CHAPTER –VIII

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

8.1 General

The study on the domestic workers in Thoothukudi district has yielded the following major findings:

A number of studies have been carried out on the socio economic status of domestic workers in India and across the world. What are inferred from these studies are their typical conditions as informal labour. It is understood that the initiatives being taken by the Government across developing countries for the welfare of domestic workers is still very low. In the analysis the following are the major findings on the socio economic status of domestic workers in Thoothukudi district.

8.2 Findings of the Research Study
On Social Factors

- It is found in the sample area that all the domestic workers are from women strata only. Even in the observation of researcher in non sample areas, no men domestic workers are found.

- Regarding the age wise distributions of the women domestic workers the majority come within the range of 30-50 age groups. Age group within less than the age of twenty five is negligible.

- There are no teen age women workers found in the sample area. There are widows, separated and destitute women found as domestic workers. But unmarried women are not found as domestic workers. The reason would be the fear of insecurity for unmarried and teenage women.

- In the analysis it is found that most of the domestic workers belong to scheduled caste that is around 56 percent. Around 38 percent of domestic workers belong to
BC and MBC. The pressure on the SC women to seek job to support the family would be the reason for such findings.

- Regarding the nature of literacy level of domestic workers, 42 percent of them are illiterates i.e. they cannot read and write. Most of the literates of domestic workers have completed schooling up to middle level and about 13 percent of them have gone up to high and higher level of schooling. What is understood from the above data on education is women who have completed even high and higher secondary school do not get formal employment either from the private or from the Government and hence they are to move to such profession.

- India as a semi feudalistic country loses its grip on the traditional structure of family system. A capitalistic mode of production unavoidably needs nuclear family system. Of course India is not fully transformed into capitalistic system. But the family system is very much transformed into nuclear family system. The findings reveal that about 84 percent domestic workers live as nuclear families. Declining agricultural growth rate and enlarging informal sector could be the reason for such expanding nuclear family system.

- Another important finding of the researcher on the social conditions of domestic workers is the larger family size. About 80 percent sample households have family members between three to six. Around 30 percent of households have 5-6 as their family members .As is known, increasing family members is positively related to poverty and their poor economic and social background. Minimizing poverty will automatically lead to reduction of family size.

- Regarding the ownership of house, 60 percent people have own houses, 29 percent people are living in rented houses and the remaining 11 percent people live in Government subsidized houses. The main reason for more domestic workers having own houses is their settlement in their villages.

- Regarding the nature of houses, 60 percent domestic workers live still in tiled houses. About 15 percent domestic workers live in asbestos sheet roofed houses.
which is highly unhealthy for them. 7 percent of domestic workers still live in thatched houses. The data on housing nature reveals their poor social background.

- From the data on drinking water it is inferred that still majority of them have no drinking water connection in their houses. Considerable sizes of domestic workers are in pathetic conditions in purchasing water to quench their thirst and for cooking.

- The overall understanding of the source of cooking fuel to the domestic workers is that the gradual move of them from traditional cooking fuel to LPG as main cooking fuel due to its user friendliness and demonstration effect.

- Regarding sanitation, it is found that the access to drainage and toilet facility is very poor for the domestic workers. Most of the domestic workers have no drainage system in their living areas and they have to cope up mainly with open toilet system till the day.

- The number of earning members in a family is another crucial factor which reveals the social conditions of domestic workers. In the sample area the percentage of two earning members in a family is three fourth. In these families both the husband and wife have been working for the survival of family. These two have to support the remaining 2-4 number of family members for all their socio economic living.

From the above findings on the social conditions it is understood that social living conditions of women domestic workers is below the average living conditions of Indians. The annual economic growth rate of India is not seen reflecting on the social conditions of domestic workers.

- Regarding the nature of employment prior to domestic work it is found that 65 percent of them were doing either private work or agricultural labour or coolie and only 24 percent of domestic workers have been doing the same job. What is understood from the table is that about 76 percent of labourers are relocated from other informal sector to domestic work.
On Economic Factors:

- The nature of economic status is another prominent area which decides the life style of domestic workers. Nature of earning and other economic benefits received by the domestic workers is very informal and irregular for them. If there is work, there is income on a day i.e. no work no pay. If anything affects the Society the work will also be affected and there cannot be any legal or social claim being done by the unorganized labour including domestic workers. They are at the mercy of house owners and there is no legal claim from the domestic workers. The following are the major findings on the economic status of domestic workers.

