

Policy Brief on Domestic Work

**Based on a Situational Analysis of 5,019
Domestic Workers in 15 Districts
of Maharashtra**



Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA) is a non-profit development organisation committed to enabling vulnerable groups to access their rights. YUVA supports the formation of people's collectives that engage in the discourse on development, thereby ensuring self-determined and sustained collective action in communities. This work is complemented with advocacy and policy recommendations on issues.

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Abstract

This Policy Brief, drawing from the findings of a recent survey of 5,019 domestic workers across 15 districts of Maharashtra, highlights key legislative and policy interventions required to ensure dignified and remunerative livelihoods for those engaged in domestic work. As suggested in the Brief, domestic work is unique even among the various forms of informal work, in that the work is performed in 'private' workplaces, offering very limited scope for collective bargaining. The terms at which domestic workers enter into work with their employers are largely dictated by the latter, with only minimal restrictions imposed by market forces. We see wide variations in practices related to wage determination, holidays, payment of bonus, increment in wages, quantum of work performed, etc. Thus, a comprehensive rights-based legislation, setting minimum standards for working conditions is suggested. Additionally, the Brief shows that most of the workers come from marginalised caste backgrounds; the overwhelming presence of women highlights how paid domestic work remains an extension of gender division of labour at home. Further, over 20 per cent of the workers are widowed or separated, being the sole earning members of their families. Despite these stark realities, the access of domestic workers to social protection is extremely limited. Moreover, there is almost no upward mobility out of domestic work and within it as well. Hence, the Brief concludes with recommendations on the targeted social protection measures for domestic workers.

1.

Introduction

In a recent judgment related to criminal appeals arising out of a case where a woman had alleged that she was forced by a placement agency to move from city to city to carry out domestic work, the Supreme Court while noting ‘a degree of lacunae in legislative frameworks, safeguarding and protecting their rights’ directed the constitution of a committee ‘to consider the desirability of recommending a legal framework for the benefit, protection and regulation of the rights of domestic workers’.¹ This nudge from the apex court is the latest in a series of abortive attempts—from both within the Parliament and without—to bring in a comprehensive legislation to safeguard and protect the rights and interests of domestic workers. As the judgement itself lists, no less than **seven Bills have been introduced in the Parliament between 1959–2017, covering various aspects of domestic work, but none of them were passed into legislation.**²

In 2011, the International Labour Organization (ILO) adopted the landmark Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189). The adoption of the Convention and the Domestic Workers Recommendation, 2011 (No. 201) were significant not only because it led to the addition of a specific instrument for domestic workers to the international labour regime, but equally importantly, it recognised the *sui generis* nature

1 | *Ajay Malik vs State of Uttarakhand & Anr* (Criminal Appeal No. 441/2025) delivered on 29.01.2025.

2 | See, Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action. (2019). *Legal Recognition of Domestic Workers in India*. City Se. Mumbai: India, for a comparative analysis of the last few legislative attempts. Leading up to the discussions for the adoption of the 2011 Convention by the ILO the Union Ministry of Labour and Employment had created a Task Force which had come out with a draft National Policy for Domestic Workers. In 2012, several unions of domestic workers across the country came together to form the National Platform for Domestic Workers (NPDW) to press for the ratification of the 2011 ILO Convention. Because of the campaign by the National Platform, domestic workers were first included in the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) and were also covered by the POSH Act, 2013. See, SEWA. (2014). *Domestic Workers' Laws and Legal Issues in India*. WIEGO Law and Informality Resources. Cambridge, MA, USA: WIEGO.

of domestic work within the broader category of informal work.³ These unique aspects included the overwhelming presence of women in this occupation, as a result of paid domestic work being seen as an extension of unpaid domestic work within one's household, which in turn leads to its devaluation in the market. Additionally, because domestic work is being done in the private confines of houses and because of the existence of multiple employer–employee relationships, most of the labour laws become inapplicable.⁴ This aspect presents further problems of enforcement of existing laws (viz. minimum wages) and ensuring safety of the workers (viz. harassment, forceful confinement, etc.). India, despite voting for the adoption of the Convention by the ILO, has not ratified it yet.

