



Struggle for Survival: A Study of Domestic Workers of Irongmara Village, Cachar, Assam

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Abstract

Domestic worker or Housemaid is generally a person who employed in another person's house and get wage for doing household work. This is an unorganized sector where a large number of people are employed. Domestic workers perform domestic chores such as cooking, washing, ironing, cleaning of house, grocery shopping, taking care of children etc. With the increase of nuclear family and women's employment in government and non-government organisation, importance of domestic workers rises. These domestic workers play crucial role in running the houses of their employers. Domestic workers service is an indispensable part of everyday life of the majority households of urban India. Unfortunately, these domestic workers interests are not protected like other workers. They are always at the risk of losing job at any time, after termination from work no financial benefit they get and they do not have fixed time of work. Above all in many cases they face physical mental abuse also. It shows that they are more vulnerable financially, physically and mentally. They struggle throughout their life for survival. Most of the domestic workers belongs to poor educational and economic back ground and lack of skill. So, it would be difficult for them after losing one job to get another one immediately. Keeping these view in mind Present paper aims to understand the socio-economic condition of housemaid with reference to Irongmara village of Assam.

Key words- Domestic worker, wage, employer, poverty, exploitation

Introduction

Domestic work is all kind of household work like cooking, cleaning, washing, raring children, looking after of disable, old person, gardening, etc. and the people who perform these work on the basis of payment or wage are known as domestic worker. It can also be said that domestic work which are perform by paid people for a particular household (employer) for a fixed period of time are the domestic worker. International Labour Organisation said domestic workers are those who "carried out household

work in private household in return of wages”. There is no uniformity of job description for domestic workers. Work pattern varies from house to house and mostly they have to discharge duties according to need of their employer. Sarita Agrawal (2023) said that there is a lack of job description with serious implications for domestic workers. That is why domestic workers work for private household without clear terms of employment and excluded from labour legislation. In spite of that, number of domestic worker increases along with the demand of domestic workers in urban and semi urban areas. According to Jayati Ghose(2014) two factors are working behind the increasing demand of domestic worker- (i)high economic growth rate of India unable to create more employment opportunity and (ii) increase of middle class population which section can afford to hire domestic workers .

It is found that more females are engaged in domestic work and it is one of the oldest sector which generate employment opportunity for a large section woman around the globe. Helma Lutz (2011) is of the view that feminisation of domestic work began in the midst of 19th century and continued still despite of educational level of women increases worldwide. Unfortunately, women’s participation in high income sector is less all over the country and most of them engaged in unorganised and low /under paid sector more. NSSO report 2012 said that in India around 39 lakh people engaged as domestic workers, among them 66.66% that is around 26 lakhs are female.

Domestic workers can be categories in to three groups like(a) part -time worker, (b)full-time workers and(c) live- in workers. Part-time workers are those who work for one or more employer’s houses for a specific period of time every day. Full time workers are those who works for single employer for definite period of time every day and full-time worker work for long period of time in one house than part time worker. Live -in- worker are those full-time workers who work for his/her employer and stayed in employer’s house (Chigateri 2016). All these types of domestic worker perform house hold work assigned to them by their employer and get wages according to their work.

Review of literature

Domestic workers are part of every day life in India especially in urban areas. In spite of facing different challenges domestic worker’s number increases day by day. The condition of domestic workers attracts the attention of the scholars and number of research were done on them. Some of the relevant reviews are discuss here. Ghatak and Sarkar (2019) said that domestic workers faces different problems like lack of decent work environment, social security, distress livelihood and so on. Ravichandran, (1979) while conducting studies on women domestic workers in Madras slums found miserable condition of female domestic worker. Majority of them belong to Scheduled castes and illiterates. They receive very

low wages which were insufficient to maintain livelihood. Bhattacharya et al (2010) found wage discrimination faces by female domestic worker in Chennai. They said that female domestic worker receives less wage than their male counterpart for same work. Katara, A. and Sharma, P. (2023) is of the view that female engaged themselves in domestic work to support family interest and deal with economic crisis. But in work places they face exploitation in the form of excess work, low wage, minimum hospitality and so on. Meghana Lakkreddy and AAnusha K Gavankar (2024) said that female domestic workers are frequently facing violence and harassment in their work places but most of the case goes unreported because of fear of losing job and social stigma.

