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WORKING CONDITIONS, LABOUR RIGHTS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES OF DOMESTIC WORKERS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF UNA DISTRICT, HIMACHAL PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

Domestic workers constitute a significant segment of India's informal labour force. Despite this, existing labour protection frameworks often fail to adequately address their employment conditions, labour rights, and socio-economic vulnerabilities. Notwithstanding their substantial contribution to domestic services, many domestic workers face challenges such as irregular working hours, low wages, and limited access to social security, job insecurity, and a lack of clear provisions for weekly holidays, paid leave, and other benefits. These conditions raise critical questions regarding the recognition and protection of the labour rights of domestic workers, particularly at the regional and local levels. The present research study examined the working conditions, labour rights, and socio-economic challenges faced by domestic workers in the Una district of Himachal Pradesh. The study explored aspects such as their socio-economic background, employment arrangements, wage structures, working hours, leave provisions, job security, and their level of awareness regarding labour rights and social security mechanisms. In Una town the district headquarter, where several residential colonies have developed, including Rakkad Colony, D.C. Colony, Friends Colony, Durga Colony, and Green Avenue Colony. These settlements exhibit a blend of urban lifestyles and socio-economic characteristics rooted in the surrounding rural areas. While the practice of employing domestic workers is relatively less common among some rural families, where household chores are typically performed by family members themselves the demand for such workers is gradually increasing within these residential colonies and urban households.

Many of these workers hail from economically disadvantaged rural families, including women from households that depend on the earnings of migrant labourers.

The present research study has adopted an empirical approach based on a quantitative/qualitative/mixed-methods design. Primary data has been collected from domestic workers through structured questionnaires and interviews. The research study concluded that domestic servants are ignorant about existence of any legislation regarding them. They are not even aware, if minimum wages are prescribed for them under the Minimum Wages Act of their State.

KEYWORDS: Domestic workers, Un-organised sector, Exploitation, Wages, Poverty, Migration, Undervalued, Underpaid.

1. INTRODUCTION

The State of Himachal Pradesh derives its name from Himalayas. The term '**Himachal'** means **"the land of snowy mountains".** Himachal Pradesh falls between 33° 22' 20" to 33° 12' 40" north latitude and 75° 45' 55" to 79° 4' 20" east longitude. The state can be divided into three zones topographically. They are "the Shivalik's or Outer Himalayas", "Inner Himalayas or Mid- Mountains" and "Alpine Zone or the Greater Himalayas". Then total area of Himachal Pradesh is 55. 673 square kilometres. It came into existence on April 15, 1948 as Chief Commissioner Province. Thirty princely states of Shimla hills and Punjab were merged into it. Statehood was granted to Himachal Pradesh on Jan. 25, 1971[1].

The State of Himachal Pradesh is divided into twelve districts which are Kangra, Shimla, Mandi, Kullu, Shimla, Chamba, Hamirpur, Solan, Lahual & Spiti, Sirmour, Una, Bilaspur and Kinnaur. The district Una falls under Shivalik's or outer Himalayas. District Una was part of Hoshiarpur district of Punjab till 1966. It came into existence on September 1, 1972 after the reorganisation of Punjab and hilly areas of Himachal Pradesh. On September 1, 1966 district Una was transferred from Punjab to Himachal Pradesh by including it in district Kangra. Later, three districts were carved out of existing Kangra district to form three districts i.e., Una, Hamirpur and Kangra. For the purpose of administration district Una is subdivided into two subdivisions i.e., Una and Amb with headquarters at both places. The four major tehsils of district are Una headquarter, Amb, Haroli and Banagana. There are total 235 panchayats and 758 inhabited villages. The district has an area of 1549 Sq. Kilo Metres.

[1] **Jag Mohan Balokhra, *The Wonderland Himachal Pradesh: An Encyclopaedia* 5,17 (H.G Publications, New Delhi, 2020).**

The majority of population is rural population involved in pastoral and agricultural activities. With the growth of urbanisation many new ventures are coming up in district. There are total eight industrial areas in district with 252 units of production. These units of production consist of small, medium and large scale enterprises providing employment to people from nearby villages and people from inside and outside the state[2].

The urban area is just composed of Una market which serves as district headquarters. The market is surrounded by colonies which have come up with time. These colonies have basically come up in villages surrounding the market area. So, they have both category of people i.e., people living urban life style who have settled in colonies and residents of village following pastoral lifestyle. There are five major colonies which have come up in area i.e., Rakkar colony, D.C Colony, Friends Colony, Durga Colony, Green Avenue Colony. Due to majority of rural population people prefer to do work themselves. Only few people who are living in colonies have kept domestic workers. These domestic workers come from poor families of villages or are wives of migrant labourers. However, the demand for domestic workers is increasing.

According to the data on child labour based on the Employment and Unemployment Survey during NSS (National Sample Survey) 66th round (2009-10) for the age group 5-14 years in the state of Himachal Pradesh, the total number of working males and females is 7398 out of which the percentage of child labour is 0.15 percent[3]. According to 2001 Census, the total number of working children in the age group 5-14 years were 12,666,377 out of which in Himachal Pradesh were 1,07,774[4]. According to 2011 census total number of working children in the age group 5-14 years in India were 4,353,247. Out of this in Himachal Pradesh were 15,001.[5] According to Census 2011 data, the number of domestic workers in the country were 47,81,355.

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2 **Brief Industrial Profile of Una District by MSME Development Institute, *available at:* https://dcmsme.gov.in/old/dips.DIP%20Una.pdf (last visited on 10 May, 2023 at 8:20 P.M).**

3 **NSSO (66th Round of Survey on child Labour in Major Indian States, 2009-2010), *available at:* https://labour.gov.in/childlabour/national-sample-survey-organisation-data-child-labour (last visited on 10 May, 2023 at 8:55 P.M).**

4 **State Wise Distribution of Working Children According to 1971, 1981, 1991 And 2001 Census in the Age Group 5-14 Years, *available at:* https://labour.gov.in/sites/default/files/ Census1971to2001.pdf. (last visited4on 11 May, 2023 at 6:05 P.M).**

5 **State Wise Details of Working Children in the Age Group of 5-14 Years as Per Census 2001 And Census 2011, *available at:* https://labour.gov.in/childlabour/census-data-child-labour (last visited on 11 May, 2023 at 9:00 P.M).**

2. STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEM

Domestic life-style play an important part in working of households. But domestic workers contribute their significantly role to informal economy growth. They perform various household tasks i.e., cleaning, cooking, washing, child-care, etc. But they face several problems and exploitation at workplace, such as poor working conditions, inadequate wages, long working hours, lack of holidays, economic insecurity, lack of formal contract of employment, etc. There is need to understand how far the existing legal measures are able to address their concerns. The research problem of present research study focused to examine the condition of domestic workers in district Una of Himachal Pradesh. Its purpose is to find out domestic workers' problems, their awareness regarding their human rights and the laws for the workers and how far laws are effective in providing them relief. The core purpose of this research problem is to find out whether domestic workers in Una district enjoy decent working conditions, adequate wages, holidays, legal protection or whether they form vulnerable socio-economic section of society because of informal nature of employment.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

(i) To explore socio-economic profile of domestic workers of the given area.

(ii) To explore the working conditions of domestic workers.

(iii) To assess the level of awareness of domestic workers regarding their legal rights and social protection.

iv) To identify major problems and challenges faced by domestic workers.

4. SELECTION OF AREA OF STUDY

The district of Una of Himachal Pradesh is chosen for the purpose of study as it was observed that there is rise in demand for domestic workers. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the perspective as well as approach of employers regarding the subject. The urban residential areas are chosen for the purpose of study because the incident of hiring domestic worker would be higher in comparison to rural areas. The rural areas are left form study because it is observed that households are agriculture based having moderate income where work is shared among family members. Moreover, focus of study condition of domestic workers in employer's households rather than their households. Attempt has been made to collect samples from households of all backgrounds. Before collection of samples, there is no prior information as to how many households employ domestic workers. Sample households were

covered to get information on live-in and live-out domestic workers. Data has been collected through questionnaires and interview schedules.

Many challenges have been faced while conducting the study. The majority of domestic workers were not interested in filling the questionnaires. Since, most of the domestic workers are illiterate or poorly educated it was very difficult to make them understand the purpose of study. They were apprehensive about filling the forms and disclosing their id- proofs or Aadhar number. Language was also a barrier as domestic workers were from different ethnic groups and were not fluent in Hindi. Due to this, the answers have to filled in by researcher. Where the questionnaires were fulfilled in front of employer or where they were interviewed in employer's household, the domestic workers hesitated to disclose their true demands.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study has been investigated through structured and unstructured interview schedules and by distribution of questionnaires. The part-time, live-in, live-out woman domestic workers were covered under the study. The area of study was Una district of Himachal Pradesh. In the absence of any official data on domestic workers in Una district effort has been made to collect maximum sample size. It has been ensured that the sample, is geographically representatives of Una district. In order to identify the sample for the study, a simple random 5ethod has been used and for collection of data, interview method using a questionnaire is to be adopted. Besides this, data has been collected from various organisations, government departments working in India. For making detailed study of the proposed topic all formal, informal, primary and secondary tools have been employed to extract relevant information relating to research work.

6.ACTUAL STUDY OF SITUATION OF DOMESTIC WORKERS IN DISTRICT UNA

A total number of sixty-five domestic workers are studied. Information is collected from them in the form of questionnaires by interview method. The collected information is organised under various headings which gives clear idea about their situation. The information collected is studied as follows:

6.1 PERSONAL PROFILE

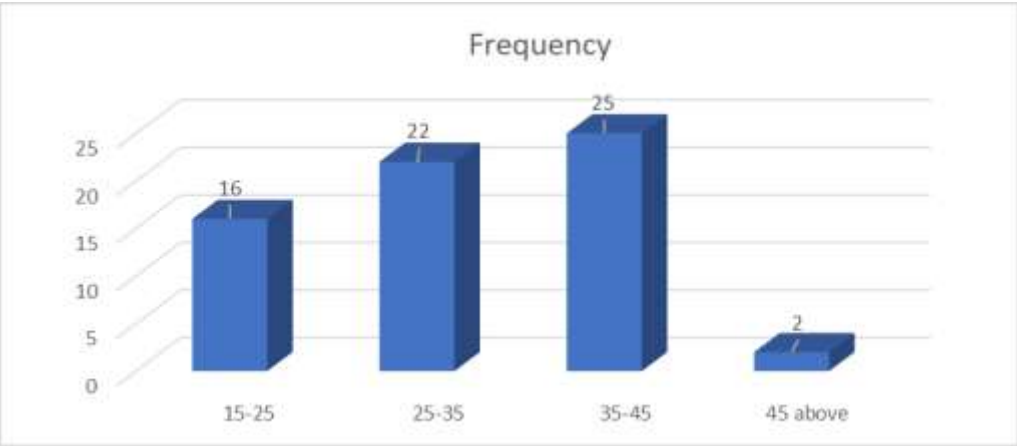
6.1.1 Information Regarding Age, Category and Place to Which Belongs

(a) Age

While conducting the study, it was found that people of different age group are working as domestic workers. Out of total no. of sixty- five domestic workers who were interviewed, sixteen domestic workers were from the age group of 15-25 years. Twenty-two domestic workers were from the age group of 25-35 years. Twenty-five domestic workers were from the age group of 35-45 years. Two domestic workers are above the age of 45 years. However, among the domestic workers falling between the age group of 15-25 years, two are live-in domestic workers who joined the households when they were below fourteen years of age. Now, they are above eighteen years of age and they are serving the same households. Due to lack of facilities for people from backward areas and poverty, they were sent by their parents so that they could study and get good atmosphere at the employer's house. The condition before joining was that employer was to enrol them in school. These domestic workers were tutored by their parents to tell everyone that they were above the age of fourteen years. However, the behaviour of households they joined was good and they were made to do diplomas and now, they were doing jobs while continuing as domestic workers in the same households. All domestic workers are females except two males who are who are live-in domestic workers.

