

**WORKING AND LIVING CONDITIONS OF WOMEN  
DOMESTIC WORKERS IN MIZORAM**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK**

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

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**WORKING AND LIVING CONDITIONS OF WOMEN DOMESTIC  
WORKERS IN MIZORAM**

**BY**

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**Submitted**

**In partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work of Mizoram University, Aizawl.**

**MIZORAM UNIVERSITY**

**December, 2022**

**CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the thesis “**Working and Living Conditions of Women Domestic Workers in Mizoram**” submitted by C. Lalrempuii for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work is carried out under my guidance and incorporates the student’s bonafide research and this has not been submitted for award of any degree in this or any other university or institution of learning.

Date : 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2022

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**DECLARATION**

I, C. Lalrempuii, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/Institute.

This is being submitted to the Mizoram University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NGOs	: Non-Governmental Organization
ILO	: International Labour Organization
NSS	: National Sample Survey
NCC	: National Campaign Committee
MNDWMWT	: Mizoram National Domestic Workers Movement Welfare Trust
CWA	: Child Workers in Asia
WIEGO	: Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing
UNIFEM	: United Nations Development Fund for Women
CDI	: Centre for Development Initiatives
OPDs	: Out Patient Departments
FGD	: Focus Group Discussion
KIIs	: Key Informant Interviews
SDGs	: Sustainable Development Goals
COVID-19	: Corona Virus Disease-2019
ICT	: Information and Communication Technology
CEC	: Centre for Education and Communication
IOM	: International Organization for Migration
NCW	: National Commission for Women
INSTRAW	: United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women
NCEUS	: National Commission for Enterprises in the Un-organized Sector
RSBY	: Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana
SEWA	: Self Employed Women's Association
WWF	: Working Women's Forum
TNDWWB	: Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers Welfare Board
MoLE	: Ministry of Labour and Employment
PPE	: Personal Protective Equipment
NH-54	: National Highway - 54
NH-150	: National Highway -150

FDWA	: Ferrando Domestic Workers' Alliance
NSSO	: National Sample Survey Office
MHIP	: Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl
GoI	: Government of India
BP	: Blood Pressure
MSW	:Master of Social Work
SEWU	: Self Employed Women's Union
GoM	: Government of Mizoram
SPSS	: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
HSLC	: High School Leaving Certificate
MR	: Muster Roll

**“WORKING AND LIVING CONDITIONS OF WOMEN  
DOMESTIC WORKERS IN MIZORAM”**

**Interview Schedule  
(Confidential and research purpose only)**

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**Schedule Number:**

**Date:**

**Time:**

**Section I: Demographic profile of the respondent**

**1. A. Personal Identification**

<b>1</b>	Name	:	
<b>2</b>	Age ( <i>at present</i> )	:	1). 10years – 15years <input type="checkbox"/> , 2). 16 -20years <input type="checkbox"/> , 3). 21-25years <input type="checkbox"/> , 4). 26-30 <input type="checkbox"/> , 5). 30 and above <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3.</b>	Educational qualification	:	1). Illiterate <input type="checkbox"/> , 2) Below Class V <input type="checkbox"/> , 3). VI-X <input type="checkbox"/> , 4) X-XII <input type="checkbox"/> , 5). XII <input type="checkbox"/> , 6). Any others <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>4.</b>	Religion	:	1). Christian <input type="checkbox"/> , 2). Hindu <input type="checkbox"/> , 3). Muslim <input type="checkbox"/> , 4). Any other religion( <i>specify</i> ) <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>5.</b>	Marital status	:	1). Unmarried/Single <input type="checkbox"/> 2). Married <input type="checkbox"/> , 3). Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> , 4). Widow <input type="checkbox"/> , 5). Remarried <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>6.</b>	Type of Family	:	1). Nuclear <input type="checkbox"/> , 2). Joint <input type="checkbox"/> , 3). Extended <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>7.</b>	No. of siblings	:	1). 1-2 <input type="checkbox"/> , 2). 3-4 <input type="checkbox"/> , 3) 5 & above <input type="checkbox"/> ,
<b>8.</b>	Economic category	:	1). Urban SEC <input type="checkbox"/> , 2). Rural SEC <input type="checkbox"/> , 3). APL <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>9.</b>	Salary( <i>monthly</i> )in INR	:	1). >1000 <input type="checkbox"/> , 2). 1001-2000 <input type="checkbox"/> , 3). 2001-4000 <input type="checkbox"/> , 4) 4001- 6000 <input type="checkbox"/> , 5) 6001 -8000 <input type="checkbox"/> 6) 8001 above <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>10.</b>	Years of experience in domestic work	:	1). >1 year <input type="checkbox"/> , 2). 1-2years <input type="checkbox"/> , 3). 3-4years <input type="checkbox"/> , 4). 5years & Above <input type="checkbox"/>

		(specify if more than 5 years)
11.	Source of referral	1). Friends <input type="checkbox"/> , 2). Parents <input type="checkbox"/> , 3). Neighbours <input type="checkbox"/> , 4) Agency <input type="checkbox"/> , 5) Newspapers/Media <input type="checkbox"/>

### 1.B. Family Background

Sl No	Identification		Age	Educational Qualification	Occupation	Income
1.	Father	:				
2.	Mother	:				
3.	Sister(s)	:				
	1					
	2					
4.	Brother(s)	:				
	1					
	2					

## Section II: Drivers to domestic work

### II.A. Push Factors (multiple choices & Ranking)

Sl. No.	Identification		
1.	Family economic burden	:	
2.	Disputes at home	:	
3.	Ill treatment	:	
4.	Loss of parents	:	
5.	Single parents	:	
6.	Being widowed or separated	:	
7.	Alcoholic husbands	:	
8.	Insurgency /natural calamities, displacements	:	
9.	Violent partner	:	
10.	Verbal/sexual abuse in the family	:	
11.	Family insecurity	:	
12.	Rural/ Urban divides	:	
13.	Low social security	:	

14.	Social identity	:	
15.	Illiteracy	:	
16.	Low decision power in the family	:	

## II. B. Pull Factors (multiple choices & Ranking)

Sl. No.	Identification		
1.	Economic opportunity	:	
2.	Fancy lifestyle	:	
3.	Exposure	:	
4.	Experiencing different lifestyle	:	
5.	For skill development	:	
6.	Peer pressure	:	
7.	Migration for employment	:	
8.	Due to love affairs	:	

## II. C. Self-Hygiene

Sl.no	Practices		
1	Brushing teeth	:	1). Once a day <input type="checkbox"/> 2). Twice a day <input type="checkbox"/> 3). Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/>
2	Daily self clean-up	:	1). Regular <input type="checkbox"/> 2). Irregular <input type="checkbox"/>
3	Self-care		1). Alternate days <input type="checkbox"/> 2). Once a week <input type="checkbox"/> 3). Once a month <input type="checkbox"/>
4	Bathing	:	1). Daily <input type="checkbox"/> 2). Alternate days <input type="checkbox"/> 3). Twice a week <input type="checkbox"/> 4). Once a week <input type="checkbox"/>
5	Wearing clean clothes	:	1). Regular <input type="checkbox"/> 2). Irregular <input type="checkbox"/>
6	Using sanitary napkins during menses	:	1). Regular <input type="checkbox"/> 2). Irregular <input type="checkbox"/>

## III. Working and Living conditions

### III.A. Working conditions at place of work

Sl.No.	Condition	Nature
1.	Working hours	1). 1-3 hours <input type="checkbox"/> , 2). 4-6 hours <input type="checkbox"/> , 3). 7-9 hours <input type="checkbox"/> , 4). 10-12 hours <input type="checkbox"/> , 5). 13-16hours <input type="checkbox"/>



2.	Additional Working hour	1). <1hour <input type="checkbox"/> , 2). 1-2hours <input type="checkbox"/> , 3). 2-4hours <input type="checkbox"/> , 4) 4-6hours <input type="checkbox"/> .
3.	Nature of work	1). Cleaning <input type="checkbox"/> , 2). Cooking <input type="checkbox"/> , 3). Baby sitting <input type="checkbox"/> , 4). Driving <input type="checkbox"/> , 5). Aged care <input type="checkbox"/> , 6). Child care <input type="checkbox"/> , 7). Shopping <input type="checkbox"/> , 8). Chauffeuring <input type="checkbox"/> , 9). Gardening <input type="checkbox"/> , 10) Disability care <input type="checkbox"/> , 11). Animal care <input type="checkbox"/> , 12). Hospitality at home <input type="checkbox"/> , 13). Nursing care <input type="checkbox"/> , 14). Providing security services <input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Avail of leaves & rest ( <i>per week</i> )	1). Not given <input type="checkbox"/> , 2). Half day <input type="checkbox"/> , 3). One day <input type="checkbox"/> , 4) Two days <input type="checkbox"/> , 5). Three days or more <input type="checkbox"/> , 6). Sick leave <input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Festival bonus received	1). In kind <input type="checkbox"/> , 2). In cash <input type="checkbox"/> , 3). Not receive <input type="checkbox"/>
6.	Rest time/break during work time	1). Personal choice <input type="checkbox"/> , 2). 1hour <input type="checkbox"/> , 3). 1-2 hours a day <input type="checkbox"/> , 3). Not given <input type="checkbox"/>
9.	Salary payment	1). Regular <input type="checkbox"/> 2). Irregular <input type="checkbox"/> 3). Delay sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> 4). Deduction in wages for extra leave <input type="checkbox"/>
10.	Welfare provided by employer	1). Medical care <input type="checkbox"/> 2). Enough food, Clothing & personal care <input type="checkbox"/> 3). Bank account <input type="checkbox"/> 4). Vocational training (sewing, baking, beauty culture, etc) <input type="checkbox"/> , 5) Condense education <input type="checkbox"/> 6). Wage with yearly increment <input type="checkbox"/> 7). Bonus money <input type="checkbox"/> 8). Festival advance <input type="checkbox"/>
11.	Work-life balance	1). Satisfy with working hours <input type="checkbox"/> 2). Satisfy with nature of work <input type="checkbox"/> 3). Satisfy with salary <input type="checkbox"/> 4). Satisfy with additional working works/holidays <input type="checkbox"/>
12.	How often do you think or worry about work?	1). Frequently <input type="checkbox"/> , 2). Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> , 3). Occasionally <input type="checkbox"/> , 4) Rarely <input type="checkbox"/> , 5). Never <input type="checkbox"/>
13.	Unfair work	1). Washing undergarments and toilets with open hands <input type="checkbox"/> , 2). Handling sick people without protective gear <input type="checkbox"/> , 3). Denial of rest and food <input type="checkbox"/> 4). Placement without consent <input type="checkbox"/> 5). Forced to sleep in hard floors or in moldy basement <input type="checkbox"/> 6). Over work beyond stipulated time <input type="checkbox"/> 7). Forced to work when sick/unwell <input type="checkbox"/> 8). Force to wake up at midnight to clean the mess <input type="checkbox"/>
14.	In case of sickness, how do you	1). Sending replacement <input type="checkbox"/> 2). Absent <input type="checkbox"/>

	manage the regular duties	from work <input type="checkbox"/> 3). No work no pay <input type="checkbox"/>
15.	Provision of work wear	1). Provided <input type="checkbox"/> 2). Partially provided <input type="checkbox"/> 3). Not provided <input type="checkbox"/>
16.	Pecuniary benefits received in supplement of wage	1). Old/new phone <input type="checkbox"/> 2). Old/new clothes <input type="checkbox"/> 3). Contributions for festivals and other occasions <input type="checkbox"/> 4). Tea/coffee/food treat <input type="checkbox"/>

### III .B. Self-perceptions at work

Sl. No	Issues				
1.	Worry about work	Frequently	Sometimes,	Rarely	Never
2.	Work induce pressure	Frequently	Sometimes,	Rarely	Never
3.	Skillful/good with your work	Very good	Good	Average	Not good
4.	Work satisfaction	Very satisfied	Satisfy	Average	Not satisfy
5.	Freedom at workplace	Frequently	Sometimes,	Rarely	Never
6.	Submissive towards employer	Very submissive	Good	Average	Not submissive

### III.C. Living conditions

Sl.no	Life at work	
1.	Type of domestic work	1). Live-in <input type="checkbox"/> , 2). Live-out <input type="checkbox"/> , 3). Part time <input type="checkbox"/> , 4) Full time <input type="checkbox"/> , 5). Migrant Domestic Workers <input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Nature	1). Living in same floor <input type="checkbox"/> 2). Having separate room <input type="checkbox"/> 3). Using separate utensils <input type="checkbox"/> 4). Eating food along with them <input type="checkbox"/> 5). Separate washing of her clothes <input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Inhumane or degrading treatment	1. Separate diner <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Separate cloth washing <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Separate utensils <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Yelled often if food is undercooked <input type="checkbox"/> 5). Restrict to food consumption <input type="checkbox"/> 6) Absence of medical care while sick <input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Sexual harassment	1). Sexually coloured remarks/gestures/demand for sexual favour

		<input type="checkbox"/> , 2). Sexually coloured remarks/gestures/demand for sexual favour <input type="checkbox"/> 3). Sexually coloured remarks/gestures/demand for sexual favour <input type="checkbox"/> , 4). Unwanted physical contact <input type="checkbox"/> , 5). Unwanted physical contact <input type="checkbox"/> , 6). Molestation <input type="checkbox"/> , 7). Rape <input type="checkbox"/> , 8). Exposing topornography <input type="checkbox"/> , 9). Verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature like leering, telling dirty jokes 10). Making sexual remarks about a person's body <input type="checkbox"/> 11). Eve teasing <input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Employer's reaction over work	1). Excuse <input type="checkbox"/> , 2). Forgiven <input type="checkbox"/> , 3). Punish <input type="checkbox"/> , 4) Abuse <input type="checkbox"/> , 5). Panelize <input type="checkbox"/> , 6). Termination of work <input type="checkbox"/> 7). Deduction in salary <input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Feeling while working	1). Enthusiastic <input type="checkbox"/> 2). Comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> 3). Un-comfortable <input type="checkbox"/> 4). Confused <input type="checkbox"/> 5). Insecure <input type="checkbox"/> 6). Scary <input type="checkbox"/>
6.	Privacy/Autonomy	1). Given <input type="checkbox"/> , 2). Less isolation <input type="checkbox"/> , 3). No privacy <input type="checkbox"/>

#### IV. Challenges faced by domestic worker

<i>Sl.No</i>	<i>Nature</i>	<i>Factors</i>
1.	Physical exertion	1). Kicking <input type="checkbox"/> , 2). Hitting <input type="checkbox"/> , 3). Shoving and threats of physical harm <input type="checkbox"/> , 4) Slapping <input type="checkbox"/> , 5). Assaults with a weapon <input type="checkbox"/> 6). Beating <input type="checkbox"/> , 7). Bullying <input type="checkbox"/> , 8). No harassment <input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Bargaining power	1). Wages <input type="checkbox"/> , 2). Hours of work <input type="checkbox"/> , 3). Holidays <input type="checkbox"/> , 4) Vocational training <input type="checkbox"/> , 5). Equal treatment <input type="checkbox"/> 6). Work/life balance <input type="checkbox"/> 7). Health & safety <input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Ill treatment	1). Being isolated <input type="checkbox"/> , 2). Poor quality food <input type="checkbox"/> , 3). No privacy <input type="checkbox"/> , 4) Withheld wages <input type="checkbox"/> , 5). Withheld passport <input type="checkbox"/> 6). Abuses from police/immigration authorities if migrants

		<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Verbal harassment	1). Intimidation <input type="checkbox"/> , 2). Stalking online <input type="checkbox"/> , 3). Lustful staring at you or a part of your body <input type="checkbox"/> 4). Persistent & unwanted invitations for sexual relationship <input type="checkbox"/> 6). Not experience <input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Physical sexual harassment	1). Sexual assault <input type="checkbox"/> 2). Rape <input type="checkbox"/> 3). Exposing to pornography and sexual demands <input type="checkbox"/> 4). Stalking <input type="checkbox"/> 5). Have not experience <input type="checkbox"/>
6.	Psychological harassment	1). Verbal threats <input type="checkbox"/> 2). Physical contact <input type="checkbox"/> 3). Invasion of personal space <input type="checkbox"/> 4). Display of sexually offensive material <input type="checkbox"/> 5). Unwanted comments on dress and appearance <input type="checkbox"/> 6). Jokes of a sexual nature <input type="checkbox"/>

## V. Coping Strategies

<i>Sl.No</i>	<i>Strategies</i>	<i>Types</i>
1.	Physically abused	1). Talk to friends/family <input type="checkbox"/> , 2). Acting out verbally or aggressively <input type="checkbox"/> , 3). Cutting or other forms of self-harm <input type="checkbox"/> , 4) Pray <input type="checkbox"/> , 5). Maintaining a sense of humour and cultivating optimism <input type="checkbox"/> 6). Spending time on hobbies <input type="checkbox"/> 7). Engaging in spirituality <input type="checkbox"/> 8). Have not experienced <input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Sexually abused	1). Alcohol or other substance abuse <input type="checkbox"/> , 2). Overspending <input type="checkbox"/> , 3). Sexual misconduct <input type="checkbox"/> , 4) Distracting oneself <input type="checkbox"/> , 5). Managing hostile feeling <input type="checkbox"/> 6). Crying <input type="checkbox"/> , 7). Engaging in spirituality 8). Spending time with friends <input type="checkbox"/> 9). Spiritual counseling <input type="checkbox"/> 10). Attending gospel camping <input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Emotionally abused	1). Releasing pent-up emotions <input type="checkbox"/> , 2). Distracting oneself <input type="checkbox"/> , 3). Managing hostile feeling <input type="checkbox"/> , 4) Meditating <input type="checkbox"/> , 5). Using systematic relaxation procedures <input type="checkbox"/> 6). Praying <input type="checkbox"/> , 7). Singing <input type="checkbox"/> , 8). Dancing <input type="checkbox"/> 9). Maintaining a sense of humour and cultivating

		optimism <input type="checkbox"/> , 10). Engaging in physical activity or exercise <input type="checkbox"/> , 11). Reading <input type="checkbox"/> , 12). Spending time with friends <input type="checkbox"/> , 13). Music therapy <input type="checkbox"/> , 14). Breathe slowly <input type="checkbox"/> , 15). Spending time on hobbies <input type="checkbox"/> , 16). Engaging in spirituality <input type="checkbox"/> , 17). Get more sleep <input type="checkbox"/> , 18). Talk to someone <input type="checkbox"/> , 19). Going out somewhere <input type="checkbox"/> , shop <input type="checkbox"/> .
4.	Sick	1). Get more sleep <input type="checkbox"/> 2). Praying <input type="checkbox"/> 3). Talk to friends <input type="checkbox"/> 4). Talk to family <input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Irregular salary	1). Acting out verbally or aggressively <input type="checkbox"/> 2). 3). Praying <input type="checkbox"/> 3). Talk to friends <input type="checkbox"/> 4). Talk to family <input type="checkbox"/>
6.	Discrimination	1). Praying <input type="checkbox"/> 2). Talk to friends <input type="checkbox"/> 3). Talk to family <input type="checkbox"/> 4). Distracting oneself <input type="checkbox"/> 5). Acting out verbally or aggressively <input type="checkbox"/> 6) Managing hostile feeling <input type="checkbox"/> 7). Cultivating optimism <input type="checkbox"/> 8). No discrimination.
7.	Family matters	1). Praying <input type="checkbox"/> 2). Talk to friends <input type="checkbox"/> 3). Talk to family <input type="checkbox"/> 4). Share with employer <input type="checkbox"/> 5). Keeping with oneself <input type="checkbox"/> 6). Go to church <input type="checkbox"/> 7). Not experience <input type="checkbox"/>
8.	Relationship with the employer	1). Talk freely <input type="checkbox"/> 2). Listening attentively <input type="checkbox"/> 3). Shop together <input type="checkbox"/> 4). Go out together <input type="checkbox"/> 5). Communicate a lot <input type="checkbox"/> 6). No communication <input type="checkbox"/>
9.	Personal matters	1). Practice self-care <input type="checkbox"/> 2). Adjusting to new limitations <input type="checkbox"/> 3). Manage increased financial pressures <input type="checkbox"/> 4). Acceptance/understand the lifestyle changes <input type="checkbox"/> 5). Praying <input type="checkbox"/> 6). Talk to friends <input type="checkbox"/> 7). Talk to family <input type="checkbox"/> 8). Share with employer <input type="checkbox"/> 9). Keeping with oneself <input type="checkbox"/> 10). Go to church <input type="checkbox"/> 11). Not experience <input type="checkbox"/>
10	Romantic relationship	1). Praying <input type="checkbox"/> 2). Talk to friends <input type="checkbox"/> 3). Talk to family <input type="checkbox"/> 4). Share with employer <input type="checkbox"/> 5). Keeping with oneself <input type="checkbox"/> 6). Go to church <input type="checkbox"/> 7). Not experience <input type="checkbox"/> 8). Let go of the relationships that add more stress <input type="checkbox"/> 9). No romantic relationship <input type="checkbox"/>

## VI. Social Support

Sl. No	Condition at work						
1.	Whom can you really count on to listen to you when you need to talk?	Parents	Friends	Employer	Church leaders	Community leaders	Romantic partner
2.	Whose lives do you feel that you are an important part of?	Mother	Father	Brother	Sister	Employer	Friend
3.	Whom could you really count on to help you out if sexually abused?	Police Station	Community leaders	Parents	Friends	Church leaders	Romantic partner
4.	Whom can you talk with frankly, without having to watch what you say when you are emotionally abused?	Mother	Father	Brother	Sister	Employer	Friend
5.	Whom can you really count on to help you feel more relaxed when you are under pressure or tense?	Mother	Father	Brother	Sister	Employer	Friend
6.	Who helps you feel that	Mother	Father	Brother	Sister	Employer	Friend

	you truly have something positive to contribute to others when you feel discriminated?						
7.	Whom can you really count on to be dependable when you were sick?	Mother	Father	Brother	Sister	Employer	Friend
8.	Whom could you really count on to help you out if you had just been fired from your job?	Parents	Friends	Relatives	Church leaders	Community leaders	Romantic partner
9.	With whom can you totally be yourself?	Parents	Friends	Employer	Church leaders	Community leaders	Romantic partner
10.	Whom do you feel really appreciates you as a person?	Parents	Friends	Relatives	Church leaders	Community leaders	Romantic partner
11.	Who will comfort you when you have disputes with your employer?	Parents	Friends	Relatives	Church leaders	Community leaders	Romantic partner

12.	Whom can you count on to console you when you have problems with your romantic partner?	Parents	Friends	Employer	Church leaders	Community leaders	Relatives
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1	Feminization of Domestic Work: Vulnerability Perspective	Compendium on Women and Development in North East India. ISBN:978-81-941839-3-8, 2020 pp.111-120	2020
2	Issues and Challenges of Female Domestic Workers: An Analysis	Mizoram University Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences. Vol.VI, Issue 2.ISSN(P):2395-7352, eISSN: 2581-6780	2020

## CONFERENCE/SEMINAR PRESENTATION

Name of the Conference	Organizer	Title of paper presented	Date
National Seminar on Women's participation in Research and Development in North-East India	Department of Management, Mizoram University, Aizawl	Feminization of domestic work: Vulnerability perspectives	4 <sup>th</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> February, 2020
National Online Seminar on Family, Community, Health and Wellbeing: Patterns Process and Outcomes of Social Work Research in India	Department of Social Work, Mizoram University	Challenges faced by domestic workers during Covid-19 pandemic in Mizoram	23-24 June, 2021
National Online Seminar on 9 <sup>th</sup> Indian Social Work Congress 2021: Nation Building, Vision 2030 and Social Work Profession	Matru Sewa Sangh Institute of Social Work, Nagpur; Maharashtra Association of Professional Social Worker Educators (MASWE) and National Association of Professional Social Worker in India (NAPSWI)	Women Domestic Workers: An insight from Mizoram	28-30 <sup>th</sup> October, 2021

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The present study attempts to determine the working and living conditions of women domestic workers in Mizoram. Therefore, the study highlights the issues and challenges of women domestic workers in Mizoram to facilitate development of strategies and practical measures for promoting of the rights and employment towards empowerment of women domestic workers in Mizoram.

From the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the Mizo society had entered a new socio-economic milieu, which has brought forth by the British occupation of the Lushai Hills (Mizoram) and the entry of the Christian Missionaries. Mizoram is placed under the administrative and political rule of the British Government since 1891. However, after the establishment of colonial authority, group territorial mobility was curtailing, while encouraging individual mobility. Thus, a moderate form of stable settlement began to take shape. The colonial rule gradually did away with some of the traditional rights and privileges of the Mizo chiefs, which encouraged individual mobility. Historically, it is evident that women in Mizoram practice jhum cultivation and mainly with a specific nature of work like *hlothlawlh* i.e. *farming*, cleaning of cotton flowers, collecting of woods, cooking and preparation for lunch while weaving was done when they are free from the jhum's work. The British Rule gradually loosened the traditional holds; thus, the people envisaged the root of a new set of rules based on democratic principles as early as 1920. However, with the pace of time, the series of events that unfolded after India's Independence in the Mizo hills had far reach, multi-faceted impact on the Mizo society.

The scenario is now being changed and women labour participation is visible everywhere, either in governmental settings or non-governmental settings, private and public enterprises, organised or unorganised work extending to the work done outside homes. (Malsawmliana and Ralte, 2011). The employment exchange of Aizawl district, Mizoram shows the number of women job seekers was 24,585 as per the record of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2000, and out of whom the educational level of 3039 was graduate and above (Lalfakzuali, 2010).

The women domestic workers work directly under the authority of the householder; the work is done by following the explicit instructions of the employer, who shall not originate any economic gain from the activity done by the workers. The trend of keeping women domestic worker is increasing day by day in almost every household. It could be due to multiple factors, including of poverty, lack of education, unemployment and lack of other vocational skills. In addition, the significantly increasing demand for domestic workers is of growing concern today since many women are engaged outside the homes for work inclusive of paid and unpaid labour (IN Ramirez, 2003). Today, domestic workers make up a large portion of the workforce, especially in developing countries, and their number has been increasing even in the industrialized world. In addition, the massive incorporation of women in the labour force, the aging of societies, the intensification of work and the frequent lack or inadequacy of policy measures to facilitate the reconciliation of family life and work are also underpinning the trend.

The national scenario has shown a strong preference for nuclear families, which has resulted in a demand for domestic workers in India and eventually in Mizoram state as well. Although they form a crucial segment of the informal worker population, domestic workers are a relatively neglected population as compared to workers in other unorganized sectors such as garment factories, construction works, transportation, restaurant and other informal industries. The women domestic workers are neither adequately educated nor organized through meaningful unionization and are denied of minimum wages, healthy work periods, safe working conditions and other benefits. Unsurprisingly, following a similar pattern, the women domestic workers are a neglected group among the unorganized workforce in Mizoram. For decades, they have been exploited and only in recent years, the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are taking up the cause of women domestic workers. Moreover, women domestic workers are subject to a series of injustices, deprivations and indignities in modern society due to the absence of meaningful legal safeguards, welfare measures and other provisions for the empowerment of women.

Domestic workers are vulnerable in many ways, and many of the domestic workers are ashamed of being a ‘domestic worker’. Therefore, it is highly important



to protect the rights and dignity of domestic workers. Therefore, a study on ‘Working and Living Conditions of Women Domestic Workers in Mizoram’ is conducted among 300 women domestic workers in Mizoram following purposive sampling technique. The study has a mixed method approach. The study shows the presence of sexual abuse who refused to reveal their ordeal out of shame and fear of retaliation from their molesters. It thus highlights the different approaches to their working and living conditions and the impact on their health conditions. The study further found that there has been ill-treatment of women domestic workers, viz., verbal harassment, psychological harassment, sexual harassment and emotional abuse. Therefore, the issues and challenges of women domestic workers in Mizoram are examined in this study, which is present in the form of qualitative and quantitative research methodology.

### **1.1 Domestic Work**

Domestic work is done across many regions around the globe, where Europe and Central Asia represent the smallest shares of the global population of domestic workers. However, the American region is the world’s second-largest employer of domestic workers by region after Asia and the Pacific. Domestic work accounts for most of the informal workforce in India; hence Mizoram by poor and unskilled women from a marginalized community and vulnerable rural districts and migrant women domestic workers crossing international boundaries from Myanmar and state boundaries from Tripura, India. The work and workplace is invisible, undervalued, unrecognized and unregulated, and hence the sector suffers from low wages, lack of formal contract, decent work conditions and poor social security measures (Chigateri et al., 2016). Domestic work is historically associated with poor working conditions, such as lack of legal registration (most often, they do not register), low wages and high weekly working hours. In fact, some of these workers actually live in the employer’s household, as evidenced by the survey conducted in the State. Moreover, domestic work is largely considered a distinct work due to its nature of work, which comprises work done inside the household, such as cleaning, nursing, caring, hospitality, gardening, as well as driving and guarding private households. The

Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent national lockdown further aggravated the situation of the already vulnerable women domestic workers.

Unlike other forms of labour market activity, domestic work takes place in an unconventional place of work, i.e. the household. Gaining public acceptance of a household as a place of work is a challenge. Implementations of labour laws such as minimum wages and regularized work hours, which are essential elements of any kind of work, also remain a challenge. Such regulation is complex because the nature of domestic work is unique compared to other forms of work. The sector lacks effective means to regulate working conditions, for example, through streamlined job descriptions, which could be offered through standard contracts. Furthermore, unlike work in a formal setting, domestic work is not guided by clear and agreed on production or output goals. Enforcing labour laws remains a significant bottleneck. This is because privacy norms do not bode well with the idea of labour inspectors entering private households and ensuring regulations. Therefore, the policymakers, legislative bodies and the general people need to recognize the existence of an employment relationship in domestic work. Such a view would see domestic workers as not just “helpers” who are “part of the family” but as employed workers entitled to the rights and dignity that employment brings with it (<https://in.one.un.org/>).

## **1.2 Domestic Workers**

The women domestic workers of Mizoram have a great labour participation, in fact, their rights have been neglected, and they are relatively ill-treated in many forms like verbal, sexual, psychological and emotional abuse. In general, domestic workers in Mizoram come from a low socio-economic background where they have low self-esteem and self-confidence. However, a number of factors are contributing to the growth of women domestic workers within the workforce in Mizoram, and each of which requires critical examination, and this is illustrate in the present study.

The Servant is an older English term for "domestic worker", though not all servants worked inside the home. Domestic service, or the employment of people for wages in their employer's residence, was sometimes simply called "service". It evolved into a hierarchical system in various countries at various times. Domestic

work covers many different activities, situations and relationships, so it is not easy to categorize. It includes many tasks such as cleaning, laundry and ironing; shopping, cooking and fetching water; caring for the sick, elderly and children; looking after pets; sweeping and garden tidying.

The main reasons for the lack of accurate and comparable data include the high incidence of undeclared women's domestic work and the consequent under-reporting, the varying definitions of domestic work in statistical surveys, and the fact that national statistics often do not count domestic workers as a distinct category but register them under such headings as "community, social and personal service activities" (Lalrempuii and Elizabeth,2020).

In millions of households throughout the world, the workplace is also the domestic worker's residence. Working and living in the employer's home has a major impact on workers' personal autonomy and mobility and could influence decisions extending to their future, like the decision to find a family of their own. One consequence of this is that, when they reach the age of retirement, domestic workers may not have children to provide them with personal or financial support (Gorfinkiel, 2011).

Employers may require their domestic workers to wear a uniform, livery or other "domestic workers' clothes" when in their employers' residences. The uniform during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century was usually simple where female servants wore long, plain, dark-coloured dresses or black skirts with white belts and white blouses, and black shoes and male servants and butlers would wear something which is a simple suit, or a white dress shirt, often with tie, and knickers. In traditional portrayals, the attire of domestic workers especially was typically more formal and conservative than that of those whom they serve. For example, in films of the early 20th century, a butler might appear in a tailcoat, while male family members and guests appeared in lounge suits or sports jackets and trousers, depending on the occasion. In later portrayals, the employer and guests might wear casual slacks or even jeans, while a male domestic worker wore a jacket and tie, or a female domestic worker either a blouse and skirt (or trousers) or a dress (IBID).

### **1.3 Concept of Women Domestic Workers**

The women's domestic labour debate was particularly prominent in the western academia amongst feminists in the 1960s and 1970s, where the implications of domestic labour on women's emancipation as well as a transformation of gender roles were also highly prominent. However, it has been read differently by different schools of feminism. Domestic worker is a person who is engaged on a part-time or full-time basis in domestic service. The domestic worker receives remuneration periodically in cash or kind for a fixed period from the employer (Chandramouli, 2021).

The *Domestic Workers Convention (C189)* adopted by the International Labour Organisation at the 100th International Labour Conference on 16<sup>th</sup> August, 2011 stressed the importance of addressing the rights of workers in the domestic sector and countries to ensure minimum wage protection for domestic workers. It also recommends regulations for occupational health and safety and the social security of workers in the sector. The legal rights and need for regulations and the importance of women domestic workers have been largely ignored by the existing labour and employment services. Therefore, there is a need to understand the challenges faced and coping strategies adopted by women domestic workers in Mizoram, as women's rights, and human rights is viewed as distinct, and women's rights are violated in a variety of ways. Gender, is therefore, a primary or related factor because gender-related abuse has been most neglected, which offers the greatest challenge to the fields of human rights today and therefore, research is needed to undertake the understanding of working and living conditions of women domestic workers(Charlotte,B., 2002).

Domestic work is one of the oldest and most significant informal occupations for millions of women around the world. Women seemed to have limited options and entered the domain of domestic work in the absence of education, economic resources and other opportunities. The term 'domestic service' is practically difficult to define since the duties of domestic workers were not well defined. However, domestic service is now accepted as an important category of livelihood across the globe and remains a highly personalized and informal service delivered in the homes

of employers. In domestic service, work cannot be subjected to any comparative tests since it has a character almost unique in wage paid industry. The service is being carried on for use, not for profit, and the settlement of wages remains an individual bargain between employer and employed (Caplow, 1954).

In addition, domestic workers, the majority of whom are women, constitute a large portion of today's migrant worker population. In Latin America, for example, they constitute as much as 60 percent of all internal and international migration. The feminization of migration, a trend that began in the early 1980s, has resulted in an increased number of women who migrate alone (Hunt and Machingura,2016).

Domestic work had existed for centuries in Asia when girls were sold by poor families to rich ones, put to work as 'slaves', 'maids' or 'servants' or described as a quasi-member of the family so as to deny their rights. Today, such feudal and patriarchal values continue to shape the way the work is valued, i.e., it is 'work of no value done by women of low caste, ethnic group or race' (Beri, 2020).

As a result, in many countries, the definition of 'domestic work' is vague - domestic workers are said to be there to make a person in their own home more 'comfortable'; so, there is little recognition for these workers as 'workers'; little or no protection in labour law or social security; little or no respect for collective bargaining rights. This provides a rationalization for abuse; some household workers receive no payment for their work at all, only 'shelter' and food; there is no opportunity for training to upgrade skills; no health insurance; no retirement protection. For others, the abuse can be more extreme forms of mental, physical or sexual assault. Isolation from society and lack of personal life add to the stress (Srinivasan and Ponnuswami, 2013).

#### **1.4 Classification of Domestic Workers**

Domestic workers work directly under the authority of the householder and the work is done by following the straight instructions of the employer. Darcy du Toit (2013) has divided the types of domestic worker, based on the hours of work and nature of employment relationship, which includes: -

- a) Part-time worker i.e., worker who works for **one or more employers for a specified number of hours per day** or performs specific tasks for each of the multiple employers every day.
- b) Full-time worker i.e., worker who works for a **single employer every day** for a specified number of hours and who returns back to her/his home every day after work.
- c). Live-in worker i.e. worker who works **full time for a single employer(residing in the household of the employer)** and also stays on the premises of the employer or in a dwelling provided by the employer (which is close or next to the house of the employer) and does not return back to her/his home every day after work.”
- d). Live-out worker i.e. **worker who may be living in his/her own residence.**

However, the ILO Convention 189 has recognised a decent wage pay where domestic workers comprised of three main groups

- Live-in domestic workers
- Part-time / Live-out domestic worker
- Migrant Domestic Workers (inter-state and overseas domestic workers)

### **1.5 Magnitude of Domestic Workers**

The almost 76 million domestic workers around the world represent 2.3 per cent of total employment worldwide (WIEGO & ILO, 2022). Globally, 76 per cent of domestic workers are women. Women comprise the higher share of domestic workers (85 percent) in developed countries, excluding the developed countries of the Middle East, than in developing and emerging countries (79 percent). So, it remains a highly feminised sector (www.ilo.org). The overwhelming majority (82 percent) of domestic workers are in developing and emerging countries, while the

number in developed countries is a substantial 13.4 million. Over half of the world's domestic workers are in two regions i.e., East and South-eastern Asia have the highest share at 36 percent, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean at 19 percent (WIEGO, 2022). The world's largest employers of domestic workers, in numerical terms, are Asia and the Pacific (where 50 percent of all domestic workers are employed) and the Americas (where 23 percent of all domestic workers are employed). In contrast, the Europe and Central Asia region employs the smallest share of all domestic workers (ILO,2021).

Domestic work is an important source of employment, representing 2.3 percent of total employment worldwide. When looking at employees only, this figure almost doubles to 4.5 percent. The weight of domestic work as a source of employment varies across the globe. Domestic work represents the largest share of employees in the Arab States (14.8 percent), followed by Latin America and the Caribbean (8.4 percent), Africa (7.3 percent) and Asia and the Pacific (4.6 percent). In contrast, domestic work represents only 1 percent of employees in Europe and Central Asia. Men make up nearly one quarter of the sector; however, domestic work represents only 0.9 percent of overall male employment. Among male domestic workers, the largest group can be found in the Arab States (23.2 percent), followed by Southern Asia (21.8 percent), Eastern Asia (19.1 percent) and sub-Saharan Africa (14.2 percent). Men actually outnumber women in domestic work in the Arab States (63.4 percent) and represent an almost equal share in Southern Asia (42.6 percent) (IBID).

Domestic workers are over-represented in upper-middle-income countries: more than half (53.1 percent) of all domestic workers are in these countries, compared with 46.8 per cent of all employees. The over-representation of domestic workers in upper-middle-income countries is mostly due to the large countries in that group with both a high share of domestic workers and some of the highest Gini coefficients, such as Argentina (ILO and WIEGO, 2022)

The demand for domestic work is expected to grow in light of demographic changes, population aging and increasing long-term care needs. Service providers play a growing role. The number of digital labour platforms in the sector has risen eightfold, from 28 platforms in 2010 to 224 platforms in 2020. The workforce for

domestic work is likely to be sustained owing to continued income inequality within and between countries, as well as unequal access to education and care services. As a job-intensive sector that meets essential and growing household needs for direct and indirect care services, domestic work could be a source of employment in the post-COVID-19 economic recovery (ILO,2020).

Domestic workers comprise a significant part of the global workforce in informal employment and are among the most vulnerable groups of workers. About 1.5 million Asian women work as migrant domestic workers in other countries; however, in the Philippines, there are estimated to be over 600,000 local domestic workers. As per official estimates, there are 4.75 million domestic workers (NSS, 2005) but this is a gross underestimation, and there could be close to 50 million domestic workers in India. According to Indian National Sample Survey (NSS) 2001 data, there were 2.0 million female workers and 0.3 million male workers as compared to 1.2 million female and 0.3 male workers in 1983, resulting in substantial issues in the number of female workers (Mehrotra, S.T., 2008). In India, two draft bills, put forward by the National Commission for Women and the National Campaign Committee (NCC) of Unorganized Sector Workers, to protect domestic workers, have been in circulation since 2008, but neither has been passed.

Domestic worker population has been increasing deliberately in every society of India and hence Mizoram as well. Domestic workers are considered part of the large ‘informal’ sector of the urban economy, and over the last two decades, the domestic worker population has emerged as the second largest urban informal workforce (Chen and Raveendran, 2011). Moreover, the population has reached next only to ‘home-based workers’ like artisans and petty commodity producers. An increasing number of studies are emerging about domestic workers around the world, and it is estimated that 41.3 lakhs workers work in the households of others, an overwhelming 27.9 lakhs of this total are women as indicated by NSS 68th round, July 2011- June 2012. In Mizoram, domestic workers population there were 1,832 domestic workers (approx.) in Aizawl from 2005 to 2007(MNDWMWT, 2008). Therefore, it is evident that there has been an increasing trend of domestic workers in Mizoram where the workers work predominantly in Mizoram and other countries as well.



However, the ILO (2004 – 2005) report has also documented that in India, there are 4.2 million (approx) domestic workers comprising of the 3lakh domestic workers in North East States. The north-east state has a large number of women and young girls enrolled in domestic work yet unrecognized and a decent work status denied to them. They are often named as maids, servants, kitchen girls and *Aiyas* while in Mizoram we call them '*Awmpui*' meaning the one who stays with me or with us, the word which in itself doesn't recognize them as workers. In Mizoram, an organization named "Jeriko Khualbuk" has started realizing the need for the protection of domestic worker's rights and freedom while working with commercial sex workers. The initiation of the Project "Formation of Domestic Workers Union Structures" in 2004 was implemented in 12 cities in North East (Agartala City, Aizawl, Barpeta, Bongaigaon, Guwahati, Imphal, Kohima, Sarupathar, Shillong, Tezpur, Tinsukia, and Tura City) covering six states namely: Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram, Nagaland and Manipur ([www.cdismshc.org](http://www.cdismshc.org)).

The ILO estimates that globally, as many as 7.4 million children under the age of 15 work in domestic service, especially in the developing world. They are particularly hidden and among the most difficult to survey (ILO and WIEGO, 2013). Women accounted for about 80 percent of counted domestic workers in 2015. In fact, the ILO says about 1 in 25 women workers in the world are domestic workers.

However, in very few countries there are more than 1 percent of men are employed in domestic service. This state of affairs is due in part to the fact that paid domestic work remains virtually invisible as a form of employment in many countries. Domestic work does not take place in a factory or an office but in the home. The employees are not male breadwinners but overwhelmingly women. They do not work alongside other co-workers, but in isolation behind closed doors. Their work is not aimed at producing added value, but at providing care to millions of households. Domestic work typically entails the otherwise unpaid labour traditionally performed in the household by women (John,K., 2012).

This explains why domestic work is undervalued in monetary terms and is often informal and undocumented. It tends to be perceived as something rather than regular employment, as not fitting the general framework of existing labour laws despite the

fact that its origins go back to the “master-servant” relationship. As a result, the domestic employment relationship is not specifically addressed in many legislative enactments, thus rendering domestic workers vulnerable to unequal, unfair and often abusive treatment. Therefore, it is difficult to define, classify and tabulate data on domestic workers.

### **1.6 Migrant Workers and Domestic Workers**

The ILO Global Estimates on Migrant Workers (2015) reports that more than 150 million workers worldwide are international migrants (accounting for 72 percent of the total international population of working-age migrants). Domestic workers of whom majority of are women, constituting a large portion of today's migrant worker population. In Latin America, for example, they constitute as many as 60 percent of all internal and international migration. The feminization of migration, a trend that began in the early 1980s, has resulted in an increased number of women who had migrated alone. Women and girls make up almost 67 million of these workers, one in six is a domestic worker. The biggest host regions for migrant domestic workers are:

- South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific (24%)
- Northern, Southern and Western Europe (22%)
- Arab States (19%)

Arab countries employ millions of migrant domestic workers. In Saudi Arabia in 2008, there were about 1.5 million domestic workers (Human Rights Watch 2008) - most came from Indonesia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka. In Latin America, according to the United Nations Population Fund (2006), domestic workers account for up to 60 percent of internal and cross-border migrants. Women migrants from Mexico and other parts of Latin America make up most of the domestic workforce in the USA, accounting for 58 percent of workers in personal and related services in 2000.

Migrant women workers are more vulnerable to situations of risk because of a number of factors and these factors are inter-linked right from the government policies to the availabilities of opportunities, the social and gender roles of women,

their vulnerability to violence as well as their access to information and services. While policy alone is not solely responsible for the problems of migrant women workers, it lays the foundation for some of the issues. All these aspects affect migrant women workers' lives negatively, sometimes resulting in psychological and physical trauma (UNIFEM, 2002). In an era of globalization, economic or labour migration is on the rise. Due to the lack of employment opportunities in developing countries and increased demands for low-wage workers in developed countries, youth, women and men are pursuing work in other countries in order to support themselves and their families back home. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that out of approximately 175 million migrants around the world, half of them are workers including domestic workers.

Therefore, it is high time to ratify ILO C 189, 'Decent work for Domestic Workers' so that their work is recognized, they are paid a decent wage and are treated as workers with respect.

### **1.7 Working and Living Conditions of Women Domestic Workers in North – East India**

In the study, the working and living conditions of women domestic workers in North – east India have been presented from different states such as Tripura, Mizoram, Assam, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Shillong and Manipur. The domestic workers in North-east India comprise mainly female workers where workers are from the native areas and their neighbouring states. The unhygienic living conditions with no proper water facilities and unawareness of the rights of domestic worker is the main issues in Agartala, Tripura. The unstable economic conditions hamper their children from going to good schools for quality education. The women domestic workers work at the mercy of employers with no decent wage paid to them for their service. Although they are blessed with the benefit of monthly pensions specifically meant for domestic workers but they are deprived of other various rights. The Government of Tripura has fixed the Minimum Wage for Domestic Workers i.e. Rs 13/- per hour which is extremely low to ensure a living wage to them.

In Mizoram, the women domestic workers comprise different sub-tribes - Bru, Mizo and Chakma where many of them are employer's relatives, who work for them as a helping hand, and are denied of their wage justifying that they are being sent to schools for education. However, in few cases they get married at the employers' house as an extended family member. In Aizawl district, the women domestic workers faced physical and mental abuse, economic exploitation and ignored and discrimination in society. However, most of the women domestic workers are international migrants allegedly from Myanmar. In fact, depending upon the government administration system and improvement of socio-economic conditions in Myanmar, the majority of the immigrant's women domestic workers are inclined to return home and never come back. In addition, most of the women domestic workers got an opportunity to work abroad in Malaysia, Singapore, United States and other European countries by registering themselves as a refugee in Delhi. The main pull factor for them is due to the possibility of greater remittance to the family. Therefore, the job demand was then replaced by the Bru Community who were taking shelter in Tripura Refugee Transit Camp e.g. Naisingpara, Asapara, etc and started working at different localities in Aizawl. Unlike the mainland, paid domestic work is mainly confined to women. (CDI,2018).

Since the olden days, Barpeta, Assam has been an ancient trading and business hub where the people have no time to manage household work. So, they eventually depend on domestic workers. Even today, one employer has multiple domestic workers at home especially the Marwaris' and Bengalis. Domestic workers are always looked down in society. They were paid very less and one Saree during Durga Puja is all that they were offered as a bonus by their employers. Nobody seems too bothered about the children or families of domestic workers' condition and they were made to do all kinds of work with no limits. Domestic workers in Barpeta city mostly have a family with a good number of children where the elder ones have to take care of their younger ones while their parents are out for work. This is why the children's education is neglected (IBID).

Domestic workers in Bongaigaon City are mostly illiterate and unskilled. Some of the domestic workers were living in small huts and rented a house with

limited facilities and lack good drinking water and proper sanitation. In the rainy season, their houses are filled with water and so they are unable to work due to water logging and lack of drainage system. Families of domestic workers have a poor saving system and drinking liquor by the husband has added the disaster. Most of domestic workers work overtime as part-time in two to three private households. But since their daily income is very less, it is not enough to meet the daily needs of their family and they find it difficult to educate their children. Due to these, the rate of school drop-out is increasing where the children develop disapproved behaviour falling into bad company and eventually becoming robbers, alcoholics and engaging in various anti-social activities and behaviours (IBID).

Domestic workers in Guwahati, Assam are more exposed to all kinds of vulnerabilities. Most of the domestic workers are living in a rented house and even those who manage to own can only afford cacha house. The rented house is mostly near the railway slums where the houses are tiny with no proper drainage system, and unsafe drinking water which is increasing exposure to opportunistically transmitted diseases such as diarrhea, dengue, malaria, typhoid, etc. The profile of domestic workers shows that they are uneducated, illiterate and/or low educated with a maximum of primary standards of education. Eventually, there was a lack of awareness in health care and family planning which resulted in having children without family planning resulted to having children without spacing along with anaemia and malnutrition among the mothers and children. Domestic workers work long hours for their employers, looking after the children of the employers and doing the household chores while leaving their families behind. This has great impact on the growth and well-being of their children that have been going unnoticed (IBID).

Domestic workers living in Imphal, Manipur are inter- migrants from different parts of Manipur state. It is estimated that 86 percent are from rural and hill districts of Manipur state, out of which 4 percent of them are migrant workers from the neighbouring state like Assam, Bengal and Bihar and the remaining 10 percent of domestic workers are the permanent resident of the Imphal city. All the migrants live in rented houses in the city by compromising various aspects of living and working conditions. The major challenges confronted by women domestic workers in Imphal

are mainly on welfare measures - no day off, no annual leave, no festival holidays, absence of privacy at the workplace, non-increment of salary, low wages, no work contract and overtime work without bonus or incentives. The poor socio-economic conditions of women domestic workers had a great impact on their children's education system since children fail to aim for higher education and began to have content with manual work. There is a lack of proper guidance from the parents' mainly on legal and rights issues available for them. So, if not checked in time, the future of the children of domestic workers is also not secured. This is common among domestic workers as most of them are Live-in domestic workers. In Kohima city, there are two types of domestic workers –firstly, the part-time domestic workers who are mainly migrants from the neighbouring states such as Biharis, Bengalis, Boro and Nepalis and secondly, the live-in domestic workers. In the case of live-in domestic workers where a common practice is that the employers provide free education to the children of the employed domestic workers. In such cases, the employer has sponsored the domestic worker family by providing fooding and lodging, tuition fees, uniforms, educational books and stationeries accordingly. In fact, the domestic worker does not receive attention even in times of sickness rather they are forced to work (IBID).

The domestic workers in Meghalaya, Shillong are from low socio-economic backgrounds comprising of Khasi, Garo, Nepali, Bengali, Boro, Adivasis, etc. Most of the children of domestic workers drop out of school and are prey to different kinds of social evils like alcoholics, drug addicts, etc. The children of domestic workers lack motivation, haing financial problem to pursue formal education, lack of support and encouragement, lack of interest of domestic workers for their children's education, no proper material to equip themselves with their peers, cannot afford to send to a better school. In Tura City, upper Shillong, the women domestic workers struggle a lot since their voice is never heard by the Government and too slow in responding to their crisis. Some employers do not give holidays even on Sundays and their wages are deducted if they happen to take holidays. So, in times of sickness, they feel hesitant to take leave and they do not feel the need to go for medical check-up due to financial constraints which ultimately leads to some kind of chronic

disease. Further, some children of domestic workers are even compelled to help their parents and drop out of school for early income (IBID).

The condition of domestic workers in Tezpur is that the women domestic workers are vulnerable to early marriage, widowhood, divorce, sexual exploitation in workplace and domestic violence at home. Most of the domestic workers are illiterate and cannot even write their names and their husbands are subject to the consumption of alcohol leading their children to drop out of school. Due to unstable livelihood opportunity it was observed that domestic workers sell out their daughters for sex work or give away to get married to an old person for financial assistance. Some domestic workers are seen working very hard with much sincerity and the little they earn is used to support their children's education. It is pathetic that the unskilled domestic workers cannot bargain to increase for fixed wages (IBID).

**Identified Number of domestic Workers in 12 cities of Northeast India(2015 – 2018)**

**Table 1: Number of Domestic Workers in North-East India**

Sl.No	Name of the City	Data	Percentage out of total population(in 2018)	Ranking
1	Sarupathar City	1416	10,827(2011 census) (13%)	1
2	Tura City	1242	74858(1.65%)	2
3	Tezpur City	1675	102,505(2011 census) (1.6%)	3
4	Tinsukia City	1210	126,389(2011 census) (0.95%)	4
5	Shillong City	2878	436,000(0.6%)	5
6	Imphal City	2424	540,000(0.44%)	6
7	Guwahati City	3321	1,083,000(0.30)	7
8	Aizawl City	824	353,000(0.2%)	8
9	Bongaigaon City	957	820,073(0.11%)	9
10	Kohima City	433	297,467(0.14%)	10
11	Agartala City	590	534,000(0.1%)	11
12	Barpeta City	1561	1,693,622(2011 census) (0.09%)	12
Total		18531		

Source: CDI (2018)

Findings: Domestic workers were traced highest in Guwahati, whilst the least were identified in Kohima. However, with the representation of the total population of the city studied, the highest is Sarupathi district with 13per cent of the total population of the city with Barpeta at the lowest (0.09%).In addition, Guwahati is a cosmopolitan city and a commercial hub of the Northeast region. Therefore, the city attracts migrant workers as it offers a lot of job opportunities. On the other hand,



Kohima is a less populated city with live-in domestic workers contributing a huge percentage of this workforce.

### **1.8 Women domestic workers during COVID-19**

The third phase of the stringent lockdown of COVID-19 has imposed a burden of unpaid care work among women domestic workers. The COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent national lockdown further aggravated the situation of the already vulnerable sector. The domestic workers who are playing a very crucial role in the economic life of women in today's competitive market are striving hard to arrange two square meals during the Covid-19 lockdown. Most of domestic workers are compelled to do the menial job due to their economically disadvantaged and poor financial conditions. Their silent contributions to many households as well as society have remained invisible for a long time. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, they have faced double marginalization as they are engaged in informal reproductive work in the unorganized sector and they are not recorded as wage labourer and yet deprived of getting any benefits. A suitable policy may be framed by bringing them to the mainstream, so that in the future if a situation like lockdown has arisen they will not fight with hunger and anxiety (Kaur, 2020).

Insightfully, many domestic workers are anxious and concerned about job loss in the post-lockdown, as many employers do not allow their domestic workers 'employees' to resume work until the threat of the pandemic settles down. Since the lockdown, families have been staying together and as a result, domestic workers reported increased domestic work burdens such as cleaning, cooking, washing, etc and stated time spent in arranging for food and other essentials, increased care giving and time spent in collecting water. Interestingly, many women domestic workers who were on their own or had smaller families said there was not much to do. The women domestic workers shared their experiences that the prices of food items like vegetables, fruits, tea, sugar etc. have gone up significantly and which they could not manage it.

Another noticeable important point is the access and utilization of health care services during the lockdown period. Women domestic workers have complained the close of Out Patient Departments (OPDs) in government hospitals and private clinics

and restriction on mobility and lack of income. There is a severe lack of focus on women's sexual and reproductive health services due to the entire health sector and available funds being allocated towards controlling the pandemic. Subsequently, many women domestic workers have been forced to give birth at home, at risk of maternal morbidity and mortality, unattended health complaints and premature deaths. The socio-economic consequences reveal the continuous loss in income in the next few months and as a result, worried about paying rents for the coming months as income will be affected even after the lockdown is over (Institute of Social Studies Trust, 2020).

## **1.9 Conceptual Framework**

A conceptual framework represents the synthesis of the literature reviewed on how to explain a phenomenon and a framework is understood as a supporting structure on which something can be built which can be real or conceptual that guides or directs into successful outcome. In other words, the conceptual framework is the understanding of how the particular variables are connected. The conceptual framework "sets the stage" to present the particular research question that drives the investigation being reported based on the problem statement. The problem statement of a thesis gives the context and the issues that caused the researcher to conduct the study (Regoniel,2015). Hence, it is essential to explore some of the frameworks on working and living conditions of women domestic workers that have been developed or framed by organizations or researchers in the past in pertaining to the working and living conditions so as to have a better understanding of the dimensions and factors that are responsible for the process of assessing the working and living conditions of women domestic workers. Thus, the working and living conditions of women domestic workers framework is discussed below:

### **1.9.1 Marxist Feminist Approach**

Feminist theory seeks to analyze the conditions which shape women's lives and to explore cultural understandings of what it means to be a woman. Marxist feminist like Heidi Hartmann, Linda Nicholson, and Gayle Rubin attempts to rework Marxian theory by incorporating kinship structures and sexual division of labour in order to

explain women's oppression in society. According to Marx, in each stage of production there is class division according to those who control the means of production and those who do not. The Capitalist system is the first economic system that saw the evolution of commodities, wage labour, the separation of use and exchange value, and a priority of exchange over use value. Marxist theory refuses to accept that inequalities between women and men are natural and inevitable and insist that they should be questioned. Women's oppression stem from both the material (economic) base and the patriarchal base over neither of which women have control. According to Marxism, women's status is like that of a proletariat whose labour is used by those who control the means of production. Likewise, women domestic workers were being oppressed and their form of labor was being controlled and used by their employers or agency (mean of production) as well. The partnership between patriarchy and capitalism is further enhanced, for Hartmann, via the "family wage" whereby a man is paid enough for his family so that the woman can stay home to perform the domestic labour such as cooking, cleaning; child-rearing that keeps the proletariat alive. Similarly, women especially women domestic workers are therefore denied of any kind of work outside the home. Unpaid domestic labour is the hidden surplus value that goes into reproducing the proletariat and eventually in reproducing and accumulating capital whereas reproductive labor of women domestic workers has prevailed. Gender division of labour analysis notices the broad axis of gender structuration of the relations of labour and distribution, and notices that certain tasks and functions in a particular society are always or usually performed by members of one sex (Mazumdar, 2010).

### **1.9.2 Decent Work**

Legal regulation designed to help people achieve a practical balance between work and their other responsibilities, as well as the need for leisure time implies that jobs must pay sufficiently well to achieve a decent standard of living without requiring excessive hours of work. To achieve this goal, there must be proper regulation addressing both the minimum wages and maximum working hours. Furthermore, employers have to adjust to their demands to the needs of the workers, rather than the other way around. Examples of such regulations include parental

leave and the right to request more flexible working hours. More generally, a right to flexibility or a right of workers to ask for changes in their hours, duration and location of work appears to be emerging as a key element in the statutory framework governing employment. The primary goal of ILO today is to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity (Somavia,2012). Therefore, proper wage structure and legal provisions for women domestic workers is highly significant in order to main decent work in their place of work.

Decent work is the aspiration all people have for their working lives; for work that is productive, delivers a fair income with security and social protection, safeguards basic rights, offers equality of opportunity and treatment, prospects for personal development and the chance for recognition and to have your voice heard. Decent work is also central to efforts to reduce poverty and is a path to achieving equitable, inclusive and sustainable development. Ultimately, decent work underpins peace and security in communities and societies. “Decent Work” is therefore the principle that guides the ILO’s work. To promote this goal the ILO Asia’s Pacific members have committed themselves to an Asian Decent Work Decade from 2006 to 2015, and in doing so, reaffirmed their commitment to achieving full, productive and decent employment. The National Decent Work Country Programmes outlined its aim in promoting decent working in Asia and Pacific competitiveness, productivity and jobs-promoting sustainable enterprises in Asia and the Pacific; labour market governance; youth employment challenge; protecting migrant workers and local development.

### **1.9.3 Labour Law**

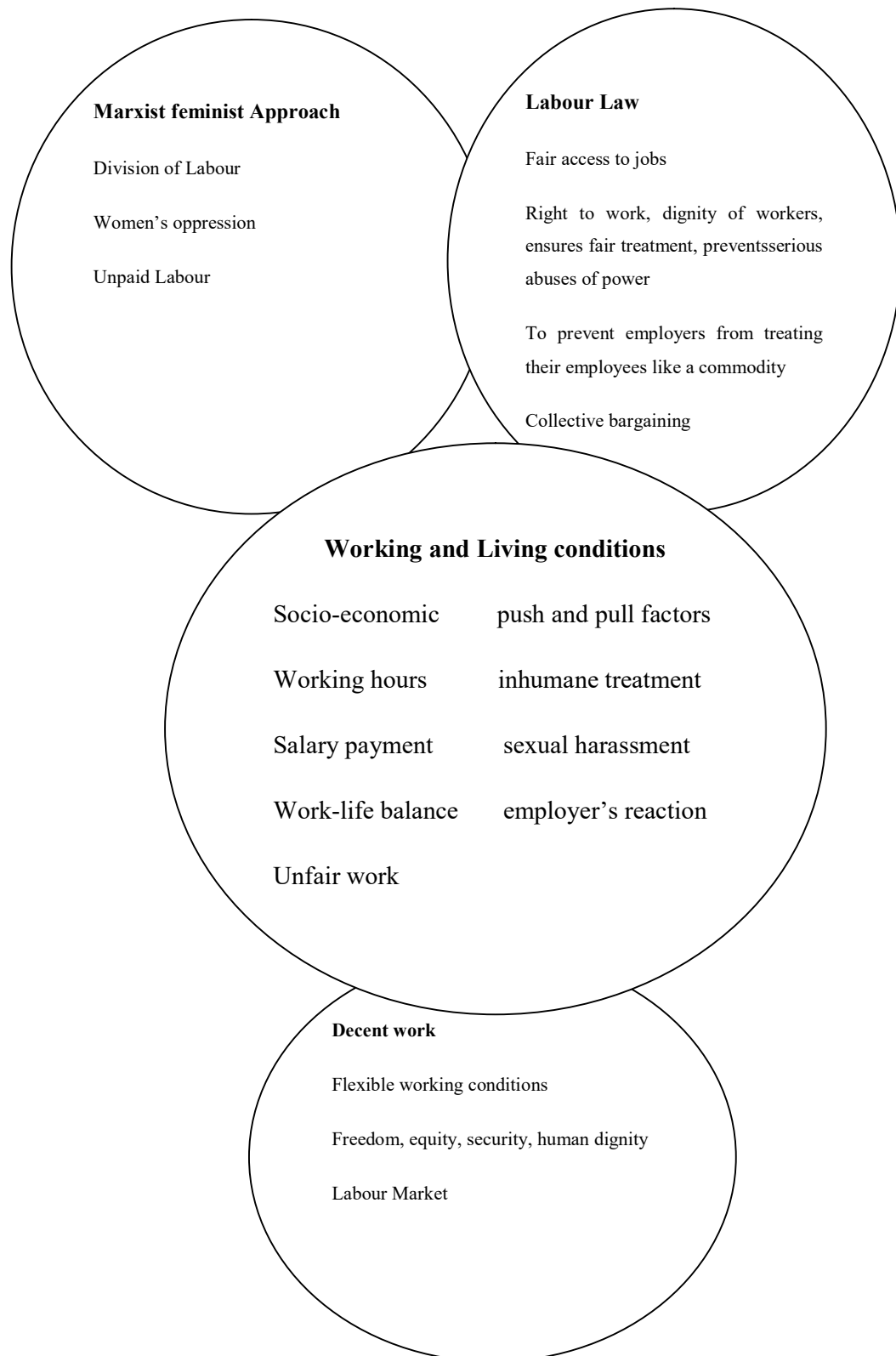
Labour Laws rest in the part of the crucial economic, social and political significance of paid work in the market economy. From a social perspective, work not only occupies a large proportion of most people’s days but also provides one of the principal contracts about the details of the performance required from the worker. The employment contract creates a power relation in which the employer has the discretion, within limits, to direct labour and the employee has the duty to obey

lawful instructions. The legislation regulates the operation of the labour market to ensure fair access to jobs and to address problems arising from unemployment. Because work is central to people's lives, both in terms of its provision of material well-being and as a source of meaning and social integration, the idea that employment relations should be regarded merely as an economic transaction has always been contested in labour law. Control over the employer's power of termination of contracts of employment is therefore a key issue in labour law; it protects the right to work, protects the dignity of workers, ensures fair treatment, prevents serious abuses of power and above all, prevents employers from treating their employees like a commodity that can be discarded at will. However, it is evident to know whether this law has particularly envisaged labor participation for women domestic workers. One unique characteristic of labour law is the regulation of employment achieved by collective bargaining. As well as setting standards for the workplace, such as hours of work, working conditions and wages, collective bargaining may also negotiate change and restructuring. Many labour standards can be described as individual rights – the right to work, the right to fair wages, the right to equal treatment. The contemporary concept of human rights is intended primarily to protect individuals from the abuse of power by the government.

In this framework, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) is seen as a body enhancing the regulation of employment and ratifying the labour conventions dealing with hours of work and rights of domestic workers. ILO Convention covers a vast territory, including freedom of associations, forced labour, child labour, and discrimination as its core areas of activity. The ILO is devoted to promote social justice and also to internationally recognized human and labour rights and assists in advancing creation of the decent work and the economic and working conditions that provide working people and business people take a stake in restoring peace, prosperity as well as progress (Chakraborty,2018).



