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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

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### THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF DOMESTIC WORKERS: GLOBAL INSIGHTS FROM A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

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#### Abstract

Domestic workers face unique challenges due to their informal nature of the work that impact their socio-economic status, health and well-being. This study presents a bibliometric analysis of socio-economics status of global domestic workers research of 24 years of scholarly work (2000-2024) published in Scopus database consisting of 1304 publications. The study uses VOS viewer and Bibliometrix from R studio software to visualise and examine the research trends. The result of the research shows the publications trend has increased significantly post 2020 due to the informal nature of work, restricted mobility of labour during pandemic, migration, emerging technological advancement, increased awareness of their rights, global advocacy and policy movements through International Labour Organisations (ILO). The citation analysis highlights prominent studies conducted globally with influential authors, sources and high volumes of publications. It explored geographical spread of studies emphasising on countries and organisations contribution towards socio-economic status of domestic workers. Furthermore, keywords co-occurrence analysis highlights the key themes and basic concepts within the literature. Despite broad focus on various dimension of socio-economic dimensions, literature has lacuna in qualitative research, underexplored or unexplored areas like technology playing a crucial role, gender-specific challenges faced by domestic workers. The study encourages future research on interdisciplinary approach and emerging issues that is imperative for welfare of domestic workers. The findings provide crucial insights to governments, policy makers, advocacy groups and labour organisations to create global awareness and protect domestic workers rights and well-being.

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#### Introduction:-

Marxist Theory of Labour and Exploitation is one of the pioneer theories of labour for understanding domestic work in context of exploitation and class struggle. This framework describes domestic work constituent informal sector often constituting to lower socio-economic spectrum often undervalued, associated with low wages, limited benefits and deemed as insecure jobs in the world. Domestic workers are people who work in other homes for pay, performing wide range of household chores like sweep, clean, wash dishes, cook and take care of children and elderly people predominantly dominated by women with low pay as compared to male domestic workers concentrating on driving, gardening and security jobs paid better salaries, Chen (2011). They work under precarious conditions going through physical, mental and emotional strain in the employer's house. Domestic work is largest source of employment in the world accounting to one hundred million as stated by Johnstone (2012). Domestic workers provide essential services that enable employers to work outside the home thus facilitating labour market and economy. There is a growing demand for domestic workers throughout the world. Thus, it is very important area of study, reflecting the intersection of labour dynamics, social inequalities, and economic policies.

Furthermore, Parrenas (2005) assert privileged class families hire these low-waged domestic workers. Domestic workers usually are migrant workers, they would have migrated for better living. This migration can happen from rural to urban, one city to another, one country to another. Domestic workers are broadly classified into live-in and live-out. Arcand (2020) points out Live-in domestic workers reside in their employers' home working long hours leading to exploitation and physical strain, however live-out domestic workers are those who commute from their home to employer's house having clearer work schedules. Despite this, they still go through precarious work conditions.

Domestic workers are illiterate, low-skilled and thus land up taking these jobs. They constantly face exploitative working conditions, ill-treated, fired from job anytime and caught with vicious circle of poverty. Nanda (2020) claims Due to the very nature of working they are informal, unregulated and unorganized sector, working in private homes, not recognized as workers but rather as 'informal help', they earn differently for the same job based on the area of work, employer. Usually, they have only horizontal mobility instead of upward mobility.

Bibliometric analysis initiated by library and information sciences, employs quantitative techniques to examine the relationship of vast collection of scientific literature stated Maira & Theodore (2023). Bibliometric analysis is used to examine the developments and patterns in Socio-economic status of Domestic workers. The following are the objectives of our study.

1. Identify themes and focal areas within the literature of the socio-economic status of domestic workers.
2. To evaluate evolution of research publications focussed on living and working conditions of domestic workers over a specified period.
3. To identify the most cited authors, impactful publications, and leading journals in this research domain.
4. To uncover under-researched areas and suggest directions for future research.

By examining the evolution of research on socio-economic status of domestic workers, this study offers a unique perspective on how academic interest and understanding of the living and working conditions of domestic workers have progressed over time. By employing extensive visual data and quantitative investigation of the development and patterns in socio-economic conditions of domestic employee, this study offers visual interpretation of the research conducted over past twenty-four years (2000-2024).

## **Methods:-**

### **Data source**

Scopus and Web of Science are widely used for conducting bibliometric analysis. For this study, the data is extracted from Scopus database considering it has a vast academic literature and quality of research articles published across the globe.

### **Search Query**

For search query relevant key terms were employed to ensure inclusion of studies on domestic workers. The key terms were input in search query with TITLE-ABS-KEY ("Domestic" AND "workers" "Domestic" AND "worker") AND (LIMIT-TO (EXACTKEYWORD, "Domestic Workers")) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE, "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, "English"))

