



DECENT WORK FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS

Skills Development
Initiative



*Logo inspired by Forward Together - Kortrijk University

RIGHTS, RESPECT, RECOGNITION
FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS

A joint initiative of
Women Development Department
Government of the Punjab and the
ILO office for Pakistan



Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada

Programme Partners:

College of Tourism and Hotel Management (COTHM):
The leading hotel management school in Pakistan

All Pakistan Women's Association (APWA):

The oldest organization actively engaged in welfare of
women and enhancement of their status



What is the current situation of domestic workers in Pakistan?

Every day millions of people throughout Pakistan clean other people's homes, cook their meals and watch over their children. The work domestic workers do helps them provide for their own families, but also, frees other women and men from the drudgery of household work and enables women in particular, to take part in the labour force and in turn, contribute to their own families' well-being. Despite this doubly productive function, domestic workers are not even recognized as 'workers'.

Domestic work is part of Pakistan's huge informal economy, estimated to be about 73% of the total Pakistani economy. Being informal and unregulated, workers in the informal economy are not covered by labour laws, and therefore remain vulnerable to all forms of exploitation. There are no clear figures of the total number of domestic workers in the country. However, estimates show that there are about 8.5 million domestic workers, a vast majority of whom are women, and also include a large number of boys and girls.

Many countries are beginning to reform their policies and laws to include domestic workers. In Pakistan, a draft bill, to be called the Domestic Workers (Employment Rights) Act 2013 has been drafted and was recently presented to the Senate. The bill carries elaborate provisions on age restrictions, free labour, contract signing, minimum wages, social security measures and formation of association or trade union. This is a welcome step. But, in order to really make a difference, we need a profound change in attitude towards the profession of domestic work.

What are the major issues faced by domestic workers?

Studies show that domestic workers face the following issues :

- Lack of legal protection
- Exposure to unprotected and unhealthy working conditions
- Violence and abuse at work
- Absence of formal contractual arrangements
- Indefinite working hours
- Unclear terms and conditions of employment
- No minimum wage protection and low salaries
- Weak collective bargaining position
- Poor living quarters
- Lack of privacy
- No labour inspection and law enforcement
- Forced labour and trafficking of domestic workers
- Exclusion from social safety nets

Skills Development Programme

Women Development Department, Government of the Punjab and the ILO Office for Pakistan have worked with stakeholders to design the comprehensive skills development package Decent Work for Domestic Workers (DW4DW)

This skills development programme will deliver high-quality, benchmarked training in the following areas:

Core Competencies

- Communicate effectively in a domestic work environment
- Maintain health, safety and security in a domestic work environment
- Maintain personal health and safety
- Plan, organize and manage own work
- Undertake calculations relevant to domestic work

Domestic Cleaning and Basic Housekeeping

- Apply basic cleaning principles to perform cleaning tasks
- Clean and maintain bedrooms and living area
- Clean and maintain bathrooms and toilet facilities
- Wash cloths, linen and fabrics
- Iron and store laundered items
- Clean and operate basic household equipment

Cooking and Food Handling

- Clean and maintain food preparation, storage and service areas
- Follow basic food safety practices
- Organize and prepare food in a domestic setting
- Serve food and beverage

C189 – Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No.189)

In 2011, the International Labour Organization adopted the Domestic Workers' Convention No. 189. These standards have helped create a momentum for the recognition of domestic workers as workers with rights like any other worker. C189 offers specific protection to domestic workers. The convention has been ratified by Bolivia, Ecuador, Philippines, South Africa, Italy, Mauritius, Germany, Paraguay, with Uruguay being the first country to ratify the convention.

The salient features of the convention are:

- Promotion and protection of the human rights of all domestic workers
- Respect for fundamental principles and rights at work, including freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining
- Protection against all forms of abuse, harassment and violence
- Fair terms of employment and decent living conditions
- Reasonable working hours
- Weekly rest of at least 24 consecutive hours
- A limit on in-kind payment
- Clear information on terms and conditions of employment

Convention 189, if ratified by Pakistan, will enhance the status of domestic workers and will also reflect well on the Government of Pakistan as showing its commitment to human rights, workers' rights and the promotion of women's empowerment.

What is the solution to address the issues?

There is no magic recipe. The problems posed by domestic workers need a complementary approach in different domains and at different levels, including:

- Policy development and legislation to provide recognition, coverage and protection to domestic workers
- Mobilising and campaigning by workers' organisations to organise domestic workers and form their associations
- Certified, competency-based skills development for domestic workers
- A complaints and grievance redressal mechanism
- Provision of social security including Employees Old Age Benefit Institution (EOBI) and Punjab Employees Social Security Institution (PESSI)
- Advocacy for the ratification of C.189

