



International  
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# Deficits in Decent Work

Employer perspectives and practices on  
the quality of employment in domestic  
work in urban India



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## ► Deficits in Decent Work

**Employer perspectives and practices on the quality of employment in domestic work in urban India**

Dr Gautam Bhan, Dr Divya Ravindranath, Antara Rai Chowdhury, Rashee Mehra, Divij Sinha, Amruth Kiran, and Teja Malladi

International Labour Organisation

Indian Institute for Human Settlements



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## ► Research team

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This report was authored by the Indian Institute for Human Settlements, India, for ILO. The team consisted of Dr Gautam Bhan, Dr Divya Ravindranath, Antara Rai Chowdhury,

Rashee Mehra, Divij Sinha, Amruth Kiran, and Teja Malladi. We would also like to acknowledge the contribution of Kinjal Sampat, also with IIHS during the early phases of this study.



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## ► Foreword

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**D**eclining female workforce participation rates in India has been an established cause for concern. According to an ILO Report on Care Work and Care Jobs for the Future of Decent Work (2018), family responsibilities were among the top reasons for women's inactivity in the labour market globally. Hence, understanding the dynamics of paid and unpaid domestic work within households is important to advance a decent work agenda in India and beyond. At the same time paid domestic work has become one of the growing areas of employment for women in India and elsewhere.

The ILO's 5R Framework for Decent Care Work to Recognise, Reduce, Redistribute unpaid care work, Reward care workers, and ensure Representation, access to social dialogue and collective bargaining for care workers offer guidance in measuring, identifying and addressing obstacles that inhibit access to paid work opportunities. They are all pertinent to advancing a decent work agenda for women workers belonging to different class and skill categories and making empowerment a reality.

Over the past decade, following the adoption of Convention No. 189 on Domestic Workers, research insights have emerged globally and in South Asia on working conditions of domestic workers and their role in the care economy of South Asia. These insights have translated into recommendations on the types of policy reforms that are needed towards formalisation and access to rights as workers. Yet we know very little about the paid and unpaid domestic work dynamics of household work and its influence on the employment relationship, beginning from mobility needed to meet the demand for jobs in the sector, recruitment, wage bargaining to working conditions, accessing social security, fundamental rights as workers and grievance redressal.

In South Asia, ILO's Work in Freedom programme has demonstrated successfully the use of a political economy lens to address forced labour conditions in vulnerable sectors, promote mobility for paid work with choice for women migrant workers and produce robust evidence to underpin policy efforts to push forward a decent

work agenda. In India, the WIF programme has extensively worked with ILO constituents, especially trade unions to address deficits in access to decent work for domestic workers.

This study report is an important contribution towards understanding the employers' perspectives on existing working conditions and practices relating to recruitment, income security, employment security and social security available to domestic workers. Drawing upon multiple rounds of survey targeting almost 10,000 households in Bengaluru and Chennai, the findings of the study will allow regulators to understand employer and worker motivations better, as well as how it allows worker organisations to better tune their advocacy strategies to the local and socially realities of domestic workers' employers.

This study conducted by Indian Institute of Human Settlements complements a previous study conducted in 2016-17 by Institute for Human Development focusing on New Delhi and Mumbai. While similar questions have been posed to aid a comparative perspective, the IIHS study builds forward on the earlier methodology by using an innovative urban sampling technique and drawing the sample from households belonging to different income categories, as balancing paid and unpaid work at home is a challenge for women across different class categories. I sincerely appreciate the efforts put in by the IIHS research team to produce three exhaustive reports based on the study, despite several challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic in data collection and analysis and encourage readers to engage and reflect on the important findings.

I would also like to express deep appreciation for my colleagues' efforts, especially Dr. Neha Wadhawan, National Project Coordinator of ILO's WIF programme in India, and Mr. Igor Bosc the Chief Technical Adviser of the WIF programme for their initiative in conceiving, designing and overseeing the completion of the study with IIHS.

**Ms Dagmar Walter**

Director, ILO DWT South Asia/CO New Delhi



## ► Executive summary

The key question of this study is to ask: *what is the quality of employment of paid domestic work in urban India?* We measured quality by looking at income security (wages, bonus, increments); employment and work security (terms of termination, terms of assistance in illness or injury); and social security (terms of paid leave, medical insurance, and maternity entitlements). We additionally assessed channels of recruitment of paid domestic workers.

We did so for 3,067 households in two large metropolitan Indian cities– Bengaluru and Chennai – with variations across socio-economic status, caste, religion, neighbourhood type and across households with and without women working for wages. This Executive Summary outlines key findings and implications.

This report is the second of a three-part series, with the first report looking at the total number of paid and unpaid hours it takes to reproduce a household in urban India, and the third assessing employer motivations, beliefs and perspectives about domestic work and workers.

### FINDINGS

#### 1. Recruitment

1.1. Reasons for hiring: More households reported engaging paid domestic workers to free time for care work (such as child and/or elderly-care; 35 per cent in Bengaluru, 40 per cent in Chennai) rather than to engage in paid work outside the home (13.5 per cent in Bengaluru, 8.5 per cent in Chennai)

1.2. Thickly spatial and social markets: Recruitment happens almost entirely through reference and referral systems at neighbourhood scale. Nearly 67 per cent of employers in Bengaluru and 59 per cent in Chennai employed workers who worked in the same area, in a neighbour's home or even in the same home before the current employers.

These recruitment practices make “reputation” disproportionately important for domestic workers, with implications for organising and relations with employers.

1.3. Identity-based hiring: Caste, region, and religion remain significant factors in hiring in a deeply socially segmented labour market. Nearly 25 per cent of high income households in Bengaluru said caste was “very important” in making recruitment decisions, and only 14 per cent said it was “not important at all.” Chennai reported patterns more similar to other studies in Delhi and Mumbai that reported that it was a less significant factor.

1.4. Attributes, not skills: Employers do not seem to consider domestic work to be skilled or require expertise. Significance was instead given to attributes such as being trustworthy, loyal or responsible. These were harder to define and employers retain significant discretion in deciding how to determine these attributes both during recruitment and employment.

#### 2. Wages and income

2.1. The attraction of domestic work is evident – in 50 per cent of employer households, median salary for domestic workers are at 5000 Indian rupees per month and above per household, with workers working in multiple households.

2.2. Earnings remain inadequate, however, for most domestic workers outside the upper 30 per cent. We looked at how many HH does one have to work in to reach the state minimum wage for domestic workers. For Karnataka, the bottom 30 per cent would have to work in four households, and the bottom 10 per cent in six. In Tamil Nadu, the bottom 30 per cent would have to work in four households, and the bottom 10 per cent in eight. If we compare this to Delhi, where minimum wages for domestic workers are higher, then the bottom 30 per cent of workers in both cities would have to work in 5-6 households.

2.3. Despite evidence of inadequate income, employers believe they pay “generously” (55 per cent in Bengaluru) versus “adequately” (38 per cent in Bengaluru). This portends poorly for expectations of wage increases without significant pressure on employers from, for example, collective bargaining.

2.4. It is important to note that it is tasks and hours that are the most important factor in

determining wages rather than the nature of the task or the quality of work. This has implications for the objects of organising when comparing, for example, fighting for a higher minimum wage versus using rate cards per task as some domestic worker organisations have started doing.

### 3. Non-wage benefits

3.1. Maternity entitlements: Employers showed little support for expansive maternity entitlements. In Bengaluru, 36 per cent support some form of maternity, but 31 per cent also support one time lump sum payment and discontinuation. One in ten households suggest dismissal.

3.2. Illness: Employers showed much wider support for illness and injury. Nearly 40 per cent employers in Bengaluru and 37 per cent in Chennai said employers should support expenses of treatment directly. A further 30 per cent in both cities supported sick leave.

3.3. Leave: A large number of workers had access to forms of leave but rarely took them. Nearly 70 per cent employers in Bengaluru and 80 per cent in Chennai offered some form of weekly, annual, or holiday leave. Yet, in Bengaluru, employers reported that 23-31 per cent “rarely” or “never” took weekly leave. In Chennai, the numbers are similar at 16-28 per cent.

### Implications and lessons

**1. Spatialised and segmented labour markets:** One key finding is of the recruitment processes being deeply spatialised at the neighbourhood scale, suggesting that both analysis as well as policy action must root themselves at this scale. It is not only recruitment but wage determination and norms around non-wage benefits that are determined at neighbourhood scale. Recruitment remains strongly marked by caste, gender, religion and region-based identity markers, rendering it both thickly social and spatial.

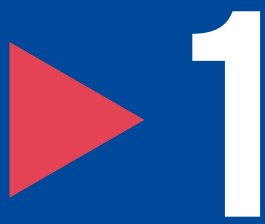
**2. Socialisation of norms around domestic work:** An emphasis on personality attributes rather than skills as well as the notion of domestic work being “part time” and “unskilled” abound in the sector, indicating that any policy moves to improve worker’s income, wage, or social security will require socialisation with employers to shift the current under valuation of domestic work. This should precede debates on enforcement of rules, laws or policies.

**3. Forms of formalisation matter:** In debates on whether domestic work should become more “formal” in order to be less precarious, our findings indicate that forms of formalisation matter. For example, should income support be formalised through minimum wage laws or rate cards for tasks in a rapidly changing market? Should support for illness be structured as health insurance or deepen existing practices for payment of medical expenses?

**4. Social identity and domestic work:** The disproportionate burden of “reputation” in a tightly controlled labour market as well as continuing effect of caste, gender, region and religion imply that improving the quality of employment must also take on larger questions of prejudice, discrimination and humiliation beyond just improvements in material conditions and outcomes of work.

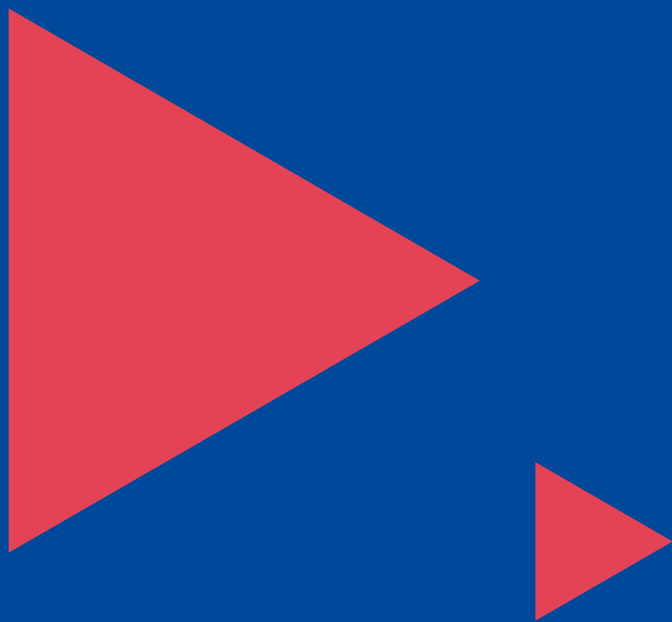
**5. The need to deepen and expand collective action:** Looking at employer perspectives suggests the urgent need to deepen and expand collective action in order to improve the quality of employment within domestic work. Employers do not seem to believe that the wage and non-wage benefits they provide are inadequate, and also indicate a deep under-valuing of the labour and skill involved in domestic work, indicating that without external pressure, there are unlikely to be changes in the conditions of employment for workers.





# Introduction

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In India, and arguably across the megacities in the global south, the impact of urbanisation on the nature of employment is immediately evident in the significance and changing dynamics of paid domestic work. As India urbanizes and “an affordable class of employers” meets a “a surplus of workers,” (Neetha, 2009) domestic work has become one of the key sites that will determine if the country’s urban transition will be able to provide decent work with dignity as well as opportunity for millions of workers.

In the last ten years, domestic work has been the subject of welcome attention within research as well as practice, policy and regulation. Scholarship on domestic work has expanded, looking at empirical and legal challenges of definition and statistical assessment (Neetha 2009; Martha 2011; Goyal & Kumar 2019) analyses of undervaluation of the sector as an extension of care work (Ray 2016); gaps in legal recognition and coverage (Neetha & Palriwala 2011; Mahanta & Gupta 2019); emerging trends in the nature of work, recruitment (Basnet & Sandhya 2020; Rustagi, Mehta & Tayal 2017<sup>1</sup>) and the impact of technology (Tandon & Rathi 2019); as well as the continuation of what some scholars have called the “culture of servitude” that holds these employment relationships (Ray & Qayum 2009) as well as ideas of purity and pollution (Sharma 2016) that are still present in the workplace.

Organising and mobilising among domestic workers themselves has thrived with the creation of unions and federations that have struggled for recognition and rights (Agarwala & Saha, 2018). In marking the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Domestic Workers’ Convention of 2011 (C 189), the International Labour Organisation (ILO) argued that, globally, legal coverage of domestic workers had improved even as large gaps in implementation remained. India is not yet a signatory to C 189 but legal recognition of domestic workers in the country has grown. Domestic workers have been explicitly included, for example, in legislation on minimum wage in states like Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Karnataka and Kerala; are recognized beneficiaries in national health insurance and pension programmes; and have legal protection against sexual harassment at the workplace. Regulation exists to monitor private agencies that place domestic workers. The National Sample Survey now offers an

initial enumeration of the number of domestic workers, an All India Survey on domestic workers is underway, and new codes on labour and social security explicitly acknowledge domestic work. While the Draft National Policy on Domestic Workers of 2011 has not progressed, states like Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu have nevertheless made separate welfare boards for domestic workers.

Despite these advances, significant challenges remain. The nature of paid domestic work makes the design of delivery mechanisms of worker’s rights and entitlements—as well as their enforcement—difficult by the very fact of work occurring within a private home. The individualized nature of the employer-employee relationship (in addition to its embedding in gender, caste, religious and regional dynamics) further complicates any conceptualisation of policy and practice seeking to improve the conditions of work. Employers, in other words, become disproportionately important and it is here that gaps in understanding still remain. A large focus of scholarship on domestic work has (rightly) been on workers themselves, with some exceptions (ILO-IHD 2017). Yet understanding both the perceptions of employers on how they value domestic work and workers, as well as how this translates into actual practices around the payment of wages and affordance of worker rights, is critical if practices to reduce decent work deficits are to be effective.

Part of the Work in Freedom programme at the ILO, this study is the second of a series of reports on paid and unpaid work within the household. The first report in this series looked at the distribution of paid and unpaid work in Bengaluru and Chennai, two large metropolitan regions in southern India, in order to understand what it takes to reproduce a household. In this report, we draw from the same larger sample but turn our attention to the quality of employment when households do engage paid domestic workers from outside the household. We focus on employers rather than domestic workers. In doing so, we seek to document not only existing practices within the employer-employee relationship but also assess the perceptions, rationale and bases that underlie how employers in urban India value and perceive domestic work and workers.

<sup>1</sup> This study will be referred to as the ILO-IHD study or (ILO-IHD 2017) in the rest of this report

What do we mean by the *quality of employment*? There are multiple approaches within research and policy that seek to measure how good and secure different forms of work are. In this report, we draw from different frameworks to identify relevant aspects of the quality of employment. The first two are the UNECE-ILO framework and the ILO's conceptualisation of 'decent work.' The former incorporates "dimensions of employment that affect the work life and well-being of the individual worker."<sup>2</sup> The latter is a broader concept towards "opportunities to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity through the Decent Work Agenda."<sup>3</sup> Across them, a set of themes to consider and measure is now fairly well established. For quality of employment, among themes that are suggested for measurement are income and benefits from employment including wages and non-wage pecuniary benefits; working hours and a balance of work and non-working life; security of employment and social protection; as well as skills development and training.

In India, the National Commission for Employment in the Unorganized Sector (NCEUS) uses the combined presence of secure income with *work security* (for example: protection from illness or injury while working), *employment security* (for example: protection from arbitrary dismissal) and *social security* (for example:

benefits such as maternity leave or health insurance) to define and measure informal employment as well as the quality of work (NCEUS 2009). Other frameworks have argued for a focus on recruitment and hiring practices particularly with regard to protection from discrimination; occupational health and safety at the work place; as well as the possibility for skill upgradation, socio-economic mobility and growth. Drawing from across these frameworks, we measure five key aspects of the quality of employment: recruitment practices, income security, employment security, work security, and social security. Table 1 details the different sub-components within each.

We proceed as follows. Section 2 describes our sample. Section 3 looks at recruitment practices, including channels of finding and hiring workers, the factors employers consider when hiring, and practices of verification. Section 4 then turns to income and wages, documenting currently given wages, increments and bonus payments, as well as assessing how employers determine each. Section 5 looks at social and employment security, covering entitlements to different forms of paid and unpaid leave, insurance and protection against illness and injury, as well as rights against arbitrary dismissal. Section 6 concludes with implications for future policy, programmes and practices.