**Figure : 1.1 Conceptualising Women and Domestic Work**



The present study attempts to find out the working and living conditions of women domestic workers in different dimensions – economic, social and psychological. It has different approaches that put domestic workers at its centre, giving the community a framework for tackling many challenges confronting humanity. The importance of the feminist theory, decent work and labour force participation in achieving the development of strategies and practical measures for promoting their rights and employment of women domestic workers is presented in Figure 1.1. The main aim of this framework is to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive and decent work for all. Thus, firstly, from Figure 1.1 it is seen that the framework is in line with gender division of labour analysis.

#### **1.10 Statement of the Problem**

Women domestic workers face a number of risks that are common in domestic work service. Women in particular, are marked by a series of changes in physical, psychological, social and economic issues. However, studies assessing the relationship between migrants or native women domestic workers, drivers to domestic work such as the push and pull factors, adequacy of salary in comparison with their working conditions, awareness level on social security measures, and humiliating or degrading treatment including physical and verbal violence, and sexual abuse of domestic workers are lacking. The complexity of the women domestic workers and the accompanying changes in physical and social characteristics are usually emphasized, but it is not very well understood by the community at large. A poor understanding of the rights of women domestic worker's issues is the main cause for the absence of focus on services, information and research on unique features of the International Labour Organization (ILO). In recent years, the trends of globalization and liberalization, the rapid spread of communication and information technology, and shifting social and moral norms may be said to have eroded the traditional bases and defining points for the concern of others in Mizo society. However, empirical study and research-based intervention is absent in the state. These require immediate attention and appropriate interventions. Therefore, the study will focus on the exploration on the working and



living conditions of women domestic workers by eliciting information on the issues and challenges faced by them.

### **1.11 Chapter Scheme**

The chapter scheme for the present study is presented in eight (8) chapters.

The first chapter deals with the introduction which discusses on the background of domestic work, the concept of domestic work, the concept of women domestic work, the classification of domestic worker, the magnitude of domestic work and the working and living conditions of women domestic workers in North-East India. It also presents the statement of the problem of the study.

The second chapter focuses on the review of various literature relate to “Living and Working Conditions of Women domestic Workers”. The review of literature is divided into 20 groups viz. studies on domestic work, domestic worker, women domestic workers, feminisation of domestic work, informal work of domestic work, working conditions, living conditions, issues and challenges such as poor bargaining power, social insecurity, push and pull factors, conditions of domestic workers, migration and domestic work, sex work, emotional labour and domestic work, caste, race and domestic work, vulnerabilities of women domestic workers, migration and women domestic workers, coping strategies & social support a laws and policies of domestic workers.

The third chapter presents the methodology employed for the study which includes the profile of the study area, objectives of the study, research design, and sampling, tools for data collection, data processing analysis and limitations of the study.

The fourth chapter discusses the “Composition of Women domestic Workers” like the profile of respondents, socio economic profile and the self-hygiene of women domestic workers.

The fifth chapter deals with “Working Conditions of Women domestic Workers” viz. working hours, work type, remittance provision and satisfaction level.

The sixth chapter deals with “Living Conditions of Women domestic Workers” viz. types of domestic work, nature of work, inhumane treatment, sexual harassment, employer’s reaction over the work, privacy and self-perception of women domestic workers while working.

The seventh chapter focuses on the challenges of women domestic workers and drivers to domestic work.

The eighth chapter deals with qualitative interpretation such as case studies, focus group discussions and key informant interviews. The Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) are conducted mainly on the social support and coping strategies of women domestic workers. Key informant interviews (KIIs) are done with the stakeholders to assess the issues faced by women domestic workers.

The ninth chapter deals with social support and coping strategies on the working and living conditions of women domestic workers in Mizoram.

The tenth chapter deals with the scope for social work intervention and the role of the social worker in the area of women working in unorganised sector particularly the women domestic workers. The study here focuses on the decent work and economic empowerment of women by using social work techniques, skills enrich around the philosophies, assumptions and values of social work education.

Lastly, the eleventh chapter deal with the conclusion and suggestions drawn out of the survey with micro and macro levels of intervention.

Thus, this chapter deals with the introduction of highlighting the topic of the study, “Living and Working Conditions of Women Domestic Workers in Mizoram”. Besides this, it also presents the statement of the problem and chapter scheme of the study. The proceeding chapter presents the review of literature.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

This chapter presents on the review of several kinds of literature relate to “Working and Living Conditions of Women Domestic Workers” that have been written and published by researchers and organizations in the form of books, e-journals, e-articles, reports, and on official documents etc and that are available and can be accessed through online and offline mode. Hence, the present study shows that it is directly and indirectly enriched and supported by the existing literature. This chapter organizes the review of literature into six (6) main themes namely women domestic workers and the driver to domestic work, working conditions & living conditions of women domestic workers, challenges & issues faced by women domestic workers, adopted coping strategies & social support of women domestic workers, social policy & social work intervention in the area of women domestic workers and the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on women domestic workers.

#### **2.1 Women Domestic Workers and Drivers to Domestic Work**

Domestic work is one of the foremost and most important works all over the world. According to ILO (2021), it has been estimated that there are 75.6 million domestic worker globally aged 15 years and over. Women continue to make up the majority of the unorganized sector (76.2%), which accounts for 4.5% of female employment worldwide, or 8.8% of female employees. However, ILO (2016) has signified that women domestic workers across the globe are assigned with works which is a low-paid, insecure and an exploitative work place. Women domestic workers comprise a significant part of the global workforce in informal employment and moreover, they are among the most vulnerable groups of workers. They work for private households, often without clear terms of employment, unregistered, and excluded from the scope of Labour Legislation.

##### **2.1.1 Concept of domestic work and women domestic work**

According to Convention No. 189 (2021),“domestic work is a work performed in or for a household or households, within an employment relationship

and on an occupational basis”. Domestic worker’s tasks vary across countries and overtime and the works undertaken by them are cleaning, nursing, caring, hospitality, gardening, as well as driving and guarding private households. The uniqueness and most challenging part of women domestic worker is that their tasks vary depending upon the wishes and directions of the employer. So, they eventually fall under the prey of their employers. Given this heterogeneity of the tasks, domestic work was determined to be the workplace – that is, the household.

ILO (2021) highlights that Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) have been working for the legal protection of domestic workers in many countries. However, for many domestic workers, decent work has not yet become a reality for both in the paid and unpaid labour. It is estimated that 75.6 million people around the globe perform domestic work in and for private households. A staggering eight out of every ten domestic workers are informally employed where effective labour and social protections are still lack behind. Throughout the stringent COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown, domestic workers were often at risk and basically on the front line, continuing to supply direct and indirect care services for their employers despite the risk of contagion. However, Convention No. 189 sought to extend protections to domestic workers from the fear of loss of jobs during pandemic.

Beri (2020) defines the term “domestic” as a vague that denotes a class of menials such as Ayah, Kitchen Helper, Cook and Sweeper. Therefore, domestic servants can be classified as those workers who do cooking, care of children, cleaning utensils, washing clothes, cleaning and sweeping the houses in return for the payment of wages.

Lalrinzuala and Elizabeth (2022) in their study “ Risks and Safety of Women Healthcare Workers in Aizawl District, Mizoram, India” has found out that women healthcare workers including women domestic workers experience a greater number of physical risks at the workplace viz., back pain, headache, eye problem, loss of appetite and needle syringe injuries which is followed by psychosocial (anxiety, insomnia, abuse by parents, low self-esteem and depression) and reproductive risks (irregular menstrual cycle, stillbirth, low birth weight and cervical cancer). However,

the study also highlight that there is no clear regulations and recommendations on the safety measures by health care settings.

Svensson (2018) studied that in India, private domestic work operates as an informal, unregulated sector. Because of the limited work opportunities for females aged 15 to 29, domestic work is an increasingly common employment option for millions of women and girls – despite the low wages and employment insecurity.

A bill presented in Rajya Sabha, entitled ‘The Housemaids and Domestic Servants (Conditions of Services and Welfare) Bill, 2004’, has defined domestic worker as:

(a) “domestic servant means any person who earns his livelihood by working in household of his employer and doing household chores”, and

(b) “housemaid means a woman servant who performs household chores for wages”. The International Labour Organization (ILO) broadly defines a domestic worker as “someone who carries out household work in private households in return for wages”.

Hunt and Machingura (2016) bring forth that women domestic workers support household maintenance, taking care of the home, children, the elderly, the sick and in some cases providing psychosocial support and stability to otherwise broken families. They also highlight the highly dispersed, informal and hidden nature of the domestic workforce. This has meant that historically, information sharing, organizing and establishing collective bargaining agreements has been difficult, although domestic worker collectives and unions have been established worldwide. The on-demand economy for domestic work presents specific challenges and opportunities in this area.

Hunt (2016) has mentioned about “Uberization of Domestic Work” where it is a platform providing services to domestic workers to do the tasks traditionally carried out by women like cleaning, cooking, laundry and care for children and older people which is emerging in the state like India, Mexico and South Africa. Although

the trend is new to the world, dedicated domestic worker app companies are growing rapidly within and across countries. In India, three of these companies are undertaking tremendous services for paid domestic workers.

The Draft National Policy on Domestic Workers recommended by the Taskforce on Domestic Workers (2015) gives a definition of a domestic worker as “*domestic worker*” means, a person who is employed for remuneration whether in cash or kind, in any household through any agency or directly, either on a temporary or permanent, part time or full time basis to do the household work, but does not include any member of the family of an employer.

ILO (2013) highlights to the fact that domestic works contribute substantially to the global economy that accounting for 7.5 % of women’s total wage employment worldwide. In addition, 53 million people with majority women and girls are employed in private homes as domestic workers and the main essential tasks for the household includes cooking, cleaning, laundry, shopping, and caring for children and elderly members of the employer’s family. Also, migrant domestic workers provide billions of dollars in remittances to their countries of origin.

John (2012) opines that domestic work is work, has a long history in India with both men and women working in others homes as servants. The affluent had servants; mostly men with loyalty obligation and patronage bring the salient aspects of this relationship. Caste defined the hierarchy – lower castes performed the dirty work of cleaning while higher caste men cooked. Though domestic work is not a new phenomenon in India, it cannot simply be viewed as an extension of historical feudal culture where the affluent employed ‘servants’

Smith (2011) illustrated that more and more households in America are turning to paid domestics to provide assistance to aging family members who need help with household duties and personal care tasks. Smith consider that between 2003 and 2030, the percentage of people in the United States aged sixty-five and older is expected to increase from 12 percent of the total population to 20 percent. If the supply of domestics keeps up with demand, it seems all but inevitable that more workers will find themselves confronting workplace hazards in their clients’ homes.

Yet despite these trends domestics have largely fallen through the cracks of America's health and safety regulatory regime.

The ILO (2011) also highlights that domestic workers are, like other workers, entitled to decent work. The domestic worker may work on full-time or part-time basis; may be employed by a single household or by multiple employers; may be residing in the household of the employer (live-in worker) or may be living in his or her own residence (live-out).

ILO (2009) survey of 70 countries has confirmed that in many countries, domestic workers are excluded from national labour laws, leaving them with no legal rights to limit their working hours, a minimum wage and a provision of adequate rest. It is found that 40 % of the employers did not guarantee domestic workers a weekly day of rest and half did not impose a limit on normal hours of working to domestic workers. It concluded that domestic workers are at the mercy of their employers and without legal protection.

ILO (2007) highlights that women domestic worker come from their house in search of employment to give financial support to their family due to the poverty and increasing inflation in the country. Women domestic workers have to maintain collaboration between their work and family life and due to that, disputes may be created in the family environment. The vast majority of women domestic workers are from the poorer sections of the society. Most domestic workers in Mizoram are from the marginalized sections of society and a large number of them are migrant (Burmese, Chakmas, Hmar, Tripura and tribal's from village to cities or within territory itself) and the workers range from full-time to part-time workers, skilled and unskilled workers.

Singh (2002) conducted a study on domestic workers of Ranchi district, India. The author concluded that lack of awareness and basic education lead to exploitation. The system of recruitment was faulty and age of recruitment often violated human rights. Wages were too low and workers did not enjoy any kind of medical benefit. Their hours of work were very long and were not spread out evenly.

There were no holidays or leave sanctioned or approved by their employers. They lacked work proficiency and did not possess formal training. She further reported that basic poverty lead to poor bargaining capacity. The workers did not possess knowledge of alternate sources of income generation. Fatalism and superstition were all pervasive. She found that in most cases the number of dependents on the earning members was too large, this lowered the standard of living and at times lead to indebtedness.

Khanderia (1947) have traces the roots of domestic work from the point of slavery during colonial rule to the invasion of Aryans – the hierarchy of work such as Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras where this nature still persistent till today. Even today, despite the changing economic scenarios, we can see the stratification of work, the slavery, where the higher order works were made to higher strata of the society and lower orders for Sudras which in general termed as “modern slavery under globalization” in the form of Domestic Work.

### **2.1.2 International Labour Organisation (ILO) and Convention 189**

ILO (2021) has highlight that in 2011, the International Labour Organization (ILO) adopted the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), the first international legal instrument devoted to domestic work. In its Preamble, the Convention recognizes the contributions of domestic workers to the global economy and the persistent undervaluation of domestic work. Considering that domestic workers are some of the most marginalized workers, the Convention set out to ensure that they enjoy decent work, like all other workers, while considering the specificities of the sector. Since then, much progress has been made towards achieving decent work for domestic workers; however, for far too many workers in this sector, decent work has not yet become a reality. Shortly after the adoption of Convention No. 189, the ILO produced the report *Domestic Workers Across the World* (ILO 2013a), which provided the first global estimate of the number of domestic workers. It also provided regional estimates and an estimate of the percentage of domestic workers covered by key labour and social security laws governing working time, wages and maternity protection.



Chand (2019) pointed out that domestic workers for long have yearned for the recognition of the work they do. The much-awaited acknowledgement of their work became a reality in 2011. The ILO statistics also emphasize on domestic work as a growing economic sector, accounting for 7.5% of women employees worldwide. Convention 189 is duly supported with recommendations number 201. The Convention has been ratified by 29-member states, the earliest of all being Uruguay, Philippines and Mauritius. India is yet to ratify the Convention. The Convention defines domestic work as ‘work performed in or for a household or households’, and domestic worker as ‘any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship’. There is a separate Convention for ‘home work’ which is covered by the Home Work Convention, 1996 and defines it as work carried by workers in their own home rather than the workplace of an employer. In addition, Convention, 189 does not recognize self-employed persons and independent contractors as ‘domestic workers’. Although to achieving this end the Convention leaves it to national laws to decide upon the legal working hours and work leaves by taking into consideration the unique nature of domestic work and treating them at par with workers in general. Further, in order to reap maximum benefits out of the Convention guidelines, it is also imperative to take measures to ensure their implementation at the ground level. Also, enforcement would be a success provided the national laws and regulations could be availed by domestic workers as favourably as other workers in general.

Lyngkhai and Elizabeth (2020) has highlight in their study that empowerment of women has become popular after the 1980s. The study emphasize that women empowerment is the process of enhancing and strengthening women who have suffer from all sorts of inequalities and discrimination. Also, the study reveals that empowerment of women is the process of providing power to women to become free from the control of others to determine her own condition. Thus, here we see that empowerment of women domestic workers is crucial in order to freed them from certain challenges that a worker encounter in their daily lives.

### **2.1.3 Regional Estimates of Domestic Workers**

ILO (2021) clearly highlights that the vast majority of domestic workers are employed in two regions: about half of all domestic workers can be found in Asia and the Pacific, largely on account of China, while another quarter (23 per cent) are

in America. These regions also employ the largest shares of the world's female domestic workers, at 52.1 per cent and 27.2 per cent, respectively. Americas and the Arab States are the two regions in which domestic workers are over-represented compared with the distribution of global employment. In America, 17.6 million men and women aged 15 years old and over work as domestic workers, accounting for 23 per cent of the total worldwide. The Americas region is home to the second-largest population of women domestic workers (15.7 million), second only to Asia and the Pacific. It is also the region in which domestic work is the most feminized, 89 per cent of domestic workers in the region being women (table 2.1). Domestic work remains an important source of employment among women, representing 7.7 per cent of female employment (or 10 per cent of female employees).

#### **2.1.4 Push and Pull Factors-**

ILO (2018a) analyzed that some research suggests the share of the domestic work sector is in part a result of income inequality. Using the Gini coefficient, research conducted by the ILO found that the higher the level of income inequality, the larger the size of the domestic workforce as a share of total employment. Another way of understanding the relationship between income inequality and the demand for domestic work is in terms of a worker's willingness to accept an offer of employment at a given wage and an employer's willingness and capacity to pay for services. In other words, in countries with higher levels of income inequality, the demand for domestic work is driven, at least in part, by the fact that there is a large number of people who are willing to accept relatively low wages, which are paid by a large enough number of households with the capacity to employ domestic workers.

Hunt and Machingura (2016) proved that the emergence of the on-demand domestic service economy is relevant across a number of areas of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Notably, it intersects with commitments focusing on decent work creation (SDG 8), health and well-being (SDG 3), poverty eradication (SDG 1) and addressing inequality (SDG 10). The cross-cutting SDG promise to 'leave no one behind' is also highly pertinent.

CWA News Letter (2004) reflected that there are certain factors which drive women domestic workers to domestic work. Firstly, poverty is the main reason why many women and children engage in domestic work. In almost all cases, these domestic workers are the product of internal migration in search of employment, due to family problems including rural and male unemployment and disputes at home. Also, ill treatment and loss of parents have resulted in their leaving the house to work as domestics. It is also usual to find domestic workers who are single parents, widowed or separated from their husbands or those with alcoholic husbands who are compelled to work for the survival of their children. Further, natural calamities and conflict situation such as insurgency are also factors forcing them to migrate because of displacement, loss of livelihood and the lack of rehabilitation programmes. However, their debts due to falling crops also push them to domestic work. On the other hand, the demand of cheap labor in the growing market economies has caused many women and children to seek employment in the cities and urban areas. In addition, the lack of access to education, especially among young girls, and false image of security and a stable environment at the employer's home are factors that entice them to domestic work. Children from rural areas coming from poor families are sent to live with better off relatives in urban areas with promise that they will be treated by relatives as their own children; some are sent together with other household goods for purposes of child marriage; most have run away from home and ended up as domestics in urban areas; and they are recruited from their villages by middle men and women.

Ramirez (2003) reveals many factors which have led women to practice domestic work. Women from poor households and disadvantaged communities have lesser employment opportunities, and usually face discrimination based on gender, caste or class, race or ethnicity. Cleaning, cooking, and caring for children and the elderly is almost universally regarded as women's work, so men rarely compete in this job market. Low levels of education and few marketable skills also play a role. Rural poverty has increased in many countries, causing young women to move to urban areas in search of employment.

Though the studies conducted on women domestic workers in India provide rich information about issues and challenges of domestic work, there is lack of information about the domestic workers.

Anderson (2000) mentioned that the size of the domestic workforce depends on a range of factors on both the supply and the demand side. Research has already substantiated some of the factors that push women and men to seek employment as domestic workers. Some of the most pronounced factors are poverty, a need to generate more income for their families, and a lack of employment opportunities.

## **2.2. Living and Working Conditions of Women Domestic Workers**

Rejimon and Gopal (2020) found that the women domestic workers has less voice in confronting the employer and often continue accepting whatever the employers pay them and are under constant fear that asking for a raise may lead to termination from work. The employers also provide them stale foods or leftover foods which are not good for their health and nutrition. The employers also refuse to give them paid leave even though they work hard beyond their capacity.

ILO (2016) has document the evidences that many domestic workers fall under '*live-in*' domestics. Their accommodations are not usually as comfortable as those reserved for the family members. In some cases, they sleep in the kitchen or small rooms, sometimes located in the basement or attic. Domestic workers may live in their own home, though more often they are "live-in" domestics. The majority of domestic workers in Mexico, India, and other populous developing countries, are rural-urban migrants who are employed by urban families.

Dithi et al., (2016) envisage the double burden of working at their own homes on the one hand and the demands of the workplace on the other take a heavy toll on their lives. The workers suffered from sleeplessness, fear (often leading to more absenteeism and hence more stress and fear), severe headaches, and mental stress due to the financial consequences of frequent absences. Moreover, the continuous demand for perfection in their tasks, often with the employer watching

closely while domestic workers go about their work, was by itself extremely stressful.

Srinivasan and Ponnuswami (2013) emphasizes some of the living conditions that they are unorganized workers, there are no labour laws to protect them or to set out their service conditions. Lacking unionization, they are left to the mercy of the employers. There are no laws to fix their wages; they have no basic rights, no amenities or social security, not even leave or a paid holiday as in any other jobs. They are also denied rights to health care, education, justice, human dignity and respect of all unorganized labour, the domestic worker is closest to us in our homes. Where better then to sow the seed of humanism, human dignity and respect than to start it at home itself, even for those of us who do not have a domestic worker, surely we have known or heard of the plight of domestic workers. Domestic work has become more 'feminize' over time. Because of the nature of their work and the workplace, they suffer loneliness and alienation from their roots as well as from any assurance for a bright future. Young girls accustomed to a new life style of the city will find it difficult to fit into life and too often their future chances for marriage is affected by the stigma of their work as house workers and their stay in city. Majority of house workers are illiterate, unable to read or write. They are unable to communicate with their dear ones or with anybody else in faraway villages. Further, they suffer from inferiority for want of education. They live and work in a state of consistent fears they are afraid of being thrown out their jobs. They are insecure about their personal safety, they have nowhere to go to and find shelter if they feel insecure.

Polask (2013) exclaimed that despite the size of the sector, many domestic workers experience poor working conditions and insufficient legal protection. Domestic workers are frequently expected to work longer hours than other workers and, in many countries, do not have the same rights to weekly rest that are being enjoyed by other workers. Combined with the lack of rights, the extreme dependency on an employer and the isolated and unprotected nature of domestic work can render them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

Svensson (2018) found out that food and water are substantial health concerns reported by the young domestic workers. The study noted how hunger and thirst can cause mistakes and injuries when girls feel tired, exhausted or depleted. Young females also reported restricted use of household lavatory facilities during work, which meant that many tried to avoid eating and drinking during work. Young worker who worked long hours in one household reports that ‘employers would withhold food or offer only little or stale food in an evening’. The effects of time constraints were also highlighted by participants, especially part-time workers. Because of their hectic schedule, juggling multiple employers during a single day, girls have little to no time for breaks, food or water. It should be noted, however, that in households where food was provided, some girls reported better food than at her family home, which was considered as a valuable aspect of the work. Girls suffered headaches from harsh cleaning chemicals; neck pain from working on high surfaces; shoulder pain following repetitive heavy lifting; back pain after squatting and bending for long periods while washing clothes or mopping floors; leg and knee pain from kneeling while mopping; arm, hand and finger pain from hand-washing clothes; and pain in feet and heels from standing or sitting for long hours while performing work tasks. Findings further show that the body aches increased with age. To date, the risks of long-term ergonomic disabilities, chronic pain and occupation-induced disease in adulthood have received little attention. The young workers noted that menstrual health is a regular source of concern. They worried about the stigma, as well as menstrual hygiene because of difficulties accessing hygiene products. Menstruation also made it especially difficult and tiring to perform their tasks, especially tasks that required bending and squatting. Menstruation has been a relatively neglected health concern, even though it is a significant – and regular – worry for young domestic workers.

Alfers (2012) has mentioned that Brazilian domestic workers also considered overwork an important challenge, and they said the lack of defined working hours made the problem worse. *“We have a time to wake up, but we do not have time to go to bed. One of the things we would like changed, in that sense, is to have a set schedule. Why do other jobs have an eight-hour working day while we don’t? If you weigh things up, we have almost 20 hours of work a day.”* Alfers have studied that in

Brazil, domestic workers are entitled to social security. However, they are only able to access it if their employers agree to sign their work papers. All of the Brazilian participants had experienced working without signed papers at some point in their lives, and one woman had been working in this way for 16 years. For many participants, the fear of losing their jobs made them unwilling to pressure their employers to sign the papers.

Smith (2011) views 'live-in' domestic workers as the most prevalent workers in the state as most workers are migrants. Live-in domestic workers experience greater isolation, less privacy and more limited mobility, work longer hours and receive a larger share of payments in kind (such as board). The living conditions are frequently sub-standard. They are also more vulnerable to physical/sexual abuse by the employers. Migrant domestic workers often live in the employers' home, facing not only the challenges of live-in domestics but also abuses within the recruitment system and from the police and or the immigration authorities, including advance commission fees, withheld wages and passports, and verbal, physical, or sexual harassment. To protect migrant domestic workers, laws and regulations are needed at the international level and in both sending and receiving countries. The author augmented that while intervening, the domestic workers were found denied of minimum wages, healthy work - period, safe working conditions and other benefits. The wage levels of domestic workers are much less than their male counterparts. The employers do not provide extra wages for more workload. They also carry out other tasks which are not linked with their regular duties. Domestic workers are paid below the minimum wages for both skilled and unskilled work and above that they are highly exploited, denied from just wages and work in inhumane conditions. Moreover, due to employment opportunities, domestic workers usually migrate from rural and tribal areas to urban areas. They experience a sense of loneliness because of the solitary nature of the work.

According to Smith (2011), domestic workers are employed in private homes rather than firms or enterprises. This tends to make them invisible as formal workers and isolated from others in the sector. They are dependent on the good or bad will of their employer. Growing evidence shows that domestic workers are exposed to a

range of unhealthy and hazardous working conditions despite the concept of the home as “safe haven”.

Rustagi (2009) highlights that the relationship between employers and domestic workers is very subjective and depended on the individuals involved. There is a marginal increase in the number of women domestic workers in India.

Ray and Qayum (2009) mentioned that sometimes the employer-employee relationship is a complex one and is viewed as one of domination, dependency and inequality.

Hajra (2007) mentioned that the employers normally scold them in times of any delay or discrepancy in the work. They are not allowed to cultivate good human relations with the neighbours. They feel reluctant to report sexual harassment at workplace. Moreover, they are forced to remain silent due to power dynamics and fear of discrimination or dismissal.

Saran and Sandhewar (1990) studied the problems of women workers engaged in unorganized sector. It was revealed by their study that the women were exploited, low paid, worked for long hours i.e. 14-16 hours in a day in case of migrants and 8-10 hours per day in case of local workers. There prevailed mass illiteracy, belonged to scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward classes and indebtedness was common among them. Further, rebuking, cheating, threatening, beating and sexual abuses were a common feature reported by women working in unorganized sector.

The study conducted by Unni (1989) concluded that female workers had to bear the work burden the most and they remained still the most disadvantaged class of workers. They put in at least 12-14 hours of work every day but their economic activities were not fully recognized, counted and included in the national product, though women’s work included many activities which lead to the economic gain of the household.

### **2.2.1 Conditions of domestic workers**

Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), 2020 highlights the status of domestic workers in Delhi, India that there was an



estimate of 500,000 domestic workers in Delhi city alone, where the bulk of the demand for domestic work is for part-time workers. Most have multiple employers and work more than 40 hours per week. Domestic workers in Delhi spend the equivalent of three-quarters of a week's wage on a health-care visit, despite various governmental schemes to help workers access health care. Also, most have no access to maternity leave or other benefits including pensions. Migrant workers often encounter problems in applying for benefits because the necessary documentation is kept in their home villages and is inaccessible to them. With COVID-19 and its impacts, large numbers of domestic workers in Delhi are said to have lost their jobs and about 80 per cent face severe to moderate economic crises. The sector was largely excluded from emergency grants and food rations. There are estimated to be 500,000 domestic workers in Delhi (ILO, 2016). According to the International Labour Organization (2017), the bulk of the demand for domestic work in Delhi is for part-time workers, although there are also substantial numbers of particularly vulnerable live-in workers from rural districts and states including Jharkhand, Odisha and Bihar.

Paul et al., (2011) reported that in 1959, New Delhi based All India Domestic Workers Union called for a one-day solidarity strike which received a thumping response from domestic workers. Interestingly, this initiative attracted legislators' attention; two bills –on minimum wages and the timely payment of wages, maximum working hours, weekly rest and annual leave periods, as well as the establishment of a servant's registry to be maintained by the local police, indifference to employers– were introduced.

Chen and Ravindran (2011) has indicated that domestic workers population has been signified as the second largest urban informal workforce over the last two decades, next to 'home based workers' (artisans and petty commodity producers). Moreover, it is estimated that 41.3 lakhs workers work in the households of others, and an overwhelming 27.9 lakhs of this total are women (NSS,68<sup>th</sup> Round). Domestic workers in many countries are considered as a special category and this is particularly reflected in their hours of work and rest, when compared with those of other workers. Given its social and economic invisibility and the accompanying low social status, domestic work is often exploitative. The domestic workers usually face

long hours of work, heavy workloads, lack of privacy, low salaries, inadequate accommodation and food (live-in workers), job insecurity, absence of benefits normally granted to other categories of workers, and exposure to violence and abuse.

Machao (2003) highlights that when talking about working conditions of domestic workers highlight extreme situations of near-servitude rather than the general situation of the majority of domestic workers. Though it is good to criticise such cases, the inclusive picture of the working conditions and status of domestic workers are not fully provided, and gratuitously help to improve the situation of their vulnerability category as worker. Long hours of work and heavy workloads, day off and limiting recess and leisure time, unfair works and treatment are a common trend in domestic work. In addition, some employers deprive their maid from free time and making them work long hours. It is uncommon to find live-in domestic workers exposed to on-call work day and night. In addition, as employers normally consider that the level of specialization required to complete the workers tasks is low, there is a tendency to consistently increase the number of chores to be performed.

Different countries like Philippines, Canada, Columbia, Mexico, Peru, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Malta, Swaziland, Tanzania, Vietnam, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Finland, France, Portugal and Sweden (IN Machao,2003) have enacted specific rules on the working hours for domestic workers, but references to such hours vary considerably. Likewise, some countries mention maximum number of hours per day without referring to a maximum amount of hours per week or otherwise. However, in Mizoram it is solely on the employer's mercy.

Constable (1997) pointed out the inadequate accommodations like no beds, small rooms, poor lighting, and lack of furniture and inadequate food (quantity and quality) are some of the recurrent complaints of live-in domestic workers.

Chaney and Castro (1989) found out from their study that live-in domestic workers face a problem of privacy, interference in personal affairs, close supervision by household members, etc. were the indicators for unpleasant working environment. This problem may be reinforced by practices such as the possibility of the employer inspecting the worker at any time, setting restrictions concerning visitors, monitoring

the domestics spare time, and by the general inadequacy of the living space to provide for privacy and separation between the employer's family and the domestic worker.

ILO (1987) pointed out that domestic work is a low paying activity. Domestic worker's salaries are often far below the minimum wage, when it exists. In many Metropolitan cities, domestic service workers were earning less than two-thirds the average income of the next lowest-earning group: wage workers in small-scale establishments. In San José City, Costa Rica, domestic servants in 1982 were receiving less than two-fifths the average income of that second-lowest group. However, in Mizoram, salaries are often between Rs 2000-9000/- depending on the employer's willingness to pay their employee since there is no formal legislation base on the salary of domestic worker.

### **2.3 Issues and Challenges of Women Domestic Workers**

WIEGO (2020) views that only few of the domestic workers having a written contract with their employer, which means that their work status is highly insecure, and they have little power to change this. This is exacerbated by the fact that wage rates are set by the neighbourhood, leaving little space for individual workers to bargain for higher wages. Although organizations of domestic workers are gaining strength in the city, which would support collective action and voice, it is challenging to organize domestic workers, particularly those who live and work in the gated communities across the city.

ILO (2016) mention that women domestic workers face numerous problems such as low wages, extra work, long working hours, lack of holidays, harassment at workplace, sexual exploitation, physical torture, ill treatment, lack of welfare facilities, lack of rest and freedom, absence of social security measures, development of fatigue, and low level of education. Moreover, they comprise a significant part of the global economy in informal employment and therefore they are the most vulnerable groups among informal workers. Domestic workers worked for private households, often without clear terms of employment, and are excluded from the scope of labour legislation. Women domestic workers face a number of risks that are

common in domestic work service. Women in particular are marked by a series of changes in physical, psychological, social and economic issues. However, studies assessing the relationship between insufficient or inadequate food and accommodation, and humiliating or degrading treatment including physical and verbal abuse, inhumane or degrading treatment, and sexual harassment of domestic workers are lacking. The complexity of the women domestic workers and the accompanying changes in physical and social characteristics is usually emphasized, but it is not very well understood by the community at large. A poor understanding of the rights of women domestic worker's issues is the main cause for the absence of focus on services, information and research on unique features of International Labour Organization (ILO). In recent years, the trends of globalization and liberalization, the rapid spread of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and shifting social and moral norms maybe said to have eroded the traditional bases and defining points for concern of others in Mizo society. However, empirical study and research based intervention is absence in the state. These require immediate attention and appropriate interventions. Therefore, the study is focusing on the exploration on the working and living conditions of women domestic workers by eliciting information on the issues and challenges faced by them.

John (2012) found that domestic work has been articulate as servants (working in other's home) and has a long history in India with both men and women. However, caste defined the hierarchy – lower castes performed the dirty work of cleaning while higher caste men cooked. Though domestic work is not a new phenomenon in India, it cannot simply be viewed as an extension of historical feudal culture where the affluent employed 'servants'.

Branco (2012) has revealed from her case study that *"I work meat and bones, absorbing toxic substances,"*. *"They go on holiday, they stay in a hotel. But they expect that I should work. Then I get sick, have to go to hospital, and don't have money to pay."* Ruth Castel Branco has also observed that willing employers may promise improvements in working conditions, but in the absence of adequate state regulation, it is a choice rather than obligation, and promises often go unfulfilled.

Domestic workers walk a very thin line in demanding access to their rights, and concerns over job security often win out in the “patience industry.”

Alfers (2011) quotes verbal abuse and humiliation left with domestic workers that says “The biggest problems are name calling, humiliation and standing up for long periods. I worked in one house where I was only allowed to sit down to eat. If I sat down to rest there would be a fight or complaints, you had to stay on your feet, and no one could stay still in her house.”

Centre for Education and Communication (CEC), 2010 emphasize that domestic work has been articulate as nothing but the commodification of household tasks performed by women, generation after generation. Mainstream economics does not consider women's engagements at home as 'productive work' and, therefore, it is not recognized as work in official economic and social policy documents. However, two aspects of the 'reproductive work' of women in households as outlined as 'paid work' by CEC includes *care work* and *dirty work*. The '*care work*' addressing to *physical and emotional needs of family members -husbands, children, attending sick person and the elderly, etc.* and the *unpaid 'dirty work'* includes *maintenance of the household, including cooking, washing, cleaning, etc.*(ibid.).

According to ILO (2007), most domestic workers are from the marginalized sections of society and a large number of them are migrant (Burmese, Chakmas, Hmar, Tripuri and tribal's from village to cities or within territory itself) and the workers range from full-time to part-time workers, skilled and unskilled workers. The vast majority are from the poorer sections of the society.

Reshmi (2003) mention that a common shortfall is the lack of reliable and adequate information about the actual procedure of domestic work and working and living conditions at the destination. Because of this, many of the women work without any formal contract as they are not aware about the importance of it. Moreover, due to lack of strong mechanism and the deep interest of workers in obtaining domestic employment resulted to cheating by the agents of association. Reshmi identifies almost all the time, women domestic workers are low educated, less knowledge about the situation of the destination and unaware of their rights and obligations.

United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2000 highlights women domestic workers often engage in unskilled work and most poorly paid jobs, which have been deserted by national women. Because of the unregulated nature of domestic work, they have worked long hours, sometimes more than 15 hours a day and forced to do extra work. In addition to abuse and discrimination arising from their immigration status, national origin and their lower status jobs, domestic workers are more frequently victims of violence, including sexual assault at the work place. The abuse to women domestic worker is less visible due to its hidden characteristics and they were highly dependent on the employer.

Reddy (1986) emphasize that women domestic workers are more vulnerable to human rights abuses since they work in gender-segregated and unregulated sectors of the economy, entertainment and sex industry, unprotected by labour legislation or policy and they are exposed to forced labour, precarious working conditions, poorly paid job, discrimination and sexual exploitation and suffer poor health condition.

### **2.3.1 Domestic work - “an informal work”**

According to ILO (2021), of the 75.6 million domestic workers worldwide, 61.4 million (81.2 per cent) remain in informal employment including 45.8 million women domestic workers. The share of informal employment among domestic workers is twice to the share of informal employment in other sectors. The high proportion of domestic workers in informal employment is a strong indicator of how few domestic workers enjoy rights and protection in practice. Statistically speaking, domestic workers are considered to be in informal employment primarily if they and their employers are not making contributions to social security. To enable contributions to social security, domestic workers must be covered by social security laws and by labour laws and their employment relationship must be recognized.

Svennson (2018) discusses about the informal occupations of domestic work in India and opines to the fact that wages are extremely low. For instance, wages for women in informal work are four times lower than women’s wages in the formal work sector. Moreover, the informal nature of domestic work creates opportunities

for potentially exploitative recruitment channels. Workers, especially young workers have very limited position or opportunity to negotiate fair employment terms and safe work conditions with recruitment agents or with employers.

Neetha (2009) rightly mention that the implementation of existing labour laws in regulated sectors in India is notoriously weak. More women in India are receiving an education than ever before and the country has recorded consistent economic growth. Despite this, India continues to have one of lowest rates of female workforce participation in the world. Close to 54 percent of working women between the ages of 15 to 59 are not available for work because of household responsibilities or domestic work. In addition, they undertake tasks such as fetching wood and water which goes towards the care and sustenance of their family. Such work is called many things – unpaid care work, reproductive work, and social care functions and so on.

The United Nations (2002) attempted to explain how tasks performed by domestic workers are not recognized as ‘work’. Domestic workers in India continue to struggle for visibility and recognition. While several legislations such as the Unorganized Social Security Act, 2008, Sexual Harassment against Women at Work Place (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 and Minimum Wages Schedules notified in various states refer to domestic workers, there remains an absence of comprehensive, uniformly applicable, national legislation that guarantees fair terms of employment and decent working conditions. Domestic workers should however be guaranteed the same terms of employment as enjoyed by other workers. Hired domestic workers ease the burden of individual households by undertaking household chores in return for remuneration. The tasks include the care of children and the elderly, cooking, driving, cleaning, grocery shopping, running errands and taking care of household pets, particularly in urban areas. However, despite the benefits this work brings to individual households, domestic workers are often not recognized as workers by society.

Harriss-White and Gooptu (2000) underlines that the Indian labour markets are generally characterized by the existence of a massive informal sector, the unskilled

nature of manual works, the absolute poverty of workers, and the fact that work is mainly unregulated by the state and is also unstructured.

Naik and Hensman (2000) opines that despite the efforts to define formal and informal sectors in India, many different definitions prevail. However, 'Informal', 'unregulated and 'unorganized'; as well as 'formal' and 'organized' have been used interchangeably and this is somewhat problematic since there are unorganized workers both in unregulated and regulated jobs; only half the 'formal' workers are unionized (Harriss-White & Gooptu,2000). More than 90% of workers among the so called 'slum population' belongs to the category of 'other workers' and the others (5%) were found to be 'household industry workers' belonging to the informal sector (census of India, 2001).

Hensman (2000) defines informal workers as "all workers, both urban and rural, who are not covered by basic labour legislation, including informal workers in large-scale production". In contrary, 'organized' or 'formal' sector workers receive regular wages, are in a registered firm, and have access to the state social security system and following the framework of labour law'. The other conceptualization to understand the nature of paid domestic work in India would be exploration of the term 'decent work' which the ILO (1999) formulates as "productive work under conditions of freedom, equity, security and dignity, in which rights are protected and adequate remuneration and social coverage are provided". The main consideration of decent work includes the promotion of labour rights, the promotion of employment, social protection for vulnerable situations, and the promotion of social dialogues (IBID). However, this concept does not provide an adequate framework for domestic work in India due to lack of regulation that makes domestic work insecure causing greater chance of worker's vulnerabilities. This is possible due to the fact that lack of awareness by the workers inclusive of basic rights, legal right, duration of working, minimum standard of wage extending to regulation of working hours.

### **2.3.2 Minimum Wages and Women Domestic Workers-**

ILO (2021) reported that since 2010, little progress has been made in ensuring a minimum wage for domestic workers equal to that enjoyed by workers



generally or limiting payment in kind for domestic workers. There has been only a small increase in the number of domestic workers who are entitled to a minimum wage equal to that of other workers (2.9 percentage points) and who have a right to receive their minimum wage fully in cash (7.2 percentage points). Remuneration is a very crucial aspect of the Convention 189 of ILO and most relevant to the present study.

Chand (2019) accounted that it must also be put to view that there have been individual and organizational attempts for the protection and status uplift of these workers with various draft bills over the years, such as Domestic Workers(Registration, Social Security and Welfare) Bill 2008, which was prepared by National Commission for Women(NCW) India, Domestic Workers (Regulation of employment, Condition of work, Social Security and Welfare) Bill 2008 by National Campaign Committee for Unorganised sector workers and The Domestic Workers Employment Rights Protection Bill 2004 ( SEWA-Kerala Bill). The main emphasis or the core issues incorporated in all of these draft bills focus on the condition of the work i.e., leaves, holidays, hours of work etc, and also on the social security of the workers. But the failure of materialization of bill to an Act has been disappointing. One such initiative in this regard of providing welfare, protection and security to domestic workers was that of, Dr. Sashi Tharoor, Member of Parliament, who introduced 'The Domestic Workers Welfare' Bill 2016 in Lok Sabha on 5 July, 2016. The proposed bill addresses the needs of the workers and suitable terms of agreement, and thus guarantees certain rights to the domestic workers in accordance with International Convention on Labour such as the right to; earn and earn livelihood free from forced and compulsory labour, to earn minimum wages , to decent working and living conditions, to address grievances in an appropriate manner, to organize and bargain collectively and the right to equal employment opportunities and remuneration. The most recent effort to the cause has come from the Ministry of Labour and Employment in the form of a Draft National Policy on Domestic Workers which is still in its initial stages and remains to be passed by the Indian parliament house.

In addition, Minimum Wages Act (1948) have proposed four codes viz. Code on Wages, Code on Social Security, Code on industrial relations and Code of

Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions. Code on Wages bill after being passed by the parliament and receiving the assent of the President became enforceable on August, 2019. It has thus expanded the purview of minimum wages beyond the scheduled employments to all organized and unorganized sector workers except government employees and MGNREGA workers. It also subsumes The Minimum Wages Act (1948), The Payment of Wages Act (1936), The Payment OF Bonus Act (1965), Equal Remuneration Act (1976), none of which included domestic workers. The centre would fix a floor wage on the recommendations of a Central Advisory Board. The states can fix minimum wages on the basis of either skills or geographical area or both, doing away with the prior occupational category as a factor in determining minimum wages. But at the same time states cannot lower the minimum wages if the central floor wage is lower than the one determined by the state. The extension of the new law to domestic workers is still ambiguous, given the fact that none of the definitions of either 'employee', 'employer' or 'establishment' in the gazette notification accommodates these workers. Also, since the employer-employee relationship is not protected by a legal contract and neither is there any official documentation of potential employers and employees, it remains doubtful as to how would these employers and employees be identified who interact in personal spaces. This keeps alive the vulnerability of domestic workers with no vivid picture as to how this act will unfold for them.

According to Minimum Wages Act (1948), article 11 of the Convention mandates national laws to incorporate domestic workers within the prevailing legislations of minimum wages in respective member nations. The modalities of the payment of the remuneration have also been enlisted in the convention, precisely to be direct and in the form of cash. Until August, 2019 minimum wages in India were protected by the Minimum Wages Act. It was a labour welfare legislation in order to ensure a minimum wage to the workers of unorganized sector and prevent their exploitation by paying unduly low wages. The Act empowered the appropriate government to fix and revise the statutory rates of minimum wages for scheduled employments at regular intervals. Domestic workers were not included in the central list of scheduled employment under the act. However, India being a Federal, with labour in the concurrent list, the state governments could frame labour laws and

could extend provisions of the same to categories of employment which were not included at the central level. This mechanism changed considerably when the government floated the idea of four labour codes in August 2017 in the Lok Sabha to amalgamate 44 labour laws previously existent.

### **2.3.3 Feminisation of Domestic Work**

ILO (2021) highlights that women continue to make up the majority of the domestic work sector (76.2 per cent), which accounts for 4.5 per cent of female employment worldwide, or 8.8 per cent of female employees. Domestic workers represent one third of female employment in the Arab States and 11.3 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean. Expressed as a percentage of employees, these figures amount to 34.6 per cent and 17.8 per cent, respectively. In contrast, domestic workers represent just 1.6 per cent of women in employment in Europe and Central Asia.

Gothoskar (2013) ascertains that domestic work is also highly invisibilised and undervalued sector of work because of the associations between domestic work and reproductive labour and its performance by poor women.

WIEGO (2012) identifies at least 37,000 domestic workers working in and around Mozambique's capital (INE 2007). They are young and old, urban residents and rural migrants, high school graduates and illiterate workers, both female and male—but mostly female. They work in the homes of millionaires and minimum wage workers, Mozambicans and expatriates, in upper class neighbourhoods and working-class suburbs. Rooted in the colonial era, domestic work has become a hallmark of urban living in Mozambique.

ITUC (2010) highlights that there are 100 million people engaging in domestic works. Domestic work and domestic workers have existed for centuries; however, since few decades ago the demand for domestic work has increasing sharply everywhere. The recent massive incorporation of women into the labour force, the ageing of societies, the intensification of work and the problems in balancing family life and work life underpin the present trend. As so, working

women and their families increasingly rely on domestic workers as confirmed by the I.L.O.

Burrow (2010) proclaimed that domestic workers were almost always women, often migrants and children and despite the fact that it is one of the oldest and most important occupations for millions of women around the world, domestic work is undervalued and, in many countries, falls outside the scope of labour legislation. She notified that domestic workers have no guarantee of a minimum wage or social protection and their rights to form and join a trade union and to bargain in a collective way are violated. And as a result, many of them are overworked, underpaid, and cases of maltreatment and abuse, especially of live-in and migrant domestic workers, are countless.

Neetha (2009) recognize that the trend of domestic work in India is a highly feminized sector of work, and there has been a phenomenal increase in the number and proportion of women in paid domestic service over the decades particularly during the year 1999-2000 and 2004-2005, but the more recent estimates shown a downward trend.

National Commission for Enterprises in the Un-organized Sector (NCEUS), 2007 view domestic work to be the destiny of significantly huge number of women workers in India who seek employment opportunities in urban sector, often rendering an invisible workforce who are not paid well, and deprived of rights to ensure decency in work. Reflecting on indecent working and living condition of women domestic workers, National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector views: “Working in the unregulated domain of a private home, mostly without the protection of national labour legislation, allows for female domestic workers to be maltreated by their employers with impunity. Women are often subjected to long working hours and excessively arduous tasks. They may be strictly confined to their places of work. The domestic workforce is excluded from labour laws that look after important employment-related issues such as conditions of work, wages, social security, provident funds, old age pensions, and maternity leave.”

Romero (2002) argued that, Marxist feminism provides a helpful insights for investigating domestic work “as an occupation located within the class structure of a particular historical situation as part of the societal reproduction system” (emphasizing labour relationships, and that race and gender oppression is not intrinsic to the occupation; the occupation is part of capitalism; domestic work involves physical and ideological reproduction; reproductive labour is devalued because of social divisions of labour; and housewives and domestic workers are both part of the reserve army of the unemployed and thus serve a vital function in the capitalist economy.

According to Shramshakti report (1989), there were at that time 16.8 lakh female domestic workers in the country whereas the presence of male domestic workers was negligible (Bhatt, 1989) and the same scenario is also observed in Kolkata.

Grande and Kerr (1998) found out that almost all type of labour can be classified as either productive or reproductive. Domestic work has long been considered to be natural women’s work and fall under the category of reproductive labour. They argued because domestic work is considered to be natural women’s work and non-productive labour, it is deemed to be unskilled and of low-status and thus finally deserving low wages.

Banerjee (1985) views that domestic works has been chosen because of the overwhelming majority of domestic workers are women who are socially and politically construed to provide a wage substitute for unused labour, which has been traditionally considered as women's work

#### **2.3.4 Poor Bargaining Power**

Vimala (2016) has viewed that the workers in unorganized sector remain unprotected by law. They are the most vulnerable section of the society and they enjoy no job or income security with little bargaining power. The unorganized sector is divided in to institutionalized and non- institutionalized sectors. The non-institutionalized unorganized sector comprises workers doing casual work like domestic workers, sweepers, scavengers etc. A key factor in the growth of informal

activity in most developing regions has been the plummeting value of wages. The informal sector has not only offered the possibility of work to the unemployed, but has permitted survival of many households with wage earners. Some division of labour exists between formal and informal sectors on the basis of gender. It has been suggested that women tend to stay within the informal sector because of the flexibility of working arrangements and diversity of opportunities.

Mehrotra (2008) identifies numerous cases evolve nowadays where workers are treated very well but it is entirely at the discretion of the employers.

Deshingkar and Akter (2008) documented there is the fastest growth rate of migration in India which has resulted in the increase of women domestic workers.

Kaur (2006) found out those women domestic workers do not have an organized performance of social network and find it difficult in challenging the authority of the employer.

Raghuram (2001) examine that there are very few advocates for the rights of domestic workers. They also have limited employment opportunities. The family history of the women domestic workers can also be trace from their employability point of view. The wages were not based on 'need-based formula'.

### **2.3.5 Social Insecurity**

ILO (2021) highlights that globally, almost half of all domestic workers are legally covered by at least one branch of social security. Levels of social security coverage vary according to the branch concerned. The most common branch of social security to be provided by law for domestic workers is pension coverage (provided by 50 per cent of countries reviewed in 2020). The remarkable landmark was made on June 16, 2011, where all the ILO members – governments, trade unions, and employers' associations – voted over-whelming to adopt the ILO Convention on Decent Work for Domestic Workers (Domestic Workers Convention, No. 189). This ground-breaking treaty establishes the first global standards for domestic workers mentioned as the domestic workers are entitled to the same basic rights as those available to other workers, including weekly days off, limits to hours of work, minimum wage coverage, over- time compensation, social security, and clear information on the terms and conditions of employment.

The new standards oblige governments that ratify to protect domestic workers from violence and abuse, to regulate private employment agencies that recruit and employ domestic workers, and to prevent child labour in domestic work. Following the convention, dozens of countries have taken action to strengthen protections for domestic workers. It is noteworthy that the Government of India extended the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) health insurance scheme to domestic workers since May 2012, and included domestic workers in a new law prohibiting sexual harassment at workplace since then 2013.

Kundu (2008) proclaimed that since 2006 the Government of India imposed an amendment to the existing Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act (1984) prohibiting the employment of children under 14 years as domestic servants or in roadside cafeterias (dhabas), teashops, hotels, and in other unorganised sectors.

Kantor et al., (2006) highlights the caste and social stratification which have induced the probability of individuals to enter domestic work. The domestic workers have very limited access to larger social networks. So, there is a need to sustain and support organizations for domestic workers to improve their bargaining power. Therefore, organizing domestic workers is fundamental to finding solutions to the various problems faced by domestic workers. The lack of legal status, fear of loss of employment, fear of deportation if migrants, the inviolable privacy of households, the scattered nature of employment, long working hours and having more than one employer are some of the common factors that make domestic workers often hesitant to speak up publicly and demonstrate.

Gothoskar (2005) identifies domestic work as traditionally grey area in Indian labour legislation. A 'Domestic Workers (Condition of Services) Bill' was introduced as early as 1959, but it has yet to become law. For years, civil society organisations, most notably the National Domestic Workers Movement, have called for national legislation to regulate domestic workers' rights, as well as for the inclusion of domestic workers under the Minimum Wages Act (1948) and the Unorganized Workers' Social Security Bill (2008).

Neetha (2004) found out the women domestic workers do not receive adequate wages and live under difficult circumstances and they are not able to save money for

their old age. Moreover, they are not entitled to any old-age pensions, gratuity or bonus. Above all, they have no medical insurance and all expenses of illness, hospitalization of self and family are borne by the worker.

Baruah (2004) showed that the new convention is likely to increase the pressure for the Indian government to enact national legislation on domestic workers' rights. Since the overwhelming majority of workers in India are in the informal sector and the needs of informal sector workers, women workers in particular, have been overlooked by the conservative practices of labour organisations and trade unions. However, several domestic workers' organizations have been established in past decades and amongst which the most notable was the Mumbai-based National Domestic Workers Movement. Further, there are several organisations of women in the informal sector or 'self-employed' women in India and in South Asia more broadly, which have fought hard to gain recognition, and to organise workers. Among the most well-known are the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and the Working Women's Forum (WWF).

Bajbaj (2003) highlights several policy initiatives, national plans and programmes directly or indirectly related to child work, such as the National Policy for Children (1974), the National Policy on Education (1986), and the National Policy for Child Labour (1987) also exist. The annual conference of International Labour Organisation adopted the 'Convention on Domestic Workers' in June 2011 and an international treaty that binds the member states that ratify it.

Brass (1997) reported that in spite of the absence of national legislation, the state-level regulation has been enacted, at least in Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, manifesting the nature of the multi-level and complex federal political system as '*...when I discussed the question of regulation of domestic work with Rajasthan government officials during my last field work period in 2007, there were no signs of regulating the sector.....*'. At the same time, civil society organizations in Jaipur had begun lobbying for such regulation. In line with similar developments in other parts of the country, the Chief Minister of Rajasthan state proposed legislation for the safety of domestic workers as 'Domestic Workers Security Act', in 2010.



Burra (1995) mention that the Maharashtra state has adopted a Domestic Workers' Welfare Board Bill in 2009, the Unorganised Sector Bill (2008) in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar; in the Minimum Wages Act in Karnataka (2004), and in Andhra Pradesh (2007); and in Tamil Nadu the Government has established a Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers Welfare Board in 2007 under section 6 of the Tamil Nadu Manual workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Work) Act 1982. Preliminary notification for Minimum Wage Act for Domestic Workers was passed by the Rajasthan Government on 4th July 2007. Child labour legislation has a longer history than this: the issue of the minimum age was raised in the Legislative Assembly of British India in 1921.

Whereas, Sr. Jeanne Devos in 1985 began working with women and children in the Dindugal district of Tamil Nadu, which subsequently led to the launch of the National Domestic Workers Movement (NDWM). Within a few years the movement was rooted in several large states, especially in Southern India resulted to the inclusion of domestic work in the schedule of the Tamil Nadu Manual Labour Act 1982 on 1st June, 1999. This was the first instance of legal recognition of domestic workers as workers in India. In continuance of their efforts, the Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers Welfare Board (TNDWWB) was constituted in January, 2007 under the Tamil Nadu Manual Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Work) Act 1982. The striving of domestic workers for attainment of legal recognition received a huge boost in July 2011 with the codification of ILO Convention 189 that gave international recognition to domestic work as decent work with rights on par with all other forms of labour.

### **2.3.6 Migration and Women Domestic Workers**

The unorganized workforce of India including female domestic work is increasing day by day. The main push factors encircle around lack of education and low education level, unemployment or lack of employment opportunities and lack of other vocational skills to opt other than domestic work. Further, at the family level the remittance out of female domestic work is also meant to build a house, purchase land, pay off debts, pay for education-related cause for their children, pay for the care

of sick, unemployed or elderly relatives, provide dowries for themselves or their children, meet their families' daily needs for food and clothing. In addition it is used as a mode to escape from an abusive spouse and to also replace family resources depleted by an alcoholic husband and purchase necessary equipment for micro-enterprises that they planned to launch.

Therefore, the inter linkage between domestic work and migration is seen and abuse is also equally obvious and visualized. Migration however, in India is mostly influenced by social structures and the pattern of development and which above all the development policies implemented by the governments accelerated the process of migration. Hence, the uneven distribution of development could be the main cause of migration. Added to it, are the development disparities, inter-regional variations and differences in socio-economic classes and background. On the other hand, over a time, domestic service is becoming more and more feminized. It is due to the fact on lower social status attached to domestic work, migrant workers are found to dominate the activity, especially in cities, who are mostly first or second generation migrants.

ILO (2010) identifies the increasing demand for domestic workers are witness in the regular flow of domestic helps from particular pockets out of migration. The lack of any former skill and training requirement and the flexibility in employment are some of the factors, which ensure a regular and increasing inflow of domestic workers. The increasing rate of migrant population is 167 million persons to 315 million in 1971 census and 2001 census respectively. Also, nearly 20 million people migrated to other states within the country seeking for livelihood (census of India, 1991). The scenario highlighted that of the total domestic workers in India in 2009- 10, more than 2/3 lived in urban India and amongst which 57 % of them are women Besides, a large scale rural-urban migration takes place from the states of Bihar, Odisha, Jharkhand, Assam, Mizoram and Chhattisgarh etc. to the metro cities like Delhi, Mumbai and other large cities (Social Alert, 2005).

Chandrashekhara and Ghosh (2007) mention that researches have highlighted the urban-rural work force participation of women in India and noticed the gradual

increasing trend in participation in urban women workforce participation as compared to rural women workforce participation. Further, the estimated distribution of interstate migrants shows that out of the 80 million persons interstate migrants' 20 million migrants are domestic workers (Census of India, 2011).

Reddy (1986) found out that due to feminisation of domestic work, women migrants are found to be more vulnerable to human rights abuses since they work in gender-segregated and unregulated sectors of the economy, such as in domestic work, entertainment and sex industry, unprotected by labour legislation or policy. Some occasions they are exposed to forced labour, precarious working conditions, poorly paid job, discrimination and sexual exploitation, suffer poorer health. Migrant women often engage in unskilled and most poorly paid jobs, which have been deserted by national women. Because of the unregulated nature of domestic work, they often face a lot of problems at the destination. In most of the cases they have to work long hours, sometimes more than 15 hours a day (INSTRAW and IOM, 2000) and forced to do extra work. In addition, abuse and discrimination arising out of their immigration status, national origin and their lower status jobs, and to which domestic workers are more frequently victims of violence, including sexual assault at the work place.

Schwenken (2005) have identified that undocumented migrant women face various barriers to organize themselves. The lack of a legal status makes them often hesitant to speak up publicly and demonstrate because of the fear of deportation. Private households in which women work are scattered in different city areas, most domestic workers have long working hours, more than one job or are live-ins. This makes it difficult to exchange experiences, come together and find time for joint social and political activities.

Shinozaki (2004) demonstrate on the micro level in how far migrant domestic workers manage to turn hierarchies upside down and develop certain transnational, gendered or religious identities in order to cope with their situations and restructure power relations towards their employers and other domestic workers. For example, domestic workers might identify with the high social status of their employers and

use it to draw a line between themselves and domestic workers working for employers with a lower social status.

Locher (2002) talks about three main factors that gave rise to the emergence of trafficking as a subject of discussion and the adoption of joint EU-policies on combating it: the existence of a feminist advocacy-network, a norm reactivation against trafficking and the opening of the political opportunity structure. The norm against trafficking in women has historic precursors. Since 1902 the international community has ratified international agreements against the trafficking of girls and women.

### **2.3.7 Sex Work, Emotional Labour and Domestic Work**

Branco (2012) in WIEGO has given one story from domestic worker which tells “When I got sick, my employer allowed me to take time off to go to the hospital but expected me to come back to work afterwards. He clearly didn’t treat me like I was sick. I did not challenge him direct Instead I pretended that I’d gotten confused and gone straight home.”

Svensson (2018) discuss how the girls are rebuked by their employers verbally and meted out corporal punishment such as hitting or slapping in response to what the girls themselves often perceived as trivial offenses. Findings also indicate that some girls thought they served as targets for household members’ pent-up anger. Commonly participants reported sexual harassment and two participants reported rape. Live-out workers, in particular, discussed sexual harassment from community members during their commute to work. Participants also frequently reported that they were asked to give massages to male members of the household. Studies have repeatedly noted that the risk of sexual abuses are substantial among youth in domestic work because their labour takes place in a private sphere where violations often go unseen and victims have little protection or recourse.

Alfers (2011) has identified one case of woman that says “*I was once employed by a certain employer in Iringa Region for about 3 years...I had a serious problem of sexual harassment where the father and son tried to force me to have love affairs with them, but I disagreed! What I did, I decided to tell the neighbour. The neighbour told me that it was better to run away; she assisted me to find a job with*

*her relative. This was very risky to me as I decided to run away without even telling my parents who are living in rural Iringa...I am no longer working with that employer. The bad thing is that my parents still think I am working in Iringa, since I cannot communicate with them.”*

Warrington (2001) mention that home is a site where power relations are played out; it often falls short of its idealized construction as a place of safety and support, and instead becomes a place of spatial restriction, abuse and violence.

Steinberg and Figart(1999) in fact found out that the paradoxes of home space for women in general are intensified for the domestic worker as she seeks to negotiate daily the blurring of productive and reproductive spaces and roles of her everyday life as someone paid to perform emotional labour not her own reflecting relational rather than the task-based.

Allan and Crow (1989) found out live-in transnational domestic workers, as foreign ‘others’ in their employers’ homes, are among the most tentative and least powerful members in a household, and hence among the most vulnerable in this power play. For these women, the private – and certainly the public – world certainly ‘do not begin and end at the front door’.

### **2.3.8 Caste, race and domestic work**

Tolla (2013) also mention that abuse was sometimes in the form of food deprivation. They also found that women experienced verbal abuse (such as being shouted at or humiliated) as well as reports of physical abuse the gender, race and inequalities that characterize domestic work create an environment in which there is great potential for abuse.

Valhmu et al., (2009) mentions the employer’s power over the domestic worker, due to class and race, creates a situation prevalent for abuse. In addition, many women work in cities or countries far away from home. As a result they often accept living with their employers in spite of the risk of abuse and the lack of support if abuse happens. The study also found that the lives of domestic workers are characterized by abuse in the workplace.

Cock (1981) ascertains that because of their position on the social hierarchy, most female domestic workers are victims of gender, class and racial oppression. Some studies have found that, in the course of their work, domestic workers sometimes experience violence from their employers. This is because of the power dynamics that exist between the worker and her employer.

### **2.3.9 Vulnerabilities of Women Domestic workers**

Svensson (2018) is concerning about the legal protection of domestic workers. In the study conducted by Svensson, it is mentioned that domestic workers may have legal protection via their inclusion in the ‘Unorganised Workers’ Social Security Act, 2008’ and are now recognized as workers and included in the labour law. Domestic workers are covered if they are within the legal working age and ‘self-employed,’ ‘home-based’ or working for an hourly payment. They have also been included in the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act (2013). Even prior to the adoption of the ILO’s Domestic Workers Convention (C189), India’s Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) convened a Task Force on Domestic Workers in 2009, which submitted a draft National Policy that defines the domestic worker, the employer and the clear-cut terms of employment. It recommends providing wage and social security protection to domestic workers, starting with the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) national health insurance scheme, under which domestic workers can also be included since 2012.

In addition, Bolton (2007) argues that vulnerability should be seen in the light of the core issues of pay, equity, security and dignity, and how they impact upon the lives of workers. The British Trade Union Congress defines vulnerable employment as “precarious work that places people at risk of continuing poverty and injustice resulting from an imbalance of power in the employer-worker relationship”. However, it is argued that when vulnerability is defined in narrow terms, the tendency is to look only at symptoms and characteristics associated with ‘risks’ of vulnerability, bypassing the underlying causes of the risks (ibid). Such an approach may narrow vulnerability to a condition which pertains only after exploitation has already taken place. This would imply that to be vulnerable a worker is already a

victim of abuse, and unlimited managerial power is only problematic if it amounts to exploitation. Pollert and Charlwood suggest that a definition of vulnerability should be based on a diagnosis of the power imbalance inherent in the employment relationship, which means that “the basis of vulnerability is in the fundamental asymmetry of the capitalist employment relationship between the individual worker and the employer”.

Saunders (2003) points out that labour market vulnerability includes issues such as lack of appropriate employment legislation, difficulties in accessing labour rights even on legislated work situations, lack of access to non-statutory benefits, lack of pension schemes, very low salaries, and lack of stable employment.

Moors (2003) notes that according to Anti-Slavery International, domestic work is particularly vulnerable to forms of slavery such as forced labour, trafficking, and bonded labour due to the unique and specific circumstances of their work inside a private household, combined with a lack of legal protection. The structural vulnerability of domestic workers around the world has been well documented. In a synthesis of their conditions, employers’ ways of dealing with domestic workers range from harsh domination to more subtle forms of discipline, and various forms may coexist and compete. In transnational contexts, women’s immigration status and whether or not they live with their employers have a major impact with undocumented live-in domestic workers in a particularly vulnerable position (ibid).

