

SWABHIMAAN KENDRA: COMMUNITY SUPPORT CENTRE

Needs Assessment Report

Panipat

2021



Prepared under the project “Community support centres for and by Women Domestic Workers: Build resilience and hope beyond the pandemic” supported by The Embassy of the Netherlands in India.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

As the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic hit India and several States went under lockdown again, women in informal sector including domestic workers were at the receiving end of the collapse of the public health infrastructure around the country. They faced shortages of oxygen beds, ICU equipment, plasma, combined with a loss of livelihood, leaving them even more vulnerable than before. In the absence of social security measures and legal protection, women domestic workers do not have access to their basic rights and entitlements, which are even more critical for their survival at this juncture during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The project supports the setting up of and running two Community Support Centres for women domestic workers in Gurgaon and Panipat, Haryana. It is being implemented in collaboration with Martha Farrell Foundation, an organisation working on the issue of gender justice and rights of women, in particular informal women workers and domestic workers. This Needs Assessment Report is based on the Needs Assessment conducted in Panipat with women workers, to assess their needs and challenges, in order to use the community support centre as a means of addressing some of these challenges.

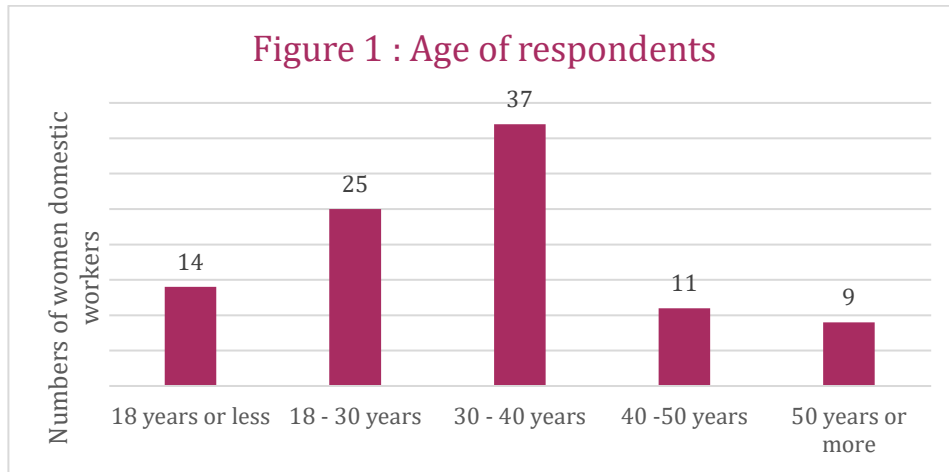
2.0 METHODOLOGY

The Needs Assessment used two participatory methods to collect data –informal discussions and a questionnaire in the form of a google form. Data was collected through women community animators, some of whom are also residents of the community.

Before the survey was conducted, the community animators were trained about the goals and objectives of the project, and about the purpose behind conducting the survey. The animators learnt how to ask key questions, how to personally interact with the respondents, and how to ask and interpret sensitive questions in the questionnaire.

