CHAPTER-1

Introduction
1.1 INTRODUCTION

A women domestic worker is a person who works within the employer's household. Domestic workers perform a variety of household services for an individual or a family, from providing care for children and elderly dependents to housekeeping, including cleaning and household maintenance. Other responsibilities may include cooking, laundry and ironing, shopping for food and undertaking other household errands. Such work has always needed to be done but before the Industrial Revolution and the advent of labour saving devices, it was physically much harder.

Some domestic workers live within their employer's household. In some cases, the contribution and skill of servants whose work encompassed complex management tasks in large households have been highly valued. However, for the most part, domestic work, while necessary, is demanding and undervalued. Although legislation protecting domestic workers is in place in many countries, it is often not extensively enforced. In many jurisdictions, domestic work is poorly regulated and domestic workers are subject to serious abuses, including slavery Many domestic workers are live-in domestics. Though they often have their own quarters, 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, such as a box room, sometimes located in the basement or attic. Domestic workers may live in their own home, though more often they are "live-in" domestics, meaning that they receive their room and board as part of their salaries. In some countries, because of the large gap between urban and rural incomes, and the lack of employment opportunities in the countryside, even an ordinary middle class urban family can afford to employ a full-time live-in servant. The majority of domestic workers in China, Mexico, India, and
other populous developing countries, are people from the rural areas who are employed by urban families.¹

Employers may require their domestic workers to wear a uniform, livery or other "domestic workers' clothes" when in their employers' residence. The uniform is usually simple, though aristocratic employers sometimes provided elaborate decorative liveries, especially for use on formal occasions. 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 from 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 white dress shirt with black pants, necktie or bowtie, maybe even waistcoat, or a female domestic worker either a blouse and skirt (or trousers) or a uniform.

Domestic workers are often exploited at the hands of the so called placement agencies that lure workers from the rural areas to the cities, promising them lucrative salary, lifestyle and benefits. A significant number of these women migrate from states like Jharkhand, Bihar, Bengal and Orissa. Most come from vulnerable communities, lower caste or ethnic minority communities. Most agencies do not share the information regarding the negotiated wages with the workers. Some adjust a considerable proportion of domestic workers’ salary of the initial months as brokerage expenses, transportation cost etc. There are many tales of employers who have failed to get the promised placement of workers, and the agents have also become untraceable. Many times, an employer pays the workers’ salaries to the agent
believing the wages are being paid to the workers, but in actual reality the wages are kept by them. This situation clearly poses a “lose-lose” for both workers and employers, yet placement agencies remain firmly embedded in the dynamics of supply and demand because of the highly informal nature of the domestic work sector, which enables this kind of exploitation to go unregulated.

In India, the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India, has acknowledged the importance of domestic work to households and the need to improve welfare and regulatory measures for promoting decent work for domestic workers. Also, for the very first time, domestic workers have been recognized as workers in the Unorganized Sector Social Security Act, 2008.\(^2\)

At the international level, domestic work is being recognized as “real” work and there will be a discussion in June 2010 at the International Labour Conference (ILO) to decide on an international Labour Convention for domestic work. Many countries such as South Africa, Brazil, Hong Kong, Philippines, Uruguay, Mali, Spain, France, Italy, Switzerland, have labour laws or mechanisms to protect and promote rights of the women domestic workers.\(^3\)