Neetha (2003) tries to conceptualize the vulnerability of migrant domestic workers in Delhi and globally, domestic workers have been perceived as particularly vulnerable since the profession differs from other occupations because of its individualized relationships, its unorganized labour force, the fact that it is based on more personal relationships, and because work is geographically scattered amongst private homes.

Romero (2002) explains that paid domestic labour is not only structured around gender but also is stratified by race and citizenship status, relegating the most vulnerable workers to the least favourable working conditions and placing the most privileged workers in the best positions.

### **2.3.10 Impacts of Covid-19 Pandemic on Domestic Workers**

Domestic workers are among those worst hits by the consequences of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. More domestic workers than other employees have lost their jobs or are seeing a dramatic reduction in working hours and correspondingly lower wages. To date, job losses have been higher among domestic workers in informal employment than those observed for all domestic workers and systematically higher than for other employees. Live-in migrant domestic workers are facing especially extreme scenarios. Despite providing essential services for clients who are often vulnerable, domestic workers frequently do not have adequate access to personal protective equipment (PPE). Informal domestic workers are the least likely to have access to income support or other emergency measures adopted to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

ILO (2021) reported that domestic workers have been much more likely to lose their jobs in the pandemic, compared to other employees and other workers. The decrease in the total amount of wages received by domestic workers has been from 1.5 times to five times greater than that experienced by other employees. Again, the drop in the number of hours is more pronounced for domestic workers than for other employees; however, the difference is smaller for working hours than for job losses. As a result, the decrease in the total amount of wages received by domestic workers has been from 1.5 times to five times greater than that experienced by other employees. While some governments, as well as employers' and workers' organizations, have taken measures to protect domestic workers from the pandemic, in reality their situation remains highly precarious.

While employment levels remained high through 2019, recent evidence suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic has had severe and disproportionate impacts on employment in domestic work. As a large part of the care workforce, domestic workers provide essential services to households; yet they are at high risk of losing their jobs on account of their informal status and lack of employment protection and sometimes because of strict confinement measures (ILO 2020a). Job losses in domestic work tend to be among the highest of all sectors: in Costa Rica, between April and June 2020, domestic work was among the top five most-affected sectors,



with 46 per cent of jobs lost, while 48 per cent of domestic workers lost their jobs in Chile.

Majithia et al., (2020) proclaimed that informal workers in Delhi were hit hard by the lockdown restrictions imposed on the nation in March 2020. With no means of earning incomes, many were unable to continue paying rent or obtaining food. Exacerbated by a lack of public transport, this “triggered a humanitarian crisis never witnessed before in modern India, as men, women and children started walking hundreds of miles back to their villages”.

Babu and Bhandari (2020) found out that domestic workers in Delhi were not spared in this disaster. It has been estimated that 80 to 90 per cent of domestic workers in Delhi have lost their jobs.

Ghosh and Bilkhu (2020) in their study “Impact of COVID 19 National Lockdown on Women Domestic Workers in Delhi” conducted by the Institute of Social Studies Trust (ISST) found that 54 per cent of domestic workers in Delhi were unable to collect their salaries in March 2020 due to mobility restrictions, with a further 14 per cent not collecting wages due to fear of contracting the virus, and over 10 per cent having their wages withheld by employers. Consequently, an emergency 5kg ration could be accessed through e-coupons for those without the required identity documents. This has helped some migrant domestic workers to access the emergency food rations, but domestic worker organizations have pointed out that a lack of smartphones, data services, a long process for the filing of the e-coupons, and the need to print the e-coupon have become a major barrier to access.

#### **2.4 Coping Strategies and Social Support adopted by Women Domestic Workers**

Anyikwa et al., (2015) proclaimed that when facing different forms of work-related and personal problems and challenges, migrants’ decision to seek help and of the forms of help to seek depend on a number of personal and interpersonal characteristics and traits, including gender, race, economic status, migration status, access to information, and level of social inclusion.

Ullman and Filipas (2001) found that ethnic minority women, including migrant women, were more likely to report negative experiences of seeking help from police and to experience negative social reactions such as racial stereotyping and discrimination and victim blaming.

Tempbongko (2000) points out that many domestic helpers have a sister or a cousin already in domestic service and such family ties are maintained on Sundays. For immigrant foreign domestic workers, friends and support systems usually come from relatives who are part of their family of origin and the greater the contact with relatives the less the likelihood of depression.

Hall et al.,(1994) found that social support becomes of paramount importance when women have left familiar and established patterns to go to unfamiliar environments particularly those in which they feel emotionally unprepared.

Schumaker and Brownall (1984) has defined social support as an exchange of resources between at least two individuals perceived by the providers or recipients to be intended to enhance the well-being of the recipient.

Sarason et al., (1983) reported that individuals with a sizeable social support network are found to have more control over positive events, have a positive self-concept, below in anxiety levels and have a belief in their own ability to control aspects of their environment.

Lipman and Longino (1982)studied that scholars usually differentiate help seeking into two dimensions: formal and informal sources of support. Ullman & Filipas (2001) has also differentiated formal and informal source of support. They have given that formal source of support refers to services that function under bureaucratic structures and agency; while informal source of support refers to individual social networks, such as family and friends. Informal support could be sought in everyday living due to the source of support's proximity to the one who seeks help. Thus, the response could be more spontaneous and unique to the person's situation. Rather than focusing on problem solving, informal support tends to provide affective and emotional support non-judgmentally.

Lin et al., (1979) also found out that absence of social support has been associated with poor health outcomes.

Gourash (1978) defined help seeking behaviour as a coping strategy aiming at getting support, advice, or assistance in times of stress, which could range from just discussing the problem and situation to requesting specific aid.

## **2.5 Social Policy and Social Work Interventions**

Palriwala and Neetha(2011) proclaimed that the state and existing laws and legal concepts in India are unable to, or refuse to, deal with the specific nature of domestic workers, their workplaces, and their employment relations. The non-recognition of the home as a work place is identified as a critical factor connected to the invisibility and devaluation of care and unpaid domestic work as well as much of women's work in India.

### **2.5.1 Social Policy**

Darcy Du Toit (2013) has mentioned that in November 2006, at a conference held in Amsterdam under the banner 'Respect and Rights: Protection for Domestic/Household Workers!', a campaign was launched to promote the organization of domestic workers and advance their interests. From the start it attracted widespread support internationally, not only from domestic workers' organizations but also from trade union federations, non-governmental organizations and researchers, leading to the adoption of Convention 189 Concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in June 2011. On 7 June 2013 South Africa became the eighth country to ratify the Convention, with effect from 20 June 2013.

Neetha and Palriwala (2011) have studied that in 1972 and 1977, two "private member" bills - the 1972 Domestic Workers (Conditions of Service) Bill and the 1977 Domestic Workers (Conditions of Service) Bill were introduced in the Lok Sabha. These bills would have brought domestic workers under the purview of the Industrial Disputes Act, but they too were allowed to lapse. The government ignored the 1974 recommendations of its own Committee on the Status of Women in India on the need to regulate the conditions of domestic workers. The recommendation of the statutory National Commission on Self-Employed Women and Women in the Informal Sector in 1988 to establish a system of registration for domestic workers, a minimum wage, and legislation to regulate conditions of employment, social security

and security of employment met with the same treatment. The House Workers (Conditions of Service) Bill, which was formulated in 1989, was not enacted either. This bill envisaged that every employer would have to contribute to a House Workers' Welfare Fund. Following lobbying by scholars and activists, there has been a growing recognition of the significance of paid domestic work in female employment, and the category "private households with employed persons" was included in the last two rounds on employment and unemployment in the National Sample Survey (1999–2000 and 2004–05).

Armacost (1994) has studied that women domestic workers across the globe have undergone different challenges in respect to their working and living conditions and has attain social support and how they cope with these challenges. However, from the review of literature, it is found out that: Domestic workers are largely absent from state policy in India, be it in labour laws or social policy. This is despite their long presence and the phenomenal growth of paid, domestic work over the last decade or more. A brief look at the spate of labour legislation in the years immediately following independence shows governmental resistance—active or through neglect—to regulating this sector. As early as 1959, a Domestic Workers (Conditions of Service) Bill was moved in the Rajya Sabha<sup>1</sup> as a "private member's" bill, but it was never enacted. This bill as well as the All India Domestic Servants Bill, which was introduced in the Lok Sabha, included clauses for minimum wages, maximum hours of work, a weekly day of rest, fifteen days paid leave annually, casual leave, and the maintenance of a register of domestic workers by the local police.

Banerjee (1982) have studied that during the 1970s, desertion and widowhood were a major factor in women taking to domestic service, such that they tended to be older and were often the heads of their households.

### **2.5.2 Social Work Intervention**

Social workers are an integral provider in the statutory support offered to women experiencing different issues and challenges.

Department of Health (2010) has mention that the role of the social worker is complex, incorporating providing support to families and safeguarding vulnerable members of society. Social workers should work with women and their families, seeking to provide individualized care dependent upon their needs.

Dominelli (2002) envisage that enabling women to tell their own stories and describe their experiences is integral to feminist ways of conducting research. It is suggested that NGOs and other organizations can play a vital role through campaigning and active participation by creating awareness amongst these women workers and unionism and cooperatives would yield results as far as struggle for better wages and working conditions are concerned. Social work is at the 'cutting edge' for the provision of support for women experiencing domestic work. A profession with a statutory mandate to support the welfare of women domestic workers, social work can benefit from a critical analysis concerning the treatment provided to victims of domestic work. There are vast research studies on the hazardous working and living conditions of women domestic workers, decent work and minimum wage of domestic workers, concern of domestic workers as workers and their need to be covered under protective legislation. However, studies on the children of domestic workers are limited in Mizoram as they are highly vulnerable to child labour especially in the arena of child in domestic work which is a real indication to existence of modern slavery. The stress generated out of the service of domestic work has to be intervene from a strength-based perspective and following the social work value of self-determination, to help the women domestic workers reach the best decision.

In the words of Davis & Lockhart (2010), a cornerstone of professional practice in both professional social work and the violence in domestic work field is the concept of empowerment practice. Within the domestic work field, empowerment practice is addressed first as a strategy to assist individual women to take control of their lives and second, as a strategy for acting against challenges of women domestic work in certain communities.

According to the Department of Health (2010), social workers should work with women domestic workers and their families to provide individualised care dependent upon their needs. However, there is limitation of care on occupational

safety and health like chemical, ergonomic, physical, psychosocial and biological hazard.

Goulding and Duggal (2011) mention that studies on the impartment of literacy programmes for domestic workers would be significantly important to make fit them in the contemporary period since it has been studied that majority of domestic workers are illiterate and have low educational studies. Contemporary policies recognize the connection and the need for skill development between women domestic workers and their children, with current commissioning of services recognizing the connection between the women domestic worker and children.

Belknap (2007) mentioned that feminist standpoint theory begins with the idea that less powerful members of society experience a different reality as a consequence of their oppression. It is built on the premise that women domestic workers can access knowledge unavailable to the socially privileged. Research undertaken from this perspective thus is political in the sense that it is committed to social action on behalf of the socially oppressed classes. Therefore, social workers can intervene in the limited studies on sensitization of employers' regarding their worker's rights.

Dominelli (2002) suggests, talking to women domestic work clients about their encounters with social work professionals about their work helps develop insights about social work practice and education. Therefore, exploring the women's stories in terms of their interaction in the working and living conditions of women domestic workers in this context, gives them 'voice' as they describe their encounters with social workers. Therefore, studies on the domestic workers sector skill and skilled training programmes to provide high-grade and quality service to the employers is very essential in order to make their voice heard.

Hague (2000) believes that women survivors on the abuse of domestic work can be an excellent resource for engaging in decent work for domestic work advocacy for the development of service provision and policy development. However, the domestic work survival forum or union is limited to provide the service they need. The studies show that there is no data based information on domestic workers in Mizoram and there are few studies available on the issues and challenges faced by women domestic workers in northeast India. Moreover, documentation,

report and research studies on the working and living conditions of domestic workers is limited in northeast India.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the overall research methodology employed in the study. This chapter is divided into different sections which include the brief profile of the study area, brief information on the living and working conditions of women domestic workers in Aizawl, the methodology, objectives and the limitations of the study.

#### 3.1 The Setting of the Study Area

The setting of the study presents a brief discourse about the state of Mizoram and is concern primarily with Aizawl city and Lunglei town.

##### 3.1.1 State of Mizoram

Mizoram state is located in north-eastern India, and Aizawl city is the state capital. The name of the state is derived from "*Mizo*", the self-described name of the native inhabitants, and "Ram", which in the Mizo language means "land." Thus "Mizo-ram" means "land of the Mizos". Within India's northeast region, it is the southernmost landlocked state, sharing borders with three of the Seven Sister States, namely Tripura, Assam and Manipur. The state also shares an international border of 722-kilometre (449 mi) border with the neighbouring countries of Bangladesh and Myanmar. Mizoram has a population of 1,091,014(per2011 census). It is the 2nd least populous state in India.

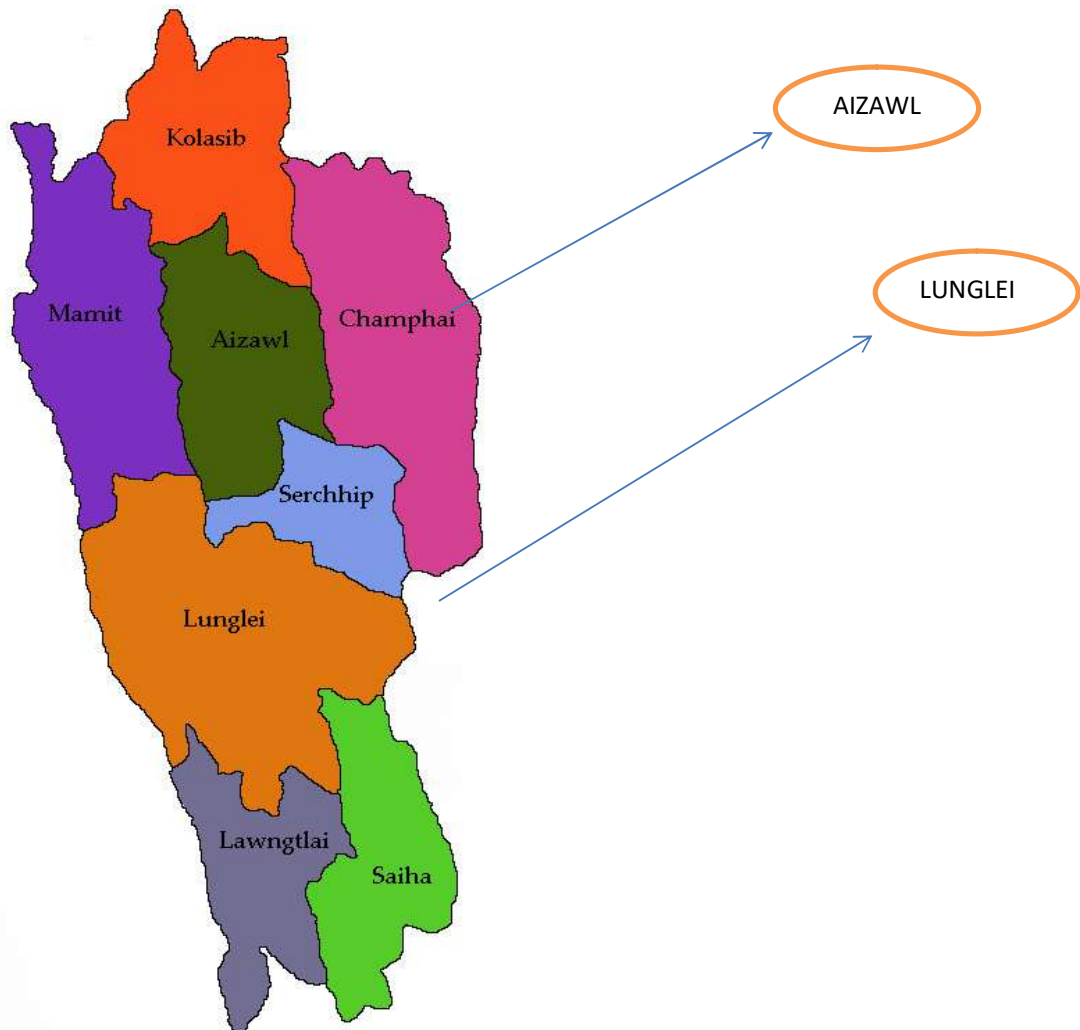
The profile of Mizoram indicates that about 95% of Mizoram's population descends from a diverse tribal origin. Mizos first began to settle the area in the 16th century, coming in waves of immigration from Southeast Asia. This immigration lasted through the 18th century. Among all of the states of India, Mizoram has the highest concentration of 'tribal people'. The Mizoram people are currently protected under the Indian constitution as a Scheduled Tribe. Mizoram is one of three states of India with a Christian majority of 87%. The domain people belong to various



Christian denominations as commonly Presbyterian denomination in the north and Baptist denomination in the south.

Mizoram is a highly literate agrarian economy. Slash-and-burn *jhum*, or shifting cultivation, is the most common form of farming, though it gives poor crop yields. In recent years, the *jhum* farming practices are steadily being replaced with a significant horticulture and bamboo products industry. The state's gross state domestic product for 2012 was estimated at 69.91 billion (US\$930 million) while about 20% of Mizoram's population lives below the poverty line(BPL), with 35% rural poverty as of 2014. The state has about 871 kilometres of national highways, with NH-54 and NH-150 connecting it to Assam and Manipur respectively. It is also a growing transit point for trade with Myanmar and Bangladesh (Census, 2011).

**Figure 1.2 Map of Mizoram**



**3.1.2 Aizawl City** - Aizawl is the capital of the state of Mizoram in India. Aizawl is officially established on 25 February 1890 with a population of 293,416. It is the largest city in the state and it is the capital of the state. It is also the centre of administration containing all the important government offices, state assembly house and civil secretariat. The population of Aizawl strongly reflects the different communities of the ethnic Mizo people. As of the 2011 Census of India, Aizawl city had a population of 293,416, and 50.61% of the entire population comprise of females and 49.39% are males. Mizos from various tribes make up the majority of the population. Christianity forms majority of the city population about 93.63%. Other minority religions are Hinduism 4.14, Islam 1.52, Buddhism 0.45,

Others 0.09%, Sikhism 0.03% and Jainism 0.02%. 0.11% peoples did not state their religion. Presbyterians make up the majority of the population ( Census, 2011). However, there are also significant numbers of the Salvation Army, Baptists, Seventh-day Adventists, United Pentecostal Church and Roman Catholics in the city. There are also some cultural based Christian sects. Hinduism and Islam are also represented in very small numbers in the city population.

**3.1.3 Lunglei Town - Lunglei** is a town, situated in the south-central part of Mizoram state. Lunglei, literally meaning '*bridge of rock*' got its name from a bridge like rock found in the riverine area around '*Nghasih*' - a small tributary of Tlawng is the longest river in Mizoram . It is the largest town after the capital, Aizawl, located in 165 km (102 miles) south of Aizawl.

Lunglei is one of the prominent districts of Mizoram encompassing a total area of 4,538 square kilometres (1,752 sq mi). It has a population of 137,155(Census, 2011). The district of Lunglei is 235 kilometres (146 mi) from Aizawl, the capital of Mizoram and is easily accessible by well-maintained roads. The district is bounded on the north by Mamit district and Aizawl district at the north and Bangladesh at the south and Lawngtlai district, on the southeast by Siaha district, on the east by Myanmar and on the northeast by Champhai district. As of the 2011 Census of India, Lunglei had a population of 57,011. Males constitute 52% of the population and females 48%. Lunglei has an average literacy rate of 84%, higher than the national average of 59.5%: male literacy is 84%, and female literacy is 83%. In Lunglei, 14% of the population is under 6 years of age.

#### **3.1.4 Ferrando Domestic Workers' Alliance (FDWA)**

FDWA is a faith-based organisation run by the Catholic Church of Mizoram diocese whereby it has been funded by Centre for Development Initiatives (CDI) where the main headquarters is in Guwahati. CDI have implemented the project "Formation of domestic workers union structures in 6 North East Indian Federal States" in 12 cities of India for the past 11years. The project gained a momentum of organising more than 21,000 domestic workers with 534 groups being formed (2015-2019).

The domestic workers were getting empowered and becoming self-reliant to support themselves and their families. Children of domestic workers had been organised and formed into clubs to mainstream them to normal schools and grow up like any other children. More than 3630 were mobilised and 265 clubs formed through various interventions. The main purpose of FIWDC is empowerment of women domestic workers for their rights promotion within the legal, social and political framework. It also tries to enhance the domestic workers integration into social security system, skills upgradation and improvement of their socio-economic condition. The FIWDC Project is targeting the domestic workers in Mizoram.

### **3.2 Methodology**

The research methodology helps in carrying out the study in systematic manner so as to achieve the aims and objectives of the study. Therefore, this section includes the objectives, research design, sampling, tools for data collection, data processing and analysis.

The study is analytical in nature and engages in evaluating both qualitative and quantitative aspects of the respondents. Barring the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) there is no data collection on Women Domestic Workers either at the centre or at the state level thus creating a natural deficit of comprehensive data. Also, since these workers are not officially registered with the government it becomes difficult to trace specific information about their status at work and living conditions at home. Hence, in order to accomplish the desired objective, it becomes important to use both the secondary and primary data through mix method approach.

#### **3.2.1 Objectives of the Study**

The present study attempts to assess “Living and Working Conditions of Women Domestic Workers in Mizoram” through the following objectives:

1. To understand into the socio-economic background of the women domestic workers in Mizoram.

2. To analyze the factors driving women to domestic work in the context of Mizoram.
3. To assess the working conditions and the living conditions of women domestic workers in Mizoram.
4. To understand the challenges faced by the women domestic workers in Mizoram.
5. To understand the coping strategies adopted by the women domestic workers and to identify the social support available to them.
6. To suggest measures for social policy and social work intervention.

### **3.2.2 Pilot Study**

A pilot study is conducted through qualitative information from the key informants in Aizawl city and Lunglei town to understand the issues and challenges faced by women domestic workers in respect to their working and living conditions as there has been very little data available.

The pilot study revealed the following data has guided the designing of the present study. Secondary data was also collected at this stage in reference to achievement of domestic worker's welfare; women domestic worker's working and living conditions, etc. Details are appended at the end.

### **3.2.3 Design**

The study is cross-sectional in nature and descriptive in design. It employs both qualitative and quantitative methods in a sequential way. It is based on quantitative data through field survey pretested interview schedule with 10 respondents and data was collected among 300 respondents in total. The qualitative data is elicited through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and in-depth case studies were attempted among ten (10) women domestic workers. The KIIs is conducted with social workers (Women Helpline), Government Officers (Labour and Employment, Government of Mizoram) and Non-

Governmental Agency (Ferrando Domestic Workers Agency) and four groups of FGDs were conducted with domestic workers.

### **Sources of Data**

Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources included data that was collected from Key Informant Interviews (with professional social workers, government leaders), Focus Group Discussions with four groups (one each from Aizawl city and Lunglei town) with women domestic workers added to the primary data. A semi-structured interview schedule for the women domestic workers in Aizawl city and Lunglei town was administered for collecting the information on working and living conditions, issues and challenges, coping strategies and social support.

Secondary sources included information gathered from articles and previous studies conducted by different professionals.

#### **3.2.4 Sampling**

Individual woman domestic worker between the age of 18-30 years in Aizawl city and Lunglei town, Mizoram forms the unit of the study. All women domestic workers in core areas of Aizawl and Lunglei constitute the population for the study.

Multi stage sampling was used. In the first stage, Aizawl is chosen using purposive sampling as Aizawl city due to the fact that population concentration is more and most of domestic workers are settled in Aizawl. In the second stage, Lunglei town is selected purposively as the researcher is from Lunglei town and that Lunglei town is the second largest capital of Mizoram. In the third stage, the core area of Aizawl and Lunglei was selected based on objective criteria such as demographic profile, literacy and sex ratio (2011 census, Government of India). The following localities such as Chanmari, Zarkawt, Electric Veng and Dawrpui are identified as the core area in Aizawl district and is the central area of housing, markets and all amenities and facilities. The following localities such as Chanmari, Venglai, Rahsiveng and Bazar Veng are identified as core area of study in Lunglei

district as this area is also the central area and main populated area in the district. Moreover, the chosen community falls under different socio economic background like Bureaucrats, Businessmen, doctors, middle age groups (teachers, lawyers,etc), to the most layman workers. In the fourth stage, a list of all the women domestic workers in Aizawl city (Chanmari, Zarkawt, Electric Veng and Dawrpui) and Lunglei town (Chanmari, Venglai, Rahsiveng and Bazar Veng) between ages 18-30 years is obtained from the Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP) office bearers. In the final stage, the sample was drawn using systematic random sampling. A proportionate final sample of 300 respondents (210 respondents from Aizawl and 110 respondents from Lunglei) was thus obtained.

Sampling for key informant interviews with professional social workers, governmental officials and non-governmental officials was done purposively.

Four FGDs (two from Aizawl and two from Lunglei) among the women domestic workers were conducted to assess social support perceived by women domestic workers in relation to working and living conditions. A group is mobilised after explaining the objectives of the study and the purpose of FGDs. The FGDs has obtained prior inform consent and voluntary participation.

### **3.2.5 Tools of Data Collection**

Three tools were used to collect data from different groups of people in order to arrive at an understanding of the topic.

Firstly, the qualitative data is collected through key informant interviews (KIIs) and then the quantitative data are collected through administration of pre-tested and structured interview schedule. Information is collected on level of awareness on the vulnerabilities of domestic workers, push and pull factors of domestic work, working and living conditions of women domestic work, challenges faced and coping strategies and social support received by the women domestic workers.

Secondly, four (4) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) is conducted to document coping strategies and social support available to women domestic workers. The study thus assesses parents, employers, church leaders, romantic partner and community

support perceived by domestic workers in relation to neglect, physical abuse, social abuse, psychological abuse and sexual abuse. Focus Group Discussions (two in each district with a group of 8-10 members) among the employees of domestic workers was administered.

Thirdly, structured interview schedule is constructed based on the pilot study. It is firstly pretested and it comprises information on the demographic profile of women domestic workers in Mizoram, push and pull factors of domestic work, working and living conditions of women domestic work, challenges faced and coping strategies adopted by the women domestic workers in Mizoram. The study is extended to understand the social support available to them.

### **3.2.6 Data Processing and Analysis**

Data from the structured interview schedule with respondents was processed through Microsoft excel and with the help of computer software SPSS package. Data is presented in simple percentages. The qualitative data collected through FGDs and KIIs is analyzed and presented in narrative and case study forms.

### **3.3 Limitations of the Study**

The limitations of the study is that the study is confine only to Aizawl city and Lunglei town (four localities each) and subject to only 300 women domestic workers. The age of the respondents comprises between 18-30 years where the age range of domestic workers can be below 18 years of age and above 30years of age as well. Further, only four FGDs and 10 case studies were conducted. Therefore, the study might not reflect the overall situations of working and living conditions of women domestic workers in Mizoram as the study focuses only on the core areas of Aizawl city and Lunglei town and the generality of the findings will be very limited. However, the study is not subjected whether if they are migrants or not. The study does not include on the children of the women domestic workers in which the researches has found there could be many problems relating to child bearing and how the working conditions of women domestic workers can have effects in terms of the overall well-being of the child, health, social status and education of their children.



Further, this is assumed to have relationship with the well-being of the mother i.e. women domestic workers. In addition, the study does not discuss in brief about the migrant domestic worker where almost all the respondents are migrant domestic worker.

This chapter has dealt with the methodology of the study. The proceeding chapter will discuss about the composition of women domestic workers viz. profile of respondents, socio economic profile and self - hygiene of women domestic workers in Mizoram.

## CHAPTER IV

### COMPOSITION OF WOMEN DOMESTIC WORKERS

This chapter discusses the profile of the respondents, the socio-economic conditions and self-hygiene practiced by women domestic workers in Mizoram. This chapter is solely based on the quantitative analysis generated through structured interview schedule.

#### 4.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The demographic profile of the respondents is an important aspect of the study as it sets the background of the study which is presented in table 2. All the respondents are women domestic workers. The respondents are belonging to two district of Mizoram as Aizawl city and Lunglei town respectively. The table 2 consisted of 12 (twelve) items on the identification information of the respondents such as age (at present) of the respondents, educational qualification of the respondents, marital status, family type, religion, salary per month, work experience, source of referral, mother's occupation and father's occupation.

##### 4.1.1 Age Group of the Respondents

The data shows that a maximum of nearly two-third (64.33%) of the entire respondents are belonging in the age group of 18-22 years and it is more common among the respondents belonging in Lunglei town than Aizawl city. This is followed by little more than one-fourth (26%) of the respondents in the age group of 23 -27 years old. And nearly one-tenth (10%) of the respondents are in the age group of 28-32 years old. The data shows that there is a little urban –rural difference in the trend of paid domestic working among the respondents. In fact, the occupation of domestic work is found decreasing with the increasing age of the respondents both in Aizawl city and Lunglei town of Mizoram. This is due to the fact that the society has manage to incorporate informal sector and skills development like beauty culture, tailoring, food processing and other vocational training to most of the marginalized sections of the community. However, due to poverty along with lack of awareness on the importance of education, many youths fall into prey on domestic labour. Since most of the respondents are from a low socio-economic background, they lack

interests in education. Due to this, there are enormous groups of school drop-out and they were compelled to earn an income by their family. Parents of these children in turn feel content for a short period of time because of the remittance received from their children. So, eventually most of the parents allow their child for domestic work since they regard domestic work as the most easy and quick way of earning an income for the family and that has increased the satisfaction level of both the respondents as well as their family.

#### **4.1.2 Educational Qualification of the Respondents**

The item no.2 of table 2 is on the educational qualification of the respondents. The data shows that a maximum of more than half (51%) of the total respondents has completed middle school education that is followed by little more than one-fourth (26.6%) of the respondents had completed elementary education. Thirdly, little more than one-tenth (11.6%) of the respondents has completed high school leaving certificate and a minimum of little more than one-fifth (6.6%) of the respondents has completed higher secondary education and some of them have drop-out of the degree courses and some of the respondents have drop-out. Unfortunately, the data informed that 4% of the total respondents are illiterate. The rate of continuation of education by the respondents is similar in both the districts and the graph of formal education of the respondents is climax in middle school stage and gradually decreasing in high school standard. Further, the scenario revealed drastic changes in continuation of higher education by the respondents. Domestic workers who studied below high school were not interested to continue their studies, so most of them drop out of school (Vimala, M., 2016). Though 26.6 per cent of the domestic workers were educated up to lower primary level but they were not fluent in reading, writing and comprehensions as well. Thus, most of the respondents are barely literate. The respondents, who had education up to High School Leaving Certificate (HSLC) or above, were interested to continue their studies but have to discontinue due to financial difficulties. Surprisingly, one of the unmarried respondents who is a full-time worker from Lunglei town completed her education up to pre-degree level and completed the degree course in distance education mode. The house-matron of the respondents has given moral and financial support for her education. However, five

out of 300 respondents had training in craft work but they did not accept it as a job because of the meager income earned out of it. It is noted that most of the respondents have realized the importance of getting well education so that they could get a better job. Hence, 80 per cent of the respondents were interested for further education, but they had no time to spend on that due to the nature of domestic work.

#### **4.1.3 Marital Status of the Respondents**

The item no.3 of table 2 is on the marital status of the respondents. Marital status comprises of three classification viz., unmarried, married and divorced. Less than two-third (64.3%) of the respondents are unmarried with 59.5% in Aizawl city and 75.6% in Lunglei town. More than one-fourth (26%) are married with 27.6% in Aizawl city and 22.2% in Lunglei town. A tenth of the respondents (10%) are divorcee with 12.9% in Aizawl city and 2.2% in Lunglei town. Most interestingly, the results signify that 26% of women domestic workers have already been married or bearing a child since they have reported having had sexual experience and bearing children out of wedlock and then get divorce. The respondents who are divorcee had joined domestic work as they have to earn their living and support the family. So, it is seen that economic compulsion is the main reason for taking up domestic work. Among the respondents who are married, 12 respondents have beard children and nine (9) of them were full-time domestic workers. These respondents were very enthusiastic about the education of their children. But they regretted that they had no knowledge or time or money for their children. However, in such case of full-time domestic workers, the children were under the custody of their grandparents and on the other hand, the unmarried respondents are very much bothered due to that their family members exploited them from personal gains.

#### **4.1.4 Type of Family of the Respondents**

The item no.4 of table 2 is on the type of family of the respondents. The following illustration speaks of family types among the women domestic workers where the type of family is classified into Nuclear, Joint and Extended family. More than a half (56.6%) of the respondents is coming from nuclear family with 51.9% in Aizawl city against to 67.8% in Lunglei town. More than one third (39.6%) of the total respondents belong to joint family with 43.3% in Aizawl city as against to 28.9% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (3.6%) of the respondents are

coming from extended family with 3.8% in Aizawl city against to 3.3% in Lunglei town. Thus, nuclear family is the predominant type of family among the respondents. However, there still exists the joint family system in a small number which results that there is a preference of proper space and maintenance of each family in a distinct form. Every family would like to be independent and maintain a specific relationship with their own children.

#### **4.1.5 Religion of the Respondents**

The item no.5 of table 2 is on the religion of the respondents. Religion is classified into Christian, Hindu, and Muslim. An overwhelming majority (92.3%) of the respondents are Christian with 93.3% in Aizawl city and 90.0% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (4%) of the respondents are Hindus with 2.4% in Aizawl city and 7.8% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (3.6%) are Muslim of the respondents with 4.3% in Aizawl city and 2.2% in Lunglei. The table signifies majority of them are Christians with the fact that Mizoram is known as a Christian state. However, the other religion like Hindus and Muslims are mainly migrant women domestic workers from Tripura, Bangladesh and Myanmar.

#### **4.1.6 Salary of the Respondents**

The item no.6 of table 2 is on the Salary (monthly) of the respondents. Nearly an overwhelming majority (80.6%) of the respondents earn between Rs 4000-6000/- per month with 82.4% in Aizawl city and 75.8% in Lunglei town. More than a tenth (11.6%) of the respondents earns Rs 2001-4000/- a month with 7.6% in Aizawl city and 20.9% in Lunglei town. Less than a tenth (6%) of the respondents earns Rs 6001-8000/- a month with 7.6% in Aizawl city and 2.2% in Lunglei town. However, an insignificant minority (1.6%) of the respondents earn more than Rs 8000 a month with 2.4% in Aizawl city exclusively. Hereby, it can be concluded that payment of salary varies accordingly with the area of living of the respondents. The salary structure (part time and full-time workers) of the respondents is estimated to be range between Rs.2000 and Rs.9000 (approx.). The table has that shown that there are some workers who have earned more than Rs 8000 a month and this has contributed to the fact that the salary of domestic workers has been deliberately increase from time to time. However, there has been no proper legislation and regulation in the state and the amount of the salary is mainly on the employer's mercy.

#### **4.1.7 Years of Experience of the Respondents**

The item no.7 of table 2 gives the years of experience of the respondents. More than one third (40%) of the respondents has work experience between 1-2years with 36.7% in Aizawl city and 47.3% in Lunglei town. Secondly, nearly one third (29%) has work experience between 3-4 years with 27.1% in Aizawl city and 33% in Lunglei town. Thirdly, nearly one fifth (19.3%) of the respondents have experienced less than a year with 24.3% in Aizawl city and 7.7% in Lunglei town. More than a tenth (11.6%) of the respondents has been working for 5years and above with 11.9% in Aizawl city and 11% in Lunglei town. Therefore, maximum of the respondents work experience is between one to two years. The data shows that the respondents have shifted their workplace from time to time and also employments turnover is high in the area of domestic works. The data also signifies that there is no proper regulation for their work time and that it depends solely on their preferences of work.

#### **4.1.8 Source of Referral of the Respondents**

The item no.8 of table 2 consists of the source of referral of the respondents to domestic work. Firstly, nearly half (46.6%) of the respondents' source of referral is from their friends with 42.4% in Aizawl city and 56.0% in Lunglei town. Secondly, nearly a quarter (24.6%) of the respondents receives information from their parents with 27.1% in Aizawl city and 18.7% in Lunglei town. Thirdly, less than one fourth (19.6%) of the respondents reported that they got the information from their neighbours with 18.6% in Aizawl city and 22% in Lunglei town. Fourthly, less than one tenth (6.6%) of the respondents receives information through local newspaper. However, an insignificant minority (2.3%) of the respondents receives information through agency with 2.4% in Aizawl city and 2.2% in Lunglei town. Therefore, the data shows that domestic workers have close connections with their friends regarding job information, change of workplace and also to the extent of salary demand from the employer. Since, there have been no proper rules and regulations or unions in regards to employment information, most of the respondents depend on their friends for further referrals.

#### **4.1.9 Occupation of the Father of the Respondents**

The item no.9 of table 2 is on occupation of the father of the respondent. Nearly half of the respondent's fathers (42.3%) were cultivators with 39.1% in

Aizawl city and 38.5% in Lunglei town. %). More than one fourth (26%) of the respondent's fathers were daily wage labourer with 13.0% in Aizawl city and 51.6% in Lunglei town. Less than a quarter (16.6%) of the respondent's fathers was self-employed with 18.1% in Aizawl city and 7.7% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (4.3%) of the respondent's fathers were government employee with 5.4% in Aizawl city exclusively.

#### **4.1.10 Educational Qualification of the Father of the Respondents**

The item no.10 of table 2 is on the educational qualification of the father of the respondent. More than one third (35.3%) of the respondent's father studied up to elementary level of education with 34.2% in Aizawl city and 37.4% in Lunglei town respectively. Little more than one third (34%) of the respondent's father has completed middle school education with 35.2% in Aizawl city and 30.8% in Lunglei town. Nearly a quarter (24.6%) studied till high school with 23.3% in Aizawl city and 27.7% in Lunglei town. However, less than one tenth (5.3%) of the respondent's father has higher education with 6.6% in Aizawl city and 2.2% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (0.6%) of the respondent's father has graduation degree with 0.5% in Aizawl city and 1.1% in Lunglei town.

#### **4.1.11 Occupation of the Mother of the Respondents**

The item no.11 of table 2 is on occupation of the mother of the respondents. One third (33%) of the respondents' mother were housewife with 34.9% in Aizawl city and 17.6% in Lunglei town followed by nearly one third (23.6%) were cultivator with 18.5% in Aizawl city and 29.7% in Lunglei town. Less than one fifth (17%) of the respondent's mother were wage labourer with 4.2% in Aizawl city and 45.1% in Lunglei town. A minimum of 14% of the respondents' mothers were self-employed with 17.7% in Aizawl city alone.

#### **4.1.12 Educational Qualification of the Respondent's Mothers**

The item no.12 of table 2 is on the educational qualification of the mother of the respondents. With regards to mother's education, a maximum of less than half (40%) has studied up to middle school education with 43.8% in Aizawl city and 32.2% in Lunglei town followed by more than one third (36.6%) of the respondent's

mother who had completed elementary education with 32.3% in Aizawl city and 46.2% in Lunglei town. Less than one fifth (18.6%) of the respondent's mothers studied high school with 19.5% in Aizawl city and 15.5% in Lunglei town. However, an insignificant minority of 4% has studied up to higher secondary with 2.6% in Aizawl city and 4.4% in Lunglei town respectively.

According to The Mizoram Gazette (date and year), Labour, Employment, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Department, Government of Mizoram (2020), the remuneration of Muster Roll (MR) employees is Rs 11,990/- including medical allowance which is paid in terms of the wages for unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled labour. However, the study found that a maximum of 80.6% of the respondent's income range between Rs 4000- 6000/- per month. The above outcome can be compared with two gazette notifications on minimum wages in the unorganized sector by both the central and the state government where the minimum wages of the state of Mizoram is Rs 380/- a day. The study therefore reveals that the domestic workers under the examination representing domestic workers in Mizoram earn minimum monthly wages that is against to the government of Mizoram gazette and also far less than that of the minimum wages of the counterparts engaged in their employments in the same unorganized sector.

In addition, a maximum of 92.3% respondents of women domestic workers under the study are local inhabitants whereas the remaining 8% of the respondents are migrant workers. Migrant workers residing in the city are from states of Tripura, and international migrants from the neighbouring country of Myanmar and Bangladesh. Further, Tripura accounts for the highest number of migrant domestic workers in Aizawl city, being found in four of the five areas under consideration. The local inhabitants who have been in the profession for long admit that the gradual advent of migrant workers and eventual flooding of the market with increased supply of cheap labour services has adversely affected the bargaining power of all domestic workers in general. Also, due to the refugee movement from Myanmar, there is greater supply of domestic workers with cheap salary. The aspect of migrant workers that draws substantial attention is the fact that migration was at its peak during 2010-2017.



## **4.2: Self Hygiene**

Good hygiene is an important barrier to many infectious diseases, including the faecal–oral diseases, and it promotes better health and well-being. Regular bathing and laundering are important for cleanliness and good personal appearance. To achieve the greatest health benefits, improvements in hygiene should be made concurrently with improvements in personal hygiene like brushing teeth, bathing, self-clean-up, self-care, wearing clean clothes at work and regular usage of sanitary napkins should be integrated with other interventions, so as to improve the well-being of women domestic workers.

The self-hygiene practices of the respondents is explored using six (6) items in three point (3point) scale as Always/ Regular, Sometimes/Irregular and Rarely. The given items are brushing of teeth, bathing, self-clean-up; self-care, wearing of clean clothes while working and use of sanitary napkins that is reflecting the respondent's knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) on self-hygiene and cleanliness of the respondents.

### **4.2.1 Brushing Teeth by the Respondents**

The frequency of brushing teeth of the respondents in table 3 shows that a maximum of three fifth (60%) of the total respondents had brush their teeth regularly as twice a day and the practice is 64.4% and 58.1% in Lunglei town and Aizawl city respectively. This is followed by more than one-third (39%) of the total respondents who are brushing their teeth once a day with 40.5% and 35.6% in Aizawl city and Lunglei town respectively. However, the other 3% of the total respondents does sometimes brushing their teeth. Interestingly, it is shown that few (3%) of the total respondents hardly brush their teeth indicating that a proper self-hygiene practice has to be taught among the domestic workers.

### **4.2.2 Bathing Practice of the Respondents**

Secondly, the bathing practice of the respondents in table 3 shows that nearly half (43.3%) of the total respondents has taken bath daily with 44.8 % and 40% in Aizawl city and Lunglei town respectively. A maximum of nearly half (46%) has taken bath

on alternate days /thrice a week. This is greater among the respondents belonging to Aizawl city than to that of Lunglei town as 50.5% and 35.6% respectively. The remaining just more than one-tenth (10.7%) of the total respondents has taken bath at least twice a week. It is noticed that all the respondents have taken bath daily, twice a week or thrice a week.

However, some of the respondents have reported that their employers do not allow them to take a bath regularly when they asked for and that they barely washed their clothes. This is because due to scarcity of water in their workplace and that some of them can take bath only twice a week. On the other hand, the effects of time constraints were also highlighted by respondents, especially part-time workers. Because of their hectic schedule, juggling multiple tasks in a single day, some of the respondents reported that they have little or no time for breaks and could hardly eat their lunch in peace.

#### **4.2.3 Tidiness or reorganize of the Respondents**

The self- clean up by the respondents in table 3 shows that a maximum of nearly two-third (61.6%) always had a self-clean-up with 65.5 % and 57.6% in Lunglei town and Aizawl city respectively. This is followed by little more than one-third (35%) of the total respondent who does self-clean-up sometimes (at least once in a week) and it 40% among the respondents belonging to Aizawl city against to 28.9% of the respondents belonging to Lunglei town. In fact, a total of 10% of the respondents does self-clean-up rarely that is once a month. The percentage is equally distributed among the respondents belonging to Aizawl city and the respondents belonging to Lunglei town. However, it is good to know that more than half of the respondents have time for self-clean-up which reveals that they had an opportunity to maintain cleanliness and self-hygiene.

#### **4.2.4 Self-care Practice (Maintenance) of the Respondents**

The self-care practice of the respondents is interpreted as Always, Sometimes and Rarely. The data shows that a maximum of nearly two-third (61.3%) of the total respondents rarely have self-care (once a month) with 65% and 63.3% among the

respondents belonging to Lunglei town and Aizawl city respectively. This is followed by little more than one-fifth (21%) of the total respondents who sometimes find time for self-care. Thus, a minimum of nearly two-fifth (17.7%) of the total respondents are able to follow a regular self-care routine and the regularity of the self-care routine is more or less the same in both the community.

#### **4.2.5 Putting of Clean Clothes by the Respondents**

Wearing of clean clothes while at work by the respondents is explored and is assessed using 3-point scale as Always, Sometimes and Rarely. A maximum of 89.3% of the total respondents always wear clean clothes while at work. The data shows that less than one-tenth (7.8%) of the total respondents sometimes wear clean clothes at work. However, it is important to notice that 9% of the total respondents are rarely putting clean clothes at work. In fact, there is more or less of similar practice of wearing clean clothes at work among the respondents belonging to Aizawl city and Lunglei town.

#### **4.2.6 Usage of Sanitary napkins by the Respondents**

The use of sanitary napkins by the respondents is enquired as always, sometimes and rarely and a maximum of more than fourth-fifth (85.7%) of the total respondents regularly and always use sanitary napkins. There is a wide difference of regular use of sanitary napkins

between the respondents belonging to Aizawl city as 91.4% and 72.2% among the respondents belonging to Lunglei town. However, it is seen that more than a tenth (14.3%) of the respondents regularly does not use sanitary napkins and it is mentioned that some of the respondents were still using cloth in replacement of sanitary napkins due to insufficient money.

However, it has reported by few of the respondents that their duly menstruation also made it difficult especially and tiring to perform their tasks efficiently, especially tasks that required bending and squatting. Menstruation has been a relatively neglected health concern, even though it is a significant and regular worry for young domestic workers (Swift Evaluation, 2018).

For the purpose of analysis of the living standards of women domestic workers the study focuses on six aspects essential on a daily basis which are brushing teeth, bathing, self-clean up, self-care, wearing clean clothes and use of sanitary napkins. All the households have water sealed toilets, and none are resorting to open defecation and 14% of the respondents are not using sanitary napkins regularly since they lack money and they have to regularly send remittances to their parents. Moreover, this aspect thus highlights a sense of awareness amongst the domestic workers and their families about maintaining good hygiene. However, an additional observation was that despite having water connection in the study area there is a serious shortage of water supply and people resort to government stand posts or water tankers which ply to their area once or twice a day. The women domestic workers respondents shared their distress regarding the poor water supply in the area; however, this problem alone in the study was only area specific.

**Table 2: Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

Sl.No	Category	Classification	Total N=300	Aizawl N=210	Lung lei N=90
1	<b>Age (at present)</b>	18-22	193 (64.3)	125 (59.5)	68 (75.6)
		23-27	78 (26)	58 (27.6)	20 (22.2)
		28-32	29 (9.6)	27 (12.9)	2 (2.2)
		Total	300 (100.0)	210 (100.0)	90 (100.0)
2	<b>Educational Qualification</b>	Middle school Education	153 (51)	112 (53.3)	41 (45.6)
		Elementary school	80 (26.6)	49 (23.3)	31 (34.4)
		High school education	35 (11.66)	25 (11.9)	10 (11.1)
		Higher secondary & above	20 (6.66)	19 (9.0)	1 (1.1)
		Illiterate	12 (4)	5 (2.4)	7 (7.8)
		Total	300 (100.0)	210 (100.0)	90 (100.0)
3	<b>Marital status</b>	Unmarried	193 (64.3)	125 (59.5)	68 (75.6)
		Married	78 (26)	58 (27.6)	20 (22.2)
		Divorced	29 (9.6)	27 (12.9)	2 (2.2)
		Total	300 (100)	210 (100.0)	90 (100.0)
4	<b>Family type</b>	Nuclear	170 (56.6)	109 (51.9)	61 (67.8)
		Joint	119 (39.6)	93 (43.3)	26 (28.9)
		Extended	11 (3.6)	8 (3.8)	3 (3.3)
		Total	300 (100.0)	210 (100.0)	90 (100.0)

5	Religion	Christian	277 (92.3)	196 (93.3)	81 (90.0)
		Hindu	12 (4)	5 (2.4)	7 (7.8)
		Muslim	11 (3.6)	9 (4.3)	2 (2.2)
		Total	300 (100.0)	210 (100.0)	90 (100.0)
6	Salary per month on INR	4001-6000	242 (80.6)	173 (82.4)	69 (75.8)
		2001-4000	35 (11.6)	16 (7.6)	19 (20.9)
		6001-8000	18 (6)	16 (7.6)	2 (2.2)
		8000 above	5 (1.6)	5 (2.4)	Nil
		Total	300 (100)	210 (100.0)	90 (98.9)
7	Work Experience (in terms of year)	1-2years	120 (40)	77 (36.7)	43 (47.3)
		3-4years	87 (29)	57 (27.1)	30 (33.0)
		>1year	58 (19.3)	51 (24.3)	7 (7.7)
		5years above	35 (11.6)	25 (11.9)	10 (11.0)
		Total	300 (100.0)	210 (100.0)	90 (100.0)
000  8	Source of Referral	Friends	140 (46.6)	89 (42.4)	51 (56.0)
		Parents	74 (24.6)	57 (27.1)	17 (18.7)
		Neighbours	59 (19.6)	39 (18.6)	20 (22.0)
		Newspaper / media	20 (6.6)	20 (9.5)	Nil
		Agency registration	7 (2.3)	5 (2.4)	2 (2.2)
		Total	300 (100.0)	210 (100.0)	90 (100.0)

<b>9</b>	<b>Father's Occupation</b>	Cultivator	128 (42.6)	93 (39.1)	35 (38.5)
		Wage labourer	78 (26)	31 (13.0)	47 (51.6)
		Self employed	50 (16.6)	43 (18.1)	7 (7.7)
		Govt. employee	13 (4.3)	13 (5.4)	0 (0.0)
		Total	269 (89.5)	180 (75.6)	89 (97.8)
<b>10</b>	<b>Father's education</b>	Elementary	106 (35.3)	72 (34.2)	34 (37.4)
		Middle school	102 (34)	74 (35.2)	28 (30.8)
		High school	74 (24.6)	49 (23.3)	25 (27.7)
		Higher secondary school	16 (5.3)	14 (6.6)	2 (2.2)
		Graduation	2 (0.6)	1 (.5)	1 (1.1)
		Total	300 (100.0)	210 (100.0)	90 (100.0)
<b>11</b>	<b>Mothers Occupation</b>	Housewife	99 (33)	83 (34.9)	16 (17.6)
		Cultivator	71 (23.6)	44 (18.5)	27 (29.7)
		Self employed	42 (14)	42 (17.7)	0 (0.0)
		Labour	51 (17)	10 (4.2)	41 (45.1)
		Govt. employee	6 (2)	6 2.5	0 (0.0)
		Total	269 (89.6)	185 (77.7)	84 (92.3)
		Middle school	121 (40.3)	92 (43.8)	29 (32.2)
		Elementary	110 (36.6)	68 (32.3)	42 (46.2)
		High school	56	41	15

<b>12</b>	<b>Mother's education</b>		(18.6)	(19.5)	(15.5)
		Higher secondary school	12 (4)	8 (2.6)	4 (4.4)
		Graduation	1 (0.3)	1 (0.3)	0 (0.0)
		Total	300 (100.0)	210 (100.0)	90 (0.0)

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

**Table 3: Self – Hygiene of Women Domestic Workers**

Sl.No	Category	Classification	Total N=300	Rizal N=210	Lung lei N=90
<b>1</b>	<b>Brushing teeth</b>	Once a day	117 (39)	85 (40.5)	32 (35.6)
		Twice a day	180 (60)	122 (58.1)	58 (64.4)
		Sometimes	3 (1)	3 (1.4)	0 (0.0)
<b>2</b>	<b>Bathing</b>	Daily	130 (43.3)	94 (44.8)	36 (40)
		Twice a week	32 (10.7)	10 (4.8)	22 (24.4)
		Thrice a week	138 (46)	106 (50.5)	32 (35.6)
<b>3</b>	<b>Self-clean-up</b>	Always	185 (61.6)	121 (57.6)	59 (65.5)
		Sometimes	105 (35)	84 (40)	26 (28.9)
		Rarely	10 (3.3)	5 (2.4)	5 (5.6)
<b>4</b>	<b>Self-care</b>	Always	53 (17.7)	36 (17.1)	17 (18.8)
		Sometimes	63 (21)	47 (22.4)	16 (17.7)
		Rarely	184 (61.3)	127 (60.5)	57 (63.3)
<b>5</b>	<b>Wearing clean Clothes at work</b>	Always	268 (89.3)	187 (89)	81 (90)
		Sometimes	23 (7.6)	17 (8.1)	6 (6.7)



		Rarely	9 (3)	6 (2.9)	3 (3.3)
<b>6</b>	<b>Use of sanitary napkins</b>	Always	257 (85.7)	192 (91.4)	65 (72.2)
		Sometimes	29 (9.6)	16 (7.6)	13 (14.4)
		Rarely	14 (4.7)	2 (1)	12 (13.3)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b> <b>(100.0)</b>	<b>210</b> <b>(100.0)</b>	<b>90</b> <b>(100.0)</b>

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

## CHAPTER V

### 5.1 WORKING CONDITIONS OF WOMEN DOMESTIC WORKERS

Many studies on the working conditions of the respondents have reported that there are no standard norms that has decide working conditions for domestic workers. However, specified working hours does not exist for many domestic workers. In general, the working hours of women domestic workers ranges from 8 to 18 hours a day while live in domestic workers are on call 24 hours each day (Sarma, K., 2003). Some does not get any rest during the day while others can rest often and some may not be given proper food or living space while others are treated equally as member of their family.

In the context of working conditions of women domestic workers, the wages are not fixed according to individual tasks in any of the five areas under study rather the same task is repeated in different households for different wages by the same individual. However, the domestic workers do not have salary protection either of minimum wages or of allowance. It was thus thought necessary to enquire whether the women domestic workers receive any overhead assistance in the form of cash or kind.

#### 5.1.1 Working Hours of the Respondents

There are three classifications of women domestic workers respondents based on the duration of working hours as presented in table 4. The data shows that half (50%) of the respondents are live-in domestic workers and nearly one third (32.3%) of the total respondents work more than 13 hours in a day and more than one-fourth (27.3%) of the total respondents are working for more than 10 hours a day. This is followed by 39% of the respondents who are working for 4-7 hours in a day. They are live-out but were regular daily women domestic workers. While a minimum of 1.3% of the entire respondents are part-time domestic worker. Vast majority of the live-in domestic workers work a minimum of 15 hours a day, seven days a week. The part-time workers often work in 1-2 different houses for nearly 8-10 hours every day except Sunday. Working hours of the domestic workers can go from 8 to over 13 hours a day. So, overall it is thought to be stressful for one woman to complete all the

tasks within a day & that they have less time for themselves for self-care. In some conditions, the employers collect their cell phones and hand it over to them before bed time which is very disturbing and humiliating of personal space.

However, in some other countries, domestic workers are clearly excluded from the general norms on hours of work, and are not subject to fixed hours of work; instead, the law refers only to hours of rest (Philippines, *lex cit.*, 1975, Rule I, Section 2 and Rule XIII, Section 20). Also, from the tale we can see that there is no “night shift” in particular like in South Africa (South Africa, *lex cit.*, 1997b, Clause 13) other countries.

### **5.1.2 Additional Working Hours of the Respondents**

Overtime or additional working hours in relation to a given period of time means the portion of time employees work for their employers in excess of the ordinary working hours established by law. A significant number of countries have no regulations on overtime, mainly because they either do not deal with hours of work of domestic workers in their laws or simply because they exclude them for the general norms on that matter.

The data also revealed in table – 4 that more than half of the respondents (57%) of the respondents have additional work other than their main work with 66.6% in Aizawl city and 34.4% in Lunglei town. More than tenth (14%) of the respondents have worked 1-2hours extra apart from their main work with 13.8% in Aizawl city and 14.1% in Lunglei town. More than a tenth(13.8%) of the respondents work more than two hours over stipulate time which can really hamper their health condition(in this case the employers were mainly shop-keeper and doctors).

Most of the workers stated that they received no extra remuneration for additional work, which employers, according to the workers, seemed to always find a reason not to pay for (Bhattacharya, D,2016).

Although employers have acknowledged the necessity of rest periods but refer to them without precision nevertheless. From the table - 4, more than three quarters (76.6%) of the respondents has obtain freedom during their working time and can take rest with their will with 85.2% in Aizawl city and 57.3% in Lunglei

town whereas mealtimes are not generally considered as work time. To this contrast, an insignificant minority (3.6%) of the respondents were being exploited to recess during work and has only one-hour rest during their work schedule with 1% in Aizawl city and 10% in Lunglei town exclusive of their meal breaks.

### **5.1.3 Recess during Work**

Nearly a quarter (19.6%) of the respondents in table 4 rest for 1-2 hours with 13.8% in Aizawl city and 33.7% in Lunglei town. The respondents has also share that there is no proper rest time being fixed by the employer and, most often, the rest times are at employer's mercy. In Finland, however, when the worker is resting, sleeping or eating (i.e. during rest time), she or he is deemed not to perform any work(Finland, lex cit., 1977, Section 6).

### **5.1.4 Day Off of the Respondents**

Day off of the respondents in table 4 shows that more than tenth (13.6%) of the respondents took 2 days off from work and 12.3% took one day off from work which is followed by 11.3% of the respondents who are taking half day as leave in a week. Interestingly, 20.3% of the respondents do not avail any leave or day off in a week and more than tenth (14%) have avail sick leave when they are sick. Only one worker from Aizawl city got a weekly day off as a matter of right. All the other workers were surprised by this, as most domestic workers do not formally get any rest day.

The length of the leave period varies greatly from country to country. It ranges from 10 days (Bolivia, Argentina and Honduras), to 30 days (Denmark, France, Panama and Spain), or to four working weeks and four days (Malta). However, in some countries (Argentina, Austria, Chile, Honduras, Italy, Paraguay or Venezuela), the number of leave days increases with the domestic worker's years of continuous service (Argentina, Austria, Chile, Honduras, Italy, Paraguay lex cit., 1956a, Section 4.)

National laws also offer a great diversity of possibilities for granting annual leave. Some national laws remain silent on this issue, as in Austria, Bolivia, Chile,

Italy or Zimbabwe. However, in India there have been no laws concerning the specific leave for domestic workers.

## **5.2 Work Type**

The type of work is divided mainly into four main broad categories viz., tasks like cleaning(mopping, cleaning dishes, washing clothes, cooking, shopping, hospitality at home, gardening, animal care, driving and security services cleaning in and around the house premises, etc.) , care giving(aged, child, disability, nursing), provision of work wear(whether fully provided, partially provided or not provided) and unfair works (washing undergarments with open hands, handling sick people without protective gear, deny of rest and food, placement without consent, overwork, force to work when sick and force to wake up at midnight to clean the mess).

### **5.2.1 Tasks Performed by the Respondents**

From the table-5, an overwhelming majority (94%) of the respondent's tasks is cleaning in and around the houses like dusting, sweeping and mopping, laundry and dishwashing, (Palriwala and Neetha, 2013). An overwhelming majority (92.3%) of the respondent's task is cleaning in Aizawl city with a higher frequency of 97.7% in Lunglei town. Majority (86.3%) of the respondents cooked daily with 85.7% in Aizawl city and 87.7% in Lunglei town. A total of 73.9% of the respondents does care-giving like aged care, sick care, disability care, nursing, etc. while performing their work with 78.9% in Aizawl city and 70.2% in Lunglei town. Less than half (42.6%) of the respondents went for shopping with 43.3% in Aizawl city and 41.1% in Lunglei town. A little less than a third (32.3%) of the respondents perform hospitality at home with 38.5% in Aizawl city and 17.7% in Lunglei town. More than a tenth (14.6%) does gardening with 15.7% in Aizawl city and 12.2% in Lung lei town. More than a tenth (13.6%) of the respondents performed animal caring with 15.7% in Aizawl city and 8.8% in Lunglei town. More than a tenth (12.8%) of the respondents does driving with 14.7% in Aizawl city and 9.9% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (3%) of the respondents does security services with 4.2% in Aizawl city only.

### **5.2.2 Work Wear**

Nearly quarters (25.2%) of the respondents in table 5 were provided with work wear with 11.4% in Aizawl city and 30% in Lung lei town. Less than a quarter (20.6%) of the respondents was provided partially with 21.4% in Aizawl city and 18.9% in Lung lei town. Less than three fourth (62.3%) of the respondents were not provided work wear with 67.1% in Aizawl city and 51.1% in Lunglei town.

With regards to this context, two countries, Belgium and Swaziland, have taken a general approach: the employer provides the domestic workers with the clothes necessary for the performance of their work (Belgium, *lex cit.*, 1978, Section 110). In Colombia, the employer provides domestic workers in service for more than three months with a pair of shoes and the clothes necessary for the performance of work, three times a year and in kind, not in cash. (Colombia, *lex cit.*, 1950, Section 230). Portugal emphasizes the avoidance of work hazards; thus, the employer shall supply uniforms and other suitable protective clothing to prevent any risk of an accident or any prejudicial effect on the worker's health (Portugal, *lex cit.*, 1992, Section 26(1)(d)). In Zimbabwe, a similar approach is taken: the employer supplies, free of charge, uniforms and other suitable protective clothing to prevent domestic workers from being habitually exposed to inclement weather in the course of their duties [Zimbabwe, *lex cit.*, 1992, Section 19(1)-(2)].

### **5.2.3 Unfair Works**

As revealed by the data, an insignificant minority (4%) of the respondents in table 5 were probe to wash undergarments with open hands with 2.3% in Aizawl city and 7.7% in Lunglei town. Less than a tenth (6%) of the respondents was asked to handle sick people without protective gear with 6.6% in Aizawl city and 4.4% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (1.6%) of the respondents were denied of rest and food with 1.9% in Aizawl city and 1.1% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (3.3%) of the respondents were placed to another employer's house without their consent with 1.9% in Aizawl city and 6.6% in Lunglei town. Less than a tenth (8%) of the respondents complains for overwork with 10.4% in Aizawl city and 2.2% in Lung lei town. An insignificant minority (6%) of the respondents were force to

work when they are sick or unwell with 6.1% in Aizawl city and 5.5% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (3.6%) of the respondents were forced to wake up at midnight to clean the mess with 3.3% in Aizawl city and 4.4% in Lunglei town.

Interestingly it was also reported that part-time or full-time domestic workers who were unmarried or alone were asked by their employers to move in with them for the lockdown period (some did to save costs on food). It is also found out that it was only when a positive case was reported in the area that employers stopped domestic workers from coming.

Further, many domestic workers are also anxious and concerned with job loss post lockdown, as many employers will not allow their domestic workers to join work until the threat of the pandemic settles down.

### **5.3 Remittance Provision**

Remittances consist of Festival bonus, salary payment, pecuniary benefits or other welfare provisions like medical care, food, bank account, vocational training, condensed education, yearly increment in their service, festival advance, clothing and personal care, old/new phone and old/new clothes.

#### **5.3.1 Festival Bonus**

Quite interestingly, more than a quarter (26%) of the respondents in table 6 receive festival bonus in kind with 18.5% in Aizawl city and 43.3% in Lunglei town. However, less than a quarter (22.3%) of the respondents receive festival bonus in cash with 18% in Aizawl city and 32.2% in Lunglei town. More than a third (37.3%) of the respondents do not receive festival bonus with 41.9% in Aizawl city and 26.65% in Lunglei town.

#### **5.3.2 Salary Payment**

Less than three fourth (67.6%) of the respondents in table 6 receive regular salary with 75.2% in Aizawl city and 50% in Lunglei town. Less than one tenth (8.3%) of the respondents receive irregularly with 6.1% in Aizawl city and 13.3% in Lunglei town. Less than a quarter (19.3%) of the respondents' salaries were delayed sometimes with 15.7% in Aizawl city and 27.7% in Lunglei town. An insignificant

minority (4.6%) of the respondent's salaries was deducted for taking extra leave with 2.9% in Aizawl city and 8.8% in Lunglei town.