3.0 PROFILE OF WOMEN WORKERS LIVING IN PANIPAT

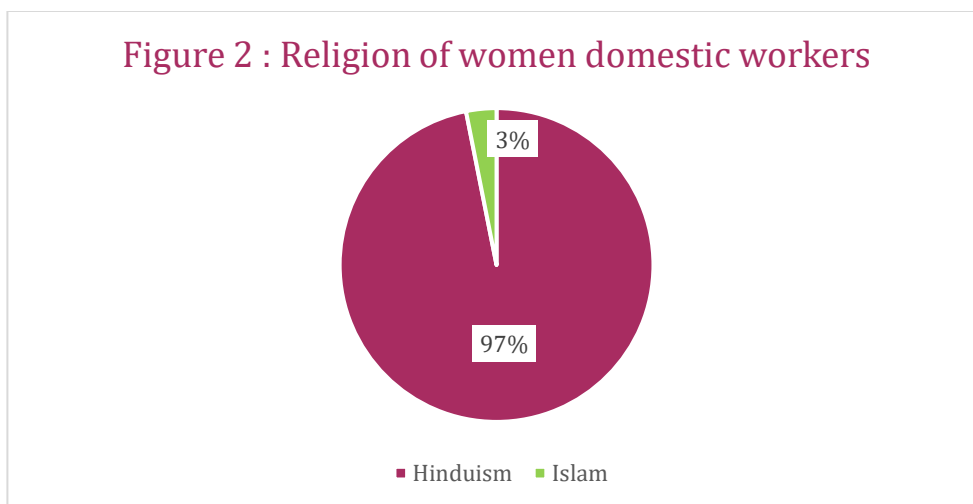
3.1 Age of Women Workers

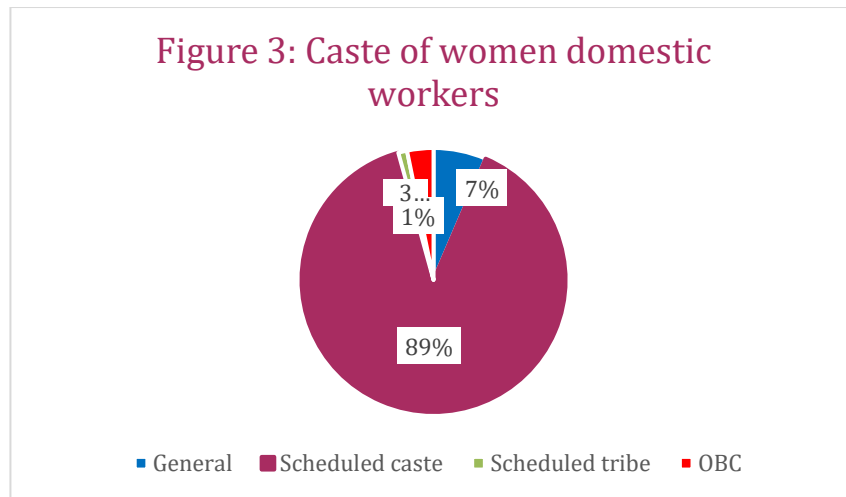


Majority of women workers surveyed (63.5%) belonged to the age group of 18-40 years. About 15% of these women were below 18 years of age.

It has also been found through informal discussions that many young daughters are opting for domestic work as due to pandemic they are not able to continue their education. It has been also found that the many newly married women (daughters-in-law of the village) are working as domestic workers.

3.2 Religion, Caste and Marriage

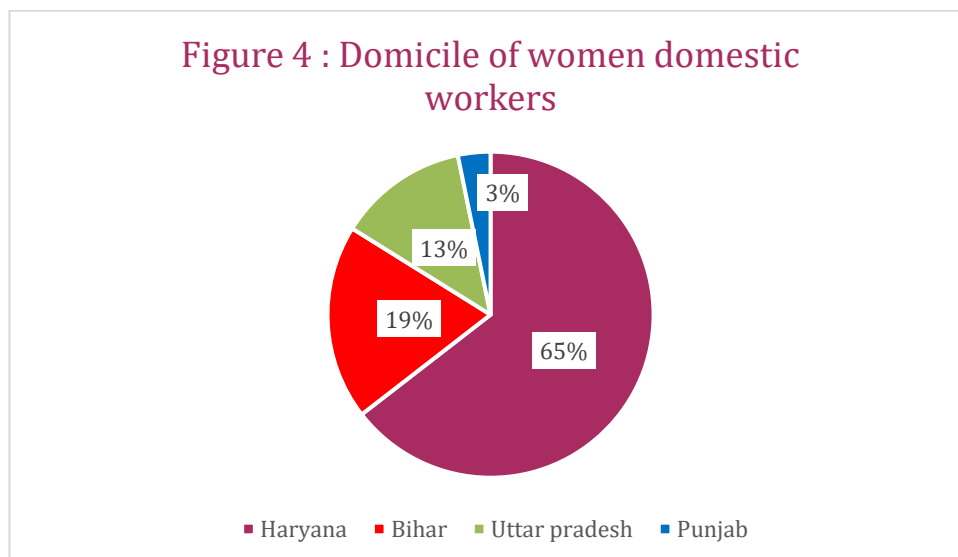




Regarding religious profile, approximately 97% of women workers surveyed in Panipat were Hindus, the rest being Muslim. In terms of Caste status, 89.2% of women workers surveyed belonged to Schedule Caste category, 1.1% belonged to Schedule Tribe, while 3.2% belong to OBC category.