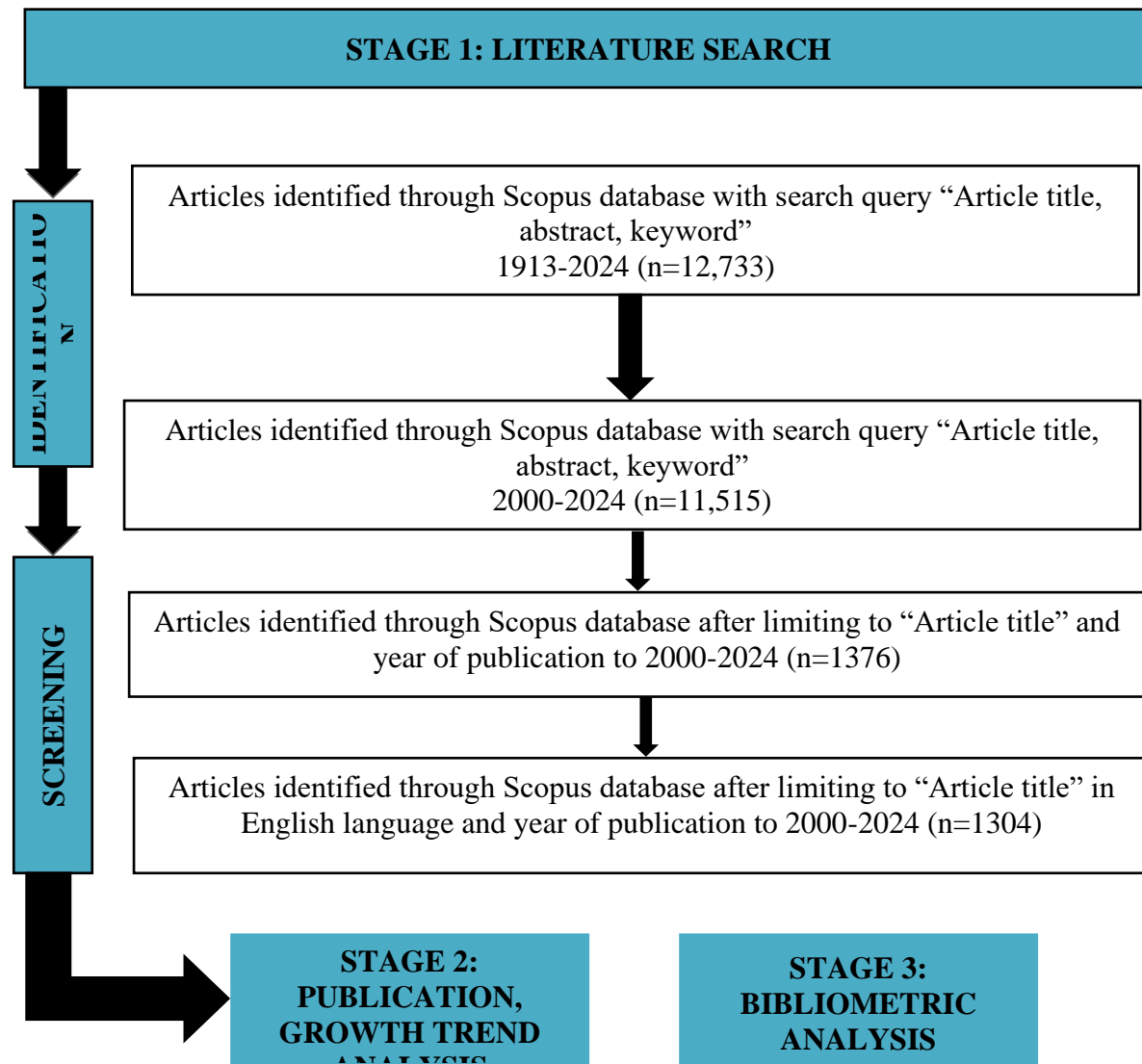
For application purpose, Keywords like “Domestic workers” were used in search criteria and 12,733 articles were identified from 1913 to 2024, these were extracted into csv files as on 24.01.2025. Further, search criteria were restricted to “Articles” only and year ranging from 2000 to 2024, 11,515 were identified for bibliometric analysis “TITLE-ABS-KEY (“Domestic” AND “workers” “Domestic” AND “worker”) AND (LIMIT-TO (DOCTYPE,“ar”)) AND (LIMIT-TO (LANGUAGE, “English”))

The data is restricted to twenty-four years of research on socio-economic status of Domestic workers. This Bibliometric analysis used various analysis methods including authors, documents, production, collaborations and network visualization. For the purpose of analysis for the data collected, VOS (Visualization of Similarities) viewer software is being used.

### Data Selection

Figure 1 presents the inclusion criteria for article selection were based on “Domestic workers” focussed on global perspective from the time articles featured on Domestic workers in the year 1913 to 2024 and further limited to 2000 to 2024 timeline with English language as preference. This ensured the analysis was focused on the relevant context of the research. The study was limited to articles and English language only, excluding conference, review papers, and book chapters.

**Figure 1:-** The study's procedural workflow.



### Publication Growth Trend Analysis

The study examines the recent developments and change in patterns in Domestic workers. Evaluating these trends helps in gaining valuable insights into the field of study. Publications on yearly basis aids researchers to assess the changes, development, patterns and predict prospective trends. This scrutiny of growth trends in the field of Domestic workers offers valuable insights into development of this field, by helping us to understand socio-economic status of Domestic workers, identify knowledge gaps and guide future research directions.

### Bibliometric Analysis

Bibliometric analysis has gained more attention in current years. Donthu et al (2021) states bibliometric analysis has high impact with large volume of publications. Fordjour et.al (2024) assert statistical evaluation of published articles are efficient way of assessing the influence of publications, authors, countries, sources, funding, institutions within scientific community. This aids scholars to gain more insights on emerging topics, identification of gaps, new ideas, themes and understanding of under explored topics and themes which significantly contributes to their study. Bibliometric analysis can be done through R program “Bibliometrix-Biblioshiny”, VOSviewer, and CiteSpace software programs. In this study we have employed VOSviewer version 1.6.20 software and Biblioshiny software. VOSviewer software enables visualisation of bibliometric data showcasing relationships, author activity, connections with other authors, sources, countries and organisations illustrated by VanEck & Waltman (2010).

By using VOSviewer software, we created bibliometric maps and examined them through citation, occurrence of keywords from 1304 studies. Citation analysis aids in identification of relationships established in 1304 studies and their impact on scientific community through citations frequency by other authors. A citation network highlights how research papers, authors, or journals are interconnected through references and citations, offering insights into the structure and influence of scientific literature. Co-occurrence analysis helps uncover patterns, themes, and connections in research data through keywords, terms, authors, affiliations, or references. These bibliometric analysis offers deep insights of relationships, emerging trends, keywords and potential impact in the field of Domestic workers enhancing understanding and fostering the advancement of research in this domain.

### Results:-

The results provide the findings corresponding to the objectives briefed in the introduction. It includes a detailed analysis and discussion of data related to publications, countries, authors, keywords, sources, emerging topics, collaboration networks, and other relevant aspects. Furthermore, studies conducted globally is taken into consideration for this research selection process for deeper comprehension and further narrowed to India. This study seeks to explore the difficulties encountered by domestic workers in India. This approach enabled a more focused examination of research literature specifically addressing the experiences of Domestic workers globally.