All these research work shows that domestic workers of India belong to marginalised section of society and they are not safe in their work place. They work more but get inadequate wage which are insufficient to manage family and self. On the basis of these review present paper made an attempt to understand:

1. social condition of the domestic worker of Irongmara.
2. Economic condition of the domestic worker of Irongmara
3. Problem faces by the domestic worker of Irongmara

METHODOLOGY

The study utilised both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected from the field through structured interview scheduled which contain both open and close ended questions. It was difficult to find out domestic worker, so snow ball technique was used to select the respondents. Total 30 respondent were interviews and all are female and residing presently in Irongmara and nearby villages.

STUDY AREA

Irongmara:

Irongmara is one of the Village of Cachar district of Assam. This village situated approximately 13 km far from Silchar the district head quarter. Present population of the village is 7685 among them 3964 are male and 3721 are female, (Irongmara Gaon Panchayat office report 2020) Irongmara came under Irongmara Gaon panchayat and the Barjalenga Tehsil. Irongmara Gaon panchayat consists of 10 wards. Earlier the village was surrounded by thick jungles and hillock but the ecological conditions started to change after the establishment of a central university in 1994 in the adjacent Durgakona

village which is nearly two Km far from Irongmara. The name of the university is Assam University, Silchar. Establishment of this university brings lots of changes in the way of living of the local people. Its create lots of income opportunity for local people in the form of job in the university (temporary/permanent) different types of shop, running PG, private hostel, rented house for students, teaching, non-teaching staff etc. Assam University is not fully residential university, so huge number of students are staying Irongmara for perusing their study. Naturally student needed variety of services among them service of housemaid is also important. Gradually a mini township developed in this village.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Personal information of the respondents

Age

Female domestic workers of Irongmara belongs middle age groups. In present study it found that around three fourth respondents belong to middle age group (Table:1).

Table:1 Respondents Age Group:

Sl. No	Age Group (years)	Community of Respondents		Percentage
		Bengali	Hindi speaking	
1.	21-25	1(5.88%)	2(15.38%)	3(10%)
2.	26-30	3(17.64%)	--	3(10%)
3.	31-35	5((29.41%)	3(23.07%)	8(26.67%)
4.	36-40	3(17.64%)	2(15.38%)	5(16.66%)
5.	41-45	4(23.52%)	3(23.07%)	7(23.33%)
6.	46-50	1(5.88%)	1(7.13%)	2(6.66%)
7.	51 and above	-	2(15.38%)	2(6.66%)
	Total	17(100)	30(100)	30(100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during April to June 2023

It is found that 26.67% belongs to the age group of 31-35 year, 23.33% belongs to the age group of 41-45 years, 16.66% belongs to the age group of 36-40 years, 10% each belongs to the age group of 21-25 and 26-30 years of age, 6.66% each belongs to the age group of 41-45 and 46-50 years of age. Most of the domestic workers of the village belongs to middle age group .and young women either perusing study or engaged in other occupation or got married

CASTE AND COMMUNITY

Irongmara is inhabited by the tea garden, ex-tea garden labourer and Bengali speaking people. Women of these community engaged in domestic work. By religion they are Hindu. In present study, majority of domestic workers belongs to scheduled caste category. (table 2)

Table:2 Respondents caste category and community

Sl. No	Caste Category	Community of Respondents		Grand total and Percentage (%)
		Bengali	Hindi speaking	
1.	Other Backward Caste	3(17.64%)	5(38.46%)	8(26.67%)
2.	Scheduled Caste	14(82.35%)	8(61.53%)	22(73.33%)
	Total	17(100)	13(100)	30(100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during April to June 2023

The proportion of respondents belongs to Bengali and Hindi speaking community are not significantly different. Not a single woman belong to upper caste of both the community are found in this occupation. It may be due to less number of upper caste people of these community are living in Irongmara and neighbouring villages.

MARITAL STATUS

Marital status of respondents shows that majority of them are married and few are divorce, widow and unmarried (table3).