Table 6.1.1(a): Age group Frequency.

S. No.	Age group	Frequency
1	15-25	16
2	25-35	22
3	35-45	25
4	45 above	2

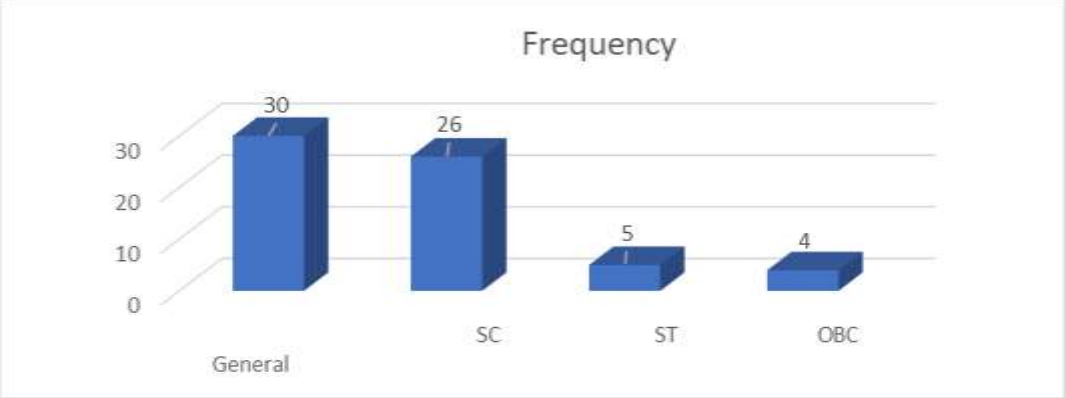


(b) Category

The domestic workers belong to different categories. They are affected by different factors because of the category to which they belong. Many of these domestic workers have migrated from other places. Out of the sixty-five domestic workers thirty domestic workers belong to general category. The reason for joining as domestic workers is poverty and inadequate land holdings. The reason is same whether they are migrants or local. Most of them have cattle, land which is the main income resources and this resource is insufficient to support their families. Four domestic workers belong to the category of other backward classes. These women have also become domestic worker due to insufficient income. Five domestic workers belong to scheduled tribes. Due to lack facilities in their areas they have migrated to this place. Two of them are live-in domestic workers. Lack of proper facilities for education, poor quality of schools and lack of funds have prompted them to become domestic workers. Twenty-six domestic workers belong to the category of scheduled castes. Although most of these women have access to facilities, due to poor income they have become domestic workers. These women are poorly educated and domestic work is the easy option available for them as they want to support their husbands. Most of these women want to give quality life to their kids. Husbands of these women are working on petty jobs in factories, shops, brick kilns, showrooms etc. Most of these women have migrated from other places and their husbands possess little or no land holding at their native place.

Table 6.1.1 (b): Category Frequency.

Sr. No.	Category	Frequency
1	General	30
2	SC	26
3	ST	5
4	OBC	4



(c) Whether Migrated or Local

Migration is an important factor regarding domestic workers. Most people who migrate to cities for better opportunities become domestic workers. Since, they come from rural and backward areas, they lack skills. Domestic work is something which is regarded as unskilled work. It is considered that a person learns domestic work naturally as a part of growth. So, being unfit for other jobs domestic work is easy available option for migrants. Out of sixty-five domestic workers studied, forty-six are migrants, nineteen are local. However, among the migrant domestic workers some are from the same State, while some are from other States of India. Some of the domestic workers are from other country of Nepal. Twelve workers are from the same State i.e., one from Hamirpur, two from Chamba and nine from Sirmour. Seventeen domestic workers are from other states i.e., six from the states of Bihar, four from Jharkhand, one from Uttar Pradesh, two from Haryana, one from Chhattisgarh, one from Rajasthan and one from Uttaranchal. Seventeen migrant domestic workers are from neighbouring country of Nepal. These domestic workers have different reasons for migration. Among the forty-six migrant workers, forty-one stated that they have migrated because of poverty and in search of employment. However, others stated that they have migrated for education and better life for children, medical treatment of children.

Table 6.1.1 (c): Migration Frequency.

Sr. No.	Migration	Frequency
1	Yes	46
2	No	19

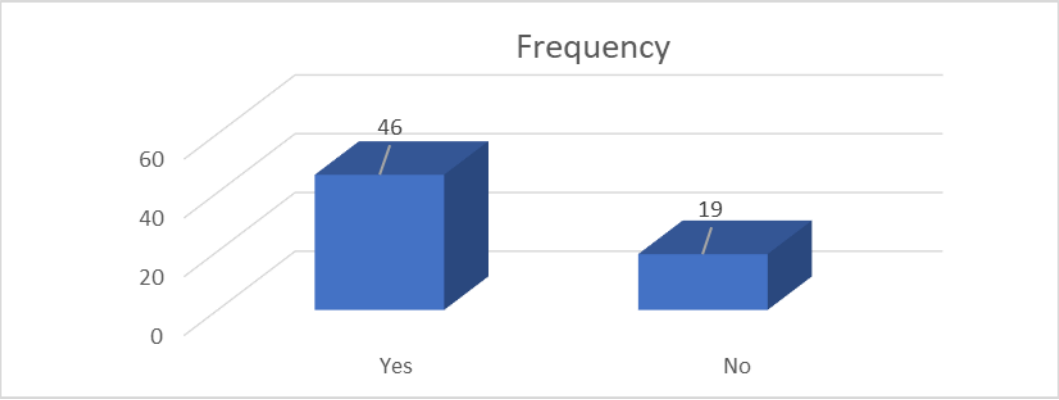


Table 6.1.1 (c) (i) : Origin of Migration Frequency

Sr. No.	Origin of Migration	Frequency
1	Local	19
2	Within state	12
3	Outside state	17
4	Outside country	17

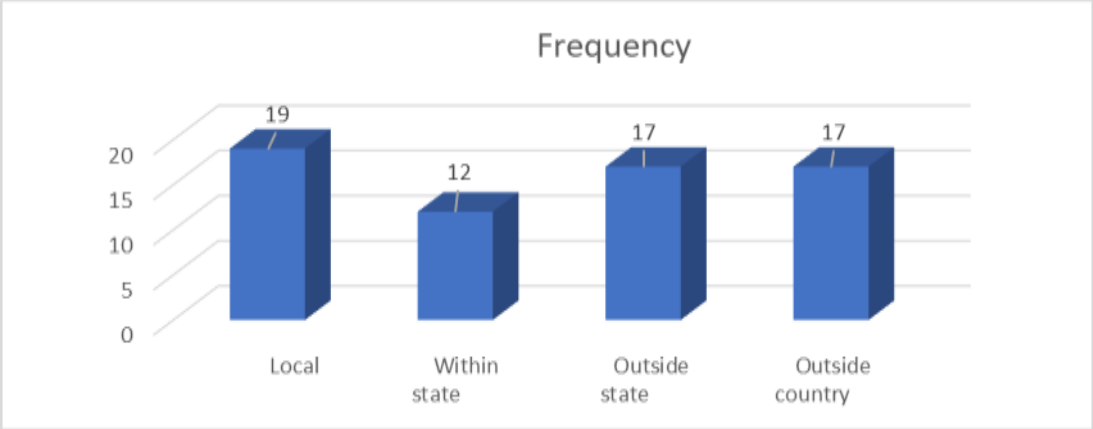
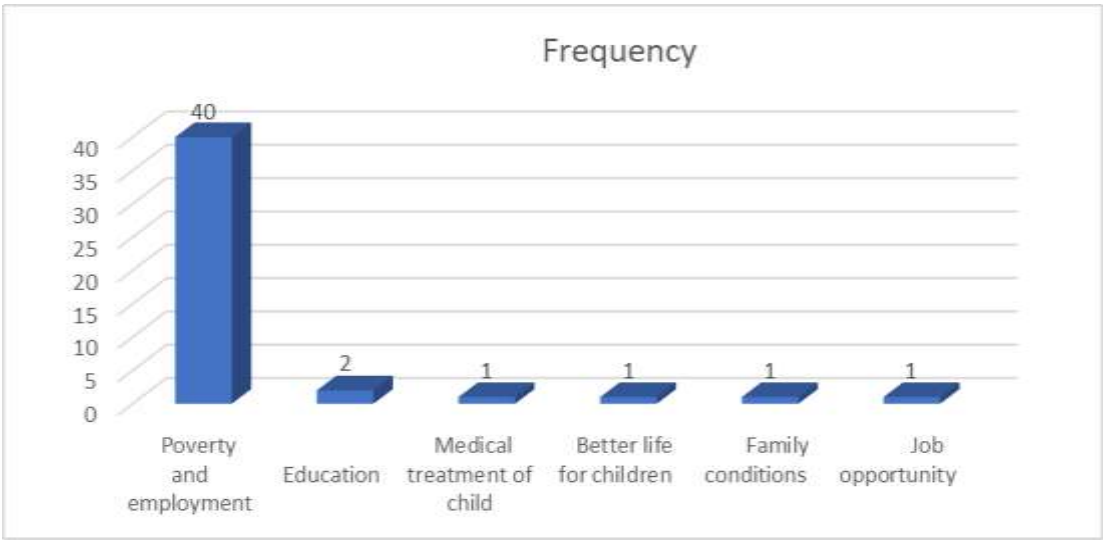


Table 6.1.1 (c) (ii): Reason for Migration Frequency.

Sr. No.	Reason for Migration	Frequency
1	Poverty and employment	40
2	Education	2
3	Medical treatment of child	1
4	Better life for children	1
5	Family conditions	1
6	Job opportunity	1



6.1.2 Status of Education

(a) Educational Qualifications and Reasons for Discontinuing Studies

Out of sixty-five domestic workers studied, forty-six are literate and nineteen are illiterate. However, none of them is highly qualified. Seventeen domestic workers have studied only till fifth. Eighteen domestic workers have studied only till matric. Only five domestic workers have studied till 10+2 standard. Only five of them have finished diplomas and one is graduate. Several reasons were found for discontinuing studies. These domestic workers come from different social backgrounds and are affected by different factors. Thirty-two of

these domestic workers stated that financial condition of families was poor. So, some of them could not study at all and some had to quit their studies and become domestic workers in order to support their families. However, only two domestic workers stated that they did not continue their studies due to lack of interest. However, there was no pressure from their families to quit their studies. However, nine stated that they had to quit studies due to family conditions. Like one of them stated that she became an orphan at a young age. So, relatives forced her to marry. Till then, she had to work in order to support herself. Other girl stated of them stated that it was a cultural norm in her community for not to educate girls. Twenty of them stated that they left their studies because they got married. However, these women had no factor forcing them to quit their studies but they eloped for marriage without their family's consent. so, ultimately school was left. Only two domestic workers have stated that they had to leave their studied because of belonging to backward area and poverty. There were less means to earn livelihood in backward area. Their families could not afford and also there were not good educational facilities in area.

Table 5.1.2 (a) (i): Educational Qualification Frequency.