### **5.3.3 Pecuniary Benefits**

More than half (55.3%) of the respondents in table 6 received medical care from their employer with 49.5% in Aizawl city and 68.8% in Lunglei town. Majority (90.6%) of the respondents received good food and was given enough food with 97.1% in Aizawl city and 75.5% in Lunglei town. To my interest, less than a quarter (18.3%) of the respondents has created bank account through the advice of their employer with 21.4% in Aizawl city and 11.1% in Lunglei town. A tenth (10.6%) of the respondents were allowed for vocational training with 12.8% in Aizawl city and 5.5% in Lunglei town. More than a tenth (13.3%) of the respondents were given condense education with 8.5% in Aizawl city and 24.4% in Lunglei town. More than tenth (12.3%) of the respondents receives yearly increment with 8.5% in Aizawl city and 21.1% in Lunglei town. Increments were arbitrary or, in some cases, the employers refused even when asked for. More than a quarter (26.3%) of the respondents receives bonus money with 26.1% in Aizawl city and 26.6% in Lunglei town. More than a tenth (15.3%) of the respondents receives festival advance (in cash and in kind) with 17.6% in Aizawl city and 10% in Lunglei town. More than half (57.6%) of the respondents receives clothing and personal care with 50% in Aizawl city and 75.5% in Lunglei town showing higher response rate. In two instances, workers had taken an advance from their employer. One worker had to buy television for their family so she took advance money of Rs. 28,000 from her employer for this period and later paid it back. Another woman, whose parents do not earn any income, was also forced to take an advance of Rs. 8,000. This was being deducted from her salary, with half her salary of Rs. 2000 going into loan repayment every month. A little less than three fourth (70%) of the respondents receives old and new phone in supplement of their wages with 75.7% in Aizawl city and 56.6% in Lunglei town. More than a third receives old and new clothes as pecuniary benefits with 35.7% in Aizawl city and 35.5% in Lunglei town.

However, depending on the country, payments are usually made either monthly or weekly, although in some cases they are made fortnightly (Finland, lex



cit., 1993, Section 16). When setting a minimum wage for domestic work the law may take into consideration the economic importance and living conditions in different zones or areas, the type of contract of employment or the number of ordinary hours of work per week (Argentina, lex cit., 1956a, Section 13; South Africa, lex cit., 1997b, Clause 2)

#### **5.4 Satisfaction Level**

The satisfaction level of women domestic workers is the level of happiness or contentment that she feels while doing her job. It is an essential aspect of study in the management and work culture of women domestic workers in order to make the work successful.

##### **5.4.1 Satisfaction Level of the Respondents**

From the table 7, more than three-fourth (78.6%) of the respondents were satisfied with their stipulated working time with 79.5% in Aizawl city and 76.6% in Lunglei town. A little more than two third (69.3%) of the respondents were also satisfied with their nature of work with 75.2% in Aizawl city and 55.5% in Lunglei town. More than half (54.4%) of the respondents were satisfied with their salary with 56.1% in Aizawl city and 50% in Lunglei town. Less than one fourth (19.6%) of the respondents were satisfied with additional work during holidays with 16.1% in Aizawl city and 27.7% in Lunglei town.

##### **5.4.2 Worry about Work**

Table 7 gives percentage distribution of worry about work other with respect to a frequency scale which ranges between frequently worried and never. Less than a tenth (7.6%) of the respondents frequently worried about their work and worried while working with 6.6% in Aizawl city and 10% in Lunglei town. Nearly half (49.65) of the respondents do sometimes worried about their work with 49% in Aizawl city and 51.1% in Lunglei town. A third (33.3%) of the respondents rarely worried about their work with 35.1% in Aizawl city and 28.8% in Lunglei town. A little less than a tenth (9.3%) of the respondents had never worried about their work with 9.5% in Aizawl city and 8.8% in Lunglei town.

#### **5.4.3 When feeling Unwell**

More than a tenth (11%) of the respondents in table 7 said they were replaced by another domestic worker when they feel unwell or when they are out of station with 8.9% in Aizawl city and 17.7% in Lunglei town. However, majority (89%) of the respondents can avail for sick leave with 91.9% in Aizawl city and 82.2% in Lunglei town.

**Table 4: Working Conditions**

<b>Sl.No</b>	<b>Conditions</b>	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Total N = 300</b>	<b>Aizawl N=210</b>	<b>Lunglei N=90</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Working hours</b>	1-3hours	4 (1.3)	2 (0.9)	2 (2.2)
		4 - 6hours	42 (14)	23 (10.9)	19 (21.1)
		7- 9 hours	75 (25)	52 (24.8)	23 (25.6)
		10-12hours	82 (27.3)	77 (36.7)	5 (5.6)
		13 & above hours	97 (32.3)	56 (26.7)	41 (45.6)
<b>2</b>	<b>Additional working hours</b>	Less than 1 hour	171 (57)	140 (66.6)	31 (34.4)
		1-2hours	14 (14)	29 (13.8)	13 (14.14)
<b>3</b>	<b>Recess during working</b>	Personal choice	230 (76.6)	179 (85.2)	51 (57.3)
		1 hour	11 (3.6)	2 (1)	9 (10)
		1-2 hours	59 (19.6)	29 (13.8)	30 (33.7)
<b>4</b>	<b>Day off/ Rest (in a month)</b>	Not avail	<b>61</b> <b>(20.3)</b>	35 (16.6)	26 (28.8)
		Half day	<b>34</b> <b>(11.3)</b>	20 (9.5)	14 (15.5)
		One day	<b>37</b> <b>(12.3)</b>	25 (11.9)	12 (13.3)
		Two days	<b>41</b> <b>(13.6)</b>	36 (17.1)	5 (5.5)
		Sick leave	<b>42</b> <b>(14)</b>	16 (7.6)	26 (28.8)

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

**Table 5: Work Type**

Sl.No	Conditions	Classification	Total N = 300	Aizawl N=210	Lunglei N=90
1	Tasks	Cleaning	282 (94)	194 (92.3)	88 (97.7)
		Cooking	259 (86.3)	180 (85.7)	79 (87.7)
		Care giving	224 (73.9)	166 (78.9)	58 (70.2)
		Shopping	128 (42.6)	91 (43.3)	37 (41.1)
		Hospitality at home	97 (32.3)	81 (38.5)	16 (17.7)
		Gardening	44 (14.6)	33 (15.7)	11 (12.2)
		Animal care	41 (13.6)	33 (15.7)	8 (8.8)
		Driving	40 (12.8)	31 (14.7)	9 (9.9)
		Security services	9 (3)	9 (4.2)	0 (0.0)
2	Provision of work wear	Fully provides	51 (24.2)	24 (11.4)	27 (30.0)
		Partially provided	62 (20.6)	45 (21.4)	17 (18.9)
		Not provided	187 (62.3)	141 (67.1)	46 (51.1)
3	Unfair works	Washing undergarments	12 (4)	5 (2.3)	7 (7.7)
		Handling sick people without protective gear	18 (6)	14 (6.6)	4 (4.4)
		Deny of rest and food	5 (1.6)	4 (1.9)	1 (1.1)
		Placement without consent	10 (3.3)	4 (1.9)	6 (6.6)
		overwork	24 (8)	22 (10.4)	2 (2.2)
		Forced to work when sick or unwell	18 (6)	13 (6.1)	5 (5.5)
		Force to wake-up at midnight	11 (3.6)	7 (3.3)	4 (4.4)

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

**Table 6: Remittance Provision**

Sl.No	Conditions	Classification	Total N = 300	Aizawl N=210	Lunglei N=90
1	Festival bonus	In kind	78 (26)	39 (18.5)	39 (43.3)
		In cash	67 (22.3)	38 (18.0)	29 (32.2)
		Not receive	112 (37.3)	88 (41.9)	24 (26.6)
2	Salary Payment	Regular	203 (67.6)	158 (75.2)	45 (50)
		Irregular	25 (8.3)	13 (6.1)	12 (13.3)
		Delay sometimes	58 (19.3)	33 (15.7)	25 (27.7)
		Deduction in wages for extra leave	14 (4.6)	6 (2.9)	8 (8.8)
3	Other welfare provision/ Pecuniary benefits	Enough food	272 (90.6)	204 (97.1)	68 (75.5)
		Old / new phone handset	210 (70)	159 (75.7)	51 (56.6)
		Clothing and personal care	173 (57.6)	105 (50)	68 (75.5)
		Medical care	166 (55.3)	104 (49.5)	62 (68.8)
		Old / new clothes	107 (35.6)	75 (35.7)	32 (35.5)
		Bonus money	79 (26.3)	55 (26.1)	24 (26.6)
		Bank account	55 (18.3)	45 (21.4)	10 (11.1)
		Festival advance	46 (15.3)	37 (17.6)	9 (10)
		Condense education	40 (13.3)	18 (8.5)	22 (24.4)
		Yearly increment	37 (12.3)	18 (8.5)	19 (21.1)
		Vocational training	32 (10.6)	27 (12.8)	5 (5.5)

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

**Table 7: Satisfaction Level**

Sl.No	Conditions	Classification	Total N = 300	Aizawl N=210	Lunglei N=90
1.	Satisfaction level	With working hours	236 (78.6)	167 (79.5)	69 (76.6)
		With nature of work	208 (69.3)	158 (75.2)	50 (55.5)
		With salary	163 (54.4)	118 (56.1)	45 (50)
		With additional works on holidays	59 (19.6)	34 (16.1)	25 (27.7)
2	Worry about work	Sometimes	149 (49.6)	103 (49.0)	46 (51.1)
		Rarely	100 (33.3)	74 (35.1)	26 (28.8)
		Never	28 (9.3)	20 (9.5)	8 (8.8)
		Frequently	23 (7.6)	14 (6.6)	9 (10)
3	Alternative Arrangement	Avail for sick leave	267 (89)	193 (91.9)	74 (82.2)
		Sending replacement	33 (11)	17 (8.9)	16 (17.7)

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **6.1 LIVING CONDITIONS OF WOMEN DOMESTIC WORKERS**

This chapter discusses on types of domestic work, nature of work, inhumane treatment, sexual harassment, employer's reaction over the work, privacy and self-feeling while working of the respondents.

The living conditions of women domestic workers in general can be seen as workers who earn very low wages, excessively long working hours, have no guaranteed weekly or day of rest and at times are vulnerable to physical, mental and sexual abuse or lack of privacy and restriction of mobility outside the workplace. Exploitation of domestic workers can partly be attributed to gaps in national labour and employment legislation, and often reflects discrimination along the lines of sex, race and caste. Unlike other occupations in the informal sector, domestic workers mainly comprise of women out of whom many are widows, single parent and major source of livelihood earners in the family. As the work is performed in a domestic space they are vulnerable to all sorts of exploitation. Also, the fact that a large number of domestic workers are migrant women belonging to lower caste or from other ethnic minority communities that makes the matters worsen even engaging in sex work, drug addiction, human trafficking and other atrocities of women. The employer-employee relationship is absent and there is no verbal or non-verbal contract made for the terms and conditions of employment (CDI, 2018).

A domestic worker may work on full-time or part-time basis; maybe employed in a single household or by multiple households/employers; maybe Live-in Domestic worker who resides in the household of the employer or may be living in his or her own residence called out the live-out domestic workers. A domestic worker may be working in a country of which he/she is not a national, thus referred to as a 'migrant domestic worker'.

### **6.2 Types of Domestic Work of the Respondents**

The types of domestic work are classified into live-in, live-out, part-time and full-time domestic work. From the table 8 of the types of domestic work, the data shows that more than three fourth (76%) of the respondents are live-in domestic

workers. A maximum of 88.8% are belonging to Lunglei town and more than two third (70.5%) are belonging to Aizawl city. However, there is a similar value of workers with respect to full-time and part-time domestic worker i.e more than one third (34%). Interestingly, the frequency of part-time and full-time domestic workers is equally distributed as 13.8% both in Aizawl city and Lunglei town respectively. Similarly, the frequency of part-time and full-time domestic worker in Lunglei town and Aizawl city is equally distributed as 5.5%. However, an insignificant minority of 0.3% of the respondents are live-out women domestic workers with 0.5% in Aizawl and no domestic workers as live-out in Lunglei town.

Live-in domestic workers had to do all types of works including food preparation in the houses and they are employed by a single household where food and shelter are provided (Bhattacharya, D., et al, 2016). In some cases, their works included taking children to and from school and fetching things from grocery shops. In regard to the part-time and full-time domestic worker, the nature of work includes cleaning the house, washing clothes, cleaning bath rooms, washing utensils, fetching articles from the shops etc. All part-time and full-time respondents were doing almost all works including kitchen work in the houses. So it is difficult to classify the women domestic workers on the basis of nature of works.

The data shows that the part-time and full-time respondents have served in more than one house in a day (as shown in table 8). About 22% (part-time and full time domestic worker) of them had worked in two or three homes daily. Whereas live out domestic worker are self-employed at multiple households and not offered food and shelter by employers ((Bhattacharya, D., et al, 2016).

### **6.3 Nature of Work of the Respondents**

The nature of living of domestic work is classified into five main categories viz., living in the same floor, having separate room, using separate utensils, eating food along with them and a separate washing of clothes.

Table 9 on the nature of work of the respondents shows that nearly two-third (64.6%) of the respondents share the same floor with their employer with 66.1% and 61.1% in Aizawl city and Lunglei town respectively. Nearly two-third (63.6%) of the



respondents has independent room with 59% and 74.4% in Aizawl city and Lunglei town. Interestingly, the data shows that less than a tenth (5.6%) of the total respondents has separate utensils and these respondents are belonging to Aizawl city. Meanwhile, more than half (53%) of the respondents had join meal with the. However, little more than a quarter (27.3%) of the respondents washes their clothes separately with 31.4% and 17.7% in Aizawl city and Lunglei town respectively.

The full-time domestic workers exclusively depend upon their house-matrons for food, though the offered food was low in quality. But most of the part time domestic workers were offered some light food, not nutrient items, sometimes was left-over food (Vimala,M.,2016). It can be seen that majority of domestic workers in Mizoram have separate rooms to sleep with one third of the respondents without separate room. Some of the workers share the room of one of the household members where some sleep on the living room with appropriate beddings.

#### **6.4 Inhumane treatment of the Respondents**

Inhumane or degrading treatment consists of six distinct categories viz., separate dinner, separate cloth washing, separate utensils, yelled often if food is undercooked, restrict to food consumption and absence of medical care in time of sickness.

The table 10 on inhumane treatment of the respondents shows that more than a quarter (21.6%) of the respondents washes their clothes separately with 16.1% in Aizawl city and 34.4% in Lunglei town. Nearly a quarter (16.3%) of the respondents encountered yelling from their employer if their food cooked is under – cooked with 12.8% in Aizawl city and 24.4% in Lunglei town. Less than a tenth (7.6%) of the respondents did not receive medical care when they fall ill with 6.6% in Aizawl city and 10% in Lung lei town. An insignificant minority (3.6%) of the respondents were restricting to their food intake with 1.4% in Aizawl city and 8.8% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (1.6%) of the respondents have separate utensils with 0.4% in Aizawl city and 4.4% in Lunglei town. A minimum of one-fifth (2.3%) has separate diner with 1.9% in Aizawl city and 3.3% in Lunglei town. From the study, it has been found out that 3.6% of the respondents were restricting to food

consumption. These workers said that their employers gave them leftover and gave them food which is very minimal. Some workers also said that some of the employers give them stale and spoiled food. One of the workers mentioned that the employers expected her to work continuously for many hours but did not even offer a cup of coffee or tea, even while having it in front of them. The worker concludes by saying that the employer expects her to work continuously without any refreshments.

7.6% of the respondents stated that they are not entitled to any paid leave even when they are sick. Even on public and national holidays and festivals, domestic workers are not allowed to take leave. It can be therefore seen that some employers give them a one-day weekly off, but not all employer's do so. Workers stated that it is painful that they in fact have to work for more hours during these days of celebration.

#### **6.4.1 Sexual harassment of the Respondents**

Sexual harassment falls under eight (8) categories viz., sexually coloured remarks for sexual favour, unwanted physical contact, Molestation, rape, exposed to pornography, leering or telling dirty jokes, making sexual remarks about a person's body and eve-teasing.

From the table 11, nearly a tenth (7%) of the respondents have been exposed to pornography where all these are from Aizawl city alone. Less than a tenth (7%) of the respondents encountered eve-teasing with 1.9% in Aizawl city and 18.8% in Lunglei town. Less than a tenth (6%) of the respondents has undergone unwanted physical contact with a value of 0.4% in Aizawl city and higher value with 18.8% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (4.3%) of the respondents has received leering or telling of dirty jokes with 0.9% in Aizawl city and 12.2% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (4%) encountered sexual remarks about their body with 2.3% in Aizawl city and 7.7% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (2.6%) of the respondents has experience a sexually coloured remarks about their body for sexual favour with 1.9% in Aizawl city and 4.4% in Lunglei town. Interestingly, an insignificant minority (1.3%) of the respondents were being raped which was a hidden truth and the respondents are solely from Aizawl city alone. An insignificant

minority (0.6%) of the respondents has experienced molestation where the victims fall from Aizawl city alone. Thus, there is a predominance of pornography and eve-teasing among the respondents whereas unwanted physical contact dominates the secondary harassment.

It can be seen from the table that domestic workers have bear patiently all the shouting, abusive language, and even physical violence and sexual harassment. Workload is in variably too heavy and exasperating.

### **6.5 Employer's reaction over the work of the Respondents**

Employer's reaction over the work is classified into five (5) categories viz., excuse, forgiven, punish or penalize and deduction in salary payment.

The table 12 of the respondents shows that half (50%) of the respondents were excuse over their work if there has been an accident or alike with 47.5% in Aizawl city and 44.6% in Lunglei town. Less than half (41%) of the respondents were forgiven for their mistakes with 33.2% in Aizawl city and 53.0% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (2.6%) of the respondents were subject to penalty or punishment with 4.6% in Aizawl city and 2.2% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (2.3%) salary has been deducted with 2.9% in Aizawl city alone.

The study found out that some of the employers had encouraged even small children to keep tracking over the work duties of the respondents. However, the domestic workers also mention that their employers are after money demanding domestic work services day and night. It is also report that the employers cannot build trust upon them regarding continuation of the work. Similar findings has been documented in Karnataka that the domestic workers were mistrust by their employer, but they still continue working in their homes, accepting the suspicion on them as if it were a common thing to occur in such situations”(Suneetha. E & Singh. A, 2013). The group discussion conducted at among domestic worker at Shanti Nagar mentioned that in case any valuable item belonging to the employer is lost or misplaced, eyebrows were often raised against them. Some of the respondents have also mention, with pain, that in many families their work was supervised every day by at least one member of the family, who would keep roaming behind them. the

whole time they worked. In most of the times, in Mizoram, the person supervising is an elderly male or female member of the household who stays back at home.

In regards to deduction of salary, Laxmi, a domestic worker from Shrirampuram, reported that *“We always live under the fear of termination of job. Employers deduct our wages if we are absent for one or two days. With the fear of termination, we will not think of taking leave even when we are sick”*.

### **6.6 Privacy of the Respondents**

Privacy or Autonomy is divided into three main categories viz., Given (i.e. privacy of the respondents is respected by the employers), less isolation (i.e. there is often an interaction between the employers and employees) and no privacy (i.e. the respondents are often watch over their duties).

The table 13 on the privacy of the respondents shows that a maximum of two-third (66.6%) of the respondents was given privacy in their place of work with 70.4% in Aizawl city and 57.7% in Lunglei town. While one fourth (25%) of the respondents were interacted with the employers, relatives and friends of the employers who kin towards the employees. However, less than one tenth (8.3%) of the respondents were not given any privacy in the house with 8.5% in Aizawl city and 7.7% in Lunglei town.

### **6.7 Self-feeling of the Respondents while Working**

The Self-feeling of the respondents while working consists of six distinct characteristics viz., enthusiastic, comfortable, uncomfortable, confuse, insecure and scary. Nearly two-third (65.3%) of the respondents in table 14 feels comfortable while working with almost same resultant of feeling comfortable in Aizawl city (65.2%) and Lunglei town (65.5%). More than one-tenth (12.6%) of the respondents feels confuse with their own-self while working whether to continue their work or not. However, 11.4% of the respondents feels confuse while working in Aizawl city and 15.5% in Lunglei town. Nearly a tenth (9.3%) of the respondents feels uncomfortable with 10% in Aizawl city and 7.7% in Lunglei town. The table 17 on the self-feeling of the respondents shows that an insignificant minority (4.6%) of the respondents feels enthusiastic. An insignificant minority (4.3%) of the respondents

feels insecure about themselves with 4.0% in Aizawl city and 5.5% in Lung lei town. However, an insignificant minority (0.6%) of the respondents feels scared to and extend that they no longer want to continue their works anymore with 0.5% in Aizawl city and 1.1% in Lunglei town.

Majority of the domestic workers are illiterate, unable to read or write. They are unable to communicate with their dear ones or with anybody else in faraway villages. Further, they suffer from inferiority for want of education. They live and work in a state of consistent fears they are afraid of being thrown out of their jobs. They are insecure about their personal safety, they have nowhere to go to and find shelter if they feel insecure (Srinivasan,S & Ponnuswami,I., 2013).

While at work, domestic workers face severe problems even in attending to nature's call as most employers won't let them use their washrooms. This is a major problem particularly for workers suffering from urinary bladder problems who have to use restrooms often. This is a serious problem, but remains un-spoken and un-discussed even among the workers themselves. Domestic workers generally feel shy talking about it or mentioning it in public.

In addition, the domestic workers often continue accepting whatever the employers pay them and are under constant fear that asking for revision of their salary may lead to termination from work as there would be many more workers who could be available for such work complying with the employer's decision.

**Table 8: Type as of Domestic Work**

<b>Sl.No</b>	<b>Conditions</b>	<b>Total N=300</b>	<b>Aizawl N=210</b>	<b>Lunglei N=90</b>
<b>1</b>	Live- in	228 (76)	148 (70.5)	80 (88.8)
<b>2</b>	Part time	34 (11.3)	29 (13.8)	5 (5.5)
<b>3</b>	Full time	34 (11.3)	29 (13.8)	5 (5.5)
<b>4</b>	Live- out	1 (0.3)	1 (.5)	0 (0.0)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>297 (98.9)</b>	<b>207 (98.6)</b>	<b>90 (100.0)</b>

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

**Table 9: Nature of Work**

<b>Sl.No</b>	<b>Condition</b>	<b>Total N=300</b>	<b>Aizawl N=210</b>	<b>Lunglei N=90</b>
<b>1</b>	Living in the same floor	194 (64.6)	139 (66.1)	55 (49.5)
<b>2</b>	Having separate room	191 (63.6)	124 (59.0)	67 (60.3)
<b>3</b>	Eating food along with them	159 (53)	126 (60)	33 (29.7)
<b>4</b>	Separate washing of clothes	82 (27.3)	66 (31.4)	16 (14.4)
<b>5</b>	Using separate utensils	17 (5.6)	17 (8.09)	0 (0.0)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>643 (214.1)</b>	<b>472 (224.5)</b>	<b>171 (153.9)</b>

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

**Table 10: Inhumane Treatment**

Sl.No	Conditions	Total N = 300	Aizawl N=210	Lung lei N=90
1	Separate cloth washing	65 (21.6)	34 (16.1)	31 (34.4)
2	Yelled often if food is undercooked	49 (16.3)	27 (12.8)	22 (24.4)
3	Absence of medical care while sick	23 (7.6)	14 (6.6)	9 (10)
4	Restrict to food consumption	11 (3.6)	3 (1.4)	8 (8.8)
5	Separate utensils	5 (1.6)	1 (0.4)	4 (4.4)
6	Separate diner	7 (2.3)	4 (1.9)	3 (3.3)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>160 (53)</b>	<b>83 (39.5)</b>	<b>77 (85.3)</b>

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

**Table 11: Sexual Harassment**

Sl.No	Conditions	Total N=300	Aizawl N=210	Lunglei N=90
1	Exposed to pornography	21 (7)	21 (10)	0 (0.0)
2	Eve-teasing	21 (7)	4 (1.9)	17 (18.8)
3	Unwanted physical contact	18 (6)	1 (0.4)	17 (18.8)
4	Leering or telling dirty jokes	13 (4.3)	2 (0.9)	11 (12.2)
5	Making sexual remarks about a person's body	12 (4)	5 (2.3)	7 (7.7)
6	Sexually colored remarks for sexual favor	8 (2.6)	4 (1.9)	4 (4.4)
7	Rape	4 (1.3)	4 (1.9)	0 (0.0)
8	Molestation	2 (0.6)	2 (0.9)	0 (0.0)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>99 (33)</b>	<b>43 (20.4)</b>	<b>56 (62.2)</b>

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

**Table 12: Employer's reaction over the work**

<b>Sl.No</b>	<b>Conditions</b>	<b>Total N=300</b>	<b>Aizawl N=210</b>	<b>Lunglei N=90</b>
<b>1</b>	Excuse	150 (50)	113 (47.5)	37 (44.6)
<b>2</b>	Forgiven	123 (41)	79 (33.2)	44 (53.0)
<b>4</b>	Penalize	13 (4.2)	11 (4.6)	2 (2.2)
<b>5</b>	Deduction in salary	7 (2.3)	7 (2.9)	0 (0.0)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>293 (97.6)</b>	<b>210 (88.2)</b>	<b>83 (100.0)</b>

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

**Table 13: Privacy**

<b>Sl.No</b>	<b>Conditions</b>	<b>Total N=300</b>	<b>Aizawl N=210</b>	<b>Lunglei N=90</b>
<b>1</b>	Given	200 (66.6)	148 (70.4)	52 (57.7)
<b>2</b>	Less isolation	75 (25)	44 (20.9)	31 (34.4)
<b>3</b>	No Privacy	25 (8.3)	18 (8.5)	7 (7.7)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300 (100.0)</b>	<b>193 (97.1)</b>	<b>90 (100)</b>

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)



**Table 14: Self feeling while working**

<b>Sl.No</b>	<b>Condition</b>	<b>Total N=300</b>	<b>Aizawl N=210</b>	<b>Lunglei N=90</b>
<b>1</b>	Comfortable	<b>196 (65.3)</b>	137 (65.2)	59 (65.5)
<b>2</b>	Confused	<b>38 (12.6)</b>	24 (11.4)	14 (15.5)
<b>3</b>	Uncomfortable	<b>28 (9.3)</b>	21 (10)	7 (7.7)
<b>4</b>	Insecure	<b>13 (4.3)</b>	8 (4.0)	5 (5.5)
<b>5</b>	Enthusiastic	<b>14 (4.6)</b>	11 (5.2)	3 (3.3)
<b>6</b>	Scary	<b>2 (0.6)</b>	1 (0.5)	1 (1.1)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>291 (97.0)</b>	<b>202 (100.0)</b>	<b>89 (98.6)</b>

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

## CHAPTER VII

### CHALLENGES OF WOMEN DOMESTIC WORKERS AND DRIVERS TO DOMESTIC WORK

This chapter presents the push and pulls factors and or the drivers to domestic work and the challenges faced by the work of women domestic workers.

#### 7.1 CHALLENGES OF DOMESTIC WORKERS

This section consists of the challenges faced by the respondents such as physical exertion, bargaining power, ill-treatment, and harassment viz., verbal harassment, sexual harassment and psychological harassment. Physical exertion is illustrated in table 15, and lack of bargaining power is given in table 16 and the table 17 shows the type of ill-treatment encountered by the respondents. However, table 18 gives the different forms of verbal harassment encountered by the respondents where table 19 illustrated the kinds of sexual harassment in their workplace and table 20 gives the results for psychological harassment encountered by the respondents.

##### 7.1.1 Physical exertion

Apart from the excessively working hours required in domestic work service, it has been noted that there is a meagre stand regarding kicking, hitting, slapping, beating, bullying as that entails woeful situation. The physical exertion experienced by the respondents is presented in table 8.

The physical exertion of the respondents shown in table 15 is that more than one tenth (11.7%) of the respondents reported that they are being slapped (4.3%), kicked (0.6%), beat and bully (0.9%) by their employers. The incidence is more prevalent among the respondents belonging to Lunglei town than that of the respondents belonging to Aizawl city. However, more than fourth-fifth of the entire respondents (88.3%) does not experienced at all. It has been note that many of the domestic workers were often scold for coming late to work (part-time) or taking a leave (full-time). This is relevant because *“Sometimes they ask us to wash clothes that we have already washed. They were even asked to wipe the floor with a cloth after mopping; if the employer feels that it is not clean enough”* (Bhattacharya, D. et. al, 2016). Notably, one of the respondents narrated that she needs to pretend that it

*does not affect her self-respect and continue to work suppressing her anger and humiliation while she got beaten from the employer's daughter with a broom. Another respondent also reported that the employers ask if she has seen the thing which went missing and when she says no, they leave at that. This also shows that there are more of situations when there is understanding between the employees an employer.*

### **7.1.2 Bargaining Power**

Domestic works differs from all other occupations and presents distinct characteristics as compared to other wage-earning jobs. The important distinction is with regard to the indefiniteness in wages, working hours, holidays, vocational training, work and life balance and health and safety of the workers. The challenges faced by the respondents in terms of negotiation and bargaining are presented in table 9 on the bargaining power of the respondents.

The bargaining power of the respondents shows in table 16 that nearly half (47%) of the total respondents are facing challenges in bargaining towards health and safety since some of the respondents exclaim that they hesitate to confront their employers when they feel ill and do not know whether they suffer from any diseases, like whether they had high blood pressure (BP), headache, giddiness, body pain, cough & cold and back pain, stomach-ache, gynae problems and diarrhoea or other cardiac diseases as well (Zechter et.al,1987). Similarly, nearly half of the respondents had faced challenges in regard to equal treatment (44%) in their living and working conditions evoking unwanted treatment feelings of slave since some of them were compelled to do multiple tasks at a time and that they are not treated as normal human beings since they were asked to eat their leftovers which has to be dump in the dustbin. Another important area is work-life balance and nearly one-third (32.3%) of the respondents are facing challenges in work-life balance as some of the respondents have to look after their family at home while attending the employer's household works. This incidence is more prevalent among the respondents in Aizawl city than the respondents in Lunglei town where the domestic workers are busy attending multiple tasks in a day. Further, more than one-fifth (26%) of the total respondents are working even on holiday as informed by their

employers. Domestic workers do not have any fixed number of duty leaves and extended leaves very often taking the risk of losing wages. Further, prolonged and regular leave also carry the entitlement of losing jobs. Annual holidays are unknown to most of the workers. When they go on leave from duty they have to make alternative arrangements by engaging other workers and if not will be at the risk of losing job. This condition has been a resulting factor for poor bargaining power. In regard to salary, almost an equal number of the total respondents are facing problems with their salary (21%) and with the working hours (20.6%) and has hesitation to talk about their wages even if they want an increment after working for more than 1 year. In fact, there is no legal contract between the employer and the employee, even though the monthly salary of the worker is usually decided through bargaining between the employer and the employee. In addition to the others, it is noted that nearly one-fifth (18.6%) of the respondents are expecting to undergo vocational course such as sewing, beauty culture, handicrafts, etc however, they were finally not permitted by the employers. Apart from the unduly hours of work required in domestic service, there is a woeful lack of stand regarding holidays, vocational training, work and life balance, and health and safety (including sick leave) of the domestic workers.

Ethnic stereotypes regarding skill and efficiency also affect the wages and treatment of domestic workers (Mehrotra, S.T., 2008). In sum, the wage structure and service packages are complex and variable, making it problematic to arrive at a uniform wage rate for domestic work even for a specific locality (Palriwala and Neetha, 2011). Thus, this brings difficulty in unionization and legislation and is used as an argument to justify the lack of regulation.

### **7.1.3 III Treatment**

Domestic work is associated with social stigma. Neighbours and family members considered domestic work as degrading to a woman's dignity (Bhattacharya, D. et. al, 2016). In many cases were given low-quality food and mostly leftovers and stale food, being isolated from their friends and families, withheld their wages and were being abuse from police. However, the havoc which

has taken place around the country is meagre in Mizoram which is shown in the table 6 on the ill treatment of the respondents.

The ill treatment of the respondents is shown in the table 17. The table shows that an insignificant minority (1%) of the respondents have experience isolation while working with 1.4% in Aizawl city and no incidence of isolation in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (0.6%) of the respondents receives poor quality food with 0.9% in Aizawl city and no incidence of poor-quality food in Lunglei town. The absence of privacy in workplace is reported by less than a tenth (3.6%) of the respondents with 4.2% in Aizawl city and 2.2% in Lunglei town. Less than one-tenth (2.3%) of the respondents experience withheld of their salaries with 1.9% in Aizawl city and 3.3% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (0.3%) of the respondents experience punishment from police just because they were migrants with 1.1% in Lunglei town alone.

Meanwhile, the excessive supervision by female employers was, according to many, a constant source of harassment and the reason for poor privacy. The continuous demand for perfection in their tasks, often with the employer watching closely while domestic workers go about their work, was by itself extremely stressful for the women domestic workers.

Another complaint expressed by the respondents is that employers are always finding fault. They have mentioned that they hardly hear anything positive about their work.

## **7.2 Harassment**

Many women and girls waged as domestic workers around the world had faced an appalling array of abuses. Verbal, sexual and psychological harassment against domestic workers is amongst these abuses. Harsh working conditions leave domestic workers vulnerable to different harassment at their workplaces. Though they were being deprived due to gender, class and social status, domestic workers are often at the receiving end of verbal, sexual and psychological abuse and this has been further aggravated due to their 'migrant' status. Migrants usually lack necessary community support in a situation of duress and the leverages and resources for social

action. Since most of the domestic workers are from a low socio-economic condition hence illiterate and are unaware of their rights, all these impending threats of loss of job and the stigma associated within has left them silenced. Therefore, the isolated and highly privatized nature of their workplaces and their isolation as migrant women and a low socio-economic condition puts them at higher risks of the harassment.

### **7.2.1 Verbal Harassment**

Verbal harassment has been classified into four main types viz., stalking online, and lustful staring at body parts, intimidation and not experiences any of the following. Verbal harassment of the respondents in table 7 shows that an insignificant minority (0.6%) of the respondents were stalked online with 0.9% in Aizawl city. An insignificant minority (1.3%) of the respondents experiences lustful staring of their body parts in their working place and some at the market with 0.9% in Aizawl city and 2.2% in Lunglei town. Less than a tenth (6.3%) of the respondents experience intimidation and the resultant factor is from Lunglei town itself i.e 21.1%.

Most of the respondents refuted any suggestion that male members of the households where they worked verbally abused them, commented on their physical appearance, or in any way attempted to physical harassment. However, most of them reported that they only worked when the women were present at home. Some of the worker also mentions that “becoming too friendly, using pet names, etc.” were tell-tale signs of the male employers trying to act playful with them. One of the KII reported that in some cases, employers insisted on hiring younger rather than older women domestic workers on the pretext of wanting efficiency, but often only because of a veiled sexual interest. Interestingly, the most common experience shared by the respondents is that of being stared at while working, especially while sweeping and swabbing floors.

### **7.2.2 Sexual harassment**

It is widely acknowledged that domestic workers find it very difficult to report sexual harassment at workplaces and are compelled to remain silent. This

could be because domestic workers are often blamed for the harassment. The power dynamics between employers and employees and fear of discrimination or dismissal also ensure that they are silenced. Lack of awareness of laws, doubtful mechanisms or stigma due to breach in confidentiality can also be responsible for the silence.

Sexual harassment consists of Sexual assault, Rape, Exposing to pornography and sexual demands and Stalking.

From the table 19, an insignificant minority (0.6%) of the respondents experience sexual assault with 0.4% in Aizawl city and 1.1% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (1%) of the respondents experience rape with 0.4% in Aizawl city and 2.2% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (1%) of the respondents were being exposed to pornography and sexual demands with 0.4% in Aizawl city and 2.2% in Lunglei town. Less than one-tenth (2.6%) experienced stalking while working with the resultant frequency of 1.9% in Aizawl city and 4.4% in Lunglei town.

Some of the workers stated that harassment at work, including sexual harassment, was rampant, even though none of the respondents admitted to having been rape in any way.

This is doubly problematic given that domestic workers would also often find it impossible given their own socialization to complain about the harassment and demand justice. Another kind of sexual harassment faced is in form of suggestive comments. A worker shared that male members of the household pass sexually suggestive comments such as expressing keenness to spend time with the domestic worker.

It is widely recognized that women domestic workers find it very difficult to report sexual harassment at workplaces and are forced to remain silent. This could be because women are often blamed for the harassment. The power dynamics between employers and employees and fear of discrimination or dismissal also engage them to keep silent. Lack of awareness of laws, little confidence in complaint mechanisms or stigma due to breach in confidentiality can also be responsible for the silence (Sanhita, 2007). Their economic vulnerability further

forces them into silence and it is believed that majority of such cases are not reported and are often hushed up.

### **7.2.3 Psychological harassment**

Besides the respect that the worker gives to her own work and that she receives from her own family, the respect that they get from their employer is critical. Some of the respondents receive verbal threats, jokes of sexual nature and unwanted physical contact which is given in table below with some issues on invasion of personal space; display of sexually offensive material unwanted comments on dress an appearance.

From the table 20, nearly a third (30%) of the respondents experience verbal threats with 4.7% in Aizawl city and 22.2% in Lunglei town. Less than a tenth (8%) of the respondents has encountered unwanted physical contact while working with 2.3% in Aizawl city and a bigger frequency of 21.1% in Lunglei town as compared to Aizawl. An insignificant minority (2%) of the respondents experience invasion of their personal space with 2.8% in Aizawl city. An insignificant minority (1%) of the respondents experience display of sexually offensive material and that was 1.4% within Aizawl city A minimum of one-fifth (6.6%) of the respondents has experience unwanted comments on their dress an appearance with 5.2% on Aizawl city and 18.8% in Lunglei town. One- tenth (10%) of the respondents has experience jokes of sexual nature with 6.1% in Aizawl city and 18.8% in Lunglei town.

The data has shown that there is considerably higher frequency of psychological harassment taking place in Lunglei town as compare to Aizawl city. This has also revealed that domestic workers in Aizawl city are treated with more respect and in a pleasant manner however it is just a little more than a tenth who has shown disrespect toward the employee with Lunglei town.

A few workers shared that employers scolded them if they reached late or even used foul language. Some workers highlighted that employers do not like being answered back. Most workers shared that employers test them from time-to-time, especially in the beginning of their work by leaving valuable items around in the house. At times they face theft accusations as well. Some workers faced a theft



accusation of stealing some food items, cash or jewellery though either valuable thing was found later where the worker was found guilty. The only option was to stop working at that house (Mehrotra, S.T, 2010).

In all the above-mentioned cases, workers had no access to any help or complaint mechanism against abusive behaviour. The only option was to quit work at the abusive employer's house. Yet, their need of money forces them to continue working.

### **7.3 DRIVERS TO DOMESTIC WORK**

Globalization, economic crises, political instability, conflicts, civil wars, ethnic cleanings, social inequality, the development of market economy, gender discrimination, the wider processes of transformation, made a solid soil for huge wave of migration in the world. Globalization has changed the way many people see the world. As people become more aware of living standards and lifestyles in other parts of the world, for example through television or the stories (and sometimes wealth) of returning expatriates, their understanding of their "relative" poverty has increased and their expectations have changed. This motivates people to migrate to secure greater income. There is also evidence that young people in particular consider migration because they want to escape the drudgery of subsistence living and see the bright lights of the big city (Cameron,S. & Newman, E.,2008).

#### **7.3.1 Push Factors to Domestic Work**

The factors driving women to domestic work in the context of Mizoram has been explored and the drivers into domestic work is analysed and presented in the table 21 push (in home) and pull factors (to other place). The push factors included the socio demographic characteristics and seen both at structural level and individual level. The study identified 10 drivers as a push factor to women to enter into paid domestic work and is presented in ranking order as family economic burden & financial insecurity, low social security illiteracy, low decision making power in the family, loss of parents/single, disputes at home, violent partner sexual abuse and ill treatment at home.

Firstly, the deterioration of the agricultural economy tremendously affected the economy of individual households and the push factors of the respondents shows that a maximum of 90% of the respondents are driven into domestic work due to family economic burden and financial insecurity with 74% in Aizawl city and 95.5% in Lunglei town. The remittance out of domestic work reduces the economic burden of their family and financially supporting them. This is found to be more common among the respondents belonging to Lunglei town district than the respondents belonging to Aizawl city.

Secondly, social security of the respondents shows that more than two-fifth (43.3%) of the respondents had mentioned the low social security with 52.8% in Aizawl city and 21.1% in Lunglei town. This is specifically for the respondents living with aged or elderly parents and the family does not have a regular income. Therefore, in such case, the respondents are having dole responsibility to provide social security to the elderly parent. This is much prevalent among the respondents from urban areas as compare to the respondents' from rural area.

Thirdly, rural-urban divides of the respondents show that more than one-fourth (36.6%) of the respondents has opted to domestic work due to urban-rural divides with 45.2% in Aizawl city and 16.6% in Lunglei town. Respondents seemed to have limited options in terms of job opportunities and enter the domain of domestic work in the absence of education, economic resources and other opportunities.

Fourthly, another significant reason is illiteracy. Among the respondents as many as more than one-fourth (36.6%) of the total respondents are illiterate with 45.2% in Aizawl city and 16.6% in Lunglei town. So, the respondents who are illiterate preferred to move-out of their original places and earn money out of domestic work. This is because that at home these respondents did only home making or else cultivating. Therefore, the respondents felt to have independent income out of domestic work and also prefer such works other than cultivation.

Fifthly, low decision power of the respondents shows that less than one third (29.9%) of the respondents has low decision powers in the family with 37.1% in

Aizawl city and 11.1% in Lunglei town. They lacked work proficiency and did not possess formal training. Basic poverty leads to poor bargaining capacity. The workers did not possess knowledge of alternate sources of income generation. Fatalism and superstition were all pervasive. Sixthly, an insignificant minority (7.3%) of the respondents opted for domestic work with 6.6% in Aizawl city and 8.8% in Lunglei town since they have alcoholic husbands who will get drunk all the time and that their husband would use all their savings for drinking. In addition, they have no proper and regular work in their area which could suffice their living. Also, their husbands earn a little income which only worsens their conditions. The table reflected that men should be the sole provider in the family instead they are just a burden for the family.

Seventhly, another reason for leaving their homes is due to violent behaviour of their partner. Violent behaviour of the respondents shows that less than a tenth (6%) of the respondents have problems with their husband with 7.1% in Aizawl city and 3.3% in Lung lei town. Most of the married domestic workers reported that their husbands were drunkards and beat them often even in a small issue. They often fight in front of their children too. So, the respondents reported that they would like to be freed from domestic violence but to live a life on their own.

Lastly, sexually abuse of the respondents' shows that an insignificant minority (2.3%) of the respondents reported sexually abuse with 1.4% in Aizawl city and 4.4% in Lunglei town. A minimum of less than one tenth (1%) has receive ill treatment with 1.4% in Aizawl city and 3.3% in Lunglei town.

### **7.3.2 Pull Factors of Domestic Work**

The pull factors include economic opportunity, experiencing different lifestyle, skill development, peer pressure, fancy lifestyle, exposure, migration for employment an due to love affairs. Firstly, the frequency of economic opportunity of the respondents shows that an overwhelming majority (94.6%) has reported that basic domain of domestic work is due to economic factors and the resultant factors is 94.2% in Aizawl city and 95.5% in Lunglei town.

Secondly, experiencing different lifestyle of the respondents shows that nearly half (43%) would like to experience different lifestyle so they work as domestic worker with 46.6% in Aizawl city and 34.4% in Lunglei town. Therefore, with this context, it is clear that the glamour of city life and the lifestyle of the rich has also lure them to domestic work (Madhumathi,M., 2013). Most of the respondents feel that they would develop their lifestyle through experiencing what the educated and intelligent people in the city are inculcating in their daily life and to bring back the good habits of city life to their family.

Thirdly, nearly half (43%) of the respondents would like to develop their skills through domestic work with 56.1% in Aizawl city and 12.2% in Lunglei town. However, due to globalisation and the growing pace of media in the country, most of the respondents feel that they indebted to acquire skills while they are still young since they have a low educational background. As a result, women and children migrate for work to address the economic problems of their family. Also, their lack of exposure to complex competitive urban life and absence of skills compel them to enter into the domain of unorganized sector like domestic work.

Fourthly, the peer pressure of having an income is strong among the respondents with nearly half (42%) exclaiming they had pressure from their friends and families to look for jobs. Nearly half (49.5%) of the respondents in Aizawl city and less than one-fourth (24.4%) in Lunglei town had peer pressure. The respondents has cited that majority of their friends are engaged in informal sector such as beauty parlour, baking, petty trade, street vendors (selling vegetables, fish and other house hold articles),etc and other menial jobs which compelled them to earn an income.

Fifthly, nearly a third (30.6%) has opted for domestic work due to fancy lifestyle with 37.1% in Aizawl city and 15% in Lunglei town.

Sixthly, less than a quarter (19.3%) would like to have exposure with 22.3% in Aizawl city and 12.2% in Lunglei town. However, some of them have to pay their debts that drive them to domestic work. This is found to be more common in Aizawl city as compared to Lunglei town.

Seventhly, more than a tenth (12%) migrates for employment with 2% in Aizawl city and 10% in Lung lei town. This is due to the fact that there are no available jobs in their place of origin. Poverty, lack of food and scarce job opportunities at their place of origin are the most important reason for migration.

Lastly, an insignificant minority (1.3%) leave their homes due to love affairs with 0.9% in Aizawl city and 2.2% in Lunglei town.

**Table 15: Physical exertion experienced by the Respondents**

Sl.No	Type	Total N=300	Aizawl N=210	Lunglei N=90
1	Slapping	13 (4.3)	11 (5.2)	2 (2.2)
	Kicking	2 (0.6)	1 (0.4)	1 (1.1)
	Hitting/ Beating/ Bullying	3 (0.9)	1 (.4)	2 (2.2)
	No harassment	265 (88.3)	189 (90)	76 (84.4)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>283</b> <b>(94.3)</b>	<b>202</b> <b>(96.1)</b>	<b>81</b> <b>(90)</b>

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

**Table 16: Lack of Bargaining Power by the Respondents**

Sl.No	Towards	Total N=300	Aizawl N=210	Lunglei N=90
1	Health & safety	141 (47)	110 (22.4)	31 (22.5)
2	Equal treatment	132 (44)	104 (21.2)	28 (20.3)
3	Work and life balance	97 (32.3)	84 (17.1)	13 (9.4)
4	Holidays	78 (26)	51 (10.4)	27 (19.6)
5	Wages	63 (21)	52 (10.6)	11 (8.0)
6	Hours of work	62 (20.6)	52 (10.6)	10 (7.2)
7	Vocational training	56 (18.6)	38 (7.7)	18 (13.0)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>629</b> <b>(209)</b>	<b>491</b> <b>(100.0)</b>	<b>138</b> <b>(100.0)</b>

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

**Table 17: Type of Ill treatment encountered by the Respondents**

<b>Sl.No</b>	<b>Conditions</b>	<b>Total N=300</b>	<b>Aizawl N= 210</b>	<b>Lunglei N=90</b>
<b>1</b>	No privacy	11 (3.6)	9 (4.2)	2 (2.2)
<b>2</b>	Withheld wages	7 (2.3)	4 (1.9)	3 (3.3)
<b>3</b>	Being isolated	3 (1)	3 (1.4)	0 (0.0)
<b>4</b>	Poor quality food	3 (0.9)	2 (0.9)	1 (1.1)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>24 (7.8)</b>	<b>18 (8.4)</b>	<b>6 (6.6)</b>

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

**Table 18: Verbal harassment encountered by the Respondents**

<b>Sl.No</b>	<b>Conditions</b>	<b>Total N=300</b>	<b>Aizawl N=210</b>	<b>Lunglei N=90</b>
<b>1</b>	Not experience	248 (82.6)	195 (92.8)	53 (58.8)
<b>2</b>	Intimidation	19 (6.3)	0 (0.0)	19 (21.1)
<b>3</b>	Lustful staring at parts of your body	4 (1.3)	2 (0.9)	2 (2.2)
<b>4</b>	Stalking online	2 (0.6)	2 (0.9)	0 (0.0)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>273 (90.8)</b>	<b>199 (94.6)</b>	<b>74 (82.2)</b>

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

**Table 19: Sexual harassment encountered by the Respondents**

<b>Sl.No</b>	<b>Act</b>	<b>Total N=300</b>	<b>Aizawl N=210</b>	<b>Lunglei N=90</b>
<b>1</b>	Stalking	8 (2.6)	4 (1.9)	4 (4.4)
<b>2</b>	Exposing to pornography and sexual demands	3 (1)	1 (.4)	2 (2.2)
<b>3</b>	Sexual assault	2 (0.6)	1 (.4)	1 (1.1)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>13 (4.3)</b>	<b>6 (2.8)</b>	<b>7 (7.7)</b>

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

**Table 20: Psychological harassment encountered by the Respondents**

<b>Sl.No</b>	<b>Intentions/Demeans</b>	<b>Total N=300</b>	<b>Aizawl N=210</b>	<b>Lunglei N=90</b>
<b>1</b>	Verbal threats	30 (10)	10 (4.7)	20 (22.2)
<b>2</b>	Jokes of sexual nature	30 (10)	13 (6.1)	17 (18.8)
<b>3</b>	Physical contact	24 (8)	5 (2.3)	19 (21.1)
<b>4</b>	Unusual comments on dress and appearance	20 (6.6)	11 (5.2)	9 (10)
<b>5</b>	Invasion of personal space	6 (2)	6 (2.8)	0 (0.0)
<b>6</b>	Display of sexually offensive material	3 (1)	3 (1.4)	0 (0.0)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>113 (37.6)</b>	<b>48 (22.8)</b>	<b>65 (72.2)</b>

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)



**Table 21: Drivers to Women Domestic Workers**

Sl.No	Conditions	Classification	Total N = 300	Aizawl N = 210	Lunglei N = 90
1	Push Factor	Family economic burden & Financial insecurity	286 (95.3)	200 (95.2)	86 (95.5)
		Low social security	130 (43.3)	111 (52.8)	19 (21.1)
		Rural/Urban divides	110 (36.6)	95 (45.2)	15 (16.6)
		illiteracy	101 (33.6)	95 (45.2)	6 (6.6)
		Low decision power in the family	88 (29.3)	78 (37.1)	10 (11.1)
		Loss of parents/Single	43 (14.3)	37 (17.6)	6 (6.6)
		Disputes at home	22 (7.3)	14 (6.6)	8 (8.8)
		Violent partner	18 (6%)	15 (7.1%)	3 (3.3)
		Sexual abuse	7 (2.3)	3 (1.4)	4 (4.4)
		Ill treatment	3 (1)	3 (1.4)	3 (3.3)
2	Pull Factors	Economic opportunity	284 (94.6)	198 (94.2)	86 (95.5)
		Experiencing different lifestyle	129 (43)	98 (46.6)	31 (34.4)
		For skill development	129 (43)	118 (56.1)	11 (12.2)
		Peer pressure	126 (42)	104 (49.5)	22 (24.4)
		Fancy lifestyle	92 (30.6)	78 (37.1)	14 (15)
		exposure	58 (19.3)	47 (22.3)	11 (12.2)
		Migration for employment	12 (4%)	2 (0.95)	10 (11.1)
		Due to love affairs	4 (1.3)	2 (0.9)	2 (2.2)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>834 (277.8)</b>	<b>647 (100.0)</b>	<b>187 (100.0)</b>

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

## **CHAPTER VIII**

### **QUALITATIVE INFORMATION ON WORKING AND LIVING CONDITIONS OF WOMEN DOMESTIC WORKERS**

This chapter is solely based on qualitative analysis generated out of case studies of women domestic workers. It analyzes the working and living conditions of women domestic workers through FGDs and knowledge enhancement of the living and working conditions of women domestic workers through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs).

#### **8.1 Women Domestic Workers**

Abrera (1996) mentioned that domestic workers suffer from violence at the workplace. Women and children are by far the most seriously and most commonly affected by physical and psychological abuses. The study found that, nonetheless, abuses ordinarily come from the employer or his/her family; however, in households with more than one employee, co-worker violence also arises as a result of rivalry and interaction between workers. Among the main motive of violence in this context, incidences of the servile and isolated nature of the work; the perception of domestic work as an inferior occupation; the traditional attitude that women and children are subordinate and inferior; the consideration of domestic workers as the cause of domestic quarrels or the victims of family violence; and the lack of awareness by domestic workers of their legal rights are common. However, these conditions have been highlighted in the case studies presented below where women domestic workers have shared their problems in regards to their working and living conditions.

##### **8.1.1 Case Studies**

The case studies have been conducted with six women domestic workers living in Aizawl city and Lunglei town respectively. In-depth interviews were conducted with the women domestic workers using multi-faceted understanding of the complex issues. A case study is an in-depth study of one person, group, or event. In a case study, nearly every aspect of the lived experiences of the client is analyzed to seek

patterns and causes of behaviour. For the case study purpose, the researcher obtains prior consent for voluntary participation of the respondents.

Therefore, using the constructivist framework, the researcher presents the individual case records of the six respondent participants using direct quotes from the participants and the emergent finding of the qualitative research is generated out of case studies.

Throughout the text, the researcher refers to the women domestic worker who has been engaging in domestic work under different forms of working and living conditions as participants. The interview questions form a framework for text; so the cases closely represent the participants' narratives as elicited in the interviews, thereby maintaining the sense and integrity of the data as well as the flow of the participant's constructed experience. The inclusion criteria include women domestic workers who attain the age of 18 years and above. The participation in case studies is voluntary in nature. The given names are fictitious to protect the identities of the respondent. All the statements and quotations are taken directly from the transcripts without correction of grammar or syntax. The interviewer's observations or clarifications inside quotes are placed in brackets.

### **Case 1 – Mrs Zuali : Case on Molestation**

#### Identification

The researcher identified the client, Mrs Zuali through the domestic worker's organisation named 'Ferrando Domestic Workers Alliance (FDWA)' which is situated in Durtlang, Aizawl, Mizoram. The researcher contacted her through Whatsapp asking for prior consent to participate in the research provide better understanding on the client's lived and working experiences. Due to pandemic and also with respect to the client's preference, the researcher has telephonic interviews with Mrs Zuali. The duration of the session ranges between 20-25 minutes per interview.

## Personal Information

The client, Mrs Zuali is 30 years of age at the time of interview. She is raised in a Bru community and belongs to Christian religion since she was raised by the Baptist missionaries in their place. The client has a nuclear family living at Putlungasih, Lunglei district, Mizoram. Her family environment was strict but yet they had the freedom to what they wanted to do as long as they chose what is right. Zuali's parents were not in good terms with each other. She was closer to her mother and her brother who is three years elder to her was closer to father. She goes on to say, —he had a better rapport than I had, but I wouldn't call it a good father-son relationship either. She grew up admiring her mother who was strict but yet very responsible who went out of her way to help others. Zuali felt her father was more approachable than mother as she was strict but as she grew up her relationship with her father deteriorated because of her father's relationship with mother. They lived in a colony type of a house where she made friends with a lot of others in her colony. The educational status shows that the client has completed Class-IV in formal education. She calls herself as a fun loving, outgoing extrovert as a child. However, the client has dropped out of school due to lack of interest in education. She works as a waiter in the tea stall run by her aunty. Then, the client got married at the age of 23 years old and blessed with two children. Unfortunately, she got divorce in 2015. The main reason for her divorce was due to the husband's alcoholic. Due to certainty of having income the client chose domestic work. So, she left her two children behind her parents and migrated to Aizawl city. The client has lived in rented house and working as a part-time domestic worker during day time while engaging in vocational skills training in tailoring during night time at Mission Veng, Aizawl City since 2017. It is noted that the client apart from having independent income has committed for skills development of income generation activity. The client Zuali had informed that more than half of her monthly income i.e. Rs 3000- 4000 (approx) has been sent regularly to her parents for her children.

## Case Analysis

The client, Mrs Zuali who has been working as a part-time domestic worker was molested by the employer at her workplace. She was working as a part time domestic worker at Chanmari West, Aizawl. She left her job due to the incident that her employer has been molested twice at her workplace. The abuse was like a little secret between the employer and the client. The incidences on the molestation are more likely of physical sex abuse which has taken place in 2019. The client says,

*'I was working in the kitchen cleaning the dishes and suddenly I was holding it from the back trying to touch my breast. I was frustrated trying to shout but my mouth was wrapped by the hand of my employer (the husband). The employer takes off his hand and requests me not to tell anyone in the house. I was frustrated and all I can remember is I does not like the situation.'*

The second abuse was perpetrated again after one month of the previous incident. It was the day when the entire employer's family gathered for marriage. She was told that they would come home late. She then took a nap in the sitting room after cleaning the house. She was fast asleep and did not realise the early coming home of the employer. Then suddenly, the employer touches the body parts of the client as she reported.

*'I wasn't sure at first who is touching my body since I was in a sound sleep. I screamed a lot out of fear. Later, soon I figured out it was again my employer but there was no one who could hear my voice since the house is empty. Out of sudden, I cried out and ran towards my room. He then begs me not to tell anyone. However, this is the second time and I could no longer hide anymore and tell one of my closest friends through telephone.'*

## Impact

The client speaks about the pain she underwent after she found herself molested twice by the employer (husband) of the house. She explains the act as the most gruesome ever. She goes on to say, *'I never knew what pain was until the day I was taken in the hands of FDWA staff. The truth is I am uneducated and a divorcee*

*but knows what ought to be done... that too in the crudest way possible. Oh my..that pain...I still have chills while I speak about it. I can still feel the pain.'*

Since the client has overcome many obstacles in her marriage life with her ex husband, she now feeling very sensitive towards molestation and that she hated every man due to her past experiences. So, psychological treatment is suggested for her recovery.

### Coping

In the first place, the client contacted her friends about her condition. Her friend refers her to contact FDWA. The client contact them through telephone and FDWA took up the case. The client immediately gave her first-hand information to the coordinator, Ferrando Domestic Workers Alliance (FDWA) through telephone. The social worker then takes up the matter and plan to intervene the case. However, the client requested not to meet the employer as she already informed the employer's wife about the situation as well as her full salary including due payment of salary from the employer is received. Therefore, the social worker terminated the case after providing a motivational and psychosocial counselling.

*'You know I tried everything... my own.. healing myself.. getting from someone else.. trying to forget it..reading about it..but I strongly feel Jesus is the one who heals. I would want to experience the same thing again it feels good to know God has healed you. I don't want my children to face such situation in their future as well- Zuali'.*

Her first healing experience came from understanding molestation through her friend's explanation and that makes her understanding the situation as sexual abuse and no way responsible for what h for which had happened. This realization was the first step in her healing journey. This friend brought to her different articles that spoke of molestation. She logged into facebook forum where people discussed about molestation, she made her read through the forum as she felt vulnerable to access the information from her own login id and *'Opening up and reading about*

*others who went through abuse and their healing journey made me come into terms with the abuse’ - Zuali.*

## **Case 2 – Ms Dengi : Case on Verbal and Physical Abuse**

### Identification

The researcher identified the client ‘Dengi’ through snowballing that she used to be abused verbally and physically by the employer and for which the client would like to leave her workplace. The client voluntarily consent for case studies and information is elicited in person. The session lasted for one hour per session. The client, Ms Dengi The researcher contacted her through Whatsapp and asked her consent whether she would like to participate in the research on her working and living conditions. The researcher requests to meet up face-to-face. Dengi accepted the proposal and the researcher is able to collect information in person. The session lasted for one hour.

### Case Analysis

The client, Dengi is 20 years of age at the time of interview. She is born and raised at Thaidawr, Mamit district, Mizoram. She is a Christian by religion and lives in Mizo community. She belongs to nuclear family. The client completed her matriculation in the year 2018 and drop out of school due to economic problems following which she joins domestic work service and earns Rs 200 per day as part-time domestic worker. The client was raised in a very disciplined and spiritual manner. She lived with her parents and an elder brother and was raised up without a television in the house which means raising them up without any form of entertainment or fun. The client memories of having fun was during the summer holidays that she spent with her grandparents and cousins in the native place Thus, she loves reading and kept things to herself as a child.

The incidence of abuse was a confidential between the researcher and the client that has taken place in 2020. She says,

*'I was working here since March, 2019. After working, I immediately quit the job since I did not like the form of family they are. The employer was an alcoholic and his son is addicted to heroin. I am not welcomed at the house on my first day. I was not allowed to sit among them and let me eat separately. On my first night, after cleaning and washing all the dishes, the employer's son came to my room and let me buy cigarette and betel nuts at 9:40PM. It was dark and I was scared of the silence and the dark. After I reached home, the employer came to my room and shout at me like I went out without his permission. I am not satisfied with the way they treated me from the first day. After two days, I got a new job as waiter in tea stall and started working hoping that the work would be comfortable and I would be free from pressure. So, I left my workplace and join the tea stall'.*

Unfortunately, soon after the employer's son, who is drug addict came to the client's new workplace and abused her verbally and physically, slapping her on face and also threatened her in front of all the other people calling her 'whore' and 'useless'. The client was not sure of situation, really felt shy and cried out of shame.

#### Impact

*'I hate everyone...everything... my mom, my dad, my aunt, my uncle... everyone and everything... hatred was filled in me... the impact of abuse was too much to hold it to myself. I couldn't I tell you...I hated...hated... hated everything... I was so full of hatred- Dengi'*

The client develops a sense of withdrawal and wanted to be isolate. She is not sure whether she would even continue to work as a domestic worker again. She lost faith in other family and is afraid that she will experience another worse situation.

#### Coping

After having the client's information, the researcher then reported the situation to the FDWA. The FDWA took up the case with two MSW students from MZU and gave information on the actions of the employer's son. The employers admitted that their son's action was disapproved, illegal and against the law. The



agency FDWA respect the decision of the client whether to find a court case but then the client finally stop without furtherance to court case.

### **Case 3 –Ms Mimi : Case on Immodest Behaviour from Employer**

#### Identification

Mimi contacted the researcher via whatsapp through FDWA staff expressing her interest in participating in research after interacting with the staff of FDWA. She identified herself fitting into the research criteria. Mimi and the researcher made friends before the researcher started interviewing her for the study. Mimi and the researcher carried out a working and living conditions of women domestic workers awareness program while conducting the second focus group discussion. The interview lasted for 2 hours.

#### Case Analysis

The client is 21 years old a registered domestic worker at Peace Home, Durtlang, Aizawl City. She belongs to nuclear family, her father is a cultivator and her mother is housewife living with her younger brother. The family is living below poverty line. Another of her younger brother passed away in his childhood due to spastic and died when he was 5 years of age. She client studied up to Class-VIII and drop out of school due to their poor economic conditions then she migrated to Aizawl city in 2020 earning Rs 5500/- per month.. In addition, the client often see the parents fighting for one or the other reason and grew up getting scared of loud voices and screams saying, *'Me and my brother were feeling scared when we were young . You know, because we never opened up. We never spoke because when they were always fighting when we can talk. Sometimes my brother will tell... I will be sleeping at night and my brother will tell..you know, in between the night they will be fighting. So that used to me to be very scared. That insecurity, whether they will separate. And all these things'*

In 2019, the client worked with a family having three adult members (siblings) being her employers. One of the siblings was a medical doctor who had divorced after having one child. He drinks quite a lot. In the presence of other family

members, he was behaving quite well towards the client. However, as disturbed by alcohol, the doctor took many days off from work and disturbed the client's privacy by trying interacting with her. She testified that one day while sitting in the living room the doctor sat very close to the client and tried chatting with her. Her movement was followed by him even in the kitchen or other places saying that the client looks like his ex-girlfriend. Further, he sent her to buy liquor many a times which the client felt embarrassed and ashamed of herself. Eventually, she decided to quit the job but again have to search for another employment.

The situation is utmost worse, one day shocking to the client, he suddenly came to the room of the client without putting shirt and just with shorts. Therefore, the client ran out of the room and venting herself nearby. After few moment, she return back to home and did not disclose the incidence to other family members.

*'It was more terrifying than what was happening there. I mean, he started squeezing my chest and he was touching my in my private parts. I dint scream. I don't know why. I don't know why, that fear was choking I think. I cant scream. That you know, inside I was screaming but I couldn't scream outside. That choking sensation was there in me- Mimi'*

The other event was while playing with two years old son of the doctor. The child accidentally fell on the ground while playing with his toys. The client immediately tried helping the child and the doctor came and pulled her from her hair which was hurtful and which she was extremely afraid of. From that moment onwards, she left the working place and return to her native village.

#### Impact

Mimi developed severe stomach cramps that lead to vomiting. She often vomited and disliked food *'this man was trying to hug and kiss me - that was also one of my factors to vomit. I have my own emotional turmoil at times. I break down. As a person I've become who I am carrying a lot of remorse and pain ... I've become so anti social and I don't trust people'*.