Table: 3 Respondents Marital Status and Community

Sl. No	Marital Status	Community of Respondents		Grand total and Percentage (%)
		Bengali	Hindi speaking	
1.	Unmarried	1(5.88%)	1(7.13%)	2(6.66%)

2.	Widow	5((29.41%))	3(23.07%)	8(26.67%)
3.	Married	10(58.82%)	7(53.84%)	17(56.66%)
4.	Divorce	1(5.88%)	2(15.38%)	3(10%)
5.	Total	17(100)	13(100)	30(100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during April to June 2023

Above table shows that more than half that is 56.66% respondents are married, 26.67% are widow, 10% are divorce and only 6.66% are unmarried. Except two cases all the widows are the head of their family. Two widow's elder son are the head of the family. Divorced respondents came back to their parental home and started working as domestic worker for survival.

FAMILY TYPES

Most of respondents belongs to nuclear family (table 4). Two fifth respondents are from joint family and rest of the respondent are from nuclear family.

Table: 4 Respondents Family Types

Sl. No	Family Types	Community of Respondents		Grand total and Percentage (%)
		Bengali	Hindi speaking	
1.	Joint	5((29.41%))	7(53.84%)	12 (40%)
2.	Nuclear	12(70.58%)	6(46.15%)	18 (60%)
5.	Total	17(100)	13(100)	30(100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during April to June 2023

Among Bengali speaking respondent nuclear family is more popular than Hindi speaking community,

FAMILY SIZE

Size of family is also an indicator of living standard of that community Domestic workers of Irongmara belongs small to medium size family (table5).

Table: 5 Respondents Family Size

Sl. No	Family Size	Community of Respondents		Grand total and Percentage (%)
		Bengali	Hindi speaking	
1.	1-2	2(11.76%)	--	2(6.66%)
2.	3-4	5((29.41%)	4(30.76\$)	9(30%)
3.	5-6	9(52.94%)	7(53.84%)	16(53.33%)
4.	7-8	1(5.88%)	2(15.38%)	3(10%)
5.	Total	17(100)	13(100)	30(100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during April to June 2023

Above data reveals that 53.33% respondent's family has 5-6 members,30% respondents have 3-4 members ,10% have 7-8 members and only 6.66% have 1-2 members. Breakdown of joint family system due to the globalization, urbanisation and other factor may also visible in rural India.

OWNERSHIP OF THE HOUSE:

Most of the respondents are living their own houses and few live in rented houses(table6).

Table: 6 Respondents Ownership of House

Sl. No	Ownership of House	Community of Respondents		Grand total and Percentage (%)
		Bengali	Hindi speaking	
1.	Owned	15(88.23%)	10(76.92%)	25(83.33%)
2.	Rented	2(11.76%)	3(23.07%)	5(16.66%)
3.	Total	17(100)	13(100)	30 (100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during April to June 2022

The above information reveals that 83.33% respondents living their own houses and rest are in rented houses. This data insisted to know the respondents home villages.

RESPONDENTS HOME VILLAGE/TOWN

From further investigation it appears that all respondents are not the original inhabitant of Irongmara. Few are coming daily to Irongmara for work and few take rented house here in Irongmara for work(table7).

Table: 7 Respondents Home Town/ Villages

Sl. No	villages	Community of Respondents		Grand total and Percentage (%)
		Bengali	Hindi speaking	
1.	Irongmara	13(76.47%)	7(53.84%)	20(66.66%)
2.	Dargakona	--	3(23.07%)	3(10%)
	Baraikona	--	1(7.13%)	1(3.33%)
	Bahadurtilla	--	2(15.38%)	2(6.66%)
	Jalanga	3(17.64%)	--	3(10%)
	Katlichora	1(5.88%)	--	1(3.33%)
3.	Total	17(100)	13(100)	30 (100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during April to June 2023

The table shows that 76.47 % Bengali and 53.84 % Hindi speaking respondents are inhabitant of Irongmara, 10% Hindi speaking respondent coming daily from Dargakona to Irongmara for work which is approximately 2Km from Irongmara. They inform that most of the day they came on foot to their workplace. One respondent is coming from Baraikona which is approximately 5 Km away from her workplace and she also manage to come on foot. Three respondents are coming daily from Jalanga which 5-6 km is away from Irongmara, two respondents are from Bahadurtilla and they take rented house in Irongmara. One respondent is from Katlichora and took rented house here. She said that her husband met an accident in 2021, since then he became bedridden and lost his job. She heard from people that household work is available in Irongmara, so she came with her family here in 2023.