### Growth Trend of Journal Publications on Domestic Workers

**Table 1:-** Main information about the Data.

MAIN INFORMATION ABOUT DATA	
Timespan	2000:2024
Sources (Journals, Books, etc)	786
Documents	1304
References	48089
Keywords Plus (ID)	1783
Author's Keywords (DE)	2119
Authors	1997
Authors of single-authored docs	506
AUTHORS COLLABORATION	
Single-authored docs	676
Co-Authors per Doc	2.03
International co-authorships %	15.64

Source: Biblioshiny

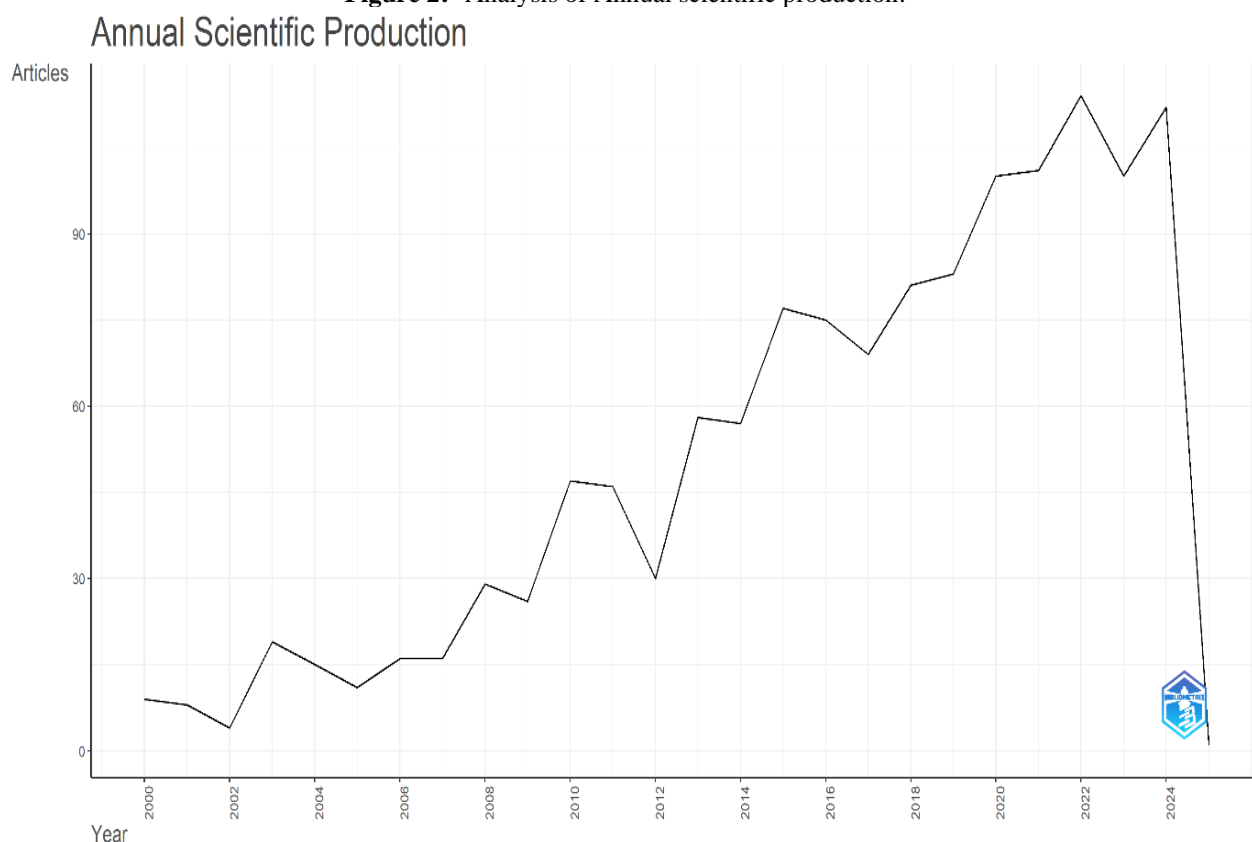
The above table illustrates a comprehensive coverage of subject with the data considered for a period of twenty-four years for analysis. A total of 1304 documents were selected for the study out 786 sources such as Journals, books

and conference proceedings with 1997 authors contributions and single authored works accounting to 676 reflecting 33.85% independent contributions. The total amount of citations was 48089 showing rich citations network with keywords plus of 1783 and author keywords of 2119 provide insights into thematic diversity and areas focussed in the research. International co-authorships accounts to 15.64% indicating a fair degree of cross-border collaboration enhancing quality and global relevance of the research.

**Table 2:-** Analysis of annual scientific production.

Year	Articles	Year	Articles	Year	Articles	Year	Articles
2000	9	2006	16	2012	30	2018	81
2001	8	2007	16	2013	58	2019	83
2002	4	2008	29	2014	57	2020	100
2003	19	2009	26	2015	77	2021	101
2004	15	2010	47	2016	75	2022	114
2005	11	2011	46	2017	69	2023	100
						2024	112

