

A STABLE DOMESTIC

Gender, Shelter Security and Livelihoods
A Case Study of Domestic Work in Delhi

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Workshop on
Shelter Security and Social Protection for the Urban Poor and the Migrants in Asia
At Ahmedabad, India
(February 11-13, 2009)
Organized by,



A Research Advocacy Program
Managed by



Supported by IDRC and Ford Foundation

Key Questions

- How is shelter linked to employment, livelihood strategies and labour market decisions?
- Gender dimensions of linkages between shelter and work.
- What does mobility mean for shelter security – stark difference between the case of live-in and live-out domestic workers?

Introduction

- Domestic Work emerging as the largest sector of employment for women in urban India.
(NSS 2004-2005)
- Domestic work implies being employed to do household chores on a temporary or permanent basis for hire or reward
- Live-out: Specific tasks; Different households
- Live-in: Working in one household and residing with them

(Neetha 2004, Chetry 1999, Pathare 2000, Ghosh and Chandrashekhar 2005)

Demographic Profile

Live-Out

- **Average Family Size - 4.64**
- **Average Age is 35**
- **Average number of earning members - 2**
- **Majority of women live-out domestic workers (83.41%) are married. 98% women have migrated to Delhi with their family.**
- **67.52% have had no formal schooling**
- **53.5% of sample belongs to SC category**
- **81% are migrants from others states and Nepal. Majority (40.6%) migrated between 1986-1996. Majority migrants from UP (56%), followed by 14% from Bihar and 11% from Bengal**

Live-In

- **Predominantly single – without immediate family in the city.**
- **Only 7 women interviewed mention knowing anyone in Delhi, prior to arrival.**
- **Average Age is 23**
- **68% have completed up to class 8th.**
- **Jharkhand, Santhal – Sahibganj, Simdega (45)**
- **West Bengal, Namoshudra's – 24 Parganas, Midnapore (5)**

Distribution of Live-In Sample

- Snow Ball Sample --- listing based survey format difficult to canvas due to non response + quality and bias issues.
- 66 full time domestic workers
 - 14 male , 52 female
 - NDWM : 45 women from Jharkhand (June 08)
 - Agency : 3 women from Bengal (September 08)
 - ISST team : 11 workers in 3 colonies.

Distribution of Sample of live-out domestic workers in Delhi, 2008

Central Delhi	43
East	180
South West	58
New Delhi	82
North East	33
North West	12
North	29
Total	438



Work and Shelter

- **Access to Basic Amenities—time and money**

Total hours per day spent working : 5 hours (2 hours per household)