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

Educational qualification of the respondents shows that most of them does not have any degree. (table 8)

Table: 8 Respondents Educational qualification

Sl. No	Educational qualification	Community of Respondents		Grand total and Percentage (%)
		Bengali	Hindi speaking	
1.	Illiterate	3(17.64%)	4(30.76%)	7(23.33%)
2.	Literate	3(17.64%)	5(38.46%)	8(26.67%)
3	Primary	6(35.29%)	2(15.38%)	8 (26.67%)
4	M.E.	5((29.41%)	2(15.38%)	7(23.33%)
	Total	17(100)	13(100)	30 (100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during April to June 2023

Above data shows that respondents educational qualification is low. None of them are even matriculate. 26.67% each are literate and educated up to primary level and 23.33% each are illiterate and educated up to middle school level.

So, it can be said that household workers of Irongmara belongs to middle age group, most of them are married and literate and belongs to nuclear family.

ECONOMIC CONDITION

Reason of adopting housemaid work

Household work is less dignitaries in the society even then the respondent adopted this type of occupation for survival. When they are asked about this question, number of reason came out. The reasons of adopting housemaid work as their occupation are shown in the following table

Table: 9 Reasons of adopting Household work as occupation

Sl. No	Reasons	Community of Respondents		Grand total and Percentage (%)
		Bengali	Hindi speaking	
1.	Insufficient family income	5(29.41%)	4(30.76%)	9(30%)
2.	Husband unable to earn	3(17.64%)	2(15.38%)	5(16.66%)
3.	Death of husband	5(29.41%)	3(23.07%)	8(26.67%)
4.	Husband did not take responsibility	2(11.76%)	2(15.38%)	4(13.33%)
5	Divorce with husband	1(5.88%)	2(15.38%)	3(10%)
6	To fulfil personal need	1(5.88%)	--	1(3.33%)
Total	17(100)	17(100)	13 (100)	30 (100)

Thus, from the above data it reveals that 30% of the respondents compels to adopt the job of housemaid because their family income is insufficient, 26.67% respondents adopt this occupation after the death of their husband, 16.66% respondents adopt this occupation because their husband unable to earn, 13.33% respondents adopted this occupation because their husband did not take family responsibility, 10% respondents adopt this occupation after divorce. So, it can be said that majority of respondents adopt the job of house maid either male earning family members are absent or reluctant to take families responsibility. In other word poverty push them to adopt this occupation for revival.

Category of Housemaid

On the basis of time the house maid spends in their employer's houses their work may be divided into three categories- part-time, full-time and live-in-worker. Details are given in the following table.

Table 10. Category of work Respondents engaged

Sl. No	Category of work	Community of Respondents		Grand total and Percentage (%)
		Bengali	Hindi speaking	
1.	part-time	11(64.70%)	8(61.53%)	19(63,33%)

2.	full-time	4(23.52%)	3(23.07%)	7(23.33%)
3	live-in-worker	2(11.76%)	2(15.38%)	4(13.33%)
4	Total	17(100)	13(100)	30 (100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during April to June 2023

From the above data it is clear that 63.33% respondents are part time workers, 23.33% are full time workers and 13.33% are live in workers. So, Majority of respondents are part time workers. Part time worker spend one to two hours in their employer's house, full time workers spend whole day or five to six hours and live in worker stayed in their employers' house whole day and night and discharge duties.

Types of work they perform

Housemaid do different types of work ranging from cooking, cleaning to baby care, collecting baby from school etc. They perform work according to the need of their employers. The pattern of works respondents perform are shown in the following Table.

Table: 11. Respondents pattern of works in others houses

Sl. No	Pattern of respondents work in others household	Community of Respondents		Percentage
		Bengali	Hindi speaking	
1.	Cooking and Cleaning floor	5(29.41%)	3(23.07%)	8(26.67%)
2.	Cooking, cleaning, and looking after baby	2(11.76%)	2(15.38%)	4(13.33%)
3.	Cooking, cleaning floor, washing cloth & dish,	3(17.64%)	2(15.38%)	5(16.66%)
4.	Cleaning utensils, cloth, floor	3(17.64%)	4(30.76%)	7(23.33%)
5	Cleaning utensils, cloth, floor and taking care of an old people	4(23.52%)	2(15.38%)	6(20%)
	Total	17(100)	13(100)	30(100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during April to June 2023