► **Table 1. The quality of employment**

<i>Recruitment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment channels</li> <li>• Recruitment checks and verifications</li> <li>• Preferences and parameters for decision on recruitment</li> </ul>
<i>Income security</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wages paid</li> <li>• Basis of determining wages</li> <li>• Bonus and increments paid</li> <li>• Basis of determining bonus and increments</li> </ul>
<i>Employment and Work security</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terms of employment termination</li> <li>• Terms of assistance in case of illness or injury at work</li> </ul>
<i>Social Security</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terms of paid leave</li> <li>• Terms of medical insurance or equivalent</li> <li>• Maternity entitlements, maternity leave, and terms of employment in case of pregnancy and childbirth</li> </ul>

Source: Author's analysis

2 UNECE Expert Group on Measuring Quality of Employment (2013). Draft statistical framework for measuring quality of employment. Presented at the Nineteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians. Available here: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/meetingdocument/wcms\\_221642.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_221642.pdf). Accessed in March 2022.

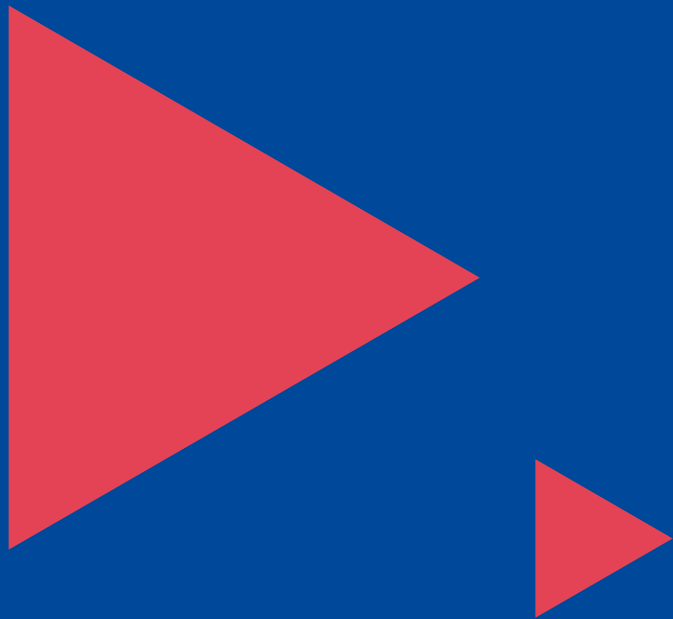
3 For more on Decent Work, see <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/decent-work/lang--en/index.htm>. Accessed in March 2022.



# ▶ 2

## Sampling

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This analysis is based within a larger sample of 9,636 household surveys that sought to assess the distribution of paid and unpaid care work in low, middle and high income homes in Bengaluru and Chennai (ILO-IIHS, 2022a). Led by the same team of authors, this report draws upon an additional survey schedule administered to a subset of households within that survey that reported engaging paid domestic workers. The additional schedule, like the main survey, was designed by the authors at the Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS) and administered by trained surveyors recruited by the Lokniti-CSDS, a well-regarded research institution based in New Delhi. Surveyors were recruited locally in Bengaluru and Chennai, trained at workshops jointly by the study authors and CSDS field supervisors.

The implementation of the surveys was hampered severely by the COVID-19 pandemic. Field teams therefore completed the surveys over different periods as lockdown conditions allowed, covering households between March and May 2021, and then again in August and September 2021. In person survey interviews were administered using a web-based survey data collection application, KoboToolbox, on tablets and mobile phones. This enabled precise geo-location and real time uploading and monitoring of data.

In this report, we look at 3,067 employer households that consented to the additional survey schedule and reported engaging paid domestic workers, with 1876 households in Bengaluru, and 1191 in Chennai. As in the fuller sample, we have classified low income households as those that report annual household income up to 3,00,000 Indian rupees, in line with the Government of India definition of Economically Weaker Sections. Households reporting annual total income of 3,00,000 to 8,00,000 rupees are considered medium income households, and those above 8,00,000 rupees as high income households. In the original sample, the distribution across income categories was as follows: 22 per cent of the households were high, 46 per cent medium and 31 per cent low. Since this is a subset of households that hire higher paid domestic workers, the distribution expectedly is skewed to have greater representation among medium- and high income households. In the sample that this report draws on, 47 per cent of the households are high, 43 per cent are medium and 10 per cent low.

The sample has a significant number of observations in multiple sub-groups of interest.

Specifically, there is strong sub-group variation in income, caste, women's employment as well as education, physical material and size of the dwelling unit, as well as access to water and sanitation services. Most households are a married family unit across the two cities (89 per cent in Bengaluru and 85 per cent in Chennai). Overall, 33 per cent and 34 per cent households in Bengaluru and Chennai have at least one female member of the household employed in paid work. Only among the high income group in Bengaluru the number of households with a female head employed in paid work is higher than households without. More households in Chennai (51 per cent) than Bengaluru (35 per cent) had the female head graduate from a university across all income groups. Only a small per cent of the sample across the two cities report having a child or an elderly at home. In Bengaluru, using governmental classifications of caste, we see that 25 per cent of employer households identify as SC/ST, 40 per cent as OBC and 19 per cent as General Category. In Chennai, these are 17 per cent SC/ST, 36 per cent OBC and 40 per cent identifying as General Category. Table 2 summarizes.

The other aspect of the sample is the nature of paid domestic work. Domestic workers in our sample are overwhelmingly women (88 per cent in Bengaluru, and 94 per cent in Chennai) as has been noted in all studies of domestic work in South Asia. This is an important characteristic of the sector itself and shapes the terms of employment and employer perceptions of the work and the worker (Sinha et al., 2020). In Bengaluru, daily part-time live-out workers are the most common (36 per cent) followed by full-time live-out (23 per cent) and full-time live-in (20 per cent). A higher percentage of workers in low income households are, perhaps surprisingly (though little is known of the hiring practices of low income households as employers rather than workers), higher in low income households than in medium- and high income households.

In Chennai, the sample has a higher rate of live-in workers (38 per cent), followed by part-time live out workers (25 per cent) and full-time live out workers (17 per cent). Here, high income households dominate those that have full-time live-in workers, and low income households predominantly hire part time live out workers. The payment cycle is predominantly a monthly cycle for the total sample (77 per cent in Bengaluru and 66 per cent in Chennai), in line with trends in the sector (NSS, 2011-12).<sup>4</sup> Table 3 summarizes.

► Table 2. Description of the Sample

		Bengaluru				Chennai			
		Total	High	Medium	Low	Total	High	Medium	Low
City	Count	1876	897	834	145	1191	545	507	139
	Bengaluru	100	100	100	100	-	-	-	-
	Chennai	-	-	-	-	100	100	100	100
Income Group	High	47.81	100	-	-	45.76	100	-	-
	Medium	44.46	-	100	-	42.57	-	100	-
	Low	7.73	-	-	100	11.67	-	-	100
Respondent's Gender	Male	61.1	61.34	62.47	51.72	22.77	15.96	29.84	23.74
	Female	38.63	38.55	37.29	46.9	77.23	84.04	70.16	76.26
	Others	0.16	0.11	0.12	0.69	-	-	-	-
	Don't want to answer	0.05	-	0.12	-	-	-	-	-
	Transgender	0.05	-	-	0.69	-	-	-	-
Caste group	Other backward classes	40.31	46.76	34.01	36.55	36.68	23.67	50	39.57
	Scheduled caste	24.99	18.19	31.37	30.34	12.48	4.59	12.55	3.17
	General	18.85	23.21	15.26	12.41	39.97	65.14	20.92	10.07
	Schedule tribe	10.04	9.26	10.58	11.72	4.22	3.12	5.78	2.88
	None of these	4.32	2.01	6.37	6.9	2.45	0.37	4.78	2.16
	Don't want to answer	1.49	0.56	2.4	2.07	4.22	3.12	5.98	2.16
Marital status of the respondent	Married	89.28	90.95	88.29	84.62	85.53	92.48	78.81	82.73
	Never married	7.98	7.15	8.57	9.79	6.98	3.49	11.29	5.04
	Separated	1.34	0.67	1.69	3.5	1.35	0.55	1.39	4.32
	Widowed	0.91	0.89	0.85	1.4	5.21	2.39	7.72	7.19
	Divorced	0.32	0.11	0.48	0.7	0.84	0.92	0.79	0.72
	Don't want to answer	0.16	0.22	0.12	-	0.08	0.18	-	-
The employment status of female head	Not employed	46.86	40.25	51.92	58.62	59.36	65.69	52.86	58.27
	Employed	32.68	44.48	22.42	18.62	33.75	29.54	37.87	35.25
	No ans./not applicable	20.47	15.27	25.66	22.76	6.88	4.77	9.27	6.47
The education status of female head	Not uni grad	54.26	50.17	58.03	57.93	42.49	28.99	49.9	68.35
	Uni grad	25.27	34.56	16.31	19.31	50.63	66.24	40.83	25.18
	No ans./not applicable	20.47	15.27	25.66	22.76	6.88	4.77	9.27	6.47
COVID-19 impact on household income	Decreased substantially	65.65	57.45	73.51	71.53	26.35	14.73	30.1	58.82
	Remains the same as before	17.26	25.31	10.21	7.64	40.29	61.33	25.94	9.56

		Bengaluru				Chennai			
		Total	High	Medium	Low	Total	High	Medium	Low
	Decreased only marginally	15.97	16.46	15.19	17.36	31.76	22.65	2.18	29.41
	Don't want to answer	1.13	0.78	1.09	3.47	1.6	1.29	1.78	2.21
Is there a child at home?	No	84.09	85.86	81.99	85.11	90.4	93.7	92.22	70.59
	Yes	11.19	12.54	10.68	5.67	8.5	5.19	6.99	27.21
	Don't want to answer	4.72	1.6	7.33	9.22	1.1	1.11	0.8	2.21
Is there an elderly person at home?	No	85.96	85.	85.87	88.03	94.06	95.21	94	89.71
	Yes	9.18	13.17	6.07	2.11	5.17	.6	4.6	9.56
	Don't want to answer	4.86	1.14	8.05	9.86	0.76	0.18	1.4	0.74
House Type	Pucca independent house	63.63	76.83	53.67	39.58	46.25	59.63	37.7	24.64
	Flats	11	12.37	9.75	9.72	33.7	26.06	40.08	40.58
	Mixed houses	10.94	5.4	15.76	17.36	15.42	12.48	20.04	10.14
	Kucha pucca	10.73	3.26	16.49	23.61	3.03	1.1	0.99	18.12
	Hut/jhuggi jhopri	2.58	1.57	3.49	3.47	0.51	0.37	0.4	1.45
	Kutcha house	0.86	0.22	0.72	5.56	0.76	–	0.6	4.35
	Don't want to answer	0.27	0.34	0.12	0.69	0.34	0.37	0.2	0.72
No. of rooms for sleeping	2	44.83	43.14	45.92	48.97	61.38	72.66	50.1	58.27
	3	21.48	29.65	14.51	11.03	8.56	14.86	4.14	–
	1	14.66	5.13	22.66	27.59	15.62	8.07	18.74	33.81
	4	14.55	18.62	11.27	8.28	1.26	2.2	0.59	–
	Nan	4.42	3.34	5.64	4.14	12.93	2.2	26.23	6.47
	0	0.05	0.11	–	–	0.25	–	0.2	1.44
Water Source	Private	93.02	97.31	89.63	85.92	79.16	85.5	71.54	82.01
	Public	4.94	1.8	8.2	5.63	1.43	0.73	1.78	2.88
	Community	1.29	0.45	1.09	7.75	18.07	12.48	25.1	14.39
	Don't want to answer	0.75	0.45	1.09	0.7	1.34	1.28	1.58	0.72
Toilet inside house	Yes	89.42	92.23	87.38	83.8	72.13	79.63	60.37	83.94
	No	6.11	3.66	7.6	12.68	26.32	18.89	38.17	13.87
	Don't want to answer	4.47	4.11	5.02	3.52	1.55	1.48	1.45	2.19

Source: Author's analysis

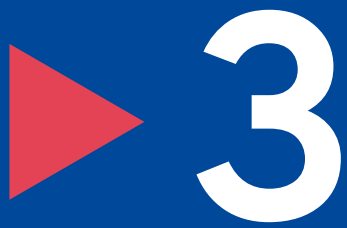


► Table 3. Profile of domestic workers engaged by the households (per cent)

		Bengaluru				Chennai			
		Total	High	Medium	Low	Total	High	Medium	Low
Payment rates	Task rates	46.22	50.56	42.25	25	34.37	28.57	23.19	98.04
	Time rates	52.41	48.48	55.63	75	65.39	70.81	76.81	1.96
	Don't want to answer	1.36	0.96	2.11	–	0.24	0.62	–	–
Employment arrangement	Live in full time	19.35	15.68	23.5	28.85	38.81	51.88	36.84	5.88
	Live out full time	22.68	25.6	19.59	13.46	16.9	15.62	21.05	3.92
	Live out part time daily	35.64	40	32.26	11.54	25.71	16.25	19.62	80.39
	Live out part time non daily regular	15.93	15.04	14.06	42.31	17.62	13.75	22.49	9.8
	Live out occasional	5.49	3.04	9.22	3.85	0.24	0.62	–	–
	Don't want to answer	0.9	0.64	1.38	–	0.71	1.88	–	–
Payment cycle	Daily	13.75	8.77	20.05	21.15	15.2	9.32	14.83	35.29
	Occasional	0.72	0.48	1.15	–	5.94	4.35	8.61	–
	Monthly	75.92	84.85	63.13	75	66.27	75.16	61.24	58.82
	Others	0.63	0.16	1.15	1.92	0.24	–	–	1.96
	Don't want to answer	0.45	0.48	0.46	–	0.24	0.62	–	–
Gender of worker	Female	88.82	89.15	87.94	92.16	94.27	92.5	94.26	100
	Male	10.82	10.37	11.83	7.84	5.73	7.5	5.74	–
	Other	0.36	0.48	0.23	–	–	–	–	–

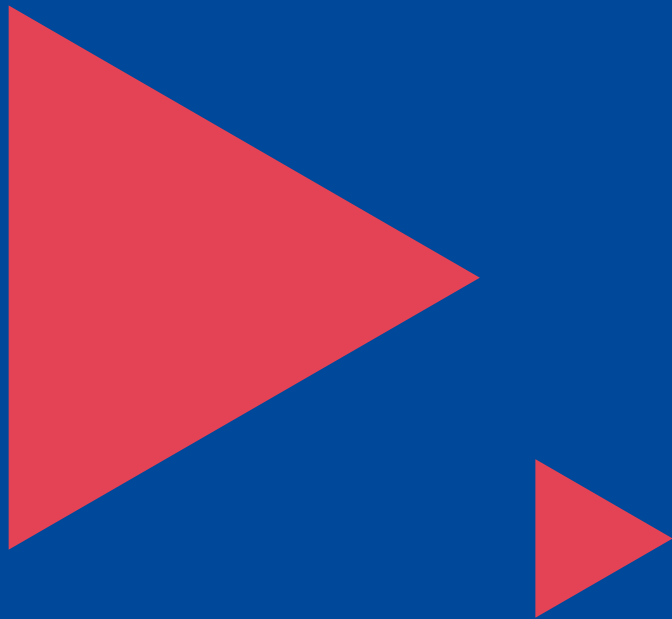
Source: Author's analysis





# Recruitment

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We now turn to the first aspect of our measures of the quality of employment—recruitment. There are two main parts of this section. The first looks at why employers hire domestic workers and how they hire them. In other words: what motivates the decision to hire domestic workers and what channels of recruitment are used to find them? We then report on practices of verification post-hiring. The second part of the section then looks at factors that shape hiring: what is it that employers consider when they hire domestic workers?

### 3.1 Reasons for hiring

Table 4 shows the most frequently cited reasons by households for hiring paid domestic workers. In Bengaluru, the first reason (35 per cent of all households that hire) to hire paid domestic workers is that it frees time for care work by members of the household, including child and elderly care. This reason was given by 40 per cent of Chennai households as well and, in both cities, is remarkably consistent across income. The second major reason is to share the burden of the tasks involved in reproducing a household (32 per cent in Bengaluru, 30 per cent in Chennai). The third reason, one often cited in discussions on women's labour force participation, is that it frees up time for paid employment for household members. This, however, was only cited by 13.5 per cent of households in Bengaluru and 8.5 per cent of households in Chennai. This is a finding discussed more deeply in the first report of this series, where we have argued that paid domestic work in the Indian context is indeed often not leveraged to increase opportunities for paid work outside the home (ILO-IIHS, 2022a).