Sr. No.	Educational qualifications	Frequency
1	Literate	46
2	Illiterate	19

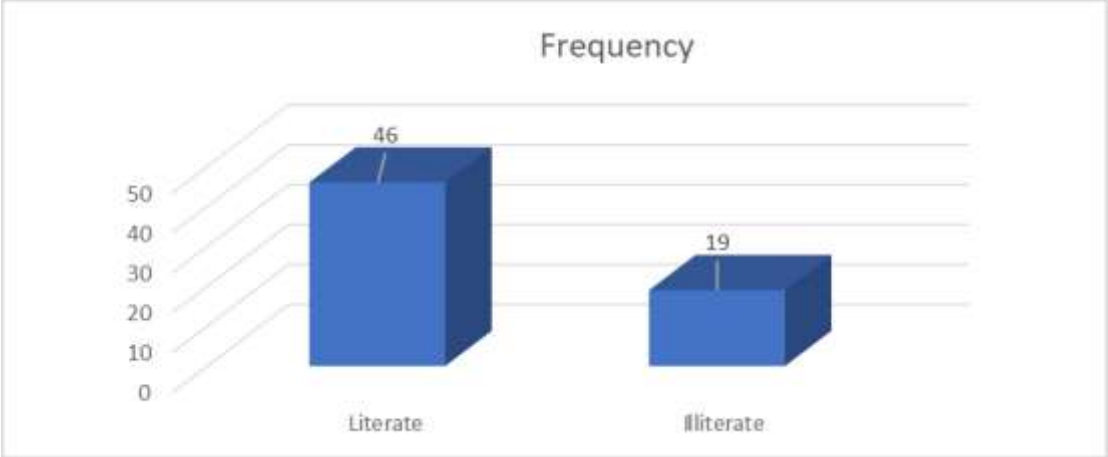
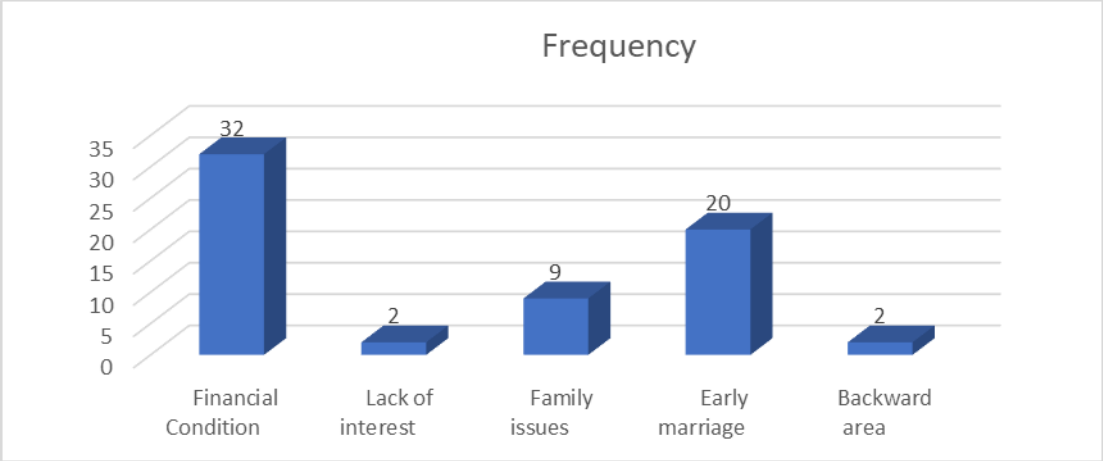


Table 6.1.2 (a) (ii):: Reason for Discontinuing Studies Frequency.

Sr. No.	Reason for Discontinuing Studies	Frequency
1	Financial Condition	32
2	Lack of interest	2
3	Family issues	9
4	Early marriage	20
5	Backward area	2



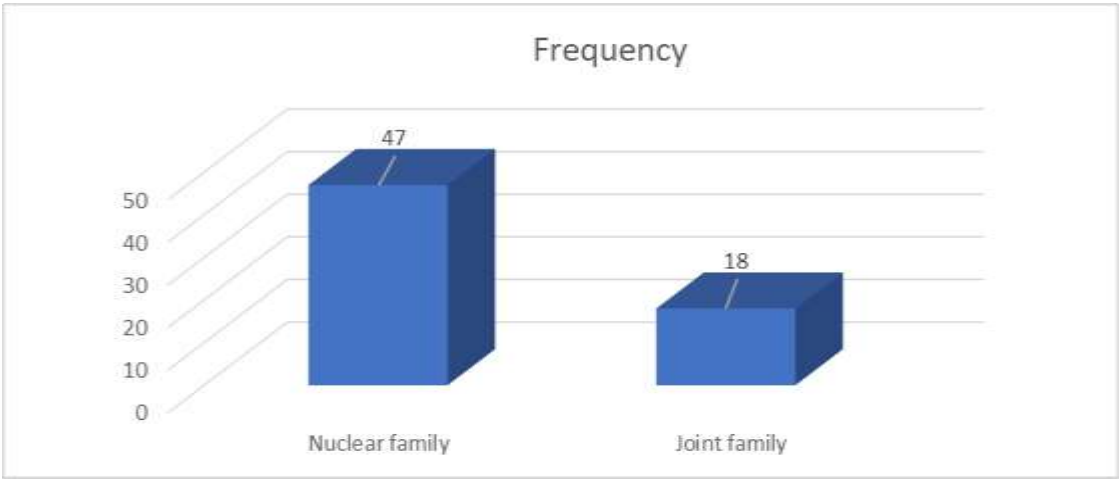
6.1.3 Status of Family Life

(a) Family Structure

Out of the sixty-five domestic workers studied, fourty-seven domestic workers have nuclear families and eighteen domestic workers have joint families. Out of these fourty-seven domestic workers having nuclear families, thirty-seven are the migrated families. Out of the eighteen domestic workers having joint families, eight are the migrated families.

Table 6.1.3 (a): Family type Frequency.

Sr. No	Family type	Frequency
1	Nuclear family	47
2	Joint family	18



(b) Married or Unmarried and Reasons for Working

These women face different situations in life. Out of the sixty-five domestic workers studied fifty-two are married. Nine are unmarried. Three of them are separated and one is widow. Since, these women come from different societies, they are affected by different factors.

Twenty-eight of these women stated that they are working to support their husband's income. Their husbands are earning but their income is not sufficient to meet all expenditure of their families. So, these women thought to step out to earn to earn livelihood for their family. Nine domestic workers stated that they were working because their husbands were not earning. In order to run their households these women worked as domestic workers. These women come from very poor families who are from labour class. So, husbands of these women are often drunkards or abusive or in habit of taking drugs. They are not regular at their work, so, they have little or no income. Four domestic workers stated that they are working as domestic workers because they want independent pocket money. Their husbands are earning and give them money but they are answerable for all the expenditure. So, they thought to work and earn money for which they are not answerable to their husbands. Seven of them stated that their husbands do not give them any money. So, for their expenditure they had to work. Three domestic workers stated that they are working because they want to support their husband's families and as well as want independent pocket money. Some of their money is used for family expenditure while some of the money is utilised as pocket money. Four domestic workers said that they are working to earn their livelihood as they were the only earning member of the family. Two among them are separated and two are widows.

In case of unmarried domestic workers, one stated that they had to work because there was no family income at all. Two stated that they were working to support family income. Four stated that they want independent pocket money. One state that they need money both for studies and independent pocket money.

Table 6.1.2 (b)(i): Marital Status Frequency.

Sr. No.	Marital Status	Frequency
1	Married	52
2	Unmarried	9
3	Separated	2
4	Widow	2

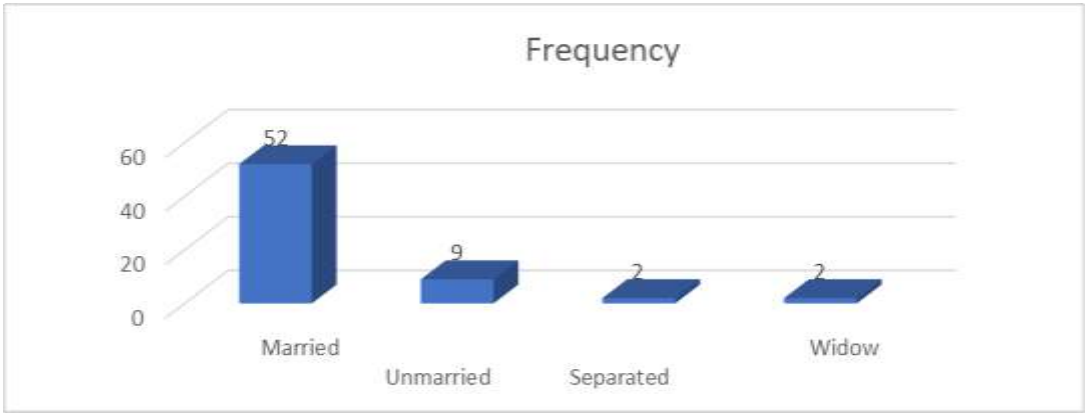


Table 6.1.2 (b)(ii): If Married Reasons for Working Frequency.

Sr. No.	If Married Reasons for Working	Frequency
1	Support husband's income	28
2	Husband not earning	9
3	Want independent pocket money	4
4	Husband do not give money	7
5	(Separated/widow) for livelihood	4
6	Support husband as well as independent pocket money	3
7	Support husband's income as well as husband do not give money	1

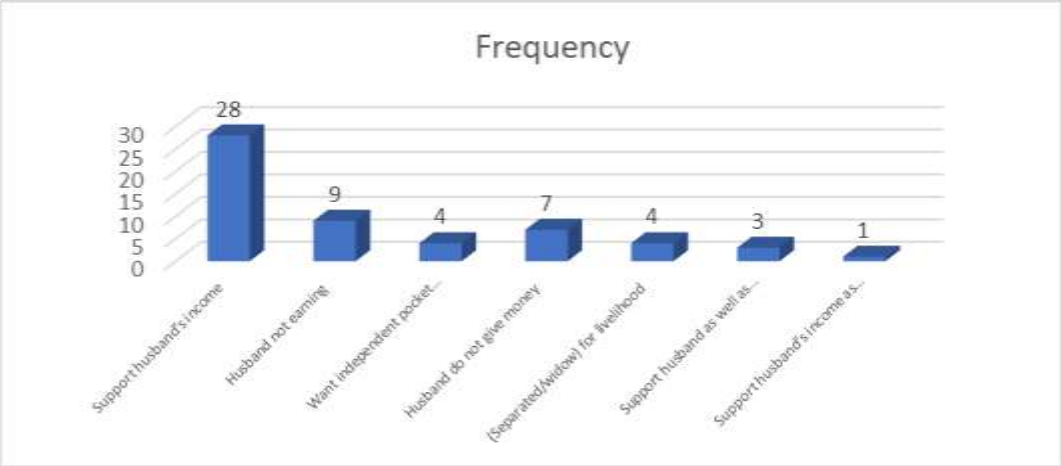
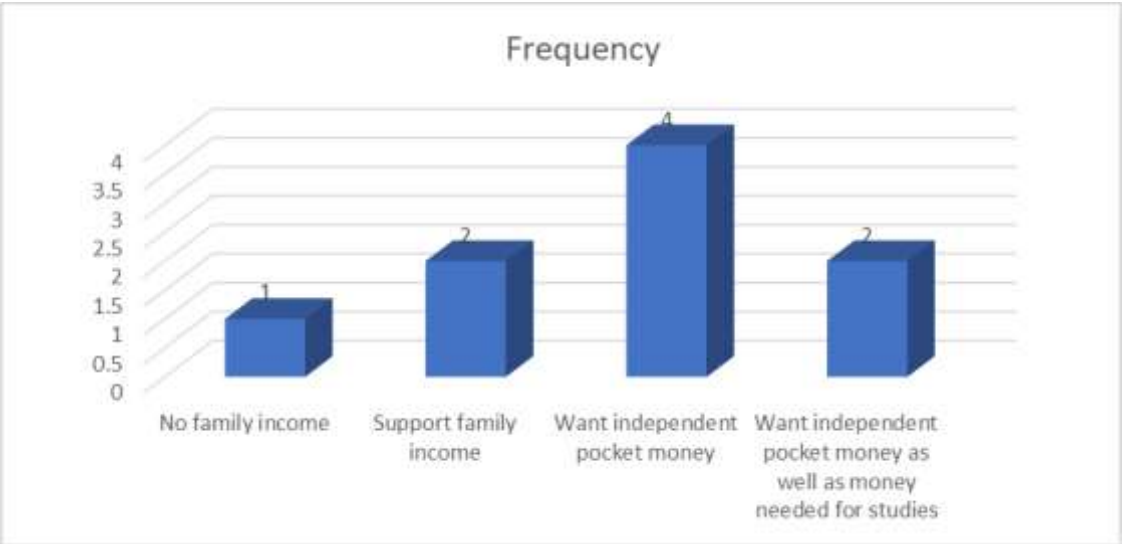


Table 6.1.2 (b)(iii): If unmarried reasons for working Frequency.