From the above table it appears that 26.67% each respondent does the household works like cooking, cleaning the floor & dish, and Cooking, cleaning, and looking after baby, 23.33% of respondents do cooking and cleaning floors only, 16.66% do the work like Cooking, cleaning floor, washing cloth & dish and 6.66% respondents wash utensils, cloth, floor and taking care of an old people. Most of the

full time and live-in -workers said that they did not have any fixed work hour. In morning they busy with cooking, cleaning, serving food, cleaning utensils, cloth etc. after that they get rest up to noon. Then they again cook or serve lunch, clean utensils etc. and get rest. In evening either they or wife of employer cook food and serve diner.

Working Hours per day

Most of the part-time workers cover more than one houses every day so their working hour may be more whereas those part-time worker work in one house their working hours is comparatively less. Respondents working hours are shown in the following table.

Table 12. Respondents Working hours per day

Sl. No	Number of houses	Respondents		Percentage
		Bengali	Hindi speaking	
1.	01-02	3(17.64%)	2(15.38%)	5(16.66%)
2.	03-04	8(47.05%)	6(46.15%)	14(46.66%)
3.	05-06	4(23.52%)	3(23.07%)	7(23.33%)
4.	No fixed time	2(11.76%)	2(15.38%)	4(13.33%)
5	total	17(100)	13(100)	30(100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during April to June 2023

It is obvious from the above data that 46.66% respondents work three to four hours per day, 23.33% work 5 to six hour, 16.66% work one to two hour and 13.33% said they did not have fixed hour of work. Majority of live in worker said they did not have fixed hour of work. In holidays they wake up late and in working day they get up early morning do all assigned work. But part time worker who cover only one house finished their assigned work within one to two hours. Their work includes cleaning floor, utensil and washing cloths etc. whereas those who cover two to three houses they need three to four hours.

Monthly Income

Respondents monthly income shows that they earn less and their income ranges from 2000/- to 7000/- per month. (table 13)

Table 13 Respondents Monthly Income

Sl. No	Monthly Income	Respondents		Percentage
		Bengali	Hindi speaking	
1.	1000/- to 2000/-	3(17.64%)	2(15.38%)	5(16.66%)
2.	3000/- to 4000/-	5(29.41%)	4(30.76%)	9(30%)
3.	5000/- to 6000/-	5(29.41%)	3(23.07%)	8(26.67%)
4	7000/- and above	4(23.52%)	4(30.76%)	8(26.67%)
5	Total	17(100)	13(100)	30(100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during April to June 2023

Above data shows that 30% respondent earn 3000/- to 4000/- per month ,26.67% each earn 7000/- per month, and 16.66% earn 1000/- to 2000/- per month. Almost all respondents said that their income is not sufficient for running family. They live in extreme poverty and have no alternative means but engaged their young children in work for earning. Brinda Hazam (name changed) a 47 years old married housemaid said that she earns 5500/- per month and purchase 3000/- rupees medicine for husband and rest of 2500 is not sufficient for running family. So, she withdrew her daughter from school and engaged her in housemaid work for earning. Similar view expresses by Mina Gosh, Ratna Das, Shukla Sutradhar. All the respondents said that they received cloth (new/old), cosmetic, used tinsels, some time medicine from their employers along with salary.

Control Over Income

All the respondents do not have full control over their income. Some respondent's money is taken by their husband or son. It is shown in the following table.

Table 14 Respondents Control over their own Income

Sl. No	Control over income	Respondents		Percentage
		Bengali	Hindi speaking	
1.	self	5(29.41%)	2(15.38%)	7(23.33%)
2.	Husband and self	5(29.41%)	4(30.76%)	9(30%)
3.	son	3(17.64%)	3(23.07%)	6(20.0%)

4	husband	4(23.52%)	4(30.76%)	8(26.67%)
5	Total	17(100)	13(100)	30(100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during April to June 2023

From the above data it is clear that 30% respondents' income controlled by themselves along with their husband, 26% income fully controlled by their husband, 23% respondents income controlled by their son and only 23.33% respondents has full control over their own income. so almost half of the respondents does not have any control over their own income and rest of the half respondents either have partial or full control over their income. In spite of earning majority of them are not economically empowered even they do not have right to spend their own income according to their own will or desire. Maloti Hazam a 48 years old housemaid (name changed) express her experience by saying that what ever I earn my husband taken away and I have to beg before him for my personal need. Laxmi Das a 40 years old housemaid said my income spend by me and my husband.