### 3.2 Recruitment channels

What channels of recruitment were used? Like several studies of recruitment have indicated, our findings also show that hiring domestic workers remains deeply informalized and reliant on local networks of reference in a spatially confined labour market. Table 5 describes the different channels, with each household being able to choose multiple channels they used. The most common recruitment channel is to hire workers who are working in other households in the same area (67 per cent in Bengaluru, 59 per cent in Chennai), with relatively high rates of households reporting such recruitment practices across income classes in both cities. In fact, 'in the same area' often translates into hiring workers because they also work at a neighbour's house (46 per cent in Bengaluru, 32 per cent in Chennai but with a high 42 per cent rate in high income households in that city). Recommendations from neighbours (nearly 50 per cent in Bengaluru, with high income areas higher at 55 per cent; nearly 45 per cent in Chennai with high income households higher at 52 per cent) as well as other domestic workers, therefore, co-relate neatly. These findings are very similar to rates in Delhi and Mumbai (ILO-IHD, 2017). One immediate implication of such localized and reference-based hiring is that a domestic worker's amicable relationship with employers and households within the neighbourhood for a favourable "reputation" is crucial for her labour market standing. We return to this finding later in the concluding section.

The fact that workers tend to work in an area or neighbourhood ties their recruitment as much to geography as to particular employers. This is evidenced by the fact that 37 per cent of employers in Bengaluru retained a domestic

► Table 4. Reasons for hiring paid domestic workers

	Bengaluru				Chennai			
	Total	High	Medium	Low	Total	High	Medium	Low
Frees time for care/ emotional work	34.49	33.54	35.61	34.18	40.35	43.07	38.07	36.78
I am the only one responsible for domestic work in the house/i get tired doing it all alone	32.17	34.16	30.18	30.38	29.67	30.09	28.67	32.18
Frees time for paid work/ am able to keep a job	13.46	13.51	13.51	12.66	8.4	5.19	11.33	11.49
The work required is too much without dw	12.14	11.96	12.63	10.13	10.27	8.66	12.29	9.2
Always had domestic help	4.41	3.88	4.91	5.06	3.94	4.33	3.37	4.6
Physically challenging work	1.78	1.55	1.75	3.8	3.22	2.81	3.37	4.6
I am not good at housework/ i don't know how to cook	0.77	0.78	0.35	3.8	0.41	0.65	0.24	–
I can easily afford	0.39	0.31	0.53	–	0.93	1.08	0.96	–
Others	0.23	0.16	0.35	–	2.59	4.11	1.45	–
I am educated	0.15	0.16	0.18	–	0.21	–	0.24	1.15

Source: Author's analysis

► Table 5. Recruitment channels and verification practices

		Bengaluru				Chennai			
		Total	High	Medium	Low	Total	High	Medium	Low
Recruitment Channel	Other households in the area	67.44	65.52	68.66	72.41	58.7	60.94	57.87	52.86
	Recommended by a relative	49.52	47.51	51.2	52.41	41.05	47.38	36.02	34.29
	Recommended by a neighbour	49.2	54.36	45.22	40	45.8	52.62	42.13	32.14
	Recommended by another domestic worker known to me	47.99	50.28	45.45	48.28	33.81	44.48	20.08	41.43
	Recommended by another domestic worker in the neighbourhood	46.34	42.87	48.68	54.48	32.72	45.39	22.44	20
	Used to work with previous residents	37.7	32.6	41.87	45.52	25.65	40.51	15.35	4.29
	Recommended by a union	32.61	26.96	36.84	43.45	27.81	45.93	13.58	7.86
	Hired through an agency	29.75	24.97	33.85	35.86	28.39	47.02	14.37	5.71
Source of verification and enquiry during recruitment	Worker's current address	36.9	44.79	27.74	31.4	42.23	30.25	53.5	82.26
	Worker's phone number	36.57	46.77	24.26	33.72	40.53	28.99	51.4	79.03
	Enquiry of the language of a worker	33.55	38.23	27.23	38.37	29.61	19.75	35.66	77.42
	Enquiry of the state a worker belongs to	33.28	35.73	30.32	32.56	28.28	19.75	34.62	64.52
	Copy of worker's government issued ID card	32.84	35.1	29.55	37.21	34.1	26.26	53.85	3.23
	Enquiry of the religion of a worker	30.75	34.17	26.71	29.07	29	24.79	38.11	19.35
	Enquiry of the caste of a worker	29.87	32.08	26.45	36.05	23.3	20.59	32.52	1.61
	Copy of worker's society/resident group issued ID card	17.3	16.67	16.39	32.56	21.48	20.17	28.32	0
	Police verification	17.02	16.67	17.16	19.77	20.27	17.23	29.72	0

Source: Author's analysis

worker that had worked for the previous occupants of their house, as did 25 per cent of employers in Chennai. In Bengaluru, such retention is higher in low income households whereas, in an exception to the trends in the data, it is remarkably low in low income households in Chennai.

One data point in recruitment channels that suggest emerging dynamics is the use of agencies. Studies have indicated that the number of agencies that place domestic workers has risen in metropolitan India over the past decade (Neetha, 2009). However, the utilisation has been thought to be insignificant. While our data also suggests that spatially embedded reference networks are the dominant mode of recruitment, we do find that 30 per cent of employers in Bengaluru do report having used an agency for recruitment, including 33 and 35 per cent of medium and low income households. This could be a dynamic particular to the Bengaluru city region since, in Chennai, while 28 per cent of employers report having used agencies, a more familiar pattern emerges: 47 per cent of high income households report having ever used an agency and only 5.7 per cent of low income households do. The presence of high rates of use of agencies across income in Bengaluru is a facet worth more deeply investigating. Beyond this, the emerging and increasing use of agencies marks a trend also worth noting within the dynamics of domestic work.

### 3.3 Verification

While domestic workers lack contracts that affirm an employment relationship with its attendant rights and entitlements, they are, ironically, still subject to multiple forms of formal verification. We describe verification within recruitment in two ways. The first is the forms of identification required by the employer household as well as other actors such as a housing society or the police. The second is the kind of information employers ask when they hire workers which, it is important to remember, is done orally and not through written forms or employee records as would occur in formal employment.

For forms of identification, the most common ask was the possession of an identity card issued by a government agency – 32 per cent of households in Bengaluru and 34 per cent in Chennai took a copy of the worker's government-issued identity card (Aadhar, PAN, Voter ID are

the most common) as a requirement of work. Looked at another way, this means that only a third of employer households kept a record of the worker's identification. Here, again, averages hide variation by income. Middle income households in Chennai were the most likely to ask for a copy of an identity card (54 per cent), and low income households rarely, if ever, did so (3 per cent). In Bengaluru, the practice was common across income classes. A further 17 per cent in Bengaluru kept a copy of identity cards issued to workers by resident or society groups. In Bengaluru, we mark a high rate of such cards in low income households, a fact that deserves further exploration. In Chennai, low income households do not report such cards at all, with middle and high income households doing so (28 per cent and 20 per cent). In Bengaluru, 17 per cent of households reported undertaking a police verification, with this practice being uniform across income. In Chennai, 20 per cent of households did so, with middle income households again at the highest (nearly one in three) and low income households reporting not using police verification at all.

What information did employers seek from workers during recruitment? As could be expected, the most common ask was for the worker's address and phone number – 37 per cent of households in Bengaluru asked for address, as did 42 per cent in Chennai. In Bengaluru, it was high income households that did so the most (45 per cent) while in Chennai, it was low and middle income households (82 and 54 per cent respectively). To see if ascribed identities (region, language, caste, religion) shaped recruitment, we not only asked employers the basis of recruitment (reported below), but also marked if information about these identities was asked at the time of hiring – a triangulation, in a sense, of their presence in recruitment decisions.

We find that 30 per cent of employers asked workers about their caste in Bengaluru, as did 23 per cent in Chennai. In Chennai, this is driven by middle income households (32 per cent) and is much lower both in high income (21 per cent) and low income households (2 per cent). In both Bengaluru and Chennai, a third of employers also asked workers about their religion, with middle income households in Chennai again asking at higher rates, with a more even spread in Bengaluru. The fact of being asked about caste and religion during a recruitment process affirms

the thickly social nature of hiring practices within domestic work and arguably within informal employment in India more generally. We explore this in more detail while looking at recruitment preferences in the next section.

### 3.4 Recruitment preferences

Studies on recruitment preferences have emphasized the emergence of work and character-based qualities such as trust, punctuality and hard work. A study of employers in Mumbai and Delhi argued that employers are “giving less importance to caste/ethnicity, education, communication/language and even region of origin” in what could be “a reflection of the formation of labour markets for domestic work” (ILO-IHD 2017). In that study, covering similar terrain as this report, employers were asked to rank what characteristics mattered in recruiting domestic workers. More qualitative scholarship, however, has continued to insist on the presence of identity, arguing that “cultural strategies (and social identities) pursued by female employers explain their differential behaviour towards specific groups of maids” even as they do not speak about it directly (Basnet & Sandhya 2020).

We asked the question in a different way. Instead of ranking factors, we asked employers

to describe the relative importance of different factors to them in recruiting domestic workers. For each, respondents were asked to say whether the factor was ‘not important at all,’ or proceed in graded increments to it being ‘very important.’ Figure 1 summarizes the responses across both cities. In Chennai, our findings mirror those of the ILO-IHD study. Households, by a significant majority, state that caste and religion are “not important at all” in hiring domestic workers. Even here, however, there are minor variations worth noting. Households saying that caste was “not important at all” in hiring are 70 per cent of high income, 50 per cent of middle income and 78 per cent of low income households. Similar findings hold for religion – only 5 per cent of households, across income classes, said it was “very important.” On regional identity, however, which is a good proxy for language, low income households reverse this trend – nearly 43 per cent say region is “very important” in choosing who to hire, compared to only 12 per cent of high income households.

For other attributes, all income classes in Chennai ranked “trustworthiness” as the most important, similar to patterns found in the study of Delhi and Mumbai. Wages being asked for were not disproportionately important, except to low income employers where 50 per cent of

► Figure 1. Importance of factors determining recruitment



Source: Author's analysis

employers said it was “very important” compared to 18 per cent of high income employers. A marked outlier in the data also is that while high income households do not give importance to skillfulness or being a quick learner as parameters for recruitment (50 per cent of high come households say it is ‘not important at all’), this is a factor that middle and low income households explicitly value and assess. This may suggest that, especially within high income households, domestic work is seen as uniformly “unskilled,” returning the emphasis in hiring to personal and professional traits. This sense of domestic work being “unskilled” has significant implications for how employers estimate appropriate wages for the sector, a finding that we turn to in the next section, and again in the concluding note.

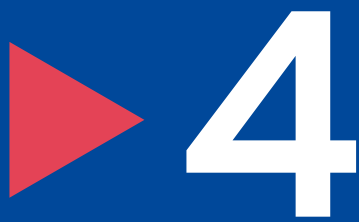
In Bengaluru, the focus on trustworthiness and work-based attributes like being hardworking and punctual were indeed key parameters in recruiting. Trustworthiness had the highest selection, with 74 per cent of households marking it ‘very important’ or ‘important.’ Skillfulness and being a quick learner were also given relatively higher importance in Bengaluru than in Chennai, with 25 per cent marking it as ‘very important’ and a further 45 per cent marking it as ‘important.’ Wages being asked for seemed to determine recruitment less than in Chennai, especially in low income households – only 12 per cent low income households in Bengaluru said wages were ‘very important’ for recruitment as opposed to 50 per cent of low income households in Chennai.

However, in Bengaluru, the importance given to identity-based characteristics is remarkably different than in Chennai. In high-, medium- and

low income households in Bengaluru, only a small minority of households (12-14 per cent across income categories) said that caste, for example, was ‘not important at all.’ In fact, in high income households in Bengaluru, 25 per cent households said that caste was ‘very important’ in hiring, marking it to be as important as work-based characteristics. This is a significant finding that needs further investigation. Trends in national statistics on domestic work do suggest that an increased number of dominant caste women have entered the occupation, and research must assess to see if this is changing or shaping caste dynamics in recruitment preference (ILO-IHD 2017). For religion, again, 26 per cent for high income households indicated that it was ‘very important,’ and only 13 per cent said it was ‘not important at all.’ One reversal in this trend was that low income households in Bengaluru did not accord significant importance to the region when hiring unlike in Chennai. Only 10 per cent of low income households in Bengaluru said region was ‘very important,’ as opposed to 43 per cent in Chennai.

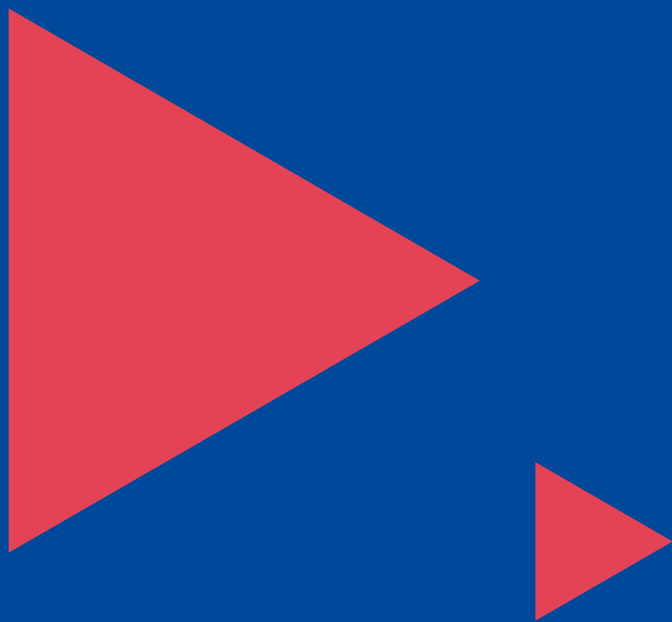
The differences between Bengaluru and Chennai on these parameters seems to suggest that there are sub-markets for domestic workers where recruitment practices seem differentiated, and patterned, at a regional or metropolitan scale. There are then important patterns to track and disaggregate by income and metropolitan location, rather than assuming patterns in the sector as a whole or patterns across the different scales of settlements within the urban. Our findings clearly show that ascriptive identities such as caste, religion and region still shape hiring in Bengaluru, despite evidence of their diminishing importance in some ways in Chennai.





## Income security

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In this section, we turn to our second theme in looking at the quality of employment: income security. Here, we start with wages, then describe bonus and increment payments. Like with recruitment, we report existing practices but also the basis on which employers determine what wages to give, whether to give bonus and increments, and the reasons for doing or not doing so.

Before we proceed, a methodological note on this section. A significant effect of conducting surveys during the COVID-19 lockdowns seems to have been a reluctance to discuss or disclose wages of domestic workers. This may be due to the fact that when the surveys were conducted in the second phase of fieldwork (August–September 2021), many domestic workers and employers were still negotiating how to account for lockdown induced interruptions in work as well as determining wage levels for a gradual return to work. Studies have shown that domestic workers have returned to work post lockdowns at 70 per cent of pre-COVID wages, even if, at times, the tasks and hours of work remain unchanged (Sampat, Chowdhury & Bhan

2022). We attempted to mitigate these effects by asking questions on wages, increments and bonus for before the lockdown, seeking to record wages in January, 2020. Despite this, for this section, we note a high rate of households not wishing to disclose information on wages, increments and bonus, though they were willing to answer questions on non-wage related worker benefits that we report on in later sections. In Sections 4.1 to 4.3, we therefore report wages from n=1525 households for wages and n=1720 for bonus and increments. These, as is evident, remain significantly large samples to assess trends and patterns in income security.