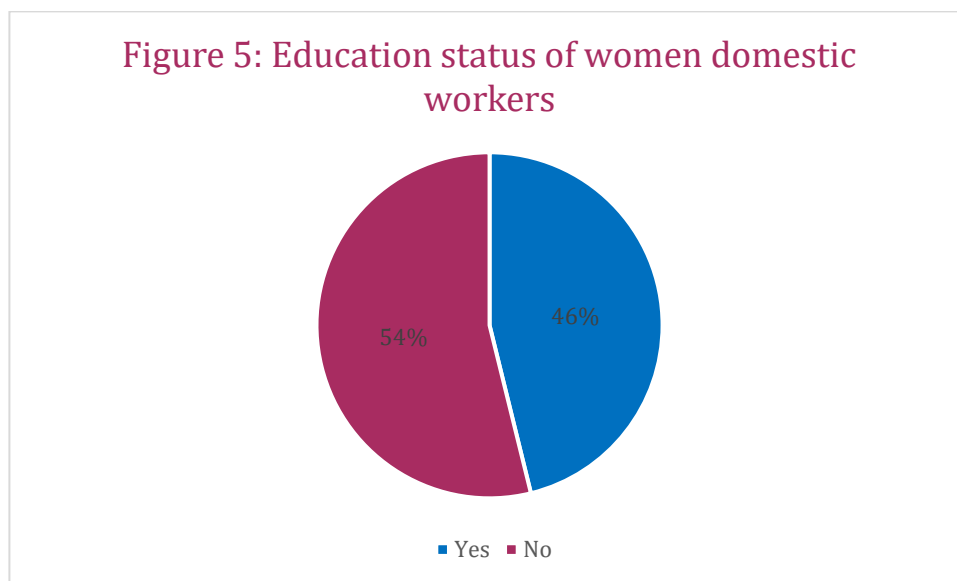
Women domestic workers who participated in the survey, 64.6% of them were married, while 14.6% of them were widows and 14.6% of them were single.

3.3 Domicile



66.7% of women workers surveyed were from Haryana, while 33.3% were migrants. The migrant population is from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Punjab. During the informal discussions and meetings, it has been found that the women who have migrated are here because of better job opportunities or their husband works in the factories as labourers.

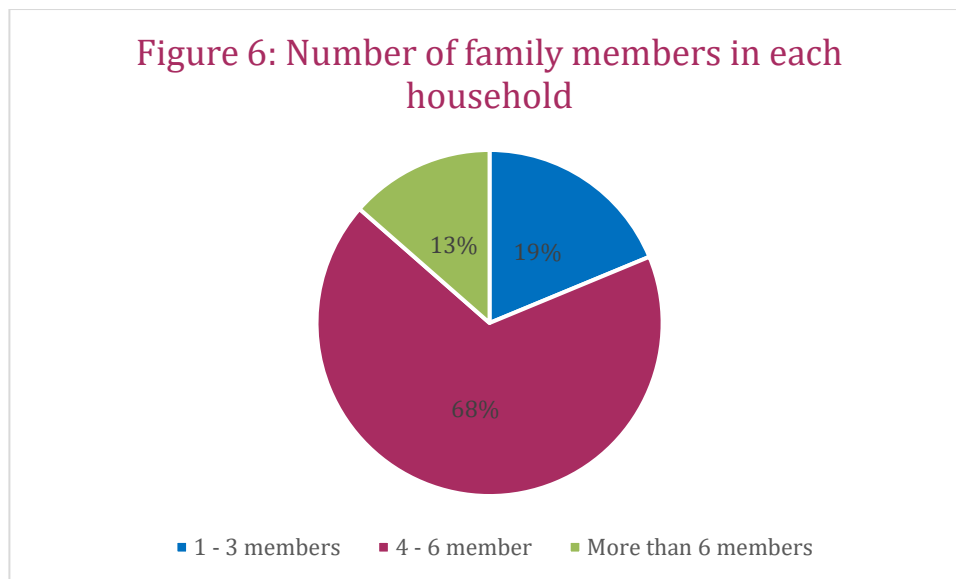
3.4 Education status of the women domestic workers



54% of the women workers surveyed responded that they had not enrolled in a school. The reasons for not enrolling were low income of the family, Less priority on girl's education and early marriage. Many women who have participated in the survey are the victim of early marriages. Many women also shared about their lack of awareness about the married life and hence they have faced many health complications when they were child.