In India, a draft bill has been proposed by National Commission for Women to govern conditions of work for domestic workers and is under review and discussion. The major areas covered by the proposed bill relate to definitional issues, such as who is a domestic worker, the age of the worker, the definition of employer, workplace, the placement agency, defining work hours, rest periods, weekly offs, annual vacations, wage levels, payment of wages, need for a written contract, creation of fund for domestic workers, registration of domestic workers, enabling them to use existing social security and maternity benefits and enrolment in future schemes and programs of the government.
Domestic 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’. Both in the urban and rural contexts, the nature of work and workers have been rapidly changing. The sector now primarily comprises women domestic workers who are not recognized as workers while their work is undervalued. This is primarily due to the gendered notion of housework; value is not ascribed to women’s work in their homes, and by extension, even paid work in other’s homes is not given any value or regarded as work. It is also undervalued because it is often performed by poor, migrant women from lower castes. All these contribute to the inferior states of their work, both in their own minds and in society. Domestic work, however, is still undervalued. It is looked upon as unskilled because most women have traditionally been considered capable of doing the work, and the skills they are taught by other women in the home are perceived to be innate. When paid, therefore, the work remains undervalued and poorly regulated. By contrast, studies that provide space for domestic workers to speak often reveal their belief in the dignity of their hard work, and, as such, it warrants recognition and respect and calls for regulation. Domestic work includes mental, manual and emotional aspects, including care work communities. Domestic work is thus viewed as reproductive work that creates not only labour units but also people and social relations. Anderson further draws attention to domestic work being rooted in the community. By the doing of domestic work we literally reproduce our communities and our place within them. In this context, it is important to note who does the domestic work as this reflects the relation between genders race and class. The employer-employee relationship is a complex one and is viewed as one of domination, dependence and inequality. Also, this is an area of work where the employer and the
employee are mostly females. As a home is the site of work, relations between employer and employee are often not limited to work but spill over as larger support systems. Domestic workers in India look access to sufficient and effective statutory measures and institutional mechanisms for their protection. Steps have been taken by the government both at the national and state levels to protect their rights. Nevertheless, the few labour laws enacted by the national and state governments addressing domestic workers face the challenge of implementation. This is aggravated by the discriminating attitude of many employers against the domestic workers, including caste prejudices. As a result those who carry out domestic work are largely ignored working sectors often specially excluded and economically exploited. On the other hand, the government recognizes the prominent role of migrant domestic workers as a source of foreign exchange in the Indian economy and a solution to the country’s unemployment issues. Compared to their local counterparts, a higher degree of regulation is exerted by the government in the process of their deployment. But despite efforts by the government, Indian domestic workers within and outside the country remain vulnerable to all forms of exploitation from the moment they enter the recruitment process till they enter the workplace.

In its contemporary manifestations, domestic work is a global phenomenon that perpetuates hierarchies based on race, ethnicity, indigenous status, caste and nationality, Care work in the household – whether performed by paid employees or by unpaid household members as part of their family responsibilities and as a “labour of love” – is quite simply indispensable for the economy outside the household function. The growing participation of women in the labour force, changes in the organization of work and the intensification of work, as well as the lack of policies reconciling work and family life, the decline in state provision of care services, the feminization of international migration and the ageing of societies have all increased the demand for care work in recent years.
1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Domestic work refers to housework such as sweeping, cleaning utensils, washing clothes, cooking, caring of children and such other work which is carried out for an employer for remuneration. Domestic work provides an important livelihood source for illiterate women or those with very little education. Official statistics place the numbers employed in India as 4.75 million, (of which 3 million are women) but this is considered as severe underestimation and the true number to be more between 20 million to 80 million workers! However, numbers alone do not describe the importance of their work, or the hardships they face. Many of these workers do not even receive the minimum wage work extremely long hours and often do not get one day’s rest. This varies based on the number of tasks, types of tasks, number of households and the locality where work is performed. Despite the benefits paid domestic work offers employers, the workers are slow to get recognition as workers and there are no law and policy to regulate and protect workers employed in this sector.

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workers and employers, yet placement agencies remain firmly embedded in the dynamics of supply and demand because of the highly informal nature of the domestic work sector, which enables this kind of exploitation to go unregulated.

Given this, in India, the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India, has acknowledged the importance of domestic work to households and the need to improve welfare and regulatory measures for promoting decent work for domestic workers. Also, for the very first time, domestic workers have been recognized as workers in the Unorganized Sector Social Security Act, 2008. At the international level, domestic work is being recognized as “real” work and there will be a discussion in June 2010 at the International Labour Conference (ILO) to decide on an international Labour Convention for domestic work. Many countries such as South Africa, Brazil, Hong Kong, Philippines, Uruguay, Mali, Spain, France, Italy, Switzerland, have labour laws or mechanisms to protect and promote rights of the domestic workers. In India, a draft bill has been proposed by National Commission for Women to govern conditions of work for domestic workers and is under review and discussion. The major areas covered by the proposed bill relate to definitional issues, such as who is a domestic worker, the age of the worker, the definition of employer, workplace, the placement agency, defining work hours, rest periods, weekly offs, annual vacations, wage levels, payment of wages, need for a written contract, creation of fund for domestic workers, registration of domestic workers, enabling them to use existing social security and maternity benefits and enrolment in future schemes and programs of the government.