#### 4.1 Wages

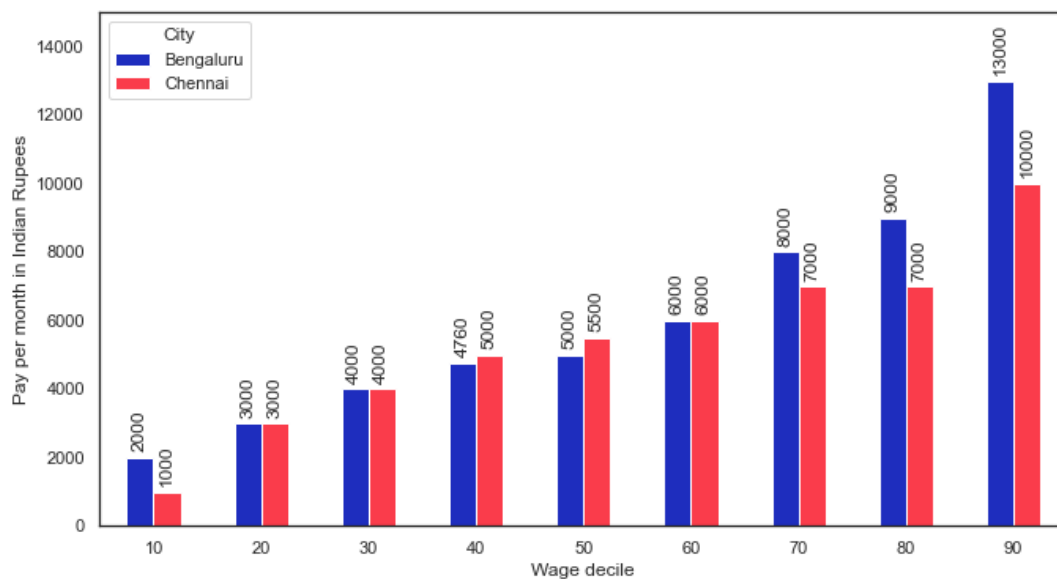
In our survey, 75 per cent of workers in Bengaluru and 67 per cent in Chennai were paid monthly. For workers paid daily and weekly, we asked the household to provide an estimation for the monthly payment. It is important to remember here that this is an employer survey. We report, therefore, wages paid by employers in a single household, not the aggregate wages of a worker who may, for example, work in

► Table 6. Median wages paid by employers

	Bengaluru				Chennai			
	Total	High	Medium	Low	Total	High	Medium	Low
Median wages paid by employer	5000	6000	5000	3000	5500	6250	5000	4200

Source: Author's analysis

► Figure 2. Decile distribution of monthly wages paid by employers



Source: Author's analysis

multiple households. In Bengaluru, the median wage paid to a domestic worker in a household is 5000 rupees, varying from 3000 rupees in low income households to 6000 rupees in high income households. In Chennai, median wage paid by a household was 5500 rupees, ranging from 4200 rupees to 6250 rupees between low and high income households. For Bengaluru, median wages paid to live-in full-time workers are 7500 rupees, whereas for Chennai they are 7000 rupees. It is important to remember that wages for full-time live-in workers do not include implied wages given in the form of housing.

Decile distributions indicate that the lowest 20 per cent of wages paid by households in Bengaluru are than 3000 rupees per household, with the bottom 50 per cent less than 5000 rupees per household and the highest 20 per cent between 9000-13,000 rupees. Karnataka explicitly includes domestic workers in minimum wage laws. In 2021, the state minimum wage for live-out domestic workers in Zone 1 (Bengaluru) is about 12,500 rupees for “washing the clothes/ housekeeping and cleaning and other related works (sic).”<sup>5</sup> This implies that domestic workers working in the bottom 30 per cent of employer households would have to work in at least four such households to make minimum wage, and the bottom 10 per cent would have to work in six such households. Monthly wages for domestic work in Tamil Nadu are meant to be between 6836 and 8051 rupees, though, as we note later, domestic workers in the state have long argued that the stipulated minimum wages are too low. Here as well, 50 per cent of the households pay under 5500 rupees per household, with the bottom 10 per cent of households only paying upto 1000 rupees, and the bottom 20 per cent up to 3000 rupees. In other words: the workers in

the bottom 10 per cent of households in Chennai would have to work in at least eight such houses to meet even existing minimum wage, and those working in the bottom 20 per cent in three. If Tamil Nadu reached parity with Karnataka’s domestic wage minimum laws, then the workers in the bottom 30 per cent of households would have to work in at least three such households, and those in the bottom 10 per cent in twelve.

State minimum wages are rarely appropriate for metropolitan regions like Bengaluru and Chennai where the costs of living are disproportionate to other urban areas in the state. A better comparator then maybe minimum wages in Delhi, a comparable metropolitan region that has, effectively, an urban minimum wage by virtue of being a city-state. Here, minimum wages are 14,000 rupees (unskilled) to 18000 rupees (skilled). If Delhi’s minimum wage rates are applied to Bengaluru and Chennai, then workers in the bottom 30 per cent of employer households would have to work in 5-6 households to make minimum wage in both cities.

It is worth noting that the two city regions have comparable wage rates despite very different regulatory minimum wages, a (lack of) relation that we will return to often in the following sections. This also, however, opens up a possibility. Given the prevailing notified rates of minimum wage, even mobilising to match these wages would lead to a benefit for at least a third of all domestic workers in both Chennai and Bengaluru. This is not true of all labour markets in the country. In Kerala, for example, wage rates for domestic workers have been found to be consistently higher than minimum wages (WIEGO-IDWF 2021). In Bengaluru

► Table 7. Perception of adequacy of paid wages by employers

	Bengaluru				Chennai			
	High	Low	Medium	Total	High	Low	Medium	Total
You pay adequately for the work that is done	43.44	37.23	39.33	41.15	62.29	33.33	44	51.15
You pay generously for the work that is done	55.3	58.39	56.08	55.88	37.71	65.94	55.4	48.52
Don’t want to answer	1.25	4.38	4.59	2.97	–	0.72	0.6	0.34

Source: Author’s analysis

5 For notification of minimum wages in Karnataka (upto 31-03-2021), see: <https://karmikaspandana.karnataka.gov.in/storage/pdf-files/mwnew/domestic.pdf>

and Chennai, wage rates both confirm why domestic work is attractive to many despite its challenges – evidenced by the rates paid in the top 30, and even 50 per cent of households – as well as indicating deficits in income security for a large number of workers. This implies that there is possibility of moving up the floor, so to speak, within the sector. What would enable such a shift in wages towards the rates paid in the upper decile is something we return to in the concluding note. However, one additional finding is important to report here: what is it that employers think of the wages they pay?

When asked, more than half of employers in Bangalore (55 per cent) believed they paid ‘generously’ rather than ‘adequately.’ In Chennai, 51 per cent said ‘adequately’ over ‘generously,’ though this is driven by low and medium income households being more likely to believe themselves to be generous (66 per cent and 55 per cent) while high income households largely thought they paid adequately (62 per cent). This is a matter of concern. If nearly half or more of all employers believe that the wages they pay are already ‘generous,’ then prospects of arguing for increased wages either through an increase in normative valuation, local economic competition, regulatory mandates, or through collective action, must all expect low rates of voluntary compliance. It is also important to remember

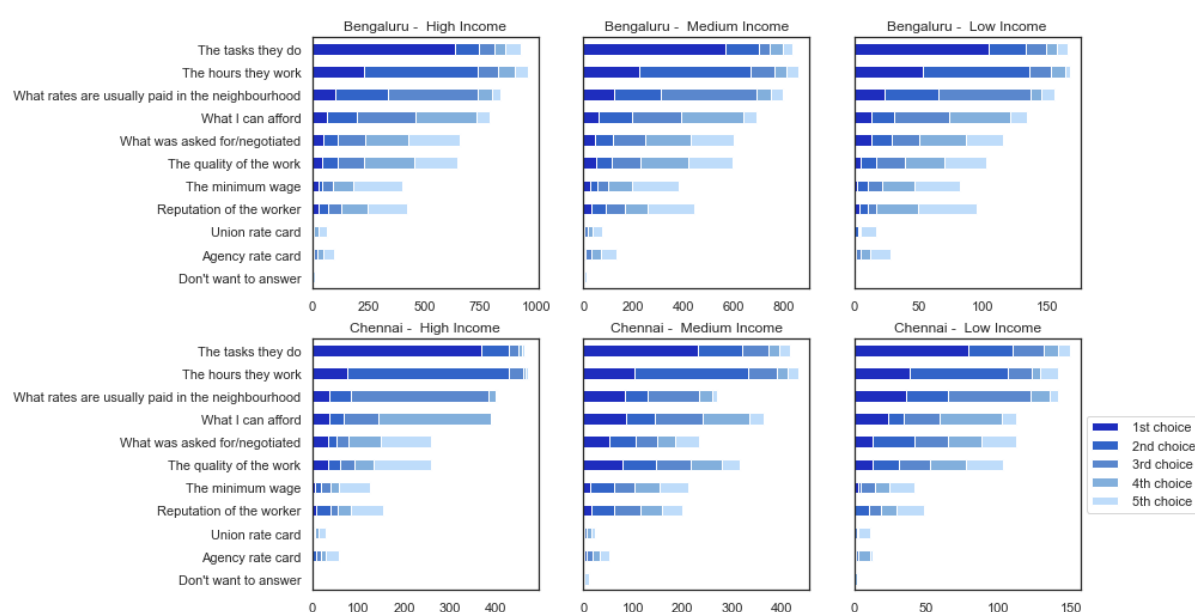
here that, in our data on recruitment, many employers seemed to consider domestic work as uniformly “unskilled,” a point that may underlie their estimation of the wages they pay as generous. Changing the value of domestic work then may be a necessary precondition to increase wages, as we will argue in the concluding note.

## 4.2 Determination of wages

What are the bases of wage calculations for employers? Primarily, wages for domestic work are structured around payments for tasks and hours. As figure 3 shows, these are the primary decision-making factors for employers across Bengaluru and Chennai and across income categories of households. This remains, importantly, true for live-out as well as live-in workers. This has implications both for organising and mobilising around wages as well as for regulatory approaches. It is possible that the language and form of minimum/living wage laws or guidelines will translate into practice within domestic work only if it takes the form of specifying payment rates for tasks and hours as opposed to a flat daily, weekly or monthly wage rate as is the current practice.

Indeed, urban domestic worker unions pioneered the use of “rate cards” by task precisely because of the wage structure of urban domestic work,

► Figure 3. Factors determining wages



Source: Author's analysis

a practice later taken up by agencies that place domestic workers into employment. Yet rate cards by unions or agencies that seek to establish decent or floor wages per task or hour are, as figure 3 indicates, not a factor for employers in calculating wages at this point. This represents a possible area for future mobilisation and regulatory practice in the sector, a point to which we will return in the concluding note.

Is innovating within and mobilising for better or different minimum wages relevant for a sector of informal employment meant to be precisely outside the reach of labour regulation? As argued above, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu both formally notify domestic workers under state minimum wage laws. Tamil Nadu also has procedures for registration of workers and a state welfare board. This perhaps explains why minimum wages do enter into the top five considerations for wage estimates in both Bengaluru and Chennai, though they are clearly far from playing a significant regulatory role by themselves. Yet, in one way, even an initial association of minimum wage as a factor to determine wages in the minds of employers is a cautiously positive sign that further regulatory moves could have a deeper impact on actual wages. In Tamil Nadu, for example, the fixing of a minimum wage of no less than 37 rupees an hour has given workers a specific ask to rally around. Recent protests in Chennai post COVID-19 have demanded an increase to 80 rupees per hour (Neelambaran 2021).

Our findings suggest that rather than see minimum wage regulation as only relevant to formal employment, it is worth our while to find ways to use it (such as mobilising around it as a baseline) to influence wages in the sector as a whole without expecting that mere declaration will have a regulatory effect on prevalent market wage rates (Sharma & Kunduri 2015). As we saw from the section above, wider payment of the minimum wage would result in a net increase in wages for a majority of workers in both Bengaluru and Chennai. In other words, minimum wage regulation could be a means rather than an end within the space of informal work.

Further, we see that the asking wage rate and negotiations on wages by workers themselves also figure prominently for wage determination in the minds of employers. This is a strong sign that increasing the bargaining capacity

of workers at individual and collective levels is likely to have an impact on wages more than, say, skilling. Skills, in fact, as we have argued already, play a significantly lesser role in wage determination, suggesting a generalized wage rate set at spatial and sectoral scale by task and hours. Finally, from the employer's perspective, affordability is a significant fourth reason shaping the wages rates as they are. Reading along with the findings on employer perception on the fairness of the wages—half the employers think they “pay generously”—we see the actually existing tension to improve wage rates. It is here that transformative work on valuation is required along with a study of “affordability.” We return to the implications for both of these findings in our concluding note.

### 4.3 Bonus and increment

Decent work requires not just the payment of minimum wages but also the stability of what economists would call a *real wage*. In other words, a wage that keeps pace with inflation, at a minimum, and, ideally, offers the prospect of mobility and thriving through gradual increase over time beyond inflation. Indeed, a key difference between formal and informal work is the routinisation of increments to wages and, to a lesser degree, the presence of bonus payments. Domestic work, like other forms of informal work, is not thought to have practices of regular or annual increments both because of the absence of formal employment relations but also partly because there isn't a specific gradation of tasks that could be associated with higher payments.

Scholars have argued that changes in wage rates within domestic work occur mostly through individual and collective bargaining, and occur slowly over time rather than, as we saw above, with any direct relations to minimum wage rates. COVID-19 has made this evident. Long negotiated incremental increases in wages and task-related payments for paid domestic work have been deeply impacted. Recent research shows that even as workers return to employment post the end of lockdowns, they are doing so not just at reduced hours, tasks and the number of employer homes but at reduced rates for the same tasks (Sampat, Chowdhury & Bhan, 2022). What was, however, the status of the increments and bonus payments to domestic workers before COVID-19 and the lockdowns?

► Table 8. Bonus and increments

		Bengaluru				Chennai			
		Total	High	Medium	Low	Total	High	Medium	Low
Do you give a bonus above the salary?	No	44.54	41.19	48.42	44.64	75.25	81.56	83.09	12
	Yes	41.18	52.4	28.2	41.07	20.76	13.93	12.56	88
	Don't want to answer	14.27	6.41	23.38	14.29	3.99	4.51	4.35	-
If yes, how many times a year did you give a bonus?"	More than once a year	71.69	79.31	57.33	59.09	47.96	27.27	58.33	58.54
	Once a year	23.42	17.87	32.67	40.91	51.02	69.7	41.67	41.46
	Don't want to answer	4.89	2.82	10	-	1.02	3.03	-	-
In the pre-lockdown year did the wages of the domestic worker in your house go up?	No	53.59	43.21	62.4	69.44	64.3	75.41	54.73	54.68
	Yes	42.06	52.69	33.17	25	32.49	24.59	39.03	40.29
	Don't want to answer	4.35	4.09	4.43	5.56	3.21	-	6.24	5.04
If yes, what was the reason for increasing the wages?	More tasks added	40.38	47.43	29.96	25	19.01	23.7	18.13	10.71
	Normal annual increment	25.5	23	27.44	44.44	23.7	15.56	30.05	21.43
	More hours added	17	12.73	24.19	19.44	16.15	23.7	15.03	1.79
	Happy with the work	10.12	10.88	9.03	8.33	13.54	14.81	11.92	16.07
	Domestic worker asked for it	3.5	2.87	4.69	2.78	21.61	14.81	19.17	46.43
	Cost of living going up for everyone	2.5	1.85	3.97	-	2.86	2.96	3.11	1.79
	No opinion	0.62	0.62	0.72	-	1.82	2.96	1.55	-
	Don't want to answer	0.38	0.62	-	-	1.3	1.48	1.04	1.79
How was the amount of increment decided?	"Decided with/by other family members"	44.25	44.26	44.57	41.67	39.58	33.33	39.38	55.36
	"Decided by me (male respondent)"	30.63	34.63	24.64	22.22	13.8	20.74	11.92	3.57
	"Decided by me (female respondent)"	13.63	12.5	14.49	22.22	22.92	21.48	27.98	8.93
	"Negotiated with the domestic worker"	7.38	5.33	10.87	8.33	16.93	13.33	15.54	30.36
	"Negotiated with the union"	2.62	1.43	4.35	5.56	4.17	5.19	4.66	-
	"Negotiated with agency"	1.12	1.23	1.09	-	2.08	5.93	-	-
	Don't want to answer	0.25	0.41	-	-	0.52	-	0.52	1.79
	"Decided by me (other respondent)"	0.12	0.2	-	-	-	-	-	-
If the wages were not increased, why was it so?	"There was no change in the task"	36.49	39.25	36.19	27	19.34	6.8	31.62	43.42
	"There was no change in the hours"	32.35	32.25	32.3	33	18.03	10.92	28.31	19.74
	"You were not happy with the work"	17.46	17.75	15.56	26	36.58	55.1	18.38	1.32
	"We already pay a lot"	6.41	6	7	5	6.18	5.34	7.72	5.26
	"Dw didn't ask for it"	5.52	4	6.23	8	17.76	20.63	11.4	25
	Don't want to answer	1.18	0.75	1.56	1	0.79	0.49	0.37	3.95
	"No one does that"	0.59	-	1.17	-	1.32	0.73	2.21	1.32

Source: Author's analysis

When asked if in 2019, the year before the first lockdowns, there was an increment to the salary of a domestic worker, a majority of households – 53 per cent in Bengaluru and 64 per cent in Chennai— said no. The averages mask variations. In Bengaluru, 52 per cent of high income households gave increments, while only 25 per cent of low income households did. In Chennai, however, it is high income households that had lower rates of giving increments – only 25 per cent did, as opposed to 40 per cent of middle and low income households.