In the absence of a comprehensive legal framework governing the sphere of domestic work in India, there have been piecemeal policy interventions by a few of the state governments, which have generally taken the following two forms:

1. **Fixation of Minimum Wage for Domestic Work:** By 2019, 11 states had notified minimum wages for domestic work.⁵ An evaluation of these minimum wage notifications stated that the enforcement of the notified minimum wages has been weak across all the states with almost no formal complaints being filed with the Labour departments.⁶ This was partly attributed to the low levels of collective bargaining capacity among the workers.
2. **Setting Up of State Welfare Boards for Domestic Workers:** By 2019, four states had passed legislations for the creation of such boards.⁷ A detailed case study of the Maharashtra Domestic Workers' Welfare Board indicates that even at its best, the Welfare Board approach is limited to social protection measures only, leaving untouched several significant aspects of domestic work, especially the working conditions, employment terms and the labour rights of the domestic workers.⁸

In the newly proposed labour regime in India, comprising the four Labour Codes,⁹ domestic work finds specific mention only in the Code on Social Security, 2020, again limiting the reach of the labour laws to welfare matters only. According to

the estimates based on the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2017–18, there were over 5.3 million domestic workers in India, of which 3.8 million were working in urban India.¹⁰ Given the trends of rapid urbanisation, nuclearisation of families and increasing female labour force participation in India, the demand for domestic work is only going to increase. Along with this quantitative jump, there is likely to be qualitative changes as well, with the entry of app-based domestic work services, recent 'InstaMaid' being the latest example.¹¹ Thus, as underscored by the Supreme Court in its aforementioned judgment, a comprehensive legislation covering all aspects of domestic work is urgently needed. This Policy Brief is an attempt to highlight the key challenges and issues facing domestic workers, and to make recommendations on how these can be addressed through comprehensive legislation and accompanying policy measures. The Policy Brief draws from the findings of a survey of 5,019 domestic workers across 15 districts of Maharashtra conducted by Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA) in collaboration with Maharashtra Rajya Gharelu Kamgar Samanvay Samiti (MRGKSS). This survey was conducted between January and March 2024.¹²

3 | See, International Labour Organization. (n.d.). C189 - Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189). Accessed on: https://normlex.ilo.org/dyn/hrmlx_en/?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0:NO::p12100_ILO_CODE:C189

4 | SEWA. (2014). *Domestic Workers' Laws and Legal Issues in India*. WIEGO Law and Informality Resources. Cambridge, MA, USA: WIEGO.

5 | Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action. (2019). *Legal Recognition of Domestic Workers in India*. City Se. Mumbai: India.

6 | Neetha, N. (2015). *Minimum wage setting practices in domestic work: An inter-state analysis*, Conditions of work and employment series - No. 66, International Labour Office, Inclusive Labour Markets, Labour Relations and Working Conditions Branch - Geneva: ILO

7 | Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action. (2019). *Legal Recognition of Domestic Workers in India*. City Se. Mumbai: India.

8 | *Ibid.*

9 | The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020; Code on Wages, 2019; The Industrial Relations Code, 2020; The Code on Social Security, 2020.

10 | Govindan Raveendran and Joann Vanek. (2020). *Informal Workers in India: A Statistical Profile*. WIEGO Statistical Brief No 24.

11 | *The News Minute*. (2025, 20 March). *Urban Company's 'InstaMaid' sparks controversy: Workers' union calls it exploitation*. Accessed on: <https://www.thenewsminute.com/karnataka/urban-companys-instamaid-sparks-controversy-workers-union-calls-it-exploitation>

12 | These 15 districts were: Ahmadnagar, Amravati, Jalna, Satara, Dhule, Nasik, Sangli, Latur, Pune, Nagpur, Mumbai City, Mumbai Suburban, Thane, Palghar and Raigad. For details about the survey methodology and coverage please see, YUVA. (2025). *Situational Analysis of Domestic Workers in 15 Districts of Maharashtra*. Mumbai: India.