Sr. No.	If unmarried reasons for working	Frequency
1	No family income	1
2	Support family income	2
3	Want independent pocket money	4
4	Want independent pocket money as well as money needed for studies	2



6.2 CONDITIONS AT WORK

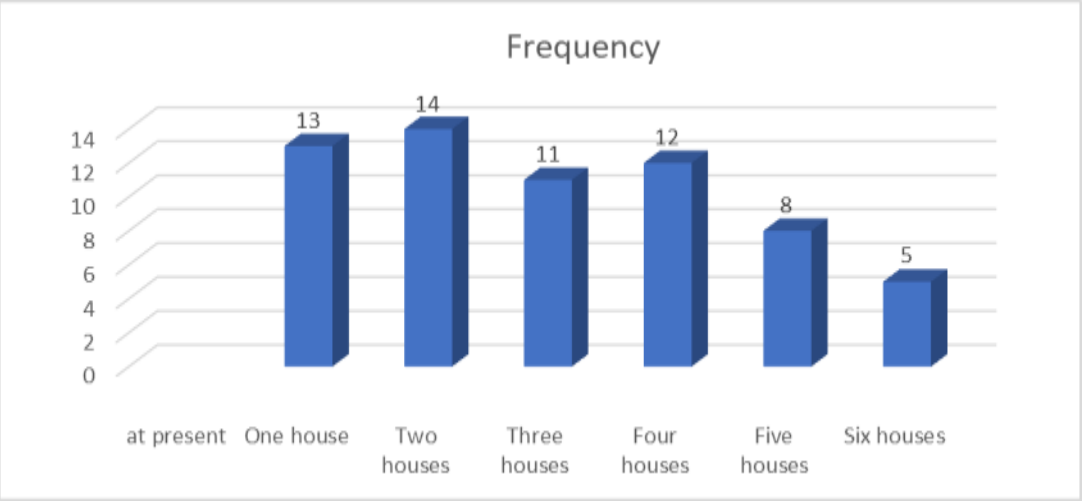
6.2.1 Issues Related to Work

(a) Number of Households

The domestic workers may be working in one or more than one household. However, out of sixty-five domestic workers, thirteen work in single household. Fourteen domestic workers work in two households. Eleven domestic workers work in three households. Twelve domestic workers stated that they work in four households. Eight domestic workers work in five households. Five domestic workers work in six households. Two domestic workers are live-in domestic workers.

Table 6.2.1 (a): How many households work at present Frequency.

Sr. No.	How many households work at present	Frequency
1	One house	13
2	Two houses	14
3	Three houses	11
4	Four houses	12
5	Five houses	8
6	Six houses	5



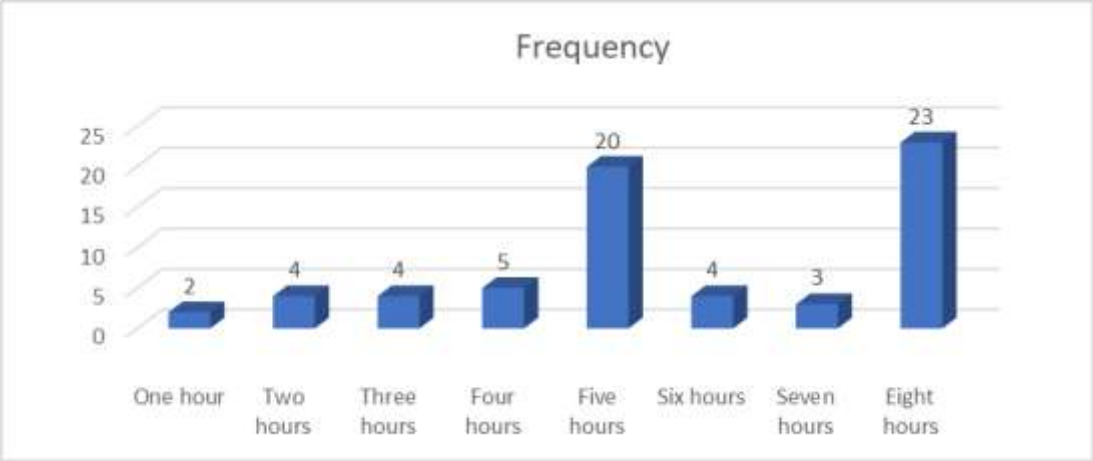
(b) Number of Hours of Work

The hours of work depend upon the number of households in which they work and number of tasks performed. Only two domestic workers stated that they work for one hour. Four domestic workers stated that they work for two hours in a day. The other four domestic workers stated that they work for three hours in a day. Five domestic workers stated that they work for four hours in a day. Twenty domestic workers stated that they work for five hours in a day. Four domestic workers stated that they work for six hours in a day. Three domestic

workers stated that they work for seven hours in a day. Twenty- three domestic workers stated that they work for eight hours in a day. However, one among these is working as domestic worker in a house for two hours and in rest of the time work as a helper in a canteen. Two domestic workers are live- in domestic workers who perform miscellaneous tasks.

Table 6.2.1 (b): Hours of work Frequency.

Sr. No.	Hours of work	Frequency
1	One hour	2
2	Two hours	4
3	Three hours	4
4	Four hours	5
5	Five hours	20
6	Six hours	4
7	Seven hours	3
8	Eight hours	23



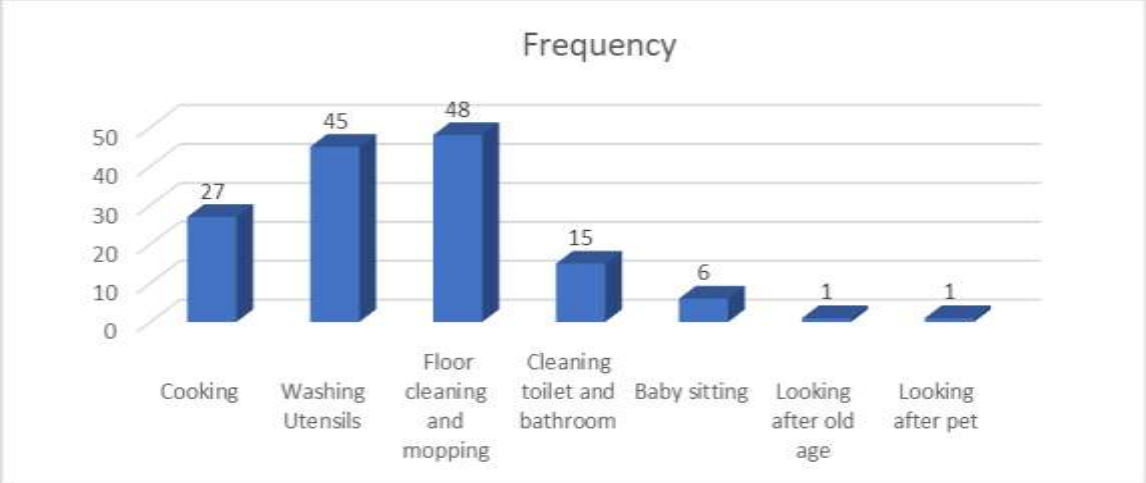
(c) Nature of Work Done

The domestic workers perform different household chores at one or more houses. They perform chores such as cooking, washing utensils, floor cleaning and mopping, cleaning toilet and bathroom, babysitting, looking after old age member or disabled member, looking after pet. Twenty- seven domestic workers are performing the tasks of cooking. Forty-five domestic workers performed the tasks of washing utensil, forty-eight domestic workers performed the tasks of floor cleaning and mopping, fifteen domestic workers performed the tasks of toilet and bathroom cleaning, six domestic workers performed the tasks of baby-sitting, one performed the task of looking after the old age, and one domestic worker looked after the pet. One stated that she works in morning and evening as a domestic worker and in between works as *Safai karamchari* (Women Sanitation worker) in a college. One performs

the task of dusting. One works as a masseur for women after delivery also. Seven domestic workers are full-time domestic workers and their work is not defined. Apart from cleaning sand mopping, they are sometimes asked to sweep outside area, clean loan, spread clothes for drying outside, folding clothes, dusting, making beds. They perform all miscellaneous tasks. Same is the case of live- in domestic workers. Although the work hours of full-time workers are fixed, the work hours of live-in domestic workers is not fixed.

Table 6.2.1 (c): Work done Frequency.

Sr. No.	Work done	Frequency
1	Cooking	27
2	Washing Utensils	45
3	Floor cleaning and mopping	48
4	Cleaning toilet and bathroom	15
5	Baby sitting	6
6	Looking after old age	1
7	Looking after pet	1



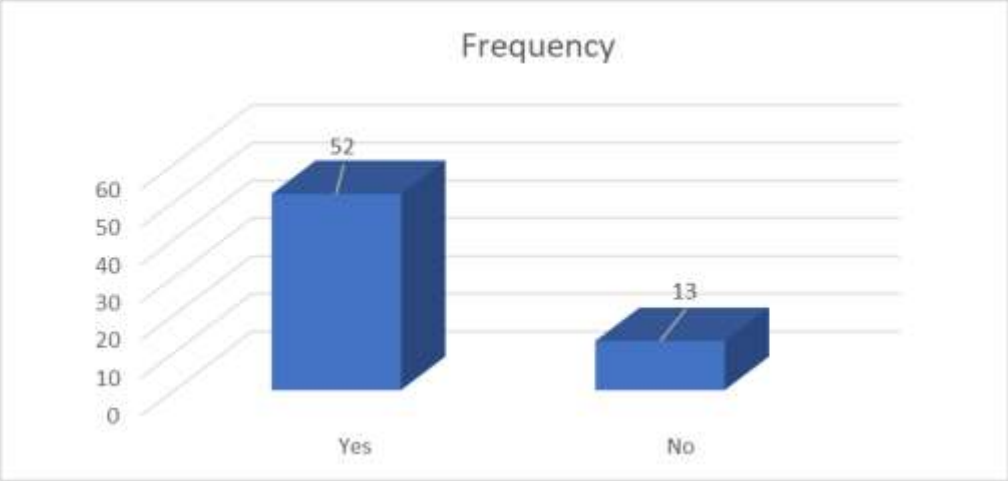
(d) Meals at Workplace or Not

Some domestic workers work from morning to evening. So, they get meals at workplace or not is important to determine. Giving them meals at workplace is of immense help to them, it saves their time to cook meals for themselves. They do not have to go home for eating. It saves their meals cost also. Fifty-two domestic workers sated that they get meals at employer's house. However, what they are getting depends upon the timing of joining work. for example- if someone joins in morning they will get breakfast, if someone joins in noon, they will get lunch. Thirteen domestic workers stated that they do not get meals at employer's house. Among these fifty-two domestic workers who get meals two are live in domestic workers and seven are full time workers. They get all three meals and snacks in day. But it

was commonly state that the quality of meals depended upon the set up and nature of family they are working. Some employers were so nice that they treated them fairly and gave them the same food they are consuming. While some families gave them leftover and kept separate utensils for them. However, in case of live-in domestic workers they said that they were treated fairly and care was taken about their needs.

Table 6.2.1 (d): Meals at workplace Frequency.

