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WORKPLACE RELATIONSHIPS AND ECONOMIC SECURITY: A STUDY ON DOMESTIC WORKERS' LIVELIHOODS IN BANGALORE, KARNATAKA - PILOT STUDY

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Abstract

The pilot study investigates the role of workplace dynamics relationships in shaping economic security of domestic workers in Bangalore, Karnataka. Primary data was collected by employing cross-sectional design through structured questionnaire from 79 respondents to examine how employer-employee dynamics influence job security and socio-economic status of domestic workers through correlation-regression analysis. The findings reveal positive correlation between employer-employee relationship and key indicators non-wage support ($r=0.653$), job security ($r=0.616$) and income ($r=0.620$). Regression analysis confirms that the employer-employee relationship accounts for 38.5% of the variance in income levels ($R^2 = 0.385$, $p < 0.05$), with a coefficient (B) value of 0.673, indicating a substantial impact on socio-economic status. Further mediation analysis demonstrates that both employer-provided non-wage support (effect size = 0.4238) and job security (effect size = 0.4512) partially mediate the relationship between employer-employee dynamics and socio-economic well-being, thus validating hypothesis the employer-employee relationship significantly influences the socio-economic status of domestic workers, and job security and non-wage support serve as mediators in this relationship. Furthermore, study suggest policy recommendations to enhance job stability, employer accountability, and social protection mechanisms, aiming to improve the livelihoods and dignity of domestic workers in urban India.

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Introduction:-

Domestic workers constitute to major workforce in informal sector of Indian economy. there are approximately 4 million domestic workers in India, and 53 million worldwide with 83% of them being women (ILO, 2018; Luebker2012). This workforce is feminized in nature, because of their innate character of caring and bearing social responsibility of household, they are undervalued and go through vulnerable conditions in workplace. Their nature of work isn't defined and thus, there are not recognised as formal workforce. They often work for multiple employers with no predefined timings. They engage in various household chores ranging from cleaning, dusting, washing vessels, laundry, child and elderly care taking.

Domestic workers are usually hired by female employers who have moved into paid labour and looking for easing the burden on household chores. Thus, these workers are either part-timer working in multiple houses for multiple employers or full timers working for single household for single employer. They are also live-in domestic workers who reside in employers house and are more vulnerable to exploitation like long hours of working, no space for privacy, they are physical and emotionally away from their families. Nguyen (2007) examines how the effect of economic reforms led to withdrawal of state subsidies on health, education and social services forced women from rural to migrate to urban for employment opportunities and landed as domestic workers in urban setting forcing them to go through vulnerable conditions and issues with work-life balance in Vietnam. Study highlight need for better laws and recognition to protect domestic workers rights and improve their working conditions. Holtzhausen& Fourie (2009) urge that relationship at work is not defined based on rules and salary, it is based on understanding, trust and shared belief. Watson (1929) advocates use of terms "household employee" instead of "maid" or "servant" promotes equality and dignity. Ehrlich (1994) urges open communication and mutual respect would enhance productive and harmonious work environment in ever changing society.

Objectives:-

1. To examine the influence of the employer-employee relationship on job security among domestic workers.
2. To explore the interconnections between workplace dynamics and the income security of domestic workers.
3. To provide policy recommendations for improving job security and socio-economic conditions of domestic workers.

Review of Literature and Hypothesis Development

Holtzhausen& Fourie (2009) propose a model emphasizing that non-visual elements such as logos or branding of corporate identity through organisational values and objectives significantly impact employer-employee relationship in corporate company. Study highlights that when employee relate their personal value with organisation goal, they build trust and stay committed in their jobs.

Richard et al (2013) used a model with 4R's - Reciprocity, responsibility, regular updates and relationship as stewardship in building a significant impact on workplace relationships. Employees experience trust, satisfaction and fairness making them more committed at workplace. The communication plays a pivotal role in making workplace more positive and collaborative.

Xesha et al (2014) examines the positive relationships between employer and employee report higher levels of job satisfaction in Small, medium and micro enterprises of South Africa. Management strategies such as motivation, incentives, transparent communication are crucial to fosters productive environment.