2. Survey Findings

2.1 Demographic and Socioeconomic Aspects

Among the 5,019 workers surveyed, a small sub-sample of those working in rural areas (N=253) was included, while the remaining workers were employed in urban areas (N=4,766). The survey covered three categories of workers—part-time workers (working in more than one household for less than 8 hours), full-time workers (working in one household but not living in the work premises for 8 hours or more) and live-in workers (those living-in the houses where they were working). Overall, **over 83 per cent of the workers in the sample were part-time workers, over 16 per cent were full-time live-out workers and just 0.2 per cent were live-in workers.** An average part-time worker in the sample was working in two to three households. **Over 94 per cent of the workers had been working as domestic workers for a period of 20–30 years.**

In terms of gender distribution, as expected, **over 99 per cent of the workers surveyed were female.** In terms of caste-category, there was very **high over-representation of those belonging to Scheduled Castes**, and a moderate over-representation of Scheduled Tribes. In terms of education, **over 33 per cent of the workers in the sample had not gone to school at all, while another 40 per cent had studied up to the primary level only.** Another noticeable aspect was that **over 23 per cent of the workers were widowed, divorced and abandoned women, which highlights both the precarity that drives vulnerable women to this occupation, as well as its importance as a source of livelihood for them.** This is also reflected in the fact that **over 40**

per cent of the workers interviewed reported that they were the sole breadwinners of their family.

In terms of housing, over 31 per cent of the workers reported living in rented accommodation. **Over 98 per cent of the workers were from Maharashtra itself**, while the rest were intra-state migrants.

A worrisome finding from the survey is that **over 18 per cent of the children of the workers interviewed had either not gone to school at all or had dropped out of school**, indicating that education-related interventions for children of domestic workers need to be made more effective.

		Total (%)	Urban (%)	Rural (%)
Type of Domestic Work	Part-time	83.3	83.4	80
	Full-time	16.2	16.1	19
	Live-in/Residential	0.2	0.2	1
Gender	Female	99.6	99.7	99.2
	Male	0.4	0.3	0.8
Caste Category	Scheduled Castes (SC)	47.9	48.8	31.6
	Scheduled Tribes (ST)	12.8	12.2	22.5
	Other Backward Classes (OBC)	19	18.1	36.4
	Others (OTH)	20.3	20.9	9.5
Religion	Hindu	57.3	56.4	74.3
	Sikh	0.2	0.2	0
	Muslim	9.8	10	5.9
	Buddhist	29.1	30.1	11.5
	Jain	0.04	0.04	0
	Christian	0.7	0.7	0.4
Educational Status	Illiterate	33.2	33.2	33.6
	Lower Primary	20.6	20.3	24.1
	Upper Primary	23.2	23.7	16.6
	Secondary	17.6	17.6	18.2
	Senior Secondary	4.7	4.6	6.3
	Undergraduate	0.4	0.4	0.8
	Postgraduate	0.1	0.1	0.4
Marital Status	Married	73.9	73.6	77.9
	Widowed	20	20.2	17
	Abandoned	1.7	1.7	2.8
	Divorced	1.4	1.5	0.8
	Single/Unmarried	2.9	3	1.6
Status of Education of Workers's Children	Studying Currently	48.3	48.4	47.4
	Finished Education	15.2	15.1	17.9
	Too Young to Go to School	10	9.9	11
	Dropped Out	17.7	17.5	21.4
	Never Gone to School	1	0.9	1.5
	Other	7.8	8.2	0.8
Housing	Own House	65.6	65.3	71.1
	Rented House	31.8	32	28.5
	Other	2.6	2.7	0.4

Table 1 : Description of the Sample

2.2 Working Conditions

Over 50 per cent of the workers were earning less than INR 10,000 per month from domestic work.