In Bengaluru, where households gave increments, 57 per cent did so because new tasks had been added for the worker or her working hours had been increased, effectively suggesting that the rate of compensation had not change but the increment reflected an increase in tasks or hours. Only one in four households described the increment as an annual raise unconnected with additional work – a form that resembles the logic of adjusting for inflation and normalising increment as an employment practice. Strikingly, low income households, though they are less likely to give increments in general, are more likely (44 per cent) to give this form of a normalized annual increment as opposed to high (23 per cent) or middle income households (27 per cent).

In Chennai, 35 per cent of increments were related to increase in tasks or hours. However, 24 per cent were a normalized annual increment, and, beyond this, 14 per cent of households said the increment was because they were “happy with the work.” Here, middle and low income households (30 and 21 per cent respectively) were more likely to give a normalized annual increment than high income households (15 per cent). An important difference between the cities to note is that only 3.5 per cent of employers in Bengaluru reported domestic workers asking for an increment as a reason for giving it. This figure was significantly higher in Chennai at 21 per cent but, in both cases, this suggests that a demand for increments from the workers is either not forthcoming, is not being acknowledged or reported by the employer, or is not seen as a major factor in the decision making by the employer. In both cities, the amount of the increment is a decision taken either directly by

the male or female head, or in consultation with family members. What is striking is that in only 7 per cent of households in Bengaluru and 17 per cent of households in Chennai was the amount of the increment discussed with the domestic worker herself.

In Bengaluru, 68 per cent of households that did not give an increment cited no changes in either task or time as the main reason indicating again that increments are not seen as routine annual work practices. In Chennai, this figure was lower (37 per cent) mostly driven by a specific pattern for high income households where the main reason for not giving an increment was “not being happy with the work.” Low and middle income households have similar patterns as Bengaluru with no change in time or task being the main reason to not give an increment. In Chennai, 17 per cent of households reported that no increment was given because the domestic worker themselves didn’t ask for it, markedly higher than a similar 6 per cent in Bengaluru.

On bonus, 41 per cent of households in Bengaluru said that they give a bonus above salary, and 71 per cent of those said they do so more than once a year. High and low income households were more likely to offer a bonus (52 per cent and 41 per cent) than medium income households (28 per cent). In Chennai, the pattern is different. Only 21 per cent of households offered a bonus. Low income households do seem to do so at higher rates than high or medium income households though the sample size requires caution in this finding. Bonus payments, scholars such as Neetha N. have argued, sit in a liminal space between right, entitlement and gift. They are, in one sense, too discretionary to be relied upon and understood as work-based entitlements yet are, undeniably, consistent practices within domestic work. When linked to intense periods of work, scholars have also argued they can be associated also with increased work exploitation within the same time and task arrangement for workers. The idea of the bonus around festivals can, scholars have also argued, reinforce the de-professionalisation of domestic work, introducing elements of familial or inter-personal discretion as the basis of payment that the sector is already disproportionately marked by.

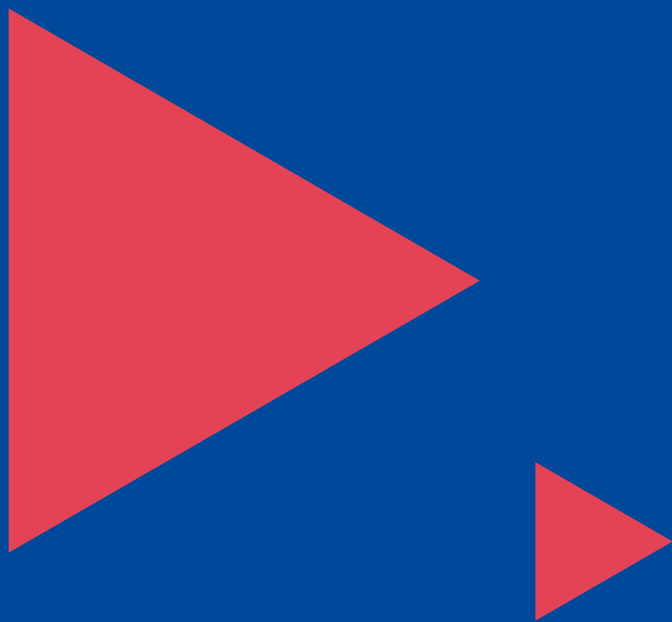




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## Employment and social security

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We now turn to non-wage benefits, grouped in two themes from our framework of looking at the quality of employment. Within an assessment of employment security and social security, we look at six work-based entitlements: maternity leave, response to injury and illness at the workplace, weekly and personal leave, and conditions of termination of employment. Empirical estimations of the presence, nature or even absence of these entitlements is critical for two reasons. The first is that we write within a period where the lines between formal and informal employment are blurring – domestic work is, for example, formally included under minimum wage law yet remains without a practice of written employment contracts. This means that understanding which aspects of non-wage related labour entitlements already exist within informal employment is essential to determine which forms of formalisation will support workers and which, ironically, could hamper benefits that they already enjoy despite the absence of mandates, contracts and formal regulations.

The second is that given the difficulty in enforcing labour regulations within informal employment, what employers perceive as the norm is disproportionately important in shaping actual practices. Therefore, in this section, we report not just on the employment and social security benefits employers report giving to domestic workers but also report their perceptions of what these entitlements should be. Research on the beliefs of employers, as we will argue in the concluding note, must be undertaken more widely within the study of informal employment as it represents an effective baseline for employment practices.

### 5.1 Maternity leave

Maternity leave is widely recognized in central and state law in India, and the country has one of the longest paid maternity leaves in the world at 26 weeks. In private and public employment, it takes the form of paid leave which can be availed flexibly before and after childbirth. In public employment, in some cases, it extends up to two years.

What are the perceptions of employers around what maternity leave should be for domestic workers? In Bengaluru, 36 per cent reported support for maternity leave with either full or partial salary payment with higher income

households reporting a higher rate of support (40 per cent) than low income households (26 per cent). A similar proportion, however, (31 per cent) suggested a discontinuation of services with a one-time lump sum payment. One of every five households suggested leave without pay (with a higher rate of low income households doing so than high income households), and, of concern, nearly 9 per cent (just about one of every ten) households suggest dismissal.

In Chennai, the dominant option was discontinuation with a lump sum payment (43 per cent of households), though that is driven by a very high 62 per cent of high income households choosing this option. Only 16 per cent of households chose full or partial paid leave, marked by a low uptake in high income households (8 per cent). Unpaid leave is the second highest chosen option at 25 per cent. Rates of dismissal without pay are slightly higher than in Bengaluru at nearly 12 per cent, with a concerning 15 per cent of low income households choosing this option.

Where households do believe that either paid or unpaid leave is ideal, only 12 per cent in Bengaluru suggested that the legal mandate of six months is the appropriate length, with 40 per cent suggesting less than 2 months, and 57 per cent suggesting less than 3 months. In Chennai, a third of all households that suggested leave also agreed that six months is the ideal duration, though it bears repeating that most households in this city supported a one-time lump sum payment with discontinuation.

Therefore, in the study of perceptions themselves, urban employer households clearly do not think of maternity leave as a non-negotiable right of domestic workers. The variation within the perceptions indicates a deep personalisation within individual employer-employee relationships of what should be a standardized work entitlement. Such personalisation is arguably a form of regulatory failure. The role of parity labour laws that ensure informal workers get rights and entitlements due to them as workers is not just to ensure compliance but to establish these entitlements as norms of what is legally mandated as well as ethical behaviour. Regulations are as much sites of the production of norms and meaning as they are of mandates and enforcement. The fact that one in every ten households directly believe that dismissal is an appropriate response even

in a hypothetical situation, and that a one-time payment with discontinuation emerges as the largest response, should cause us deep concern.

In practice, what did employers do? In Bengaluru, 20 per cent of respondents (n=377) reported that domestic workers did indeed get pregnant while working with them. In Chennai, this number was much lower (3 per cent, n = 42). We therefore report from Bengaluru more extensively. In close relation to the perceptions reported above, only 27 per cent of households retained domestic workers when they became pregnant, with high income households most likely to retain (35 per cent) compared to low income households (12 per cent). In 37 per cent

of the cases, the worker was asked to discontinue services, with medium income households most likely to do this (48 per cent) followed by low and high income households. Importantly, in nearly one of every five households, employers reported that the worker asked to discontinue, a rate slightly higher in women working in low income households (25 per cent). In one of every ten households, the worker herself suggested a replacement and it wasn't clear if this indicated an ability to return after a period of time. Finally, where domestic workers were retained, 76 per cent did take leave, of which 92 per cent was paid leave. Most such leave was for either two or three months, with only 7 per cent taking the legal mandate of six months.

► **Table 9. Employer perceptions and practices on maternity leave**

		Bengaluru				Chennai			
		Total	High	Medium	Low	Total	High	Medium	Low
When a worker employed in a household gets pregnant and cannot work for a period after childbirth, how should an employer deal with it?	"Allow her leave and offer salary for the leave period fully or partially"	36.03	40.27	34.13	26.02	16.11	8.19	20.92	30.71
	"Discontinue her services but offer some lump sum money"	31.84	31.81	32.04	30.89	43.68	62.18	28.76	22.83
	"Allow her leave without any salary"	19.75	16.41	21.41	26.83	24.48	14.23	35.08	27.56
	"Discontinue her service without offering any money"	8.83	8.8	8.08	13.01	11.92	12.28	10.46	15.75
	Don't want to answer	3.55	2.71	4.34	3.25	3.82	3.12	4.79	3.15
What do you think should be the duration of the leave? (in months)	0 months	2.01	0.95	2.14	7.55	1.14	1.72	1.23	-
	01 month	18.82	14.24	22.63	22.64	10.23	8.62	11.11	10.81
	02 months	22.7	19.3	25.99	22.64	11.36	13.79	4.94	21.62
	03 months	17.39	18.99	16.51	13.21	13.64	13.79	8.64	24.32
	04 months	2.44	2.85	2.45	-	2.84	3.45	2.47	2.7
	05 months	5.46	3.48	6.73	9.43	5.68	5.17	2.47	13.51
	06 months	12.93	13.29	11.93	16.98	32.39	32.76	39.51	16.22
	07 months	0.72	-	1.53	-	1.14	3.45	-	-
	08 months	0.86	1.27	0.61	-	1.7	-	2.47	2.7
	09 months	2.01	3.8	0.61	-	1.14	-	2.47	-
	10 months	0.86	1.27	0.61	-	3.41	5.17	3.7	-
	11 months	0.29	0.63	-	-	-	-	-	-
	12 months	8.05	12.03	4.59	5.66	1.7	1.72	2.47	-
	More than 12 months	5.46	7.91	3.67	1.89	13.64	10.34	18.52	8.11

		Bengaluru				Chennai			
		Total	High	Medium	Low	Total	High	Medium	Low
Have any domestic workers gotten pregnant while they were employed with you?	Yes	20.4	24.3	16.87	16.67	3.71	3.49	4.17	2.88
	No	68.97	59.96	76.75	79.86	90.99	93.38	88.49	90.65
	Don't want to answer	10.63	15.75	6.39	3.47	5.31	3.12	7.34	6.47
If yes, did you retain or discontinue their services?	Count	377	214	139	24	42	17	21	4
	"We asked her to discontinue"	37.93	30.84	48.2	41.67	23.81	29.41	19.05	25
	"We retained her"	27.85	35.51	18.71	12.5	9.52	11.76	4.76	25
	"She asked to discontinue"	19.1	18.22	19.42	25	35.71	35.29	38.1	25
	"She suggested a replacement"	10.34	9.81	10.07	16.67	26.19	23.53	28.57	25
	Don't want to answer	2.92	4.21	1.44	-	2.38	-	4.76	-
	"Others"	1.86	1.4	2.16	4.17	2.38	-	4.76	-
If retained, did she take leave during the pregnancy?	Yes	76.36	80	66.67	66.67	75	100	100	-
	No	18.18	16.25	25.93	-	25	-	-	100
	Don't want to answer	5.45	3.75	7.41	33.33	-	-	-	-
If she took leave during the pregnancy, how long was she on leave for? (in months)	1	4.35	4	6.25	-	-	-	-	-
	2	42.03	42	50	-	-	-	-	-
	3	42.03	50	18.75	33.33	-	-	-	-
	4	1.45	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
	5	1.45	-	6.25	-	-	-	-	-
	6	7.25	2	12.5	66.67	100	100	100	-
	9	1.45	-	6.25	-	-	-	-	-
If she took leave during the pregnancy, was it a paid leave?	Yes	92.86	93.75	88.24	100	100	100	100	-
	No	5.95	6.25	5.88	-	-	-	-	-
	Don't want to answer	1.19	-	5.88	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Author's analysis

## 5.2 Illness

What are the responsibilities of an employer when a domestic worker falls ill? In this case, we see a slightly different set of responses than within maternity leave. In both Bengaluru and Chennai, the dominant response was that employers should support expenses of treatment (40 per cent in Bengaluru, 37 per cent in Chennai). In both cities, low income households chose this option more than their counterparts, though the response is significant across income categories. Nearly a third of households in both cities also supported giving sick leave, which is the parity entitlement formal workers get in this situation, along with health insurance which drew support from about one in every ten households in both cities. This is an

encouraging finding, suggesting that regulatory advancements in health insurance coverage, expanded and paid sick leave, as well as direct support for treatment could be welcome by a significant number of employers.

Do these perceptions of employer behaviour in hypothetical situations translate into practice? In Bengaluru, 23 per cent of employers (n=442) reported a domestic worker falling ill while working with them, a much higher percentage than 6 per cent in Chennai (n=72). In Bengaluru, 64 per cent of households did in fact report granting paid sick leave and supporting expenses of treatment (74 per cent fully, 23 per cent partially). High income households have higher rates of support for expenses than low income households though the latter also remain high

► Table 10. Employer perceptions and practices on illness

		Bengaluru				Chennai			
		Total	High	Medium	Low	Total	High	Medium	Low
When a domestic worker falls ill, what do you think is the responsibility of an employer?	"Support expenses of treatment"	40.53	37.58	41.74	51.52	36.91	33.33	39.9	40
	"Give sick leave"	29.13	32.21	27.4	20.2	28.04	24.94	30.83	30
	"Should give health insurance"	11.16	10.07	12.7	9.09	10.84	13.91	8.81	6.36
	"Offer advice and information"	10.27	11.91	8.71	9.09	10.51	11.51	9.33	10.91
	"Help them consult a medical professional"	6.1	5.2	6.9	7.07	9.75	11.27	8.03	10
	"Help with diagnostic tests"	1.44	1.34	1.27	3.03	2.19	2.64	1.81	1.82
	"Give general monetary support"	1.36	1.68	1.27	–	1.75	2.4	1.3	0.91
If you think they should be given sick leave, should it be paid or unpaid?	Paid	59.13	49.28	66.14	65.12	43.65	35.29	38.38	71.93
	Unpaid	36.11	45.41	29.53	30.23	55.11	61.76	61.11	26.32
	Don't want to answer	4.76	5.31	4.33	4.65	1.24	2.94	0.51	1.75
Have any of your domestic worker fallen ill while working with you?	Yes	23.95	30.37	18.34	16.67	6.07	5.16	5.94	10.07
	No	67.29	57.82	75.03	81.25	87.87	90.79	85.74	84.17
	Don't want to answer	8.75	11.81	6.63	2.08	6.07	4.05	8.32	5.76
If yes, what did you do? Would you say that you	Count	442	267	151	24	72	28	30	14
	"Granted paid sick leave and also supported expenses of the treatment"	64.48	67.04	61.59	54.17	36.11	50	30	21.43
	"Granted paid sick leave only and did not give any extra monetary help"	16.06	11.99	20.53	33.33	20.83	14.29	26.67	21.43
	"Granted unpaid sick leave with some monetary support"	10.18	11.24	9.93	–	25	14.29	30	35.71
	"Only extended non monetary support such as offering advice and information or helping them with consulting a medical professional"	6.56	7.49	4.64	8.33	11.11	17.86	3.33	14.29
	"Did none of these."	1.58	1.12	1.99	4.17	4.17	3.57	3.33	7.14
	Don't want to answer	1.13	1.12	1.32	–	2.78	–	6.67	–
If you supported expenses did you support fully or partially?	Fully	74.74	76.8	68.42	92.31	29.63	14.29	40	66.67
	Partially	23.53	20.44	31.58	7.69	66.67	85.71	50	33.33
	Don't want to answer	1.73	2.76	–	–	3.7	–	10	–

Source: Author's analysis

(67 per cent vs 54 per cent). Conversely, when expenses are supported, 92 per cent of low income households that did support did so for full expenses as opposed to 76 per cent of high income households. Further, 16 per cent of households granted paid sick leave without supporting expenses (as is usually done for formal workers), with low income households reporting higher rates of this practice (33 per cent). Across income categories, ten per cent of households granted unpaid sick leave with token monetary support. In Chennai, albeit with a small sample that means findings should be interpreted with caution, 36 per cent of households granted paid sick leave and paid for expenses, while 20 per cent granted paid leave without expenses, and 25 per cent granted unpaid leave with token monetary support.