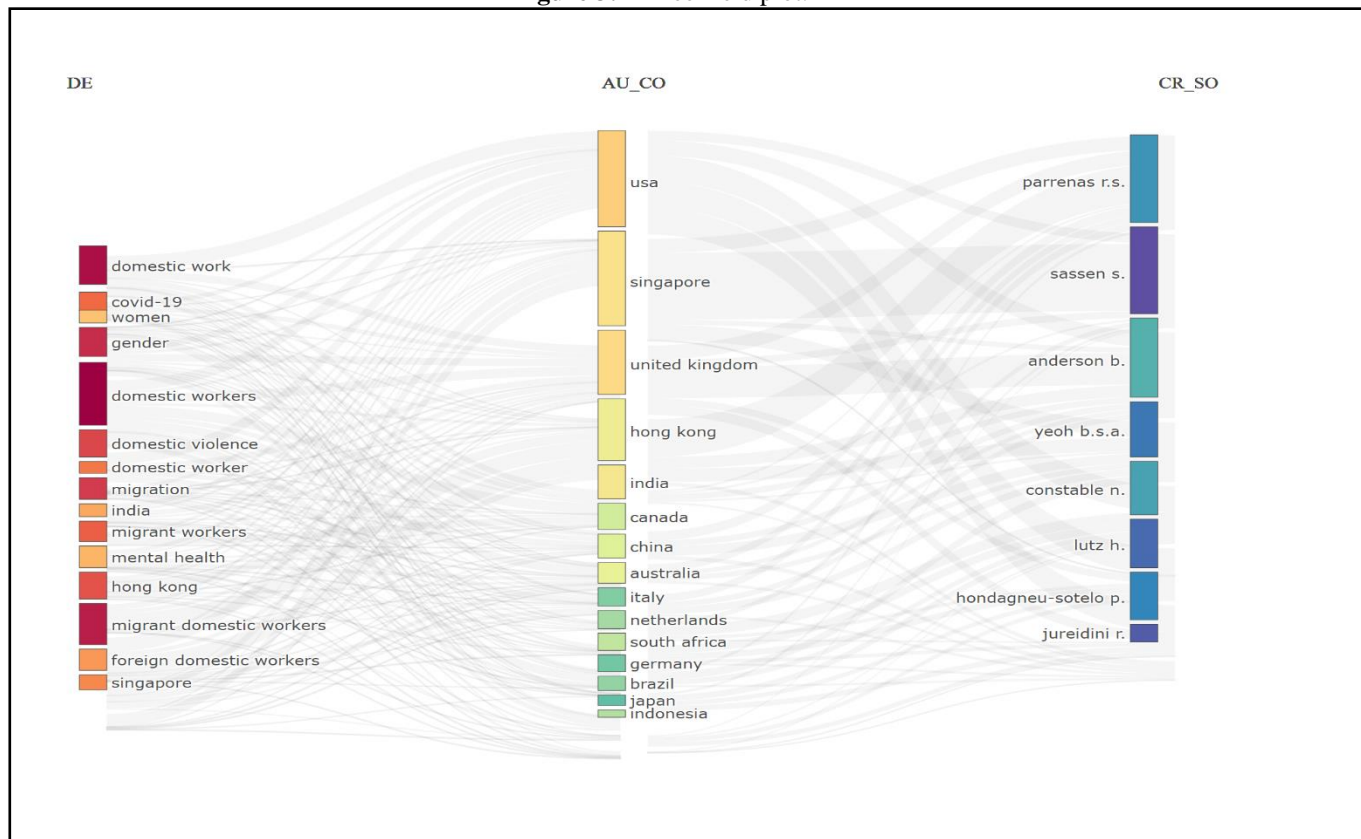
**Figure 2:-** Analysis of Annual scientific production.



Source: Biblioshiny

Figure 2 illustrates publication trend over twenty-four years. Initial years starting from 2000 publications were relatively low, with a moderate growth seen from 2006 onwards, from 2012 there is significant expansion in publications highlighting growing importance due to increase in paid labour workforce and very sharp, noticeable increase in publications from the year 2018 to the peak with three-digit consistent research work on this topic, which reflects on technological advancement, policy developments and global challenges.

Figure 3:- Three-field plot.



Source: Biblioshiny

Figure 3 highlights global research trends in topics related to domestic workers with dominant keywords being domestic workers, gender, domestic violence, migration and mental health. It also demonstrates how research from specific countries particularly highlights contributors being United States of America (USA), Singapore, United Kingdom (UK), Hong Kong, India, Canada most active contributors, given their central position aligns with particular theme which guides researchers about influential sources and collaborations.

Table 3:- Top 10 Relevant Sources.

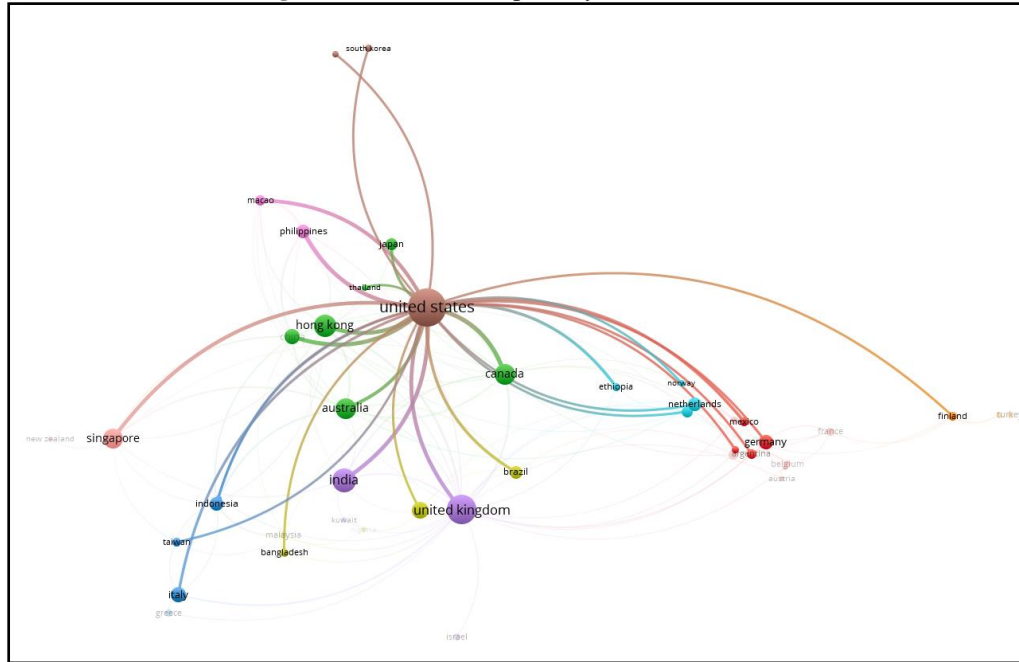
Sources	Articles
ASIAN AND PACIFIC MIGRATION JOURNAL	22
ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL WEEKLY	21
JOURNAL OF ETHNIC AND MIGRATION STUDIES	20
AMERICAN BEHAVIORAL SCIENTIST	13
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH AND PUBLIC HEALTH	13
STUDIES IN GLOBAL SOCIAL HISTORY	13
IRREGULAR MIGRANT DOMESTIC WORKERS IN EUROPE: WHO CARES?	12
TOWARDS A GLOBAL HISTORY OF DOMESTIC AND CAREGIVING WORKERS	12
INTERNATIONAL LABOUR REVIEW	11
ASIAN JOURNAL OF WOMEN'S STUDIES	10
INTERNATIONAL LABOR AND WORKING-CLASS HISTORY	10

Source: Biblioshiny

Table 3 shows highest publications contributing to research with Asian and pacific migration journal produced highest articles (n 22), Economic and political weekly (n 21), journal of ethnic and migration studies (n 20),

American behavioural scientist, international journal of environmental research and public health and studies on global social history contribute (n 13), Irregular migrant domestic workers in Europe: who cares? And towards global history of domestic and caregiving workers (n 12), international labour review (n 11), Asian journal of women's studies and international labour and working-class history with 10 articles.