Sr. No.	Meals at workplace	Frequency
1	Yes	52
2	No	13

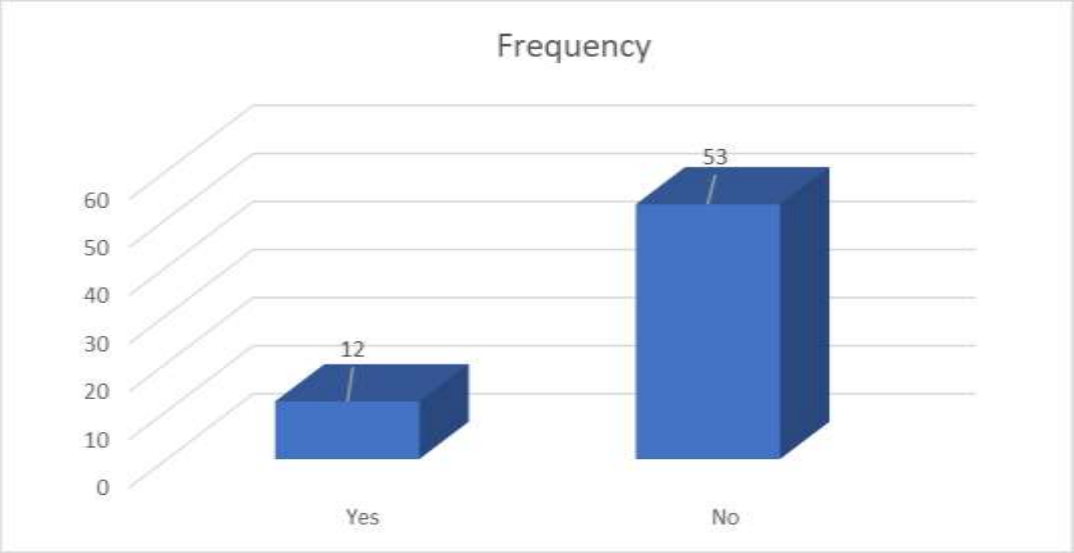


(e) Abuse at Workplace

Abuse at workplace is common and several cases have been reported about the abuse of domestic workers. However, the serious abuse which is reported in the metropolitan cities of Delhi, Bombay have never been reported here. Twelve domestic workers stated that they have faced abuse. But this is just limited to verbal disagreements which may be about the quality of work done, or about time of coming, or about wages due to which domestic workers felt bad. This is not of such a gravity to term it as criminal offence. Fifty-three stated that they have not faced any kind of physical or verbal or sexual abuse.

Table 6.2.1 (e): Abuse at Workplace Frequency.

Sr. No	Abuse at Workplace	Frequency
1	Yes	12
2	No	53

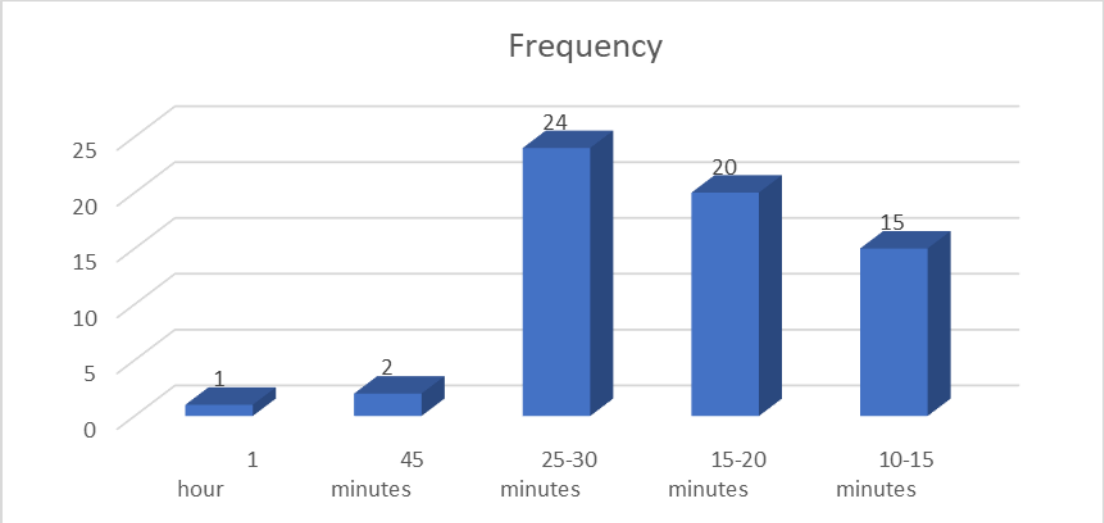


(f) Time Taken in Commuting to Workplace

Most domestic workers take work near to the places they live. The domestic workers who live nearby employer's house go by walk. And domestic workers who come from other place come by bus. One domestic worker stated that it takes one hour to go to the workplace. Two domestic workers stated that it takes 45 minutes to one hour to commute to work place. Twenty-four domestic workers stated that it takes 25-30 minutes for them to go to employer's house. Twenty domestic workers sated that it takes 15-20 minutes for them to go to employer's house. Fifteen domestic workers stated that it takes 10-15 minutes for them to go to employer's house. Fifty-four domestic workers go by walking. Six domestic workers travel by bus. Three domestic workers stated that one work place is near where she goes by walking and one is bit far where she goes by bus. Two are live-in domestic workers who lives at the place they work.

Table 6.2.1 (e): Time taken Frequency.

Sr. No.	Time taken	Frequency
1	1 hour	1
2	45 minutes	2
3	25-30 minutes	24
4	15-20 minutes	20
5	10-15 minutes	15



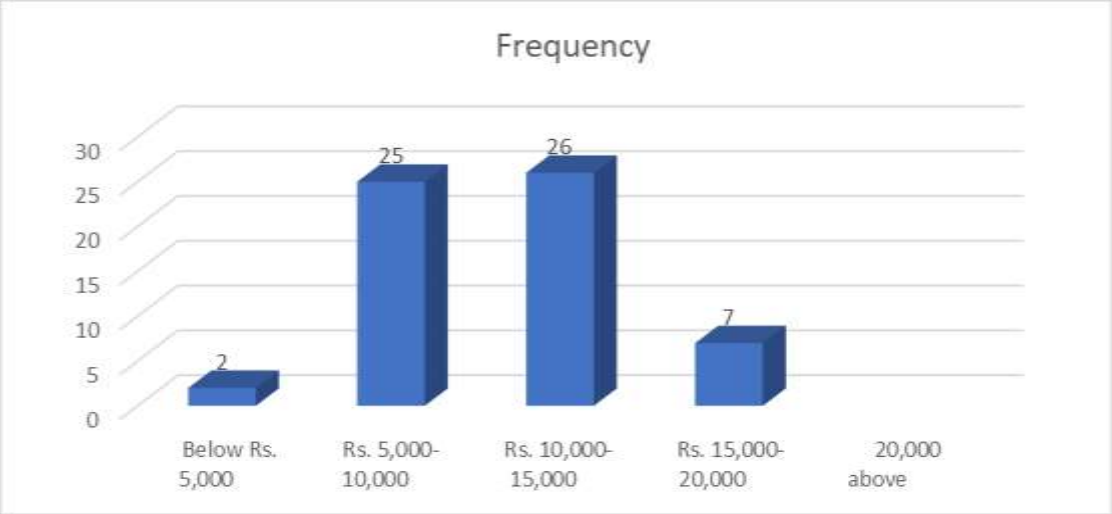
6.2.2 Issues Related to Wages

(a) Income

The domestic workers earn decent income depending upon the number of households they have taken. Some work in multiple houses whereas some work in one or two households because of their circumstances are such that they cannot take out more time, for example- kids are young and cannot be left alone. Some domestic workers leave their kids in "***Anganwadi***" and work till the closing time of "***Anganwadi".*** Out of the study of sixty-five domestic workers it was found that only two domestic workers earn below Rs. 5000. Twenty-five domestic workers are earning between Rs. 5,000- 10,000. Twenty-six domestic workers are earning between Rs. 10,000- 15, 000. Seven domestic workers are earning between 15,000- 20,000. None domestic worker is earning above Rs. 20, 000. For those who are earning up to Rs. 20, 000, these domestic workers are working for at least 8-9 hours in multiple houses.

Table 6.2.2 (a): Income Frequency.

Sr. No.	Income	Frequency
1	Below Rs. 5,000	2
2	Rs. 5,000- 10,0002	25
3	Rs. 10,000- 15,000	26
4	Rs. 15,000-20,000	7
5	20,000 above	None

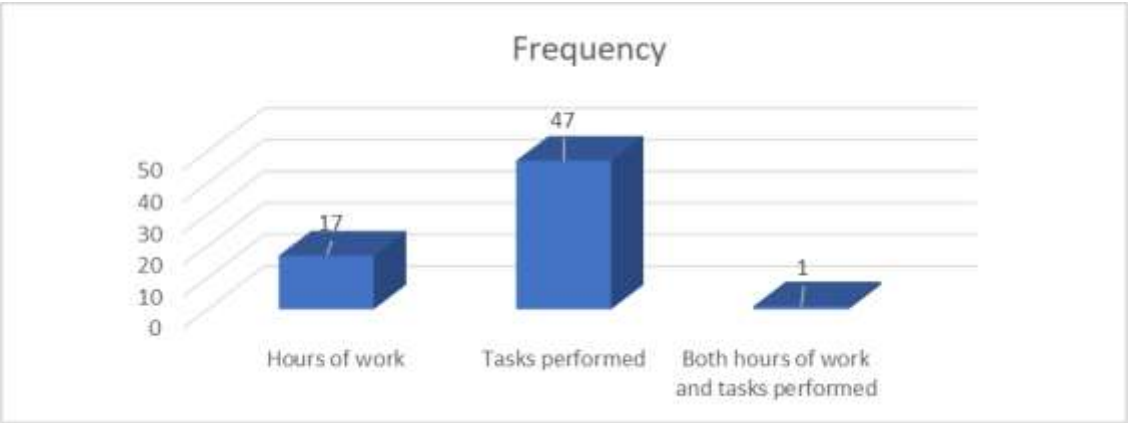


(b) Basis for Fixation of Payment

Out of sixty-five domestic workers, seventeen stated that wages are fixed according to the hours of work, forty- seven stated that wages are fixed according to tasks performed. However, one stated that she does cleaning work as well as baby sitting. The wages for cleaning work are fixed according to per task and wages for babysitting are fixed according to the hours of work. Although different states have fixed minimum wages under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948. The minimum wages are fixed by the government of Himachal Pradesh also. But while conducting the study, it was found that none of the domestic workers knew that wages are fixed by them for government. Two workers are live- in workers who are hired on different conditions fixed with parents.

Table 6.2.2 (b): Criteria for Fixation of Wages Frequency.