Compared to maternity leave, then, there is a broader sense of employer responsibility when domestic workers fall ill though it is not articulated in the way in which formal workers exercise rights (sick leave, health insurance) but instead through the direct contribution to expenses. Scholars studying domestic work in India have noted that payment for health and illness is often invoked by employers as a responsibility understood both as legitimate payment (illness is not a moral or professional fault), as well as highlighted how it can be culturally accommodated into narratives of domestic workers being “like family” rather than as professional workers in their own right. This perception does also translate into practices of support through paid sick leave, payment of expenses, or extension of unpaid sick leave without dismissal. Yet it also reinforces relations of dependence and discretion, rather than a framework of rights and entitlements.

In this case, unlike in maternity leave, domestic workers benefit from an additional entitlement that is not often extended to formal workers, an indication of the complexity of informal work arrangements and *de facto* regimes of entitlement. Any regime of formalisation will have to take into account such a sense of employer responsibility in both its positive and negative effects. Would a type of formalisation of domestic work, for example, that sought to replace direct expense support by wider coverage of health insurance (which is the case for formal workers) benefit domestic workers? We return to this discussion in the concluding section.

### 5.3 Injury

When asked for their perception of employer responsibility in case of injury in the course of duties, we see a similar pattern as to illness. In Bengaluru, 51 per cent supported the idea that employers should compensate medical expenses fully or partially. A further 21 per cent supported paid leave for duration of treatment or recovery. In Chennai, this was relatively lower – 27 per cent supported full or partial payment of medical expenses, driven by high income households where only 13 per cent supported payment as opposed to 45 per cent of low income households. Discontinuation with or without lump sum payment was, unlike in pregnancy, suggested by very few households (under 3 per cent) as the right thing to do.

In practice, there is again higher rates of reporting of injury in Bengaluru (28 per cent) than in Chennai (6 per cent). In both cases, over 80 per cent of reported injuries required only treatment or treatment and rest. Retention rates post injury were high (78 per cent in Bengaluru, 70 per cent in Chennai) though both cities reported a concerning sub-set of workers retained at lower salaries (26 per cent in Bengaluru, 12 per cent in Chennai). Of concern is that despite less than 3 per cent of households suggesting that discontinuation of services is an appropriate response, actual rates of dismissal are much higher – 14 per cent in Bengaluru and Chennai both, with low income households reported discontinuation in nearly 27 per cent of cases in both cities.

When workers were retained, in Bengaluru, paid sick leave without monetary help was the dominant response (44 per cent of households), with paid leave and support for expenses at 34 per cent. This diverges from employer household's perceptions of what should be done, indicating an important difference between perception and practice. It is also useful to note that low income households were more likely in Bengaluru to support treatment expenses than high income households, further indicating that the behaviour of low income households as employers rather than suppliers of domestic work needs to be better understood.

### 5.4 Weekly and personal leave

Four forms of paid leave entitlements are due to workers: at least one weekly off day, sick leave, and fixed days of personal leave often also

► Table 11. Employer perceptions and practices on injury

		Bengaluru				Chennai			
		Total	High	Medium	Low	Total	High	Medium	Low
When a domestic worker is injured in the course of their duties what do you think is the responsibility of the employer?	"Support medical expenses partially"	27.77	30.57	26.57	22.43	21.88	10.12	31.07	36.36
	"Support medical expenses fully"	24.22	24.24	24.87	20.56	6.49	3.31	9.35	9.09
	"Offer paid leave for the duration of treatment and recovery"	21.71	22.27	20.64	25.23	16.65	12.4	22.2	14.05
	"Offer paid leave for a fixed duration"	9.86	8.95	10.15	12.15	17.23	17.56	20.09	5.79
	"Offer unpaid leave for duration of treatment and recovery"	8.3	5.46	9.48	14.02	19.55	32.23	6.78	14.05
	"Offer unpaid leave for a fixed duration"	3.11	3.06	3.05	3.74	10.65	15.91	4.67	10.74
	"Discontinue her services but offer some lump sum money"	3.03	4.15	2.54	0.93	3	4.13	1.4	4.13
	"Discontinue her service without offering any money"	1.21	0.44	1.86	0.93	2.81	2.89	2.57	3.31
	Don't want to answer	0.78	0.87	0.85	-	1.65	1.24	1.87	2.48
	"Others"	-	-	-	-	0.1	0.21	-	-
Have any domestic workers employed by you been injured due to their duties?	No	62.85	51.97	72.38	75.52	87.72	89.65	85.83	87.05
	Yes	28.35	35.74	21.65	20.98	6.01	5.55	5.79	8.63
	Don't want to answer	8.8	12.29	5.96	3.5	6.27	4.81	8.38	4.32
How was the injury managed?	Count	521	316	175	30	71	30	29	12
	"Only treatment"	38.39	44.3	30.86	20	23.94	26.67	13.79	41.67
	"Treatment and rest"	46.45	45.57	45.71	60	53.52	50	58.62	50
	"Lead to permanent incapacitation"	10.17	6.33	16.57	13.33	14.08	16.67	17.24	-
	"Don't remember/can't say"	2.88	2.22	4	3.33	8.45	6.67	10.34	8.33
	Don't want to answer	2.11	1.58	2.86	3.33	-	-	-	-
What happened to their employment status post injury?	Count	519	313	177	29	70	30	29	11
	"I retained him/her"	52.41	62.62	37.29	34.48	58.57	53.33	65.52	54.55
	"I retained but with less salary"	26.01	20.13	35.03	34.48	12.86	13.33	13.79	9.09
	"I discontinued services"	14.84	11.18	19.21	27.59	14.29	10	13.79	27.27
	"Worker resigned"	4.43	3.51	6.21	3.45	11.43	23.33	3.45	-
	Don't want to answer	2.12	2.24	2.26	-	-	-	-	-
	Others	0.19	0.32	-	-	2.86	-	3.45	9.09
	Count	523	317	176	30	71	30	29	12
What did you do?	"Granted paid sick leave only and did not give any extra monetary help"	44.17	46.37	42.61	30	21.13	16.67	31.03	8.33
	"Granted paid leave and also supported expenses of the treatment"	34.03	31.23	36.93	46.67	32.39	26.67	41.38	25
	"Granted unpaid leave with some monetary support"	11.09	11.67	8.52	20	26.76	26.67	13.79	58.33
	"Only extended non monetary support such as offering advice and information or helping them with consulting a medical professional"	5.35	4.73	7.39	-	15.49	26.67	6.9	8.33
	"Did none of these."	2.49	3.15	1.14	3.33	1.41	3.33	-	-
	"No worker was injured"	1.53	0.95	2.84	-	1.41	-	3.45	-
	Don't want to answer	1.34	1.89	0.57	-	1.41	-	3.45	-
	Count	523	317	176	30	71	30	29	12

Source: Author's analysis

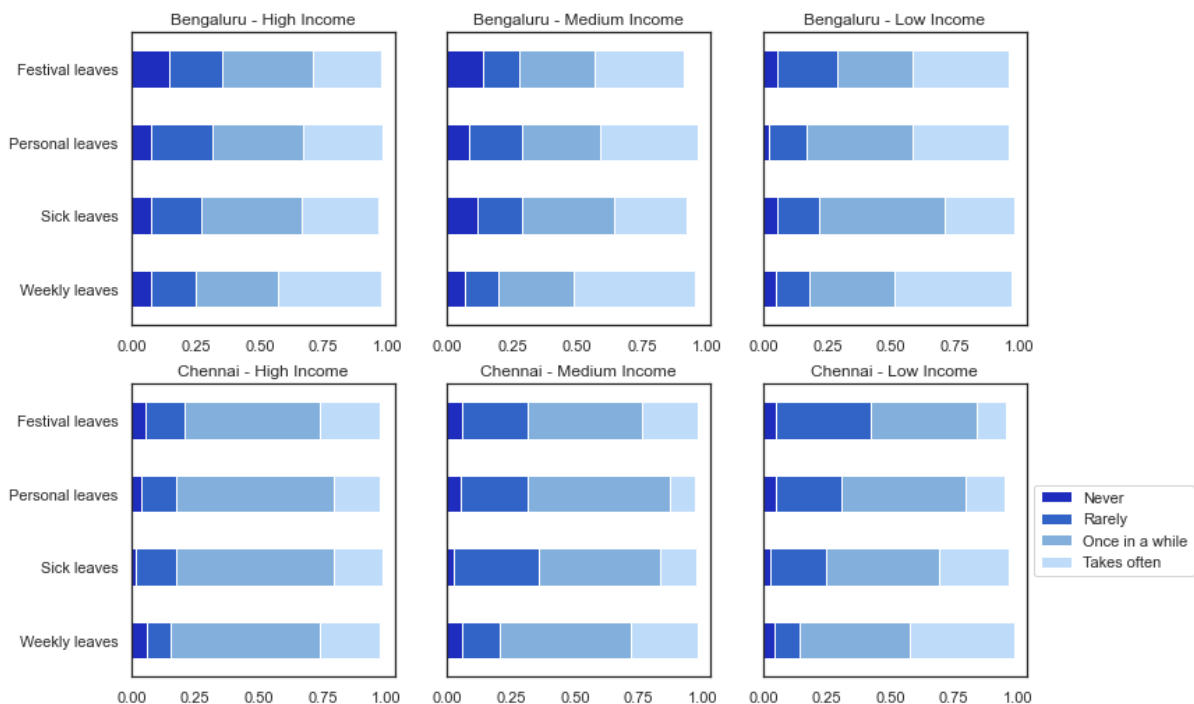
understood as annual leave. These are separate from national holidays. In the Indian context, “festival leave” is a term and type of leave used in practice that overlaps with both mandated government holidays and personal leave, and is often taken in a continuous stretch of time to enable travel.

Which of these entitlements do domestic workers enjoy? In Bengaluru, 68 per cent of employers reported that they offer weekly leave (with low income households at 76 per cent much higher than high income households at 65 per cent); 63 per cent reported offering sick leave; 62 per cent offered personal leave, and 55 per cent offered festival leave. Across categories, low income households offered more leaves than medium- and high income households. One way of reading this data is to reinforce the gap between worker entitlements and conditions of informal work – one in three domestic workers do not even have the right to take leave, let alone debates on the quantum of such leave and the ease of exercising the right in practice, which we will get to below. In Chennai, this gap is narrower. Over 80 per cent of employers report weekly

leave; 77 per cent offer sick leave; 77 per cent offer personal leave (with low income households significantly lower in this category at 61 per cent), and 66 per cent offer leave for festivals. Our findings show why domestic worker organisations have made the ‘weekly off’ and paid sick leaves one of the priority demands of their organising. Where such collective action has occurred, there are reports of significant success in expanding access to leaves such as in the case of the Rajasthan Mahila Kamgar Union in Jaipur. Why and how this has occurred is a critical subject of future research.

For workers that do have an entitlement to leave, are they able to exercise this right? Figure 4 summarizes. In Bengaluru, employers themselves report that the rates of domestic workers “rarely” or “never” taking weekly leaves are 23 per cent (weekly leave), 27 per cent (sick leave), 29 per cent (personal leave) and 31 per cent (festival leave). In Chennai, the numbers are similar at 16 per cent, 25 per cent, 26 per cent, and 28 per cent respectively. Taken conversely, in Bengaluru, only 43 per cent of workers take weekly leaves ‘often,’ a number that drops to 26 per cent in Chennai where workers in low income households are more likely to take a

► Figure 4. Reported use of leave entitlements



Source: Author's analysis



weekly off than in higher income households. For sick, personal and festival leaves, responses for leave taken “once in a while” are the dominant response across the cities, particularly in Chennai.

Leave then is far from a matter of routine practice, even when it exists as an entitlement. It is pivotal for research and practice then to both argue for much wider coverage of rights and entitlement to paid leave for domestic workers but, equally, to understand more carefully why a structural hesitancy exists in practice to avail of existing leave entitlements. Scholarship indicates, for example, that workers wittingly or unwittingly have more work just before or after the leave, implying that taking leave shifts the burden of work for a domestic worker. Workers then consider leave as worth taking only when they have to rather than for rest or a balance between working and non-working life. These particularities need deeper investigation.

## 5.5 Termination of employment

Lastly, we look at employment security in terms of the conditions of termination or dismissal, including the right to adequate notice and protection from arbitrary dismissal. Without a contract, domestic work remains a precarious arrangement like other forms of informal employment. There is no doubt that the flexibility of termination is also what makes precarious forms of work desirable to employers, and deficits in this aspect of the quality of employment are wide-spread in the informal economy.

In our sample, 115 households in Bengaluru and 32 households in Chennai reported having asked a domestic worker to discontinue their services in the 12 months preceding January, 2020. This time period is important since it speaks of a period pre-COVID-19's impact on domestic work. In Bengaluru, only 60 per cent employers reported giving a notice period, mostly of 1 month (50

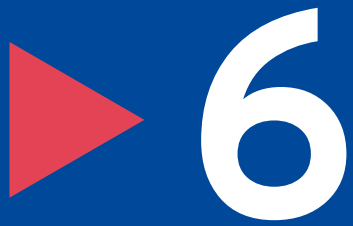
► Table 12. Termination of employment

		Bengaluru				Chennai			
		Total	High	Medium	Low	Total	High	Medium	Low
In the last 12 months have you asked a domestic worker to discontinue their services?	Yes	6.38	7.07	5.54	6.94	2.7	3.5	1.98	2.16
	No	84.77	79.57	89.52	89.58	94.69	94.84	94.25	95.68
	Don't want to answer	8.85	13.36	4.94	3.47	2.61	1.66	3.77	2.16
If, yes was there a notice period?	Count	115	61	45	9	32	19	10	3
	Yes	60.87	70.49	46.67	66.67	31.25	36.84	30	-
	No	36.52	24.59	53.33	33.33	68.75	63.16	70	100
	Don't want to answer	2.61	4.92	-	-	-	-	-	-
If there was a notice period, how long was it? (in months)	1	50.72	57.14	45	28.57	77.78	85.71	50	-
	2	27.54	21.43	35	42.86	11.11	14.29	-	-
	3	5.8	7.14	5	-	-	-	-	-
	5	5.8	4.76	10	-	-	-	-	-
	6	4.35	2.38	-	28.57	11.11	-	50	-
	8	2.9	4.76	-	-	-	-	-	-
	10	1.45	-	5	-	-	-	-	-
	15	1.45	2.38	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Don't want to answer	10.92	14.29	6.52	10	9.38	5.26	20	-
If yes, was there a severance pay?	No	56.3	39.68	76.09	70	65.62	52.63	80	100
	Yes	32.77	46.03	17.39	20	25	42.11	-	-

Source: Author's analysis

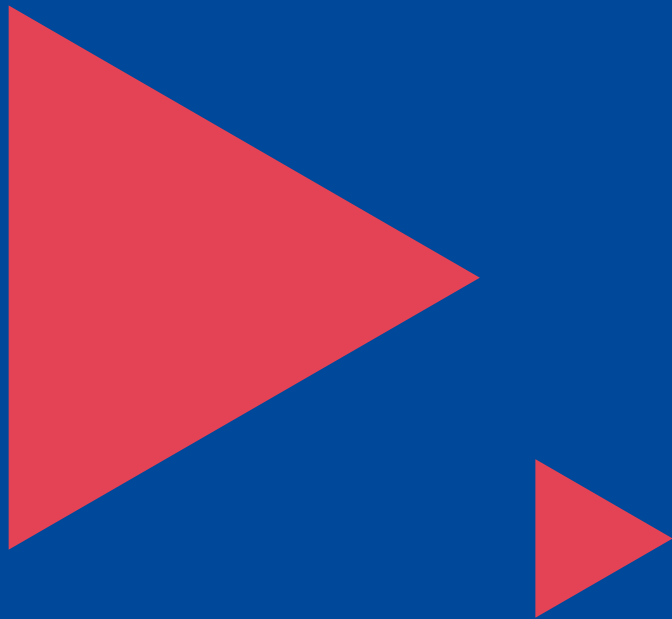
per cent) or 2 months (27 per cent) duration. In Chennai, only a third of the thirty dismissals reported a notice period, and when given, it was almost always 1 month in duration (85 per cent). In Bengaluru, 30 per cent of households reported giving a one time wage or severance payment, typically of a months wage (28 per cent), with some households reporting two months (10 per

cent). High income households, predicatably, reported much higher rates of a one time payment at dismissal (46 per cent of high income versus 20 per cent of low income households). In Chennai, 25 per cent of dismissal cases reported such payment, with one month of wages being the near uniform amount.



