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Psycho-Social Needs & Problems of Domestic Girl Child Workers---A Case Study

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Abstract

In India, child labour is a common social problem throughout the country. Child labour stands as a bar of human development in terms of curtail of child's rights & freedom, education, health care and equal psycho-social status in comparison to the non-labourer child under the lap of parental care, love and affection. Many legal protection help the domestic girl child from economic exploitation, from formal education and over all psycho- social development. It is generally found that the problem of child labour is more serious among the girl child. It is estimated that around 80% of child domestic workers are girls. Domestic girl child workers are persons under eighteen years of age who work in other people's households. In today's world girl childs are considered as equal with that of male child but due to economic insecurity and illiteracy of parents, they are deprive from formal education and proper health care as compared to their counterparts. Therefore, it is the duty of all concerned to protect the girl child for all round development of our nation. In this paper an attempt has been made to study the psycho-social needs & working conditions of domestic girl child workers in a sample area of North Guwahati, Assam.

KEY words: *Psycho-Social needs, working conditions, Domestic girl Childs.*

INTRODUCTION: In a developing country like India, widespread child labour is a common social problem throughout the country. Child labour is a curse for human development in terms of curtail of child's rights & freedom, education, health care and equal psycho-social status in comparison to the non-labourer child under the lap of parental care, love and affection. Article 32(1) of the convention on the rights of the child (1989) calls for the recognition of the right of children to be protected from economic exploitation and from

performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with their education, or to be harmful to their health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. The problem of child labour is more serious among the girl child. It is estimated that around 80% of child domestic workers are girls. Most of the domestic girl child workers (DGCW) are between 12 to 17 years of age group but some are as young as five or six years of age group. Domestic girl child workers are generally means the persons under

eighteen years of age who work in other people's households. In today's world girl Childs are considered as equal with that of male child and therefore if they are deprived from proper health care, education and psycho-social satisfaction, then in the long run it will definitely affect the progress and prosperity of our nation. Therefore, it is the duty of all concerned to protect the girl child for all round development of our nation. But unfortunately in our country due to the economic problem and illiteracy of the parents, re-marriage or death of parents , a countable number of girl Childs are sacrificing their golden childhood and adolescence period due to their engagement as domestic worker.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To study the working conditions of domestic girl child workers.
2. To study the psycho- social needs of domestic girl child workers.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

The first limitation relates to the area under study. North Guwahati has been taken as the field of the study. The second limitation relates to the age group taken in this study. Domestic girl child workers under the age group of 18 years only considered in this study.

METHODOLOGY:

Descriptive survey method has been used to collect data and information on the domestic girl child worker under the age group of 18 years.

Area of the study: North Guwahati of Kamrup District, Assam.

No. of sample children : 100 domestic girl child workers.

Tools: Observation and Interview techniques. Interview with both the sides - Domestic girl child workers and their Master .

Sample selection procedure: By using purposive sampling method the investigator selected 100 families having domestic girl child workers under the age group of 18 years.

Aspects of observation: Working conditions, needs & problems of the domestic girl child workers.