**Figure 4:-** Co-authorship Analysis with Countries.

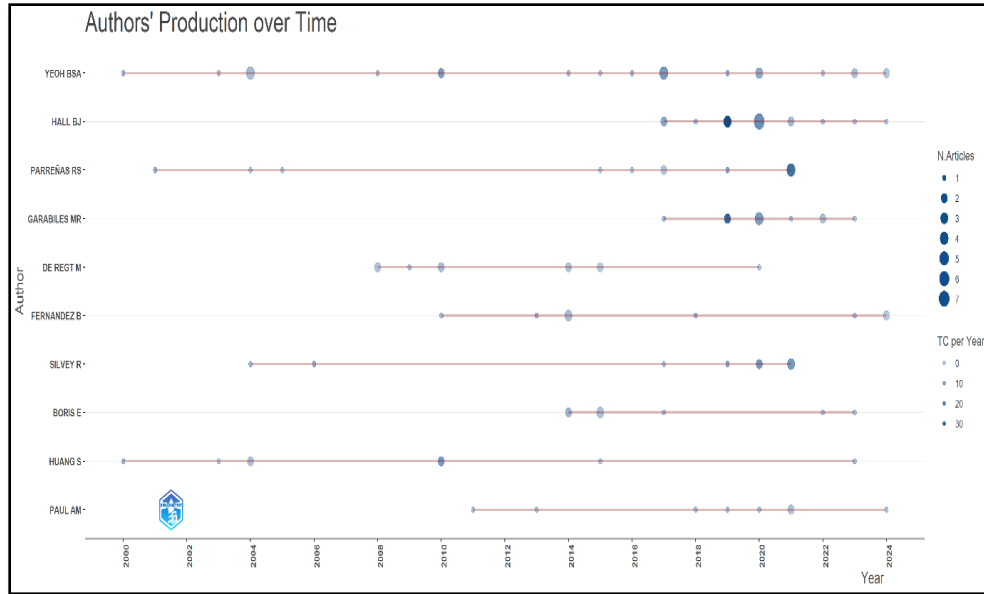


Source: VOS viewer

The figure 4 examines the collaborative relationships between countries based on authored research outputs in VOS viewer. It provides valuable insights into global research partnerships and the geographic distribution of collaborative efforts in this discipline, thereby strengthening international partnerships. Here, USA, UK, India, Hong Kong, Australia, Canada, Singapore, and South Africa are actively collaborating with other countries with leading contributors in research of this field.