The state-wide average monthly income was INR 8,928. Task-specific wage data was also collected as part of the survey. The most common tasks

performed were washing utensils (71.1 per cent) followed by sweeping (55.2 per cent), swabbing (46.1 per cent), washing clothes (42.4 per cent), cooking (26.2 per cent), childcare (5.4 per cent) and other (1.6 per cent).

Task	Sweeping	Swabbing	Washing Utensils	Washing Clothes	Cooking
Reported Monthly Payment for the Task for a Standard Family of Four Members (in INR)	1,080.30	1,017.40	1,674.20	1,399.60	3,267.40

Table 2: Reported Monthly Payment for Tasks

There was wide variation between the reported task-specific wages both between and within districts. Since Maharashtra does not have a minimum wage for domestic work, the wages are largely determined by the market. The variation in the rates paid to the workers across the districts can be explained by the variation in cost of living. For instance, **the average payment rates in urbanised districts like Mumbai Suburban, Raigad, Thane and Pune are higher.** 7 districts reported an average monthly income below INR 6,000, highlighting lower earnings in many areas. The **wide variations within the districts point to the fact that the payment rates are also driven by the mutual**

bargaining power of the employer and the domestic workers.

Among non-live-in workers, only 2.6 per cent workers reported supplementing their income from secondary sources. After taking into account both the primary (domestic work) and secondary sources of income of all working members of the household and the reported expenditure, **over 31 per cent of the workers reported a deficit in household budget. Over 34 per cent workers with deficit incomes reported making up for this deficit through borrowing.** The size of the debt for over 81 per cent of the workers was less than INR 1 lakh.

Income Category (in INR)	Urban		Rural		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Below 5,000	1,109	23.6	60	23.8	1,169	23.6
5,000–10,000	1,835	39	111	44.1	1,946	39.2
10,000–15,000	936	19.9	36	14.3	972	19.6
15,000–20,000	520	11	29	11.5	549	11.1
20,000–25,000	203	4.3	9	3.6	212	4.3
Above 25,000	105	2.2	7	2.8	112	2.3
Total	4,708	100	252	100	4,960	100

Table 3: Monthly Income Earned from Domestic Work

Referrals from existing employers, friends and neighbours is the most common route to obtain domestic work, as reported by over 98 per cent workers. In the sample, mobile applications and

placement agencies form a much less common route. Among those who obtained domestic work through mobile applications, social media was the primary source of information about the apps.

Those obtaining work through mobile applications are paid on a per-task basis. The payments made to the workers does not include travel costs incurred to go to the place of the task, and a commission is deducted by the platform for connecting the workers to the service-seeker. **Almost all workers reported that the app they were using did not have any complaint or appeal mechanism to challenge the sometimes arbitrary decisions taken by the platform.**

Almost all the workers reported that they did not have a written contract specifying the terms and conditions of their work. This informality implies that their employment can be terminated at the will of the employer. In most instances, the terms are not certain, and are decided based on negotiations between the employer and the worker. Even after such negotiations, such terms can be altered unilaterally by the employer. To illustrate, 14 per cent of the workers were paid later than the first week of next month or were paid at an non-fixed time at the will of the employer. Cash payment remains the most common mode of payment (98.5 per cent). Further, **just over 30 per cent of the workers were paid annual bonuses.** Among those who were paid a bonus, the usual practice was to give it on Diwali, but even here there were variations based on the wishes of the employer. In terms of the amount paid as bonus, several different practices were reported — equivalent to one month's salary (28.4 per cent), half of one month's salary (34.8 per cent) as bonus, and the amount decided by the employer (39.6 per cent).

Apart from bonuses, workers reported that their employers helped them with clothes (38.3 per cent), food (32.5 per cent), loans or advances on salaries (24.9 per cent), school fees for their children (1.1 per cent). 1.8 per cent workers reported that they had currently borrowed from their employers. But none of these were standard practices, they depended on the 'benevolence' of the employer. 24.6 per cent workers didn't receive any of these benefits from their employers. Similar informal arrangements were reported in respect of increase in wages.