Out of the ones who said they had been to school (approx. 42%), 47.4% studied till class 5, while 5.3% studied till class 12. None of them had completed a graduate degree.

3.5 Number of individuals in each household



The women domestic workers who have been surveyed, 68% of women workers had 4-6 individuals living in the same household as them. There were 6 households where more than 6 family members live.

3.6 Employment Status

All the women who participated in the survey are employed. Among these, 89% of women worked in people's houses as domestic workers. Among the domestic workers, approximately 27% stated they work in 2 houses while 25% of them stated to work in 3 houses. 11.5% of them stated they work for 12 hours in their employers' houses.

In terms of hours of work, approximately 26% of these women stated they work for 6 hours in other's houses, while over 20% of them work for over 8 hours. About 10% of them work for less than 4 hours in their employers' houses.

In terms of income of the women workers, almost 30% of them stated to get between Rs. 3000-4000, while 15% of them get between Rs. 1000-2000 for their work.

Majority of them works in the nearby residential colony but there were a few who work as a cleaner in the hospital and school.

The women who work in the Kothis (Bungalow) are paid very less amount of salary. Reena, a domestic worker shared that her employer pays her only Rs. 1200/- for cleaning and

cooking. She cleans 3 rooms and 1 balcony and cooks one time meal for 4 family members. Women domestic workers shared that the employers started paying lesser after the pandemic.

The women who work as cleaner in hospital shared that their employers call them at very odd hours. Sometimes they call after 9 PM at night and refusing to come can result in losing the job.

4.0 IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON WOMEN WORKERS

4.1 All the women domestic workers who participated in the survey said they have faced challenges in one form or another during the Pandemic.

- 100% of the women domestic workers lost their jobs during the lockdowns.
- In addition, 88.5% of women workers did not receive any information or benefits from welfare schemes related to Covid-19 during the lockdowns.
- Regarding the ration card, 60.4% stated that they could not use their ration cards to get access to food during the lockdowns.
- 71.9% of women workers stated that in terms of access to government services such as timely health camps, information related to sexual and reproductive health, and maternal health, they did not have access to any of these.

4.2 In terms of safety, 78.1% of women workers felt safe at home, while 21.9% did not feel safe in their homes.



At their workplace, the divide is much narrower. 52% of women workers felt safe at their workplace, while 47.9% did not feel safe. Most of them (91.7%) did not know of any women's safety helplines. 99% of women workers did not know where to complain if they faced domestic violence, while none of them knew where to complain if they faced violence at their workplace. 99% of women did not know the process of filing a complaint for any violence committed against them, with an overwhelming 97.9% stating that they felt hesitant to go to the police to lodge any complaint.

5.0 NEEDS OF THE WOMEN WORKERS

5.1 The women workers voiced their concerns around several areas ranging from unemployment, especially of younger girls who had completed school, but did not have any link to employment opportunities or vocational training. They also desired Ayushman Bharat cards, for accessing cashless health care. In terms of their own workspaces, they faced several challenges in terms of lack of dignity attached to their work, gender-based discrimination, less pay for more hours of work, lack of facilities such as clean toilets for them to use at their employers' houses amongst others.

6.0 POTENTIAL OF THE COMMUNITY SUPPORT CENTRE AS A SOURCE OF EMPOWERMENT FOR THE WOMEN WORKERS

6.1 The women workers see this community support centre as a source of restoring their dignity to their present work, a means to link them to information, awareness about government schemes and bridge their access to supply of government services. They envision this centre to build their awareness about government health schemes, as well as schemes for vocational training and skilling.

They are keen to use micro-financing models such as SHGs to slowly invest their money in alternative sources of income, but are yet to concretise this model in their local contexts. Many of the women workers have been previously part of SHGs, and are actively promoting such models amongst other women in their community. Finally, these women workers find this community support centre as a means for upskilling and learning the art of tailoring.

They feel the demand for tailoring in their region is definitely there, and many of them

are slowly coming together to deliberate on using this centre for beginning their entrepreneurial journey for the same. This centre therefore has potential to play a critical role in the lives of these women, and transform their means of livelihood, and their access to information and services in a radical way.