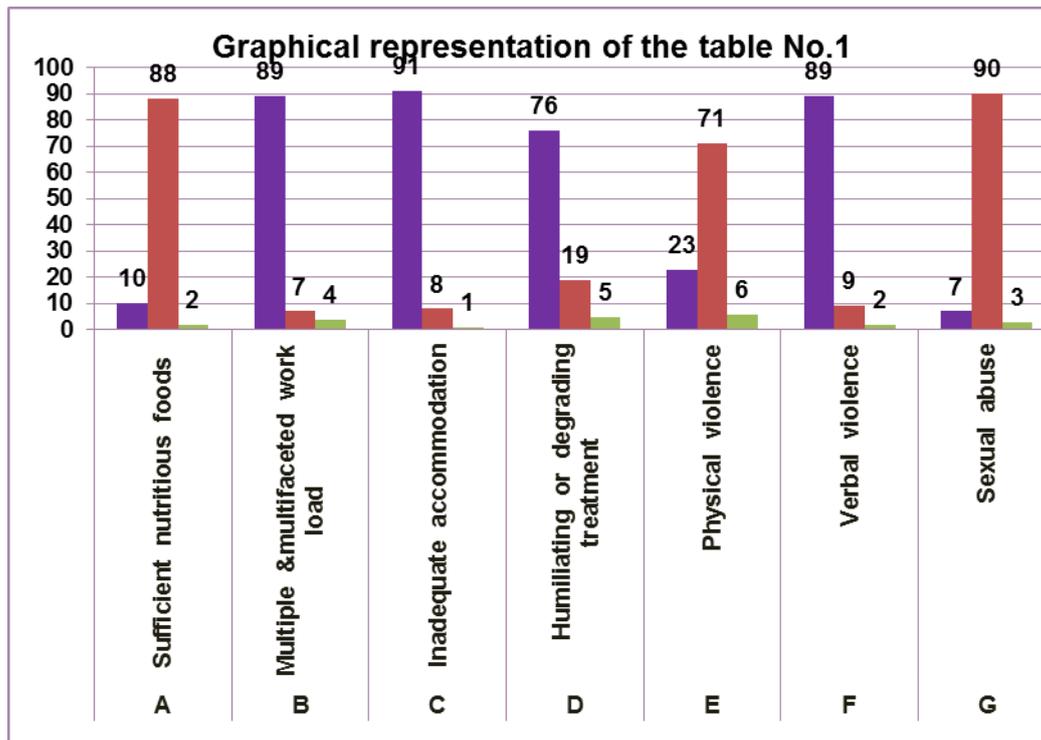
ANALYSIS OF THE OBJECTIVE NO. 1

To study the working conditions of domestic girl child workers (DGCW) , the investigator has personally met 100 sample workers at their master's residence. The investigator has collected required data and information about their working conditions by applying structured interview technique

TABLE NO. 1

Working conditions of DGCW

Sl No	Working condition	Yes	No	Not sure
A	Sufficient nutritious foods	10	88	2
B	Multiple & multifaceted work load	89	7	4
C	Inadequate accommodation	91	8	1
D	Humiliating or degrading treatment	76	19	5
E	Physical violence	23	71	6
F	Verbal violence	89	9	2
G	Sexual abuse	7	90	3



From the Table no. 1, it is found that the working and living conditions of the sample DGCW are not satisfactory. They work a lot but the nutritious foods which include fruits, milk, vegetables, protein & iron based food and non-veg. Items were not provided adequately. Unfortunately in our

study we have found that only 10% DGCW are getting nutritious food where 88% are deprived from adequate nutritious food. Without proper nutritious food these majority of the DGCW are deprived from Physical growth and development.

B	Multiple & multifaceted work load	89	7	4
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Regarding daily work load of DGCW, 89% have under pressure of multiple & multi-faceted work load. They usually perform tasks like cooking, cleaning, ironing, caring children, gardening and are also engaged in miscellaneous works. In our study only 7% of them are enjoying limited and specific domestic works and 4% DGCW hesitated to disclose properly their daily work scheduled, so it was not possible for the investigator to decide whether they engaged in heavy work load or not.

Regarding accommodation, most of the DGCW were deprived from proper accommodation and are given inadequate accommodations. Data shows that 91% of them live in pitiable condition lacking minimum standard of living. They have to compromise their comfort with in terms of sleeping arrangement, living arrangement and also working conditions. In this study it has been found that 8% of them are getting adequate accommodation

Humiliating or degrading treatment	76	19	5
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From table no.1 it is found that 76% of girl workers are working with humiliating or degrading treatment by their master and other members of their family and associates. They live with depression because of constant and continuous humiliating behaviour from their master and other members of the family. In this study it has been found that 19% of the DGCW, are enjoying

humanistic behaviour from their master and other members of their family. They consider themselves as one of the family member and live with contentment in their working place. It has been found in this study that 5% of the DGCW are confusing about the matter because of the fluctuating nature of treatment and behaviour from family members of the working place.

Physical violence	23	71	6
Verbal violence	89	9	2

Regarding physical and verbal violence, it is found that verbal violence on DGCW are one of the common phenomenon. As compared to verbal violence the percentage of physical punishment are found to be less ,only 23%, in the present society. Though it is considered that verbal violence is less harmful but from psychological point

of view mental punishment may lead to anxiety , tension and depression which are considered to be equivalent to physical punishment . Therefore, in this study though 71% DGCW are free from physical punishment but they are not free from frequent tension and anxiety due to verbal violence.

Sexual abuse	7	90	3
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DGCWs are often sexually victimised though its percentage are less in our society. Moral degradation, illegal marital or extra marital relation also exaggerate sexual relation with DGCW. In this study the majority of the DGCW (90%) are happy with their relationship with Master and other members of the family. In this study 3% of the DGCWs were not ready to express their views on this matter, out of fear and hesitation.

so satisfactory. Of course a few of the DGCW are enjoying a good and comfortable working condition with adequate nutritious food , minimum work load, good accommodation, humanistic treatment and good moral and social relationships with the members of the family.