Thus, she firstly narrated of her being abuse to her grandmother mainly to release her feelings. And secondly, she verbalised the incidence of abuse to her mother by saying,

*'You are responsible, yes. But your awareness ... your levels of awareness and your level of exposure... everything was... so and it happened and you don't feel guilty about it. I am not blaming you'.*

The mother of the client mentions that the client herself kept away from opposite gender. Since then the client resented from any form of attention received from boys and kept herself away from romantic or sexual relationship that is unlikely of teenage girls or young adult. She is still feeling guilty and under confident thinking that she could have stop the abuse and even pass it on the information to other people including the family members.

### Coping

The client moving towards recovering from the psychosocial challenges faced out of sexual abuse and verbal abuse. Her grandmother and mother provide continuous psychosocial support. Interestingly, as she reported the entire episode to her only brother, the brother engaging her in happy moment. As said by the client, her brother plays an important role in providing coping from the traumatic experience of abuse.

### **Case 4 - Ms Chhantei : Case on Racial discrimination and Withheld Wages**

#### Identification

The researcher contacted the client through FIWDC and virtual interaction was started. After building a rapport, case study was begin with the client. The telephonic interview lasted for 25-30 minutes

#### Case Analysis

The client, Chhantei is 19 years old coming from Bru community and living in Tripura. She belongs to nuclear family. After completion of Class-VI, she was

sponsored for her education by one of her mother's friend. In return, she has to assist in domestic work at home and she did not receive salary for the job. The client comes from authoritarian family. her father is a Christian missionary corresponding for 18 schools in her area. Her mother is a housewife busy engaging with lots of people who were sick and in need of help. Saying that 'it was a rare opportunity to leave her parents as they were so busy'. Therefore, the client engage herself in reading a lot of books, did not socialise with anyone and kept things to herself with a feeling of insecurity. She felt threatened by happy moment.

The client migrated to Aizawl for domestic work t the age of 14years old in 2017 and return home after two years. She went back to her hometown in 2019. During her stay for three months or so, the employer treats her as a burden and started insulting in regards to her tribe and community accompanied by irregular payment of her salary. Therefore, the client decided to leave the house which the employer reluctant of it and she even inform the story to her friends and relatives in the city.

*'My uncle (employer), they had two children. My uncle and those two children they used to tease me that I am very fat and black. They even tell me that I should use fairness cream in order to look like them... I didn't reply back. I felt so small thinking that I am the ugliest person on earth. All these nonsense...like emotional harassment...they have displayed in me and i can never feel confident about my skin and my face'.*

#### Impact

*The client is introvert and like to be alone. She did not like socialisation and wants to be isolated. 'I will only wait to get to home. That too inside my room. That was like cocoon like. I just .. I felt I am secured in the inside world. And outside world is not secured for me. Including my parents -they can't even protect me'.* The client develop inferiority complex and lose her confidence that she could not take control of the situation but blaming her parents for letting her go away from them. The client built up angry over the years which she vented out as an adult. She says

*'she doesn't comb her hair neither dress up appropriately nor hesitant to show her face in public'.*

### Coping

The source of coping for the client is her childhood friend. She reunited with her childhood friend after long distance. The client often discloses her situation and struggles in life. However, the friend became a source of psychosocial support consoled through bible scriptures and praying to God. Though she belongs to a conservative Christian family, the client never felt direct connection with God. Later which the client could continue to do bible reading and praying to God independently and cope up with the experiences.

### **Case 5 – Ms Esther: Case on Intimidation and threatening**

#### Identification

The researcher identified the client, Esther through contact from neighbourhood as the neighbour often approaches the researcher for professional assistance .At first, rapport was built with the lady from the neighbor who has an experience of domestic work and also interest on the researcher research on working and living conditions of women domestic worker in Mizoram.

#### Case Analysis

The client, Esther is 20 years of age. She lives with her parents in Damchhora, Tripura with her parents and two younger sisters. She was raised in a conservative Christian family. Both her parents worked and were busy with their work most of the time. Father fulfilled his duty as a provider for the family and hardly expressed his love either physically or verbally. Mother was also busy working. Thus, a client felt a serious disconnect with her mother. She craved for physical form of love from her parents but she never got any. She was closer to her sister and felt protective of her. She discussed and disclosed a lot of things to her sister as she was the only one she could speak her heart out too. She felt being out of her house was safer and happier. The client performed well in academics and participated in debate and speech at school. She completed Class-X and drop out of school due to their economic

problems. Finally, the client migrated to Lung lei as a domestic worker earning Rs 4000 per month as a live-in domestic worker.

The journey of domestic working of the client begins in 2015. She migrated from Tripura to Aizawl, Mizoram and shifted to Lunglei town as referred by her friends. There were two domestic workers in the same household. One of the sons of the employer is drunkard and used to drink alcohol at home with his friends. She often got scolding from him when he is drunk. He usually used to send her to buy eatables late at night and sometimes touch her body forcefully. One night, since her room has no locking system, she slept with her friend downstairs who is also a domestic worker like. The togetherness of the two domestic workers was not permitted. The son complains and scolded her for sleeping with her friend, and also for not doing their job well. On the other hand the employer's daughter had complained them too. The client hardly find time to eat and rest and left the job after working for five months and no more tolerance to verbal, mental, sexual and physical torture.

### Impact

*'The period between those 6months of working as a domestic worker: haaa... I think that was time, the most struggling part in my life. I thought that I was not good in cooking and preparation for lunch. Hated myself. Hated the way I am and all that because was treated just like a slave. I dint think i had a personality or anything of that sort. So there was a lot of self pity. That I practice myself. I would love everyone else but myself. I would encourage everyone else but myself. I support everyone else but myself. Major self doubt i lived it. Major under confidence. I think that was the period. Add to it that was the part of time I was searching for a dignified job. I was searching for job and I need money so badly. Someone apart from, beyond my parents and my brother. I think that was the search. I think, I was searching for an identity and a job'.*

As she grew up, the feeling of being violated took over her and that made her think if she is worthy enough for anyone. She had tremendous fear of the future and asked God why it had to happen to her. She doubted herself and lived in self pity and self-condemnation for a long time.

## Coping

The first person whom the client has spoken about her abuse was her friend, Mary. She spoke to her as and when she was threatened and abused. She did that with the only motive of keeping her protected. She considered her friend as a soul mate. They kept the story with themselves without sharing to anyone. Then after which they both decided and contacted the FIWDC Durtlang agency protecting the rights of domestic worker.

Secondly, she reported the incidences to her mother. Her mother consoles her through scriptures and Esther started her healing journey when she felt she heard God's voice. She started reading Scripture and having fellowship with other followers of Christ. Her neighbour, who was a believer in Christ, helped her out as she kept struggling often. He helped her look at the issue from a different perspective and made her focus more on God. This strengthened her to hold on to God and resist what she felt was not right before Him.

### **8.2 Results of Focus Group Discussions**

A focus group discussion (FGD) is a pre-determine, planned and facilitated discussion among a small group of people or stakeholders designed to obtain information, perceptions, opinions, views, etc. of the participants to a particular area of interest which is done in a permissive, non-threatening environment (USAID,2008). Therefore, the focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted to gather in-depth information pertaining to understand the social support and coping strategies adopted by the women domestic workers in order to enrich the living and working conditions.

The study had four sets of focus group discussions that were conducted with the women domestic workers through online platform at night-time. The main reason for having through online mode is that due to the standard operation procedure on mobility restrictions during pandemic. And many of the participants were unavailable daytime due to their works. So, the discussion was conducted through Zoom Meeting. The participation in FGD is voluntary and informed consent

was obtained. The meeting lasted for between 45 minutes to 1 hour long. There were eight (8) participants in each of the group and the discussion was facilitated by the researcher. The inclusion criteria include a women domestic worker between the ages of 18-30years. Majority of the participants in all the four FGDs were live-in domestic workers followed by part-time domestic workers.

The purpose of conducting focus group discussion (FGDs) was to have better understanding on the working and living conditions of women domestic workers in Mizoram. It was indeed an exploration of the nature and quality of social support received by the participants in terms of their working and living conditions. In fact, the study has highlighted the supporter that is proven to be a literal life-saver. The resolutions generated out of the four FGDs are summarized into 5 themes as discussed below:

#### 8.2.1 Knowledge and Awareness on Policy Implementation and Regulation of Domestic Workers

In all the FGDs, the responses generated out from the participants shows that the awareness level and knowledge regarding the policy implementation of domestic worker is very weak. According to Ms A *“I have work as domestic worker since the past two years and I am not aware of the policy and regulations of domestic work. My employers have never talk about it and I am not as well registered in any union. I am not aware that there is an NGO who is working for the safety of domestic workers”*. According to Ms C *“I always wish there would be an NGO or any union for the upliftment of our status. Now that I’ve heard the NGOs are taking up certain measures for our betterment and I would show much interest for unionization of domestic work”*. For most of the participants, domestic work is a hidden work that requires dedication and hard work. The participants are not aware that the ILO is taking steps for decent work. Moreover, the participants acknowledge that they did not know the importance of union and working together as a group can manifest good product for their rights and dignity.



### 8.2.2 Reasons for joining in Domestic Work Service

All the participants of the focus group discussions reported that their main reason for joining domestic work service is due to low economic conditions. Participants want to get involved in FDWA movement through registration in FDWA programme so that they could belong to a structured group that facilitates their growth and development. The group members also shared that they want to experience city life in freelance as they were attracted by the lifestyle of the city. Participants expressed their feeling of contentment when they are economically independent and also sending remittance to financially support their family at homes. However, on the other hand, the participants acclaimed for that they were unskilled and unorganized laborers and the domestic work does not require any skills or qualifications to enter into the domain of domestic work.

### 8.2.3 Working and Living Conditions of Domestic Workers

All the women participants gave verbal consent for an one-to-one meeting with the researcher. To ensure anonymity, the woman chose a pseudonym by which to be known. In regards to the nature of work, all the participants reported that there is no specific work assigned to them and that they do all kinds of works. According to Ms D *“I woke up at 6:00am and prepare food for the family of the employer. I wash all the utensils and in between I clean up the house and washes clothes every day. Each member of the family requested to wash their clothes separately which takes a lot of time. I also look after elder person in the family and feed him day and night. I cook for the evening meal. I hardly have spare time during daytime and I am usually exhausted by night time”*. The participants reported that they hardly work for extra hours in a day. They also mention that their employers were kind towards them and they have no such difficulties in their living space. They were provided with separate rooms and eat food along with them. However, few of the participant respondents reported that their employers keep an eye on them and cross check their works every once in a while, that was irritating to them.

#### 8.2.4 Issues and Challenges faced by Domestic Workers

The participants of women domestic workers are no exception to all sorts of problems and difficulties. The issues and challenges underlined by the participants mainly focus on the work regulation such as no day off, less privacy, heavy workload and demands of money from their families. The participants reported that the expectation of the family on the amount of the remittances became a major burden for them as they need to calculate their personal share or pocket money out of the salary and finally felt that their income was insufficient. Participants do sometimes feel insecure and left-out in their working place as they did responsible for the job alone. At the same time some of the participants also reported that they were being cared by their employers and they did not face much difficulty while working with them.

#### **8.3 Key Informant Interviews**

For the purpose of key interview (KII), semi-structured open ended questionnaires were used. The responses generated through the KIIs were analyzed using thematic analysis. Therefore, the themes generated out of the KIIs were categorized into two main domains namely strategy for empowerment of women domestic workers and coping strategies on living and working conditions of women domestic workers. The KIIs is one of the methods for generating qualitative data. The study has conducted seven KIIs and the informants comprised of the Joint director, Deputy Director, Labour and Employment, Government of Mizoram, Manager, Women Helpline and Coordinator, FDWA, Mizoram which will incorporate with the social support received, the coping mechanism and women domestic workers.

#### **8.2.5 Strategy for empowerment of women domestic workers:**

In the process of unionization of domestic workers, the governmental and non-governmental agencies have to use various techniques and strategies to create awareness and to be part of the Domestic Workers Movement. Furthermore, sensitization of the stakeholders is emphasized. Therefore, without proper planning

and strategies, mobilising women domestic workers to form a union, it would not be successful. A strategy is a detailed plan in order to be able to achieve something concrete so that the outcome of a particular task is successful. The different strategies for empowerment of women domestic worker include:

- a) Organising and strengthening women domestic workers groups and unions.
- b) Empowerment of the domestic Workers to claim services from governmental programmes
- c) Boosting the social and technical competencies of the domestic workers.
- d) Empowerment of women domestic workers to obtain assistance in times of emergency and or crisis.
- e) Setting up and equipping the transit centre at various locations especially at the easy approachable places (like the centre of the city)
- f) Protection of the children of women domestic workers.
- g) Raising public awareness on the issues and challenges faced by the women domestic workers.
- h) Networking and lobbying
- i) Training and capacity building of project staff
- j) Monitoring and timely evaluation of the organisation.

## CHAPTER IX

### SOCIAL SUPPORT AND COPING STRATEGIES ON THE WORKING AND LIVING CONDITIONS OF WOMEN DOMESTIC WORKERS IN MIZORAM

#### 9.1 Social Support of Women Domestic Workers

The social support and coping strategies of women domestic workers is generated through structured interview schedule. As discussed in Chapter 2.4, there are two types of support systems – the formal and informal social support. This study is based on the informal social support where participants expressed that their source of support is received from individual social networks, such as family, friends, relatives, community leaders, church leaders and romantic partner. The informal social support of women domestic workers in Mizoram is presented in Table 22 – 33.

##### 9.1.1 When needed to talk

From table 22, we can identify the social support received by the participants from focus group discussion. Nearly a majority (73.3%) of the respondents receives support from their parents when they needed to talk regarding personal, romantic, family or any other kind of relationship. Less than half (43.3%) of the respondents would like to share their secrets to their friends. More than a tenth (18.3%) of the respondents would like to share with their romantic partner which is more prevalent in Lunglei town by 11.9%. a little more than a tenth (14.6%) of the respondents shares with their employer and also a tenth (10%) of the respondents shares their problems with their community leaders. An insignificant minority (3.6%) of the respondents shares with church leaders which is 2.3% in Aizawl city and 6.6% in Lunglei town. The study has make sure that parents are the building blocks for every of their child and that they are responsive parents when their child is in need to talk on any matters. It is a surprise to know that a tenth (10%) of the respondents are sharing their grievances and problems with their community leaders and this has shown that the community has taken much effort in looking after their own community and that they are friendly and open towards every member in their

society. This has shown the close-knit group of society as a whole. Also, the table shows that there is a close relationship between the employer and the employee since more than a tenth (14.6%) of the respondents agreed to share their own personal and family situations and problems with their employer.

It has been studied that for other minority groups such as women domestic workers and other racial minorities, family is a significant source of social support, in part because family members commonly share minority backgrounds (D'Augelli and Hershberger, 1993).

### **9.1.2 Whose lives do you feel you are an important part of?**

Table - 23 gives the description regarding who plays an important part in the lives of domestic workers. Nearly a majority (74.6%) of the respondents revealed that “mother” plays an integral part in their lives which is 69.5% in Aizawl city and 86.6% in Lunglei town followed by “father” (35%) which is 30% in Aizawl city and 46.6% in Lunglei town where “sisters” is 27.3% which is 27.1% in Aizawl city and 27.7% in Lunglei town. Little more than one-fourth (26%) of the respondents stated that they had an important part in their brother’s lives with 26.1% in Aizawl city and 25.5% in Lunglei town. Compared with a friend (23.3%), with 13.8% in Aizawl city and more higher in Lunglei town (45.5%), the respondents states that their employer has little less (8%) to be important in their lives with 8% in Aizawl city and 7.7% in Lunglei town.

From the table, it is seen that “mother” has always been considerate toward their children and that most of the respondents’ (74.6%) lives is also being consoled by their mothers. The table has also shown that relationship is best witness among blood relationship rather than an employer’s relationship.

### **9.1.3 If Sexually abused**

From Table – 24, less than half (46.3%) of the respondents stated that they would like to get support from their parents if they are sexually abused with 50% in Aizawl city and 14.4% in Lunglei town. Less than one-fourth (24%) would seek help from Police Station with 24.6% in Aizawl city and 11.1% in Lunglei town. More than a tenth (12.6%) of the respondents would seek support from their friends if sexually abused with 11.1% in Aizawl city and Lunglei town respectively. Less than a tenth

(7.3%) of the respondents is not hesitant to tell their romantic partner if they are sexually abused with 7.1% in Aizawl city and 4.4% in Lunglei town. Less than one-tenth (6%) of the respondents would seek support from their community leaders with 4.8% in Aizawl city and 6.6% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (4.6%) of the respondents would seek help from their church leaders with 2.4% in Aizawl city and 8.8% in Lunglei town.

The table has shown that the respondents have high expectation towards the domestic workers services viz. FIWDC, One Stop Centre and Women Helpline in compliance with their harsh situation like sexual abuse. Interestingly, the table has also shown that the women domestic workers feel more secure with FIWDC rather than their friends, romantic partner, community leaders as well as church leaders. This has shown that most of the domestic workers are aware of their support system and services through these agencies.

Even though family members share minority backgrounds, this is not true of sexual minorities, however. Parents' attitudes toward their children's sexual orientation vary considerably and exert a strong influence on their psychological state. Although parents do not always respond negatively, disclosure of sexual orientation to parents is one of the most stressful developmental tasks for sexual minority women domestic workers (D'Augelli, 1993).

#### **9.1.4 When emotionally abused?**

From Table – 25, less than two-third (65%) of the respondents seek support from their mother if they are emotionally abuse with 55.7% in Aizawl city and 86.6% in Lunglei town. Less than one-fourth (24%) of the respondents seek help from their friend with 28.5% in Aizawl and 13.3% in Lung lei. Less than one-fourth (23.3%) of the respondents seek help from their father if they are emotionally abused with 9% in Aizawl city and 56.6% in Lunglei town. In comparison, less than one-fourth (20.3%) of the respondents is seeking help from their sister while 17.3% would like to seek help from their brother. An insignificant minority (4.3%) of the respondents seek support from their employer when they are emotionally abused with 3.8% in Aizawl city and 5.5% in Lunglei town.

The table has shown that despite all the difficulties in every domestic worker's lives, mother has shown the highest probability in connection with their children where father, sister, brother and a friend are also an important part in their lives but cannot overcome the intimate relationship that a mother has with her children. Also, it is interesting to know that few (4.3%) of the respondents could share their emotional problems with their employer which shows that the employers are kind hearted toward domestic workers.

Women domestic workers and adolescents who anticipate negative responses from parents are less likely to disclose their sexual orientation; to avoid disclosure; they may become emotionally distant from their parents, as with their friends (Williams, 1998).

#### **9.1.5 When under pressure or tense?**

From Table – 26, less than half (43.3%) of the respondents seek support from their mother when they are under pressure or tense with 51.4% in Aizawl city and 24.4% in Lunglei town. Less than one-fourth (22.6%) of the respondents seeks help from their friend with 24.7% in Aizawl city and 17.7% in Lunglei town. Less than one-fourth (20.3%) of the respondents seek help from their brother with 3.3% in Aizawl city and with much high frequency of 60% in Lunglei town. Less than one-fourth (17.3%) of the respondents seek support from their sister with 19.5% in Aizawl city and 12.2% in Lunglei town. More than a tenth (12.3%) of the respondents seeks support from their father with 10.9% in Aizawl city and 15.5% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (5%) of the respondents receives support from their employer with 28.5% in Aizawl city and 10% in Lung lei town.

The table shows that most of the respondents shared their working and living conditions with their friends and they felt more freely to talk about their daily experiences of their workplace with their friends as compared to their family members.

According to Salovey (2000), social support, whether from a trusted group or valued individuals, has been shown to reduce the psychological and physiological consequences of stress, and may enhance immune function.

#### **9.1.6 When discriminated?**

From Table – 27, less than two-third (63%) of the respondents share with their mother when they feel they are discriminated with 56.6% in Aizawl city and 77.7% in Lunglei town. More than one-fourth (27.3%) of the respondents shared their feeling with their sister with 25.2% in Aizawl city and 32.2% in Lunglei town. Less than one-fourth (23.6%) of the respondents seek support from their friend with 26.6% in Aizawl city and 16.6% in Lunglei town. Less than one-fourth (19.6%) of the respondents seek support from their father with 12.8% in Aizawl city and 35.5% in Lunglei town. Less than a tenth (7.3%) of the respondents finds help from their employer with 3.8% in Aizawl city and 15.5% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (5%) of the respondents seek support from their brother with 4.2% in Aizawl city and 6.6% in Lunglei town.

#### **9.1.7 When sick?**

From table – 28, less than a majority (70%) of the respondents receive support from their mother when they fall sick with 66.6% in Aizawl city and 77.7% in Lunglei town. Less than one-fourth (18.3%) of the respondents seek support from their father and sister when they are sick. More than a tenth (16.3%) of the respondents seeks support from their employer with 21.4% in Aizawl city and 4.4% in Lunglei town. More than a tenth (13%) of the respondents seeks support from their friend with 6.6% in Aizawl city and 27.7% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (5%) of the respondents seek support from their brother with 3.8% in Aizawl city and 7.7% in Lunglei town.

The table highlights to the fact that few of the employers are taking care of their employees when they feel unwell and that they are also approachable in times of sickness.



### **9.1.8 If fired from job?**

From Table – 29, less than majority (76.3%) of the respondents receive support from their parents when they are fired from their job with 75.2% in Aizawl city and 78.8% in Lung lei town. More than one-fourth (26%) of the respondents seek support from their friends when they have been fired from their job with 23.3% in Aizawl city and 32.2% in Lunglei town. A little more than a tenth (11.3%) of the respondents receives support from community leaders with 0.9% in Aizawl city and 35.5% in Lunglei town. Less than one tenth (8.6%) of the respondents receives support from their relatives with 10.9% in Aizawl city and 3.3% in Lunglei town. Less than a tenth (6.3%) of the respondents seeks support from their romantic partner with 6.1% in Aizawl city and 6.6% in Lunglei town. However, less than one tenth (5.3%) of the respondents receive support from church leaders with 2.8% in Aizawl city and 11.1% in Lunglei town.

The church leaders have least important role to play in regards to lose of job of the employees but however, they were been consulted. Most of the respondents seek help from the community leaders since they have no proper family to run in to if they were fired from their job. So, the community leaders would arrange a house to stay for them. In this difficult time, these domestic workers are not certain to comply with their job and are not aware of whom to contact when they have been fired from their job.

Social networks, whether formal (such as church or social club) or informal (meeting with friends) provide a sense of belonging, security and community. In fact, social support is now proven to be a literal life saver. People that are supported by close relationship with friends, family, or fellow members of church, work, or other groups are less vulnerable to ill health and premature death. There is also a strong tie between social support and measures of well-being. Those who have close personal relationships cope better with various stressors, including bereavement, job loss, rape and illness (Salovey,2000).

### **9.1.9 When disputes with employer?**

From Table – 30, less than majority (73.3%) of the respondents seek help from their parents when they have disputes with their employer with 63.8% in Aizawl city and 95.5% in Lunglei town. More than two-third (36.3%) of the respondents seek support from friends with 42.3% from Aizawl city and 22.2% from Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (5.6%) of the respondents seek support from romantic partner with 8% in Aizawl city. An insignificant minority (4.6%) of the respondents seek help from their relatives when having disputes with their employer with 5.2% in Aizawl city and 3.3% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (1.3%) of the respondents seek support from community leaders with 1.4% in Aizawl city and 1.1% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (1%) of the respondents receives support from church leaders with 1.4% in Aizawl city respectively.

It has been envisaging that many past studies documenting conflicts with employer or emotional distance from parents tended to focus on both the parents' and employers' initial responses to their emotional orientation, but the existing evidence shows that the overall relationship with the employer is not necessarily bad (Williams, 1998).

### **9.1.10 When there is romantic problems?**

From Table – 31, more than half (54.6%) of the respondents receives support from their friends when they have an issue with their romantic partner with 58% in Aizawl city and 46.6% in Lunglei town. More than two third (34.6%) of the respondents seek support through their parents when they encounter problems with their romantic partner with 39.5% in Aizawl city and 23.3% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (4.6%) of the respondents seeks support from relatives with 5.2% in Aizawl city and 3.3% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (2.3%) of the respondents receives support from their employer when they have disputes with their romantic partner with 1.4% in Aizawl city and 4.4% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (0.3%) of the respondents receives support through church leaders with 0.4% in Aizawl city respectively.

In this study, attachment to friends is highly prevalent and the church leaders are least understanding when they have problems with their romantic partner. It has been studied that skills, attitudes, perceived social norms and self-efficacy have all been related to parent-women domestic workers, employer-women domestic worker communication behaviour.

## **9.2 Coping Strategies on the Working and Living Conditions of Women Domestic Workers**

Coping strategy consists of confronting or countering perceptions and behaviours. 'Confronting' aims to change other's stigmatizing perceptions and behaviours, by highlighting value of one's occupation or by refuting the stigma attached to it (Ashforth et al.,2007).

### **9.2.1 Coping Strategies on Living Condition of Women Domestic Workers**

In this section, information is sought on the coping strategies on living conditions of women domestic workers and has been distinguish into four main groups which consists of discrimination, family matters, personnel matters and romantic relationship which is given in Table – 32.

From Table- 32, it is seen that family ranked the first and foremost priority in coping with the problems of the respondents. It has also shown that though majority of the respondents used praying as a method of delivering their problems or challenges, parents play the most important part in their lives. Sharing with friend comes to the third where most of the respondents had also shared their feelings with their friends which is followed by keeping their secrets and their feelings within themselves. Share with employer has been ranked at sixth position which is a very interesting and surprise to know that the respondents have a very close connection with their employer which takes over other individual mechanism like optimism, self-care, distracting oneself, acceptance of lifestyle changes, managing hostile feelings and verbal angry expression.

Firstly, tracing back to several decades, Khanderia (1947) observes glaring discrimination in providing food to live-in domestic workers by employers. In 300 cases, however, discrimination is shown in the food given to the workers. Sometimes, she is given lower quality of rice and only one vegetable. Lesser quantity of butter is applied to her rice and she is not provided with milk while every other member of the family has. As noticed by Kantor et.al (2006) based on a response base of 86 casual women workers, all informal women casual workers are not entitled to food at work.

As revealed by the data, probing if they are susceptible to discriminatory treatment by employers, only 5% of domestic workers in the study have ever been acting out verbally when they were discriminated and the rest were found to keep silent. From the table, a third (33%) of the respondents prayed when they feel discriminated with 34.7% in Aizawl city and 30% in Lunglei town. Little less than one fourth (24.3%) of the respondents discuss among their friends with 22.3% in Aizawl city and 28.8% in Lunglei town. More than half (54.3%) of the respondents discuss with their family with 68.0% in Aizawl city and 22.2% in Lunglei town. Less than a quarter (20.3%) of the respondents distracted themselves with 25.2% in Aizawl city and 8.8% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (5%) of the respondents act out verbally and aggressively when they are discriminated with 3.8% in Aizawl city and 7.7% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (8.3%) of the respondents manages hostile feelings with 5.7% in Aizawl city and 14.4% in Lunglei town. Less than one fourth (22.3%) of the respondents acquires optimistic view when they are discriminated with 20.4% in Aizawl city and 26.6% in Lunglei town.

Eluri and Singh (2013) has mention that younger women were more confident and uncompromising in terms of fighting against discrimination, whereas the older women tried to console themselves by taking it as their fate and saying that they had no option other than undergoing this humiliation.

Secondly, another way to identify the coping strategy for personnel problems is highlighted in the table which consists of self-care, adjustment, managing financial

pressure, acceptance of lifestyle changes, praying, talk to friends, talk to family, sharing to employer, keeping with oneself and go to church.

From the Table - 32, less than a quarter (22%) of the respondents takes care of their hygiene and maintains regular self-care with 19% in Aizawl city and 28.8% in Lunglei town. More than a quarter (26.3%) of the respondents adjusts with their surroundings and environment with 24.2% in Aizawl city and 31.1% in Lung lei town. A tenth (10.6%) manage with their financial pressure with 12.3% in Aizawl city and 6.6% in Lunglei town. More than one tenth (13%) of the respondents accepts to lifestyle changes with 12.8% in Aizawl city and 13.3% in Lunglei town. Less than a quarter (22.3%) of the respondents usually prayed for their future as well as their family and friend with 23.8% in Aizawl city and 18.8% in Lunglei town. Little more than a third (34%) of the respondents talks to their friends when they have personal problems with 36.1% in Aizawl city and 28.8% in Lunglei town. Less than one-fourth (22.3%) of the respondents talks with their family about their personal problems with 35.7% in Aizawl city and 13.3% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (5%) share with their employer regarding their personal problems with 4.7% in Aizawl city and 5.5% in Lunglei town. More than a third (37.6%) of the respondents keeps with themselves about their personal problems with 48% in Aizawl and 13.3% in Lunglei. An insignificant minority (3.6%) of the respondents went to church service when they encounter personal problems with 1.9% in Aizawl city and 7.7% in Lunglei town.

With respect to personnel matters, there is predominance of keeping with oneself when they possess personal problems which have stated that they are more confident in being confidential. However, some of the respondents also share dilemmas with their friends, families and with their employer to a certain extent. To my consternation, 26% of the respondents were able to reconcile to their environment and are competent to their working and living conditions which manifest a spectacular working condition.

Thirdly, romantic relationship, natch, is an embodiment of youngsters which is fundamentally accepted by the society. Besides, there is a need to study the coping

mechanism and how domestic workers response to their romantic relationship while working. This category consists of praying, talk to friends, talk to family, sharing to employer, keeping with oneself, go to church and don't mind respectively.

The Table- 32 reveals an interesting fact that more than a third (35.6%) of the respondents prayed about their romantic relationship with 31.9% in Aizawl city and 43.3% in Lunglei town. Less than half (42.6%) of the respondents share with their friends with 43.8% in Aizawl city and 40% in Lunglei town. Less than a third (29.6%) of the respondents talks with their family about their romantic relationship with 36.6% in Aizawl city and 13.3% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (6%) of the respondents share with their employer with 4.2% in Aizawl city and 10% in Lunglei town. Less than a third (28.3%) of the respondents keeps within themselves with 37.6% in Aizawl city and 6.6% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (6%) of the respondents finds relaxation in the Church and attends the church service with 1.4% in Aizawl city and 2.2% in Lunglei town. More than a tenth (12%) of the respondents doesn't bother about any kind of romantic relationship with 12.8% in Aizawl city and 10% in Lunglei town.

However, greatly, even though there has been impediment with romantic relationship, it has been ascertained to the fact that their romantic relationship does not restrained much on their daily duties. Intriguingly, to weigh up between sharing with families and friends, the workers have shared more of their romantic relationship with their friends rather than sharing with their families. This has unveiled the proximity of friends among domestic workers.

### **9.2.2 Coping Strategies on Working Conditions of Women Domestic Workers**

The coping strategies on working conditions of women domestic workers in Mizoram is divided into four main categories viz. relationships with employer, irregular salary, working hours and sickness which is represented in Table – 33.

From Table – 33, firstly, in order to understand the conditions of domestic workers, it is important to discuss the perspective of the employers as well. How do employers view domestic work? How do they select a worker? What changes has

this form of work undergone in the last few decades? Do they think that they have any responsibility towards the domestic worker or is it a one-sided relationship? This is especially important as the workspace is the employer's home and the boundaries between contract/ custom and affection/duty are blurred, dynamic and certainly hierarchical (Mehrotra, 2010).

From the Table - 33, less than three quarters (70%) of the respondents talk freely with their employer with 70.4% in Aizawl city and 68.8% in Lunglei town. More than half (53.3%) of the respondents obeyed their employer with 57.1% in Aizawl city and 44.4% in Lunglei town. Less than a third (31.6%) of the respondents shopped with their employer for vegetables and grocery with 37.6% in Aizawl city and 17.7% in Lunglei town. Less than a quarter (22.6%) of the respondents often hangs out with their employer with 28% in Aizawl city and 10% in Lunglei town. An insignificant minority (4.3%) of the respondents have no communication with their employer with 3.8% in Aizawl city and 5.5% in Lunglei town.

As we can see from Table- 33, there is mutual relationship between the employer and employee. Most of the domestic workers have built trust with their employers and there is mutual understanding between the two. There is also a state and circumstances where few of the workers were being treated as their servants to which the workers feel unaccepted.

Secondly, the coping strategies adopted by female domestic workers when they encounter with irregular salary consists of verbal or aggressive reaction, praying, talk to friends and inform family. From the table, an insignificant minority (5.6%) of the respondents shows verbal or aggressive reaction in times of irregular salary with 6.6% in Aizawl city and 3.3% in Lunglei town. Less than a quarter (16.6%) of the respondents prays about their irregular salary with 18.0% in Aizawl city and 13.3% in Lunglei town. Little more than a tenth (11.6%) of the respondents discuss with their friends with 11.4% in Aizawl city and 12.2% in Lunglei town. Nearly three quarters (71%) of the respondents inform their family about their irregular salary with 78.5% in Aizawl city and 53.3% in Lunglei town.

The observation made from the study is that majority of the respondents inform their family at first hand when they receive their salary irregularly. This is due to the fact that most of the workers are taking care of their family and the financial condition of the family is solely depending on the income of the workers.

Fourthly, apart from the coping strategies reported here, the workers also seek help from health sub-centres and other health care services in their area. As shown by Zechter et.al (1987), domestic workers are prone to occupational hazards which emanate from sources like pests, flammable 24 trash piles, non-electrical safety hazards, garbage and frayed electrical cords. Further, work related injuries and back pain are commonly noticed among women domestic workers. Some of respondents said that they do not know whether they suffer from any diseases.

The above table shows how they cope with sickness and more than half (56.6%) of the respondents get more sleep when they get sick with 62.8% in Aizawl city and 42.2% in Lunglei town. Less than a half (46.3%) of the respondents prays when they are sick with 42.8% in Aizawl city and 54.4% in Lung lei town. Less than a quarter (17%) of the respondents talked to their friends when they are sick with 20.9% in Aizawl city and 7.7% in Lunglei town. A third of the respondents (33%) talked to their family when they fall sick with 36.6% in Aizawl city and 24.4% in Lunglei town.

Though they usually go to Government hospitals, some of them prefer to get treatment from private practitioners as they quickly dispose of. Hence, their expenditure increases when health deteriorates. Due to time constraints they look for easy way out but its outcome is resource drain. They take short cuts to get cured but it results in loss of money and health. And, in these hard times, most of the workers prayed for their speedy recovery and it also seen that more than half could able to sleep and take rest while being sick.



**Table 22: When domestic workers needed to talk.**

Sl.No	Supporter	Total N=300	Aizawl N=210	Lunglei N=90
1	Parents	220 (73.3)	151 (71.9)	69 (76.6)
2	Friends	130 (43.3)	98 (46.6)	32 (35.5)
3	Romantic Partner	55 (18.3)	31 (14.7)	24 (26.6)
4	Employer	44 (14.6)	32 (15.2)	12 (13.3)
5	Community Leaders	30 (10)	21 (10)	9 (10)
6	Church leaders	11 (3.6)	5 (2.3)	6 (6.6)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>490 (163.3)</b>	<b>338 (160.9)</b>	<b>152 (168.8)</b>

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

**Table 23: Whose lives do you feel you are an important part of?**

Sl.No	Supporter	Total N=300	Aizawl N=210	Lunglei N=90
1	Mother	224 (74.6)	146 (69.5)	78 (86.6)
2	Father	105 (35)	63 (30)	42 (46.6)
3	Sister	82 (27.3)	57 (27.1)	25 (27.7)
4	Brother	78 (26)	55 (26.1)	23 (25.5)
5	Friend	70 (23.3)	29 (13.8)	41 (45.5)
6	Employer	24 (8)	17 (8.0)	7 (7.7)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>583 (194.3)</b>	<b>367 (174.7)</b>	<b>216 (240)</b>

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

**Table 24: If Sexually abused?**

<b>Sl.No</b>	<b>Supporter</b>	<b>Total N=300</b>	<b>Aizawl N=210</b>	<b>Lunglei N=90</b>
<b>1</b>	Parents	139 (46.3)	126 (50.0)	13 (14.4)
<b>2</b>	Domestic Workers Services	72 (24)	62 (24.6)	10 (11.1)
<b>3</b>	Friends	38 (12.6)	28 (11.1)	10 (11.1)
<b>4</b>	Romantic partner	22 (7.3)	18 (7.1)	4 (4.4)
<b>5</b>	Community leaders	18 (6)	12 (4.8)	6 (6.6)
<b>6</b>	Women Helpline	14 (4.6)	6 (2.4)	8 (8.8)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>303 (101)</b>	<b>252 (120.0)</b>	<b>51 (56.6)</b>

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

**Table 25: When emotionally abused?**

<b>Sl.No</b>	<b>Supporter</b>	<b>Total N=300</b>	<b>Aizawl N=210</b>	<b>Lunglei N=90</b>
<b>1</b>	Mother	195 (65)	117 (55.7)	78 (86.6)
<b>2</b>	Friend	72 (24)	60 (28.5)	12 (13.3)
<b>3</b>	Father	70 (23.3)	19 (9.0)	51 (56.6)
<b>4</b>	Sister	61 (20.3)	51 (24.2)	10 (11.1)
<b>5</b>	Brother	52 (17.3)	11 (5.23)	41 (45.5)
<b>6</b>	Employer	13 (4.3)	8 (3.8)	5 (5.5)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>463 (154.3)</b>	<b>266 (126.6)</b>	<b>197 (218.8)</b>

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

**Table 26: When under pressure or tense?**

<b>Sl.No</b>	<b>Supporter</b>	<b>Total N=300</b>	<b>Aizawl N=210</b>	<b>Lunglei N=90</b>
<b>1</b>	Mother	130 (43.3)	108 (51.4)	22 (24.4)
<b>2</b>	Friend	68 (22.6)	52 (24.7)	16 (17.7)
<b>3</b>	Brother	61 (20.3)	7 (3.3)	54 (60)
<b>4</b>	Sister	52 (17.3)	41 (19.5)	11 (12.2)
<b>5</b>	Father	37 (12.3)	23 (10.9)	14 (15.5)
<b>6</b>	Employer	15 (5)	6 (28.5)	9 (10)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>363 (121)</b>	<b>237 (112.8)</b>	<b>126 (140)</b>

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

**Table 27: When discriminated?**

<b>Sl.No</b>	<b>Supporter</b>	<b>Total N=300</b>	<b>Aizawl N=210</b>	<b>Lunglei N=90</b>
<b>1</b>	Mother	189 (63)	119 (56.6)	70 (77.7)
<b>2</b>	Sister	82 (27.3)	53 (25.2)	29 (32.2)
<b>3</b>	Friend	71 (23.6)	56 (26.6)	15 (16.6)
<b>4</b>	Father	59 (19.6)	27 (12.8)	32 (35.5)
<b>5</b>	Employer	22 (7.3)	8 (3.8)	14 (15.5)
<b>6</b>	Brother	15 (5)	9 (4.2)	6 (6.6)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>438 (146)</b>	<b>272 (129.5)</b>	<b>166 (184.4)</b>

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

**Table 28: When sick?**

<b>Sl.No</b>	<b>Supporter</b>	<b>Total N=300</b>	<b>Aizawl N=210</b>	<b>Lunglei N=90</b>
<b>1</b>	Mother	210 (70)	140 (66.6)	70 (77.7)
<b>2</b>	Father	55 (18.3)	22 (10.4)	33 (36.6)
<b>3</b>	Sister	55 (18.3)	29 (13.8)	26 (28.8)
<b>4</b>	Employer	49 (16.3)	45 (21.4)	4 (4.4)
<b>5</b>	Friend	39 (13)	14 (6.6)	25 (27.7)
<b>6</b>	Brother	15 (5)	8 (3.8)	7 (7.7)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>423 (141)</b>	<b>258 (122.8)</b>	<b>165 (183.3)</b>

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

**Table 29: If fired from job?**

<b>Sl.No</b>	<b>Supporter</b>	<b>Total N=300</b>	<b>Aizawl N=210</b>	<b>Lunglei N=90</b>
<b>1</b>	Parents	229 (76.3)	158 (75.2)	71 (78.8)
<b>2</b>	Friends	78 (26)	49 (23.3)	29 (32.2)
<b>3</b>	Community leaders	34 (11.3)	2 (0.9)	32 (35.5)
<b>4</b>	Relatives	26 (8.6)	23 (10.9)	3 (3.3)
<b>5</b>	Romantic partner	19 (6.3)	13 (6.1)	6 (6.6)
<b>6</b>	FDWA	16 (5.3)	6 (2.8)	10 (11.1)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>402 (134)</b>	<b>251 (119.5)</b>	<b>151 (167.7)</b>

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

**Table 30: When disputes with employer?**

<b>Sl.No</b>	<b>Conditions</b>	<b>Total N=300</b>	<b>Aizawl N=210</b>	<b>Lunglei N=90</b>
<b>1</b>	Parents	220 (73.3)	134 (63.8)	86 (95.5)
<b>2</b>	Friends	109 (36.3)	89 (42.3)	20 (22.2)
<b>3</b>	Romantic partner	17 (5.6)	17 (8.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>4</b>	Relatives	14 (4.6)	11 (5.2)	3 (3.3)
<b>5</b>	FDWA	4 (1.3)	3 (1.4)	1 (1.1)
<b>6</b>	Church leaders	3 (1)	3 (1.4)	0 (0.0)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>369 (123)</b>	<b>257 (122.3)</b>	<b>112 (124.4)</b>

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

**Table 31: When there is a romantic problem?**

<b>Sl.No</b>	<b>Conditions</b>	<b>Total N=300</b>	<b>Aizawl N=210</b>	<b>Lunglei N=90</b>
<b>1</b>	Friends	164 (54.6)	122 (58.0)	42 (46.6)
<b>2</b>	Parents	104 (34.6)	83 (39.5)	21 (23.3)
<b>3</b>	Relatives	14 (4.6)	11 (5.2)	3 (3.3)
<b>4</b>	Employer	7 (2.3)	3 (1.4)	4 (4.4)
<b>5</b>	Church leaders	1 (0.3)	1 (0.4)	0 (0.0)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>290 (96.6)</b>	<b>220 (104.7)</b>	<b>70 (77.7)</b>

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

**Table 32: Coping Strategies on Living Conditions of Women Domestic Workers**

Sl.No	Mechanism	Total N=300				Ranking
		Discri- mination	Family matters	Personnel matters	Romantic relation- ship	
1	Informed to family	163 (54.3)	109 (36.3)	67 (22.3)	89 (29.6)	1
2	Praying	100 (33.3)	133 (44.3)	67 (22.3)	106 (35.3)	2
3	Talk with friends	73 (24.3)	79 (26.3)	102 (34)	128 (42.6)	3
4	Keeping with oneself	0 (0.0)	109 (36.3)	113 (37.6)	85 (28.3)	4
5	Adjustment	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	79 (26.3)	0 (0.0)	5
6	Share with employer	0 (0.0)	40 (13.3)	15 (5)	18 (6)	6
7	Optimism	67 (22.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	7
8	Self-care	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	66 (22)	0 (0.0)	8
9	Distracting oneself	61 (20.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	9
10	Acceptance of lifestyle changes	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	39 (13)	0 (0.0)	10
11	Don't mind	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	36 (12)	11
12	Managing financial pressure	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	32 (10.6)	0 (0.0)	12
13	Go to church	0 (0.0)	12 (4)	11 (3.6)	5 (1.6)	13
14	Managing hostile feeling	25 (8.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	14
15	Verbal angry expression	15 (5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	15

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

**Table 33: Coping Strategies on Working Condition of Women Domestic Workers**

Sl.No	Mechanisms	Total N=300				
		Relationships with employer	Irregular salary	Working hour	Sickness	Ranking
1	Informed to family	0 (0.0)	213 (71%)	67 (22.35)	99 (33%)	1
2	Praying	0 (0.0)	50 16.6%)	56 (18.9%)	139 (46.3%)	2
3	Talk freely	210 (70%)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3
4	Talk with friends	0 (0.0)	35 (11.6%)	101 (33.8%)	51 (17%)	4
5	Get more sleep	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	170 (56.6%)	5
6	Listening	160 (53.3%)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	6
7	Shopping together	95 (31.6%)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	7
8	Go out together	68 (22.6%)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	8
9	No communication	13 (4.3%)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	9

Source: Computed

(Figures in parentheses are percentages)

## **CHAPTER X**

### **SCOPE FOR SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTION AND THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKER IN THE AREA OF WOMEN DOMESTIC WORKERS.**

The study here focuses on the decent work and economic empowerment of women by using the social work techniques, skills enrich around the philosophies, assumptions and values of social work education.

As discussed earlier in the previous chapters, there is a lack of proper unionization in the informal economy of women domestic workers. Majority of the trade unions are concentrated in the formal sector and are oligarchic in nature. However, with globalization, liberalization and privatization more and more jobs are becoming informal and unless they are organized, they will not have the collective bargaining power for better living conditions. Therefore, social work intervention is crucial for the formation of union in order to improve the working and living conditions of women domestic workers.

#### **10.1 Social Work Intervention**

Erd and Scherrer (1985) have highlighted that job identification and a relatively stable employment is required for the formation of a union, historically. So it was always the skilled workers who founded organizations to retain their labour power and improve their status. They did not extend the membership to unskilled workers who have a lower labour market status. However, this condition did not prevail for long. Despite of the opposition from the skilled workers, the unskilled workers started organizing. But the trade union representation for unskilled workers was not as big as that of the skilled workers. Therefore, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are taking part in inculcating the spirit of forming a union among women domestic workers in different regions of the globe.

Job security is one of the major concerns of the informal sector workers. The high instability of employment is a major challenge for the unions involved in organizing the unorganized sector workers. Very often, informal workers are dismissed without any consultation whenever they ask for a wage rise. This is possible for the employer as the workers have no permanent employee status. Of



course, this will force the dismissed worker to search for a new job where the worker may have to migrate to another location. This makes it difficult for the trade union or an NGO which is involved in organizing the unorganized sector workers to continue the activities with the workers. Once the workers are unionized, they need to be together for demanding better wages, working conditions, insurance, pension etc. The precarious nature of employment is a major block to such developments. With this regards, social workers is required is to create a documented relationship between the employer and the employee. The trade unions could put pressure on the government with its strong membership base to influence the policy advocacy.

In informal sector, the representation as well as membership of women in trade unions is very less. The main reason for this is that the women are least visible as most of them work from home and their work are not acknowledged as work, very often. But there are exceptions with the new trade union initiatives in the informal sector. 'LEARN' Working Women's Trade Union at Dharavi, Mumbai is a classic example. The union is exclusively for women and they elect leaders from among themselves ensuring 100 per cent representation of women, as the leaders are very much aware of the problems faced by women. SEWA is another successful example in organizing the women workers. Self Employed Women's Union (SEWU) in South Africa is modeled similar to SEWA. The target group is informal sector women workers. SEWU, a non-governmental organization has found that for the poorest women workers, collective organization is needed in order to give them strength to negotiate for better conditions in order to improve their working and living conditions.

Mathew (2010) has define decent work as '*productive work by men and women, in conditions of freedom, equity, safety and dignity*', where productive work is that which benefits people by enabling the generation of an adequate income (India Exclusion Report 2013-14). Decent work guarantees sufficient work that is safe, with enough social protection in cases where work is not possible or not available. In period of economic laxity or in personal crises, workers should be able to depend on some form of social security.

According to United Nations, the key role of decent work for all in achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) aims to “*encourage sustained and inclusive economic growth, complete and productive employment and decent work for all*”. Under its mandate of providing ‘decent work’ to all its citizens, the state has three major responsibilities: to stimulate job growth, uphold rights at work and put minimum social security in place. The government’s performance in all three areas has been extremely poor. “India’s labour market is predominantly socially organized, in which equality is not a relevant concept. Labour laws form a regime of pseudo-laws, and subsequently the poor have no power. In case the state remains absent, and does not correct the distribution of wealth, which is also generated by labour, the risk of rising social Darwinism is genuine” (India Exclusion Report 2013-14).

Social worker, therefore, play a significant role as unorganized workers to advance the competency and smooth functioning of the nation’s economy without receiving the equitable share of benefits. It’s high time to adopt new policy framework for the betterment of majority of the citizens as the policies with ‘trickle-down approach’ are unable to meet their objectives. The future policies and regulations for unorganized workers must consider the hardships and livelihood challenges being faced by the workers in informal/unorganized sector. The further action should be spreading of awareness about this act and rights of informal workers in rural areas and hinterland. The social security mechanism meant for informal workers needs to be expanded effectively in remote areas and places far away from administrative centres. Thus, we can achieve and secure the rights as well as preserve the dignity of nation’s hardworking citizens; those are very backbone of this expanding and thriving economy.

Blackett (2011) mention that paid domestic work in the household has become increasingly important for all of the demographic reasons linked to dual income families in an economic structure. The insatiable “*need*” in the current stage of globalization for workers who are perpetually market available and relentlessly productive is coupled with significant demographic changes leading in many parts of the world to increased longevity. It is important to recognize that the rising demand for domestic work also reflects recognition of the increased value attached by communities such as the disabled, as well as the elderly, to the dignity of being able

to have care support and stay at home and retain greater autonomy than in public health care facilities.

Job quality for domestic workers, as for all other workers, is a right; it is also a social necessity. As more and more women enter the labour force, their reproductive tasks are delegated to household employees on whose care the well-being of entire generations depends. As domestic work allows other women workers with family responsibilities to achieve equilibrium between work and family life, it plays a key role in the smooth functioning of the economy. The demand for domestic workers is a key factor in opening up legal channels of temporary migration to some countries for large numbers of women with few employment options at home. The remittances of these migrant women have created pockets of relative prosperity in otherwise resource-starved communities. Thus, if performed under fair working conditions, domestic work has tremendous potential for reducing poverty and empowering women. Addressing the decent work deficit in domestic work is thus a powerful means to achieve Millennium Development Goal 1 – *‘eradication of extreme poverty and hunger’* and Goal 3 – *‘promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women’*.

Within the ILO, several departments have undertaken research and technical cooperation on domestic work approaching the subject from the angle of gender equity, protection of informal economy workers, migrant workers’ rights, freedom of association, the elimination of forced labour and trafficking or the abolition of child labour, particularly its worst forms. Given the number of workers concerned, the fact that they are mostly women and the extreme exploitation many are faced with, NGO’s work in this domain must be intensified.

International NGOs like Human Rights Watch, Anti-Slavery International, Save the Children, etc. have done extensive research on the problems of adult and child domestic workers, denounced the slavery-like conditions in which domestic workers are held before Human Rights and other supervisory bodies of the United Nations and supported local NGOs in taking action to prevent such abuse and rehabilitate victims of it. In addition, a number of local or national NGOs like the CDIs in Guwahati, India and Ferrando Domestic Workers Alliance in Aizawl, Mizoram have developed strategies to prevent child domestic work, protect child

domestic workers and rehabilitate those withdrawn from hazardous or abusive situations. From their interaction with village communities it became obvious that migration to towns is often an escape from the numerous chores that women shoulder in villages, from the lack of economic opportunities and from the monotony of village life. The NGO therefore undertook to lighten the burden of domestic work, create alternative sources of income, promote sports and cultural activities for youth during which the risks of uninformed migration to cities is publicized.

The social workers pay a liaison between the domestic workers and the employers. Recognition and regulation of domestic work is in the interest of both workers and employers. More importantly, decent work for domestic workers is no longer an impossible dream. The ILO and its constituents are committed to fighting the exploitation and abuse of domestic workers and to accelerating the movement towards work in conditions of freedom, security and dignity.

Advocacy can be done on gender-balanced representation of domestic workers and employers in consultations concerning necessary amendments to the labour legislation should be required. The special needs of women, children, rural or foreign migrants, and indigenous people should be incorporated. More transparency should be introduced into what has until now been a largely informal employment relationship through the introduction of model contracts, registration of domestic workers and creation of dispute resolution structures at local level. The recognition of domestic work as an occupation should be facilitated through the introduction of certified skills training for domestic workers thus improving their status, negotiating power as well as the quality of services they provide. The registration of domestic workers will also provide employers with some protection against crime committed with the complicity of their household employees.

Similarly, social worker can play an organizer role that emphasis can be done on building the capacity of existing organizations of domestic workers to increase their outreach and render more efficient services to their members. Trade unions will be key partners in this effort. Where strong domestic workers organizations exist, they should be assisted in creating networks or federations of domestic worker organizations. Where no such organization exists, trade unions should be encouraged to create special help desks for domestic workers. Given the difficulties in

introducing usual labour monitoring mechanisms such as inspection in private households, the programme should privilege the organization of interest groups and their self-regulation. Thus, while work on an enabling legislative framework at international and national levels is undertaken with policymakers, groups of workers, employers and recruitment agencies should be created or enhanced with a view to adopting codes of conduct or providing social space for bringing about improvements in current practices. For instance, the organization which is formed for employers of the women domestic workers.

Helling et al., (2005) explained empowerment as the ability of women to effectively participate in all sociopolitical and economic activities which enable them to manifest and convert choices into attainments. In India, women constitute a significant proportion of the population. With economic development and gender promotional activities in India, women today have more prominence and ability to speak than they had a few years ago. But till date, women empowerment is a much-debated issue and gender discrimination against girls exists in investments on education, the formation of skills, health issues and so on.

Bardhan (1985) reveals that though participation in the labour market is a vital prerequisite for the economic independence of women, it is not a sufficient condition to ensure an increase in the bargaining power of women restricting her decision-making role within families. Women empowerment leads to economic development. There is a bi-directional relationship between economic development and empowerment of women.

## **10.2 Conceptual Issues**

The study is conceptualized considering a set of personal and socio-economic dimensions that shape women's empowerment. These dimensions are dynamic and inter-linked in nature. At the household level, this inter-linkage is highlighted by emphasizing the association between gender equality and development. These dimensions are hereby described below:

*Personal dimensions:* Involvement in the process of household decision-making is considered in this dimension. Women's participatory role in taking household decision enhances the self-determination, self-esteem and autonomy within households, as well as demonstrates exertion of power in control over resources.

Participation of women in decision-making at the household level results in their own well being as well as that of their children. By educating their children, their well-being falls straight in the process of encouraging capital accumulation. Doepke and Terlilt (2011) indicate that expenditures on children go up when transfers are made to females, with greater expenditure on schooling for kids. This encourages the accumulation of human capital, which in turn contributes to economic growth.

*Socio-economic dimensions:* This dimension includes women's contribution to family income and decision-making in household economy, their access to socio-economic resources and ownership of assets. With increased earning, women domestic worker's participation in households' economic decision gets enhanced, thereby improving her self-reliance and bargaining power and reducing economic subordination. Various factors encourage women's participation in household economy and improve self-confidence, control over resources and freedom of choices of women domestic workers. In this study, female domestic workers lack skills as well as a means of skill enhancement. As a consequence, they are virtually without any choice as regards obtaining worthwhile jobs that would reduce vulnerability and poverty. They are engaged in household-oriented services like cooking, cleaning and mopping, washing utensils and clothes and as elderly and child caretakers. Enhancing participation of labour force enhance women domestic worker an opportunity to earn income which is also an exposure to the outside world. This ensures a right on arrangements and networks outside the family.

### **10.3 Empowerment Indicators**

Bhattacharya et al. (2013) measured women empowerment at individual level; where empowerment is interpreted in terms of basic capabilities entitled health, knowledge and autonomy. The characteristics of women domestic workers in this study reflect that they experience positive, personal and social changes with income generated and through their interaction with their employers.

Datta and Gaily (2012) mention that the opportunity to support a family financially has subsequent positive effects on the dimensions of empowerment like health, education, outside-home mobility and so forth; thereby improving their position within the household and the society. Education, for example, ensures women's independence and improves control over resources and decision-making.

The World Bank(2013) indicates that the behaviour of women domestic workers tends to change with age and the experiences gained over lifetime empower the women domestic workers to voice her desired goals. It leads to increased prosperity not just for individuals but for their communities and their societies. The age group of the study ranges between 18 and 30 years. It is found out that 64.33% are in the age group 18-22. The level of literacy indicates that 4% are illiterate but can recognize alphabets and do minor mathematical calculations without ever attending school. So, most domestic workers in the study are either illiterate or just literate. The lack of education is negatively associated with household decision-making. This is in line with El-Halawany's (2009) results. He showed that education supplements women's autonomy, empowerment and gender equality and that is visible through their participation in the social and economic decision for the welfare of their household.

Domestic work is a predominantly female-dominated sector. This type of informal economy is poorly regulated and not protected by labour laws. They seldom have an organized mechanism for collective bargaining. Their vulnerability as a worker is made more complex as they work in isolation in private homes and depend on the generosity of their employers. Empowering domestic workers is essential. Fair wages are the biggest obstacle to empower domestic workers. They are susceptible to unlawful working hours and low wages. Judicious working hours and a reasonable wage rate improve quality of life. Execution of the 'Minimum Wage Act' and provision of Social Security Support is essential to improve their well-being. They lack awareness as well as funds to save money for their old age. Access to financial support, information on insurance and retirement funds and access to family support services is important for long-term planning and saving.

#### **10.4 Correlation**

Correlation techniques are used in a wide range of applications, often in conjunction with probability density functions, information on the distribution of amplitudes of a random signal.

**Table 34 - Correlates of types of domestic work: Cross tabulation**

<b>Age at Present</b>	<b>Live-in</b>	<b>Live-out</b>	<b>Part-time</b>	<b>Full-time</b>	<b>Total</b>
18-22	125 (84.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	125 (60.4%)
23-27	22 (14.9%)	1 (100.0%)	29 (100.0%)	6 (20.7%)	58 (28.0%)
28-32	1 (0.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	23 (79.3%)	24 (11.6%)
Count	148 (100.0%)	1 (100.0%)	29 (100.0%)	29 (100.0%)	207 (100.0%)

Source: Computed

To understand the relation between the age of the respondents and the types of domestic work service of live-in women with live-out, part-time and full-time domestic workers, a cross tabulation is presented in Table 34. The age group of the study ranges between 18 and 32 years.

Classifying the age into three age groups, a maximum of 60.4% are in the age group of 18-22, 24% are in the age group of 23-27 and 11.6% are in the age group of 28-32. So, it is found out that predominance of young women domestic workers of live-in domestic workers. Therefore, the Cross-tabulation signify that maximum number (84.5%) of the domestic workers are Live-in and the rest are Live-out which can be the part-time and full time as well.

**Table 35 - Correlates on year of experience and Salary: Pearson**

		<b>Years of experience</b>	<b>Salary</b>
<b>Years of Experience</b>	Pearson correlation	1	.679**
	N	210	.000
<b>Salary payment</b>	Pearson correlation		
	N	.679**	1

Source: Computed

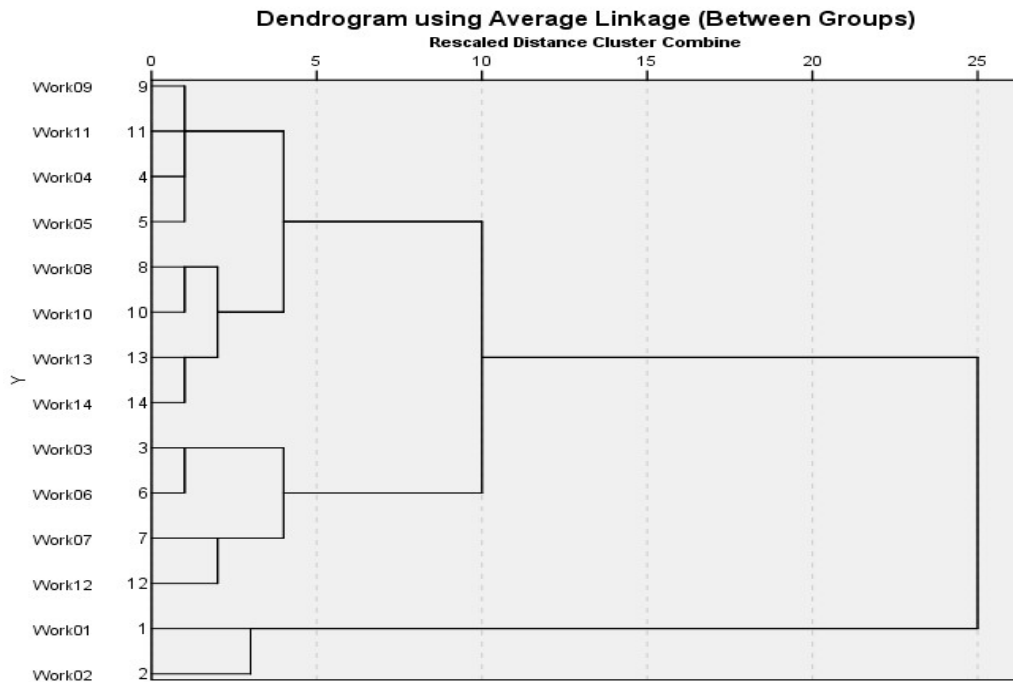
\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Salary varies with duration of experience of work. By managing time devoted to work in respective households, the women domestic worker tries to stay in their workplace for increment of their job service. So, eventually the women domestic workers can help sustain a livelihood for herself and her family.



Therefore, salary earned by the women domestic worker is a positive indicator of her empowerment. The study shows that there is a significant relation between the years of experience and the amount of salary received per year and that there is an annual increment after every one year.

**Figure 1.4 Correlates on major linkage on nature of work and the combine cluster into groups : Dendrogram**



The Dendrogram shows that there are linkages between cleaning and cooking. However, the other nature of work which can be grouped are firstly gardening/animal care/driving and aged care. Secondly, the other natures of work which can be grouped are chauffeuring/disability care/nursing care and security services fall in the same category. Thirdly, the natures of work that can also be grouped are babysitting, child care, shopping, and hospitality at home.

## CHAPTER XI

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present study probe into the working and living conditions of women domestic workers in Mizoram particularly in Aizawl and Lunglei. This chapter summarizes the findings of the study which were discussed and dealt with in the previous chapters. This chapter is divided into three sections namely the findings, conclusion and recommendations which is given below:

#### 11.1 Findings

The findings of the present study are classified as viz., the composition of women domestic workers, self-hygiene of women domestic workers, challenges of women domestic workers, drivers to domestic work, working conditions of women domestic workers, living conditions of women domestic workers, conditions of women domestic workers (the case studies and focus group discussions) and social support and coping strategies employed by the respondents.

Domestic workers although unskilled and uneducated succeed in locating their own employment opportunities. It is without any support from the government authorities they are able to fetch employment and earn monthly wages. Hence, it can be said that they constantly build their own market and sell their labour services in return of money. Since domestic worker is unorganized labour they are beyond the purview of the government for which they fail to avail any welfare assistance. The primary data shows that apart from the insurance guaranteed under the e-Shram majority of the respondents were unaware of all other social security schemes like the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana. It does reflect the lack of awareness due to illiteracy which prevents them from making maximum benefits out of the existing schemes dedicated to them. It therefore calls for a proactive effort on the part of the government to ensure maximum outreach of the policies formulated at the grassroots level. The women domestic workers as the study reveals are able to maintain minimum basic standards of living and more than one-tenth (11%) of the respondents are living in their own houses, have water sealed toilet facility, use cooking gas, and

100% electricity connection being the most encouraging outcome of the study. Even on living below the minimum wage standards of the unorganized sector workers, the domestic workers have shown capabilities to make the best out of the limited source of income and make out a living well balanced with all the basic necessities of sustenance. This brings to light that the domestic workers who are neglected in context of labour laws and social security have the potential to raise their standards of living once supported by the government. If uplifted and brought at par with other unorganized sector workers in terms of wages it is possible to see they grow at a faster pace than without any legal support.

Presently, they work at the mercy of their employer under hire and fire conditions without any mechanism in place for grievance redressed. Throughout the day the respondents run from house to house completing the daily chores of various households and attend their own homes in the end. Sometimes they walk large distances every day lured by higher wages in far off localities in turn taking a toll on their own health. With no minimum fixed wages and no legal support, they naturally lose on their bargaining power and also there is a constant sense of insecurity about the future of their job. The need of the hour is to attempt formalization of the sector. To this end the first step has to be recognition of domestic workers as ‘workers’ endowed with rights. The government must also take note of the fact that domestic workers work under multiple employers and may work part-time or full time. Hence there is no single unique employer-employee relationship, instead there is one employee working for a variety of employers.