- This study has found out that the average monthly income of domestic workers is below Rs.4165 and 67 percent of both registered and unregistered domestic workers are earning below Rs.3228 per month. Only 33 percent of domestic workers are able to earn Rs. 5103 per month. From the data it is found that the average earning of domestic worker is relatively increased. The data on income reveals the fact that most of the domestic workers earn monthly income which helps them to live above the poverty line.

- The average monthly income of the spouses of domestic workers is around Rs 3500. Clubbing the average income of respondents and their spouses together shows the per capita of income of household which has an average of 4-6 members per family. The computation of the income of individuals in a family of domestic workers shows the level of living standards. Income from domestic work helps the households to reasonably come out of poverty.

- In this analysis it reveals the positive correlation between the annual household income and the income of domestic workers. The annual income of the household is highly decided by the income of the domestic workers. That is spouse’s earnings are not sufficient enough to support their households. The value of correlation viz. 0.688 gives us a fact that annual income of household is highly decided by the income of the domestic workers. Understanding otherwise, the role
of the income of domestic workers is significant on deciding the income of household. That is their earnings are supportive to the overall income nature of their households.

- Regarding the previous occupational income of the respondents, about 72 percent of domestic workers are earning less than Rs.15,000 per annum. Only the remaining 28 percent of domestic workers are earning an annual income between Rs.15,000 to 45,000. The data reveals the fact that the earning capacity of domestic workers is increased after they get into domestic work. In this regard, one more finding to be added is the nature of income inequalities before and after joining domestic work. The income inequality has come down compared to inequality before joining domestic work.

- Regarding the household expenditure of domestic workers, the overall mean expenditure before joining domestic work is Rs.30,125 per annum and after joining domestic work this has gone to 37.452. But in the case of expenditure below Rs.15,000, the percentage of respondents has come down from 24.16 percent to 10.29 percent. The domestic work has supported the high income group to increase their expenditure after joining domestic work. In general taking into account the inflationary changes, the increasing mean expenditure does not represent much the positive change in the living standard of domestic workers. If household debt is taken into the consideration, then the expenditure pattern still shows the gloomy nature of the status, reflecting people’s life style.

- Regarding savings, it is found that about 32 percent of respondents have no savings at all. Change in the per capita savings, after joining domestic work is relatively very low. Despite that there is a pressure on the members of the Self Help Group (SHG) to save; they save to the minimum level just sufficient to borrow from SHG.

- From the data on the household’s debt and per capita debt of both registered and unregistered domestic workers, it is found that the percentage of debt after joining domestic work is increased. Also it is found that the percentage of people who
have not had any debt, before joining domestic work has come down. That means whatever be the earning, the spreading ‘consumer culture’ has been making them to spend more with credit and hence the size of “no debt” people has been coming down even after they start earning from their domestic work. Another finding is that the quantum of debt in the SHG is steadily increasing for the domestic workers’ households.

❖ On Occupational Conditions of Domestic Workers

In general the occupational nature of domestic work is highly unprotected and it is a non-state supported industry not only in India but in other developing economies also. Even in a number of developed economies domestic work is given less importance by the state. The following are the major findings on the occupational nature of domestic workers.

➢ The reasons behind the choice of domestic work as their main profession are poverty, meeting marriage expenses, being self-dependent, children’s education, supplementing family income, lack of family support and unsatisfactory working conditions etc. It is found that supplementing family income was the main factor of choosing domestic work followed by poverty and unsatisfactory working conditions in their previous job. These reasons indicate that lack of regular job and poor sources of income compel them to get into domestic work.

➢ Regarding the persons or source through which they enter into domestic work, most of the respondents get domestic job through their friends only. As can be understood, the house owner will employ any worker for his house only through a reliable source. Most of the domestic workers are introduced to the house owners only by known people who are also known to the employers.

➢ About the full time nature of domestic work, the majority i.e. 72 percent of the domestic workers have been doing their work as part-time job and the remaining are full-time workers. The main reason for such larger part-time percentage is the poor wage paid by the house owners in Thoothukudi district, unable to employ full time domestic workers, and their preoccupation with family commitments.
Most of the houses in the urban areas are middle and low income based. Payment of full-time wage is not possible for them. Hence it is found that majority the domestic workers are employed on part-time basis.