ANALYSIS OF THE OBJECTIVE NO.2:

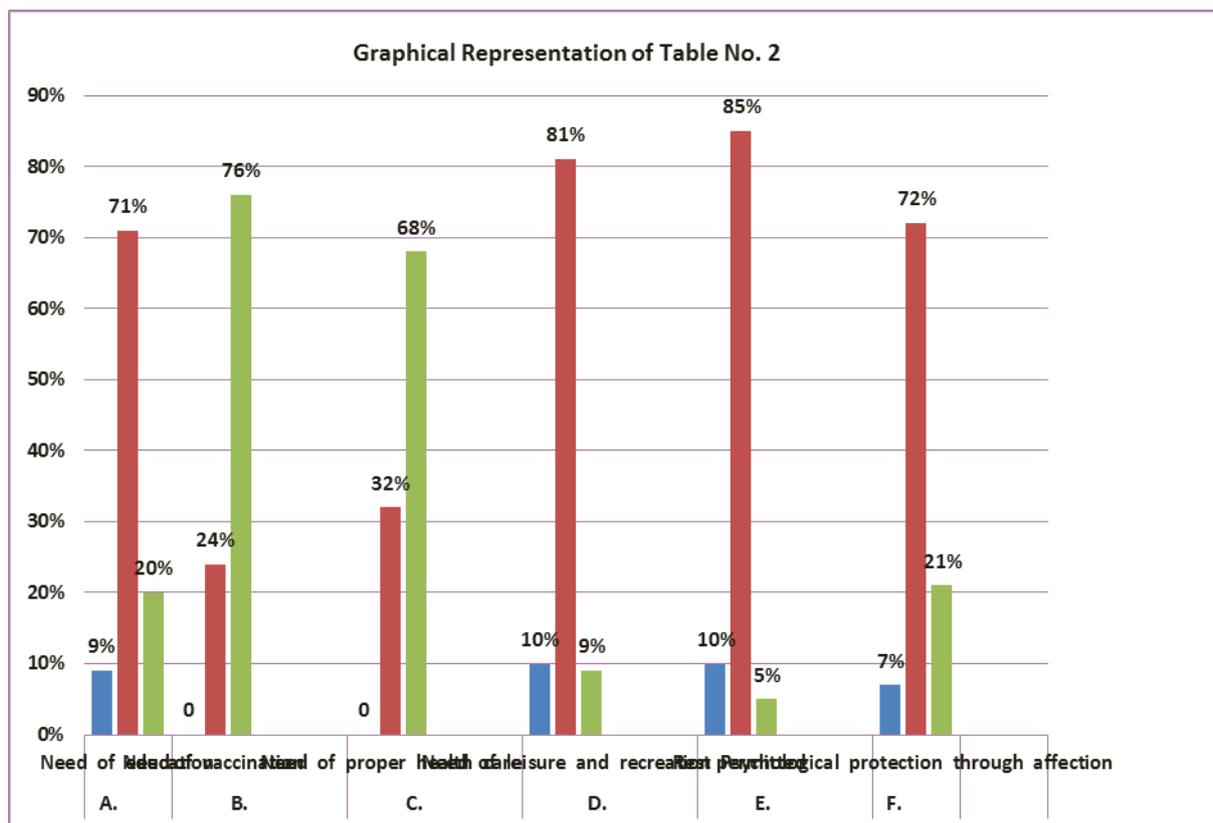
The second objective of the study is to find out the psycho-social needs of domestic girl child workers.

From the above findings and discussion, it is found that the overall working conditions of DGCWs are not

TABLE NO.2
PSYCHO _SOCIAL NEEDS OF THE DOMESTIC GIRL CHILD WORKERS

Sl No	Types of needs	Responses Towards Needs	%	Responses Towards Needs	%	Responses Towards Needs	%
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A.	Need of education	Arrangement for formal education on realization of its importance	9%	No arrangement for formal education of realization	71%	No realization no arrangement	20%
B.	Need of vaccination	Regular routine vaccination	0	Only give important vaccination	24%	Neglect vaccination	76%
C.	Need of proper health care	Proper health care received	0	Partial health care received	32%	Nominal health care received	68%
D.	Need of leisure and recreation	Allowed leisure & recreation	10%	Partially allowed leisure & recreation-	81%	Disallowed leisure & recreation	9%
E.	Rest permitted	Sufficient	10%	Insufficient	85%	Negligible-	5%
F.	Psychological protection through affection	Proper protection	7%	Improper Protection	72%	Neglected	21%



From Table no.2A , it is found that one of the major neglected need and

right of DGCW is their Education. From the collected data, it is found that

only 9% DGCWs are enjoying their educational right with support from their masters which is an encouraging picture for the overall development of DGCW. But unfortunately 71% of them deprived from formal education in spite of awareness of their master about its

importance for the long term achievement. 20% of them could not start or continue their formal education because of ignorance and illiteracy of their masters who are unaware about the law and its importance in practical life.