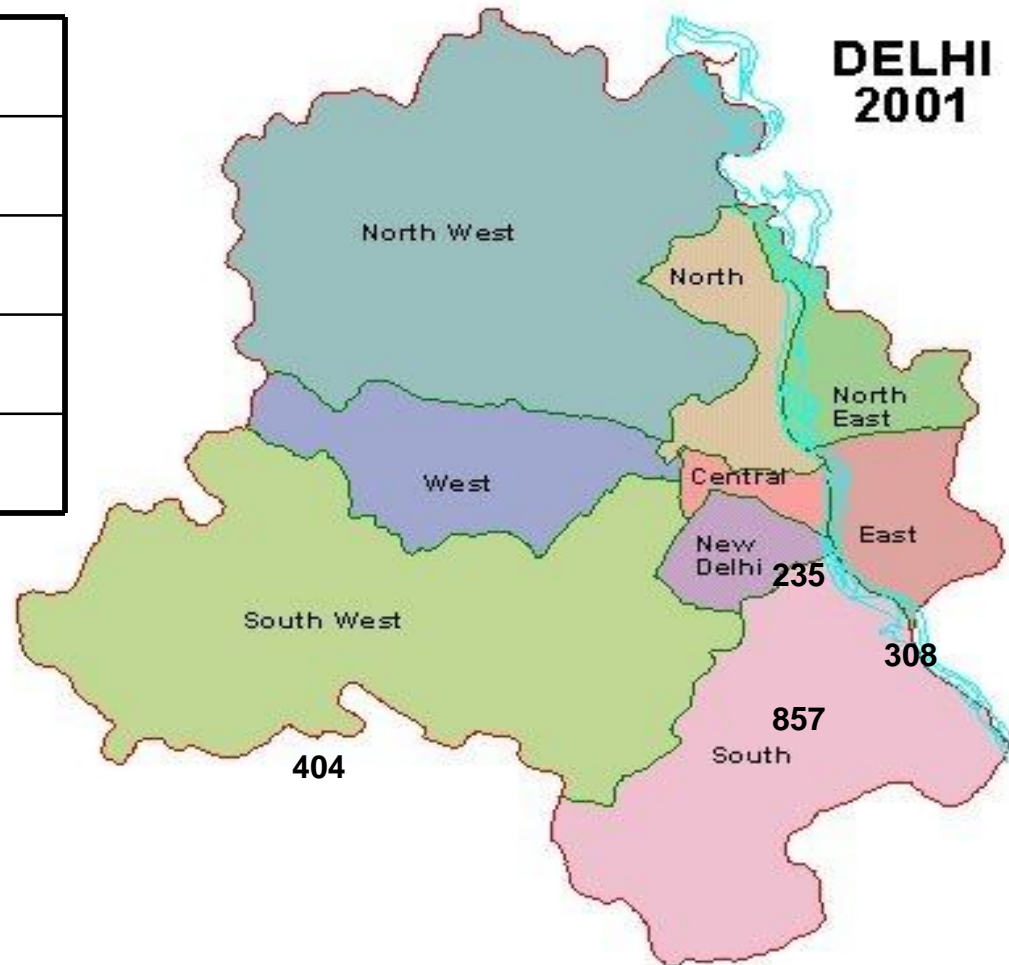
**Average Monthly Income:
Rs 1576**

On an average they perform 2.5 tasks in 3 households

- **Preference for proximity to workplace**
 - **97% report walking to work (average time taken – 28 mins)**
 - **Reported monthly expenditure on travel is as high as Rs 700**
- **Only 2.5% of the women report paying for childcare. 45% report that children are left on their own. The various strategies that women have reported include admitting children to school early just so they have a safe space to leave them; leave them with neighbours, relatives, friends, in some cases payment is involved; if they can afford it send them to hostel.**

Rent Paid per month by Selected Districts in Delhi, 2008 (in Rs)

Central Delhi	235
East	308
South West	404
New Delhi	857
Delhi	373



Percentage Share of rent from monthly income: 24%

Ownership

Period of Migration	% of people who own their current house
1968-1974	77.6
1975-1985	85.8
1986-1996	71
1997-2001	43
2002-2007	23

- 63.5 % of the sample reports owning their current house
- 61% of the migrants report that they own the current house. 71.5% of the non-migrants report owning their current house

Insecure Tenure and Citizenship

- 7% women in the sample report facing evictions. 7.5% of the migrants report facing evictions as opposed to 4% of non-migrants
- Role of social network in finding work; as support systems;
- Proof of Residence for entitlements – alternative housing etc; case for worker registration particularly for migrants
- Proposed Domestic Workers Welfare Board also requires proof of residence to apply for benefits

Live-In Workers

Agency and Accommodation

- Role of Shelter is highlighted in narratives regarding using agencies to facilitate migration for domestic work.
- None of the men are placed by agencies

With relatives and friends also, there are problems. If you know more than one then you can stay at 2 houses, while looking for work. But for how long ? With an office , you know you have a place to stay and a job. It is more certain (pukka).

Where else can girls like us find such proper work? We get food and a roof over our heads. If your employer is good, you get a good family too. My madam loves me. No other job allows all this.

Working Conditions

'She always wants me to do something. If she sees me, she comes up with work. I live with her --- where do I hide?'

- In times of harassment or facing poor working conditions, housing is the key variable that can allow women to exit jobs and look for more preferred options. Men appear to be in a stronger position to find alternative shelter on their own, as they can approach the low end rental markets.—hostels, shared flats.
- Shelter plays a strong role in defining the terms of labour and bargaining between agencies, employers and lives in domestic workers
- Total hours of work : 12- 18 hours.
- Monthly Income : Rs 3000 – Rs 8000

Life Cycle and 'Privacy'

They reported adjustment problems with these girls, discomfort with their interaction with men who would call or they visited who were not family members. The girls apparently said that the person(s) were brothers. One of them was fired for these reasons and another went back to her village and never came back. Third one was hired through relatives in Ranchi, but left after a year to get married. She was termed as 'a good girl'.

- **Marriage and social engagement seem easier for men to navigate. Women's mobility is restricted.**

Assets and Accommodation

Few girls stay in the city forever. This only happens if they get a god like employer or a god like husband!!

The dominant understanding of the migration trajectory is temporary as women said they plan to return to their villages after consolidating savings and/or marriage.

Gendered Shelter Trajectories

'We are lucky. We don't pay rent. But we need money for educating our daughter and son. We also have to manage cultivating back home and that requires money too. Our daughter goes to school and her expenses require Rs 10 – Rs 5 per day. She often complains about the distance from school and takes a bus'.