Purpose and Pattern of Expenditure

The respondents who has control over their own income spend money for different purpose. Mostly they spend for family consumption. (Table 15)

Table 15 Respondents Purpose and Pattern of Expenditure

Sl. No	Purpose and Pattern of Expenditure	Respondents		Percentage
		Bengali	Hindi speaking	
1.	Personal need	1(10.0%)	--	1(6.25%)
2.	Family need and personal need	4(40.0%)	2(30.0%)	6(37.5%)
3.	Family needs	2(20.0%)	3(50.0%)	5(31.25%)
4	Children need	3(30.0%)	1(16.66%)	4(25.0%)
5	Total	10(100)	6(100)	16(100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during April to June 2023

The above data indicate that more than 56% respondents spend their own income fully for family and children's needs, 37% respondents spend money for family as well as personal need and only 6% respondents earn for fulfilment of personal needs.

Saving of Income

For secure future saving of one portion of income is necessary. But for people of low income group it is difficult to save money for future. Respondents saving status are depicts in the following table.

Table 15 Saving money by Respondents

Sl. No	Saving money	Respondents		Percentage
		Bengali	Hindi speaking	
1.	Yes	4(23.52%)	1(7.69%)	5(16.66%)
2.	No	13(76.47%)	12(92.30%)	25(83.33%)
3.	Total	17(100)	13(100)	30(100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during April to June 2023

It is reveal from above data that near about four fifth respondents do not money and only less than one fifth have saving account. Those who do not have saving account, majority of them inform that their earning is insufficient for running family. Every month they take glossary item on credit so they can't think for saving. Laxmi Das and other inform that their income is so insufficient that if they did not take government subsidies rice, white, sugar, Arunadoi money, free schooling for children then they would have to remain in fast. It is also found that almost all respondents have bank account they open it under Prodhan Mantri Jon Dhan Yujona but saving money regularly is rare among them.

Satisfaction with Work

Job satisfaction is one of the major issue in the life of the respondents because it helps to boost mental health, dedication to work etc. Majority of housemaid dissatisfied with their work. Details are given in the following table (table 16).

Table 16 Respondents Job Satisfaction

Sl. No	Job Satisfaction	Respondents		Percentage
		Bengali	Hindi speaking	
1.	Yes	4(23.52%)	1(7.69%)	5(16.66%)
	Partially Satisfied	3(30.0%)	4(30.76%)	7(23.33%)
2.	Not Satisfied	10(33.33%)	7(53.84%)	17(56.66%)

3.	Total	17(100)	13(100)	30(100)
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Source: Field Survey Conducted during April to June 2023

It is found that more than half (56.66%) of the respondents are dissatisfied with their job, 23.33% are partially satisfied and 16.66% are fully satisfied with their job. This figure lead to know the reason of dissatisfaction (table 17).

Reason of Dissatisfaction

Respondents shows many reason for their dissatisfaction with their job. The reason is shown in the following table.

Table 17 Respondents dissatisfaction with their work

Sl. No	Reason of dissatisfaction	Respondents		Percentage
		Bengali	Hindi speaking	
1.	Less dignitary work	1(10.0%)	1(12.28)	2(11.76%)
2.	Insufficient salary	4(40.0%)	2(28.57%)	6(35.29%)
3.	Irregularity in payment	2(20.0%)	3(42.84%)	5(29.41%)
4	Insecure job	3(30.0%)	1(12.28%)	4(23.52%)
5	Total	10(100)	7(100)	17(100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during April to June 2023

Around 35% respondents said they are dissatisfied with their work because salary is less, 29% are dissatisfied due to irregular payment given by their employer, 23% are dissatisfied because there is no job security, and only 11 % express their view that though they engaged this work but they are not satisfied because this occupation does not have social dignity. So, majority of respondents are engaged themselves with this work but they are not satisfied because of variety of reason.

Attitude of employer towards the respondents

Generally, employers attitude towards employee is adoptive because relationship between them is interdependent. But some time employers attitude goes against the interest of employee and then problem stated. attitude of the employer towards the respondents can be shown in the following table.