A. Need of vaccination	Regular routine vaccination ---Nil ----	Only important vaccination 24	give Neglect vaccination 76
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From table no. 2B, it is found that the most of the DGCW are not given proper Vaccination. They are deprived from the needed vaccination for a healthy life. Unfortunately in this study out of the 100 sample DGCWs, no one received regular or routine vaccination jeopardising their present and future

health. Though 24% received a few and specific vaccines for the greater protection of the masters family. A large portion of DGCW (76%) are deprived from vaccination due to the lack of awareness from master's side and from parent's side due to failure to realise about the importance of vaccination.

B. Need of proper health care	Proper health care received Nil	Partial health care received 32%	Nominal health care received 68%
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From Table no.2C., it is found that no DGCW have received proper health care in masters house in spite of having their sound economic condition and academic qualifications. Proper health care means regular health check-up, use of required medicine, clinical investigation to find out the cause of

disease etc. 32% of them received partial care where 68% received nominal health care from their masters side. Most of the care & treatment related to their effect not on cause so it may be vulnerable to their proper growth and development

C. Need of leisure and recreation	Allowed leisure & recreation 10%	Partially allowed leisure &recreation 81%	Disallowed leisure &recreation 9%
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From Table no.2D., it is found that 81% of DGCW after completion of their daily works do enjoy TV and radio programmes . Many of them are exhausted after continuous work and they like to take rest rather than enjoying TV programmes, of course a few of the DGCWs are addicted to T.V. Serial and other

programmes. In this study only a few(10%) of DGCWs are enjoying liberty in domestic work as well as liberty in using of their leisure time in their own way majority of them are deprived from proper use of leisure time for recreational activities.

D. Rest permitted	Sufficient 10%	Insufficient 85%	Negligible 5%
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From Table no.2E., it is found that only 10% of DGCW enjoying rest after their work at night as well as at day time also. Majority of the DGCWs are not getting adequate physical rest at their master's house due to over burden of domestic work. In this study ,it has

been found that 85% of DGCWs were not given sufficient physical rest after day long hard labour, a very few DGCWs were (5%) deprived from the required rest not only during day time but also at night time.

E. Psychological protection through affection	Proper protection 7%	Improper protection 72%	Neglected 21%
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From the Table no.2F, it is found that DGCWs are deprived from true love and affection. Only 7% of them think that they are protected psychologically and are living in an environment surrounded by love and affection of every family members. But unfortunately 72% DGCWs are unhappy because of conditional affection to them. 21% of them informed about the neglected

behaviour and they consider themselves as outsiders and do not feel as part of the family .

Therefore , in this study a countable no of DGCWs are not getting their needs and are deprived of the fundamental rights of the children such as, access to education and health care, the right to rest, leisure & recreation and love & affection.

Suggestions for improvement:

Training on moral & value based education to DGCW to reorient their work culture with honesty and sincerity will help to improve the overall scenario. They should be morally trained up to make a balance between rights and responsibilities.

1. To provide opportunities for formal education and help them to understand laws and human rights.
2. To provide best medical care and regular vaccination to them.
3. To provide balanced nutritious food to them.
4. To provide training on sex education, education on reproductive life , need of family planning, disadvantages of early marriage etc.
5. To provide humanistic approach of opportunities to express

themselves positively and cooperatively.

6. Govt. should work with N.G.O.s to monitor the DGCWs working and living conditions, their problems and prospects.
7. Govt. schemes may reinforce their education and health care and and labour law, job security.
8. Provision may be made to motivate our educated youths specially from higher education sector with motto " Each Student Teach One Domestic Worker" can help a lot to irradiate illiteracy and ignorance from our society.
9. Arrangement for self-management programmes to inculcate positive thinking in life approach to develop their self-confidence and self-esteem.

10. Arrangement for vocational training course to them on some specific field such as knitting , cooking, flower making, doll making, house decorating etc can do a lot for the economic upliftment of the society.

CONCLUSION:

If you have faith in the cause, The means and in God. The hot sun will be cool for you. (M.K.Gandhi)

With the above view , it is the high time to think for those girl child Who work as domestic workers to protect their life , recognize their contribution, promotion of their working and living

condition. Therefore every negative approach of our society has to be changed in a positive direction for the greater interest of DGCWs which will contribute for the progressive development and qualitative improvement of human resource of our nation.

Therefore, it is the joint responsibilities of the Govt. , Non-govt. organisation and the responsible citizens of our society to formulate effective long term plan and schemes for the welfare of the underprivileged DGCW section of our society which will definitely contribute a lot for the growth and development of the nation as a whole.

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