**Figure 5:-** Authors Production over time.





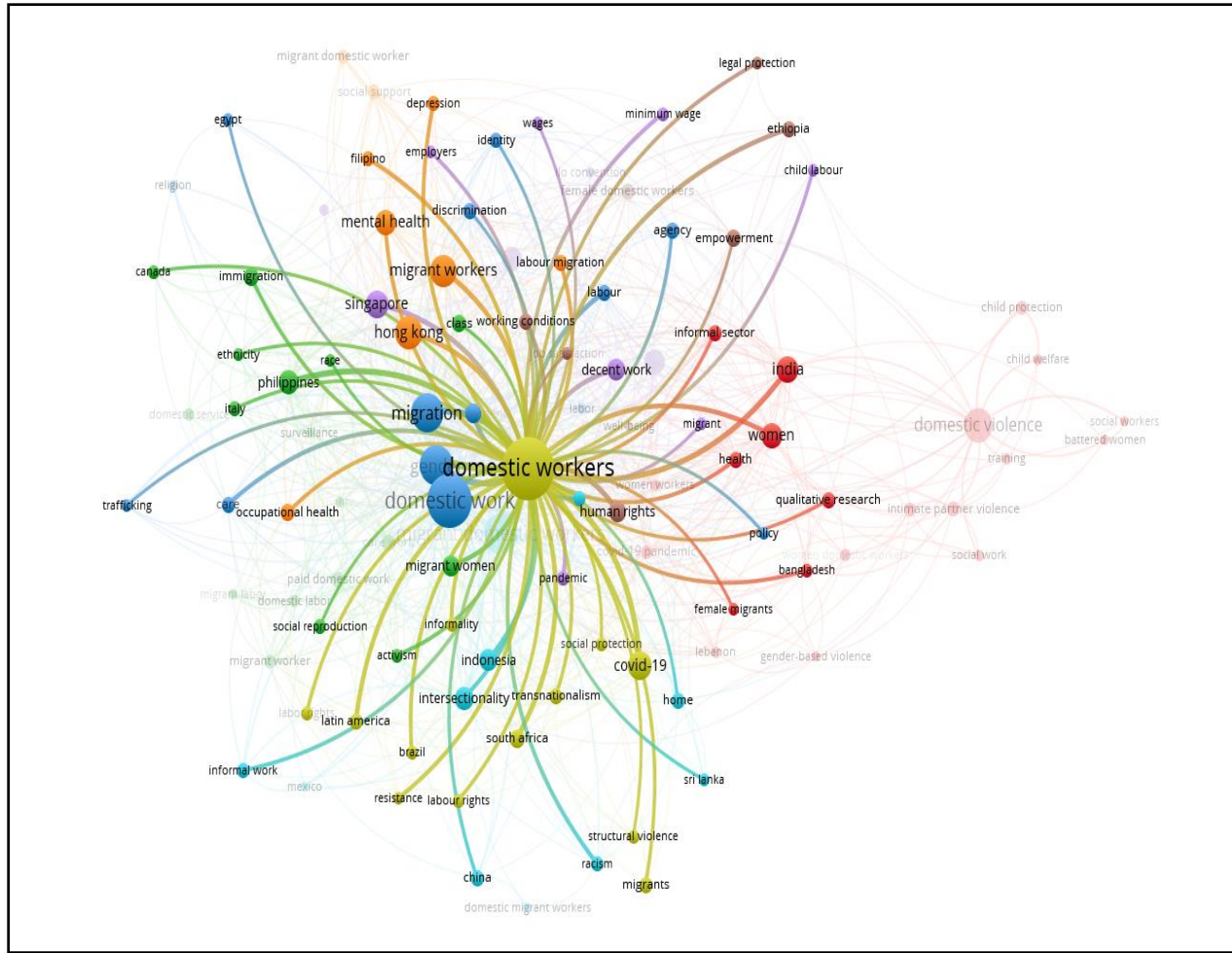
Source: Biblioshiny

The figure 5 represents the publication activity of key author over period of time in the research domain related to socio-economic status of domestic workers. Each row represents the work of the author and bubble size indicates the number of publications in a given year, darker bubble represents higher citations.

Articles pertaining to socio-economic status started from the year 2000 with Yeoh BSA and Parrenas RS had their publication from 2000 and 2001, Halls BJ and Garabiles MR started their publications in 2017 onwards had significant impacts. Highest contributors with significant citation impact are Yeoh BSA, Hall BJ and Parrenas RS and Garabiles MR and De Regt M have contributed consistently with comparatively lower overall impact. Research publications have increased post 2010, indicating scholarly attention is increasing in this field.

**Figure 6:-** Co-occurrence Analysis Using Author Keywords.

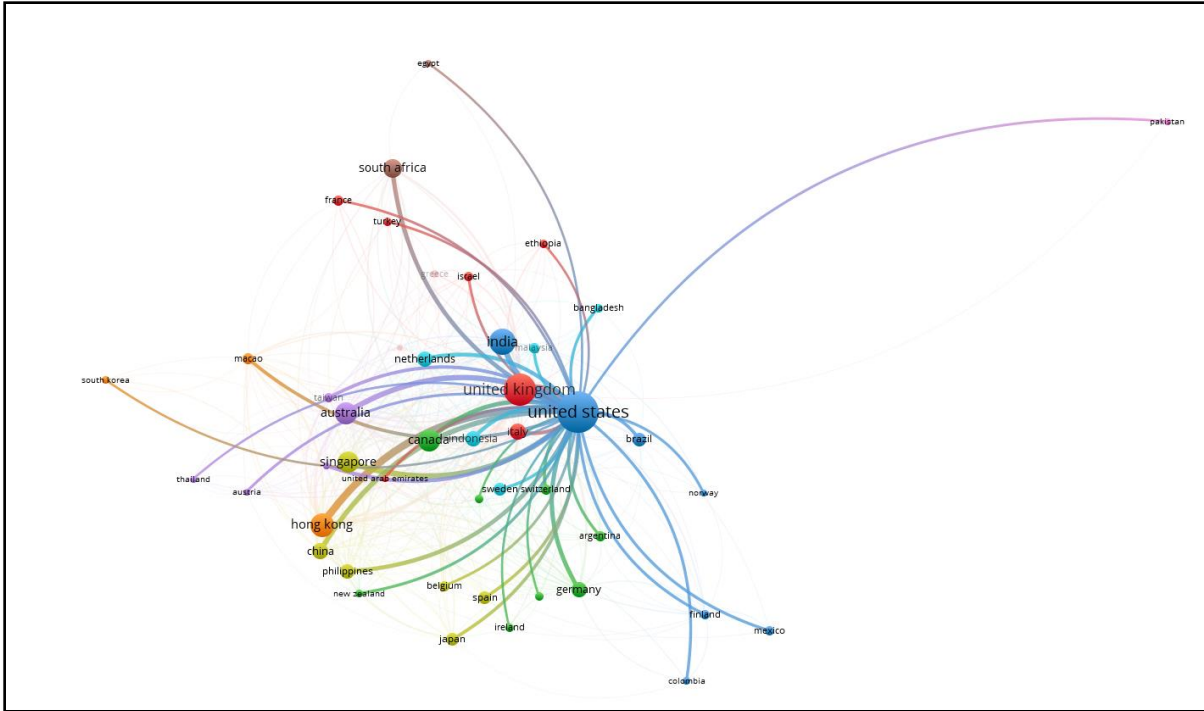




Source: VOS viewer

Figure 6 illustrates Co-occurrence Analysis Using Author Keywords in VOSviewer is a robust approach in Examining the foundational framework of a research domain. It represents dominant topics being researched, their emerging trends and interdisciplinary linkages and potential gaps yet to explored. Here, prominent topics being explored are domestic workers as major keyword with frequency of 153, implying “domestic workers” (n 153) as major cluster, followed by domestic work (n 113), migrant domestic worker (n 72), gender (n 59), migration (n 58), domestic violence (n 50), migrant workers (n 37), foreign domestic workers (n 25) and women (n 23) need for explorations in the areas like social protection, mental health, occupational health, wages and job satisfaction.