1.3 IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

This domestic work force has become ‘an important element in the social life of a community, contributing to its general health and welfare. The wide varieties of tasks performed in the household by this class of workers are
certainly vital to the conduct and well-being of family-life. The domestic helpers share the burden of stress by performing the major daily tasks of the household and make the life of civilians more comfortable. Despite the growing importance of domestic workforce, the domestic workers in majority of the countries are undervalued, denigrated, unseen and denied the human rights they are actually entitled to. They are perceived as something lower than the standard work of the society by both the employers and the workers themselves. Often, it is tragedy or rare positive development that heaves our attention to the increasing population of this spectrum.

1.4 **SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

A substantial number of women in rural areas have little skills and practically no education. One of the low-ranking occupations assigned to the poorest classes of society is “domestic service”. Employment of servants has become very common in the urban areas of any cities where a large number of housewives going out for jobs. The employment of servants saves much of the time and energy for the working housewives of modern cities. Domestic servants have proved to be a necessity for non-working housewives also. In urban areas, they commonly engaged domestic servants to keep them in carrying out their household chores, partly due to physical inability and partly due to lack of time. Moreover, in nuclear families there is no stand-by in the family, if the housewife falls ill. Also we can argue that the new middle classes have developed a life style which has increased the demand for domestic servants. Thus the maid servant employed in household labour are playing a significant role especially in small towns of India. It is difficult to gauge the exact number of women in the occupation, as workers in the category have not been enumerated as such by the census.

Women Domestic work, a predominantly female occupation, has been increasing in Gulbarga. Growing urbanization, the increased labour force participation rate of women, and the decline of extended families are the
primary reasons for the exponential growth of this sector. Despite this growth, there are few laws and policies to regulate domestic work and protect domestic workers. In recent years, efforts have been made at the state and central levels to legislate for these workers and several draft legislations are currently under discussion by organisations of domestic workers. Most women domestic workers are from the marginalized sections of society and a large number of them are migrant workers. Workers range from full-time to part-time workers, skilled and unskilled workers. Largely women, who already know how to clean and cook, domestic workers are seen as requiring very little skill training. Besides, the work is seen as allowing women, who also shoulder the responsibility of their own households, some degree of flexibility. ‘This fact reinforces sexual division of labour within the world of work and of race, caste, class, poorer economies apart from gender as well.’ In 2000, the UN Human Rights Commission declared domestic worker as a form of contemporary slavery. Organising domestic workers has been a huge challenge as the work place is inaccessible and multiple, marked by a high rate of attrition and instability. As a result, the demand for the better wages or working conditions through an organized union has been weak and scattered. A strong and well organized work force has been pivotal in ensuring progressive policy and legislation, while simultaneously enabling better enforcement of existing legislations.6

1.5 NEED FOR THE STUDY

Several researches and surveys have been conducted by the social scientists to analyse and improve the conditions of these domestic workers till now. Many writers and columnists have written about the status of domestic servants in the society of India. The efforts have been made by the social workers, government as well as the non-government agencies to preserve their rights; many laws have been passed by the government for their protection and security. However, no significant changes are observed in the disgraceful status of such large and important labour force of the nation. They are treated with
‘No Terms and Conditions’ attitude of the employers even today. There is a long list of the issues highlighting the problems and mal-treatment of the domestic workers. There is a requirement to analyse the trend of treatment received by the domestic workers from their employers that can help to draw guidelines for the betterment of the group.