## Concluding note

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The aim of this report was to assess the quality of employment within domestic work in urban metropolitan regions in India, focusing on Bengaluru and Chennai. We did so by looking at several themes that compose the quality of employment, starting from recruitment practices and hiring, and then looking at income security (wages, bonus, increments), employment security (conditions of termination, access to paid leave), and social security (maternity leave, protections for illness and injury at the workplace). We added a critical empirical layer to our assessment by looking at the perceptions of employers on what they believe employment practices for domestic workers should be, before relating these to actual practices.

Our findings both document clear and significant deficits in the quality of employment for domestic workers, as well as describe a spatially and socially segmented labour market. In this concluding note, we do not repeat these multiple findings that have been summarized within each section and across the tables. Instead, we offer a set of reflections and provocations for future research and practice.

### 6.1 Socialisation of norms and values around domestic work

Though with important variations, employer perceptions of what domestic workers should be entitled to consistently fall short of parity with entitlements already mandated for formal workers. Such perceptions reflect an employer's valuation of domestic work which, as we argued earlier, is disproportionately important given the known challenges of any regime of labour inspection and enforcement in the case of domestic workers working in private homes. Further, not only do norms fall short of parity with existing rights of formal workers, but there are also deep variations among households, indicating a personalisation and discretion in the presence of what should be standardized rights and entitlements of work.

This implies that the very fact that domestic workers *should* be entitled to certain wage and non-wage benefits itself must be socialized before debates proceed on either on how to expand more legal rights or to focus on challenges of enforcement. We are not suggesting that increasing more legal mandates for informal workers not be undertaken. To the contrary, as we will argue below, these mandates

matter even in the informal economy. Yet these mandates must be seen as means rather than an end. Including domestic workers in minimum wage laws, for example, is essential but must come with the expectation that employer perceptions, norms and values, coupled with the difficulty in enforcement, means that mandates do not equal outcomes by a significant degree. Such disjunction itself varies – employers report a greater sense of responsibility for illness and injury, but not for maternity leave, to take one example, but they also believe that they wage rates they pay are ‘generous’ – reminding us that we must anticipate different degrees of acceptance and resistance for different kinds of worker entitlements.

How can such socialisation occur? Workers themselves have always been at the forefront of changing beliefs about their rights and the value of their work, as protesting domestic workers in Tamil Nadu remind us. Yet socialisation cannot and, indeed, must not, be the work of domestic workers alone. Organisations, state institutions, researchers and citizens must think about how one changes perceptions and values about domestic work through direct engagement with employers in multiple modes – through using regulations and policy statements as social rather than just legal tools, expanding cultural production, direct engagement with employers, deepening recognition of domestic work in public policy, and undertaking and communicating research.

The work of such socialisation must occur across scale. Our findings show deeply spatialized recruitment markets for domestic workers are within neighbourhoods. Socialisation then must begin with individual action, where even small shifts in norms, or even one household's own practices, have the possibility of shifting outcomes for domestic workers as much as macro-scale regulations. For this to occur, modes of campaigning, advocacy and organising must shift attention to engaging with employer households through neighbourhood-scaled actions, even as worker groups organize for the symbolic and real power of city, state and central regulations, laws and rights.

### 6.2 Forms of formalisation matter

Debates on improving the quality of employment for informal workers often refer to the need for formalisation, though the precise meaning of

what that entails remains unclear. Our findings suggest, aligning with recommendations of global worker organisations like WIEGO,<sup>6</sup> that it is imperative to be specific about forms of formalisation. For example, including domestic workers in minimum wage laws may be more effective if the form of that inclusion reflects the nature of their work in metropolitan regions. This implies, as we argued earlier, that “rate cards” that establish minimum payments per task are likely to be more effective than a flat monthly or daily wage. Rate cards also have the advantage of being able to set deeply local wage rates, necessary in what we have shown to be a very spatialized labour market where employers are deeply influenced with hyper-local baselines of what other households near them pay. In short: payments seem to be determined more by ‘local rates’ than by ‘sector rates’ as is more common in formal employment. The form of setting wage regulation matters. Yet as we saw, though these practices are gaining ground, they remain far from being significant determinants of what employers think about when they determine wage levels. This represents an area of significant potential that must be explored.

In a different example, our finding that many employers support – in theory and practice – direct payment for expenses in the case of illness suggest that current notions of formalisation that seek to expand health insurance to informal workers may, in fact, reduce the substantive benefit that workers already receive. Would a type of formalisation of domestic work that sought to replace direct expense support by wider coverage of health insurance (which is the case for formal workers) benefit domestic workers? If not, how can the current practice of supporting a worker’s expenses be made more of an assured entitlement than a discretionary practice without changing its form from expense coverage to insurance?

Today there are many more health insurance schemes available to a domestic worker both at the central level and from states ranging from protection cover of 1,00,000 to 1,50,000 rupees per annum. How these schemes will play out and the impact they will have on existing employment practices must take into account current employer perceptions and practices, and

also ask what role employers will play in domestic workers accessing insurance.

In principle, conceptualising forms of formalisation from a depth of understanding of employer perception as well as current employer practice can give us a broader and more nuanced understanding of what forms of formalisation improve the quality of employment. These take us away from one-size-fits-all approaches for the informal economy as a whole and re-emphasize that formalisation must be specific to different forms of informal work.

### 6.3 Spatialized and segmented labour markets

One clear finding in this report shows that labour markets within domestic work are spatially differentiated at multiple scales in ways that we must more deeply understand to contextualize practice. The differences between Bengaluru and Chennai suggest that large metropolitan regions are indeed socio-economic markets in their own right, with significant differences as well as enduring similarities. This has strong implications both for research but also labour policy which is often conceptualized at state level in Indian governance but arguably must, in fact, articulate itself the scale of metropolitan region. Equally, it is important to not treat all megacities as being similar in their market structure. Doing so will also enable us to see possibilities of learning across cities as we try and understand why domestic work differs, or remains the same, across them.

The second spatial aspect of the labour market in domestic work is the importance of the neighbourhood as a scale and site of recruitment, the determination of wages, and the quality of employment overall. The disproportionate impact of the neighbourhood rather than skills or individual work experience of workers suggest that wage and recruitment effects must be influenced not primarily through skill training, for example, but through collective action at the neighbourhood scale. We have already shown how this suggests practices for socialisation of norms around domestic work (see 6.1 above) or for hyper-local rate cards as a mechanism to regulate minimum wages (see

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, WIEGO’s statement on Re-Thinking Formalisation, available here: <https://www.wiego.org/rethinking-formalization>. Accessed in March 2022.

6.2 above). Here, we add a third dimension – the importance of micro-scaled practice for unions and associations of domestic workers. Deeply spatialized markets indicate the need for multiple, decentralized and local institutional forms – unions, worker groups, associations – that think of place rather than sector as their primary field of entry and engagement. It implies equally that local institutional forms like resident welfare associations are as critical a stakeholder as more macro-institutions. Indeed, successful domestic worker unions in India have worked precisely in this way, finding themselves working at the intra-urban neighbourhood scale in a way that is unique to labour organising in this sector.

Finally, in all our findings, average values mask deep variations between high-, middle and low income households. Studying this segmentation must then be a further specification of understanding labour markets for domestic work. To focus on one aspect, we note that this report represents one of the few assessments of low income households in urban India as employers rather than suppliers of domestic work. Low income households are not just hiring paid domestic workers at greater rates than expected but also appear to have particular employment practices with respect to income, employment and social security that we have highlighted throughout this report. Unlike that of medium- and high income households, gaps between perceptions and practices of low income households often indicated that, if they were supported, their employment practices would be able to reduce deficits in the quality of employment for domestic workers. This must be explored as a specific type of practice when working with a disaggregated set of employers. Supporting low income households as both employers and suppliers of domestic work represents a unique opportunity to reach multiple developmental goals simultaneously.

#### 6.4 Social identity and domestic work

Our findings show complex but nevertheless prevalent dynamics of how caste, region, and religious identity continue to shape hiring practices within domestic work. Recruitment remains, in a sense, thickly social. Not only do employers ask for identity information but many report considering it an important parameter for hiring. This occurs, we must remember, within the spatialized nature of the recruitment as well as the central importance of “reputation” and

informal recommendation as a channel of hiring. Taken together, recruitment into domestic work seems to allow both tacit and explicit forms of discrimination. These dynamics vary greatly as shown by the difference in the importance of caste and religion as the basis for hiring in Bengaluru as opposed to in Chennai.

How then do we respond to the possibility of discrimination? First must be a greater understanding of recruitment within thickly social labour markets. Such practices require deeper investigation, and recent trends in scholarship that indicate a move from identity-segmented labour markets to those operating on individual and professional traits must be taken with a note of caution. In our findings, domestic work remains a site of the social reproduction of caste, gender and religious systems. This too then must be part of not just innovations in regulation around anti-discrimination law but in the socialisation of norms of work (see 6.1 above), practices of formalisation (see 6.2 above), the mandates of collective action (see 6.5 below) as well as be a specific part of research mandates in the sector that offer evidence as well as demystification of the actual practices and motivations for identity based discrimination to counter it effectively. As the sector of domestic work (and care work) expands and becomes a key site of waged work for both women and household incomes in urban India, the discrimination in opportunities to enter the market and within the sector will become instrumental in reproducing inequalities if left unattended.

#### 6.5 The need to deepen and expand collective action

Our findings indicate several areas where deeper collective action by workers, unions, and organisations could improve the quality of employment. As we have argued above, this is not to indicate that it is only workers that must engage with questions of the quality of employment within domestic work. Instead, we ask: what do our findings suggest as possible focus areas that organisations of domestic workers should focus on? We have already described the importance of micro-organising at the neighbourhood scale (see 6.4 above), the importance of scaling the existing union practice of establishing rate cards and task-based minima as a regulatory form of establishing minimum wage (see 6.3 above), the need for workers

organisations to explicitly address identity-based discrimination within recruitment (see 6.4 above) and the role of organisations in socialising higher and better norms for domestic workers (see 6.1 above).

For all of these, it is imperative that worker organisations be recognized, supported, and partnered by the state, citizens and researchers alike. Organising around domestic work in urban India has grown in scale but remains deeply limited relative to the size and importance of the sector. Unlike organising in construction, street vending and transport, which have more advanced regulatory recognition, state support and engagement, and public awareness, organisations of domestic workers have not received adequate support. It is imperative that, structurally, enabling conditions that can deepen

and expand organising be put in place, including for example state partnership, collective funding support, easier terms of legal recognition, as well as education, training and capacity building support for worker organisations.

We began this report by arguing that domestic work was an inextricable part of India's urbanisation, and will, in fact, mirror its nature and dynamics in the future. Laying the foundation to address deficits in the dignity of domestic work and workers is critical to do so as India urbanizes. We hope the findings in this report enable policy makers, researchers, organizers, and domestic workers themselves to not just understand where these deficits are but imagine better ways of addressing them.





## ► Appendix 1

### Household Survey 1B

Enter Surveyor ID [Instruction: Enter two letters only]	
<hr/>	
Enter Survey number of household [Instruction: Enter three numbers only]	
<hr/>	
Renumeration	
<hr/>	
Q1. How did you decide what wages to give the domestic worker in your household? Rank the most important criteria from 1 to 5.	
<hr/>	
<b>1st choice</b>	
<input type="radio"/> a. Based on the tasks they do <input type="radio"/> c. Based on what rates are usually paid in the neighbourhood <input type="radio"/> e. Based on what was asked for/negotiated <input type="radio"/> g. Based on reputation of the worker <input type="radio"/> i. Based on Agency rate card	<input type="radio"/> b. Based on the hours they work <input type="radio"/> d. Based on what I can afford <input type="radio"/> f. Based on the quality of the work <input type="radio"/> h. Based on the minimum wage <input type="radio"/> j. Based on Union rate card <input type="radio"/> Don't want to answer
<b>2nd choice</b>	
<input type="radio"/> a. Based on the tasks they do <input type="radio"/> c. Based on what rates are usually paid in the neighbourhood <input type="radio"/> e. Based on what was asked for/negotiated <input type="radio"/> g. Based on reputation of the worker <input type="radio"/> i. Based on Agency rate card	<input type="radio"/> b. Based on the hours they work <input type="radio"/> d. Based on what I can afford <input type="radio"/> f. Based on the quality of the work <input type="radio"/> h. Based on the minimum wage <input type="radio"/> j. Based on Union rate card <input type="radio"/> Don't want to answer
<b>3rd choice</b>	
<input type="radio"/> a. Based on the tasks they do <input type="radio"/> c. Based on what rates are usually paid in the neighbourhood <input type="radio"/> e. Based on what was asked for/negotiated <input type="radio"/> g. Based on reputation of the worker <input type="radio"/> i. Based on Agency rate card	<input type="radio"/> b. Based on the hours they work <input type="radio"/> d. Based on what I can afford <input type="radio"/> f. Based on the quality of the work <input type="radio"/> h. Based on the minimum wage <input type="radio"/> j. Based on Union rate card <input type="radio"/> Don't want to answer

**4th choice**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> a. Based on the tasks they do                                | <input type="radio"/> b. Based on the hours they work     |
| <input type="radio"/> c. Based on what rates are usually paid in the neighbourhood | <input type="radio"/> d. Based on what I can afford       |
| <input type="radio"/> e. Based on what was asked for/negotiated                    | <input type="radio"/> f. Based on the quality of the work |
| <input type="radio"/> g. Based on reputation of the worker                         | <input type="radio"/> h. Based on the minimum wage        |
| <input type="radio"/> i. Based on Agency rate card                                 | <input type="radio"/> j. Based on Union rate card         |
|  | <input type="radio"/> Don't want to answer                |

**5th choice**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> a. Based on the tasks they do                                | <input type="radio"/> b. Based on the hours they work     |
| <input type="radio"/> c. Based on what rates are usually paid in the neighbourhood | <input type="radio"/> d. Based on what I can afford       |
| <input type="radio"/> e. Based on what was asked for/negotiated                    | <input type="radio"/> f. Based on the quality of the work |
| <input type="radio"/> g. Based on reputation of the worker                         | <input type="radio"/> h. Based on the minimum wage        |
| <input type="radio"/> i. Based on Agency rate card                                 | <input type="radio"/> j. Based on Union rate card         |
|  | <input type="radio"/> Don't want to answer                |

**Q2. Thinking of the wages you pay to your domestic workers for whatever work they do; would you say that [Instructions: Read out options]**

- ☐ a. You pay generously for the work that is done (Jitna kaam hain uske hisaab se jyada hain)
- ☐ b. You pay adequately for the work that is done (Jitna kaam hain usek hisaab se sahi hai)
- ☐ Don't want to answer

**Increments****Details****Entering details of domestic worker #1****Q1. Name of the domestic worker****Q2. In the year before lockdown and corona (2019) did the wages of the domestic worker in your house go up?**

- ☐ a. Yes
- ☐ b. No
- ☐ Don't want to answer

**If yes, what was the reason for wage hike?**

- ☐ a. More tasks added
- ☐ b. More hours added
- ☐ c. Normal annual increment
- ☐ d. DW asked for it
- ☐ e. Happy with the work
- ☐ f. Cost of living going up for everyone
- ☐ g. No opinion
- ☐ h. Others
- ☐ Don't want to answer

**If others, please specify**

---

**Q3. How was the amount of increment decided? Was it decided:**

- ☐ a. Decided by me
- ☐ b. Decided with/by other family members
- ☐ c. Negotiated with the DW
- ☐ d. Negotiated with the union
- ☐ e. Negotiated with agency
- ☐ f. Others
- ☐ Don't want to answer

**If others, please specify**

---

**Q4. If no increase, why were the wages not increased? Would you say that ....**

- ☐ a. There was no change in the task;
- ☐ b. There was no change in the hours
- ☐ c. You were not happy with the work
- ☐ d. DW didn't ask for it
- ☐ e. We already pay a lot
- ☐ f. No one does that
- ☐ Don't want to answer