Gurtoo (2015) examines how workplace dynamics and employer relationships impact the economic well-being of domestic workers in Karnataka. The findings of the study highlight that job clarity, employer non-wage support, collective power significantly enhance their well-being and underscores empowerment and legislative policy enforcement to protect these workers.

Subramanian (2017) examines the organisational strategies impact employer-employee relationship. His study emphasize flexibility and adaptability should be employed to maintain positive environment in this dynamic world, which could be attained through communication and mutual understanding between employer and employee.

Salami &Meherali (2018) explores the relationship between employers from Canada and caregivers hired from developing countries. The migrant workers who are reside in employers house prefer to be treated as one of the family members however, some feel there should be they should be limited to their professional roles as these caregivers perform emotional labour beyond their contracts and can be misused. The study underscores clearer labour policies and protections for migrant domestic workers and caregivers.

Richard et al (2018) highlights the nature of relationship between employer and employee can significantly impact their productivity either positively or negatively. Strong relationship enhances performance, job satisfaction and overall healthy environment.

H1: Employer-employee relationship has a significant impact on socio-economic status of domestic workers.

Pramberger (2021) examines domestic workers familial connections with their employers can be subjected to imbalances of power, which can adversely affect their professional lives. Expecting them to be loyal, availability beyond work hours and tasks. Study underscores need for policy protection for these workers to ensure fairness and dignity within household employment setting.

Sinha et.al (2020) examines the migrant domestic workers vulnerable conditions in seven states of India. Study highlights the work of these workers are undervalued, exploited with low wages due to absence of policies to protect them. The intersection of gender, caste, class and migration status limits their access to social security.

Mauno & Kinnunen (2010) reveals differences of cognitive (thoughts about job loss) and affective job (emotional response) insecurity which is different from gender and job sector. Public sector feels more secured when compared to private sector, men and women perceive job threats differently. Furthermore, study highlights personal factors and workplace conditions shape the feeling of job insecurity. Workers in less stable jobs get emotionally affected which could be mitigated through better support and communication.

Ngwama& Onyekwere (2013) unveils the working conditions and employment relationships of domestic workers in Nigeria. Absence of formal employment contracts have led to job insecurity, vulnerability and exploitation which have often resulted in pay reductions, non-payment of wages and changes in work agreement. Study urges for social protection and policy intervention to improve their conditions.

Bhattacharjee and Goswami (2019) reveal how the informal relationship between of employer-employee in domestic work can often lead job insecurity and income instability. The employers no doubt empathize the workers situation but doesn't really translate to better labour conditions or legal protection. Study calls for policy reforms in recognising the domestic work as legal and formal work.

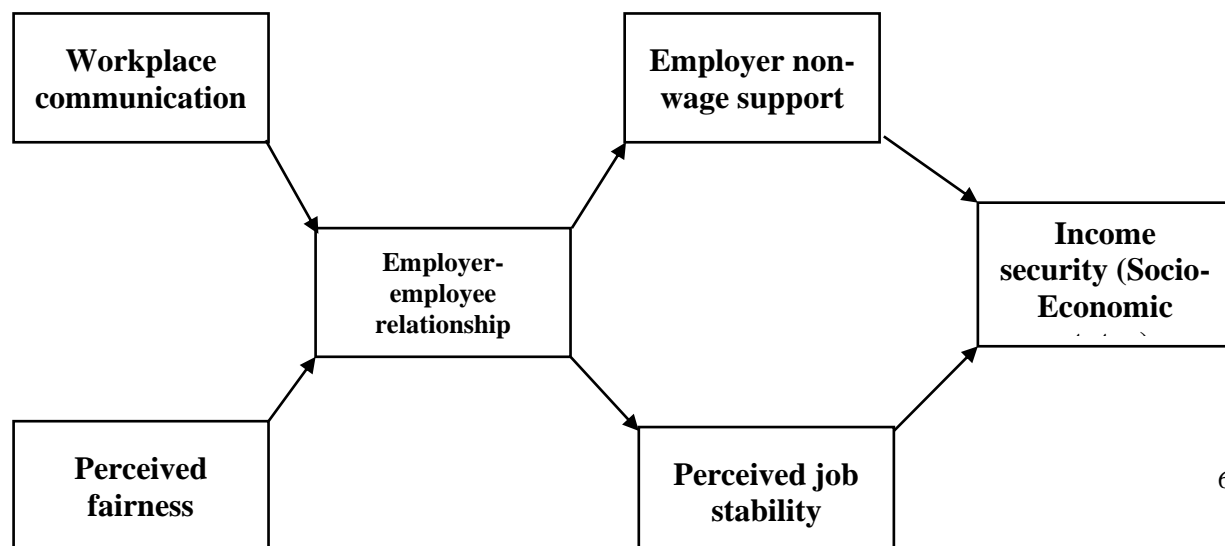
Israni (2025) explores multi-faceted problems associated with domestic workers focussing on informal employment, lack of legal framework, poor working conditions. Study reveals intervention of policy to improve their conditions by recognising them as formal work, ensuring fair wages and strong implementation mechanism to ensure dignity, job security and income stability for domestic workers.