1.6 CONCEPTUALISING DOMESTIC WORK

Conceptualization means to plan, to design, to imagine, to conceive and to envision. It considered that conceptualization is a dry and difficult intellectual exercise that pulls people into analytical thinking. Conceptualization is the application of certain scientific terminologies with a view to clearly communicate the intended outcome of the study. The need for the conceptualization and defining the general concept with specific and purified component is important. “Conceptualization means deliberately looking beyond the known i.e. beyond assumptions, commonplace interpretations, beliefs, prevailing theories, habitual conclusions and so on to see what is not yet known, or to understand what is not yet known, or to understand what is not yet clearly understood.” Conceptualization is the use of particulars to illuminate a generalizable idea or construct. We can say that the act of conceptualization is the concept of thinking through and seeing beyond existing ideas to discover higher order ideas within one’s mind.

DOMESTIC WORK

The term domestic service is difficult to define, as the duties of the domestic servants are not so well defined. In common parlance, the term is defined as a person who is engaged in part lime or full time domestic work in return for remuneration payable in cash or kind for a fixed period. The terms of employment may be expressed or implied. Domestic service is becoming a major and growing informal sector activity in the urban areas, especially in big cities. It is one of the informal sector activities where the conditions of work are disgusting with long working hours, low pay and absence of job security.
The modern system of domestic work is an outgrowth of the system of slavery, though its nature, functions and relations have undergone considerable changes over time. Historically, though the character of the industry did not change much, certain temporal and spatial distinctions could be traced. The definition of the ‘domestic worker’ needs greater clarity. The domestic worker is defined as a person employed to do the housework or allied activities in any household, thus excluding those involved in cleaning or cooking in offices, shops and other such premises.

**DOMESTIC WORKER**

"Domestic worker" means a woman who is employed to do the household work in any household for remuneration whether in cash or kind, either directly or through any agency on a temporary, permanent, part time or full time basis, but does not include any member of the family of the employer.

**FAMILY**

The family defined as” a relatively permanent group of people related by ancestry, marriage or adoption, who live together, form an economic unit, and take care of their young once.” Family is the group of intimate people emotionally related either by blood, marriage, responsible for the reproduction and rearing of children. For the present study there are two types of families:

**Nuclear Family**

Ordinarily nuclear type of family consists of a couple and their children. By nuclear family here the researcher meant husband, wife and their unmarried children living together.

**Joint family**

Joint family consists of blood relatives surrounded by a number of married persons and their children. In the present study joint family consisted
of brothers, sisters, cousins, grand mother, grand father living in a household with their spouses.

Migration

Migration is defined as any permanent change in residence, involves the detachment from the organization of activities at one place and the total around of activities at one place and the total around of activities to another.

Migrant

“Migrant is a person who changes his location in physical space from one country, state a community, involving at the same time change of the social system at origin to the social system at destination.

1.7 KEY ISSUES IN LEGISLATING FOR WOMEN DOMESTIC WORKERS

Definition - The definition of the ‘domestic worker’ needs greater clarity. The domestic worker is defined as a person employed to do the housework or allied activities in any household, thus excluding those involved in cleaning or cooking in offices, shops and other such premises. Many workers are engaged by small shops and establishments for similar work. Workers who are employed in cleaning and more particularly, catering jobs in an establishment are covered by the Contract Labour Act, 1970. Additionally, the Shops and Establishments Act can also be invoked to protect workers engaged in shops and similar such establishments. Thus, whether a comprehensive law to cover all categories of domestic work is desirable or whether there needs to be a separate law for domestic workers engaged in household work and whether those involved in cleaning/cooking/catering in establishments should continue be treated as workers under existing labour laws, needs further explication within the domestic workers movement. Wages – Wages for the domestic workers are determined by factors such as tasks performed, hours of work, their social status, skills (or the lack of it), the need for flexibility and other labour
market conditions. There are on-going debates over the norms for setting wages. These debates include several tricky issues such as whether the wage ought to be time rated or piece rated, in kind, hourly or weekly, part-time or full time; based on house size or persons per household, over time; adjusted for boarding, include medical care and other necessities and multiplicity of employers. Another concern that has been expressed is the need to link the wages to dearness allowance, which will ensure that the minimum wages do not fall lower than the cost of living for this very poor category of largely female workers. Several issues in wage setting relate to the live-in domestic workers, such as the regulation of agencies, leave periods (including annual, sick and maternity leave), hours of work, ‘on call’ periods/ rest periods.