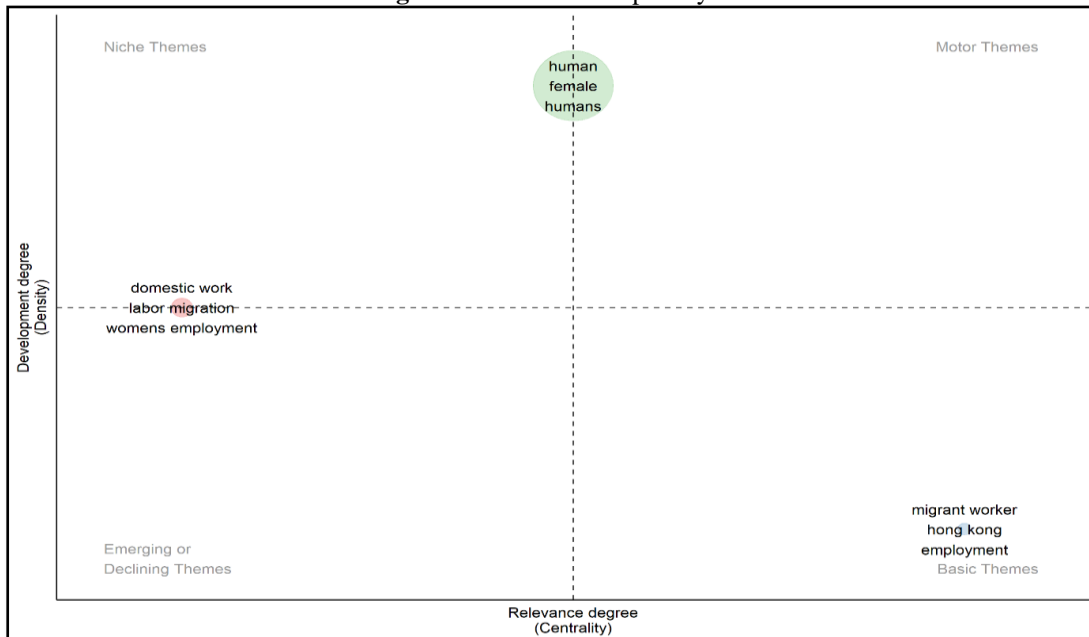
**Figure 7:-** Citation’s countrywise.



Source: VOS viewer

Figure 7 displays Citation’s country wise. As viewed in clusters United States of America has highest citations (n 4571) followed by United Kingdom (n 2036), Hong Kong (n 987), Canada (n 860), Australia (n 855), Italy (n 614), Philippines and Germany (n 504), India (n 446) and Netherlands (n 371). It is evident that USA and UK have highest collaboration with rest of the countries in this field.

**Figure 8:-** Thematic map analysis.

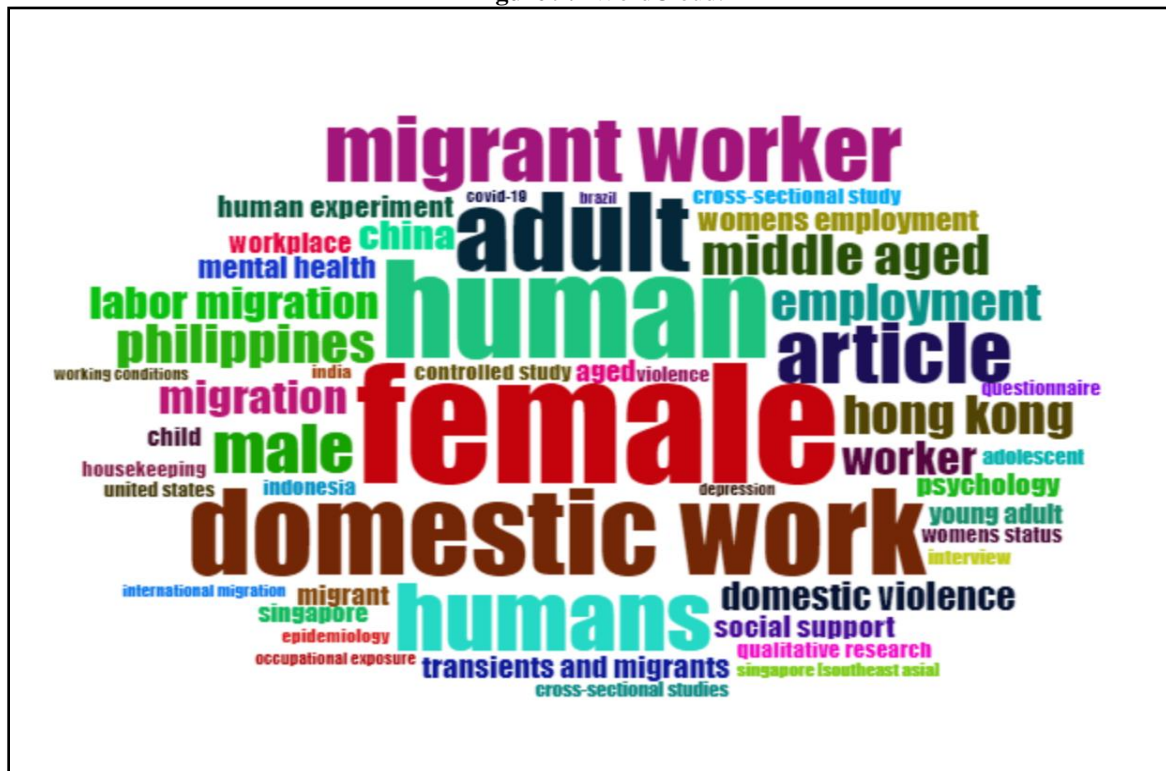


Source: Biblioshiny

Figure 8 discusses themes explored so far. The Thematic map analysis illustrates visually representation and analysis of themes in bibliometric data drawn through Scopus in our study. It is very useful in identifying and exploring key themes and their interconnections within a field of study.

The thematic map is classified into 4 quadrants, top-right is called "Motor themes" highlighting they are well-developed themes and very important to research domain. Top-left is "Niche themes" implying specialised, well-developed themes with limited influence. Bottom-right is "Basic themes" revealing foundational themes and not well-developed and lastly bottom-left called "Emerging or declining themes" showing areas either developing or losing its relevance. There is a potential correlation between "domestic work" and "labour migration". Furthermore, domestic work is falling in the niche theme quadrant suggesting it has been less explored. Women employment in domestic work is emerging theme indicating they feel empowered, as they are able to financially contribute to their home.

Figure 9:- WordCloud.



Source: Biblioshiny

WordCloud in Figure 9 is most frequently occurred keyword in bibliometric dataset, it helps researchers to identify important themes, concepts within articles. Each word depending on size indicate how frequently they have been used in the research. For the purpose of study, we have selected keyword plus with a display of 50. Female (n 238), human (n 192) domestic work (n 172), adult (n 156), migrant worker (n 129) are largest themes used as central themes in the dataset. Themes such as mental health (n 44), social support (n 43), Workplace (n 40), Working conditions (n 24), Women status (n 32), occupational exposure (n 24) depression (n 23) are less explored.