H2: Job security mediates between Employer-employee relationship and socio-economic status.

Methodology:-

The study used a quantitative design to examine the employer-employee relationship and job security mediating between employer-employee relationship and income security of domestic workers. A convenient sampling was conducted through survey - structured questionnaire with 79 domestic workers in Bangalore, Karnataka as part of pilot testing. The questionnaire administered demographic details with exploration workplace communication, perceived fairness as predictors for independent variable - employer-employee relationship, employers non-wage support along with perceived job stability were considered as mediating factors and income security as dependent variable. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS (regression).

Conceptual framework



Hypothesis 1:

Employer-employee relationship has a significant impact on socio-economic status of domestic workers.

Hypothesis 2:

Job security mediates between Employer-employee relationship and socio-economic status.

Results and Discussion:-**1. Demographic details**

Table 1 discusses about demographic details of 79 sample collected from female domestic workers residing and working in Bangalore. Demographic details are mentioned below. The age distribution shows that the respondents are from 18-30 years (23%), 31-40 years (25%), 41-50 years (26%), 51-60 (14%), 61-70 (12%). The marital status was classified into Married (75%), Unmarried (15%) and Widows (10%). Further, highest education was classified into Graduate (8%), Higher secondary (12%), Illiterate (58%), Middle school (11%), Secondary school (10%), Years of experience range from 01-05 years (15%), 06-10 years (23%), 11-20 years (13%), 21-30 years (29%) and 31-40 years (20%). Domestic workers salary was 500-10,000 (71%), 10,001-20,000 (12%) and 20,001-30,000 (17%). Type of employment was full-time being 41% and Part-time being 59%.

Table 1:- Demographic details.

Variable		Percentage
Age	18-30	23
	31-40	25
	41-50	26
	51-60	14
	61-70	12
Marital Status	Married	75
	Unmarried	15
	Widows	10
Highest Education	Graduate	8
	Higher Secondary	12
	Illiterate	58
	Middle school	11
	Secondary school	10
Years of Experience	01-05	15
	06-10	23
	11-20	13
	21-30	29
	31-40	20
Earnings	500-10,000	71
	10,001-20,000	12
	20,001-30,000	17
Type of Employment	Full-time	41
	Part-time	59

Domestic workers choose domestic work as profession because of absence of male family member, easy availability of job, Insufficient family income, lack of skills, unemployed male family member and for being financially independent.

2. Reliability and Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 presents the reliability statistics for the set of 16 items in the survey questionnaire measured with Cronbach's Alpha. 16 items were used to measure the key variables. The Cronbach's Alpha was 0.914, indicating a very good internal consistency of the items used and suggesting the items are reliable for measuring the key variables.

Table 2:- Reliability statistics of the questionnaire.

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.914	16

Source: SPSS output

Table 3 further presents the descriptive statistics of the items measured in terms of means and standard deviation.