Sr. No.	Criteria for Fixation of Wages	Frequency
1	Hours of work	17
2	Tasks performed	47
3	Both hours of work and tasks performed	1

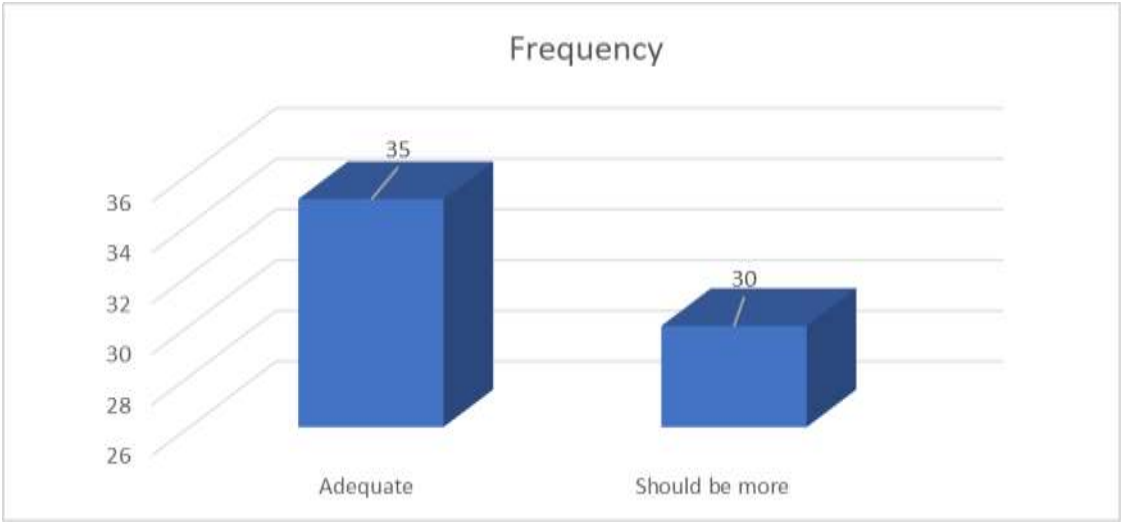


(c) Payment Adequate or Not

Some domestic workers get payment for work according to hours of work consumed while some get payment according to task performed. However, some are satisfied with the wages while some said it is insufficient and should be more. Thirty-five domestic workers stated that they are satisfied with the wages they get and they think that it is a fair according to the work done. Among these thirty-five domestic workers, two are live-in domestic workers and seven are full- time domestic workers. They live-in domestic workers said they said they were totally satisfied as their living and education was totally free. Their expenses were done by the family. Moreover, they were going to school as per the verbal promise made with the parents at the time of hiring. Before going to school, they did sweeping, mopping and washing the dishes. And after coming from school, they did other tasks like kneading dough, folding clothes, watering plants. Care was taken about their food and daily needs. Moreover, whenever they visited their families, money was given to them. So, they were satisfied with this set up. In case of seven full-time domestic workers, three said they were satisfied but the tasks performed were not defined. There was no pressure on them and they did work at their own speed. They were given meals and snacks like tea. So, they were satisfied. However, one full-time worker said payment should be more as they are made to do time consuming tasks sometimes. While thirty domestic workers stated that payment should be more and on raising demands their employer usually avoided their demands.

Table 6.2.2 (c): Satisfied with wages Frequency.

Sr. No.	Satisfied with wages	Frequency
1	Adequate	35
2	Should be more	30

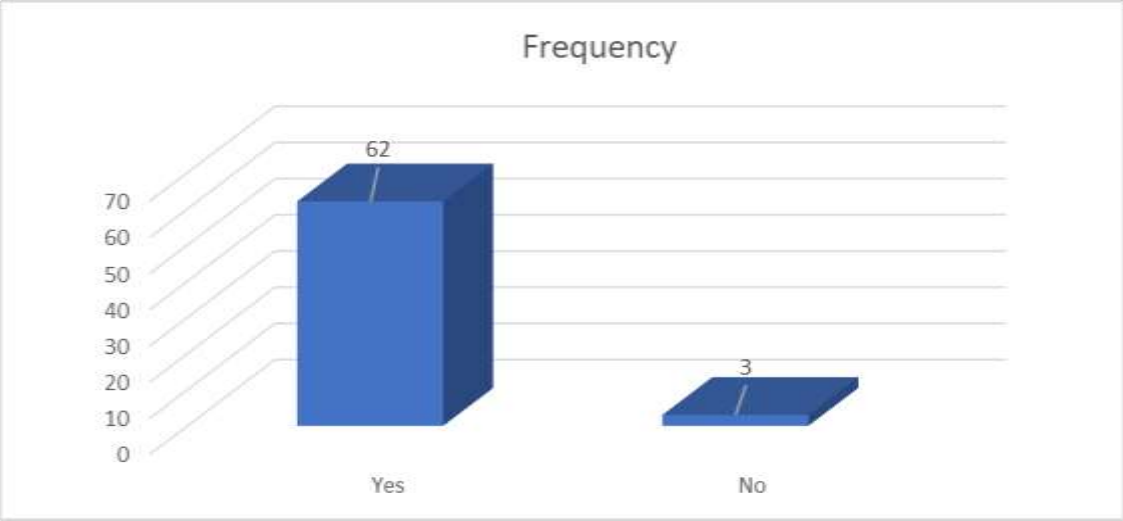


(d) Payment of Wages in Time or Not

Out of sixty-five domestic workers, sixty-two stated that they received their payment in time. While three stated that they did not get payment in time. It was also found that although maximum domestic worker received their wages in time but it also depended upon the understanding between domestic worker and employer. Sometimes, due to financial requirement domestic workers took their wages in advance which was deducted in small amounts from wages every month or at once. Sometime, employers paid wages later and domestic workers did not have any problem.

Table 6.2.2 (d): Payment of Wages in time Frequency.

Sr. No.	Payment of wages in time	Frequency
1	Yes	62
2	No	3



(*e) Holidays in a Month and Deduction of Salary*

Domestic workers too, like any other person needs holidays. However, it is expected that they have to come daily even on Sundays. There are no fixed holidays for them but they take holidays whenever they need. Out of sixty-five domestic workers, sixty domestic workers stated that their employer gives them holidays when they need for some work. Five domestic workers stated that their employers do not give them holidays when they need. It has also been observed that as domestic workers are expected to turn up all days in a month, salary is deducted in case they take holiday. Ten domestic workers stated that salary is deducted in case they take holiday. Fifty-three domestic workers stated that no salary is deducted in case they take holiday. Two domestic workers who are live-in domestic workers told that they get

holidays on festive occasions when they want to visit families. Otherwise, they are studying and they did not feel the necessity to take holidays.

Table 6.2.2 (e) (i): Holidays in a month Frequency

Sr. No.	Holidays in a Month	Frequency
1	Yes	60
2	No	5

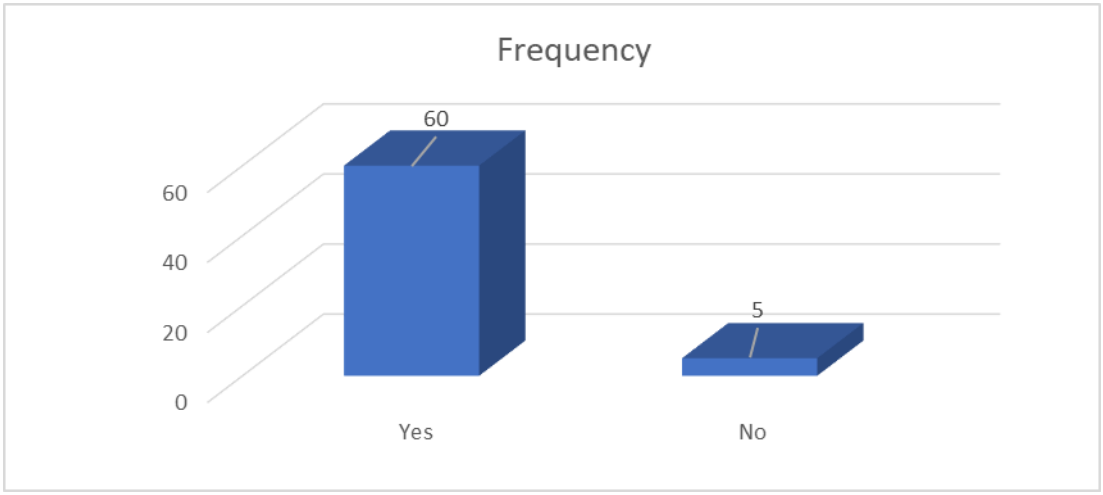
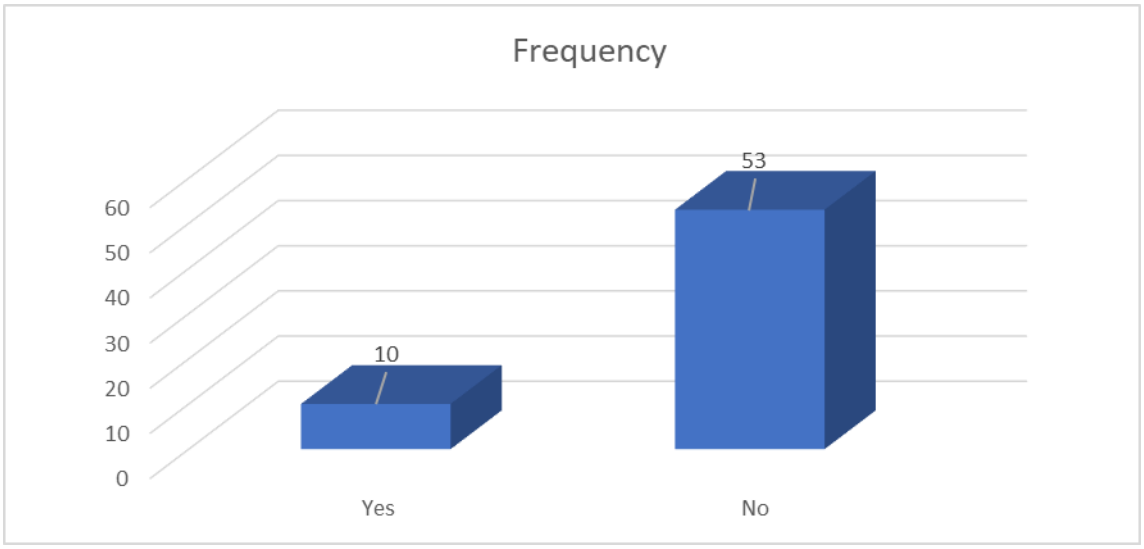


Table 6.2.2 (e) (ii): Deduction of Salary Frequency.

Sr. No.	Deduction of Salary	Frequency
1	Yes	10
2	No	53

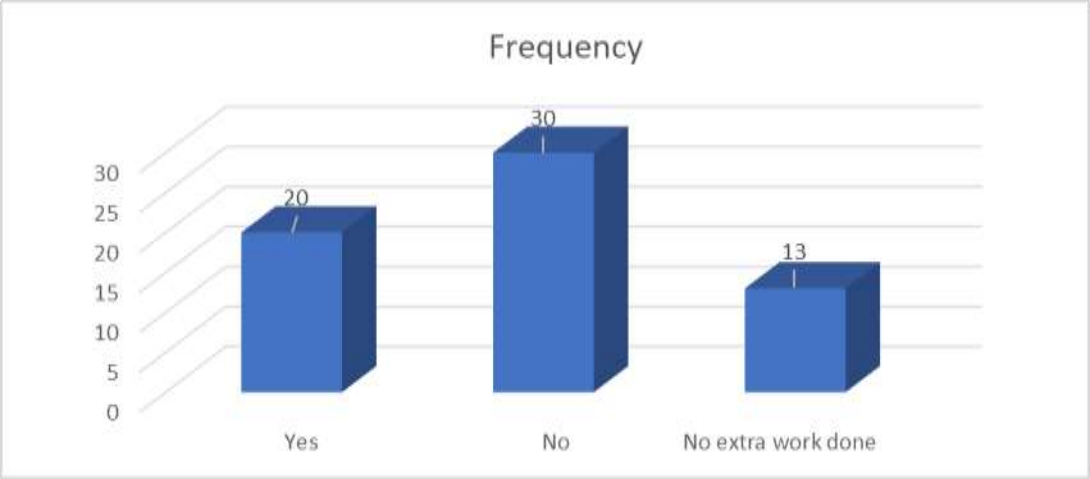


(f) Extra Pay for Extra Work

Sometimes domestic workers are asked to do some extra tasks other than the tasks for which they are paid. Sometimes they are paid for these extra tasks and sometimes they are not paid for such extra tasks. Out of sixty-five domestic workers twenty domestic workers stated that they are paid for extra work they do. Thirty domestic workers stated that they are not paid anything for extra work. Thirteen stated that they do not do any extra work. Two are live-in domestic workers who found difficult to answer as their criteria for appointment is different and their tasks are not defined.

Table 6.2.2 (f): Extra payment Frequency.