**Sexual Harassment** - Female domestic workers, especially those who live in their employer’s home, are vulnerable to sexual abuse. The existing sexual harassment law following the *Vishaka* judgement of the Supreme Court does not apply to domestic work. There is thus a need for the proposed law to provide a mechanism for dealing with such harassment. Migrant domestic workers are especially vulnerable to sexual assault. A separate law, or a component of a domestic violence law, is needed to control trafficking of women and workplace sexual harassment.

**Discrimination** – Domestic workers invariably represent the more marginalized communities in society. Prejudice and bias related to social status is reflected very strongly at the workplace for many domestic workers. A clear statement in the law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of caste, class, gender, sexuality and/or religion is necessary. Another insidious but widely prevalent bias is that of poverty and criminality, which has wider ramifications as domestic workers are the first to be questioned on the occurrence of a crime. Greater protection needs to be accorded to domestic workers against police harassment and discrimination.
**Trafficking and Migrant Labour** – Both inter and intra-country migration brings with it certain vulnerability for workers within the sector. Lacking support systems in a new city, many have low bargaining power and the ability to protect their basic rights. The situation of foreign domestic migrants is even worse than that of domestic migrants as they are generally un-documented and they are regularly harassed by the police and the authorities.

**Regulation of Agencies** – Agencies that seek to procure and place domestic work proliferate in several parts of the country. Time and again allegations of harassment, rape, corruption, and adoption rackets, are levelled against these agencies. Regulation of these agencies is of prime importance and this must necessarily be tied in with education of citizens employing domestic workers through agencies.

**Freedom of Association** - While the nature of the work renders it difficult to organize the domestic workers, particularly those that work full-time in households, the other challenge is to register a union under the Trade Union Act, 1926. There is a need for this law to be amended to clarify that domestic workers are deemed to be working in an ‘industry’ and are thus within the scope of the law. Issues for organizing domestic workers in several parts of the world have focused on union issues; formation of cooperatives; credit and savings groups. Vocational training; social activities; employment exchanges; support services; a place to congregate; crèche; legal and general advice; support in disputes with employers and in familial disputes10. The law must take of cue from these efforts to rethink organizing as necessary to the effective implementation of any legislation for domestic workers.

**Ensuring Effective Implementation** – Reconceptualising the legal framework so as to enable effective implementation is imperative Experience in both Karnataka state suggest it is difficult to implement even the minimal protections accorded by the law. Time and again, the labour department has
expressed its inability to monitor the implementation. Providing a role to unions of domestic workers or women’s organisations in enforcing the law and in registering complaints of non-compliance is essential. Re-envisioning and recasting the labour regulation framework so to be able to address the protection of domestic workers is crucial.

**Recent Efforts at Legislating for Domestic Worker:**

The National Commission for Women (NCW) has proposed the Domestic Workers (Registration Social Security and Welfare) Act, 2008. It claims to put in place a Comprehensive Central Legislation designed to register and meet the working conditions of the domestic workers, who are an important segment of the service sector of the Indian economy.

**Different Categories of Domestic Work**

Over the last few years, studies on domestic work in India have noted the increase in the numbers of migrant female domestic workers in the cities. They have also observed that domestic work is highly informal in its organization and highlighted the vulnerabilities of domestic workers who belong to the poorer and uneducated sections of society. These studies also note that women from marginalized castes form a substantive group of domestic workers In the Indian context, domestic work is generally defined in terms of types of work performed and the time spent at work, i.e., in the employer’s home. Live- out and live-in are two distinct categories of domestic work. Live-out work is primarily of two types:

first, those who work in one house for the whole day and go back to their homes in the evening and; secondly, those who work in different houses, moving from one to the other, performing one or more tasks in each household. They may clean in one house, chop vegetables in another and wash clothes in the third, while some others may perform only one task, such as cooking. They often visit these households twice a day though the requirements in some
families may be limited to only once a day. Another form of part-time live-out work is in terms of piece-rate. It is often applied to washing clothes and wages are calculated on the basis of family size. Another critical issue is that of the age of the domestic worker. Despite laws to prevent it, child domestic labour is still prevalent in India. The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulations)\(^9\) Act 1986 lists domestic work in the schedule of “hazards” whereby the permissible age for work is 18 years. Yet, given the socio-economic conditions in the country, 15 years may appear permissible but most organizations working on the issue and child rights advocates advocate the age of admission to domestic work as 18 years. They argue that these children work long hours, are not given nutritious food, are often sexually abused and have no way of raising their voices. Based on the 2001 census, about 185,595 children are employed as domestic workers and in dhabas (roadside tea and food stall) (UNICEF 2007).\(^{10}\) Employers prefer children as they are cheap. They are often paid as little as rupees 300 per month for work that lasts ten hours each day and seven days a week. They are also beaten up and in some cases, sexually abused. Dimensions of trafficking can be seen here as well. Children are often brought in from poor areas of the country and made to work as bonded labourers. Many are not allowed to contact their families. They live in their employers’ homes without any support system.

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of part-time live-out work is in terms of piece-rate. It is often applied to washing clothes and wages are calculated on the basis of buckets of clothes. Women who work as live-out part-timers are primarily migrants who move to the city with their families or are female construction workers who enter domestic labour when no construction work is available. Some of them are also landless labourers who are displaced when rural areas are absorbed by cities. On moving to the city, they mainly reside in the difficult conditions of slum clusters. They begin work at one or two houses and gradually take up more, depending on their individual capacities, the money needed and their specific stage of life cycle (for example, women with very young children prefer to work in fewer households than older women). Besides learning work, they have to adapt to urban ways of living and a culture different from their own.

Point out that this kind of work is characterised as ‘part-time’ from the perspective of the employer. For the domestic worker, the actual number of hours she spends in all the households she works in is a full day’s work. They also note that this form of work may be flexible but is also unstable as workers shift out of the sector, change employers, stop working for a few years due to marriage or childbirth and also have constant issues with their employers. Yet, in terms of time spent at work, it may be as much or more than a live-in worker. “The fragmented nature of their work, the multitude of tasks, a multiplicity of employers, and the instability of employment pose challenge in documenting them and in attempts to organise them. The full-timers live with the employer’s family. Studies have reported that they often have no specified work hours with some working for eighteen hours a day. Some do not get any rest during the day while others may not be given proper food or living space. Non-payment of wages, no weekly leaves or holidays, verbal and sexual abuse is also reported. They have no recourse to any form of assistance when they face harassment – verbal, physical or sexual. A large number of full time workers are hired through recruiting agents who also collect their wages, often withholding a substantial part. Private work agents often recruit girls in villages and bring them to cities. Some agents provide basic training for a couple of
days and then send them to homes as domestic workers. Agents also send them untrained. There is no state mechanism to check these agents or their functioning. These agencies are difficult to trace as they frequently change their identities, location and phone numbers. They also charge a large amount from employers for providing domestic helpers. Sexual exploitation by recruiting agents has also been reported. It is important to point out that most agencies are commercial in nature and do not focus on the welfare of workers. The condition of domestic workers has not improved with the growth of placement agencies. Full-time workers also live in the quarters provided by employers including government and defense officials. They are provided with living space but Introduction Domestic Workers: Conditions, Rights and Responsibilities are expected to be on call for most of the day, resulting in no fixed working hours. Thus, both forms of domestic work are undervalued and not regulated – workers are underpaid, overworked and unprotected. A different trend in the changing demographics of the domestic worker is migration of girls from the northeast. They primarily work as salespersons but are increasingly joining as domestic work, working mostly with affluent Indians and expatriates. Their ethnic and cultural distinctiveness makes them vulnerable. They are also subject to ‘racial’ stereotyping and isolation because of language difficulties. Similarly, young girls from Bengal who come to Rajasthan to work are also vulnerable and isolated because of language. Another critical issue is that of the age of the domestic worker. Despite laws to prevent it, child domestic labour is still prevalent in India. The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulations) Act 1986 lists domestic work in the schedule of “hazards” whereby the permissible age for work is 18 years. Yet, given the socio-economic conditions in the country, 15 years may appear permissible but most organisations working on the issue and child rights advocate the age of admission to domestic work as 18 years. They argue that these children work long hours, are not given nutritious food, are often sexually abused and have no way of raising their voices. Based on the 2001 census, about 185,595 children are employed as domestic workers and in _dhabas_ (roadside tea and food stall)
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**Working conditions of domestic workers**