- Regarding the live – in and live – out domestic workers it is understood that only the full-time workers can be live-in workers. From the analysis it is found that 35 percent of full-time workers live – in their owner’s houses and the remaining respondents are live-out or full-time workers.

- What is inferred from this data analysis is only the separated or widows or destitute or the deserted or unmarried will be live in workers. The size of these live-in full-time workers is considerably high. Their social conditions compel them to be live in workers. From the data collected from the respondents it is found that the majority of domestic workers have joined on full-time basis mainly due to lack of jobs available outside domestic work. Around 50 percent full- time domestic workers say that long distance from their residence is their main reason for being full time workers. Widows and no family member cases are the reason for 20 percent of respondents to be full time workers.

- Regarding the number of working houses per domestic workers, it is found that on an average 52 percent of workers are working in two houses. 20 percent workers have been working in up to 3 houses in a day. From this data it is found that both part-time and full-time workers excluding ‘live in’ workers have to work in more than one house a day. Practically this makes them tiresome and morally and psychologically discouraged.

- About the number of working hours of part-time workers per day, on an average 52 percent of part-time workers has to work two hours a day, followed by 22 percent workers working 2 to 3 hours per day. After that they have to carry out their regular housemaid work in their home, including paid in – house work like beedi rolling and match box making. The main reason for such part-time work is to earn additional income to supplement their other regular income of house hold.
The date on the commuting nature of domestic workers shows that the majority of the domestic workers are a commuter that is travelling everyday from their residence to work place. Just 25 percent domestic workers are non-commuter. One of the main reasons for being commuters is their socio-economic background and most of them who are from rural area are marginalized. Staying adjacent to workplace is practically unaffordable to them.

Regarding the travelling distance of the domestic workers from their residing place to their work place, the majority are travelling a distance of up to 10 kilometers everyday to do their work. 11 percent of domestic workers are travelling above 15 kilometers per day. Their socio-economic background is the main reason for such a long travel to their work place.

The majority of the domestic workers are in the domestic work industry for more than 5 to 10 years. About 18 percent of domestic workers have more than 15 years of service in the industry, despite the fact that one of the most socially insecure industries is domestic work industry. The lack of job in the other sectors and their socio-economic backwardness has been force them to remain in the domestic work industry. Also a poor social security support for this industry is another issue but still they have to survive in this industry due to their family commitments.

The type of works they have to undertake in their work place are cooking, utensils cleaning, cloth washing, and floor cleaning and mopping, market assistance etc. The majority of them are doing utensil cleaning, cloth washing and floor cleaning and mopping. These works relatively demand more labour and hard work. They consume a lot energy and time also.

Regarding the frequency of payment, most of them are paid on monthly basis. Only negligible sizes of domestic workers are paid on weekly and daily basis.

Regarding the mode of payment, the majority of the respondents are paid cash in hand. Only a small proportion of respondents are paid through banks and post
offices. What is inferred from them is payment through banks and post offices is safer than cash in hand.

- Regarding the benefit of leave facilities, in general it is found that most of the domestic workers are unable to get any such benefit from the house owners. The availability of leave facilities largely depends on the mercy of house owners. In fact the majority of the domestic workers can avail any leave only with an arrangement of substitutes. The availability of leave during festival is in general accessible to the workers. The role of state or trade unions on regularizing the sanctions of leave to the domestic workers is almost nil. In fact the benefit of leave is determined by the nature of relationship of domestic workers with house owners.

- Regarding the additional benefit from the employers it is found that there are some fringe benefits sanctioned by the employer for the cause of children education, dress during festivals and interest free loan. But the overall quantum of such additional benefits given by the employer is very minimum.

- The social security benefits given by the state and its agencies to the domestic workers are almost nil. A very few respondents said with weak voice that they get some benefits of social security like health insurance and group insurance. But in reality the researcher has found nothing concrete in terms of social security benefits to the domestic work.

- The class characteristics of employers in general keep them away of cordial relationship with the domestic workers. Of course the social nature of employer permits or rejects the lenient attitude of the employers towards the domestic workers. What is found of the attitude of employers towards employees in terms of being loving, friendly, helpful, and understandable etc is not much positive.