Less than 15 per cent workers reported their wages being increased periodically. Among these, only 22 per cent reported that their wages were increased automatically, while the rest stated that usually they had to implore their employers to increase the wages. In terms of holidays as well, **over 31 per cent**

of the workers reported that they had no fixed arrangements for holidays, and they had to usually negotiate with their employers whenever they wanted a day off. Of the remaining, 51.2 per cent of the workers were given a fixed number of holidays per month, 9 per cent were given off only during holidays, **4.9 per cent had a fixed day in the week as holiday (usually Sunday),** while 2.1 per cent had a fixed number of holidays in the year. Over 27 per cent of the workers reported that their wages were deducted for the holidays taken. 24.7 per cent of the workers reported that their wages were cut if they took more than the allowed number of holidays.

Some of the workers reported that they have inexperienced untouchability at the place of their employment, the most common form being usage of separate utensils and the workers not being allowed inside prayer rooms. Apart from this, a small proportion of workers also reported being verbally or physically or even sexually abused by their employers. Instances of being accused of theft were also reported, with the most common outcome being removal from work or the threat of police complaint. In terms of occupational health, the most common consequences experienced were body pain (71.4 per cent), back pain (53.2 per cent), joint pain (37.5 per cent) and hand pain (29.5 per cent). Over 6 per cent of the female domestic workers also reported facing domestic violence.

In terms of the distance travelled for work, over 83 per cent of the workers had to travel less than 5 km, 14 per cent had to travel 5–15 kms and the remaining (1.3 per cent) were travelling more than 15 kms. Over 70 per cent of the workers reported walking to work, followed by auto/taxi (12.8 per cent), public bus (11.3 per cent), private bus (3.3 per cent) and own vehicle (3.7 per cent). For over 38 per cent of the workers, the travel expenses on commute to work and back ranged from 5–15 per cent of their income, while for 31.5 per cent of workers it was higher than 15 per cent of their incomes from domestic work.

Turning to the situation at home, **over 34 per cent of the workers reported spending over 12 hours at work, in work-related travel and on household duties, leaving them very little personal time.** **Most workers (85 per cent) left their younger children with the older children; only 5.8 per cent relied on anganwadis.**

2.3 Access to Welfare Board and Social Protection

Over 16 per cent of the workers reported that they did not have any documents at the address of their current place of residence, which is a basic requirement to access most social protection schemes. Over 10 per cent of the respondents reported that they didn't have a bank account in their own name, which is also required for cash transfer schemes.

In terms of access to entitlements under National Food Security Act, 33 per cent didn't have ration cards, making them ineligible to obtain rations. 11 percent of the workers had an Antyodaya Card (AAY), while 55 per cent had Below Poverty Line (BPL) card and 2.1 percent had an Above Poverty Line (APL) card. Even among those who had ration cards, not everyone was able to access these entitlements at their current place of residence.

The access to general/non-targeted social protection measures was also very low. Overall, only 31.5 per cent of the workers have registered at the e-Shram portal initiated by the Union government. Thus, despite the push for e-Shram registrations, less than one-third of the domestic workers had not registered on the portal by February 2024. As noted earlier, there is a large proportion (25 per cent) of widowed, abandoned and divorced women in the domestic work labour force in the state. The Sanjay Gandhi Niradhar Pension Yojana of the state government provides pension for such vulnerable women. A very small proportion of eligible female workers (12.5 per cent) are able to access the pension scheme designed to support such women. The coverage of health insurance schemes is also very low at 10 per cent. This is significant since the occupational health issues reported by the workers develop into chronic health problems after years of domestic work.