Table 18 Employers Attitude towards Respondents

Sl. No	Employers Attitude	Respondents		Percentage
		Bengali	Hindi speaking	
1.	Good	4(23.52%)	2(15.38)	6(20.0%)
2.	Average	12(70.58%)	8(61.53%)	20(66.66%)
3.	Bed	1(3.33%)	3(23.07%)	4(13.33.0%)
4	Total	17(100)	13(100)	30(100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during April to June 2023

Above data shows that 66.66% respondent said that their employers attitude towards them is average that is neither too good nor too bed,20% respondents said the attitude of their employer is good and 13.33% respondents said that the attitude of their employers is bed. Monika Gosh a fifty years old house maid said that her employer never uses abusive language against her if she done mistake also.Mrs. Ratna, Mrs.Bindra, Mrs.Gita and other said their employer's behaviour is average.

Problem Face in work place

People either engaged in high or low-profile job everybody face one or other types of problem or difficulties during discharging their duties. So, housemaid of Irongmara also face different kinds of problems in their workplace. (table19)

Table 19 Problems face by Respondents in their workplace

Sl. No	Types of problem face	Respondents		Percentage
		Bengali	Hindi speaking	
1.	No problem	4(23.52%)	2(15.38%)	6(20.0%)
2	Oral abuse	4(23.52%)	2(15.38%)	6(20.0%)
3	Sexual harassment	1(5.88%)	2(15.38%)	3(10.00%)
4	Insulting behavior	6(35.29%)	6(46.15%)	12(40.0%)
5	Physical abuse	2(11.76%)	1(7.69%)	3(10.0%)
6	Total	17(100)	13(100)	30(100)

Source: Field Survey Conducted during April to June 2023

Above data shows that 40% respondents face insulting behaviour from employer's side, 10% each faces sexual harassment and physical abuse, and 20% each face oral abuse in their work places and did not face any problem. Therefore, it can be said that four fifth respondents face one or other types of harassment in their work places. Minati Das (name changed) a 30 years old divorce woman of Irongmara said that she works in a businessmen's house as a fulltime worker but few days latter the businessman started to talk rubbish with her and give bed proposal, so she left the house and take work in student's mass. Bichitra Roy (name changed) said that in little mistake she always gets scolded by her employer. Monika Sutradhar (name changed) a forty years old married women get bitten by her employer's wife due to unintentional hitting of their baby. And at the same day she was terminated from the work now she is searching of new house for work.

Preference of work place

Most of the housemaid of Irongmara prefer to work in University students room or mass rather than family. They are of the view that working with students is comfortable because student needs only cook food. Mita paul (name changed) a thirty-five years old married woman of Irongmara said that in student's room we have to cook only two or one item carry and small amount of rice, less utensils, and only one room to clean and weekly few cloths to wash. In student's room per student we get 1000 to 1200 rupees monthly. In a day, we can cover three to four students room. But students in mass we get salary on the basis of number of student. In mass per student pay 700 to 800 rupees per month for cooking. Another thing is that students does not need whole day service like family, only morning and sometime evening we have to cook for them. When they go for vacation we get relaxed. Mita also said that after one or two years most of the student left and after that finding new student is difficult. Similar view expressed by Gita, Anima and others.

Housemaid Organization

In the locality no formal and informal housemaid organisation is found. None of the respondents are aware about the existence of such organisation in other places of the district also. They get surprised when researcher asked about it and some of them said that if organisation is form in near future then it will be benefited for the housemaid workers.

Conclusion

In conclusion it can be said that housemaid of Irongmara belongs to scheduled caste and other backward caste category. They are less educated and belongs to poor economic background. Majority of them join this profession due to poverty. Most of them are dissatisfied with their profession because of various reason like less payment, job insecurity and irregular payment. Not only this they also face different types of problem in their work place like harassment, oral abuse, physical abuse, insulting behaviour etc. Because of their educational qualification they are unable to find work elsewhere, therefore they are working in the locality itself at low payment as housemaids.

They are leading their life with poverty, hard work, less dignity, insecurity of job. No housemaid association or NGO come forward to help them or sensitise them about their right and privileges. Strong legislation, along with vocational training, improving education of girl children elimination of poverty may improve their condition.

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