality is observed clearly in Latin American and the Caribbean region where 91.1% of the domestic workers are women.
- Only 53.4% of the domestic workers are recognised wholly or partially by the labour laws or regulations. Again, inequality sinks in as 95% of them are covered by some law in Americas, Europe and Central Asia in contrast to exclusion of 61.5% and 94% of them fully or partially from labour in Asia and Arab states respectively.
- Majority of the domestic workers i.e 83% of them enjoy a limit on the weekly working hours in the Americas, while the situation is grim in Arab states; Asia and the Pacific, with the vast majority of them without limits on normal weekly hours. But, 77.8% of the countries reviewed provide entitlements to weekly rest.
- Though 64.8% of the countries reviewed stated that they provide a statutory minimum wage, they are home to only 35% of the domestic workers. As a result, the majority of them work in those countries which lack legal backing for statutory minimum wage or do not implement them properly.
- Almost half of all domestic workers worldwide are covered under one social security benefit or the other. But only 6% of them are covered under all the branches of social security provided by their respective countries.
- Surprisingly, all female domestic labourers and 67.6% of them are excluded from maternity leave in Arab states; Asia and the Pacific respectively in contrast to the Americas where 81% of them enjoy some kind of maternity benefits.
- To sum, only one in five domestic workers enjoy effective employment related social security benefits.
- Globally, women domestic workers earn just half of the average wages of the other employees, which is lower than their male counterparts (67.3%).

Read more: [Making decent work a reality for domestic workers: Progress and prospects ten years after the adoption of the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 \(No. 189\)](#)

Author: Navamitha Easwar Yadav, PILOT at Pratham.