Sr. No.	Extra payment	Frequency
1	Yes	20
2	No	30
3	No extra work done	13

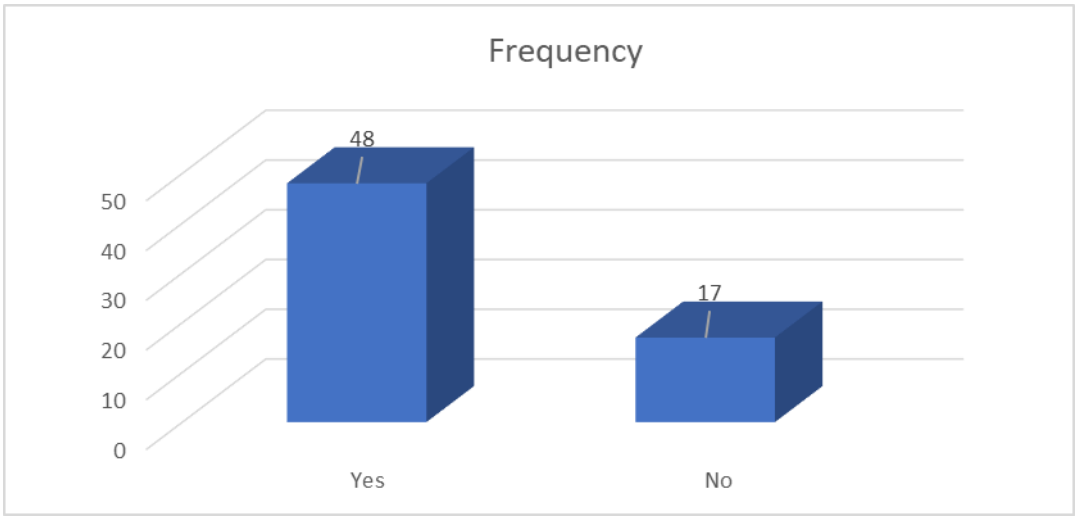


(g) Perks Apart from Salary

Out of sixty-five domestic workers forty-eight domestic workers said that they got perks apart from salary. Seventeen said that they did not get anything apart from salary. The perks given depended upon the will and capacity of employer. There is no criteria for this. They receive perks in all forms i.e., clothes, financial help, food and gifts at festivals. These advances varied every time.

Table 6.2.2 (g): Extra Perks Frequency.

Sr. No.	Extra Perks	Frequency
1	Yes	48
2	No	17



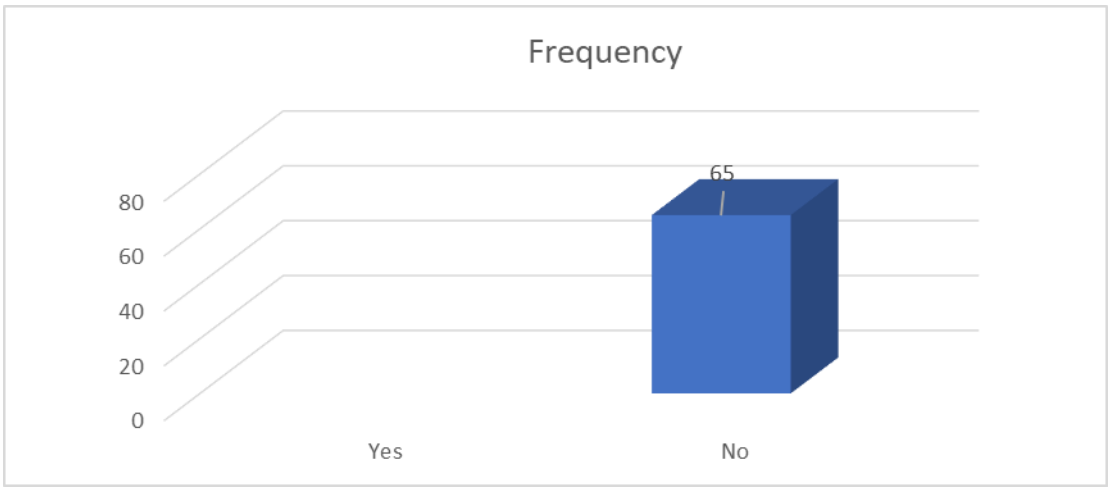
6.2.3 Issues Related to Job Risk

(a) Written Contract or Not

All stated that there is no written contract. This clearly indicates the informal nature of employment. Domestic workers stated that they did not feel the necessity for it because maximum times they left work at their own will. They had the freedom to join and leave the job anytime. They also stated that they knew they will get work. Although in the case of live-in domestic workers, there is no written contract but some conditions are mutually agreed upon by both the parties. In case of live-in domestic workers, the conditions are usually regarding the free education of child. Parents send their children as domestic workers on condition that employer will send their child to school and child will do household's work.

Table 6.2.3 (a): Written contract Frequency.

Sr. No.	Written contract	Frequency
1	Yes	None
2	No	65

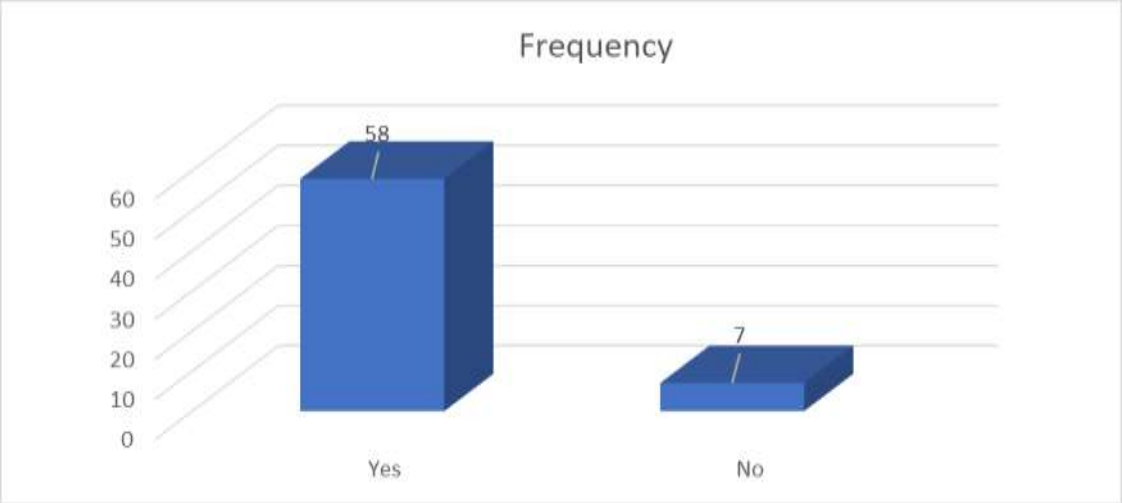


(b) Informed Before Termination or Not

Since, domestic work is informal in nature there is no surety about the job. In absence of contract, they can be asked to leave anytime. Out of sixty-five domestic workers fifty-eight domestic workers stated that they are informed before termination. Seven stated that they were not informed before their termination.

Table 6.2.3 (b): Informed Before Termination Frequency.

Sr. No	Informed Before Termination	Frequency
1	Yes	58
2	No	7



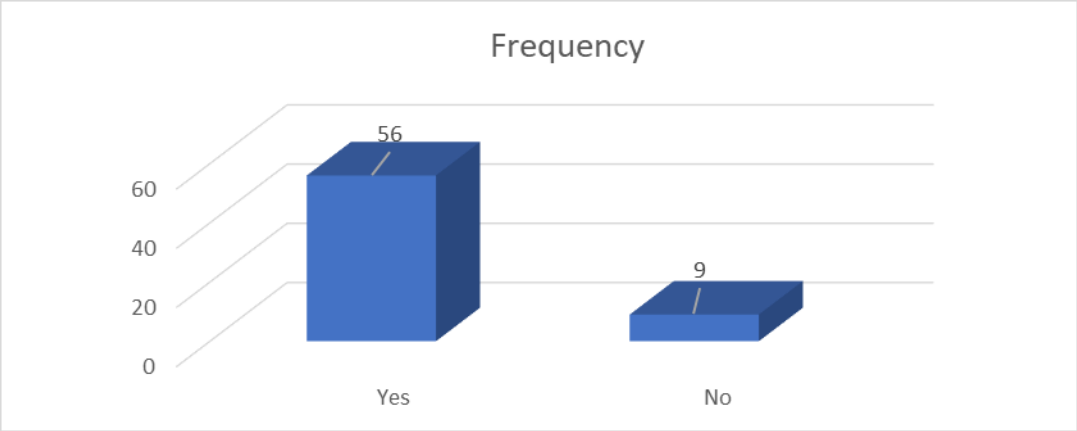
6.2.4 Issues Related to Social Security

(a) Form of Social Security

Out of sixty-five domestic workers, thirty-two domestic workers stated that they have access to social security in the form of LIC Policy, Bank Account Savings, Post-Office Savings, Voter-Id, Ration Card and Aadhar Card. Four domestic workers have LIC Policy. Forty-eight domestic workers have bank account savings, ten domestic workers have post office account savings, and forty-five domestic workers have voter-id. Forty domestic workers have ration card. Forty- eight domestic workers have Aadhar Card. Nine domestic workers disclosed that they do not possess any kind of social security.

Table 6.2.4 (a): Social Security Frequency.

Sr. No.	Social Security	Frequency
1	Yes	56
2	No	9



(b) Medical Condition and Access to Medical Service

Sometimes, domestic workers are suffering from disease but then also they continue to work due to their financial conditions. Sometimes, they do not have enough money to get proper treatment. Out of sixty-five domestic workers, sixty-one domestic workers stated that they were totally fit. Only four domestic workers had health issues. One suffered from goitre, one from thyroid, two from menstrual problems.

Depending upon the situation and budget their preference for medical facility varied. Six domestic workers responded that they just went to government hospital. Four domestic workers responded that they went to both government hospital as well as private hospital. Eight domestic workers said that they went to private hospital only if the ailment was serious but for minor issues, they took medicine from chemist also. Four domestic workers responded that if sickness was serious, they only went to private hospital whereas for minor issues they took medicine from chemist. Forty-three domestic workers responded that they preferred any of these facilities i.e., government hospital, private hospital and medicine from chemist depending upon their need. Two live-in domestic workers said that they depended upon employer for treatment. Some domestic workers get financial help from employer for treatment. Some employers do not take it back while some deduct it from their wages. Forty-two domestic workers stated that they get help from employer for treatment while twenty-three said that they get no help. For those who get help, if the money advanced as help is small amount then no money is deducted from salary. If money advanced is large sum, then it is deducted from salary in instalments or returned lump sum by domestic worker.

Table 6.2.4 (b) (i): Any Medical Condition Frequency.

Sr. No	Any Medical Condition	Frequency
1	Yes	4
2	No	61

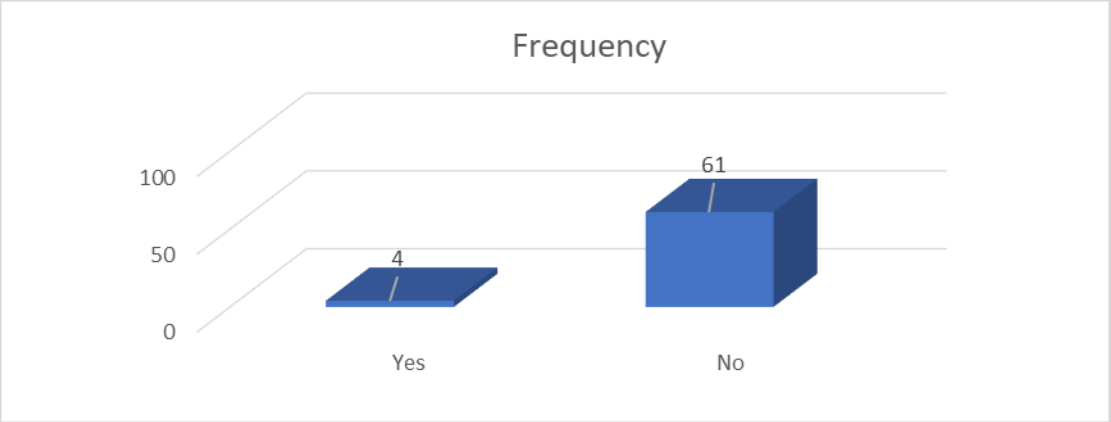


Table 6.2.4 (b) (ii):: Help from employer Frequency.