Availability of shelter is central to assets and consolidation strategies employed by migrants

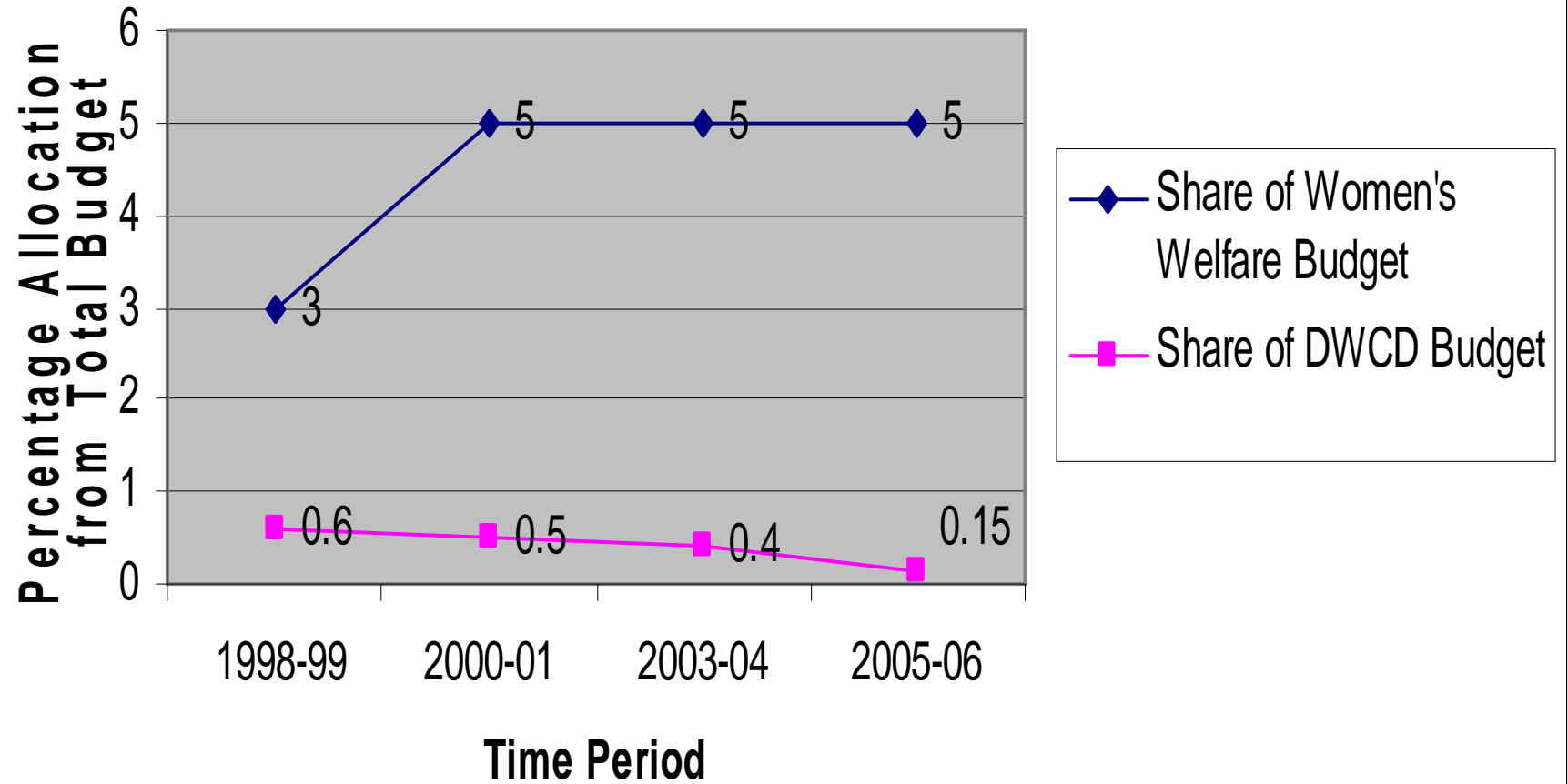
Alternative Shelters

Some girls cannot go back to the village but they cannot work and live with another family. They want to live with people they can talk to and are friends with. If she knows someone else in Delhi or has some family, she can stay with them and I try and find some part time work for her. But, most girls who come from Bengal for such work do not know people here. In those cases, I make exception and let them work in shifts in nearby houses in South Delhi. I would like to provide space to more girls, but we cannot. We do not have the money. Aand housing so many girls together would obly bring more trouble from authorities and local people.

- Stagnant State engagement with single women's accommodation
- Social Networks
- Agency
- Unions/ Church based Groups

Policy and Programme Entry Points ?

Working Women's Hostels



Impact of Shelter on Wages and Working Conditions

LIVE-OUT

- Ownership/Land Tenure
- Rental Expenditures
- Water and Electricity – time and financial allocations
- Childcare

LIVE-IN

- Harassment and Life cycle concerns
- Agency based placement
- Limited alternatives for single female temporary migrant workers

Thank You

Work Profile

- **On an average women have been working in current households for 16 years**
- **Total hours per day spent working : 5 hours (2 hours per household)**
- **Average Monthly Income:
Rs 1576**
- **On an average they perform 2.5 tasks**
- **Tasks include cleaning floors, dusting, washing utensils, washing clothes, cooking, maternity care, childcare, assistance in the kitchen, cleaning toilets etc**