- From the observations and views of domestic workers it is found that most of the domestic workers are not paid wages according to their work. The existing unemployment nature of domestic workers is abused by the employers by paying low wages.
➢ It is found that, in general most of the domestic workers are not permitted to have rest during the working hours. This is very much found for the full time live in workers. Regarding the fulltime non-living workers, they have no time to have rest during the working hours, mainly due to the fact that, they have to run to different houses in the same or different locality for doing their work. Any delay between one house to another house will affect the relationship with the employer first and later their job in the house.

➢ It is found that most of the live-in domestic workers are not permitted to go out to do purchasing. Owners do not entertain such activity of their house servants for fear that it will affect their house work.

➢ In general domestic workers are very much restricted to enter or use all the rooms of the house owners.

➢ Another finding which is against the basic human rights is compelling the domestic workers to use separate plates and glass for their use. This practice is something related to the existence of caste system.

➢ In general it is found that there is discrimination and human rights violation against domestic workers in most of the cases. Since domestic workers are not organized under any umbrella and institutional support not given by the government, this violation against domestic workers continues.

➢ From the analysis of collected data it is found that more than 50 percent of the domestic workers are satisfied with this profession. The part-time nature of domestic work helps them to earn additional income for their households. Such support makes them feel satisfied of this profession. Also it is found that the degree of dissatisfaction among the unregistered workers is higher than registered workers.

❖ On Associational Awareness of Domestic Workers

➢ In general most of the domestic workers are not aware of the activities of association for their welfare. As is found, the size of membership of sample
respondents in the Tamilnadu domestic workers welfare board is just 26 percent. Most of the people are not interested or not given any information about this board. About 82 percent of the respondents are not aware of the benefits they would enjoy from the welfare board.

- Highly scattered nature and part-time nature of domestic work makes them unaware and disinterested of such union activities. From the observation and reference of literature of the researcher it is found that there was no such attempt on the part of domestic workers to undertake any unionizing attempts to claim the benefits of social security availed by the state.

- From the responses collected from the samples it is found that a few domestic workers are availing certain benefits from the domestic workers union like medical benefits, insurance benefits, and financial support for the education of their children, pension benefits and legal advice. It is observed that these benefits are enjoyed by only a few respondents.

- Regarding other additional benefits enjoyed by the domestic workers, it is found that 40 percent of the respondents get food in their working place and about 36 percent of domestic workers get additional pay for the extra work other than usual work. It is also found that the majority of the employers are suspicious of their domestic workers when is anything missing in their work place. Such attitude of employer affects the continuity of work in the same place.

- The other findings on the suggestions given by the domestic workers are fixing minimum wage, drug counseling center for their addicted spouses, and separate welfare board for domestic workers and making the functioning of domestic workers union more active. 70 percent of the respondents suggest that minimum wage should be fixed for domestic workers. As their household male heads have been affected with alcoholism, 70 percent of the domestic workers suggest having drug counseling centers. 54 percent of the domestic workers suggested having a separate welfare board for the domestic workers. From the suggestions of the respondents it is found that the present union for them is not active. So
they suggested making functioning of union more active and vibrant in order to get the benefits available for them.

- **On Problems Encountered by the Domestic Workers**
  - Regarding the protection of self dignity of the domestic workers it is found that the verbal abuse against the full-time live-in domestic workers is more than the non live-in full-time and part-time workers. The majority of the domestic workers conform that sometimes there is verbal abuse by the house owners.
  
  - In general it is found that part-time domestic workers especially the registered categories are able to protest against the verbal abuse of the owners.
  
  - Regarding the physical abuse by the owners it is found that it does not take place against the domestic workers with a very few exceptional cases. On the nature of sexual abuse in countries like India where the patriarchal value system is still very much prevalent, the sexual abuse of women domestic workers cannot be underestimated. This sexual abuse is very much found among the full time live-in workers. Sexual abuse consists of touching the separate part, kissing, talking with sexual advance and directly or indirectly forced intercourse. From the analysis of data it is found that around 50 percent of the domestic workers face such sexual abuses except forced inter course due to the poor socio economic background of the domestic workers.
  