Social Protection Measures	Urban		Rural		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sanjay Gandhi Niradhar Pension Yojana						
Yes	142	13	1	2	143	12.5
No	950	87	50	98	1,000	87.5
Total	1,092	100	51	100	1,143	100
e-Shram Registration						
Yes	1,520	31.9	60	23.7	1,580	31.5
No	3,246	68.1	193	76.3	3,439	68.5
Total	4,766	100	253	100	5,019	100
Health Insurance Coverage						
Yes	445	9.3	41	16.2	486	9.7
No	4,321	90.7	212	83.8	4,533	90.3
Total	4,766	100	253	100	5,019	100

Table 4: Access to Social Protection Measures

Maharashtra Domestic Workers' Welfare Board

In 2011-12, when the Maharashtra Domestic Workers' Welfare Board was operationalised 79,179 workers were registered. In 2012-13, 1,08,064 workers registered and 11,018 renewed their registrations. Since then, registrations and renewals have dropped annually (excepting in 2014-2015 and 2021-22). **As of 2022-23 there were 11,512 registrations and 2,631 renewals.**¹³ The survey findings reveal that **only 15 percent workers surveyed had ever registered with the Welfare Board, and only 7.8 per cent workers had an active (renewed) registration at the time of the survey.** Over 57 per cent workers have never applied for registration! Among those not registered with the Board, 47 per cent hadn't heard about the Board itself, and over 31 per cent were unaware of the benefits of registration.

Registration with the Board won't be of any

benefit was not just a perception but a reality—92 per cent of those registered reported that they had not accessed any Board schemes. The impact of such large-scale exclusion also shows from the finding that less than 5 per cent workers received the INR 1,500 cash transfer announced by the state government during the distressing Covid-19 period, when several domestic workers suffered prolonged loss of work and income. As noted earlier, the choice of getting into domestic work is often not really a choice, and is the only option available to the workers given their education and skill sets. Upward mobility into higher paying and less physically-taxing livelihoods requires skill upgradation. Unfortunately, only 5 per cent workers reported having received any skill development training, although 20 per cent expressed willingness for it.

Status of Registration with Welfare Board	Urban		Rural		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Not Applied	2,707	56.8	171	67.6	2,878	57.3
Application Filed but Registration Not Completed	553	11.6	32	12.7	585	11.7
Registration Completed but Haven't Received Identity Card	269	5.6	6	2.4	275	5.5
Registration Completed and Have Received Identity Card	731	15.3	23	9.1	754	15
Have Received Identity Card but Have Not Renewed Registration	123	2.6	14	5.5	137	2.7
Have Received Identity Card and Have Renewed Registration	383	8	7	2.8	390	7.8
Total	4,766	100	253	100	5,019	100
Total	4,708	100	252	100	4,960	100

Table 5: Status of Registration with Maharashtra Domestic Workers' Welfare Board

Welfare Board Schemes Availed	Urban		Rural		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
None	1,082	91.2	40	95.2	1,122	91.4
Scholarships	45	3.8	1	2.4	46	3.7
Sanmandhan Nidhi	30	2.5	1	2.4	31	2.5
Other	29	2.4	0	0	29	2.4
Total	1,186	100	42	100	1,228	100

Table 6 : Welfare Board Schemes Availed by Registered Domestic Workers

Note: Respondents were allowed to mark more than one scheme.

13 | Information obtained under Right to Information Act, 2005.

3. *Recommendations*

Given the report findings, the following recommendations have been suggested, which are in the nature of legislative interventions and non-legislative policy measures.

Legislative Interventions _____

1. **Enact a Comprehensive Legislation on Domestic Work:** A specific and a comprehensive legislation is needed, which enshrines the rights of domestic workers (viz. right against discrimination, right to fair wages, right to a contract) and to hold the employers accountable for violations of these rights. Among other things, this legislation should provide for the following:-
 - a. **Legally Recognise Domestic Work:** This recognition must be reflected both in legal frameworks and administrative practice, to ensure domestic workers gain access to the full range of labour rights and entitlements.
 - b. **Mandate Paid Maternity Leave:** Domestic workers must be entitled to a minimum of three months of paid maternity leave, funded through welfare mechanisms, irrespective of the worker's employment type or registration status.
 - c. **Ensure Leave Entitlements:** A minimum of four days' paid leave per month should be guaranteed to all domestic workers. Additionally, after 11 months of continuous service, workers should be entitled to one month of paid annual leave.
 - d. **Regulate Mobile Apps and Private Placement Agencies:** All private agencies involved in recruiting and placing domestic workers

must be registered under the legislation. Terms and conditions of employment must be standardised and monitored through a licensing and audit system.