Table 3:- Item Descriptive Statistics.

Variable	Description	Mean	Std. Deviation
WC1	My employer listens to my concerns and needs	2.23	0.697
WC2	I can openly communicate with my employer without fear of losing my job	2.27	0.796
PF1	My employer treats me with fairness and respect	2.37	1.015
PF2	I feel valued and appreciated for my work	2.23	0.784
PF3	My employer ensures timely and fair wages with increments	1.95	0.830
ENWS1	My employer grants me paid leaves	2.29	0.936
ENWS2	My employer support me during medical emergency	2.34	0.904
ENWS3	My employer sponsors my children education	2.27	0.693
ENWS4	My employer provides me non-wage support such as food, groceries	2.09	0.788
PJS1	I feel secure in my current job.	2.29	0.787
PJS2	My employer has assured me of continued employment	2.11	0.698
I1	My total monthly household income is sufficient to meet basic needs	2.24	0.738
I2	My living conditions have improved due to my job	2.10	0.672
I3	My job and income allow me to maintain a decent standard of living	2.28	0.715
I4	I can afford basic healthcare and education for my family	2.09	0.664
I5	My housing conditions are satisfactory	2.28	0.715

Source: SPSS output

The data from all the items of the variables is slightly left skewed, indicating potential high agreement (measured on a five-point Likert scale where 1- strongly agree and 5- strongly disagree). The mean value suggests that the responses of the domestic workers are primarily positive, indicating there is scope for deriving findings based on objective responses that can be generalised to a larger target population.

3. Correlation analysis

The findings of the correlation analysis are presented in Table 4.

Table 4:- Correlation analysis.

Correlations		Emp_Emp_Rel	Emp_Non_Wage	Job_Sec	Income
Emp_Emp_Rel	Pearson Correlation	1	.653**	.616**	.620**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	79	79	79	79
Emp_Non_Wage	Pearson Correlation	.653**	1	.764**	.748**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.000	0.000
	N	79	79	79	79
Job_Sec	Pearson Correlation	.616**	.764**	1	.801**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000		0.000
	N	79	79	79	79
Income	Pearson Correlation	.620**	.748**	.801**	1

	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	N	79	79	79	79

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS output

The findings of Table 4 indicate that there is a positive correlation between the employer-employee relationship and employer-non-wage support for domestic workers with $r = 0.653$. With $r = 0.616$, there is a positive correlation between job security and receiving non-wage support from employers. Income correlated positively with an employee-employer relationship, with $r = 0.620$. The strongest correlation was found between job security and the socio-economic status of domestic workers with $r = 0.801$. The p-value of all the correlations was within the specific limit of $p < 0.05$.

4. Regression Analysis

This study has used regression analysis to understand and quantify the relationship between independent variables (employer-employee relationship) and the socioeconomic status of domestic workers.

Table 5:- Employer-Employee Relationship and Socio-Economic status of domestic workers.

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.620 ^a	0.385	0.377	0.46024

a. Predictors: (Constant), Emp_Emp_Rel

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.711	0.220		3.227	0.002
	Emp_Emp_Rel	0.673	0.097	0.620	6.943	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Income

Source: SPSS output

The model summary in Table 5 indicates the R Square value of 0.385, indicating that the employer-employee relationship can predict 38.5% of changes in the DV (income) of domestic workers. The model is statistically significant with significance lower than the threshold value $p = 0.05$. The coefficient (B) value of 0.673 indicates that for every unit change in the employer-employee relationship, there is the possibility of a 0.673 increase in the socio-economic status of the workers. The findings establish that IV (employer-employee relationship) has a direct impact on the socioeconomic status of domestic workers (DV), thereby resulting in the acceptance of H1: Employer-employee relationship has a significant impact on the socio-economic status of domestic workers.

5. Mediation Analysis

This study relies on the mediation analysis to further explore the role of employer non-wage support and job security in mediating the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Table 6:- Mediation analysis 1.

***** DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y *****						
Direct effect of X on Y						
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	
.2496	.1052	2.3729	.0202	.0401	.4591	
Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:						
Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI			
Emp_N_W	.4238	.0915	.2390	.6026		

Source: SPSS output

Results of Table 6 indicate that employer non-wage support partially mediates the relationship between the employer-employee relationship and the socio-economic status of the workers. With an effect size of 0.4238, it can be noted that it boosts the direct relationship between the IV and DV (0.2496), thereby resulting in acceptance of H2: Employee Non-Wage Support mediates between Employer-employee relationship and socio-economic status.

Table 7:- Mediation analysis 2.

***** DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y *****										
Direct effect of X on Y										
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI					
.2222	.0912	2.4370	.0171	.0406	.4038					
Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:										
Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI							
Job_Sec	.4512	.0872	.2705	.6123						

Source: SPSS output

Results of Table 7 indicate that job security partially mediates the relationship between the employer-employee relationship and the socio-economic status of the workers. With an effect size of 0.4512, it can be noted that it boosts the direct relationship between the IV and DV (0.2222), thereby resulting in acceptance of H2: Job security mediates between Employer-employee relationship and socio-economic status.

Discussions:-

The regression analysis indicates that the employer-employee relationship significantly influences the socio-economic status of domestic workers. With the model accounting for 38.5% of the variation in income, it demonstrates a substantial link between the independent and dependent variables. This suggests that nurturing a positive employer-employee dynamic can notably enhance the economic well-being of domestic workers. Furthermore, the mediation analysis shows that job security partially mediates this relationship. Employer non-wage support partially mediates the relationship between the employer-employee relationship and the socio-economic status of the workers. With an effect size of 0.4238, it can be noted that it boosts the direct relationship between the IV and DV (0.2496). These findings state job security as a vital channel through which workplace relationships contribute to material well-being. These results are consistent with prior studies by Richard et al. (2013), Xesha et al. (2014), Gurtoo (2015), Richard et al. (2018), and Salami & Meherali (2018), who emphasized the importance of secure and respectful employment relationships. Domestic workers who perceive stability in their jobs are more likely to enjoy steady income and improved living standards. Thus, enhancing both relational and structural aspects of employment is key to uplifting the socio-economic conditions of domestic workers.

Implications of the findings

The study's findings suggest that decent employer-employee relationships have positive impact on socio-economic status of domestic workers, thus enhancing their economic well-being. This increases job security among domestic workers that contribute to their material well-being. The study's findings underscore the importance of fostering decent and respectful employer-employee relationships in the domestic work sector. A Positive and supportive relationships will contribute to improvement of domestic workers socio-economic status, enhancing a sense of dignity and belonging. Domestic workers experience increased motivation, satisfaction and long-term commitment to their roles.

Job security gives domestic workers a sense of stability and predict their incomes that helps them to plan financial, accessibility to healthcare, education and housing. The study urges for need for policy frameworks and awareness campaign that promote fair treatment, job protection and formal recognition of domestic workers.

Conclusion and Scope of Future Research:-

This study reveals the pivotal role of employer-employee relationships in shaping socio-economic status of domestic workers. The findings indicate positive and respectful relationship enhances workers' economic well-being and job

security partially mediating this relationship suggest secure jobs for domestic workers improving the income stability and strengthens healthy workplace dynamics. Furthermore, the study adds growing body of evidence calling for formal recognition and protection of domestic workers who often stay marginalised in policy and practice. Further research can be extended to other districts, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of regional variations. Also, incorporating employers perspective can offer more balanced and nuanced view of the employment relationship. Further studies can include more mediating and moderating variables like workplace discrimination, access to legal protection and emotional well-being.

Limitations:-

While the study provides valuable insights into the influence of employer-employee relationships and job security on socio-economic status of domestic workers, however it has the following limitations:

1. The sample size is 79, though adequate for basic analysis, may not capture the full diversity of domestic workers' experiences across various localities or employment settings.
2. The study was conducted exclusively in Bangalore
3. The research is based on perspectives of Domestic workers as employees.

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