  - Regarding it is understood that, out of the 447 respondents, 103 i.e. 23.04 percent of respondents opined that they are exploited by low salary, of which, 27 respondents are from registered domestic workers and 76 respondents are from un-registered workers. Out of the total, 85 respondents feel that have to undergo long working hours than what they have to do is the next important exploitation and 76 respondents view that the agency brokerage is another important type of exploitation. Only 56 respondents i.e. 12.53 per cent opine that they have been suffering by other misuses like sexual, physical abuse etc. The remaining 127 i.e. 28.41 percent respondents opined that they are not affected by any exploitation of the employers and placement agencies.
The nature of domestic work like cleaning, cooking vessels, washing clothes, sweeping the house etc., are the main influencing factors on deciding the nature of health problem. Around 50 percent of the domestic workers conform that they are affected by joint pain. About 12 percent of them have the problem of dermatologic diseases, 16 percent of the domestic workers are found affected with back pain problem. In general the insufficient earning of income by the head of household does not permit them to treat this disease. They have to manage with the pain while doing domestic work.

8.3 Conclusion

As an area of socio economic research, women domestic work continued to remain at a theoretical discourse and peripheral level. After the discussion of the narratives of domestic workers and their employers, it is concluded that domestic work is only undervalued. They are not recognized as workers as their effort does not take place in a factory or an administrative centre or organization, but inside a home. Their performance is not justified by to labour market values. Moreover, in such informal nature, occupational health and safety for domestic workers are difficult to achieve. This is a section which is completely ignored by the legislative framework also. So awareness is important for them to organize and empower themselves to fight against the exploitation and also enhance their overall welfare. They are unaware of their rights and dignity, which is very essential for their healthy survival. Proper associational activity and their political nature could help them realize their situation. They have to unite to raise their voices in the public arena to pressurise the Government to give importance for their unattended issues. Thus, while determining the socio-economic status of the domestic workers, the present study attempts to highlight the problems encountered by them in their work place.

8.4 Suggestions and Recommendations

The study has brought out the intricate patterns of employment, stark realities regarding the working conditions and the subtle nuances of expressions among the domestic workers. The following suggestions are based on the key findings among
the domestic workers for enhancing the overall welfare of these deprived domestic workers.

1. **On Wage Rate**, Poverty alleviation is the primary motive behind taking up domestic work by the women covered by the study. Inflation tends to dilute their real wages from time to time. The present study has brought out evidence that wage rates applicable to the members of informal sector communities have been significantly lower than those of other communities. Hence drastic improvements are needed in matters of remuneration to the workers. Inclusion of domestic work as an occupation and introduction of minimum wages could be carried out in order to streamline the wage differential and prevention of discriminatory practices based on caste, language or religion.

2. Lack of other employment avenues has been one of the major push factors that have led the women towards domestic work. Hence there is a need to provide a policy level frame work to streamline domestic work, just to bring both the workers and the employers to get in to a formal contract that binds both the employee and employer on fixing minimum wages for both the part time and full time work of the domestic workers.

3. Greater organization of workers has been realized as the need of the result of the study. This can be taken up on the voluntary initiatives by the existing trade unions and developmental organizations at the taluk, district, state, national and international levels. The State must make trade unions as mandatory for any unorganized work force. More awareness programmes would have to be conducted in order to make the workers understand the need for an umbrella organization of domestic workers.

4. Opportunities and aspiration for savings are minimal under the present conditions of the domestic workers. Debt trap with employers perpetuates the informal binding between the worker and the employer. The domestic workers are always under the threat of losing the meagre wages earned by them. Hence appropriate mechanism has to be created both by the Central and State governments to bring the domestic workforce in the saving network of the state Institutions.
5. The growing complexity and multifarious demands of domestic work call for refinement of life-skills and soft skills among female domestic workers. The study has brought out the fact that the extent of training undergone currently by fulltime domestic workers has been minimal. Inept ways of dealing with work activities is found to be often attracting verbal abuses, even leading to physical abuses. Hence there is a need for designing a comprehensive package of training to all types of domestic workers being initiated and funded by the Governments.

6. Employers are found unsupportive to the unionizing activities of Domestic workers. In the light of the prevailing situation, it is necessary to educate the employers on the legal obligations of them to recognize the trade union activities of the domestic workers. It is in this context, the state has to propagate the necessity of the workers to be the members of trade union and circulating news among the employers through media on the importance of recognizing the supportive role of trade unions for the overall welfare of the workers and the employers also.