### Discussions:-

The discussion on this paper relates to bibliometric information of published articles in Scopus database related to socio-economic status of domestic workers starting from 1913-2024. There were 12,733 articles found and for the purpose of study, it was further narrowed down to the year of 2000 to 2024 considering 1304 articles for a period of twenty-four years. Publications were relatively low in the initial years of 2000 and moderately increased in 2006. We see a surge in publications from 2012 and from 2018 steep growth due to technological advancement, policy developments for informal sectors adding to pandemic situations.

The key themes identified through analysis for domestic workers is “economic vulnerability”, women move into employment due to their low economic conditions (Ally, 2010; Jureidini&Moukarbel, 2004; Garabiles et al., 2019). “Migration” has been another source of income to domestic workers to improve their living conditions at home country, however their well-being is determined through creation of labour standards, regulation of migration and policies in the host country, on contrary absence of these could have adverse effects on domestic workers well-being as they leave their families and stay far away (Parrenas, 2005; Anderson, 2007; Yeoh & Huang, 2000). “Labour rights” the cost of living in overseas are relatively more compared to home country, thus making it very important frame standardised labour laws to protect domestic workers labour rights. (Silvey, 2006). “Gender equality”, the housewives in the home country migrate to host country for employment opportunities, they sell their domestic labour in the market and become breadwinners, however they continue to carry gender-specific responsibilities within their families (Lan, 2023), and “social protection” are very crucial to ensure the absence of abuse the domestic workers face in host country (Anderson, 2013).

Nevertheless, there are some important underexplored themes like digital labour, Artificial intelligence, automation in domestic work and impact of technological changes need to be discovered. Domestic workers are outsourced from Philippines, India to developed economies like USA, UK, Hong Kong and Canada due to specific migrant domestic worker visa programs and thus extensive studies prevailed here on topics like labour rights, migration policies, legal protection to socio-economic challenges (Dinkelman & Ranchhod (2012); Figueiredo et.al (2018); Jiang & Korczynski (2021); Amrith (2022)). The author asserts extensive migration from third world economies to developed economies could be result of better facilities in the developed economy.

The highest publication is witnessed in Asian and Pacific Migration Journal, Economic and Political Weekly, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies. Furthermore, these countries have well-established academic institutions and support research funding for these studies (Goh et al., (2017); Yeoh & Huang (2010); Silvey & Parrenas (2020); Pande (2012); Parrenas et.al (2019)). Co-authorship provides valuable insights on research partnership and collaborative efforts in inter and multi-disciplinary across globe sharing economic and social difficulties encountered by domestic workers. The analysis reveals that countries like USA, UK, Australia, Canada, Hong Kong are the host countries requiring migrant domestic workers from lower income countries and India, Philippines have high concentrated of domestic workers who migrate to host countries for employment, thus they have established strong network contributing highest impact on publications with robust academic ties (Garabiles et al. (2019); Silvey & Parrenas (2020); Hall et al. (2019); Neetha & Palriwala (2011); Sarti & Scrinzi (2010)). This facilitates knowledge exchange, knowledge-sharing, comparative studies, policy recommendations. Yet, some of the developing economies exhibit limited participation, calling for greater international academic engagement and funding opportunities.

### **Research gap**

There has been an extensive work on socio-economic status of domestic workers, however there is limited understanding of research evolution. Lack of comprehensive data-driven bibliometric analysis that integrates global research trends, mapping of research themes, evaluation of publications trends acts as a barrier for better understanding and scope of research. Deficiency of impactful analysis and citations from most influential authors and publications are hindering key research contribution. Most of the studies are from USA, UK, Australia, Hong Kong, Philippines relating only to migrant domestic workers. The predominant focus is on gender bias, social protection, migration. Themes such as mental health, occupational health, wage and job satisfaction are still underexplored. Hence, comprehensive thematic mapping of literature is remains unexamined. AI and automation displacing manual domestic work, mental health concerns and post pandemic recovery are some emerging, under researched topics that has largely been overlooked and requires more research in these themes.

### **Implications and future scope of study**

Identification of key themes, influential authors and their publications help researchers to navigate existing body of knowledge more effectively. This provides more insights for policy makers, labour rights advocacy across borders to frame policies concerning to improve domestic workers working conditions, decent wages and legal protections. Future research can include comparative bibliometric analysis across different regions and policies to understand socio-economic conditions of global domestic workers. It also provides insights in integrating interdisciplinary from Economics, sociology, labour studies and technology to identify emerging challenges of AI and automation and digital labour platforms affecting domestic workers jobs.

**Limitations**

Bibliometric analysis on socio-economic status of domestic workers has several limitations. Our study is limited to Scopus database and excludes some of the valuable regional journals, governmental policy reports and labour union documents, and NGO publications. Citation counts and author, country impact introduces citation bias often favouring to research work from developed nations and institutions. Additionally, bibliometric analysis does not capture qualitative insights lived experiences, gender dynamics and policy implications which are very important for comprehensive understanding. As bibliometric analysis identifies historic trends, it limited ability to predict future trends and themes in the research such as AI driven household task or post pandemic labour right shifts.

**Conclusions:-**

The bibliometric analysis on the socio-economic status of domestic workers has revealed notable research trends by emphasising on the increasing volume of publications, identifying key words, themes, author contributions, influential journals that are impactful for the study. Despite its contribution, there are several unexplored areas such as digital labour, AI driven household tasks remain as research gap. This paves way to delve deeper into evolving socio-economic dynamics of domestic work through future scope of study. A more interdisciplinary and cross-cultural approach in future studies will be adding value. The findings of the study are very essential for policy makers, labour organisations to frame policies and bring labour reforms to boost working and living conditions of domestic workers. In conclusion, the ongoing research is very crucial to create global awareness and protect domestic workers rights and well-being.

**List Of Abbreviation**

VOSviewer - Visualization of Similarities

USA – United States of America

UK – United Kingdom

**Reference:-**

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