#### **11.1.1 Composition of Women Domestic Workers**

From the study, it is found out that a maximum of nearly two-third (64.33%) of the total respondents fall under the age group of 18-22 years and the mean age of the respondents is 21.8 years old. The vast majority (96%) are literate and receives education fair enough where 4% of the respondents are illiterate. Though most of the respondents are unmarried, 26% have been married with 12.9% a divorcee which makes them even harder to work due to their dual responsibilities of looking after the family as well as doing their regular job. The domestic workers as likely to be living in poverty as other workers, and likely to either be in poverty or be above the poverty

line but still without sufficient income to make ends meet. The corona virus crisis has laid bare the ways in which this work is undervalued and this workforce is under protected. As their employers take steps to practice social distancing, many domestic workers have been left without work—and without any indication that they would get their jobs back. At the same time, many domestic workers who are still on the front lines of the pandemic, caring for the sick and keeping homes clean, are in lack of protective equipment they needed. More than half (56%) of the respondents are belonging to nuclear family type while few of the respondents still practice the joint family and extended type of family. The common characteristics of nuclear family type among the respondents indicated that every family must have striven for their own living in spite of their low socio- economic background, so the children must have work to earn their daily living. Even though majority of the respondents are Christian there are Hindus and Muslims among the respondents which make it clear that the study area accepts any person from any background or ethnicities are over presented in the domestic - employee relationship workforce and this overrepresentation is particularly pronounced for the Mizos; and women of all races inclusive of their status, class, religion, etc. In addition, a maximum of two-fifth (40%) of the respondents works for one to two years and often shift their place of work from time to time. This shows their inconsistency at work and the high rate of turnover in the job. Nearly half (46.6%) of the respondents receives information regarding referrals or workplace from their friends and this also shows that the women domestic workers are in a close connection with their friends rather than of their parents, relatives, romantic partner, etc when it comes to placement of work.

#### **11.1.2 Self Hygiene of Women Domestic workers**

The data shows that nearly half (43.3%) of the respondents are taking bath regularly. This reflected the availability of proper water supply in the study area and the awareness of the women domestic workers on the importance of maintaining proper hygiene from different angles. However, the shows that some of the respondents were not able to take bath on regular basis due to scarcity of water in the study area. Further, more than half (61.6%) of the respondents can have regular self-clean up and this shows that respondents can have free time and space on their own. In addition, 15% of the respondents does not use sanitary napkins regularly and uses

cloth instead. This is due to the fact that they refuse to buy sanitary napkins since they are in shortage of money.

### **11.1.3 Challenges and Issues of Women Domestic Workers**

Domestic work is vital in everyday living, this study shows that the wages of the women domestic workers are low paid, rarely receive monetary benefits, and have less access to full-time work than other workers. Because they work in private homes, they are outside of public view and isolated from other workers, and at-risk to exploitation. In specific, domestic workers are excluded from the National Labor Relations Act, enacted in 1935 that guarantee employees the right to form labor unions - or engage in other forms of collective action - to organize for better working conditions. And “live-in” workers are excluded from the overtime protections in the Fair Labor Standards Act, enacted in 1938.

The study found that there is a distinction between the working and living conditions of women domestic workers whose workplace is the employer’s private residence, and provide care in their own homes. Fortunately, almost majority (90%) of the total respondents does not experience harassment and this is reverse to those of women domestic workers from other parts of the world where the women domestic workers are facing tremendous challenges in their working and living conditions. However, slapping, kicking and hitting is the most common form of physical harassment that is existing in the study area. Moreover, there is a wide and persistent gap between domestic workers and the employer regarding bargaining power on different issues like health and safety (47%), equal treatment (44%), work and life balance (32.3%), holidays (26%), wages (21%), hours of work (20.6%) and vocational training (18.6%). The wage gap for the women domestic workers is large as well as persistent. Like other typical workers, domestic workers have seen stagnant wages for decades. The women domestic workers are much more likely than other workers to be living in poverty, regardless of their occupation. They are also much more likely to have incomes that fall below the twice-poverty threshold, which is considered by many researchers a better cut-off for whether a family has enough income to make ends meet. However, the women domestic workers face a lot of challenges whenever they encountered withheld wages (2.3%) and they are struggling when they feel isolated and are given poor privacy (3.6%). Nearly three-

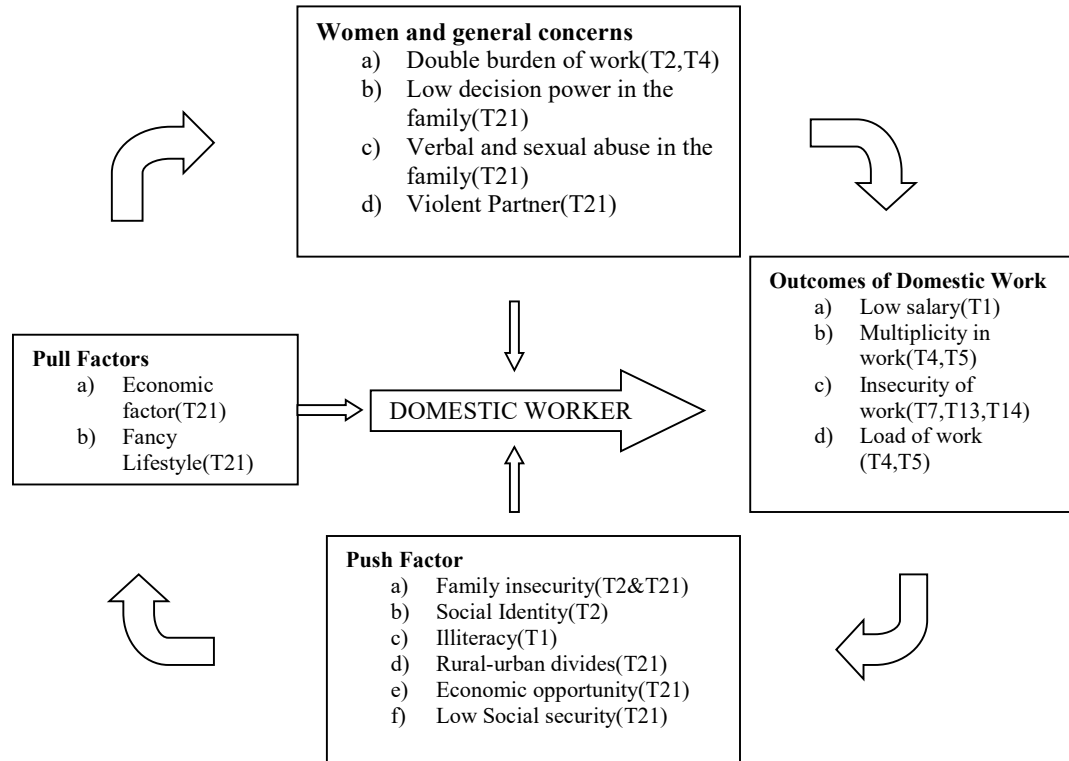
fourth (82.6%) of the respondents does not experience any kind of verbal harassment which shows that the employers in the study area are considerate enough to make the respondents meet their ends; intimidation and lustful staring at body parts however still persist that hinders their work environment. In fact, 4.3% of the total respondents had experienced sexual harassment in their workplace which reveals that they are vulnerable and are needed to be protected under the laws and legislations. However, psychological harassment which prevails around the respondents are many such as jokes of sexual nature, verbal threats, physical contact, unusual comments on dress and appearance, invasion of personal space and display of sexually offensive material. Of them the verbal threats are the most common form of psychological harassment that is experienced by 10% of the total respondents. This has shown the hazardous working conditions and the vulnerability of the workers.

#### **11.1.4 Drivers to domestic work**

Domestic workers are largely driven by low socio-economic conditions and employment in domestic works is projected to grow more compared with other occupations over a decade. This could be because of the easier accessibility of jobs that it does not require specific skills and education. The trend is also driven by skill development, peer pressure, fancy lifestyle, exposure, etc. where the study found that almost majority (95.5%) of the total respondents are driven due to economic opportunity (95.5%).

Quite predominantly, domestic workers in urban areas are likely to emerge from lower strata of the society which is characterized by lower educational attainment and social backwardness. In case of Mizoram, it is more often rural to urban migration that forms large square of domestic workers like in Aizawl city and Lunglei town especially. The complexity and phenomena of the working and living conditions of the women domestic workers have been illustrated in the following tables, indicating the push and pull factors and the outcomes together. Similarly, the outcomes are indeed affected by the combinations of push and pull factors and the general concerns.

Figure 1.3: Domestic work: Push, Pull, General concerns and Outcomes



*Note: “T” in parentheses refers to Table*

Prompting from the content presented in Figure 1.3, the works of women domestic workers have been invisible facing multiple burden of work in their workplace as well as in their homes. It is very important to create a capacity building and make them form a union that can benefit their insecurities. They were driven due to economic necessities even though the wages is meager to meet the daily needs of the family. The women domestic workers were also being pulled by the luxurious and splendid culture of the city that they want to explore the city life in spite of the heavy loads of work. However, the advocacy of women domestic workers should be done so that they can also take initiatives for combating their situation and specific regulations and legislations like the Minimum Wages Act, 2016 should be executed so as safeguarding and protection of the women domestic workers in Mizoram.

### **11.1.5 Working conditions of Women Domestic Workers**

The table shows the different classifications on working hours of the respondents. The table shows average time spent on different activities by respondents' women domestic workers in a day as well as the nature of works. The activities include sleeping, market activities and non-market activities. Further, non-market activities are classified into: self-grooming, preparing meals or snacks, eating and drinking, cleaning own house and kitchen, washing clothes, grocery shopping, attending religious activities including church visits, hanging out with friends, watching television and caring for children and elderly. The study found that nearly one-third (32.3%) of the respondents worked for 13 hours and more in a day which is hectic and laborious. While 3.6% of them took rest for one hour in a day and during which they usually sit and play with their phones and the rest of the time they were followed by their employer and they were hardly given a space. Unfortunately, little more than one-fifth (20.3%) of the respondents did not given day-off or rest in a month whereas 13.6% were given two days of rest in a week. Among the respondents, it is observed that the workers who works for 1-2 years does not complain much of not having day off but the domestic workers who have work for more than 2 years usually complain about the absence of rest/ day-off. This has provided an insight that the more experience in the field of domestic work the more confidence they are in bargaining day off as well. In addition, a total of 14% of the respondents can avail for sick leave. The weakness of welfare measures for the women domestic workers is reflected. The main tasks of the women domestic workers are cleaning, cooking, care giving, shopping, hospitality at home, gardening, animal care, driving and care giving and out of which a maximum of 94% of the respondents' tasks falls in cleaning work. The study shows that there is no specific time allocation pattern and no particular tasks which is assigned to them. The workers are usually assigned and expected to do the task according to the needs of the employer and their family. In addition, wages are not set based on their work performance or the particular task they performed but solely on the mercy of the employer and the contract deal between the worker and the employer.

The study found that work wear is not available to nearly two-third (62.3%) of the respondents. However, 24.2% of the respondents were provided work wear



such as gloves, masks and clothes especially during the pandemic. From the study, the unfair works comprises of washing undergarments of the employers and their family, handling sick people without protective gear, deny of rest and food, placement without consent, over work, forced to work when sick or unwell and force to wake up in the middle of the night to clean up their mess. Further, 3.3% of the women domestic workers have reported that they were placed in another home from their employer's home without prior consent and that are very ridiculous in times. Moreover, 6% of the respondents have reported that they were forced to do the works even in times of sickness or unwell and especially during their menstruation period. This also compels the respondents to change their mind and increase the job turnover rates. The table shows the financial assistance provided to the women domestic workers were festival bonus, salary payment, pecuniary benefits such as enough food, old/new phones, old/ new clothes, clothing and personal care, bonus money, bank account, festival advance, condense education, yearly increment and vocational training. A maximum of 90.6% of the respondents were provided with enough food and that they are privilege enough. The respondents exclaimed that they did not like to work as a domestic worker for whole life and those they would like to undergo different skills trainings like sewing, beauty culture, etc. However, less than one-tenth (9.3%) of the total respondents never did worry about their work and they are satisfied working with their employers.

#### **11.1.6 Living Conditions of Women Domestic Workers**

The study shows that more than two-third (76%) of the respondents are Live-in women domestic workers where 11.3% are part-time workers. This shows the dominant factor of live –in domestic workers rather than part- time workers and that there are more of an inter-state migrant worker where the workers need accommodation. Nearly two third (64.6%) of the respondents lives in the same floor with the employers due to limited space and almost an equal number (63.6%) of the respondents were given separate room. While,27.3% of the respondents wash their clothes separately and some are not allowed to use washing machine and that they have to manually hand wash. The study found that more than half (53%) of the respondents eat food along with the employer. A report from one respondent is that “I usually feed the children first and ate food after all the family members have

finished”. Surprisingly, 5.3% of the respondents have separate utensils and they usually feel discriminated. Less than one-tenth (7.6%) were barely given medical care when they are sick or unwell, so they exclaimed that they used to buy pain killer ‘Paracetamol’ from their pocket when in pain.” The respondents, however, came across different kind of sexual harassment in their workplace such as eve-teasing, exposed to pornography, unwanted physical contact, leering or telling dirty jokes, making sexual remarks about a person’s body, sexually remarks for sexual favour, rape and molestation. Exposed to pornography (7%) is the most common form of harassment among the respondents. Most interestingly, there is also an incident of rape cases which they did not allow to reveal their ordeal. In regard to mistakes committed by the respondents, half of the respondents (50%) were usually excused when they make mistakes and they were given another chance. There is also a case when the respondents are forgiven in their mistakes in a manner that their monthly salary is reduced with the replacement of the actual amount they have broken.

#### **11.1.7 Conditions of Women Domestic Workers- the Case Studies and Focus Group Discussions**

Case studies were conducted among the women domestic workers such as a case on molestation, withheld stay by employer, verbal and physical abuse, money quarrel, immodest behavior from employer, torture from employer, challenges due to pandemic, racial discrimination and withheld wages, mental health issues and intimidation and threatening. The case studies found out that women domestic workers in Mizoram are mostly live-in domestic workers where there is little privacy. The women domestic workers also face discrimination in various kinds such as racial discrimination, low education and are discriminated due to their socio-economic background. However, there is an organization named “Ferrando Domestic Workers Alliance” that contributes to the improvement of domestic workers in the State where domestic workers can reach out easily when they faced problems.

In the study a focus group discussions (FGDs) were also conducted in order to identify the social support received by the respondents. 73.3% used to contact their parents when they need to talk. Friends also play the secondary role in giving advice and console them when they encountered different problems. The study found that mothers do really play a significant role when girls are needed to express their

feeling and emotions. However, there are 8% of the employers who became the guardian to the women domestic workers that the respondents felt secure to share their secrets and accept them as their guardian. When talking about sexual abuse, half of the respondents (50%) reported that they feel free to share with their mother at the most. The study also shows that Women Helpline and Domestic Workers Services like Ferrando Domestic Workers Alliance play a significant role in counselling and giving advice and shelter to the victims of sexual abuse. When the respondents are fired from their job, the first person they would contact is their parents including friends, community leaders, relatives, romantic partner and domestic workers services. When having disputes with the employer, the respondents do contact parents, friends, romantic partners, relatives, church leaders and Ferrando Domestic Workers Alliance. When having issues with romantic partner, the respondents firstly contacted their friends. Secondly, parents, relatives, employers and church leaders. This has shown the values of friendship, the cordial and unison among women domestic workers in Mizoram.

## **11.2 Further Research**

The present study suggests the following areas for further research:

- 1) Research on the children of domestic workers since they are prone to child labour or child domestic work.
- 2) To study on child domestic work
- 3) To conduct a comparative study between child domestic worker and old aged domestic worker.
- 4) A comparative study between the employer and the employee.
- 5) Comparative research on migrant domestic worker and native domestic worker
- 6) Impact of domestic work in socio-economic conditions of their families
- 7) Impact of Covid -19 among domestic workers.

### 11.3 Recommendations

The study found out that the women domestic workers comprise a significant part of the workforce in the world and are among the most vulnerable groups of workers in the informal sector. Domestic workers form the most important part in lives of an individual as well as families and that the demand for domestic workers is increasing day by day by every family. Therefore, in order to ensure the decent working and living conditions of women domestic workers the following recommendations should be taken into consideration:

1. Women domestic workers must be assisted in getting their entitlements and must be helped to enrol to avail Social Security Schemes(eShram) and other benefits depending on the documents available with them and their eligibility.
2. To develop program regarding the rights of domestic workers and impart training skills of domestic work through Leadership Quality Training Program to motivate them in improving life's skills for an increase in income and to attain the employer's satisfaction.
3. The government of Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram are on the verge of fixing the Minimum Wages of Domestic Workers (Assam and Tripura have fixed) but the implementation is ambiguous. Hence, awareness campaign on just wage should start from our Home itself so that the practise is spread and their rights are not denied.
4. Sensitization program on Anti-Child Labour must be taken into considerations so that the young workers of below 18years of age are protected from hazardous working conditions so that civilians would know the key roles on how to stop child labour to respond to this situation and join hand for the fight against children in domestic work.
5. Imparting literacy program for women domestic workers since we are in the era of high technology, literacy is a mandatory requirement to deal with every aspects of our daily life.
6. To develop welfare board for domestic workers and form a union among domestic workers with the help of governmental (Labour and Employment, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship department, Government of

Mizoram), non-governmental agencies and CBOs. A mechanism to assist the domestic workers in distress is required to address the enormous incidences of sexual exploitation and harassment behind the closed doors. If a domestic workers' welfare board is constituted then most of the problem will diminish largely.

7. Legalisation of domestic work with registration of the employers and employees in a more regularised and standardised domestic work spectrum is highly significant. Skills training and other measures will only help if the employment is within a legal framework.

8. Another platform or outlet for domestic workers in the centre of Aizawl city other than FIWDC, Aizawl so that women domestic workers in Mizoram can easily access the facilities they need since FIWDC is located 1kms away from the city and is not reachable by all.

**WORKING AND LIVING CONDITIONS OF WOMEN  
DOMESTIC WORKERS IN MIZORAM**

**AN ABSTRACT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

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**ABSTRACT**

**WORKING AND LIVING CONDITIONS OF WOMEN DOMESTIC WORKERS IN  
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## ABSTRACT

### INTRODUCTION

The present study attempts to find out the working and living conditions of women domestic workers in Mizoram. Therefore, the study highlights the issues and challenges of women domestic workers in Mizoram hence to facilitate development of strategies and practical measures for promotion of the rights and employment towards empowerment of women domestic workers in Mizoram.

From the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century the Mizo society had entered a new socio-economic milieu, which was brought forth by British occupation of the Lushai Hills (Mizoram) and the entry of the Christian Missionaries. Mizoram is placed under the administrative and political rule of the British Government since from 1891. However, after the establishment of colonial authority, group territorial mobility was curtailed, while encouraging individual mobility. Thus, a moderate form of stable settlement began to take shape. The colonial rule gradually had done away with some of the traditional rights and privileges of the Mizo chiefs, which encourages individual mobility. Historically, it is evidences that women in Mizoram practice jhum cultivation and mainly with a specific nature of work like *hlothlawlh i.e. farming*, cleaning of cotton flowers, collection of woods, cooking and preparation for lunch while weaving was done mostly when they are free from the jhum's work . The British Rule gradually loosened the traditional holds, thus, the people envisaged the root of a new set of rules based on democratic principle as early as 1920. However, with the pace of time the series of events that unfolded after India' Independence in the Mizo hills had far reaching, multi-faceted impact on the Mizo society.

The scenario is now being changed and women labour participation is visible everywhere either in governmental settings or non-governmental settings, private and public enterprises, organised or unorganised work extending to the work done outside homes. (Malsawmliana & Benjamin Ralte, 2011). The employment exchange of Aizawl district, Mizoram shows the number of women job seekers was 24,585 as per the record



of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2000, and out of whom the educational level of 3039 were graduate and above (Lalfakzuali, 2010).

The national scenario has shown the strong preference for nuclear families which has resulted in a demand for domestic workers in India and eventually in Mizoram state as well. Although they form a crucial segment of the informal worker population, domestic workers are a relatively neglected population as compared to workers in other unorganised sectors such as garment factory, construction works, transportation, restaurant and other informal industries. The women domestic workers are neither not adequately educated nor organized through meaningful unionization and are denied of minimum wages, healthy work period, safe working conditions and other benefits. Unsurprisingly, following a similar pattern, the women domestic workers are a neglected group among the unorganized workforce in Mizoram. For decades they have been exploited and only in recent years the Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are taking up the cause of women domestic workers. Moreover, women domestic workers are subjected to series of injustices, deprivations and indignities in modern society due to the absence of meaningful legal safeguards, welfare measures and other provisions for the empowerment of women.

### **Domestic Work**

Domestic work is done across many regions around the globe where Europe and Central Asia represent the smallest shares of the global population of domestic workers. However, the American region is the world's second-largest employer of domestic workers by region after Asia and the Pacific. Domestic work accounts for most of the informal workforce in India hence Mizoram by poor and unskilled women, from marginalized communities and vulnerable rural districts and migrant women domestic workers crossing international boundaries from Myanmar and state boundaries from Tripura, India. The work and workplace is invisible, undervalued, unrecognized and unregulated, and hence the sector suffers from low wages, lack of formal contract, decent work conditions and poor social security measures (Chigateri, S., et al, 2016). Domestic work is historically associated with poor working conditions, such as lack of

legal registration (most often they do not register), low wages and high weekly working hours. In fact, some of these workers actually live in the employer's household, as evidenced by the survey conducted in the State. Moreover, domestic work is largely considered a distinct work due to its nature of work which comprises of work done inside the household such as cleaning, nursing, caring, hospitality, gardening, as well as driving and guarding private households. The Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent national lockdown further aggravated the situation of the already vulnerable women domestic worker.

### **Domestic Workers**

Servant is an older English term for "domestic worker", though not all servants worked inside the home. Domestic service, or the employment of people for wages in their employer's residence, was sometimes simply called "service". It evolved into a hierarchical system in various countries at various times. Domestic work covers many different activities, situations and relationships, and so is not easy to categorize. It includes many tasks such as cleaning, laundry and ironing; shopping, cooking and fetching water; caring for the sick, elderly and children; looking after pets; sweeping and garden-tidying.

The women domestic workers of Mizoram has a great labour participation, infact, their rights has been neglected and they are relatively ill-treated in many forms like verbal, sexual, psychological and emotional abuse. In general, domestic workers in Mizoram came from a low socio-economic background where they have low self-esteem and self-confidence. However, a number of factors are contributing to the growing of women domestic workers within the workforce in Mizoram and each of which requires critical examination that is illustrated in the present study.

### **Concept of Women Domestic Workers**

The women domestic labour debate was particularly prominent in the western academia amongst feminists in the 1960s and 1970s. The implications of domestic labour on women's emancipation as well as transformation of gender roles. However, it has been differently read by different schools of feminism. Domestic worker is a person

who is engaged on a part time or full time basis in domestic service. The domestic worker receives remuneration periodically in cash or kind for a fixed period from the employer (Chandramouli,K., 2021).

Domestic work is one of the oldest and most significant informal occupations for millions of women around the world. Women seemed to have limited options and enter the domain of domestic work in the absence of education, economic resources and other opportunities. The term ‘domestic service’ is practically difficult to define since the duties of domestic workers were not well defined. However, domestic service is now accepted as an important category of livelihood across the globe and remains a highly personalized and informal service delivered in the homes of employers. In domestic service, work cannot be subjected to any comparative tests, since it has the character almost unique in wage paid industry. The service is being carried on for use, not for profit, and the settlement of wages remains an individual bargain between employer and employed (Caplow, 1954).

### **Classification of Domestic Workers**

Domestic workers works directly under the authority of householder and the work is done by following the straight instructions of the employer. Darcy du Toit (2013), has divided the types of domestic workers, based on the hours of work and nature of employment relationship which includes:-

- a) Part-time worker i.e. worker who works for **one or more employers for a specified number of hours per day** or performs specific tasks for each of the multiple employers every day.
- b) Full-time worker i.e. worker who works for a **single employer every day** for a specified number of hours and who returns back to her/his home every day after work.
- c). Live-in worker i.e. worker who works **full time for a single employer(residing in the household of the employer)** and also stays on the

premises of the employer or in a dwelling provided by the employer (which is close or next to the house of the employer) and does not return back to her/his home every day after work.”

d). Live-out worker i.e. **worker who may be living in his/her own residence.**

However, the ILO Convention 189 has recognised a decent wage pay where domestic workers comprised of three main groups

- Live-in domestic workers
- Part-time / Live-out domestic worker
- Migrant Domestic Workers (inter-state and overseas domestic workers)

### **Magnitude of Domestic Workers**

Around the world, there are 75.6 million domestic workers aged 15 years and over. The world’s largest employers of domestic workers, in numerical terms, are Asia and the Pacific (where 50 per cent of all domestic workers are employed) and the Americas (where 23 per cent of all domestic workers are employed). In contrast, the Europe and Central Asia region employs the smallest share of all domestic workers (ILO,2021).

Domestic workers comprise a significant part of the global workforce in informal employment and are among the most vulnerable groups of workers. About 1.5 million Asian women work as migrant domestic workers in other countries, however, in the Philippines, there are estimated to be over 600,000 local domestic workers. As per official estimates, there are 4.75 million domestic workers (NSS 2005) but this is a gross under-estimation and there could be close to 50 million domestic workers in India. According to Indian National Sample Survey (NSS) 2001 data, there were 2.0 million female workers and 0.3 million male workers as compared to 1.2 million female and 0.3 male workers in 1983, resulting in a substantial issues in the number of female workers (Mehrotra, S.T., 2008). In India, two draft bills, put forward by the National Commission for Women and the National Campaign Committee(NCC) of Unorganized

Sector Workers, to protect domestic workers have been in circulation since 2008, but neither has been passed.

Domestic worker's population has been increasing deliberately in every society of India and hence Mizoram as well. Domestic workers are considered as part of the large 'informal' sector of urban economy and over the last two decades, the domestic worker population has emerged as the second largest urban informal workforce (Chen and Raveendran, 2011). Moreover, the population has reached next only to 'home based workers' like artisans and petty commodity producers. An increasing number of studies are emerging about domestic workers around the world and it is estimated that 41.3 lakhs workers work in the households of others, and an overwhelming 27.9 lakhs of this total are women as indicated by NSS 68th round, July 2011- June 2012. In Mizoram, domestic workers population there are 1,832 domestic workers (approx.) in Aizawl since 2005 to 2007(MNDWMWT, 2008). Therefore, it is evident that there has been an increasing trend of domestic workers in Mizoram where the workers work predominantly at Mizoram and other countries as well.

However, the ILO (2004 – 2005) report has also documented that in India, there are 4.2 million (approx) of domestic workers comprising of the 3lakh domestic workers in North East States. The north east state has a large number of women and young girls enrolled in domestic work yet unrecognized and a decent work status denied to them. They are often named as maids, servants, kitchen girls and *Aiyas* while in Mizoram we call them '*Awmpui*' meaning the one who stays with me or with us, the word which in itself doesn't recognize them as workers. In Mizoram, an organization named "Jeriko Khualbuk" has started realizing the need for protection of domestic worker's rights and freedom while working with commercial sex workers. The initiation of the Project "Formation of Domestic Workers Union Structures" in 2004 was implemented in 12 cities in North East (Agartala City,Aizawl, Barpeta, Bongaigaon, Guwahati, Imphal, Kohima, Sarupathar, Shillong,Tezpur,Tinsukia, and Tura City) covering six states namely: Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram, Nagaland and Manipur ([www.cdismhc.org](http://www.cdismhc.org)).

## **Migrant Workers and Domestic Worker**

The [ILO Global Estimates on Migrant Workers](#) (2015) reports that more than 150 million workers worldwide are international migrants (accounting for 72 per cent of the total international population of working age migrants). Domestic workers, the majority of whom are women, constituting a large portion of today's migrant worker population. In Latin America, for example, they constitute as many as 60 per cent of all internal and international migration. The feminization of migration, a trend that began in the early 1980s, has resulted in an increased number of women who had migrated alone. Women and girls make up almost 67 million of this workers, one in six is a domestic worker. The biggest host regions for migrant domestic workers are:

- South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific (24%)
- Northern, Southern and Western Europe (22%)
- Arab States (19%)

## **Working and Living Conditions of Women Domestic Workers in North – East India**

In the study, the working and living conditions of women domestic workers in North – east India has been presented from different states such as Tripura, Mizoram, Assam, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Shillong and Manipur. The domestic workers in North-east India comprise mainly of female workers where workers are from native area and their neighbouring states. The unhygienic living conditions with no proper water facilities and unaware of the rights of domestic worker is the main issues in Agartala, Tripura. The unstable economic conditions hamper their children to go to good schools for quality education. The women domestic workers works at the mercy of the employers with no decent wage paid to them for their service. Although they are blessed with the benefit of monthly pension specifically meant for domestic workers but they are deprived of other various rights. The Government of Tripura has fixed the Minimum Wage for Domestic Workers i.e. Rs 13/- per hour which is extremely low to ensure a living wage to them.

**Identified Number of domestic Workers in 12 cities of Northeast India(2015 – 2018)**

**Table 1: Number of Domestic Workers in North-East India**

Sl.No	Name of the City	Data	Percentage out of total population(in 2018)	Ranking
1	Sarupathar City	1416	10,827(2011 census) (13%)	1
2	Tura City	1242	74858(1.65%)	2
3	Tezpur City	1675	102,505(2011 census) (1.6%)	3
4	Tinsukia City	1210	126,389(2011 census) (0.95%)	4
5	Shillong City	2878	436,000(0.6%)	5
6	Imphal City	2424	540,000(0.44%)	6
7	Guwahati City	3321	1,083,000(0.30)	7
8	Aizawl City	824	353,000(0.2%)	8
9	Bongaigaon City	957	820,073(0.11%)	9
10	Kohima City	433	297,467(0.14%)	10
11	Agartala City	590	534,000(0.1%)	11
12	Barpeta City	1561	1,693,622(2011 census) (0.09%)	12
<b>Total</b>		<b>18531</b>		

**Source: CDI (2018)**

Findings: Domestic workers were traced highest in Guwahati, whilst the least were identified in Kohima. However, with the representation of the total population of the city studied, the highest is Sarupathi district with 13per cent of the total population of the city with Barpeta at the lowest (0.09%).In addition, Guwahati is a cosmopolitan city and a commercial hub of the Northeast region. Therefore, the city attracts the

migrant workers as it offers a lot of job opportunities. On the other hand, Kohima is a less populated city with live-in domestic workers contributing a huge percentage of this workforce.

### **Women domestic workers during COVID-19**

The third phase of stringent lockdown of COVID-19 has imposed a burden of unpaid care work among women domestic workers. The COVID -19 pandemic and the subsequent national lockdown further aggravated the situation of the already vulnerable sector. The domestic workers who are playing a very crucial role in the economic life of the women in today's competitive market are striving hard to arrange two square meals during the Covid-19 lockdown. Most of the domestic workers are compelled to do the menial job due to their economically disadvantaged and poor financial conditions. Their silent contributions for many households as well as society have remained invisible for a long time. However, during the pandemic COVID-19, they have faced double marginalization as they are engaged in informal reproductive work in the unorganized sector and they are not recorded as wage laborer and yet deprived of getting any benefit. A suitable policy may be framed by bringing them to the mainstream, so that in the future if a situation like lockdown has arisen they will not fight with hunger and anxiety (Kaur, K., 2020).

### **Conceptual Framework**

A conceptual framework represents the synthesis of the literature reviewed on how to explain a phenomenon and a framework is understood as a supporting structure on which something can be built which can be real or conceptual that guides or directs into successful outcome. In other words, the conceptual framework is the understanding of how the particular [variables](#) are connected. The conceptual framework “sets the stage” to present the particular research question that drives the investigation being reported based on the problem statement. The problem statement of a thesis gives the context and the issues that caused the researcher to conduct the study (Regoniel,P.,2015). Hence, it is essential to explore some of the frameworks on working and living conditions of women domestic workers that have been developed or framed by organisations or researchers in



the past in pertaining to the working and living conditions so as to have a better understanding of the dimensions and factors that are responsible in the process of assessing the working and living conditions of women domestic workers. Thus, the working and living conditions of women domestic workers framework is discussed below:

<b>Marxist</b>	<b>feminist</b>	<b>Labour Law</b>	<b>Decent work</b>
<b>Approach</b>			
Division of Labour	Women's oppression	Fair access to jobs	Flexible working conditions
Unpaid Labour		Right to work, dignity of workers, ensures fair treatment, prevents serious abuses of power	Freedom, equity, security, human dignity
		To prevent employers from treating their employees like a commodity	Labour Market
		Collective bargaining	

### **Statement of the Problem**

Women domestic workers face a number of risks that are common in domestic work service. Women in particular are marked by a series of changes in physical, psychological, social and economic issues. However, studies assessing the relationship between migrants or native women domestic workers, drivers to domestic works such as the push and pull factors, adequacy of salary in comparison with their working conditions, awareness level on social security measures, and humiliating or degrading treatment including physical and verbal violence, and sexual abuse of domestic workers are lacking. The complexity of the women domestic workers and the accompanying changes in physical and social characteristics is usually emphasized, but it is not very

well understood by the community at large. A poor understanding of the rights of women domestic worker's issues is the main cause for the absence of focus on services, information and research on unique features of International Labour Organization (ILO). In recent years, the trends of globalization and liberalization, the rapid spread of communication and information technology, and shifting social and moral norms maybe said to have eroded the traditional bases and defining points for concern of others in Mizo society. However, empirical study and research based intervention is absence in the state. These require immediate attention and appropriate interventions. Therefore, the study will focus on the exploration on the working and living conditions of women domestic workers by eliciting information on the issues and challenges faced by them.

### **Chapter Scheme**

The chapter scheme for the present study is presented into eight (8) chapters.

The first chapter deals with the introduction which discusses on the background of domestic work, concept of domestic work, concept of women domestic work, classification of domestic worker, magnitude of domestic work and working and living conditions of women domestic workers in North-East India. It also presents the statement of problem of the study.

The second chapter focuses on the review of various literatures relate to "Living and Working Conditions of Women domestic Workers". The review of literature is divided into 20 groups viz. studies on domestic work, domestic worker, women domestic worker, feminization of domestic work, an informal work of domestic work, working conditions, living conditions, issues an challenges such as poor bargaining power, social insecurity, push and pull factors, conditions of domestic workers, migration and domestic work, sex work, emotional labour and domestic work, caste, race and domestic work, vulnerabilities of women domestic workers, migration and women domestic workers, coping strategies & social support an laws and policies of domestic workers.

The third chapter presents on the methodology employed for the study which includes the profile of the study area, objectives of the study, research design, and sampling, tools for data collection, data processing analysis and limitations of the study.

The fourth chapter discusses on the “Composition of Women domestic Workers” like Profile of respondents, socio economic profile and self - hygiene of women domestic workers.

The fifth chapter deals with “Working Conditions of Women domestic Workers” viz. working hours, work type, remittance provision and the satisfaction level.

The sixth chapter deals with “Living Conditions of Women domestic Workers” viz. types of domestic work, nature of work, inhumane treatment, sexual harassment, employer’s reaction over the work, privacy and self-perception of women domestic workers while working.

The seventh chapter focuses on the challenges of women domestic workers and drivers to domestic work.

The eighth chapter deals with qualitative interpretation such as case studies, focus group discussions and key informant interviews. The Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) is conducted mainly on the social support and coping strategies of women domestic workers. Key informant interviews (KIIs) are done with the stakeholders to assess the issues faced by women domestic workers.

The ninth chapter deals with social support and coping strategies on the working and living conditions of women domestic workers in Mizoram.

The tenth chapter deals with the scope for social work intervention and the role of social worker in the area of women working in unorganized sector particularly the women domestic workers. The study here focuses on the decent work and economic empowerment of women by using the social work techniques, skills enrich around the philosophies, assumptions and values of social work education.

Lastly, the eleventh chapter deals with conclusion and suggestions drawn out of the survey with micro and macro levels of intervention.

Thus this chapter deals with the introduction of highlighting the topic of the study, “Living and Working Conditions of Women Domestic Workers in Mizoram”. Besides this, it also presents the statement of the problem and chapter scheme of the study. The proceeding chapter presents on the review of literature.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Domestic work is one of the foremost and most important works all over the world. It has been estimated that there are 75.6 million domestic worker globally aged 15 years and over. Women continue to make up the majority of the unorganised sector (76.2%), which accounts for 4.5% of female employment worldwide, or 8.8% of female employees (ILO, 2021). However, women domestic workers across the globe are assigned with works which is a low-paid, insecure and an exploitative work place. Women domestic workers comprise a significant part of the global workforce in informal employment and moreover, they are among the most vulnerable groups of workers. They work for private households, often without clear terms of employment, unregistered, and excluded from the scope of Labour Legislation (ILO, 2016).

### **Concept of domestic work and women domestic work**

According to Convention No. 189 (2021), “domestic work is a work performed in or for a household or households, within an employment relationship and on an occupational basis”. Domestic worker’s tasks vary across countries and overtime and the works undertaken by them are cleaning, nursing, caring, hospitality, gardening, as well as driving and guarding private households. The uniqueness and most challenging part of women domestic worker is that their tasks vary depending upon the wishes and directions of the employer. So, they eventually fall under the prey of their employers. Given this heterogeneity of the tasks, domestic work was determined to be the workplace – that is, the household.

## **International Labour Organisation (ILO) and Convention 189**

ILO (2021) has highlight that in 2011, the International Labour Organization (ILO) adopted the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), the first international legal instrument devoted to domestic work. In its Preamble, the Convention recognizes the contributions of domestic workers to the global economy and the persistent undervaluation of domestic work. Considering that domestic workers are some of the most marginalized workers, the Convention set out to ensure that they enjoy decent work, like all other workers, while taking into account the specificities of the sector. Since then, much progress has been made towards achieving decent work for domestic workers; however, for far too many workers in this sector, decent work has not yet become a reality. Shortly after the adoption of Convention No. 189, the ILO produced the report *Domestic Workers Across the World* (ILO 2013a), which provided the first global estimate of the number of domestic workers. It also provided regional estimates and an estimate of the percentage of domestic workers covered by key labour and social security laws governing working time, wages and maternity protection.

### **Regional Estimates of Domestic Workers**

ILO (2021) clearly highlights that the vast majority of domestic workers are employed in two regions: about half of all domestic workers can be found in Asia and the Pacific, largely on account of China, while another quarter (23 per cent) are in America. These regions also employ the largest shares of the world's female domestic workers, at 52.1 per cent and 27.2 per cent, respectively. Americas and the Arab States are the two regions in which domestic workers are over-represented compared with the distribution of global employment. In America, 17.6 million men and women aged 15 years old and over work as domestic workers, accounting for 23 per cent of the total worldwide. The Americas region is home to the second-largest population of women domestic workers (15.7 million), second only to Asia and the Pacific. It is also the region in which domestic work is the most feminized, 89 per cent of domestic workers in the region being women (table 2.1). Domestic work remains an important source of

employment among women, representing 7.7 per cent of female employment (or 10 per cent of female employees).

### **Push and Pull Factors**

ILO (2018a) analyzed that some research suggests the share of the domestic work sector is in part a result of income inequality. Using the Gini coefficient, research conducted by the ILO found that the higher the level of income inequality, the larger the size of the domestic workforce as a share of total employment. Another way of understanding the relationship between income inequality and the demand for domestic work is in terms of a worker's willingness to accept an offer of employment at a given wage and an employer's willingness and capacity to pay for services. In other words, in countries with higher levels of income inequality, the demand for domestic work is driven, at least in part, by the fact that there is a large number of people who are willing to accept relatively low wages, which are paid by a large enough number of households with the capacity to employ domestic workers.

Anderson (2000) mentioned that the size of the domestic workforce depends on a range of factors on both the supply and the demand side. Research has already substantiated some of the factors that push women and men to seek employment as domestic workers. Some of the most pronounced factors are poverty, a need to generate more income for their families, and a lack of employment opportunities.

### **Living and Working Conditions of Women Domestic Workers**

Rejimon P.M & Gopal, S. (2020) found that the women domestic workers has less voice in confronting the employer and often continue accepting whatever the employers pay them and are under constant fear that asking for a raise may lead to termination from work. The employers also provide them stale foods or leftover foods which are not good for their health and nutrition. The employers also refuse to give them paid leave even though they work hard beyond their capacity.

Dithhi, B. et.al. (2016) envisage the double burden of working at their own homes on the one hand and the demands of the workplace on the other take a heavy toll

on their lives. The workers suffered from sleeplessness, fear (often leading to more absenteeism and hence more stress and fear), severe headaches, and mental stress due to the financial consequences of frequent absences. Moreover, the continuous demand for perfection in their tasks, often with the employer watching closely while domestic workers go about their work, was by itself extremely stressful.

Polask, S. (2013) exclaimed that despite the size of the sector, many domestic workers experience poor working conditions and insufficient legal protection. Domestic workers are frequently expected to work longer hours than other workers and in many countries do not have the same rights to weekly rest that are being enjoyed by other workers. Combined with the lack of rights, the extreme dependency on an employer and the isolated and unprotected nature of domestic work can render them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

According to Smith (2011), domestic workers are employed in private homes rather than firms or enterprises. This tends to make them invisible as formal workers and isolated from others in the sector. They are dependent on the good or bad will of their employer. Growing evidence shows that domestic workers are exposed to a range of unhealthy and hazardous working conditions despite the concept of the home as “safe haven”.

Rustagi (2009) highlights that the relationship between employers and domestic workers is very subjective and depended on the individuals involved. There is a marginal increase in the number of women domestic workers in India.

### **Conditions of domestic workers**

Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), 2020 highlights the status of domestic workers in Delhi, India that there was an estimate of 500,000 domestic workers in Delhi city alone, where the bulk of the demand for domestic work is for part-time workers. Most have multiple employers and work more than 40 hours per week. Domestic workers in Delhi spend the equivalent of three-

quarters of a week's wage on a health-care visit, despite various governmental schemes to help workers access health care. Also, most have no access to maternity leave or other benefits including pensions. Migrant workers often encounter problems in applying for benefits because the necessary documentation is kept in their home villages and is inaccessible to them. With COVID-19 and its impacts, large numbers of domestic workers in Delhi are said to have lost their jobs and about 80 per cent face severe to moderate economic crises. The sector was largely excluded from emergency grants and food rations. There are estimated to be 500,000 domestic workers in Delhi (ILO, 2016). According to the International Labour Organization (2017), the bulk of the demand for domestic work in Delhi is for part-time workers, although there are also substantial numbers of particularly vulnerable live-in workers from rural districts and states including Jharkhand, Odisha and Bihar.

Bino Paul et al., (2011) reported that in 1959, New Delhi based All India Domestic Workers Union called for a one-day solidarity strike which received a thumping response from domestic workers. Interestingly, this initiative attracted legislators' attention; two bills –on minimum wages and the timely payment of wages, maximum working hours, weekly rest and annual leave periods, as well as the establishment of a servant's registry to be maintained by the local police, in deference to employers- were introduced.

### **Issues and Challenges of Women Domestic Workers**

WIEGO (2020) views that only few of the domestic workers having a written contract with their employer, which means that their work status is highly insecure, and they have little power to change this. This is exacerbated by the fact that wage rates are set by the neighbourhood, leaving little space for individual workers to bargain for higher wages. Although organizations of domestic workers are gaining strength in the city, which would support collective action and voice, it is challenging to organize domestic workers, particularly those who live and work in the gated communities across the city.



ILO (2016) mention that women domestic workers face numerous problems such as low wages, extra work, long working hours, lack of holidays, harassment at workplace, sexual exploitation, physical torture, ill treatment, lack of welfare facilities, lack of rest and freedom, absence of social security measures, development of fatigue, and low level of education. Moreover, they comprise a significant part of the global economy in informal employment and therefore they are the most vulnerable groups among informal workers. Domestic workers worked for private households, often without clear terms of employment, and are excluded from the scope of labour legislation. Women domestic workers face a number of risks that are common in domestic work service. Women in particular are marked by a series of changes in physical, psychological, social and economic issues. However, studies assessing the relationship between insufficient or inadequate food and accommodation, and humiliating or degrading treatment including physical and verbal abuse, inhumane or degrading treatment, and sexual harassment of domestic workers are lacking. The complexity of the women domestic workers and the accompanying changes in physical and social characteristics is usually emphasized, but it is not very well understood by the community at large. A poor understanding of the rights of women domestic worker's issues is the main cause for the absence of focus on services, information and research on unique features of International Labour Organization (ILO). In recent years, the trends of globalization and liberalization, the rapid spread of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and shifting social and moral norms maybe said to have eroded the traditional bases and defining points for concern of others in Mizo society. However, empirical study and research based intervention is absence in the state. These require immediate attention and appropriate interventions. Therefore, the study is focusing on the exploration on the working and living conditions of women domestic workers by eliciting information on the issues and challenges faced by them.

### **Domestic work - “an informal work”**

Svennson, J. (2018) discusses about the informal occupations of domestic work in India and opines to the fact that wages are extremely low. For instance, wages for women in informal work are four times lower than women’s wages in the formal work sector. Moreover, the informal nature of domestic work creates opportunities for potentially exploitative recruitment channels. Workers, especially young workers have very limited position or opportunity to negotiate fair employment terms and safe work conditions with recruitment agents or with employers.

The United Nations (2002) attempted to explain how tasks performed by domestic workers are not recognized as ‘work’. Domestic workers in India continue to struggle for visibility and recognition. While several legislations such as the Unorganized Social Security Act, 2008, Sexual Harassment against Women at Work Place (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 and Minimum Wages Schedules notified in various states refer to domestic workers, there remains an absence of comprehensive, uniformly applicable, national legislation that guarantees fair terms of employment and decent working conditions. Domestic workers should however be guaranteed the same terms of employment as enjoyed by other workers. Hired domestic workers ease the burden of individual households by undertaking household chores in return for remuneration. The tasks include the care of children and the elderly, cooking, driving, cleaning, grocery shopping, running errands and taking care of household pets, particularly in urban areas. However, despite the benefits this work brings to individual households, domestic workers are often not recognized as workers by society.

### **Minimum Wages and Women Domestic Workers-**

ILO (2021) reported that since 2010, little progress has been made in ensuring a minimum wage for domestic workers equal to that enjoyed by workers generally or limiting payment in kind for domestic workers. There has been only a small increase in the number of domestic workers who are entitled to a minimum wage equal to that of other workers (2.9 percentage points) and who have a right to receive their minimum

wage fully in cash (7.2 percentage points). Remuneration is a very crucial aspect of the Convention 189 of ILO and most relevant to the present study.

Chand, H.(2019) accounted that it must also be put to view that there have been individual and organizational attempts for the protection and status uplift of these workers with various draft bills over the years, such as Domestic Workers( Registration, Social Security and Welfare) Bill 2008, which was prepared by National Commission for Women(NCW) India, Domestic Workers (Regulation of employment, Condition of work, Social Security and Welfare) Bill 2008 by National Campaign Committee for Unorganised sector workers and The Domestic Workers Employment Rights Protection Bill 2004 ( SEWA-Kerala Bill). The main emphasis or the core issues incorporated in all of these draft bills focus on the condition of the work i.e., leaves, holidays, hours of work etc, and also on the social security of the workers. But the failure of materialization of bill to an Act has been disappointing. One such initiative in this regard of providing welfare, protection and security to domestic workers was that of, Dr. Sashi Tharoor, Member of Parliament, who introduced ‘The Domestic Workers Welfare’ Bill 2016 in Lok Sabha on 5 July, 2016. The proposed bill addresses the needs of the workers and suitable terms of agreement, and thus guarantees certain rights to the domestic workers in accordance with International Convention on Labour such as the right to; earn and earn livelihood free from forced and compulsory labour, to earn minimum wages , to decent working and living conditions, to address grievances in an appropriate manner, to organize and bargain collectively and the right to equal employment opportunities and remuneration. The most recent effort to the cause has come from the Ministry of Labour and Employment in the form of a Draft National Policy on Domestic Workers which is still in its initial stages and remains to be passed by the Indian parliament house.

### **Feminisation of Domestic Work**

Sharan Burrow (2010) proclaimed that domestic workers were almost always women, often migrants and children and despite the fact that it is one of the oldest and most important occupations for millions of women around the world, domestic work is undervalued and in many countries falls outside the scope of labour legislation. She

notified that domestic workers have no guarantee of a minimum wage or social protection and their rights to form and join a trade union and to bargain in a collective way are violated. And as a result, many of them are overworked, underpaid, and cases of maltreatment and abuse, especially of live-in and migrant domestic workers, are countless.

National Commission for Enterprises in the Un-organized Sector (NCEUS), 2007 view domestic work to be the destiny of significantly huge number of women workers in India who seek employment opportunities in urban sector, often rendering an invisible workforce who are not paid well, and deprived of rights to ensure decency in work. Reflecting on indecent working and living condition of women domestic workers, National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector views: “Working in the unregulated domain of a private home, mostly without the protection of national labour legislation, allows for female domestic workers to be maltreated by their employers with impunity. Women are often subjected to long working hours and excessively arduous tasks. They may be strictly confined to their places of work. The domestic workforce is excluded from labour laws that look after important employment-related issues such as conditions of work, wages, social security, provident funds, old age pensions, and maternity leave.”

### **Poor Bargaining Power**

Vimala, M (2016) has viewed that the workers in unorganized sector remain unprotected by law. They are the most vulnerable section of the society and they enjoy no job or income security with little bargaining power. The unorganized sector is divided in to institutionalized and non- institutionalized sectors. The non-institutionalized unorganized sector comprises workers doing casual work like domestic workers, sweepers, scavengers etc. A key factor in the growth of informal activity in most developing regions has been the plummeting value of wages. The informal sector has not only offered the possibility of work to the unemployed, but has permitted survival of many households with wage earners. Some division of labour exists between

formal and informal sectors on the basis of gender. It has been suggested that women tend to stay within the informal sector because of the flexibility of working arrangements and diversity of opportunities.

### **Social Insecurity**

Kantor et al, (2006) highlights the caste and social stratification which have induced the probability of individuals to enter domestic work. The domestic workers have very limited access to larger social networks. So, there is a need to sustain and support organizations for domestic workers to improve their bargaining power. Therefore, organizing domestic workers is fundamental to finding solutions to the various problems faced by domestic workers. The lack of legal status, fear of loss of employment, fear of deportation if migrants, the inviolable privacy of households, the scattered nature of employment, long working hours and having more than one employer are some of the common factors that make domestic workers often hesitant to speak up publicly and demonstrate.

Gothoskar (2005) identifies domestic work as traditionally grey area in Indian labour legislation. A 'Domestic Workers (Condition of Services) Bill' was introduced as early as 1959, but it has yet to become law. For years, civil society organisations, most notably the National Domestic Workers Movement, have called for national legislation to regulate domestic workers' rights, as well as for the inclusion of domestic workers under the Minimum Wages Act (1948) and the Unorganized Workers' Social Security Bill (2008).

### **Migration and Women Domestic Workers**

ILO (2010) identifies the increasing demand for domestic workers are witness in the regular flow of domestic helps from particular pockets out of migration. The lack of any former skill and training requirement and the flexibility in employment are some of the factors, which ensure a regular and increasing inflow of domestic workers. The increasing rate of migrant population is 167 million persons to 315 million in 1971 census and 2001 census respectively. Also, nearly 20 million people migrated to other

states within the country seeking for livelihood (census of India, 1991). The scenario highlighted that of the total domestic workers in India in 2009- 10, more than 2/3 lived in urban India and amongst which 57 % of them are women Besides, a large scale rural-urban migration takes place from the states of Bihar, Odisha, Jharkhand, Assam, Mizoram and Chhattisgarh etc. to the metro cities like Delhi, Mumbai and other large cities (Social Alert, 2005).

Chandrashekhar & Ghosh (2007) mention that researches have highlighted the urban-rural work force participation of women in India and noticed the gradual increasing trend in participation in urban women workforce participation as compared to rural women workforce participation. Further, the estimated distribution of interstate migrants shows that out of the 80 million persons interstate migrants'20 million migrants are domestic workers (Census of India, 2011).

Reddy (1986) found out that due to feminisation of domestic work, women migrants are found to be more vulnerable to human rights abuses since they work in gender-segregated and unregulated sectors of the economy, such as in domestic work, entertainment and sex industry, unprotected by labour legislation or policy. Some occasions they are exposed to forced labour, precarious working conditions, poorly paid job, discrimination and sexual exploitation, suffer poorer health Migrant women often engage in unskilled and most poorly paid jobs, which have been deserted by national women. Because of the unregulated nature of domestic work, they often face a lot of problems at the destination. In most of the cases they have to work long hours, sometimes more than 15 hours a day (INSTRAW and IOM, 2000) and forced to do extra work. In addition, abuse and discrimination arising out of their immigration status, national origin and their lower status jobs, and to which domestic workers are more frequently victims of violence, including sexual assault at the work place.

### **Sex Work, Emotional Labour and Domestic Work**

Svensson, J. (2018) discuss how the girls are rebuked by their employers verbally and meted out corporal punishment such as hitting or slapping in response to what the girls themselves often perceived as trivial offenses. Findings also indicate that some girls thought they served as targets for household members' pent-up anger. Commonly participants reported sexual harassment and two participants reported rape. Live-out workers, in particular, discussed sexual harassment from community members during their commute to work. Participants also frequently reported that they were asked to give massages to male members of the household. Studies have repeatedly noted that the risk of sexual abuses are substantial among youth in domestic work because their labour takes place in a private sphere where violations often go unseen and victims have little protection or recourse.

Alfers, L (2011) has identified one case of woman that says *"I was once employed by a certain employer in Iringa Region for about 3 years...I had a serious problem of sexual harassment where the father and son tried to force me to have love affairs with them, but I disagreed! What I did, I decided to tell the neighbour. The neighbour told me that it was better to run away; she assisted me to find a job with her relative. This was very risky to me as I decided to run away without even telling my parents who are living in rural Iringa...I am no longer working with that employer. The bad thing is that my parents still think I am working in Iringa, since I cannot communicate with them."*

Warrington (2001) mention that home is a site where power relations are played out; it often falls short of its idealized construction as a place of safety and support, and instead becomes a place of spatial restriction, abuse and violence.

### **Caste, race and domestic work**

Mkandawire-Valhmu et al., (2009) mentions the employer's power over the domestic worker, due to class and race, creates a situation prevalent for abuse. In addition, many women work in cities or countries far away from home. As a result they often accept living with their employers in spite of the risk of abuse and the lack of

support if abuse happens. The study also found that the lives of domestic workers are characterized by abuse in the workplace.

Cock (1981) ascertains that because of their position on the social hierarchy, most female domestic workers are victims of gender, class and racial oppression. Some studies have found that, in the course of their work, domestic workers sometimes experience violence from their employers. This is because of the power dynamics that exist between the worker and her employer.

### **Vulnerabilities of Women Domestic workers**

Svensson, J. (2018) is concerning about the legal protection of domestic workers. In the study conducted by Svensson, it is mentioned that domestic workers may have legal protection via their inclusion in the 'Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008' and are now recognized as workers and included in the labour law. Domestic workers are covered if they are within the legal working age and 'self-employed,' 'home-based' or working for an hourly payment. They have also been included in the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act (2013). Even prior to the adoption of the ILO's Domestic Workers Convention (C189), India's Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) convened a Task Force on Domestic Workers in 2009, which submitted a draft National Policy that defines the domestic worker, the employer and the clear cut terms of employment. It recommends providing wage and social security protection to domestic workers, starting with the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) national health insurance scheme, under which domestic workers can also be included since 2012.

Saunders (2003) points out that labour market vulnerability includes issues such as lack of appropriate employment legislation, difficulties in accessing labour rights even on legislated work situations, lack of access to non-statutory benefits, lack of pension schemes, very low salaries, and lack of stable employment.



## **Impacts of Covid-19 Pandemic on Domestic Workers**

Majithia et al., (2020) proclaimed that informal workers in Delhi were hit hard by the lockdown restrictions imposed on the nation in March 2020. With no means of earning incomes, many were unable to continue paying rent or obtaining food. Exacerbated by a lack of public transport, this “triggered a humanitarian crisis never witnessed before in modern India, as men, women and children started walking hundreds of miles back to their villages”.

Babu & Bhandari (2020) found out that domestic workers in Delhi were not spared in this disaster. It has been estimated that 80 to 90 per cent of domestic workers in Delhi have lost their jobs.

## **Coping Strategies and Social Support adopted by Women Domestic Workers**

Anyikwa, et al., (2015) proclaimed that when facing different forms of work-related and personal problems and challenges, migrants’ decision to seek help and of the forms of help to seek depend on a number of personal and interpersonal characteristics and traits, including gender, race, economic status, migration status, access to information, and level of social inclusion.

Ullman and Filipas (2001) found that ethnic minority women, including migrant women, were more likely to report negative experiences of seeking help from police and to experience negative social reactions such as racial stereotyping and discrimination and victim blaming.

Tempbongko (2000) points out that many domestic helpers have a sister or a cousin already in domestic service and such family ties are maintained on Sundays. For immigrant foreign domestic workers, friends and support systems usually come from relatives who are part of their family of origin and the greater the contact with relatives the less the likelihood of depression.

## **Social Policy and Social Work Interventions**

Darcy Du Toit (2013) has mentioned that in November 2006, at a conference held in Amsterdam under the banner ‘Respect and Rights: Protection for Domestic/Household Workers!’, a campaign was launched to promote the organization of domestic workers and advance their interests. From the start it attracted widespread support internationally, not only from domestic workers’ organizations but also from trade union federations, non-governmental organizations and researchers, leading to the adoption of Convention 189 Concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in June 2011. On 7 June 2013 South Africa became the eighth country to ratify the Convention, with effect from 20 June 2013.

Neetha & Palriwala (2011) have studied that in 1972 and 1977, two “private member” bills - the 1972 Domestic Workers (Conditions of Service) Bill and the 1977 Domestic Workers (Conditions of Service) Bill were introduced in the Lok Sabha. These bills would have brought domestic workers under the purview of the Industrial Disputes Act, but they too were allowed to lapse. The government ignored the 1974 recommendations of its own Committee on the Status of Women in India on the need to regulate the conditions of domestic workers. The recommendation of the statutory National Commission on Self-Employed Women and Women in the Informal Sector in 1988 to establish a system of registration for domestic workers, a minimum wage, and legislation to regulate conditions of employment, social security and security of employment met with the same treatment. The House Workers (Conditions of Service) Bill, which was formulated in 1989, was not enacted either. This bill envisaged that every employer would have to contribute to a House Workers’ Welfare Fund. Following lobbying by scholars and activists, there has been a growing recognition of the significance of paid domestic work in female employment, and the category “private households with employed persons” was included in the last two rounds on employment and unemployment in the National Sample Survey (1999–2000 and 2004–05).

### **Social Work Intervention**

Social workers are an integral provider in the statutory support offered to women experiencing different issues and challenges.

Department of Health (2010) has mention that the role of the social worker is complex, incorporating providing support to families and safeguarding vulnerable members of society. Social workers should work with women and their families, seeking to provide individualized care dependent upon their needs.

Dominelli, 2002 envisage that enabling women to tell their own stories and describe their experiences is integral to feminist ways of conducting research. It is suggested that NGOs and other organizations can play a vital role through campaigning and active participation by creating awareness amongst these women workers and unionism and cooperatives would yield results as far as struggle for better wages and working conditions are concerned. Social work is at the 'cutting edge' for the provision of support for women experiencing domestic work. A profession with a statutory mandate to support the welfare of women domestic workers, social work can benefit from a critical analysis concerning the treatment provided to victims of domestic work. There are vast research studies on the hazardous working and living conditions of women domestic workers, decent work and minimum wage of domestic workers, concern of domestic workers as workers and their need to be covered under protective legislation. However, studies on the children of domestic workers are limited in Mizoram as they are highly vulnerable to child labour especially in the arena of child in domestic work which is a real indication to existence of modern slavery. The stress generated out of the service of domestic work has to be intervene from a strength based perspective and following the social work value of self-determination, to help the women domestic workers reach the best decision.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter outlines the overall research methodology employed in the study. This chapter is divided into different sections which include the brief profile of the study area, brief information on the living and working conditions of women domestic workers in Aizawl, the methodology, objectives and the limitations of the study.

### **The Setting of the Study Area**

The setting of the study presents a brief discourse about the state of Mizoram and is concern primarily with Aizawl city and Lunglei town.

The research methodology helps in carrying out the study in systematic manner so as to achieve the aims and objectives of the study. Therefore, this section includes the objectives, research design, sampling, tools for data collection, data processing an analysis.

The study is analytical in nature and engages in evaluating both qualitative and quantitative aspects of the respondents. Barring the National Sample Survey Office(NSSO) there is no data collection on Women Domestic Workers either at the centre or at the state level thus creating a natural deficit of comprehensive data. Also since these workers are not officially registered with the government it becomes difficult to trace specific information about their status at work and living conditions at home. Hence, in order to accomplish the desired objective it becomes important to use both the secondary and primary data through mix method approach.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The present study attempts to assess “Living and Working Conditions of Women Domestic Workers in Mizoram” through the following objectives:

1. To understand into the socio-economic background of the women domestic workers in Mizoram.

2. To analysed the factors driving women to domestic work in the context of Mizoram.
3. To assess the working conditions and the living conditions of women domestic workers in Mizoram.
4. To understand the challenges faced by the women domestic workers in Mizoram.
5. To understand the coping strategies adopted by the women domestic workers and to identify the social support available to them.
6. To suggests measures for social policy and social work intervention.

### **Pilot Study**

A pilot study is conducted through qualitative information from the key informants in Aizawl city and Lunglei town to understand the issues and challenges faced by women domestic workers in respect to their working and living conditions as there has been very little data available.

The pilot study revealed the following data has guided the designing of the present study. Secondary data was also collected at this stage in reference to achievement of domestic worker's welfare; women domestic worker's working and living conditions, etc. Details are appended at the end.

### **Design**

The study is cross-sectional in nature and descriptive in design. It employs both qualitative and quantitative methods in a sequential way. It is based on quantitative data through field survey pretested interview schedule with 10 respondents and data was collected among 300 respondents in total. The qualitative data is elicited through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and in-depth case studies were attempted among ten (10) women domestic workers. The KIIs is conducted

with social workers (Women Helpline), Government Officers (Labour and Employment, Government of Mizoram) and Non-Governmental Agency(Ferrando Domestic Workers Agency)and four groups of FGDs were conducted with domestic workers.

### **Sources of Data**

Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources included data that was collected from Key Informant Interviews (with professional social workers, government leaders), Focus Group Discussions with four groups (one each from Aizawl city and Lunglei town) with women domestic workers added to the primary data. A semi- structured interview schedule for the women domestic workers in Aizawl city and Lunglei town was administered for collecting the information on working and living conditions, issues and challenges, coping strategies and social support.

### **Sampling**

Individual woman domestic worker between the age of 18-30 years in Aizawl city and Lunglei town, Mizoram forms the unit of the study. All women domestic workers in core areas of Aizawl and Lunglei constitute the population for the study.

Multi stage sampling was used. In the first stage, Aizawl is chosen using purposive sampling as Aizawl city due to the fact that population concentration is more and most of domestic workers are settled in Aizawl. In the second stage, Lunglei town is selected purposively as the researcher is from Lunglei town and that Lunglei town is the second largest capital of Mizoram. In the third stage, the core area of Aizawl and Lunglei was selected based on objective criteria such as demographic profile, literacy and sex ratio (2011 census, Government of India).

Sampling for key informant interviews with professional social workers, governmental officials and non-governmental officials was done purposively.

Four FGDs (two from Aizawl and two from Lunglei) among the women domestic workers were conducted to assess social support perceived by women domestic workers in relation to working and living conditions. A group is mobilised after explaining the objectives of the study and the purpose of FGDs. The FGDs has obtained prior inform consent and voluntary participation.

### **Tools of Data Collection**

Three tools were used to collect data from different groups of people in order to arrive at an understanding of the topic.

Firstly, the qualitative data is collected through key informant interviews (KIIs) and then the quantitative data are collected through administration of pre-tested and structured interview schedule. Information is collected on level of awareness on the vulnerabilities of domestic workers, push and pull factors of domestic work, working and living conditions of women domestic work, challenges faced and coping strategies and social support received by the women domestic workers.

Secondly, four (4) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) is conducted to document coping strategies and social support available to women domestic workers. The study thus assess parents, employers, church leaders, romantic partner and community support perceived by domestic workers in relation to neglect, physical abuse, social abuse, psychological abuse and sexual abuse. Focus Group Discussions (two in each district with a group of 8-10 members) among the employees of domestic workers was administered.

Thirdly, structured interview schedule is constructed based on the pilot study. It is firstly pretested and it comprises information on the demographic profile of women domestic workers in Mizoram, push and pull factors of domestic work, working and living conditions of women domestic work, challenges faced and coping strategies adopted by the women domestic workers in Mizoram. The study is extended to understand the social support available to them.

## **Data Processing and Analysis**

Data from the structured interview schedule with respondents was processed through Microsoft excel and with the help of computer software SPSS package. Data is presented in simple percentages. The qualitative data collected through FGDs and KIIs is analyzed and presented in narrative and case study forms.