7. Formation of a repository of knowledge is one of the best practices among individuals and agencies in upholding the welfare and rights of domestic workers. Knowledge sharing meets and conferences for permitting cross-fertilization of ideas from other allied fields such as construction industry is to be organized.

8. Review of literature shows vicious propaganda by electronic and print media against the whole population of women domestic workers. Hence there must be sensitization of the media towards improved and human portrayal of domestic workers in contrast to the present style of mocking at, accusing and stereotyping them as unreliable, untrustworthy and as criminals. Trade Unions can have a constructive role on protesting against such dehumanizing and character assassinating attempts of media.


   i. The Government should de-stigmatize the occupation by removing the term ‘servants’ and replacing it with ‘workers’
ii. Since the size of domestic work force is increasing day by day, the formation of a separate board for domestic workers is to be initiated in order to strengthen and empower them to protect their interests and add legitimacy to the field of work.

iii. Government of India needs to include domestic work in the list of unorganized sector, thereby providing a status and thrust to the cause of domestic workers.

iv. Social security measures including insurance and pension schemes, which are applicable to other unorganized workers; have to be provided for safeguarding the future of the domestic workers and protecting them against the exigencies of life. Therefore the state has to bring all the domestic workers into the life insurance network that supports their old age life and the welfare of their children.

v. There would have to be urgent measures to curb the menacing aspects of domestic employment which include arbitrary termination, payment being sent to persons other than the workers, absence of medical facilities and poor living conditions.

10. Instances of sexual innuendoes and advances have erupted despite extreme caution and reluctance on the part of the workers in discussing such issues in the open. In this regard, the research reiterates the demand for the setting up of complaint cells to deal with complaints of sexual harassment as recommended by the Supreme Court of India.

11. The content of the provisions of the law on domestic workers should be printed and circulated widely in order to usher in inter-disciplinary discussion and bring about help to workers to assert their due rights.

❖ Suggestions to the Legislature

➢ Minimum wages legislation for domestic workers need not improve the living standards of workers unless accompanied by strong enforcement mechanisms.
➢ Tax exemption is given under the Income Tax Act 1961. Tax exemption may be given for the expenditure incurred by way of payment of salary to the employees under the head of business and professional income. Likewise while salaried people are engaging employees, the wages paid to the domestic workers can be exempted for payment of income tax. This will be an incentive to the assessee to pay more to the domestic workers.

➢ Government of India tries to implement few regulations related to better working and living conditions of the unorganized workers both in the urban and rural areas. But surprisingly the domestic workers are not yet included in the domain of the unorganized workers.

➢ The domestic workers of Thoothukudi district are deprived from getting minimum wage, overtime pay, public holidays, timely payment of salaries, standard daily working hours etc. They initially should be included in the domain of unorganized workers. Apart from that fixing of daily wage (salaries) for both types of workers is necessary and a full-time domestic worker should not be allowed to work more than eight hours daily. The domestic worker should also be encouraged to form formal domestic workers union which can look after their interest. Apart from those safety regulations, provision of paid leave, provision of housing and medical facilities are necessary for the upliftment of their working and living conditions.

➢ Micro-Credit Programmes should be developed among those domestic workers, which can help them to earn few extra amounts through investing credit in any income augmenting activity. This may help a domestic worker to keep herself away from any type of exploitation which she is now facing in the work place. But the most important fact is that they should be included under the state assisted scheme of Provident Fund of unorganized workers. All those types of social practices can improve the economic and working conditions of the women domestic workers.

➢ Governments also stand to gain from formalizing domestic work and implementing social protection for those concerned. Once domestic work is
treated as decent work and paid accordingly, it can become a source of employment promotion and gains in efficiency.

- The Study also recognizes that domestic work is an important economic activity and as such the Indian Constitutional Rights guaranteed to workers apply to domestic workers. However, due to the particular nature of domestic work, for example that it takes place in an unconventional workplace (private households) and because workers are mainly women and girls, poorly educated, many of whom are migrants or members of disadvantaged communities, who are not aware of their rights as workers, existing labour legislations, policies and schemes have not been effective in safeguarding domestic workers’ labour rights.