e. Enable Access to Childcare and Rest Facilities:

Building by-laws should mandate that housing societies and residential complexes allocate space for crèches and rest facilities for domestic workers to support both childcare needs and workers' own rest and refreshment during the workday.

f. Uphold Occupational Health and Safety

Measures: This includes periodic health screenings, access to protective equipment, and awareness about occupational risks.

g. Provide Access to a Dedicated State

Helpline: A toll-free, multilingual helpline should be established for domestic workers to report abuse, seek information, and access welfare services.

- 2. Mandate Minimum Wages:** Domestic Work should be added as a scheduled employment under the Minimum Wages Act/Code of Wages and a minimum wage notification should be issued specifying location/zone specific floor wages for specific tasks—sweeping and swabbing, washing clothes, cooking, childcare, etc.—performed as part of domestic work. These must take into account the *size of the house as well as number of family members*.

Non-legislative Policy Measures

3. Revive and Rejuvenate the Maharashtra Domestic Workers' Welfare Board:

a. Ensure Autonomous and Independent

Welfare Board Structure: The Board must operate free from external interference, with a dedicated administrative structure comprising qualified personnel handling implementation, monitoring, and grievance redressal at all administrative levels.

b. Ensure Dedicated Budget and Fiscal

Authority: The state government should allocate a separate budget for the Domestic Workers' Welfare Board and empower it to mobilise additional revenue through mechanisms such as levies and cess collections. For example, a dedicated cess levied on household items (kitchen electronics, soaps etc.)

c. Mandate Employer Registration: All employers engaging domestic workers must be registered with the Welfare Board to ensure contribution compliance, and improve the enforcement of welfare and legal obligations.

d. Digitise and Fast-Track Registration Systems:

The registration process for workers and employers should be digitised to ensure efficiency and transparency. The issuing

of identity cards and enrolment in welfare schemes should be streamlined through an integrated online platform.

e. Establish a Grievance Redressal Mechanism:

A formal grievance redressal system should be created under the Domestic Workers' Welfare Board Act, including quasi-judicial complaints committees at the district level. These mechanisms should be accessible, time-bound, and empowered to enforce redressal decisions.

f. Rollout a Comprehensive and Integrated

Welfare Card: A single, unified welfare card (e.g. Swasthya Arogya Card) should be issued to domestic workers to enable seamless access to various entitlements—including health, maternity, education, and pension benefits. Financial support under existing schemes should be enhanced, with maternity assistance increased to INR 20,000 and retirement or long-service assistance to INR 50,000.

g. Expand Welfare Benefits and Dovetail with

Other Schemes: Domestic workers of all ages—including those currently unregistered—must be brought under the ambit of social protection. The Board should also promote and facilitate access to union or state

government social protection schemes (viz. Sanjay Gandhi Niradhar Pension Yojana) which provide targeted support for vulnerabilities commonly faced among domestic workers. The Board should proactively link domestic workers to other targeted schemes for informal workers—such as housing, food security, and health insurance—ensuring convergence and reduction of exclusion errors across social protection systems. The range of schemes made available by the Board should be expanded, with greater focus on educational scholarship schemes for the children of those working as domestic workers to address the high drop-out rates among them.

h. Drive Skill Development Support: Domestic workers should be given access to skill development opportunities to promote upward mobility and economic security.

i. Provide Pension through State Revenue: A minimum of 3 per cent of the state government's total revenue should be earmarked annually for pension schemes for domestic workers. This contribution must be over and above the Board's regular budgetary resources.

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