## **Limitations of the Study**

The limitations of the study is that the study is confine only to Aizawl city and Lunglei town (four localities each) and subject to only 300 women domestic workers. The age of the respondents comprises between 18-30 years where the age range of domestic workers can be below 18 years of age and above 30years of age as well. Further, only four FGDs and 10 case studies were conducted. Therefore the study might not reflect the overall situations of working and living conditions of women domestic workers in Mizoram as the study focuses only on the core areas of Aizawl city and Lunglei town and the generality of the findings will be very limited. However, the study is not subjected whether if they are migrants or not. The study does not include on the children of the women domestic workers in which the researches has found there could be many problems relating to child bearing and how the working conditions of women domestic workers can have effects in terms of the overall well-being of the child, health, social status and education of their children. Further, this is assumed to have relationship with the well-being of the mother i.e. women domestic workers. In addition, the study does not discuss in brief about the migrant domestic worker where almost all the respondents are migrant domestic worker.

## **Findings**

The findings of the present study is divided into different sections viz., the composition of women domestic workers, self hygiene of women domestic workers, challenges of women domestic workers, drivers to domestic work, working conditions of women domestic workers, living conditions of women domestic workers, conditions of women



domestic workers- the case studies and focus group discussions, social support and coping strategies.

Domestic workers although unskilled and uneducated succeed in locating their own employment opportunities. It is without any support from the government authorities they are able to fetch employment and earn monthly wages. Hence, it can be said that they constantly build their own market and sell their labour services in return for remuneration. Since these workers are beyond the purview of the government they fail to avail any welfare assistance. In the primary data collection it was found that apart from the insurance guaranteed under the e- Shram majority of the workers were unaware of all other social security schemes like the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana. This also highlights the unawareness due to illiteracy which prevents them from making maximum benefits out of the existing schemes dedicated to them. It therefore calls for a proactive effort on the part of the government to ensure maximum outreach of the policies formulated to the grassroots level. The women domestic workers as the study reveals are able to maintain minimum basic standards of living. 11% of the workers under study live in their own houses, have water sealed toilet facility, use cooking gas, and 100% electricity connection being the most encouraging outcome of the study. Even on living below the minimum wage standards of the unorganized sector workers, the domestic workers have shown capabilities to make the best out of the limited source of income and eke out a living well balanced with all the basic necessities of sustenance. This brings to light that the domestic workers who are neglected in context of labour laws and social security have the potential to raise their standards of living once supported by the government. If uplifted and brought at par with other unorganized sector workers in terms of wages it is possible to see they grow at a faster pace than without any legal support.

Presently, the women domestic workers work at the mercy of their employer under hire and fire conditions without any mechanism in place for grievance redressal. Throughout the day these women run from house to house completing the daily chores

of various households and attend their own homes in the end. Sometimes they walk large distances every day lured by higher wages in far off localities in turn taking a toll on their own health. With no minimum fixed wages and no legal support they naturally lose on their bargaining power and also there is a constant sense of insecurity about the future of their job. The need of the hour is to attempt formalization of the sector. To this end the first step has to be recognition of domestic workers as 'workers' endowed with rights. The government must also take note of the fact that domestic workers work under multiple employers and may work part-time or full time. Hence there is no single unique employer-employee relationship, instead there is one employee working for a variety of employers.

From the study, it is found out that most (64.33%) of the total respondents fall under the age group of 18-22 years and the mean age of the respondents is 21.8 years old. The vast majority (96%) are literate and receives education fair enough where 4% of the respondents are illiterate. Though most of the respondents are unmarried, 26% have been married with 12.9% a divorcee which makes them even harder to work since they have to take care of their family at home the same time they are looking doing their job.

The study reveals that most (43.3%) of the respondents are taking bath regularly. This shows that there is proper water supply in the study area and the respondents are taught enough of proper hygiene from different angles. However, there is a situation also that shows that some of the respondents were not able to take bath on regular basis due to scarcity of water in the study area. 61.6% can have regular self clean up and this shows that respondents can have free time and space on their own. In addition, 15% of the respondents does not use sanitary napkins regularly and uses cloth instead. This is due to the fact that they refuse to buy sanitary napkins since they are in shortage of money.

Fortunately, majority (90%) of the respondents does not receive any harassment as compared to the other parts of the world where almost all the women domestic workers are facing tremendous working challenges and issues that hinder the growth of the

working conditions. However, slapping, kicking and hitting is the most common form of physical harassment that exist in Mizoram. From the study, there is a wide and persistent gap between domestic workers and the employer regarding bargaining power on different issues like health and safety (47%), equal treatment (44%), work and life balance (32.3%), holidays (26%), wages (21%), hours of work (20.6%) and vocational training (18.6%). The wage gap for domestic workers is not only large, but it is also persistent. Like other typical workers, domestic workers have seen stagnant wages for decades. Domestic workers are much more likely than other workers to be living in poverty, regardless of occupation. They are also much more likely to have incomes that fall below the twice-poverty threshold, which is considered by many researchers a better cutoff for whether a family has enough income to make ends meet. However, domestic workers face a lot of challenges whenever they encountered withheld wages (2.3%) and they are struggling when they feel isolated and are given poor privacy (3.6%). Most (82.6%) of the respondents does not receive any kind of verbal harassment which shows that the employers in Mizoram are considerate enough to make the respondents meets their ends; intimidation and lustful staring at body parts however still persist that hinders their work environment. A total of 4.3% receives sexual harassment in their workplace which shows that they are vulnerable and are needed to be protecting under the laws and legislations. However, psychological harassment which have prevails around the respondents are many such as jokes of sexual nature, verbal threats, physical contact, unusual comments on dress and appearance, invasion of personal space and display of sexually offensive material. Verbal threats are the most common (10%) form of psychological harassment that have encountered during the study. This has shown the hazardous working conditions and the vulnerability of the workers.

Domestic workers are largely driven by their low socio-economic conditions as stated earlier and employment in domestic worker occupations is projected to grow more compared with other occupations over a decade. This could be because of the easier accessibility of jobs that it does not require much skills and education. This trend is also

driven by skill development, peer pressure, fancy lifestyle, exposure, etc where the most driven outcome is due to economic opportunity (95.5%).

. It is also seen that 32.3% of the respondents worked for 13 hours and more in a day which can be very tiresome. However, 3.6% can take rest for only one hour in a day. They usually sit and play with their phones during their recess period and the rest of the time they were followed by their employer and they were hardly given a space. 20.3% of the respondents were not given day off or rest in a month whereas 13.6% were given two day of rest in a week. Among the respondents, the workers who works for 1-2 years does not complain much of their day off in which they took it as it is, while workers who have work for more than 2 years usually complain about their resting time and day off that it is too less and such. This shows that the more experience in the field of domestic work the more confidence they are in bargaining day off as well. In addition, 14% can avail for sick leave. The main tasks of domestic workers through the study are mainly cleaning, cooking, care giving, shopping, hospitality at home, gardening, animal care, driving and care giving. Majority (94%) of the tasks in cleaning. The study shows that there is no specific time allocation pattern and no particular tasks which is assigned to them. The workers are usually assigned and expected to do the task according to the needs of the employer and their family. In addition, wages are not set based on their work performance or the particular task they performed but solely on the mercy of the employer and the contract deal between the worker and the employer. Work wear is usually not provided (62.3%) among the respondents. However, there are some (24.2%) that provided work wear in the work space and they were provided with gloves, masks and clothes especially during the pandemic. From the study, the unfair works comprises of washing undergarments of their employers and their family, handling sick people without protective gear, deny of rest and food, placement without consent, over work, forced to work when sick or unwell and force to wake up in the middle of the night to clean up their mess. 3.3% have reported that they were placed in another home from their employer's home without their consent and that is very ridiculous in times. 6% have also reported that they were forced to do the works when they are sick or unwell

and especially during their menstruation period which compel the respondents to change their mind and work in another place. From the study, it can be seen that the remittances provided were festival bonus, salary payment, pecuniary benefits such as enough food, old/new phones, old/ new clothes, clothing and personal care, bonus money, bank account, festival advance, condense education, yearly increment and vocational training. Majority (90.6%) was provided with enough food and that they are privilege enough to their employers. The most common form of remittances is exchange of old or new phone (70%), since most of the respondents does not have phone on their own. The satisfaction level of the respondents is work out with working hours, nature of work, salary and additional works on holidays. 49.6% sometimes worried about their work. They exclaimed that they did not like to work as a domestic worker their whole life and those they would like to undergo different trainings like sewing, beauty culture, etc. However, 9.3% never did worry about their work and they are satisfied working with their employers. The study also reveals that 89% can avail for sick leave when they are not feeling well.

From the study, most (76%) of the respondents are Live-in domestic workers where 11.3% are part-time workers. This shows the dominant factor of live –in domestic workers rather than part time workers and that there are more of a migrant worker from inter-state area where the workers are needed to stay in the house of their employer. More than half (64.6%) of the respondents lives in the same floor with their employers where 63.6% have their own separate room. This has shown that some (37.4%) does not have a separate room and they slept on the living room, where some reported they slept on the floor. This is mainly due to the limited space of the house. 27.3% washes their clothes separately and some are not allowed to wash their clothes in Washing Machine and that they have to wash their belongings separately with their hands. From the study, it can be seen that only half (53%) of the respondents eat food along with their employer. A report from one respondent is that “I usually feed the children first and ate food after all the family members have finished”. To my surprise, there are 5.3% who have separate utensils and they usually feels discriminated. 16.3% of the respondents

were yelled often if they prepare undercooked food. This shows that the works also required skills in cooking and preparation for lunch as well. 7.6% were barely given medical care when they are sick or unwell, so they exclaimed that they used to buy pain killer 'Paracetamol' from their pocket when in pain. 3.6% were restricting to food consumption and they were given food according to the employer's willingness. One respondent utter that " I was given just the exact amount of rice and vegetables every day since the employer exclaimed that she would become fat if she consume lots of food everyday". The respondents, however, came across different kind of sexual harassment in their workplace such as eve –teasing, exposed to pornography, unwanted physical contact, leering or telling dirty jokes, making sexual remarks about a person's body, sexually remarks for sexual favour, rape and molestation. Exposed to pornography seems to be the most common form of harassment (7%). The study shows that respondents are vulnerable to different kinds of abuses though there may be hidden cases which they did not want to reveal. Most interestingly, there is also an incident of rape cases which they did not allow to reveal their ordeal. Half of the respondents (50%) were usually excused when they make mistakes and they were given another chance. There is also a case when the respondents are forgiven in their mistakes in a manner that their monthly salary is reduced with the replacement of the actual amount they have broken. One respondent report that "my salary is reduced when I broke a tea cup and a plastic bucket". 1.6% was punished when they did not take care of the children properly. From the study, 34.4% hardly have privacy while working since most of the time the employers do a check list on their works.

Five case –studies were conducted among the women domestic workers such as cases on – molestation, withheld stay by employer, verbal and physical abuse, money quarrel, immodest behavior from employer, torture from employer, challenges due to pandemic, racial discrimination and withheld wages, mental health issues and intimidation and threatening. From the case studies, it is found out that there are no serious cases in Mizoram where there is harassment and issues that hamper the domestic workers. Moreover, there is an organization named "Ferrando Domestic Workers

Alliance” that contributes to the improvement of domestic workers in the State where domestic workers can reach out easily when they faced problems.

### **Further Research**

The present study suggests the following areas for further research:

- 1) Research on the children of domestic workers since they are prone to child labour or child domestic work.
- 2) To study on child domestic work
- 3) To conduct a comparative study between child domestic worker and old aged domestic worker.
- 4) A comparative study between the employer and the employee.
- 5) Comparative research on migrant domestic worker and native domestic worker
- 6) Impact of domestic work in socio-economic conditions of their families
- 7) Impact of Covid -19 among domestic workers.

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## ABSTRACT

### INTRODUCTION

The present study attempts to find out the working and living conditions of women domestic workers in Mizoram. Therefore, the study highlights the issues and challenges of women domestic workers in Mizoram hence to facilitate development of strategies and practical measures for promotion of the rights and employment towards empowerment of women domestic workers in Mizoram.

From the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century the Mizo society had entered a new socio-economic milieu, which was brought forth by British occupation of the Lushai Hills (Mizoram) and the entry of the Christian Missionaries. Mizoram is placed under the administrative and political rule of the British Government since from 1891. However, after the establishment of colonial authority, group territorial mobility was curtailed, while encouraging individual mobility. Thus, a moderate form of stable settlement began to take shape. The colonial rule gradually had done away with some of the traditional rights and privileges of the Mizo chiefs, which encourages individual mobility. Historically, it is evidences that women in Mizoram practice jhum cultivation and mainly with a specific nature of work like *hlothlawlh i.e. farming*, cleaning of cotton flowers, collection of woods, cooking and preparation for lunch while weaving was done mostly when they are free from the jhum's work . The British Rule gradually loosened the traditional holds, thus, the people envisaged the root of a new set of rules based on democratic principle as early as 1920. However, with the pace of time the series of events that unfolded after India' Independence in the Mizo hills had far reaching, multi-faceted impact on the Mizo society.

The scenario is now being changed and women labour participation is visible everywhere either in governmental settings or non-governmental settings, private and public enterprises, organised or unorganised work extending to the work done outside homes. (Malsawmliana & Benjamin Ralte, 2011). The employment exchange of Aizawl district, Mizoram shows the number of women job seekers was 24,585 as per the record

of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2000, and out of whom the educational level of 3039 were graduate and above (Lalfakzuali, 2010).

The national scenario has shown the strong preference for nuclear families which has resulted in a demand for domestic workers in India and eventually in Mizoram state as well. Although they form a crucial segment of the informal worker population, domestic workers are a relatively neglected population as compared to workers in other unorganised sectors such as garment factory, construction works, transportation, restaurant and other informal industries. The women domestic workers are neither not adequately educated nor organized through meaningful unionization and are denied of minimum wages, healthy work period, safe working conditions and other benefits. Unsurprisingly, following a similar pattern, the women domestic workers are a neglected group among the unorganized workforce in Mizoram. For decades they have been exploited and only in recent years the Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are taking up the cause of women domestic workers. Moreover, women domestic workers are subjected to series of injustices, deprivations and indignities in modern society due to the absence of meaningful legal safeguards, welfare measures and other provisions for the empowerment of women.

### **Domestic Work**

Domestic work is done across many regions around the globe where Europe and Central Asia represent the smallest shares of the global population of domestic workers. However, the American region is the world's second-largest employer of domestic workers by region after Asia and the Pacific. Domestic work accounts for most of the informal workforce in India hence Mizoram by poor and unskilled women, from marginalized communities and vulnerable rural districts and migrant women domestic workers crossing international boundaries from Myanmar and state boundaries from Tripura, India. The work and workplace is invisible, undervalued, unrecognized and unregulated, and hence the sector suffers from low wages, lack of formal contract, decent work conditions and poor social security measures (Chigateri, S., et al, 2016). Domestic work is historically associated with poor working conditions, such as lack of

legal registration (most often they do not register), low wages and high weekly working hours. In fact, some of these workers actually live in the employer's household, as evidenced by the survey conducted in the State. Moreover, domestic work is largely considered a distinct work due to its nature of work which comprises of work done inside the household such as cleaning, nursing, caring, hospitality, gardening, as well as driving and guarding private households. The Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent national lockdown further aggravated the situation of the already vulnerable women domestic worker.

### **Domestic Workers**

Servant is an older English term for "domestic worker", though not all servants worked inside the home. Domestic service, or the employment of people for wages in their employer's residence, was sometimes simply called "service". It evolved into a hierarchical system in various countries at various times. Domestic work covers many different activities, situations and relationships, and so is not easy to categorize. It includes many tasks such as cleaning, laundry and ironing; shopping, cooking and fetching water; caring for the sick, elderly and children; looking after pets; sweeping and garden-tidying.

The women domestic workers of Mizoram has a great labour participation, infact, their rights has been neglected and they are relatively ill-treated in many forms like verbal, sexual, psychological and emotional abuse. In general, domestic workers in Mizoram came from a low socio-economic background where they have low self-esteem and self-confidence. However, a number of factors are contributing to the growing of women domestic workers within the workforce in Mizoram and each of which requires critical examination that is illustrated in the present study.

### **Concept of Women Domestic Workers**

The women domestic labour debate was particularly prominent in the western academia amongst feminists in the 1960s and 1970s. The implications of domestic labour on women's emancipation as well as transformation of gender roles. However, it has been differently read by different schools of feminism. Domestic worker is a person

who is engaged on a part time or full time basis in domestic service. The domestic worker receives remuneration periodically in cash or kind for a fixed period from the employer (Chandramouli,K., 2021).

Domestic work is one of the oldest and most significant informal occupations for millions of women around the world. Women seemed to have limited options and enter the domain of domestic work in the absence of education, economic resources and other opportunities. The term ‘domestic service’ is practically difficult to define since the duties of domestic workers were not well defined. However, domestic service is now accepted as an important category of livelihood across the globe and remains a highly personalized and informal service delivered in the homes of employers. In domestic service, work cannot be subjected to any comparative tests, since it has the character almost unique in wage paid industry. The service is being carried on for use, not for profit, and the settlement of wages remains an individual bargain between employer and employed (Caplow, 1954).

### **Classification of Domestic Workers**

Domestic workers works directly under the authority of householder and the work is done by following the straight instructions of the employer. Darcy du Toit (2013), has divided the types of domestic workers, based on the hours of work and nature of employment relationship which includes:-

- a) Part-time worker i.e. worker who works for **one or more employers for a specified number of hours per day** or performs specific tasks for each of the multiple employers every day.
- b) Full-time worker i.e. worker who works for a **single employer every day** for a specified number of hours and who returns back to her/his home every day after work.
- c). Live-in worker i.e. worker who works **full time for a single employer(residing in the household of the employer)** and also stays on the



premises of the employer or in a dwelling provided by the employer (which is close or next to the house of the employer) and does not return back to her/his home every day after work.”

d). Live-out worker i.e. **worker who may be living in his/her own residence.**

However, the ILO Convention 189 has recognised a decent wage pay where domestic workers comprised of three main groups

- Live-in domestic workers
- Part-time / Live-out domestic worker
- Migrant Domestic Workers (inter-state and overseas domestic workers)

### **Magnitude of Domestic Workers**

Around the world, there are 75.6 million domestic workers aged 15 years and over. The world’s largest employers of domestic workers, in numerical terms, are Asia and the Pacific (where 50 per cent of all domestic workers are employed) and the Americas (where 23 per cent of all domestic workers are employed). In contrast, the Europe and Central Asia region employs the smallest share of all domestic workers (ILO,2021).

Domestic workers comprise a significant part of the global workforce in informal employment and are among the most vulnerable groups of workers. About 1.5 million Asian women work as migrant domestic workers in other countries, however, in the Philippines, there are estimated to be over 600,000 local domestic workers. As per official estimates, there are 4.75 million domestic workers (NSS 2005) but this is a gross under-estimation and there could be close to 50 million domestic workers in India. According to Indian National Sample Survey (NSS) 2001 data, there were 2.0 million female workers and 0.3 million male workers as compared to 1.2 million female and 0.3 male workers in 1983, resulting in a substantial issues in the number of female workers (Mehrotra, S.T., 2008). In India, two draft bills, put forward by the National Commission for Women and the National Campaign Committee(NCC) of Unorganized

Sector Workers, to protect domestic workers have been in circulation since 2008, but neither has been passed.

Domestic worker's population has been increasing deliberately in every society of India and hence Mizoram as well. Domestic workers are considered as part of the large 'informal' sector of urban economy and over the last two decades, the domestic worker population has emerged as the second largest urban informal workforce (Chen and Raveendran, 2011). Moreover, the population has reached next only to 'home based workers' like artisans and petty commodity producers. An increasing number of studies are emerging about domestic workers around the world and it is estimated that 41.3 lakhs workers work in the households of others, and an overwhelming 27.9 lakhs of this total are women as indicated by NSS 68th round, July 2011- June 2012. In Mizoram, domestic workers population there are 1,832 domestic workers (approx.) in Aizawl since 2005 to 2007(MNDWMWT, 2008). Therefore, it is evident that there has been an increasing trend of domestic workers in Mizoram where the workers work predominantly at Mizoram and other countries as well.

However, the ILO (2004 – 2005) report has also documented that in India, there are 4.2 million (approx) of domestic workers comprising of the 3lakh domestic workers in North East States. The north east state has a large number of women and young girls enrolled in domestic work yet unrecognized and a decent work status denied to them. They are often named as maids, servants, kitchen girls and *Aiyas* while in Mizoram we call them '*Awmpui*' meaning the one who stays with me or with us, the word which in itself doesn't recognize them as workers. In Mizoram, an organization named "Jeriko Khualbuk" has started realizing the need for protection of domestic worker's rights and freedom while working with commercial sex workers. The initiation of the Project "Formation of Domestic Workers Union Structures" in 2004 was implemented in 12 cities in North East (Agartala City,Aizawl, Barpeta, Bongaigaon, Guwahati, Imphal, Kohima, Sarupathar, Shillong,Tezpur,Tinsukia, and Tura City) covering six states namely: Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram, Nagaland and Manipur ([www.cdismhc.org](http://www.cdismhc.org)).

## **Migrant Workers and Domestic Worker**

The [ILO Global Estimates on Migrant Workers](#) (2015) reports that more than 150 million workers worldwide are international migrants (accounting for 72 per cent of the total international population of working age migrants). Domestic workers, the majority of whom are women, constituting a large portion of today's migrant worker population. In Latin America, for example, they constitute as many as 60 per cent of all internal and international migration. The feminization of migration, a trend that began in the early 1980s, has resulted in an increased number of women who had migrated alone. Women and girls make up almost 67 million of this workers, one in six is a domestic worker. The biggest host regions for migrant domestic workers are:

- South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific (24%)
- Northern, Southern and Western Europe (22%)
- Arab States (19%)

## **Working and Living Conditions of Women Domestic Workers in North – East India**

In the study, the working and living conditions of women domestic workers in North – east India has been presented from different states such as Tripura, Mizoram, Assam, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Shillong and Manipur. The domestic workers in North-east India comprise mainly of female workers where workers are from native area and their neighbouring states. The unhygienic living conditions with no proper water facilities and unaware of the rights of domestic worker is the main issues in Agartala, Tripura. The unstable economic conditions hamper their children to go to good schools for quality education. The women domestic workers works at the mercy of the employers with no decent wage paid to them for their service. Although they are blessed with the benefit of monthly pension specifically meant for domestic workers but they are deprived of other various rights. The Government of Tripura has fixed the Minimum Wage for Domestic Workers i.e. Rs 13/- per hour which is extremely low to ensure a living wage to them.

**Identified Number of domestic Workers in 12 cities of Northeast India(2015 – 2018)**

**Table 1: Number of Domestic Workers in North-East India**

Sl.No	Name of the City	Data	Percentage out of total population(in 2018)	Ranking
1	Sarupathar City	1416	10,827(2011 census) (13%)	1
2	Tura City	1242	74858(1.65%)	2
3	Tezpur City	1675	102,505(2011 census) (1.6%)	3
4	Tinsukia City	1210	126,389(2011 census) (0.95%)	4
5	Shillong City	2878	436,000(0.6%)	5
6	Imphal City	2424	540,000(0.44%)	6
7	Guwahati City	3321	1,083,000(0.30)	7
8	Aizawl City	824	353,000(0.2%)	8
9	Bongaigaon City	957	820,073(0.11%)	9
10	Kohima City	433	297,467(0.14%)	10
11	Agartala City	590	534,000(0.1%)	11
12	Barpeta City	1561	1,693,622(2011 census) (0.09%)	12
<b>Total</b>		<b>18531</b>		

**Source: CDI (2018)**

Findings: Domestic workers were traced highest in Guwahati, whilst the least were identified in Kohima. However, with the representation of the total population of the city studied, the highest is Sarupathi district with 13per cent of the total population of the city with Barpeta at the lowest (0.09%).In addition, Guwahati is a cosmopolitan city and a commercial hub of the Northeast region. Therefore, the city attracts the

migrant workers as it offers a lot of job opportunities. On the other hand, Kohima is a less populated city with live-in domestic workers contributing a huge percentage of this workforce.

### **Women domestic workers during COVID-19**

The third phase of stringent lockdown of COVID-19 has imposed a burden of unpaid care work among women domestic workers. The COVID -19 pandemic and the subsequent national lockdown further aggravated the situation of the already vulnerable sector. The domestic workers who are playing a very crucial role in the economic life of the women in today's competitive market are striving hard to arrange two square meals during the Covid-19 lockdown. Most of the domestic workers are compelled to do the menial job due to their economically disadvantaged and poor financial conditions. Their silent contributions for many households as well as society have remained invisible for a long time. However, during the pandemic COVID-19, they have faced double marginalization as they are engaged in informal reproductive work in the unorganized sector and they are not recorded as wage laborer and yet deprived of getting any benefit. A suitable policy may be framed by bringing them to the mainstream, so that in the future if a situation like lockdown has arisen they will not fight with hunger and anxiety (Kaur, K., 2020).

### **Conceptual Framework**

A conceptual framework represents the synthesis of the literature reviewed on how to explain a phenomenon and a framework is understood as a supporting structure on which something can be built which can be real or conceptual that guides or directs into successful outcome. In other words, the conceptual framework is the understanding of how the particular [variables](#) are connected. The conceptual framework “sets the stage” to present the particular research question that drives the investigation being reported based on the problem statement. The problem statement of a thesis gives the context and the issues that caused the researcher to conduct the study (Regoniel,P.,2015). Hence, it is essential to explore some of the frameworks on working and living conditions of women domestic workers that have been developed or framed by organisations or researchers in

the past in pertaining to the working and living conditions so as to have a better understanding of the dimensions and factors that are responsible in the process of assessing the working and living conditions of women domestic workers. Thus, the working and living conditions of women domestic workers framework is discussed below:

<b>Marxist feminist Approach</b>	<b>Labour Law</b>	<b>Decent work</b>
Division of Labour Women's oppression Unpaid Labour	Fair access to jobs Right to work, dignity of workers, ensures fair treatment, prevents serious abuses of power To prevent employers from treating their employees like a commodity Collective bargaining	Flexible working conditions Freedom, equity, security, human dignity Labour Market

### **Statement of the Problem**

Women domestic workers face a number of risks that are common in domestic work service. Women in particular are marked by a series of changes in physical, psychological, social and economic issues. However, studies assessing the relationship between migrants or native women domestic workers, drivers to domestic works such as the push and pull factors, adequacy of salary in comparison with their working conditions, awareness level on social security measures, and humiliating or degrading treatment including physical and verbal violence, and sexual abuse of domestic workers are lacking. The complexity of the women domestic workers and the accompanying changes in physical and social characteristics is usually emphasized, but it is not very

well understood by the community at large. A poor understanding of the rights of women domestic worker's issues is the main cause for the absence of focus on services, information and research on unique features of International Labour Organization (ILO). In recent years, the trends of globalization and liberalization, the rapid spread of communication and information technology, and shifting social and moral norms maybe said to have eroded the traditional bases and defining points for concern of others in Mizo society. However, empirical study and research based intervention is absence in the state. These require immediate attention and appropriate interventions. Therefore, the study will focus on the exploration on the working and living conditions of women domestic workers by eliciting information on the issues and challenges faced by them.

### **Chapter Scheme**

The chapter scheme for the present study is presented into eight (8) chapters.

The first chapter deals with the introduction which discusses on the background of domestic work, concept of domestic work, concept of women domestic work, classification of domestic worker, magnitude of domestic work and working and living conditions of women domestic workers in North-East India. It also presents the statement of problem of the study.

The second chapter focuses on the review of various literatures relate to "Living and Working Conditions of Women domestic Workers". The review of literature is divided into 20 groups viz. studies on domestic work, domestic worker, women domestic worker, feminization of domestic work, an informal work of domestic work, working conditions, living conditions, issues an challenges such as poor bargaining power, social insecurity, push and pull factors, conditions of domestic workers, migration and domestic work, sex work, emotional labour and domestic work, caste, race and domestic work, vulnerabilities of women domestic workers, migration and women domestic workers, coping strategies & social support an laws and policies of domestic workers.

The third chapter presents on the methodology employed for the study which includes the profile of the study area, objectives of the study, research design, and sampling, tools for data collection, data processing analysis and limitations of the study.

The fourth chapter discusses on the “Composition of Women domestic Workers” like Profile of respondents, socio economic profile and self - hygiene of women domestic workers.

The fifth chapter deals with “Working Conditions of Women domestic Workers” viz. working hours, work type, remittance provision and the satisfaction level.

The sixth chapter deals with “Living Conditions of Women domestic Workers” viz. types of domestic work, nature of work, inhumane treatment, sexual harassment, employer’s reaction over the work, privacy and self-perception of women domestic workers while working.

The seventh chapter focuses on the challenges of women domestic workers and drivers to domestic work.

The eighth chapter deals with qualitative interpretation such as case studies, focus group discussions and key informant interviews. The Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) is conducted mainly on the social support and coping strategies of women domestic workers. Key informant interviews (KIIs) are done with the stakeholders to assess the issues faced by women domestic workers.

The ninth chapter deals with social support and coping strategies on the working and living conditions of women domestic workers in Mizoram.

The tenth chapter deals with the scope for social work intervention and the role of social worker in the area of women working in unorganized sector particularly the women domestic workers. The study here focuses on the decent work and economic empowerment of women by using the social work techniques, skills enrich around the philosophies, assumptions and values of social work education.



Lastly, the eleventh chapter deals with conclusion and suggestions drawn out of the survey with micro and macro levels of intervention.

Thus this chapter deals with the introduction of highlighting the topic of the study, “Living and Working Conditions of Women Domestic Workers in Mizoram”. Besides this, it also presents the statement of the problem and chapter scheme of the study. The proceeding chapter presents on the review of literature.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Domestic work is one of the foremost and most important works all over the world. It has been estimated that there are 75.6 million domestic worker globally aged 15 years and over. Women continue to make up the majority of the unorganised sector (76.2%), which accounts for 4.5% of female employment worldwide, or 8.8% of female employees (ILO, 2021). However, women domestic workers across the globe are assigned with works which is a low-paid, insecure and an exploitative work place. Women domestic workers comprise a significant part of the global workforce in informal employment and moreover, they are among the most vulnerable groups of workers. They work for private households, often without clear terms of employment, unregistered, and excluded from the scope of Labour Legislation (ILO, 2016).

### **Concept of domestic work and women domestic work**

According to Convention No. 189 (2021), “domestic work is a work performed in or for a household or households, within an employment relationship and on an occupational basis”. Domestic worker’s tasks vary across countries and overtime and the works undertaken by them are cleaning, nursing, caring, hospitality, gardening, as well as driving and guarding private households. The uniqueness and most challenging part of women domestic worker is that their tasks vary depending upon the wishes and directions of the employer. So, they eventually fall under the prey of their employers. Given this heterogeneity of the tasks, domestic work was determined to be the workplace – that is, the household.

## **International Labour Organisation (ILO) and Convention 189**

ILO (2021) has highlight that in 2011, the International Labour Organization (ILO) adopted the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), the first international legal instrument devoted to domestic work. In its Preamble, the Convention recognizes the contributions of domestic workers to the global economy and the persistent undervaluation of domestic work. Considering that domestic workers are some of the most marginalized workers, the Convention set out to ensure that they enjoy decent work, like all other workers, while taking into account the specificities of the sector. Since then, much progress has been made towards achieving decent work for domestic workers; however, for far too many workers in this sector, decent work has not yet become a reality. Shortly after the adoption of Convention No. 189, the ILO produced the report *Domestic Workers Across the World* (ILO 2013a), which provided the first global estimate of the number of domestic workers. It also provided regional estimates and an estimate of the percentage of domestic workers covered by key labour and social security laws governing working time, wages and maternity protection.

### **Regional Estimates of Domestic Workers**

ILO (2021) clearly highlights that the vast majority of domestic workers are employed in two regions: about half of all domestic workers can be found in Asia and the Pacific, largely on account of China, while another quarter (23 per cent) are in America. These regions also employ the largest shares of the world's female domestic workers, at 52.1 per cent and 27.2 per cent, respectively. Americas and the Arab States are the two regions in which domestic workers are over-represented compared with the distribution of global employment. In America, 17.6 million men and women aged 15 years old and over work as domestic workers, accounting for 23 per cent of the total worldwide. The Americas region is home to the second-largest population of women domestic workers (15.7 million), second only to Asia and the Pacific. It is also the region in which domestic work is the most feminized, 89 per cent of domestic workers in the region being women (table 2.1). Domestic work remains an important source of

employment among women, representing 7.7 per cent of female employment (or 10 per cent of female employees).

### **Push and Pull Factors**

ILO (2018a) analyzed that some research suggests the share of the domestic work sector is in part a result of income inequality. Using the Gini coefficient, research conducted by the ILO found that the higher the level of income inequality, the larger the size of the domestic workforce as a share of total employment. Another way of understanding the relationship between income inequality and the demand for domestic work is in terms of a worker's willingness to accept an offer of employment at a given wage and an employer's willingness and capacity to pay for services. In other words, in countries with higher levels of income inequality, the demand for domestic work is driven, at least in part, by the fact that there is a large number of people who are willing to accept relatively low wages, which are paid by a large enough number of households with the capacity to employ domestic workers.

Anderson (2000) mentioned that the size of the domestic workforce depends on a range of factors on both the supply and the demand side. Research has already substantiated some of the factors that push women and men to seek employment as domestic workers. Some of the most pronounced factors are poverty, a need to generate more income for their families, and a lack of employment opportunities.

### **Living and Working Conditions of Women Domestic Workers**

Rejimon P.M & Gopal, S. (2020) found that the women domestic workers has less voice in confronting the employer and often continue accepting whatever the employers pay them and are under constant fear that asking for a raise may lead to termination from work. The employers also provide them stale foods or leftover foods which are not good for their health and nutrition. The employers also refuse to give them paid leave even though they work hard beyond their capacity.

Dithhi, B. et.al. (2016) envisage the double burden of working at their own homes on the one hand and the demands of the workplace on the other take a heavy toll

on their lives. The workers suffered from sleeplessness, fear (often leading to more absenteeism and hence more stress and fear), severe headaches, and mental stress due to the financial consequences of frequent absences. Moreover, the continuous demand for perfection in their tasks, often with the employer watching closely while domestic workers go about their work, was by itself extremely stressful.

Polask, S. (2013) exclaimed that despite the size of the sector, many domestic workers experience poor working conditions and insufficient legal protection. Domestic workers are frequently expected to work longer hours than other workers and in many countries do not have the same rights to weekly rest that are being enjoyed by other workers. Combined with the lack of rights, the extreme dependency on an employer and the isolated and unprotected nature of domestic work can render them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

According to Smith (2011), domestic workers are employed in private homes rather than firms or enterprises. This tends to make them invisible as formal workers and isolated from others in the sector. They are dependent on the good or bad will of their employer. Growing evidence shows that domestic workers are exposed to a range of unhealthy and hazardous working conditions despite the concept of the home as “safe haven”.

Rustagi (2009) highlights that the relationship between employers and domestic workers is very subjective and depended on the individuals involved. There is a marginal increase in the number of women domestic workers in India.

### **Conditions of domestic workers**

Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), 2020 highlights the status of domestic workers in Delhi, India that there was an estimate of 500,000 domestic workers in Delhi city alone, where the bulk of the demand for domestic work is for part-time workers. Most have multiple employers and work more than 40 hours per week. Domestic workers in Delhi spend the equivalent of three-

quarters of a week's wage on a health-care visit, despite various governmental schemes to help workers access health care. Also, most have no access to maternity leave or other benefits including pensions. Migrant workers often encounter problems in applying for benefits because the necessary documentation is kept in their home villages and is inaccessible to them. With COVID-19 and its impacts, large numbers of domestic workers in Delhi are said to have lost their jobs and about 80 per cent face severe to moderate economic crises. The sector was largely excluded from emergency grants and food rations. There are estimated to be 500,000 domestic workers in Delhi (ILO, 2016). According to the International Labour Organization (2017), the bulk of the demand for domestic work in Delhi is for part-time workers, although there are also substantial numbers of particularly vulnerable live-in workers from rural districts and states including Jharkhand, Odisha and Bihar.

Bino Paul et al., (2011) reported that in 1959, New Delhi based All India Domestic Workers Union called for a one-day solidarity strike which received a thumping response from domestic workers. Interestingly, this initiative attracted legislators' attention; two bills –on minimum wages and the timely payment of wages, maximum working hours, weekly rest and annual leave periods, as well as the establishment of a servant's registry to be maintained by the local police, in deference to employers- were introduced.

### **Issues and Challenges of Women Domestic Workers**

WIEGO (2020) views that only few of the domestic workers having a written contract with their employer, which means that their work status is highly insecure, and they have little power to change this. This is exacerbated by the fact that wage rates are set by the neighbourhood, leaving little space for individual workers to bargain for higher wages. Although organizations of domestic workers are gaining strength in the city, which would support collective action and voice, it is challenging to organize domestic workers, particularly those who live and work in the gated communities across the city.

ILO (2016) mention that women domestic workers face numerous problems such as low wages, extra work, long working hours, lack of holidays, harassment at workplace, sexual exploitation, physical torture, ill treatment, lack of welfare facilities, lack of rest and freedom, absence of social security measures, development of fatigue, and low level of education. Moreover, they comprise a significant part of the global economy in informal employment and therefore they are the most vulnerable groups among informal workers. Domestic workers worked for private households, often without clear terms of employment, and are excluded from the scope of labour legislation. Women domestic workers face a number of risks that are common in domestic work service. Women in particular are marked by a series of changes in physical, psychological, social and economic issues. However, studies assessing the relationship between insufficient or inadequate food and accommodation, and humiliating or degrading treatment including physical and verbal abuse, inhumane or degrading treatment, and sexual harassment of domestic workers are lacking. The complexity of the women domestic workers and the accompanying changes in physical and social characteristics is usually emphasized, but it is not very well understood by the community at large. A poor understanding of the rights of women domestic worker's issues is the main cause for the absence of focus on services, information and research on unique features of International Labour Organization (ILO). In recent years, the trends of globalization and liberalization, the rapid spread of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and shifting social and moral norms maybe said to have eroded the traditional bases and defining points for concern of others in Mizo society. However, empirical study and research based intervention is absence in the state. These require immediate attention and appropriate interventions. Therefore, the study is focusing on the exploration on the working and living conditions of women domestic workers by eliciting information on the issues and challenges faced by them.

### **Domestic work - “an informal work”**

Svennson, J. (2018) discusses about the informal occupations of domestic work in India and opines to the fact that wages are extremely low. For instance, wages for women in informal work are four times lower than women’s wages in the formal work sector. Moreover, the informal nature of domestic work creates opportunities for potentially exploitative recruitment channels. Workers, especially young workers have very limited position or opportunity to negotiate fair employment terms and safe work conditions with recruitment agents or with employers.

The United Nations (2002) attempted to explain how tasks performed by domestic workers are not recognized as ‘work’. Domestic workers in India continue to struggle for visibility and recognition. While several legislations such as the Unorganized Social Security Act, 2008, Sexual Harassment against Women at Work Place (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 and Minimum Wages Schedules notified in various states refer to domestic workers, there remains an absence of comprehensive, uniformly applicable, national legislation that guarantees fair terms of employment and decent working conditions. Domestic workers should however be guaranteed the same terms of employment as enjoyed by other workers. Hired domestic workers ease the burden of individual households by undertaking household chores in return for remuneration. The tasks include the care of children and the elderly, cooking, driving, cleaning, grocery shopping, running errands and taking care of household pets, particularly in urban areas. However, despite the benefits this work brings to individual households, domestic workers are often not recognized as workers by society.

### **Minimum Wages and Women Domestic Workers-**

ILO (2021) reported that since 2010, little progress has been made in ensuring a minimum wage for domestic workers equal to that enjoyed by workers generally or limiting payment in kind for domestic workers. There has been only a small increase in the number of domestic workers who are entitled to a minimum wage equal to that of other workers (2.9 percentage points) and who have a right to receive their minimum

wage fully in cash (7.2 percentage points). Remuneration is a very crucial aspect of the Convention 189 of ILO and most relevant to the present study.

Chand, H.(2019) accounted that it must also be put to view that there have been individual and organizational attempts for the protection and status uplift of these workers with various draft bills over the years, such as Domestic Workers( Registration, Social Security and Welfare) Bill 2008, which was prepared by National Commission for Women(NCW) India, Domestic Workers (Regulation of employment, Condition of work, Social Security and Welfare) Bill 2008 by National Campaign Committee for Unorganised sector workers and The Domestic Workers Employment Rights Protection Bill 2004 ( SEWA-Kerala Bill). The main emphasis or the core issues incorporated in all of these draft bills focus on the condition of the work i.e., leaves, holidays, hours of work etc, and also on the social security of the workers. But the failure of materialization of bill to an Act has been disappointing. One such initiative in this regard of providing welfare, protection and security to domestic workers was that of, Dr. Sashi Tharoor, Member of Parliament, who introduced ‘The Domestic Workers Welfare’ Bill 2016 in Lok Sabha on 5 July, 2016. The proposed bill addresses the needs of the workers and suitable terms of agreement, and thus guarantees certain rights to the domestic workers in accordance with International Convention on Labour such as the right to; earn and earn livelihood free from forced and compulsory labour, to earn minimum wages , to decent working and living conditions, to address grievances in an appropriate manner, to organize and bargain collectively and the right to equal employment opportunities and remuneration. The most recent effort to the cause has come from the Ministry of Labour and Employment in the form of a Draft National Policy on Domestic Workers which is still in its initial stages and remains to be passed by the Indian parliament house.

### **Feminisation of Domestic Work**

Sharan Burrow (2010) proclaimed that domestic workers were almost always women, often migrants and children and despite the fact that it is one of the oldest and most important occupations for millions of women around the world, domestic work is undervalued and in many countries falls outside the scope of labour legislation. She



notified that domestic workers have no guarantee of a minimum wage or social protection and their rights to form and join a trade union and to bargain in a collective way are violated. And as a result, many of them are overworked, underpaid, and cases of maltreatment and abuse, especially of live-in and migrant domestic workers, are countless.

National Commission for Enterprises in the Un-organized Sector (NCEUS), 2007 view domestic work to be the destiny of significantly huge number of women workers in India who seek employment opportunities in urban sector, often rendering an invisible workforce who are not paid well, and deprived of rights to ensure decency in work. Reflecting on indecent working and living condition of women domestic workers, National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector views: “Working in the unregulated domain of a private home, mostly without the protection of national labour legislation, allows for female domestic workers to be maltreated by their employers with impunity. Women are often subjected to long working hours and excessively arduous tasks. They may be strictly confined to their places of work. The domestic workforce is excluded from labour laws that look after important employment-related issues such as conditions of work, wages, social security, provident funds, old age pensions, and maternity leave.”

### **Poor Bargaining Power**

Vimala, M (2016) has viewed that the workers in unorganized sector remain unprotected by law. They are the most vulnerable section of the society and they enjoy no job or income security with little bargaining power. The unorganized sector is divided in to institutionalized and non- institutionalized sectors. The non-institutionalized unorganized sector comprises workers doing casual work like domestic workers, sweepers, scavengers etc. A key factor in the growth of informal activity in most developing regions has been the plummeting value of wages. The informal sector has not only offered the possibility of work to the unemployed, but has permitted survival of many households with wage earners. Some division of labour exists between

formal and informal sectors on the basis of gender. It has been suggested that women tend to stay within the informal sector because of the flexibility of working arrangements and diversity of opportunities.

### **Social Insecurity**

Kantor et al, (2006) highlights the caste and social stratification which have induced the probability of individuals to enter domestic work. The domestic workers have very limited access to larger social networks. So, there is a need to sustain and support organizations for domestic workers to improve their bargaining power. Therefore, organizing domestic workers is fundamental to finding solutions to the various problems faced by domestic workers. The lack of legal status, fear of loss of employment, fear of deportation if migrants, the inviolable privacy of households, the scattered nature of employment, long working hours and having more than one employer are some of the common factors that make domestic workers often hesitant to speak up publicly and demonstrate.

Gothoskar (2005) identifies domestic work as traditionally grey area in Indian labour legislation. A 'Domestic Workers (Condition of Services) Bill' was introduced as early as 1959, but it has yet to become law. For years, civil society organisations, most notably the National Domestic Workers Movement, have called for national legislation to regulate domestic workers' rights, as well as for the inclusion of domestic workers under the Minimum Wages Act (1948) and the Unorganized Workers' Social Security Bill (2008).

### **Migration and Women Domestic Workers**

ILO (2010) identifies the increasing demand for domestic workers are witness in the regular flow of domestic helps from particular pockets out of migration. The lack of any former skill and training requirement and the flexibility in employment are some of the factors, which ensure a regular and increasing inflow of domestic workers. The increasing rate of migrant population is 167 million persons to 315 million in 1971 census and 2001 census respectively. Also, nearly 20 million people migrated to other

states within the country seeking for livelihood (census of India, 1991). The scenario highlighted that of the total domestic workers in India in 2009- 10, more than 2/3 lived in urban India and amongst which 57 % of them are women Besides, a large scale rural-urban migration takes place from the states of Bihar, Odisha, Jharkhand, Assam, Mizoram and Chhattisgarh etc. to the metro cities like Delhi, Mumbai and other large cities (Social Alert, 2005).

Chandrashekhar & Ghosh (2007) mention that researches have highlighted the urban-rural work force participation of women in India and noticed the gradual increasing trend in participation in urban women workforce participation as compared to rural women workforce participation. Further, the estimated distribution of interstate migrants shows that out of the 80 million persons interstate migrants'20 million migrants are domestic workers (Census of India, 2011).

Reddy (1986) found out that due to feminisation of domestic work, women migrants are found to be more vulnerable to human rights abuses since they work in gender-segregated and unregulated sectors of the economy, such as in domestic work, entertainment and sex industry, unprotected by labour legislation or policy. Some occasions they are exposed to forced labour, precarious working conditions, poorly paid job, discrimination and sexual exploitation, suffer poorer health Migrant women often engage in unskilled and most poorly paid jobs, which have been deserted by national women. Because of the unregulated nature of domestic work, they often face a lot of problems at the destination. In most of the cases they have to work long hours, sometimes more than 15 hours a day (INSTRAW and IOM, 2000) and forced to do extra work. In addition, abuse and discrimination arising out of their immigration status, national origin and their lower status jobs, and to which domestic workers are more frequently victims of violence, including sexual assault at the work place.

### **Sex Work, Emotional Labour and Domestic Work**

Svensson, J. (2018) discuss how the girls are rebuked by their employers verbally and meted out corporal punishment such as hitting or slapping in response to what the girls themselves often perceived as trivial offenses. Findings also indicate that some girls thought they served as targets for household members' pent-up anger. Commonly participants reported sexual harassment and two participants reported rape. Live-out workers, in particular, discussed sexual harassment from community members during their commute to work. Participants also frequently reported that they were asked to give massages to male members of the household. Studies have repeatedly noted that the risk of sexual abuses are substantial among youth in domestic work because their labour takes place in a private sphere where violations often go unseen and victims have little protection or recourse.

Alfers, L (2011) has identified one case of woman that says *"I was once employed by a certain employer in Iringa Region for about 3 years...I had a serious problem of sexual harassment where the father and son tried to force me to have love affairs with them, but I disagreed! What I did, I decided to tell the neighbour. The neighbour told me that it was better to run away; she assisted me to find a job with her relative. This was very risky to me as I decided to run away without even telling my parents who are living in rural Iringa...I am no longer working with that employer. The bad thing is that my parents still think I am working in Iringa, since I cannot communicate with them."*

Warrington (2001) mention that home is a site where power relations are played out; it often falls short of its idealized construction as a place of safety and support, and instead becomes a place of spatial restriction, abuse and violence.

### **Caste, race and domestic work**

Mkandawire-Valhmu et al., (2009) mentions the employer's power over the domestic worker, due to class and race, creates a situation prevalent for abuse. In addition, many women work in cities or countries far away from home. As a result they often accept living with their employers in spite of the risk of abuse and the lack of

support if abuse happens. The study also found that the lives of domestic workers are characterized by abuse in the workplace.

Cock (1981) ascertains that because of their position on the social hierarchy, most female domestic workers are victims of gender, class and racial oppression. Some studies have found that, in the course of their work, domestic workers sometimes experience violence from their employers. This is because of the power dynamics that exist between the worker and her employer.

### **Vulnerabilities of Women Domestic workers**

Svensson, J. (2018) is concerning about the legal protection of domestic workers. In the study conducted by Svensson, it is mentioned that domestic workers may have legal protection via their inclusion in the 'Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008' and are now recognized as workers and included in the labour law. Domestic workers are covered if they are within the legal working age and 'self-employed,' 'home-based' or working for an hourly payment. They have also been included in the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act (2013). Even prior to the adoption of the ILO's Domestic Workers Convention (C189), India's Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) convened a Task Force on Domestic Workers in 2009, which submitted a draft National Policy that defines the domestic worker, the employer and the clear cut terms of employment. It recommends providing wage and social security protection to domestic workers, starting with the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) national health insurance scheme, under which domestic workers can also be included since 2012.

Saunders (2003) points out that labour market vulnerability includes issues such as lack of appropriate employment legislation, difficulties in accessing labour rights even on legislated work situations, lack of access to non-statutory benefits, lack of pension schemes, very low salaries, and lack of stable employment.

## **Impacts of Covid-19 Pandemic on Domestic Workers**

Majithia et al., (2020) proclaimed that informal workers in Delhi were hit hard by the lockdown restrictions imposed on the nation in March 2020. With no means of earning incomes, many were unable to continue paying rent or obtaining food. Exacerbated by a lack of public transport, this “triggered a humanitarian crisis never witnessed before in modern India, as men, women and children started walking hundreds of miles back to their villages”.

Babu & Bhandari (2020) found out that domestic workers in Delhi were not spared in this disaster. It has been estimated that 80 to 90 per cent of domestic workers in Delhi have lost their jobs.

## **Coping Strategies and Social Support adopted by Women Domestic Workers**

Anyikwa, et al., (2015) proclaimed that when facing different forms of work-related and personal problems and challenges, migrants’ decision to seek help and of the forms of help to seek depend on a number of personal and interpersonal characteristics and traits, including gender, race, economic status, migration status, access to information, and level of social inclusion.

Ullman and Filipas (2001) found that ethnic minority women, including migrant women, were more likely to report negative experiences of seeking help from police and to experience negative social reactions such as racial stereotyping and discrimination and victim blaming.

Tempbongko (2000) points out that many domestic helpers have a sister or a cousin already in domestic service and such family ties are maintained on Sundays. For immigrant foreign domestic workers, friends and support systems usually come from relatives who are part of their family of origin and the greater the contact with relatives the less the likelihood of depression.

## **Social Policy and Social Work Interventions**

Darcy Du Toit (2013) has mentioned that in November 2006, at a conference held in Amsterdam under the banner ‘Respect and Rights: Protection for Domestic/Household Workers!’, a campaign was launched to promote the organization of domestic workers and advance their interests. From the start it attracted widespread support internationally, not only from domestic workers’ organizations but also from trade union federations, non-governmental organizations and researchers, leading to the adoption of Convention 189 Concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in June 2011. On 7 June 2013 South Africa became the eighth country to ratify the Convention, with effect from 20 June 2013.

Neetha & Palriwala (2011) have studied that in 1972 and 1977, two “private member” bills - the 1972 Domestic Workers (Conditions of Service) Bill and the 1977 Domestic Workers (Conditions of Service) Bill were introduced in the Lok Sabha. These bills would have brought domestic workers under the purview of the Industrial Disputes Act, but they too were allowed to lapse. The government ignored the 1974 recommendations of its own Committee on the Status of Women in India on the need to regulate the conditions of domestic workers. The recommendation of the statutory National Commission on Self-Employed Women and Women in the Informal Sector in 1988 to establish a system of registration for domestic workers, a minimum wage, and legislation to regulate conditions of employment, social security and security of employment met with the same treatment. The House Workers (Conditions of Service) Bill, which was formulated in 1989, was not enacted either. This bill envisaged that every employer would have to contribute to a House Workers’ Welfare Fund. Following lobbying by scholars and activists, there has been a growing recognition of the significance of paid domestic work in female employment, and the category “private households with employed persons” was included in the last two rounds on employment and unemployment in the National Sample Survey (1999–2000 and 2004–05).

### **Social Work Intervention**

Social workers are an integral provider in the statutory support offered to women experiencing different issues and challenges.

Department of Health (2010) has mention that the role of the social worker is complex, incorporating providing support to families and safeguarding vulnerable members of society. Social workers should work with women and their families, seeking to provide individualized care dependent upon their needs.

Dominelli, 2002 envisage that enabling women to tell their own stories and describe their experiences is integral to feminist ways of conducting research. It is suggested that NGOs and other organizations can play a vital role through campaigning and active participation by creating awareness amongst these women workers and unionism and cooperatives would yield results as far as struggle for better wages and working conditions are concerned. Social work is at the 'cutting edge' for the provision of support for women experiencing domestic work. A profession with a statutory mandate to support the welfare of women domestic workers, social work can benefit from a critical analysis concerning the treatment provided to victims of domestic work. There are vast research studies on the hazardous working and living conditions of women domestic workers, decent work and minimum wage of domestic workers, concern of domestic workers as workers and their need to be covered under protective legislation. However, studies on the children of domestic workers are limited in Mizoram as they are highly vulnerable to child labour especially in the arena of child in domestic work which is a real indication to existence of modern slavery. The stress generated out of the service of domestic work has to be intervene from a strength based perspective and following the social work value of self-determination, to help the women domestic workers reach the best decision.



## **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter outlines the overall research methodology employed in the study. This chapter is divided into different sections which include the brief profile of the study area, brief information on the living and working conditions of women domestic workers in Aizawl, the methodology, objectives and the limitations of the study.

### **The Setting of the Study Area**

The setting of the study presents a brief discourse about the state of Mizoram and is concern primarily with Aizawl city and Lunglei town.

The research methodology helps in carrying out the study in systematic manner so as to achieve the aims and objectives of the study. Therefore, this section includes the objectives, research design, sampling, tools for data collection, data processing an analysis.

The study is analytical in nature and engages in evaluating both qualitative and quantitative aspects of the respondents. Barring the National Sample Survey Office(NSSO) there is no data collection on Women Domestic Workers either at the centre or at the state level thus creating a natural deficit of comprehensive data. Also since these workers are not officially registered with the government it becomes difficult to trace specific information about their status at work and living conditions at home. Hence, in order to accomplish the desired objective it becomes important to use both the secondary and primary data through mix method approach.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The present study attempts to assess “Living and Working Conditions of Women Domestic Workers in Mizoram” through the following objectives:

1. To understand into the socio-economic background of the women domestic workers in Mizoram.

2. To analysed the factors driving women to domestic work in the context of Mizoram.
3. To assess the working conditions and the living conditions of women domestic workers in Mizoram.
4. To understand the challenges faced by the women domestic workers in Mizoram.
5. To understand the coping strategies adopted by the women domestic workers and to identify the social support available to them.
6. To suggests measures for social policy and social work intervention.

### **Pilot Study**

A pilot study is conducted through qualitative information from the key informants in Aizawl city and Lunglei town to understand the issues and challenges faced by women domestic workers in respect to their working and living conditions as there has been very little data available.

The pilot study revealed the following data has guided the designing of the present study. Secondary data was also collected at this stage in reference to achievement of domestic worker's welfare; women domestic worker's working and living conditions, etc. Details are appended at the end.

### **Design**

The study is cross-sectional in nature and descriptive in design. It employs both qualitative and quantitative methods in a sequential way. It is based on quantitative data through field survey pretested interview schedule with 10 respondents and data was collected among 300 respondents in total. The qualitative data is elicited through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and in-depth case studies were attempted among ten (10) women domestic workers. The KIIs is conducted

with social workers (Women Helpline), Government Officers (Labour and Employment, Government of Mizoram) and Non-Governmental Agency(Ferrando Domestic Workers Agency)and four groups of FGDs were conducted with domestic workers.

### **Sources of Data**

Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources included data that was collected from Key Informant Interviews (with professional social workers, government leaders), Focus Group Discussions with four groups (one each from Aizawl city and Lunglei town) with women domestic workers added to the primary data. A semi- structured interview schedule for the women domestic workers in Aizawl city and Lunglei town was administered for collecting the information on working and living conditions, issues and challenges, coping strategies and social support.

### **Sampling**

Individual woman domestic worker between the age of 18-30 years in Aizawl city and Lunglei town, Mizoram forms the unit of the study. All women domestic workers in core areas of Aizawl and Lunglei constitute the population for the study.

Multi stage sampling was used. In the first stage, Aizawl is chosen using purposive sampling as Aizawl city due to the fact that population concentration is more and most of domestic workers are settled in Aizawl. In the second stage, Lunglei town is selected purposively as the researcher is from Lunglei town and that Lunglei town is the second largest capital of Mizoram. In the third stage, the core area of Aizawl and Lunglei was selected based on objective criteria such as demographic profile, literacy and sex ratio (2011 census, Government of India).

Sampling for key informant interviews with professional social workers, governmental officials and non-governmental officials was done purposively.

Four FGDs (two from Aizawl and two from Lunglei) among the women domestic workers were conducted to assess social support perceived by women domestic workers in relation to working and living conditions. A group is mobilised after explaining the objectives of the study and the purpose of FGDs. The FGDs has obtained prior inform consent and voluntary participation.

### **Tools of Data Collection**

Three tools were used to collect data from different groups of people in order to arrive at an understanding of the topic.

Firstly, the qualitative data is collected through key informant interviews (KIIs) and then the quantitative data are collected through administration of pre-tested and structured interview schedule. Information is collected on level of awareness on the vulnerabilities of domestic workers, push and pull factors of domestic work, working and living conditions of women domestic work, challenges faced and coping strategies and social support received by the women domestic workers.

Secondly, four (4) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) is conducted to document coping strategies and social support available to women domestic workers. The study thus assess parents, employers, church leaders, romantic partner and community support perceived by domestic workers in relation to neglect, physical abuse, social abuse, psychological abuse and sexual abuse. Focus Group Discussions (two in each district with a group of 8-10 members) among the employees of domestic workers was administered.

Thirdly, structured interview schedule is constructed based on the pilot study. It is firstly pretested and it comprises information on the demographic profile of women domestic workers in Mizoram, push and pull factors of domestic work, working and living conditions of women domestic work, challenges faced and coping strategies adopted by the women domestic workers in Mizoram. The study is extended to understand the social support available to them.

## **Data Processing and Analysis**

Data from the structured interview schedule with respondents was processed through Microsoft excel and with the help of computer software SPSS package. Data is presented in simple percentages. The qualitative data collected through FGDs and KIIs is analyzed and presented in narrative and case study forms.

## **Limitations of the Study**

The limitations of the study is that the study is confine only to Aizawl city and Lunglei town (four localities each) and subject to only 300 women domestic workers. The age of the respondents comprises between 18-30 years where the age range of domestic workers can be below 18 years of age and above 30years of age as well. Further, only four FGDs and 10 case studies were conducted. Therefore the study might not reflect the overall situations of working and living conditions of women domestic workers in Mizoram as the study focuses only on the core areas of Aizawl city and Lunglei town and the generality of the findings will be very limited. However, the study is not subjected whether if they are migrants or not. The study does not include on the children of the women domestic workers in which the researches has found there could be many problems relating to child bearing and how the working conditions of women domestic workers can have effects in terms of the overall well-being of the child, health, social status and education of their children. Further, this is assumed to have relationship with the well-being of the mother i.e. women domestic workers. In addition, the study does not discuss in brief about the migrant domestic worker where almost all the respondents are migrant domestic worker.

## **Findings**

The findings of the present study is divided into different sections viz., the composition of women domestic workers, self hygiene of women domestic workers, challenges of women domestic workers, drivers to domestic work, working conditions of women domestic workers, living conditions of women domestic workers, conditions of women

domestic workers- the case studies and focus group discussions, social support and coping strategies.

Domestic workers although unskilled and uneducated succeed in locating their own employment opportunities. It is without any support from the government authorities they are able to fetch employment and earn monthly wages. Hence, it can be said that they constantly build their own market and sell their labour services in return for remuneration. Since these workers are beyond the purview of the government they fail to avail any welfare assistance. In the primary data collection it was found that apart from the insurance guaranteed under the e- Shram majority of the workers were unaware of all other social security schemes like the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana. This also highlights the unawareness due to illiteracy which prevents them from making maximum benefits out of the existing schemes dedicated to them. It therefore calls for a proactive effort on the part of the government to ensure maximum outreach of the policies formulated to the grassroots level. The women domestic workers as the study reveals are able to maintain minimum basic standards of living. 11% of the workers under study live in their own houses, have water sealed toilet facility, use cooking gas, and 100% electricity connection being the most encouraging outcome of the study. Even on living below the minimum wage standards of the unorganized sector workers, the domestic workers have shown capabilities to make the best out of the limited source of income and eke out a living well balanced with all the basic necessities of sustenance. This brings to light that the domestic workers who are neglected in context of labour laws and social security have the potential to raise their standards of living once supported by the government. If uplifted and brought at par with other unorganized sector workers in terms of wages it is possible to see they grow at a faster pace than without any legal support.

Presently, the women domestic workers work at the mercy of their employer under hire and fire conditions without any mechanism in place for grievance redressal. Throughout the day these women run from house to house completing the daily chores

of various households and attend their own homes in the end. Sometimes they walk large distances every day lured by higher wages in far off localities in turn taking a toll on their own health. With no minimum fixed wages and no legal support they naturally lose on their bargaining power and also there is a constant sense of insecurity about the future of their job. The need of the hour is to attempt formalization of the sector. To this end the first step has to be recognition of domestic workers as 'workers' endowed with rights. The government must also take note of the fact that domestic workers work under multiple employers and may work part-time or full time. Hence there is no single unique employer-employee relationship, instead there is one employee working for a variety of employers.

From the study, it is found out that most (64.33%) of the total respondents fall under the age group of 18-22 years and the mean age of the respondents is 21.8 years old. The vast majority (96%) are literate and receives education fair enough where 4% of the respondents are illiterate. Though most of the respondents are unmarried, 26% have been married with 12.9% a divorcee which makes them even harder to work since they have to take care of their family at home the same time they are looking doing their job.

The study reveals that most (43.3%) of the respondents are taking bath regularly. This shows that there is proper water supply in the study area and the respondents are taught enough of proper hygiene from different angles. However, there is a situation also that shows that some of the respondents were not able to take bath on regular basis due to scarcity of water in the study area. 61.6% can have regular self clean up and this shows that respondents can have free time and space on their own. In addition, 15% of the respondents does not use sanitary napkins regularly and uses cloth instead. This is due to the fact that they refuse to buy sanitary napkins since they are in shortage of money.

Fortunately, majority (90%) of the respondents does not receive any harassment as compared to the other parts of the world where almost all the women domestic workers are facing tremendous working challenges and issues that hinder the growth of the

working conditions. However, slapping, kicking and hitting is the most common form of physical harassment that exist in Mizoram. From the study, there is a wide and persistent gap between domestic workers and the employer regarding bargaining power on different issues like health and safety (47%), equal treatment (44%), work and life balance (32.3%), holidays (26%), wages (21%), hours of work (20.6%) and vocational training (18.6%). The wage gap for domestic workers is not only large, but it is also persistent. Like other typical workers, domestic workers have seen stagnant wages for decades. Domestic workers are much more likely than other workers to be living in poverty, regardless of occupation. They are also much more likely to have incomes that fall below the twice-poverty threshold, which is considered by many researchers a better cutoff for whether a family has enough income to make ends meet. However, domestic workers face a lot of challenges whenever they encountered withheld wages (2.3%) and they are struggling when they feel isolated and are given poor privacy (3.6%). Most (82.6%) of the respondents does not receive any kind of verbal harassment which shows that the employers in Mizoram are considerate enough to make the respondents meets their ends; intimidation and lustful staring at body parts however still persist that hinders their work environment. A total of 4.3% receives sexual harassment in their workplace which shows that they are vulnerable and are needed to be protecting under the laws and legislations. However, psychological harassment which have prevails around the respondents are many such as jokes of sexual nature, verbal threats, physical contact, unusual comments on dress and appearance, invasion of personal space and display of sexually offensive material. Verbal threats are the most common (10%) form of psychological harassment that have encountered during the study. This has shown the hazardous working conditions and the vulnerability of the workers.