- This Study recommends the Government to adopt a National Policy on Domestic Workers which will place a labour rights framework on domestic workers and will lay down certain minimum conditions for domestic workers which cannot be compromised with. Such a Policy may eventually lead to a specific legislative mechanism for domestic workers.

- The denial of overtime pay, minimum wage, social security, and other benefits to the domestic workers is the demand of the employees. An informal approach to the employer-employee relationship exposes them to irregular and inconsistent wages, precarious job security, as well as an ever-extension of their responsibilities and duties. The unprotected nature of the work renders them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, as does the failure to allow them to organise and collectively bargain. Despite the resistance of certain sectors of society to extending key labour rights to domestic workers, and the difficulty in ensuring the enforcement of legislation, extending the reach of labour law to domestic workers will insert them within the formal economy, giving them legal protection and recognition.

- The Tripartite Boards of Domestic Workers should constitute State/District/Taluk level Committees for complaint against sexual harassment at workplace which should also provide protection for women going to work as Domestic Workers.

- For immediate implementation of the suggestions, the Tripartite Boards of Domestic Workers is to be set up to regulate employment conditions, social
security and welfare measures. The Board should be authorized to constitute Dispute Resolution Councils and Appellate Authorities in the Study Area.

➢ The ILO Convention on Domestic Work was passed by the International Labour Congress in 2010, but the Government of India has still not ratified it. This Convention clearly outlines the basic rights of domestic workers, and provides guidelines on terms and conditions of employment, wages, working hours, occupational safety and health, social security and the avoidance of child labour. Ratification is obviously just a first step in a longer process, but it is still likely to be an important step in ensuring the dignity of all domestic workers in the country. The delay in simply ratifying such an obviously desirable convention suggests that there is not sufficient seriousness about the matter in official policy circles in India. Ultimately, ensuring basic rights for domestic workers obviously has to be based on their social and political mobilisation, which can affect the labour market conditions. But it also requires a significant change in the attitudes and behaviour of their employers, who constitute not just the rich elite groups in the country but also a growing number of middle class beneficiaries of the economic growth process.

❖ Suggestions to the Non-Government Organizations

➢ This is a section which has been completely ignored by the legislative framework also. Awareness is important for them to organize and empower themselves to fight against their exploitation. They are unaware of their rights and dignity, which is very essential for their healthy survival. Proper education could help them realize their situation. They have to unite to raise their voices in front of the public as well as Government.

➢ There are very few organizations in India that raise the voice in support of domestic workers, these are : i. All India Domestic Workers Union (Their lobbies go for minimum wages, payment of wages, weekly rest and annual leave periods, as well the establishment of a domestic workers registry), ii. Delhi Domestic Workers Union (Their demand is to accept Domestic Work as Work and Domestic Worker as Workers and lend it the dignity and reorganization of labour. And iii. The National Consultation on Domestic workers organized by NCW
(National Commission of Women). Iv. Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers Union and v. Local Domestic Workers Union. These types of Organizations are very urgent in this present situation. Rally, public meeting, advertisement etc. is also needed to draw the attention of the Government to take necessary steps to protect them from any form of violation.

- In this context, it is necessary to make an awareness of the exploitation faced by the domestic servants and inspire them to organize themselves for protecting their rights and also to work for implementing enactment of laws by the government. Then only they can live with status and dignity equal to that of other members of the society.

- **Suggestions to the Domestic Workers**
  - There must be compulsory registration with Tamil Nadu Manual Workers Welfare Board and also Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers Welfare Board.
  - The domestic workers must get the membership ID card and Effective participation of local Domestic Workers Union.
  - The existing social security measure like Group Insurance must be strengthened in the study area.

**8.5 Scope for Further Research**

- Further studies in the mode of action research: A study on the socio-cultural dimension of domestic workers which would examine the specific cultural background of women that prompts them to enter and remain in domestic work.

- There can be an exploratory study to examine the modus operandi of organizations which tend to result in personal aggrandizement of the founders under the pretext of an altruistic cause of serving the domestic workers.

- A comparative research should be carried out to assess the plight of out-migrant domestic workers from India with that of other country nationals.

- If the Object of uplifting the status of domestic workers is to be achieved, a detailed study of the behaviour and opinion of the employers is quite essential.