**Leaves**

**Q1. Nature of leave - Agreement [Remember that we are talking about the situation in normal times, before corona]**

	a. Yes	b. No	Dont want to answer
Q1a. Weekly off	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q1b. Sick leave	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q1c. Personal leave	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q1d. Festivals and national holidays	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q2. How often did take the following kind of leave in the last six months/one year [Remember that we are talking about the situation in normal times, before corona]?**

	a. Takes often	b. Once in a while	c. Rarely	d. Never	e. Don't remember	Don't want to answer
Q2a. Weekly off	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q2b. Sick leave (6 monthly)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q2c. Personal leave (annually)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q2c. Festivals and national holidays (6 months)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Hiring and Firing**

**Q1. Amongst the workers you employ presently, in the last 12 months (before March 2020) have you asked a domestic worker(s) to discontinue their services? [Remember that we are talking about the situation in normal times, before corona]**

- ☐ a. Yes  
☐ b. No  
☐ c. don't want to answer

**If Yes, how many?**

**Q2. What was the most important reason for you to ask them to discontinue the services?**  
[Record the exact answer]

---

**Q3. Was there a notice period?**

- ☐ a. Yes  
☐ b. No  
☐ c. don't want to answer

**Q4. How long was the notice period? (in months)**

---

**Q5. Any wages or severance? (Y/N)**

- ☐ a. Yes  
☐ b. No  
☐ c. don't want to answer

**If Yes, how many?**

---

### **Pregnancy and Maternity**

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**Q1. Have any of the domestic workers – employed by you now or earlier at any time – gotten pregnant while they were working with you?**

- ☐ a. Yes  
☐ b. No  
☐ c. don't want to answer

**If yes, did you retain their services or discontinue their services?**

- ☐ a. Retain  
☐ b. We Asked Her To Discontinue  
☐ c. She Asked To Discontinue  
☐ d. She Suggested A Replacement  
☐ e. Others  
☐ Don't want to answer

**Others**

---

<p><b>Q1.1. if retained, Did she take leave during pregnancy?</b></p> <p> <input type="radio"/> a. Yes  <input type="radio"/> b. No  <input type="radio"/> c. NA  <input type="radio"/> Don't want to answer         </p>
<p><b>If yes, for how long was she on leave during pregnancy? (record in months)</b></p> <p>_____</p>
<p><b>Was it a paid leave?</b></p> <p> <input type="radio"/> a. Yes  <input type="radio"/> b. No  <input type="radio"/> c. NA  <input type="radio"/> Don't want to answer         </p>
<p><b>Q1.2. if retained, Did she take leave after childbirth?</b></p> <p> <input type="radio"/> a. Yes  <input type="radio"/> b. No  <input type="radio"/> c. NA  <input type="radio"/> Don't want to answer         </p>
<p><b>If yes, for how long was she on leave after childbirth? (record in months)</b></p> <p>_____</p>
<p><b>Was it a paid leave?</b></p> <p> <input type="radio"/> a. Yes  <input type="radio"/> b. No  <input type="radio"/> c. NA  <input type="radio"/> Don't want to answer         </p>
<p><b>Q6. Speaking generally, in a scenario where a worker employed in a household gets pregnant and cannot work for a period after childbirth, how should an employer deal with it? (Read out the answer options)</b></p> <p> <input type="radio"/> a. Allow her leave , and offer salary for the leave period fully or partially  <input type="radio"/> b. Allow her leave without any salary  <input type="radio"/> c. Discontinue her services but offer some lump sum money  <input type="radio"/> d. Discontinue her service without offering any money  <input type="radio"/> Don't want to answer         </p>
<p><b>Q7. What do you think should be the duration of the leave? (record in months)</b></p> <p>_____</p>

## Injury and Health

**Q1. If any of your domestic worker employed by you now or earlier at any time had fallen ill while working with you? [Remember that we are talking about the situation in normal times, before corona]**

- ☐ a. Yes
- ☐ b. No
- ☐ c. don't want to answer

**If Yes, what did you do? Would you say that you: [Instructions: Read out options]**

- ☐ a. Granted paid sick leave and also supported expenses of the treatment [whether fully or partially]
- ☐ b. Granted paid sick leave only and did not give any extra monetary help
- ☐ c. Granted (unpaid) sick leave with some (token) monetary support
- ☐ d. Only extended non-monetary support such as offering advice and information or helping them with consulting a medical professional
- ☐ e. Did none of these.
- ☐ Don't want to answer

**If Yes, whether fully or partially?**

- ☐ a. Fully
- ☐ b. Partially
- ☐ Don't want to answer

**Q2. Then, in a general scenario when a domestic worker falls ill, what do you think is the responsibility of an employer?**

- ☐ a. Support expenses of treatment
- ☐ b. Give sick leave
- ☐ c. Should give health insurance
- ☐ d. Offer advice and information
- ☐ e. Help them consult a medical professional
- ☐ f. Help with diagnostic tests
- ☐ g. Give general monetary support
- ☐ Don't want to answer

**Q3. Did you support expenses of treatment**

- ☐ a. Yes
- ☐ b. No
- ☐ Don't want to answer

**Q4. Fully or Partially?**

- ☐ a. Fully
- ☐ b. Partially
- ☐ Don't want to answer

**Q5. Paid or Unpaid?**

- ☐ a. Paid
- ☐ b. Unpaid
- ☐ Don't want to answer

**Q6. Have any of the domestic workers – employed by you now or earlier at any time – been injured in the course of their duties?**

- ☐ a. Yes
- ☐ b. No
- ☐ Don't want to answer

**Q7. Did the injury require: [Instructions: Read out options]**

- ☐ Only Treatment
- ☐ b. Treatment And Rest
- ☐ c. Permanent Incapacitation
- ☐ d. Don'T Remember/Can'T Say
- ☐ e. N.A
- ☐ Don't want to answer

**Q8. What happened to their employment status post injury? Would you say that: [Instructions: Read out options]**

- ☐ a. You retained him/her
- ☐ b. You retained but with less salary
- ☐ c. You discontinued services
- ☐ d. Worker resigned
- ☐ e. Others
- ☐ f. NA
- ☐ Don't want to answer

**Others**

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**Q9. Did you: [Instructions: Read out options]**

- ☐ a. Granted paid sick leave only and did not give any extra monetary help
- ☐ b. Granted paid leave and also supported expenses of the treatment [whether fully or partially]
- ☐ c. Granted (unpaid) leave with some (token) monetary support
- ☐ d. Only extended non-monetary support such as offering advice and information or helping them with consulting a medical professional
- ☐ e. Did none of these.
- ☐ f. No worker was injured
- ☐ Don't want to answer



**If no, In a scenario where the domestic worker is injured in the course of their duties ,what do you think applies?**

- ☐ a. Support medical expenses fully
- ☐ b. Support medical expenses partially
- ☐ c. Offer paid leave for the duration of treatment and recovery
- ☐ d. Offer paid leave for a fixed duration
- ☐ e. Offer unpaid leave for duration of treatment and recovery
- ☐ f. Offer unpaid leave for a fixed duration
- ☐ g. Discontinue her services but offer some lump sum money
- ☐ h. Discontinue her service without offering any money
- ☐ i. Others
- ☐ Don't want to answer

**Others**

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### **Living conditions for live-in domestic workers**

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**Before lockdown (March 2020), did you have a live-in domestic worker ?**

- ☐ a. Yes
- ☐ b. No
- ☐ c. don't want to answer

**There must be a reason why you chose to hire a live-in domestic worker rather than someone who comes part time. What was that?**

---

**Q1. I am reading out a few statements about access of domestic workers to various things. Please tell me for each one of these**

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**That the domestic worker...**

---

	a. Yes	b. No	Dont want to answer
Q1a. Has access to exclusive living space	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q1b. Has access only to non- exclusive space	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q1c. Has access to bathroom only for use by them	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	a. Yes	b. No	Dont want to answer
Q1d. Has access to bathroom shared with other household members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q1e. Share the food made for family members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q1f. Cook their own food in the kitchen	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q1g. Cook their own food in their accommodation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Q2. Do you consider any of the following as part of the payment/salary of the domestic worker?</b> <hr/>			
	a. Yes	b. No	Dont want to answer
Q2a. Living space (exclusive)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q2b. Living space (non- exclusive)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q2c. Food	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Q3. Is the work of the domestic worker determined by hours or by tasks?</b> <input type="radio"/> a. Hours <input type="radio"/> b. Tasks <input type="radio"/> Don't want to answer			
<b>Q4. If there are occasional social events like dinners, parties or other gatherings, is the domestic worker expected to work through their duration?</b> <input type="radio"/> a. Yes <input type="radio"/> b. No <input type="radio"/> Don't want to answer			
<b>Recruitment Process</b> <hr/>			
<b>Q1. Was the decision to recruit a domestic worker taken: [Instructions: Read out options]</b> <input type="radio"/> a. Entirely by you <input type="radio"/> b. In consultation with spouse/partner <input type="radio"/> c. Taken by other family members <input type="radio"/> Don't want to answer			

## Details

**Q1. How did you hire the domestic workers who currently work for you. Do these apply to how to hired your domestic worker?**

**Entering details of domestic worker #1**

## Details

	a. Yes	b. No	Dont want to answer
Q1a. She works in other households in the area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q1b. She was recommended by a neighbour	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q1c. She was recommended by a relative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q1d. She was recommended by another domestic worker known to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q1e. She was recommended by another worker in the neighbourhood	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q1f. She was hired through an agency/ bureau	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q1g. She used to work with the previous residents of this house	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q1h. She was recommended by a union/association of domestic workers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

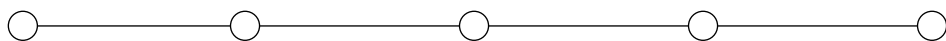
**Click the "+" to add details of another domestic worker**

**I am reading out a few statements. Please tell me which one comes the closest to your opinion**

- ☐ a. I would like to hire a domestic worker recommended by someone I know
- ☐ b. I would like to hire DW from bureaus/ portals who can whet the candidates before hand
- ☐ c. I would like to hire a domestic worker that works in other households in my area
- ☐ Don't want to answer

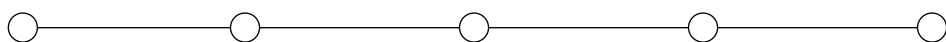
**Q2. When people hire domestic workers they take many things into consideration. I am reading out some of these. Please tell me how important was each of these for you when hiring a domestic worker? [Instructions: Read out the likert scale options at least once]**

Q2a. Wages being asked for



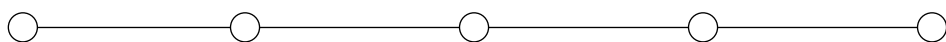
a. Not Important At All   b. Somewhat Important   c. Important   d. Very Important   Don't want to answer

Q2b. Years of Experience



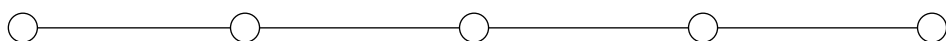
a. Not Important At All   b. Somewhat Important   c. Important   d. Very Important   Don't want to answer

Q2c. Trustworthiness



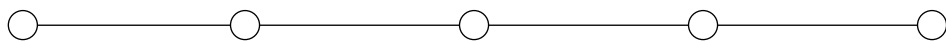
a. Not Important At All   b. Somewhat Important   c. Important   d. Very Important   Don't want to answer

Q2d. Reputation/what her recommenders say about her



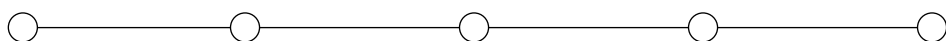
a. Not Important At All   b. Somewhat Important   c. Important   d. Very Important   Don't want to answer

Q2e. Respectful/Listens to instructions



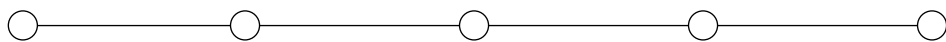
a. Not Important At All   b. Somewhat Important   c. Important   d. Very Important   Don't want to answer

Q2f. Respectful/Doesn't talk back



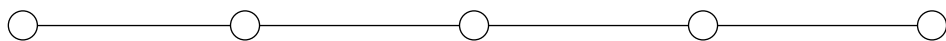
a. Not Important At All   b. Somewhat Important   c. Important   d. Very Important   Don't want to answer

Q2g. Punctual/Comes on time



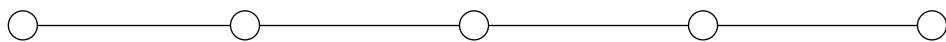
a. Not Important At All   b. Somewhat Important   c. Important   d. Very Important   Don't want to answer

Q2h. Flexible/Will come when needed



a. Not Important At All   b. Somewhat Important   c. Important   d. Very Important   Don't want to answer

Q2i. Hardworking



a. Not Important At All   b. Somewhat Important   c. Important   d. Very Important   Don't want to answer

Q2j. Quick learner/learns new things fast

☐ — ☐ — ☐ — ☐ — ☐

a. Not Important At All   b. Somewhat Important   c. Important   d. Very Important   Don't want to answer

Q2k. Skilled at tasks/Good at her work

☐ — ☐ — ☐ — ☐ — ☐

a. Not Important At All   b. Somewhat Important   c. Important   d. Very Important   Don't want to answer

Q2l. Caste

☐ — ☐ — ☐ — ☐ — ☐

a. Not Important At All   b. Somewhat Important   c. Important   d. Very Important   Don't want to answer

Q2m. Religion

☐ — ☐ — ☐ — ☐ — ☐

a. Not Important At All   b. Somewhat Important   c. Important   d. Very Important   Don't want to answer

Q2n. Region or Language

☐ — ☐ — ☐ — ☐ — ☐

a. Not Important At All   b. Somewhat Important   c. Important   d. Very Important   Don't want to answer

### Living conditions for live-in domestic workers

**Q1. I am reading out a few statements. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the statements. [Instructions: Read out the likert scale options at least once]**

Q1a. When jobs are scarce, men should have more of a right to a job than women.

☐ — ☐ — ☐ — ☐ — ☐ — ☐

a. Strongly Agree   b. Somewhat agree   c. Somewhat disagree   d. Strongly disagree   e. No opinion   Don't want to answer

Q1b. When women work, it causes problems in their household.

☐ — ☐ — ☐ — ☐ — ☐ — ☐

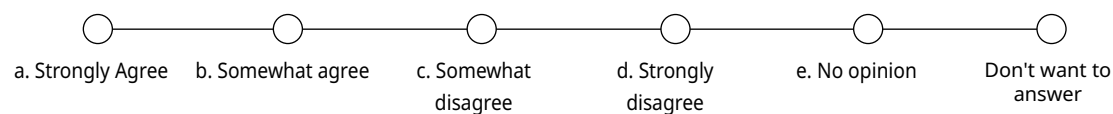
a. Strongly Agree   b. Somewhat agree   c. Somewhat disagree   d. Strongly disagree   e. No opinion   Don't want to answer

Q1c. When women work, children suffer

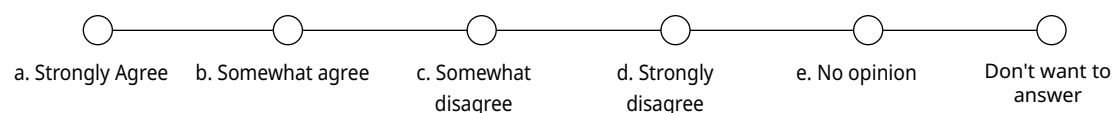
☐ — ☐ — ☐ — ☐ — ☐ — ☐

a. Strongly Agree   b. Somewhat agree   c. Somewhat disagree   d. Strongly disagree   e. No opinion   Don't want to answer

Q1d. Working as a housewife is as fulfilling as paid employment.



Q1e. The household's well being is primarily a women's responsibility.



**Q2. Have you ever personally witnessed/experienced caste discrimination in the following places?**

	a. Yes	b. No	c. Declined to answer	Dont want to answer
Q2a. In neighbourhood	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q2b. In workplaces	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q2c. In public spaces	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q3. What is the reason for adivasi/dalit poverty? [Instructions: Read out options]**

- ☐ a. Lack Of Hardwork
- ☐ b. Lack Of Opportunities
- ☐ c. Systematic Oppression
- ☐ d. Stereotypes/Biases
- ☐ e. Policy Failure
- ☐ Don't want to answer

[illegible]

**Q8. Do you have any money of your own that you alone can decide how to use?**

- ☐ a. Yes  
☐ b. No  
☐ Don't want to answer

### GPS Location

#### Please collect GPS information

latitude (x.y °)

\_\_\_\_\_

longitude (x.y °)

\_\_\_\_\_

altitude (m)

\_\_\_\_\_

accuracy (m)

\_\_\_\_\_



**End of survey 1B**

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