Domestic workers are largely driven by their low socio-economic conditions as stated earlier and employment in domestic worker occupations is projected to grow more compared with other occupations over a decade. This could be because of the easier accessibility of jobs that it does not require much skills and education. This trend is also



driven by skill development, peer pressure, fancy lifestyle, exposure, etc where the most driven outcome is due to economic opportunity (95.5%).

. It is also seen that 32.3% of the respondents worked for 13 hours and more in a day which can be very tiresome. However, 3.6% can take rest for only one hour in a day. They usually sit and play with their phones during their recess period and the rest of the time they were followed by their employer and they were hardly given a space. 20.3% of the respondents were not given day off or rest in a month whereas 13.6% were given two day of rest in a week. Among the respondents, the workers who works for 1-2 years does not complain much of their day off in which they took it as it is, while workers who have work for more than 2 years usually complain about their resting time and day off that it is too less and such. This shows that the more experience in the field of domestic work the more confidence they are in bargaining day off as well. In addition, 14% can avail for sick leave. The main tasks of domestic workers through the study are mainly cleaning, cooking, care giving, shopping, hospitality at home, gardening, animal care, driving and care giving. Majority (94%) of the tasks in cleaning. The study shows that there is no specific time allocation pattern and no particular tasks which is assigned to them. The workers are usually assigned and expected to do the task according to the needs of the employer and their family. In addition, wages are not set based on their work performance or the particular task they performed but solely on the mercy of the employer and the contract deal between the worker and the employer. Work wear is usually not provided (62.3%) among the respondents. However, there are some (24.2%) that provided work wear in the work space and they were provided with gloves, masks and clothes especially during the pandemic. From the study, the unfair works comprises of washing undergarments of their employers and their family, handling sick people without protective gear, deny of rest and food, placement without consent, over work, forced to work when sick or unwell and force to wake up in the middle of the night to clean up their mess. 3.3% have reported that they were placed in another home from their employer's home without their consent and that is very ridiculous in times. 6% have also reported that they were forced to do the works when they are sick or unwell

and especially during their menstruation period which compel the respondents to change their mind and work in another place. From the study, it can be seen that the remittances provided were festival bonus, salary payment, pecuniary benefits such as enough food, old/new phones, old/ new clothes, clothing and personal care, bonus money, bank account, festival advance, condense education, yearly increment and vocational training. Majority (90.6%) was provided with enough food and that they are privilege enough to their employers. The most common form of remittances is exchange of old or new phone (70%), since most of the respondents does not have phone on their own. The satisfaction level of the respondents is work out with working hours, nature of work, salary and additional works on holidays. 49.6% sometimes worried about their work. They exclaimed that they did not like to work as a domestic worker their whole life and those they would like to undergo different trainings like sewing, beauty culture, etc. However, 9.3% never did worry about their work and they are satisfied working with their employers. The study also reveals that 89% can avail for sick leave when they are not feeling well.

From the study, most (76%) of the respondents are Live-in domestic workers where 11.3% are part-time workers. This shows the dominant factor of live –in domestic workers rather than part time workers and that there are more of a migrant worker from inter-state area where the workers are needed to stay in the house of their employer. More than half (64.6%) of the respondents lives in the same floor with their employers where 63.6% have their own separate room. This has shown that some (37.4%) does not have a separate room and they slept on the living room, where some reported they slept on the floor. This is mainly due to the limited space of the house. 27.3% washes their clothes separately and some are not allowed to wash their clothes in Washing Machine and that they have to wash their belongings separately with their hands. From the study, it can be seen that only half (53%) of the respondents eat food along with their employer. A report from one respondent is that “I usually feed the children first and ate food after all the family members have finished”. To my surprise, there are 5.3% who have separate utensils and they usually feels discriminated. 16.3% of the respondents

were yelled often if they prepare undercooked food. This shows that the works also required skills in cooking and preparation for lunch as well. 7.6% were barely given medical care when they are sick or unwell, so they exclaimed that they used to buy pain killer 'Paracetamol' from their pocket when in pain. 3.6% were restricting to food consumption and they were given food according to the employer's willingness. One respondent utter that " I was given just the exact amount of rice and vegetables every day since the employer exclaimed that she would become fat if she consume lots of food everyday". The respondents, however, came across different kind of sexual harassment in their workplace such as eve –teasing, exposed to pornography, unwanted physical contact, leering or telling dirty jokes, making sexual remarks about a person's body, sexually remarks for sexual favour, rape and molestation. Exposed to pornography seems to be the most common form of harassment (7%). The study shows that respondents are vulnerable to different kinds of abuses though there may be hidden cases which they did not want to reveal. Most interestingly, there is also an incident of rape cases which they did not allow to reveal their ordeal. Half of the respondents (50%) were usually excused when they make mistakes and they were given another chance. There is also a case when the respondents are forgiven in their mistakes in a manner that their monthly salary is reduced with the replacement of the actual amount they have broken. One respondent report that "my salary is reduced when I broke a tea cup and a plastic bucket". 1.6% was punished when they did not take care of the children properly. From the study, 34.4% hardly have privacy while working since most of the time the employers do a check list on their works.

Five case –studies were conducted among the women domestic workers such as cases on – molestation, withheld stay by employer, verbal and physical abuse, money quarrel, immodest behavior from employer, torture from employer, challenges due to pandemic, racial discrimination and withheld wages, mental health issues and intimidation and threatening. From the case studies, it is found out that there are no serious cases in Mizoram where there is harassment and issues that hamper the domestic workers. Moreover, there is an organization named "Ferrando Domestic Workers

Alliance” that contributes to the improvement of domestic workers in the State where domestic workers can reach out easily when they faced problems.

### **Further Research**

The present study suggests the following areas for further research:

- 1) Research on the children of domestic workers since they are prone to child labour or child domestic work.
- 2) To study on child domestic work
- 3) To conduct a comparative study between child domestic worker and old aged domestic worker.
- 4) A comparative study between the employer and the employee.
- 5) Comparative research on migrant domestic worker and native domestic worker
- 6) Impact of domestic work in socio-economic conditions of their families
- 7) Impact of Covid -19 among domestic workers.

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## ABSTRACT

### INTRODUCTION

The present study attempts to find out the working and living conditions of women domestic workers in Mizoram. Therefore, the study highlights the issues and challenges of women domestic workers in Mizoram hence to facilitate development of strategies and practical measures for promotion of the rights and employment towards empowerment of women domestic workers in Mizoram.

From the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century the Mizo society had entered a new socio-economic milieu, which was brought forth by British occupation of the Lushai Hills (Mizoram) and the entry of the Christian Missionaries. Mizoram is placed under the administrative and political rule of the British Government since from 1891. However, after the establishment of colonial authority, group territorial mobility was curtailed, while encouraging individual mobility. Thus, a moderate form of stable settlement began to take shape. The colonial rule gradually had done away with some of the traditional rights and privileges of the Mizo chiefs, which encourages individual mobility. Historically, it is evidences that women in Mizoram practice jhum cultivation and mainly with a specific nature of work like *hlothlawlh i.e. farming*, cleaning of cotton flowers, collection of woods, cooking and preparation for lunch while weaving was done mostly when they are free from the jhum's work . The British Rule gradually loosened the traditional holds, thus, the people envisaged the root of a new set of rules based on democratic principle as early as 1920. However, with the pace of time the series of events that unfolded after India' Independence in the Mizo hills had far reaching, multi-faceted impact on the Mizo society.

The scenario is now being changed and women labour participation is visible everywhere either in governmental settings or non-governmental settings, private and public enterprises, organised or unorganised work extending to the work done outside homes. (Malsawmliana & Benjamin Ralte, 2011). The employment exchange of Aizawl district, Mizoram shows the number of women job seekers was 24,585 as per the record

of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2000, and out of whom the educational level of 3039 were graduate and above (Lalfakzuali, 2010).

The national scenario has shown the strong preference for nuclear families which has resulted in a demand for domestic workers in India and eventually in Mizoram state as well. Although they form a crucial segment of the informal worker population, domestic workers are a relatively neglected population as compared to workers in other unorganised sectors such as garment factory, construction works, transportation, restaurant and other informal industries. The women domestic workers are neither not adequately educated nor organized through meaningful unionization and are denied of minimum wages, healthy work period, safe working conditions and other benefits. Unsurprisingly, following a similar pattern, the women domestic workers are a neglected group among the unorganized workforce in Mizoram. For decades they have been exploited and only in recent years the Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) are taking up the cause of women domestic workers. Moreover, women domestic workers are subjected to series of injustices, deprivations and indignities in modern society due to the absence of meaningful legal safeguards, welfare measures and other provisions for the empowerment of women.

### **Domestic Work**

Domestic work is done across many regions around the globe where Europe and Central Asia represent the smallest shares of the global population of domestic workers. However, the American region is the world's second-largest employer of domestic workers by region after Asia and the Pacific. Domestic work accounts for most of the informal workforce in India hence Mizoram by poor and unskilled women, from marginalized communities and vulnerable rural districts and migrant women domestic workers crossing international boundaries from Myanmar and state boundaries from Tripura, India. The work and workplace is invisible, undervalued, unrecognized and unregulated, and hence the sector suffers from low wages, lack of formal contract, decent work conditions and poor social security measures (Chigateri, S., et al, 2016). Domestic work is historically associated with poor working conditions, such as lack of

legal registration (most often they do not register), low wages and high weekly working hours. In fact, some of these workers actually live in the employer's household, as evidenced by the survey conducted in the State. Moreover, domestic work is largely considered a distinct work due to its nature of work which comprises of work done inside the household such as cleaning, nursing, caring, hospitality, gardening, as well as driving and guarding private households. The Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent national lockdown further aggravated the situation of the already vulnerable women domestic worker.

### **Domestic Workers**

Servant is an older English term for "domestic worker", though not all servants worked inside the home. Domestic service, or the employment of people for wages in their employer's residence, was sometimes simply called "service". It evolved into a hierarchical system in various countries at various times. Domestic work covers many different activities, situations and relationships, and so is not easy to categorize. It includes many tasks such as cleaning, laundry and ironing; shopping, cooking and fetching water; caring for the sick, elderly and children; looking after pets; sweeping and garden-tidying.

The women domestic workers of Mizoram has a great labour participation, infact, their rights has been neglected and they are relatively ill-treated in many forms like verbal, sexual, psychological and emotional abuse. In general, domestic workers in Mizoram came from a low socio-economic background where they have low self-esteem and self-confidence. However, a number of factors are contributing to the growing of women domestic workers within the workforce in Mizoram and each of which requires critical examination that is illustrated in the present study.

### **Concept of Women Domestic Workers**

The women domestic labour debate was particularly prominent in the western academia amongst feminists in the 1960s and 1970s. The implications of domestic labour on women's emancipation as well as transformation of gender roles. However, it has been differently read by different schools of feminism. Domestic worker is a person

who is engaged on a part time or full time basis in domestic service. The domestic worker receives remuneration periodically in cash or kind for a fixed period from the employer (Chandramouli,K., 2021).

Domestic work is one of the oldest and most significant informal occupations for millions of women around the world. Women seemed to have limited options and enter the domain of domestic work in the absence of education, economic resources and other opportunities. The term ‘domestic service’ is practically difficult to define since the duties of domestic workers were not well defined. However, domestic service is now accepted as an important category of livelihood across the globe and remains a highly personalized and informal service delivered in the homes of employers. In domestic service, work cannot be subjected to any comparative tests, since it has the character almost unique in wage paid industry. The service is being carried on for use, not for profit, and the settlement of wages remains an individual bargain between employer and employed (Caplow, 1954).

### **Classification of Domestic Workers**

Domestic workers works directly under the authority of householder and the work is done by following the straight instructions of the employer. Darcy du Toit (2013), has divided the types of domestic workers, based on the hours of work and nature of employment relationship which includes:-

- a) Part-time worker i.e. worker who works for **one or more employers for a specified number of hours per day** or performs specific tasks for each of the multiple employers every day.
- b) Full-time worker i.e. worker who works for a **single employer every day** for a specified number of hours and who returns back to her/his home every day after work.
- c). Live-in worker i.e. worker who works **full time for a single employer(residing in the household of the employer)** and also stays on the

premises of the employer or in a dwelling provided by the employer (which is close or next to the house of the employer) and does not return back to her/his home every day after work.”

d). Live-out worker i.e. **worker who may be living in his/her own residence.**

However, the ILO Convention 189 has recognised a decent wage pay where domestic workers comprised of three main groups

- Live-in domestic workers
- Part-time / Live-out domestic worker
- Migrant Domestic Workers (inter-state and overseas domestic workers)

### **Magnitude of Domestic Workers**

Around the world, there are 75.6 million domestic workers aged 15 years and over. The world’s largest employers of domestic workers, in numerical terms, are Asia and the Pacific (where 50 per cent of all domestic workers are employed) and the Americas (where 23 per cent of all domestic workers are employed). In contrast, the Europe and Central Asia region employs the smallest share of all domestic workers (ILO,2021).

Domestic workers comprise a significant part of the global workforce in informal employment and are among the most vulnerable groups of workers. About 1.5 million Asian women work as migrant domestic workers in other countries, however, in the Philippines, there are estimated to be over 600,000 local domestic workers. As per official estimates, there are 4.75 million domestic workers (NSS 2005) but this is a gross under-estimation and there could be close to 50 million domestic workers in India. According to Indian National Sample Survey (NSS) 2001 data, there were 2.0 million female workers and 0.3 million male workers as compared to 1.2 million female and 0.3 male workers in 1983, resulting in a substantial issues in the number of female workers (Mehrotra, S.T., 2008). In India, two draft bills, put forward by the National Commission for Women and the National Campaign Committee(NCC) of Unorganized

Sector Workers, to protect domestic workers have been in circulation since 2008, but neither has been passed.

Domestic worker's population has been increasing deliberately in every society of India and hence Mizoram as well. Domestic workers are considered as part of the large 'informal' sector of urban economy and over the last two decades, the domestic worker population has emerged as the second largest urban informal workforce (Chen and Raveendran, 2011). Moreover, the population has reached next only to 'home based workers' like artisans and petty commodity producers. An increasing number of studies are emerging about domestic workers around the world and it is estimated that 41.3 lakhs workers work in the households of others, and an overwhelming 27.9 lakhs of this total are women as indicated by NSS 68th round, July 2011- June 2012. In Mizoram, domestic workers population there are 1,832 domestic workers (approx.) in Aizawl since 2005 to 2007(MNDWMWT, 2008). Therefore, it is evident that there has been an increasing trend of domestic workers in Mizoram where the workers work predominantly at Mizoram and other countries as well.

However, the ILO (2004 – 2005) report has also documented that in India, there are 4.2 million (approx) of domestic workers comprising of the 3lakh domestic workers in North East States. The north east state has a large number of women and young girls enrolled in domestic work yet unrecognized and a decent work status denied to them. They are often named as maids, servants, kitchen girls and *Aiyas* while in Mizoram we call them '*Awmpui*' meaning the one who stays with me or with us, the word which in itself doesn't recognize them as workers. In Mizoram, an organization named "Jeriko Khualbuk" has started realizing the need for protection of domestic worker's rights and freedom while working with commercial sex workers. The initiation of the Project "Formation of Domestic Workers Union Structures" in 2004 was implemented in 12 cities in North East (Agartala City,Aizawl, Barpeta, Bongaigaon, Guwahati, Imphal, Kohima, Sarupathar, Shillong,Tezpur,Tinsukia, and Tura City) covering six states namely: Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram, Nagaland and Manipur ([www.cdismhc.org](http://www.cdismhc.org)).

## **Migrant Workers and Domestic Worker**

The [ILO Global Estimates on Migrant Workers](#) (2015) reports that more than 150 million workers worldwide are international migrants (accounting for 72 per cent of the total international population of working age migrants). Domestic workers, the majority of whom are women, constituting a large portion of today's migrant worker population. In Latin America, for example, they constitute as many as 60 per cent of all internal and international migration. The feminization of migration, a trend that began in the early 1980s, has resulted in an increased number of women who had migrated alone. Women and girls make up almost 67 million of this workers, one in six is a domestic worker. The biggest host regions for migrant domestic workers are:

- South-Eastern Asia and the Pacific (24%)
- Northern, Southern and Western Europe (22%)
- Arab States (19%)

## **Working and Living Conditions of Women Domestic Workers in North – East India**

In the study, the working and living conditions of women domestic workers in North – east India has been presented from different states such as Tripura, Mizoram, Assam, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Shillong and Manipur. The domestic workers in North-east India comprise mainly of female workers where workers are from native area and their neighbouring states. The unhygienic living conditions with no proper water facilities and unaware of the rights of domestic worker is the main issues in Agartala, Tripura. The unstable economic conditions hamper their children to go to good schools for quality education. The women domestic workers works at the mercy of the employers with no decent wage paid to them for their service. Although they are blessed with the benefit of monthly pension specifically meant for domestic workers but they are deprived of other various rights. The Government of Tripura has fixed the Minimum Wage for Domestic Workers i.e. Rs 13/- per hour which is extremely low to ensure a living wage to them.



**Identified Number of domestic Workers in 12 cities of Northeast India(2015 – 2018)**

**Table 1: Number of Domestic Workers in North-East India**

Sl.No	Name of the City	Data	Percentage out of total population(in 2018)	Ranking
1	Sarupathar City	1416	10,827(2011 census) (13%)	1
2	Tura City	1242	74858(1.65%)	2
3	Tezpur City	1675	102,505(2011 census) (1.6%)	3
4	Tinsukia City	1210	126,389(2011 census) (0.95%)	4
5	Shillong City	2878	436,000(0.6%)	5
6	Imphal City	2424	540,000(0.44%)	6
7	Guwahati City	3321	1,083,000(0.30)	7
8	Aizawl City	824	353,000(0.2%)	8
9	Bongaigaon City	957	820,073(0.11%)	9
10	Kohima City	433	297,467(0.14%)	10
11	Agartala City	590	534,000(0.1%)	11
12	Barpeta City	1561	1,693,622(2011 census) (0.09%)	12
<b>Total</b>		<b>18531</b>		

**Source: CDI (2018)**

Findings: Domestic workers were traced highest in Guwahati, whilst the least were identified in Kohima. However, with the representation of the total population of the city studied, the highest is Sarupathi district with 13per cent of the total population of the city with Barpeta at the lowest (0.09%).In addition, Guwahati is a cosmopolitan city and a commercial hub of the Northeast region. Therefore, the city attracts the

migrant workers as it offers a lot of job opportunities. On the other hand, Kohima is a less populated city with live-in domestic workers contributing a huge percentage of this workforce.

### **Women domestic workers during COVID-19**

The third phase of stringent lockdown of COVID-19 has imposed a burden of unpaid care work among women domestic workers. The COVID -19 pandemic and the subsequent national lockdown further aggravated the situation of the already vulnerable sector. The domestic workers who are playing a very crucial role in the economic life of the women in today's competitive market are striving hard to arrange two square meals during the Covid-19 lockdown. Most of the domestic workers are compelled to do the menial job due to their economically disadvantaged and poor financial conditions. Their silent contributions for many households as well as society have remained invisible for a long time. However, during the pandemic COVID-19, they have faced double marginalization as they are engaged in informal reproductive work in the unorganized sector and they are not recorded as wage laborer and yet deprived of getting any benefit. A suitable policy may be framed by bringing them to the mainstream, so that in the future if a situation like lockdown has arisen they will not fight with hunger and anxiety (Kaur, K., 2020).

### **Conceptual Framework**

A conceptual framework represents the synthesis of the literature reviewed on how to explain a phenomenon and a framework is understood as a supporting structure on which something can be built which can be real or conceptual that guides or directs into successful outcome. In other words, the conceptual framework is the understanding of how the particular [variables](#) are connected. The conceptual framework “sets the stage” to present the particular research question that drives the investigation being reported based on the problem statement. The problem statement of a thesis gives the context and the issues that caused the researcher to conduct the study (Regoniel,P.,2015). Hence, it is essential to explore some of the frameworks on working and living conditions of women domestic workers that have been developed or framed by organisations or researchers in

the past in pertaining to the working and living conditions so as to have a better understanding of the dimensions and factors that are responsible in the process of assessing the working and living conditions of women domestic workers. Thus, the working and living conditions of women domestic workers framework is discussed below:

<b>Marxist</b>	<b>feminist</b>	<b>Labour Law</b>	<b>Decent work</b>
<b>Approach</b>			
Division of Labour	Women's oppression	Fair access to jobs	Flexible working conditions
Unpaid Labour		Right to work, dignity of workers, ensures fair treatment, prevents serious abuses of power	Freedom, equity, security, human dignity
		To prevent employers from treating their employees like a commodity	Labour Market
		Collective bargaining	

### **Statement of the Problem**

Women domestic workers face a number of risks that are common in domestic work service. Women in particular are marked by a series of changes in physical, psychological, social and economic issues. However, studies assessing the relationship between migrants or native women domestic workers, drivers to domestic works such as the push and pull factors, adequacy of salary in comparison with their working conditions, awareness level on social security measures, and humiliating or degrading treatment including physical and verbal violence, and sexual abuse of domestic workers are lacking. The complexity of the women domestic workers and the accompanying changes in physical and social characteristics is usually emphasized, but it is not very

well understood by the community at large. A poor understanding of the rights of women domestic worker's issues is the main cause for the absence of focus on services, information and research on unique features of International Labour Organization (ILO). In recent years, the trends of globalization and liberalization, the rapid spread of communication and information technology, and shifting social and moral norms maybe said to have eroded the traditional bases and defining points for concern of others in Mizo society. However, empirical study and research based intervention is absence in the state. These require immediate attention and appropriate interventions. Therefore, the study will focus on the exploration on the working and living conditions of women domestic workers by eliciting information on the issues and challenges faced by them.

### **Chapter Scheme**

The chapter scheme for the present study is presented into eight (8) chapters.

The first chapter deals with the introduction which discusses on the background of domestic work, concept of domestic work, concept of women domestic work, classification of domestic worker, magnitude of domestic work and working and living conditions of women domestic workers in North-East India. It also presents the statement of problem of the study.

The second chapter focuses on the review of various literatures relate to "Living and Working Conditions of Women domestic Workers". The review of literature is divided into 20 groups viz. studies on domestic work, domestic worker, women domestic worker, feminization of domestic work, an informal work of domestic work, working conditions, living conditions, issues an challenges such as poor bargaining power, social insecurity, push and pull factors, conditions of domestic workers, migration and domestic work, sex work, emotional labour and domestic work, caste, race and domestic work, vulnerabilities of women domestic workers, migration and women domestic workers, coping strategies & social support an laws and policies of domestic workers.

The third chapter presents on the methodology employed for the study which includes the profile of the study area, objectives of the study, research design, and sampling, tools for data collection, data processing analysis and limitations of the study.

The fourth chapter discusses on the “Composition of Women domestic Workers” like Profile of respondents, socio economic profile and self - hygiene of women domestic workers.

The fifth chapter deals with “Working Conditions of Women domestic Workers” viz. working hours, work type, remittance provision and the satisfaction level.

The sixth chapter deals with “Living Conditions of Women domestic Workers” viz. types of domestic work, nature of work, inhumane treatment, sexual harassment, employer’s reaction over the work, privacy and self-perception of women domestic workers while working.

The seventh chapter focuses on the challenges of women domestic workers and drivers to domestic work.

The eighth chapter deals with qualitative interpretation such as case studies, focus group discussions and key informant interviews. The Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) is conducted mainly on the social support and coping strategies of women domestic workers. Key informant interviews (KIIs) are done with the stakeholders to assess the issues faced by women domestic workers.

The ninth chapter deals with social support and coping strategies on the working and living conditions of women domestic workers in Mizoram.

The tenth chapter deals with the scope for social work intervention and the role of social worker in the area of women working in unorganized sector particularly the women domestic workers. The study here focuses on the decent work and economic empowerment of women by using the social work techniques, skills enrich around the philosophies, assumptions and values of social work education.

Lastly, the eleventh chapter deals with conclusion and suggestions drawn out of the survey with micro and macro levels of intervention.

Thus this chapter deals with the introduction of highlighting the topic of the study, “Living and Working Conditions of Women Domestic Workers in Mizoram”. Besides this, it also presents the statement of the problem and chapter scheme of the study. The proceeding chapter presents on the review of literature.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Domestic work is one of the foremost and most important works all over the world. It has been estimated that there are 75.6 million domestic worker globally aged 15 years and over. Women continue to make up the majority of the unorganised sector (76.2%), which accounts for 4.5% of female employment worldwide, or 8.8% of female employees (ILO, 2021). However, women domestic workers across the globe are assigned with works which is a low-paid, insecure and an exploitative work place. Women domestic workers comprise a significant part of the global workforce in informal employment and moreover, they are among the most vulnerable groups of workers. They work for private households, often without clear terms of employment, unregistered, and excluded from the scope of Labour Legislation (ILO, 2016).

### **Concept of domestic work and women domestic work**

According to Convention No. 189 (2021), “domestic work is a work performed in or for a household or households, within an employment relationship and on an occupational basis”. Domestic worker’s tasks vary across countries and overtime and the works undertaken by them are cleaning, nursing, caring, hospitality, gardening, as well as driving and guarding private households. The uniqueness and most challenging part of women domestic worker is that their tasks vary depending upon the wishes and directions of the employer. So, they eventually fall under the prey of their employers. Given this heterogeneity of the tasks, domestic work was determined to be the workplace – that is, the household.

## **International Labour Organisation (ILO) and Convention 189**

ILO (2021) has highlight that in 2011, the International Labour Organization (ILO) adopted the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), the first international legal instrument devoted to domestic work. In its Preamble, the Convention recognizes the contributions of domestic workers to the global economy and the persistent undervaluation of domestic work. Considering that domestic workers are some of the most marginalized workers, the Convention set out to ensure that they enjoy decent work, like all other workers, while taking into account the specificities of the sector. Since then, much progress has been made towards achieving decent work for domestic workers; however, for far too many workers in this sector, decent work has not yet become a reality. Shortly after the adoption of Convention No. 189, the ILO produced the report *Domestic Workers Across the World* (ILO 2013a), which provided the first global estimate of the number of domestic workers. It also provided regional estimates and an estimate of the percentage of domestic workers covered by key labour and social security laws governing working time, wages and maternity protection.

### **Regional Estimates of Domestic Workers**

ILO (2021) clearly highlights that the vast majority of domestic workers are employed in two regions: about half of all domestic workers can be found in Asia and the Pacific, largely on account of China, while another quarter (23 per cent) are in America. These regions also employ the largest shares of the world's female domestic workers, at 52.1 per cent and 27.2 per cent, respectively. Americas and the Arab States are the two regions in which domestic workers are over-represented compared with the distribution of global employment. In America, 17.6 million men and women aged 15 years old and over work as domestic workers, accounting for 23 per cent of the total worldwide. The Americas region is home to the second-largest population of women domestic workers (15.7 million), second only to Asia and the Pacific. It is also the region in which domestic work is the most feminized, 89 per cent of domestic workers in the region being women (table 2.1). Domestic work remains an important source of

employment among women, representing 7.7 per cent of female employment (or 10 per cent of female employees).

### **Push and Pull Factors**

ILO (2018a) analyzed that some research suggests the share of the domestic work sector is in part a result of income inequality. Using the Gini coefficient, research conducted by the ILO found that the higher the level of income inequality, the larger the size of the domestic workforce as a share of total employment. Another way of understanding the relationship between income inequality and the demand for domestic work is in terms of a worker's willingness to accept an offer of employment at a given wage and an employer's willingness and capacity to pay for services. In other words, in countries with higher levels of income inequality, the demand for domestic work is driven, at least in part, by the fact that there is a large number of people who are willing to accept relatively low wages, which are paid by a large enough number of households with the capacity to employ domestic workers.

Anderson (2000) mentioned that the size of the domestic workforce depends on a range of factors on both the supply and the demand side. Research has already substantiated some of the factors that push women and men to seek employment as domestic workers. Some of the most pronounced factors are poverty, a need to generate more income for their families, and a lack of employment opportunities.

### **Living and Working Conditions of Women Domestic Workers**

Rejimon P.M & Gopal, S. (2020) found that the women domestic workers has less voice in confronting the employer and often continue accepting whatever the employers pay them and are under constant fear that asking for a raise may lead to termination from work. The employers also provide them stale foods or leftover foods which are not good for their health and nutrition. The employers also refuse to give them paid leave even though they work hard beyond their capacity.

Dithhi, B. et.al. (2016) envisage the double burden of working at their own homes on the one hand and the demands of the workplace on the other take a heavy toll



on their lives. The workers suffered from sleeplessness, fear (often leading to more absenteeism and hence more stress and fear), severe headaches, and mental stress due to the financial consequences of frequent absences. Moreover, the continuous demand for perfection in their tasks, often with the employer watching closely while domestic workers go about their work, was by itself extremely stressful.

Polask, S. (2013) exclaimed that despite the size of the sector, many domestic workers experience poor working conditions and insufficient legal protection. Domestic workers are frequently expected to work longer hours than other workers and in many countries do not have the same rights to weekly rest that are being enjoyed by other workers. Combined with the lack of rights, the extreme dependency on an employer and the isolated and unprotected nature of domestic work can render them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

According to Smith (2011), domestic workers are employed in private homes rather than firms or enterprises. This tends to make them invisible as formal workers and isolated from others in the sector. They are dependent on the good or bad will of their employer. Growing evidence shows that domestic workers are exposed to a range of unhealthy and hazardous working conditions despite the concept of the home as “safe haven”.

Rustagi (2009) highlights that the relationship between employers and domestic workers is very subjective and depended on the individuals involved. There is a marginal increase in the number of women domestic workers in India.

### **Conditions of domestic workers**

Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), 2020 highlights the status of domestic workers in Delhi, India that there was an estimate of 500,000 domestic workers in Delhi city alone, where the bulk of the demand for domestic work is for part-time workers. Most have multiple employers and work more than 40 hours per week. Domestic workers in Delhi spend the equivalent of three-

quarters of a week's wage on a health-care visit, despite various governmental schemes to help workers access health care. Also, most have no access to maternity leave or other benefits including pensions. Migrant workers often encounter problems in applying for benefits because the necessary documentation is kept in their home villages and is inaccessible to them. With COVID-19 and its impacts, large numbers of domestic workers in Delhi are said to have lost their jobs and about 80 per cent face severe to moderate economic crises. The sector was largely excluded from emergency grants and food rations. There are estimated to be 500,000 domestic workers in Delhi (ILO, 2016). According to the International Labour Organization (2017), the bulk of the demand for domestic work in Delhi is for part-time workers, although there are also substantial numbers of particularly vulnerable live-in workers from rural districts and states including Jharkhand, Odisha and Bihar.

Bino Paul et al., (2011) reported that in 1959, New Delhi based All India Domestic Workers Union called for a one-day solidarity strike which received a thumping response from domestic workers. Interestingly, this initiative attracted legislators' attention; two bills –on minimum wages and the timely payment of wages, maximum working hours, weekly rest and annual leave periods, as well as the establishment of a servant's registry to be maintained by the local police, in deference to employers- were introduced.

### **Issues and Challenges of Women Domestic Workers**

WIEGO (2020) views that only few of the domestic workers having a written contract with their employer, which means that their work status is highly insecure, and they have little power to change this. This is exacerbated by the fact that wage rates are set by the neighbourhood, leaving little space for individual workers to bargain for higher wages. Although organizations of domestic workers are gaining strength in the city, which would support collective action and voice, it is challenging to organize domestic workers, particularly those who live and work in the gated communities across the city.

ILO (2016) mention that women domestic workers face numerous problems such as low wages, extra work, long working hours, lack of holidays, harassment at workplace, sexual exploitation, physical torture, ill treatment, lack of welfare facilities, lack of rest and freedom, absence of social security measures, development of fatigue, and low level of education. Moreover, they comprise a significant part of the global economy in informal employment and therefore they are the most vulnerable groups among informal workers. Domestic workers worked for private households, often without clear terms of employment, and are excluded from the scope of labour legislation. Women domestic workers face a number of risks that are common in domestic work service. Women in particular are marked by a series of changes in physical, psychological, social and economic issues. However, studies assessing the relationship between insufficient or inadequate food and accommodation, and humiliating or degrading treatment including physical and verbal abuse, inhumane or degrading treatment, and sexual harassment of domestic workers are lacking. The complexity of the women domestic workers and the accompanying changes in physical and social characteristics is usually emphasized, but it is not very well understood by the community at large. A poor understanding of the rights of women domestic worker's issues is the main cause for the absence of focus on services, information and research on unique features of International Labour Organization (ILO). In recent years, the trends of globalization and liberalization, the rapid spread of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and shifting social and moral norms maybe said to have eroded the traditional bases and defining points for concern of others in Mizo society. However, empirical study and research based intervention is absence in the state. These require immediate attention and appropriate interventions. Therefore, the study is focusing on the exploration on the working and living conditions of women domestic workers by eliciting information on the issues and challenges faced by them.

### **Domestic work - “an informal work”**

Svennson, J. (2018) discusses about the informal occupations of domestic work in India and opines to the fact that wages are extremely low. For instance, wages for women in informal work are four times lower than women’s wages in the formal work sector. Moreover, the informal nature of domestic work creates opportunities for potentially exploitative recruitment channels. Workers, especially young workers have very limited position or opportunity to negotiate fair employment terms and safe work conditions with recruitment agents or with employers.

The United Nations (2002) attempted to explain how tasks performed by domestic workers are not recognized as ‘work’. Domestic workers in India continue to struggle for visibility and recognition. While several legislations such as the Unorganized Social Security Act, 2008, Sexual Harassment against Women at Work Place (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 and Minimum Wages Schedules notified in various states refer to domestic workers, there remains an absence of comprehensive, uniformly applicable, national legislation that guarantees fair terms of employment and decent working conditions. Domestic workers should however be guaranteed the same terms of employment as enjoyed by other workers. Hired domestic workers ease the burden of individual households by undertaking household chores in return for remuneration. The tasks include the care of children and the elderly, cooking, driving, cleaning, grocery shopping, running errands and taking care of household pets, particularly in urban areas. However, despite the benefits this work brings to individual households, domestic workers are often not recognized as workers by society.

### **Minimum Wages and Women Domestic Workers-**

ILO (2021) reported that since 2010, little progress has been made in ensuring a minimum wage for domestic workers equal to that enjoyed by workers generally or limiting payment in kind for domestic workers. There has been only a small increase in the number of domestic workers who are entitled to a minimum wage equal to that of other workers (2.9 percentage points) and who have a right to receive their minimum

wage fully in cash (7.2 percentage points). Remuneration is a very crucial aspect of the Convention 189 of ILO and most relevant to the present study.

Chand, H.(2019) accounted that it must also be put to view that there have been individual and organizational attempts for the protection and status uplift of these workers with various draft bills over the years, such as Domestic Workers( Registration, Social Security and Welfare) Bill 2008, which was prepared by National Commission for Women(NCW) India, Domestic Workers (Regulation of employment, Condition of work, Social Security and Welfare) Bill 2008 by National Campaign Committee for Unorganised sector workers and The Domestic Workers Employment Rights Protection Bill 2004 ( SEWA-Kerala Bill). The main emphasis or the core issues incorporated in all of these draft bills focus on the condition of the work i.e., leaves, holidays, hours of work etc, and also on the social security of the workers. But the failure of materialization of bill to an Act has been disappointing. One such initiative in this regard of providing welfare, protection and security to domestic workers was that of, Dr. Sashi Tharoor, Member of Parliament, who introduced ‘The Domestic Workers Welfare’ Bill 2016 in Lok Sabha on 5 July, 2016. The proposed bill addresses the needs of the workers and suitable terms of agreement, and thus guarantees certain rights to the domestic workers in accordance with International Convention on Labour such as the right to; earn and earn livelihood free from forced and compulsory labour, to earn minimum wages , to decent working and living conditions, to address grievances in an appropriate manner, to organize and bargain collectively and the right to equal employment opportunities and remuneration. The most recent effort to the cause has come from the Ministry of Labour and Employment in the form of a Draft National Policy on Domestic Workers which is still in its initial stages and remains to be passed by the Indian parliament house.

### **Feminisation of Domestic Work**

Sharan Burrow (2010) proclaimed that domestic workers were almost always women, often migrants and children and despite the fact that it is one of the oldest and most important occupations for millions of women around the world, domestic work is undervalued and in many countries falls outside the scope of labour legislation. She

notified that domestic workers have no guarantee of a minimum wage or social protection and their rights to form and join a trade union and to bargain in a collective way are violated. And as a result, many of them are overworked, underpaid, and cases of maltreatment and abuse, especially of live-in and migrant domestic workers, are countless.

National Commission for Enterprises in the Un-organized Sector (NCEUS), 2007 view domestic work to be the destiny of significantly huge number of women workers in India who seek employment opportunities in urban sector, often rendering an invisible workforce who are not paid well, and deprived of rights to ensure decency in work. Reflecting on indecent working and living condition of women domestic workers, National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganized Sector views: “Working in the unregulated domain of a private home, mostly without the protection of national labour legislation, allows for female domestic workers to be maltreated by their employers with impunity. Women are often subjected to long working hours and excessively arduous tasks. They may be strictly confined to their places of work. The domestic workforce is excluded from labour laws that look after important employment-related issues such as conditions of work, wages, social security, provident funds, old age pensions, and maternity leave.”

### **Poor Bargaining Power**

Vimala, M (2016) has viewed that the workers in unorganized sector remain unprotected by law. They are the most vulnerable section of the society and they enjoy no job or income security with little bargaining power. The unorganized sector is divided in to institutionalized and non- institutionalized sectors. The non-institutionalized unorganized sector comprises workers doing casual work like domestic workers, sweepers, scavengers etc. A key factor in the growth of informal activity in most developing regions has been the plummeting value of wages. The informal sector has not only offered the possibility of work to the unemployed, but has permitted survival of many households with wage earners. Some division of labour exists between

formal and informal sectors on the basis of gender. It has been suggested that women tend to stay within the informal sector because of the flexibility of working arrangements and diversity of opportunities.

### **Social Insecurity**

Kantor et al, (2006) highlights the caste and social stratification which have induced the probability of individuals to enter domestic work. The domestic workers have very limited access to larger social networks. So, there is a need to sustain and support organizations for domestic workers to improve their bargaining power. Therefore, organizing domestic workers is fundamental to finding solutions to the various problems faced by domestic workers. The lack of legal status, fear of loss of employment, fear of deportation if migrants, the inviolable privacy of households, the scattered nature of employment, long working hours and having more than one employer are some of the common factors that make domestic workers often hesitant to speak up publicly and demonstrate.

Gothoskar (2005) identifies domestic work as traditionally grey area in Indian labour legislation. A 'Domestic Workers (Condition of Services) Bill' was introduced as early as 1959, but it has yet to become law. For years, civil society organisations, most notably the National Domestic Workers Movement, have called for national legislation to regulate domestic workers' rights, as well as for the inclusion of domestic workers under the Minimum Wages Act (1948) and the Unorganized Workers' Social Security Bill (2008).

### **Migration and Women Domestic Workers**

ILO (2010) identifies the increasing demand for domestic workers are witness in the regular flow of domestic helps from particular pockets out of migration. The lack of any former skill and training requirement and the flexibility in employment are some of the factors, which ensure a regular and increasing inflow of domestic workers. The increasing rate of migrant population is 167 million persons to 315 million in 1971 census and 2001 census respectively. Also, nearly 20 million people migrated to other

states within the country seeking for livelihood (census of India, 1991). The scenario highlighted that of the total domestic workers in India in 2009- 10, more than 2/3 lived in urban India and amongst which 57 % of them are women Besides, a large scale rural-urban migration takes place from the states of Bihar, Odisha, Jharkhand, Assam, Mizoram and Chhattisgarh etc. to the metro cities like Delhi, Mumbai and other large cities (Social Alert, 2005).

Chandrashekhar & Ghosh (2007) mention that researches have highlighted the urban-rural work force participation of women in India and noticed the gradual increasing trend in participation in urban women workforce participation as compared to rural women workforce participation. Further, the estimated distribution of interstate migrants shows that out of the 80 million persons interstate migrants'20 million migrants are domestic workers (Census of India, 2011).

Reddy (1986) found out that due to feminisation of domestic work, women migrants are found to be more vulnerable to human rights abuses since they work in gender-segregated and unregulated sectors of the economy, such as in domestic work, entertainment and sex industry, unprotected by labour legislation or policy. Some occasions they are exposed to forced labour, precarious working conditions, poorly paid job, discrimination and sexual exploitation, suffer poorer health Migrant women often engage in unskilled and most poorly paid jobs, which have been deserted by national women. Because of the unregulated nature of domestic work, they often face a lot of problems at the destination. In most of the cases they have to work long hours, sometimes more than 15 hours a day (INSTRAW and IOM, 2000) and forced to do extra work. In addition, abuse and discrimination arising out of their immigration status, national origin and their lower status jobs, and to which domestic workers are more frequently victims of violence, including sexual assault at the work place.

### **Sex Work, Emotional Labour and Domestic Work**



Svensson, J. (2018) discuss how the girls are rebuked by their employers verbally and meted out corporal punishment such as hitting or slapping in response to what the girls themselves often perceived as trivial offenses. Findings also indicate that some girls thought they served as targets for household members' pent-up anger. Commonly participants reported sexual harassment and two participants reported rape. Live-out workers, in particular, discussed sexual harassment from community members during their commute to work. Participants also frequently reported that they were asked to give massages to male members of the household. Studies have repeatedly noted that the risk of sexual abuses are substantial among youth in domestic work because their labour takes place in a private sphere where violations often go unseen and victims have little protection or recourse.

Alfers, L (2011) has identified one case of woman that says *"I was once employed by a certain employer in Iringa Region for about 3 years...I had a serious problem of sexual harassment where the father and son tried to force me to have love affairs with them, but I disagreed! What I did, I decided to tell the neighbour. The neighbour told me that it was better to run away; she assisted me to find a job with her relative. This was very risky to me as I decided to run away without even telling my parents who are living in rural Iringa...I am no longer working with that employer. The bad thing is that my parents still think I am working in Iringa, since I cannot communicate with them."*

Warrington (2001) mention that home is a site where power relations are played out; it often falls short of its idealized construction as a place of safety and support, and instead becomes a place of spatial restriction, abuse and violence.

### **Caste, race and domestic work**

Mkandawire-Valhmu et al., (2009) mentions the employer's power over the domestic worker, due to class and race, creates a situation prevalent for abuse. In addition, many women work in cities or countries far away from home. As a result they often accept living with their employers in spite of the risk of abuse and the lack of

support if abuse happens. The study also found that the lives of domestic workers are characterized by abuse in the workplace.

Cock (1981) ascertains that because of their position on the social hierarchy, most female domestic workers are victims of gender, class and racial oppression. Some studies have found that, in the course of their work, domestic workers sometimes experience violence from their employers. This is because of the power dynamics that exist between the worker and her employer.

### **Vulnerabilities of Women Domestic workers**

Svensson, J. (2018) is concerning about the legal protection of domestic workers. In the study conducted by Svensson, it is mentioned that domestic workers may have legal protection via their inclusion in the 'Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008' and are now recognized as workers and included in the labour law. Domestic workers are covered if they are within the legal working age and 'self-employed,' 'home-based' or working for an hourly payment. They have also been included in the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act (2013). Even prior to the adoption of the ILO's Domestic Workers Convention (C189), India's Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) convened a Task Force on Domestic Workers in 2009, which submitted a draft National Policy that defines the domestic worker, the employer and the clear cut terms of employment. It recommends providing wage and social security protection to domestic workers, starting with the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) national health insurance scheme, under which domestic workers can also be included since 2012.

Saunders (2003) points out that labour market vulnerability includes issues such as lack of appropriate employment legislation, difficulties in accessing labour rights even on legislated work situations, lack of access to non-statutory benefits, lack of pension schemes, very low salaries, and lack of stable employment.

## **Impacts of Covid-19 Pandemic on Domestic Workers**

Majithia et al., (2020) proclaimed that informal workers in Delhi were hit hard by the lockdown restrictions imposed on the nation in March 2020. With no means of earning incomes, many were unable to continue paying rent or obtaining food. Exacerbated by a lack of public transport, this “triggered a humanitarian crisis never witnessed before in modern India, as men, women and children started walking hundreds of miles back to their villages”.

Babu & Bhandari (2020) found out that domestic workers in Delhi were not spared in this disaster. It has been estimated that 80 to 90 per cent of domestic workers in Delhi have lost their jobs.

## **Coping Strategies and Social Support adopted by Women Domestic Workers**

Anyikwa, et al., (2015) proclaimed that when facing different forms of work-related and personal problems and challenges, migrants’ decision to seek help and of the forms of help to seek depend on a number of personal and interpersonal characteristics and traits, including gender, race, economic status, migration status, access to information, and level of social inclusion.

Ullman and Filipas (2001) found that ethnic minority women, including migrant women, were more likely to report negative experiences of seeking help from police and to experience negative social reactions such as racial stereotyping and discrimination and victim blaming.

Tempbongko (2000) points out that many domestic helpers have a sister or a cousin already in domestic service and such family ties are maintained on Sundays. For immigrant foreign domestic workers, friends and support systems usually come from relatives who are part of their family of origin and the greater the contact with relatives the less the likelihood of depression.

## **Social Policy and Social Work Interventions**

Darcy Du Toit (2013) has mentioned that in November 2006, at a conference held in Amsterdam under the banner ‘Respect and Rights: Protection for Domestic/Household Workers!’, a campaign was launched to promote the organization of domestic workers and advance their interests. From the start it attracted widespread support internationally, not only from domestic workers’ organizations but also from trade union federations, non-governmental organizations and researchers, leading to the adoption of Convention 189 Concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in June 2011. On 7 June 2013 South Africa became the eighth country to ratify the Convention, with effect from 20 June 2013.

Neetha & Palriwala (2011) have studied that in 1972 and 1977, two “private member” bills - the 1972 Domestic Workers (Conditions of Service) Bill and the 1977 Domestic Workers (Conditions of Service) Bill were introduced in the Lok Sabha. These bills would have brought domestic workers under the purview of the Industrial Disputes Act, but they too were allowed to lapse. The government ignored the 1974 recommendations of its own Committee on the Status of Women in India on the need to regulate the conditions of domestic workers. The recommendation of the statutory National Commission on Self-Employed Women and Women in the Informal Sector in 1988 to establish a system of registration for domestic workers, a minimum wage, and legislation to regulate conditions of employment, social security and security of employment met with the same treatment. The House Workers (Conditions of Service) Bill, which was formulated in 1989, was not enacted either. This bill envisaged that every employer would have to contribute to a House Workers’ Welfare Fund. Following lobbying by scholars and activists, there has been a growing recognition of the significance of paid domestic work in female employment, and the category “private households with employed persons” was included in the last two rounds on employment and unemployment in the National Sample Survey (1999–2000 and 2004–05).

### **Social Work Intervention**

Social workers are an integral provider in the statutory support offered to women experiencing different issues and challenges.

Department of Health (2010) has mention that the role of the social worker is complex, incorporating providing support to families and safeguarding vulnerable members of society. Social workers should work with women and their families, seeking to provide individualized care dependent upon their needs.

Dominelli, 2002 envisage that enabling women to tell their own stories and describe their experiences is integral to feminist ways of conducting research. It is suggested that NGOs and other organizations can play a vital role through campaigning and active participation by creating awareness amongst these women workers and unionism and cooperatives would yield results as far as struggle for better wages and working conditions are concerned. Social work is at the 'cutting edge' for the provision of support for women experiencing domestic work. A profession with a statutory mandate to support the welfare of women domestic workers, social work can benefit from a critical analysis concerning the treatment provided to victims of domestic work. There are vast research studies on the hazardous working and living conditions of women domestic workers, decent work and minimum wage of domestic workers, concern of domestic workers as workers and their need to be covered under protective legislation. However, studies on the children of domestic workers are limited in Mizoram as they are highly vulnerable to child labour especially in the arena of child in domestic work which is a real indication to existence of modern slavery. The stress generated out of the service of domestic work has to be intervene from a strength based perspective and following the social work value of self-determination, to help the women domestic workers reach the best decision.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter outlines the overall research methodology employed in the study. This chapter is divided into different sections which include the brief profile of the study area, brief information on the living and working conditions of women domestic workers in Aizawl, the methodology, objectives and the limitations of the study.

### **The Setting of the Study Area**

The setting of the study presents a brief discourse about the state of Mizoram and is concern primarily with Aizawl city and Lunglei town.

The research methodology helps in carrying out the study in systematic manner so as to achieve the aims and objectives of the study. Therefore, this section includes the objectives, research design, sampling, tools for data collection, data processing an analysis.

The study is analytical in nature and engages in evaluating both qualitative and quantitative aspects of the respondents. Barring the National Sample Survey Office(NSSO) there is no data collection on Women Domestic Workers either at the centre or at the state level thus creating a natural deficit of comprehensive data. Also since these workers are not officially registered with the government it becomes difficult to trace specific information about their status at work and living conditions at home. Hence, in order to accomplish the desired objective it becomes important to use both the secondary and primary data through mix method approach.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The present study attempts to assess “Living and Working Conditions of Women Domestic Workers in Mizoram” through the following objectives:

1. To understand into the socio-economic background of the women domestic workers in Mizoram.

2. To analysed the factors driving women to domestic work in the context of Mizoram.
3. To assess the working conditions and the living conditions of women domestic workers in Mizoram.
4. To understand the challenges faced by the women domestic workers in Mizoram.
5. To understand the coping strategies adopted by the women domestic workers and to identify the social support available to them.
6. To suggests measures for social policy and social work intervention.

### **Pilot Study**

A pilot study is conducted through qualitative information from the key informants in Aizawl city and Lunglei town to understand the issues and challenges faced by women domestic workers in respect to their working and living conditions as there has been very little data available.

The pilot study revealed the following data has guided the designing of the present study. Secondary data was also collected at this stage in reference to achievement of domestic worker's welfare; women domestic worker's working and living conditions, etc. Details are appended at the end.

### **Design**

The study is cross-sectional in nature and descriptive in design. It employs both qualitative and quantitative methods in a sequential way. It is based on quantitative data through field survey pretested interview schedule with 10 respondents and data was collected among 300 respondents in total. The qualitative data is elicited through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and in-depth case studies were attempted among ten (10) women domestic workers. The KIIs is conducted

with social workers (Women Helpline), Government Officers (Labour and Employment, Government of Mizoram) and Non-Governmental Agency(Ferrando Domestic Workers Agency)and four groups of FGDs were conducted with domestic workers.

### **Sources of Data**

Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources included data that was collected from Key Informant Interviews (with professional social workers, government leaders), Focus Group Discussions with four groups (one each from Aizawl city and Lunglei town) with women domestic workers added to the primary data. A semi- structured interview schedule for the women domestic workers in Aizawl city and Lunglei town was administered for collecting the information on working and living conditions, issues and challenges, coping strategies and social support.

### **Sampling**

Individual woman domestic worker between the age of 18-30 years in Aizawl city and Lunglei town, Mizoram forms the unit of the study. All women domestic workers in core areas of Aizawl and Lunglei constitute the population for the study.

Multi stage sampling was used. In the first stage, Aizawl is chosen using purposive sampling as Aizawl city due to the fact that population concentration is more and most of domestic workers are settled in Aizawl. In the second stage, Lunglei town is selected purposively as the researcher is from Lunglei town and that Lunglei town is the second largest capital of Mizoram. In the third stage, the core area of Aizawl and Lunglei was selected based on objective criteria such as demographic profile, literacy and sex ratio (2011 census, Government of India).

Sampling for key informant interviews with professional social workers, governmental officials and non-governmental officials was done purposively.



Four FGDs (two from Aizawl and two from Lunglei) among the women domestic workers were conducted to assess social support perceived by women domestic workers in relation to working and living conditions. A group is mobilised after explaining the objectives of the study and the purpose of FGDs. The FGDs has obtained prior inform consent and voluntary participation.

### **Tools of Data Collection**

Three tools were used to collect data from different groups of people in order to arrive at an understanding of the topic.

Firstly, the qualitative data is collected through key informant interviews (KIIs) and then the quantitative data are collected through administration of pre-tested and structured interview schedule. Information is collected on level of awareness on the vulnerabilities of domestic workers, push and pull factors of domestic work, working and living conditions of women domestic work, challenges faced and coping strategies and social support received by the women domestic workers.

Secondly, four (4) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) is conducted to document coping strategies and social support available to women domestic workers. The study thus assess parents, employers, church leaders, romantic partner and community support perceived by domestic workers in relation to neglect, physical abuse, social abuse, psychological abuse and sexual abuse. Focus Group Discussions (two in each district with a group of 8-10 members) among the employees of domestic workers was administered.

Thirdly, structured interview schedule is constructed based on the pilot study. It is firstly pretested and it comprises information on the demographic profile of women domestic workers in Mizoram, push and pull factors of domestic work, working and living conditions of women domestic work, challenges faced and coping strategies adopted by the women domestic workers in Mizoram. The study is extended to understand the social support available to them.

## **Data Processing and Analysis**

Data from the structured interview schedule with respondents was processed through Microsoft excel and with the help of computer software SPSS package. Data is presented in simple percentages. The qualitative data collected through FGDs and KIIs is analyzed and presented in narrative and case study forms.

## **Limitations of the Study**

The limitations of the study is that the study is confine only to Aizawl city and Lunglei town (four localities each) and subject to only 300 women domestic workers. The age of the respondents comprises between 18-30 years where the age range of domestic workers can be below 18 years of age and above 30years of age as well. Further, only four FGDs and 10 case studies were conducted. Therefore the study might not reflect the overall situations of working and living conditions of women domestic workers in Mizoram as the study focuses only on the core areas of Aizawl city and Lunglei town and the generality of the findings will be very limited. However, the study is not subjected whether if they are migrants or not. The study does not include on the children of the women domestic workers in which the researches has found there could be many problems relating to child bearing and how the working conditions of women domestic workers can have effects in terms of the overall well-being of the child, health, social status and education of their children. Further, this is assumed to have relationship with the well-being of the mother i.e. women domestic workers. In addition, the study does not discuss in brief about the migrant domestic worker where almost all the respondents are migrant domestic worker.

## **Findings**

The findings of the present study is divided into different sections viz., the composition of women domestic workers, self hygiene of women domestic workers, challenges of women domestic workers, drivers to domestic work, working conditions of women domestic workers, living conditions of women domestic workers, conditions of women

domestic workers- the case studies and focus group discussions, social support and coping strategies.

Domestic workers although unskilled and uneducated succeed in locating their own employment opportunities. It is without any support from the government authorities they are able to fetch employment and earn monthly wages. Hence, it can be said that they constantly build their own market and sell their labour services in return for remuneration. Since these workers are beyond the purview of the government they fail to avail any welfare assistance. In the primary data collection it was found that apart from the insurance guaranteed under the e- Shram majority of the workers were unaware of all other social security schemes like the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana. This also highlights the unawareness due to illiteracy which prevents them from making maximum benefits out of the existing schemes dedicated to them. It therefore calls for a proactive effort on the part of the government to ensure maximum outreach of the policies formulated to the grassroots level. The women domestic workers as the study reveals are able to maintain minimum basic standards of living. 11% of the workers under study live in their own houses, have water sealed toilet facility, use cooking gas, and 100% electricity connection being the most encouraging outcome of the study. Even on living below the minimum wage standards of the unorganized sector workers, the domestic workers have shown capabilities to make the best out of the limited source of income and eke out a living well balanced with all the basic necessities of sustenance. This brings to light that the domestic workers who are neglected in context of labour laws and social security have the potential to raise their standards of living once supported by the government. If uplifted and brought at par with other unorganized sector workers in terms of wages it is possible to see they grow at a faster pace than without any legal support.

Presently, the women domestic workers work at the mercy of their employer under hire and fire conditions without any mechanism in place for grievance redressal. Throughout the day these women run from house to house completing the daily chores

of various households and attend their own homes in the end. Sometimes they walk large distances every day lured by higher wages in far off localities in turn taking a toll on their own health. With no minimum fixed wages and no legal support they naturally lose on their bargaining power and also there is a constant sense of insecurity about the future of their job. The need of the hour is to attempt formalization of the sector. To this end the first step has to be recognition of domestic workers as 'workers' endowed with rights. The government must also take note of the fact that domestic workers work under multiple employers and may work part-time or full time. Hence there is no single unique employer-employee relationship, instead there is one employee working for a variety of employers.

From the study, it is found out that most (64.33%) of the total respondents fall under the age group of 18-22 years and the mean age of the respondents is 21.8 years old. The vast majority (96%) are literate and receives education fair enough where 4% of the respondents are illiterate. Though most of the respondents are unmarried, 26% have been married with 12.9% a divorcee which makes them even harder to work since they have to take care of their family at home the same time they are looking doing their job.

The study reveals that most (43.3%) of the respondents are taking bath regularly. This shows that there is proper water supply in the study area and the respondents are taught enough of proper hygiene from different angles. However, there is a situation also that shows that some of the respondents were not able to take bath on regular basis due to scarcity of water in the study area. 61.6% can have regular self clean up and this shows that respondents can have free time and space on their own. In addition, 15% of the respondents does not use sanitary napkins regularly and uses cloth instead. This is due to the fact that they refuse to buy sanitary napkins since they are in shortage of money.

Fortunately, majority (90%) of the respondents does not receive any harassment as compared to the other parts of the world where almost all the women domestic workers are facing tremendous working challenges and issues that hinder the growth of the

working conditions. However, slapping, kicking and hitting is the most common form of physical harassment that exist in Mizoram. From the study, there is a wide and persistent gap between domestic workers and the employer regarding bargaining power on different issues like health and safety (47%), equal treatment (44%), work and life balance (32.3%), holidays (26%), wages (21%), hours of work (20.6%) and vocational training (18.6%). The wage gap for domestic workers is not only large, but it is also persistent. Like other typical workers, domestic workers have seen stagnant wages for decades. Domestic workers are much more likely than other workers to be living in poverty, regardless of occupation. They are also much more likely to have incomes that fall below the twice-poverty threshold, which is considered by many researchers a better cutoff for whether a family has enough income to make ends meet. However, domestic workers face a lot of challenges whenever they encountered withheld wages (2.3%) and they are struggling when they feel isolated and are given poor privacy (3.6%). Most (82.6%) of the respondents does not receive any kind of verbal harassment which shows that the employers in Mizoram are considerate enough to make the respondents meets their ends; intimidation and lustful staring at body parts however still persist that hinders their work environment. A total of 4.3% receives sexual harassment in their workplace which shows that they are vulnerable and are needed to be protecting under the laws and legislations. However, psychological harassment which have prevails around the respondents are many such as jokes of sexual nature, verbal threats, physical contact, unusual comments on dress and appearance, invasion of personal space and display of sexually offensive material. Verbal threats are the most common (10%) form of psychological harassment that have encountered during the study. This has shown the hazardous working conditions and the vulnerability of the workers.

Domestic workers are largely driven by their low socio-economic conditions as stated earlier and employment in domestic worker occupations is projected to grow more compared with other occupations over a decade. This could be because of the easier accessibility of jobs that it does not require much skills and education. This trend is also

driven by skill development, peer pressure, fancy lifestyle, exposure, etc where the most driven outcome is due to economic opportunity (95.5%).

. It is also seen that 32.3% of the respondents worked for 13 hours and more in a day which can be very tiresome. However, 3.6% can take rest for only one hour in a day. They usually sit and play with their phones during their recess period and the rest of the time they were followed by their employer and they were hardly given a space. 20.3% of the respondents were not given day off or rest in a month whereas 13.6% were given two day of rest in a week. Among the respondents, the workers who works for 1-2 years does not complain much of their day off in which they took it as it is, while workers who have work for more than 2 years usually complain about their resting time and day off that it is too less and such. This shows that the more experience in the field of domestic work the more confidence they are in bargaining day off as well. In addition, 14% can avail for sick leave. The main tasks of domestic workers through the study are mainly cleaning, cooking, care giving, shopping, hospitality at home, gardening, animal care, driving and care giving. Majority (94%) of the tasks in cleaning. The study shows that there is no specific time allocation pattern and no particular tasks which is assigned to them. The workers are usually assigned and expected to do the task according to the needs of the employer and their family. In addition, wages are not set based on their work performance or the particular task they performed but solely on the mercy of the employer and the contract deal between the worker and the employer. Work wear is usually not provided (62.3%) among the respondents. However, there are some (24.2%) that provided work wear in the work space and they were provided with gloves, masks and clothes especially during the pandemic. From the study, the unfair works comprises of washing undergarments of their employers and their family, handling sick people without protective gear, deny of rest and food, placement without consent, over work, forced to work when sick or unwell and force to wake up in the middle of the night to clean up their mess. 3.3% have reported that they were placed in another home from their employer's home without their consent and that is very ridiculous in times. 6% have also reported that they were forced to do the works when they are sick or unwell

and especially during their menstruation period which compel the respondents to change their mind and work in another place. From the study, it can be seen that the remittances provided were festival bonus, salary payment, pecuniary benefits such as enough food, old/new phones, old/ new clothes, clothing and personal care, bonus money, bank account, festival advance, condense education, yearly increment and vocational training. Majority (90.6%) was provided with enough food and that they are privilege enough to their employers. The most common form of remittances is exchange of old or new phone (70%), since most of the respondents does not have phone on their own. The satisfaction level of the respondents is work out with working hours, nature of work, salary and additional works on holidays. 49.6% sometimes worried about their work. They exclaimed that they did not like to work as a domestic worker their whole life and those they would like to undergo different trainings like sewing, beauty culture, etc. However, 9.3% never did worry about their work and they are satisfied working with their employers. The study also reveals that 89% can avail for sick leave when they are not feeling well.

From the study, most (76%) of the respondents are Live-in domestic workers where 11.3% are part-time workers. This shows the dominant factor of live –in domestic workers rather than part time workers and that there are more of a migrant worker from inter-state area where the workers are needed to stay in the house of their employer. More than half (64.6%) of the respondents lives in the same floor with their employers where 63.6% have their own separate room. This has shown that some (37.4%) does not have a separate room and they slept on the living room, where some reported they slept on the floor. This is mainly due to the limited space of the house. 27.3% washes their clothes separately and some are not allowed to wash their clothes in Washing Machine and that they have to wash their belongings separately with their hands. From the study, it can be seen that only half (53%) of the respondents eat food along with their employer. A report from one respondent is that “I usually feed the children first and ate food after all the family members have finished”. To my surprise, there are 5.3% who have separate utensils and they usually feels discriminated. 16.3% of the respondents

were yelled often if they prepare undercooked food. This shows that the works also required skills in cooking and preparation for lunch as well. 7.6% were barely given medical care when they are sick or unwell, so they exclaimed that they used to buy pain killer 'Paracetamol' from their pocket when in pain. 3.6% were restricting to food consumption and they were given food according to the employer's willingness. One respondent utter that " I was given just the exact amount of rice and vegetables every day since the employer exclaimed that she would become fat if she consume lots of food everyday". The respondents, however, came across different kind of sexual harassment in their workplace such as eve –teasing, exposed to pornography, unwanted physical contact, leering or telling dirty jokes, making sexual remarks about a person's body, sexually remarks for sexual favour, rape and molestation. Exposed to pornography seems to be the most common form of harassment (7%). The study shows that respondents are vulnerable to different kinds of abuses though there may be hidden cases which they did not want to reveal. Most interestingly, there is also an incident of rape cases which they did not allow to reveal their ordeal. Half of the respondents (50%) were usually excused when they make mistakes and they were given another chance. There is also a case when the respondents are forgiven in their mistakes in a manner that their monthly salary is reduced with the replacement of the actual amount they have broken. One respondent report that "my salary is reduced when I broke a tea cup and a plastic bucket". 1.6% was punished when they did not take care of the children properly. From the study, 34.4% hardly have privacy while working since most of the time the employers do a check list on their works.

Five case –studies were conducted among the women domestic workers such as cases on – molestation, withheld stay by employer, verbal and physical abuse, money quarrel, immodest behavior from employer, torture from employer, challenges due to pandemic, racial discrimination and withheld wages, mental health issues and intimidation and threatening. From the case studies, it is found out that there are no serious cases in Mizoram where there is harassment and issues that hamper the domestic workers. Moreover, there is an organization named "Ferrando Domestic Workers



Alliance” that contributes to the improvement of domestic workers in the State where domestic workers can reach out easily when they faced problems.

### **Further Research**

The present study suggests the following areas for further research:

- 1) Research on the children of domestic workers since they are prone to child labour or child domestic work.
- 2) To study on child domestic work
- 3) To conduct a comparative study between child domestic worker and old aged domestic worker.
- 4) A comparative study between the employer and the employee.
- 5) Comparative research on migrant domestic worker and native domestic worker
- 6) Impact of domestic work in socio-economic conditions of their families
- 7) Impact of Covid -19 among domestic workers.

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