Sr. No	Help from employer	Frequency
1	Yes	42
2	No	23

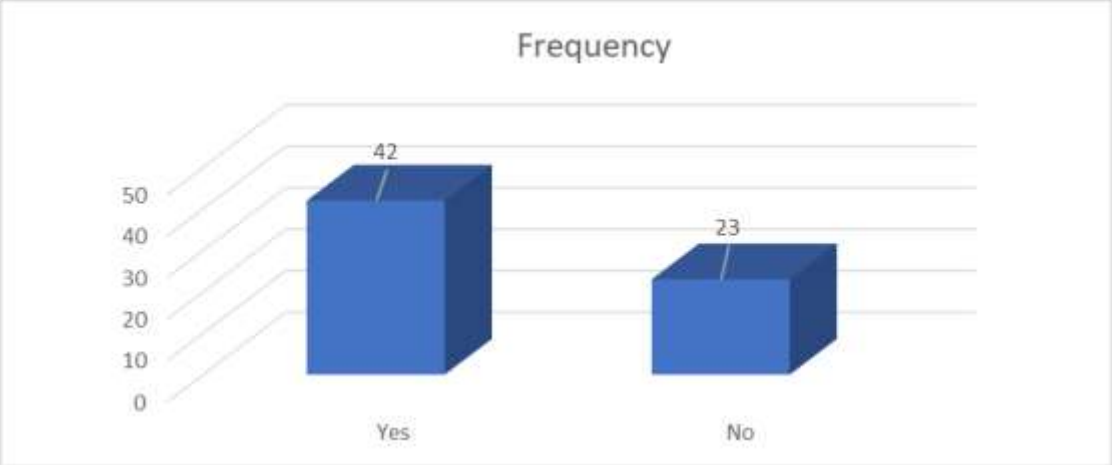
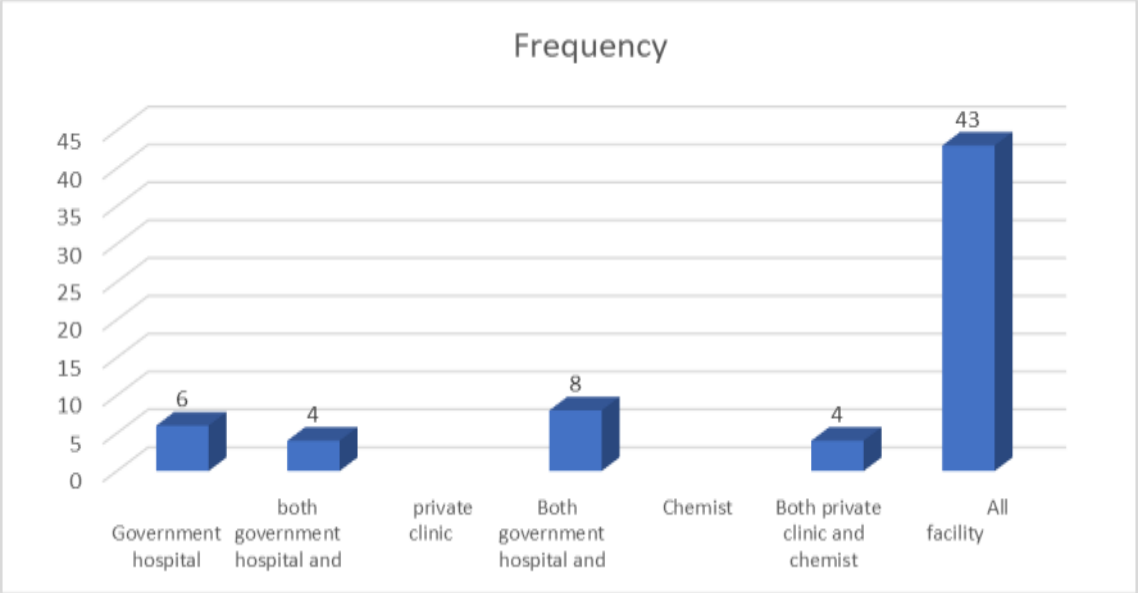


Table 6.2.4 (b) (iii):: Type of Medical Facility Availed Frequency.

Sr. No	Type of Medical Facility Availed	Frequency
1	Government hospital	6
2	both government hospital and private clinic	4
3	Both government hospital and Chemist	8
4	Both private clinic and chemist	4
5	All facility	43



6.2.5 Issues Related to Legal Awareness

(a) Knowledge About existence Domestic Worker's Union and the Law Regarding Domestic Workers

The state of Himachal Pradesh is a peaceful state. Here, the general criminal matters are also less in comparison to states like Delhi. Matters of violence against domestic workers are unheard. There are many Non- Governmental Organisations (NGO's) but they are dealing with other social issues. In can be assessed from the data that none of the domestic worker reported physical or sexual abuse at workplace. There is no domestic workers union for domestic workers. None of the domestic worker had awareness about existence of law regarding domestic worker.

Table 6.2.5 (a) (i): Awareness about Domestic Workers Union Frequency.

Sr. No.	Awareness about Domestic Worker's Union	Frequency
1	Yes	None
2	No	65

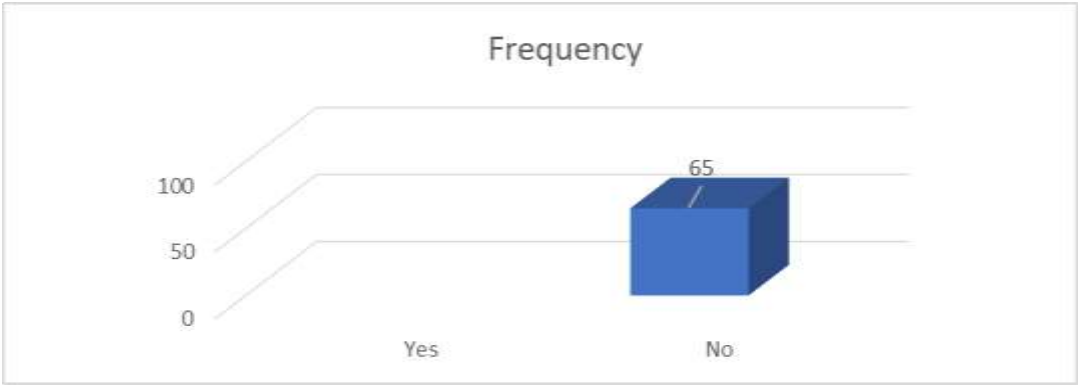
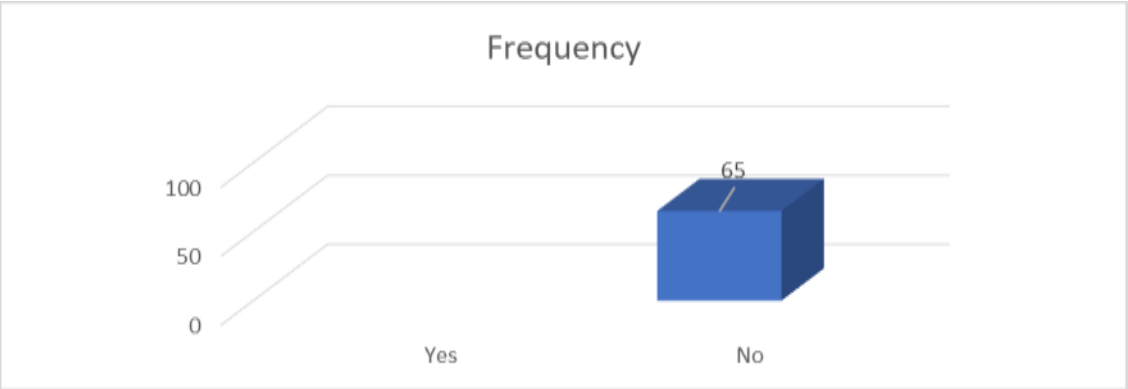


Table 6.2.5 (a) (ii): Awareness About Law Frequency.

Sr. No	Awareness About Law	Frequency
1	Yes	None
2	No	65

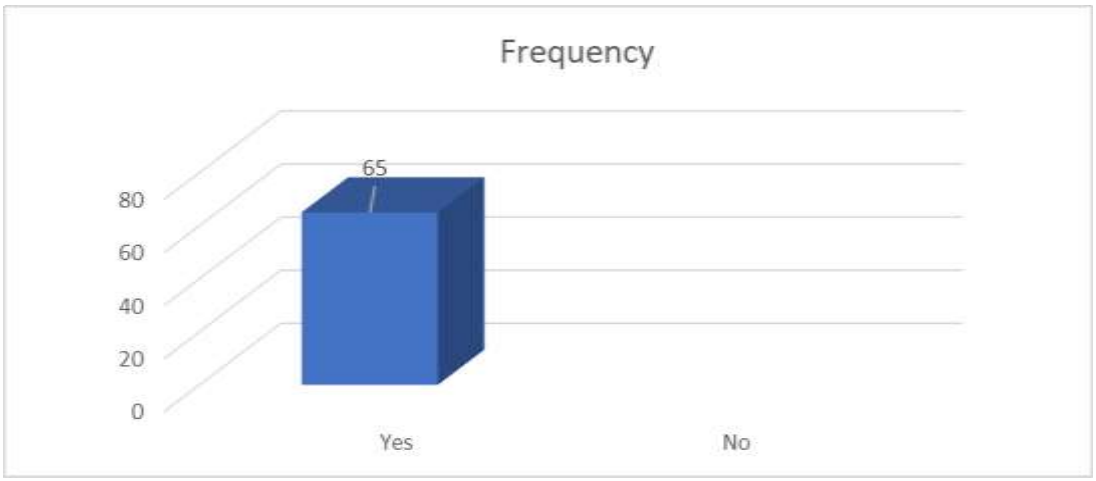


(b) Demand for Law Regarding Domestic Workers

All domestic workers stated that they have no idea about existence of any legislation regarding domestic workers. But all stated that they want government to come up with legislation. Eight domestic workers demanded that there should be criteria for fixation of salary. Five stated that there should be provisions for holidays and rest time. However, fifty-two domestic workers demanded both criteria for fixation of salary and provision for holidays and rest time. Some other demands put forward by domestic workers are increment on wages, a government help line number and a regulation body, fixation of tenure of employment in a house and criteria for financial help during medical problem from employer.

Table 6.2.5 (b): Want Government to Make Law Frequency.

Sr. No.	Want Government to Make Law	Frequency
1	Yes	65
2	No	None



7. ALL OVER FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY:

The research study proved that domestic servants are ignorant about existence of any legislation regarding them. They are not even aware, if minimum wages are prescribed for them under the Minimum Wages Act of their State (Himachal Pradesh). The domestic workers are unaware about minimum wages prescribed for them by the government of Himachal Pradesh. But, if their income according to the recent H.P. Government's notification of 2024 is analysed, they are earning fairly. For example, for a cook, the minimum wage is Rs. 464 daily and Rs. 13,920 per month, while no other benefit is provided and these wages are for 9 to 5 hours of work. Any domestic worker who is working as a cook is earning fairly because they will not put 9 to 5 hours of work in single household. They will just complete the task and go. For example, a cook cooking meal for three times in a house will charge between Rs. 5000-7000 from single household and they just put 3-4 hours of work. By working in more housed they earn better than prescribed by minimum wages. They are not bound in single house and get times for themselves also by working in multiple houses.

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