The tasks performed by either category of domestic workers may include cleaning (sweeping, swabbing and dusting), washing (clothes and dishes), or even putting machine-washed clothes on the clothesline or/and folding them, cooking, or preparation for cooking such as chopping vegetables and making dough, or cooking a part of meal, ironing, housekeeping and extensions of these outside the home such as shopping. Domestic work may also include childcare or care of the aged. There are no standard norms that decide working conditions. By and large, employers decide wages though this is often the ‘rate’ of the area they live in. Wages also depend on the bargaining power of the domestic worker and workers’ desperation for work. Experienced workers may be able to bargain for more while those desperate for work may be willing to work at lower rates. Other factors that influence decisions about wages include the type of tasks performed and the neighborhood. Rates vary according to the task (for example, cooking attracts more wages than cleaning) and the socio-economic profile of employers. These factors are not cast-in-stone as workers are made to perform extra work with no additional compensation, especially during festivals or when employers have guests. There is no guarantee of employment as employers can ask workers to leave.
with no prior notice or financial compensation. These studies also note that only a few workers get a weekly off; paid leave is often the result of difficult negotiations with the employers. Getting sick leave also depends on the good will of the employer. Instances of workers losing their jobs due to long leave taken at time of childbirth or ill health are often reported. Some also lose their jobs when they visit their villages. Deduction in wages for extra leave is a common practice among employers. Part-time workers are not allowed access to a toilet in the employers’ homes. Many commute long distances and thus have no time to cook and carry food with them. They are often not provided with any tea or snacks and stay.

1.8 MIGRATION OF WOMEN DOMESTIC WORKERS IN GULBARGA CITY

Migration of women remains more or less unexplored as it is often viewed as more domestic and private, which is outside the sphere of production. Nevertheless, of late, it is increasingly being recognised that women are no longer passive movers, who follow the male household heads. Migration for domestic service is largely a female driven phenomenon, where migration is primarily due to employment availability of women. The conditions of work in domestic service are deplorable with long working hours, low pay and absence of job security. The informalisation process in the economy has resulted in the mobilisation of new segments of the population into migration for employment. Recent evidences suggest that with high insecurity in employment coupled with low wages of male members, family migration for employment is becoming increasingly common. In the literature on migration women staying back in rural areas, looking after the households conditioning male migration is often highlighted. The paper argues that traditional image of individual male migrant supporting the family back at the rural areas, where women are tied to home and family is not true for the working class masses, which forms a large chunk of urban population. Recent literature on migration has not only shown that female migration is on the
increase, but also that movement of women is complex and varied. Though women are increasingly migrate independently and for economic reasons, family migration or joint migration with the husband still continues for the majority of women’s move in India. The employment implications of those women who migrate with the spouses are not much discussed in the literature on migration of women. It has generally been argued that family rather than work considerations take on the greater importance for women when making migration decisions. This paper examines the employment consequences and the economic role of women, when they migrate with the family. It is based on a case study of Domestic workers who are migrated to get opportunities to work and survive in the city of Gulbarga. Women domestics plays crucial role in the survival of working class and rich class families.

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1.9 CHAPTER SCHEME:

In tune with the objectives set for the present study. Present research work has been divided in Eight Chapters as liked below.

Chapter-I: It is an introductory chapter which narrates the statement of the Problem, scope of the study, need for the study, importance of the study, Conceptualizing of Domestic Work, Migration Of Women Domestic Workers In Gulbarga City,, and Chapter Scheme of the study.

Chapter-II: This chapter attempt to trace out review of related literature concerning the present study.

Chapter-III: It deals with the research methodology, objective of the study, Hypotheses of the study, Limitations of the study.

Chapter-IV: It deals with brief profile of study area.

Chapter-V: This chapter deals with the socio-economic and demographics characteristics of the women domestic workers in the study area.

Chapter-VI: This chapter intends to the Women domestic workers professional and skillful life

Chapter-VII: This chapter deals with problems and challenges of women domestic workers in informal sector.

Chapter-VIII: This chapter intends to the present the summary of findings, conclusion and suggestions.
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