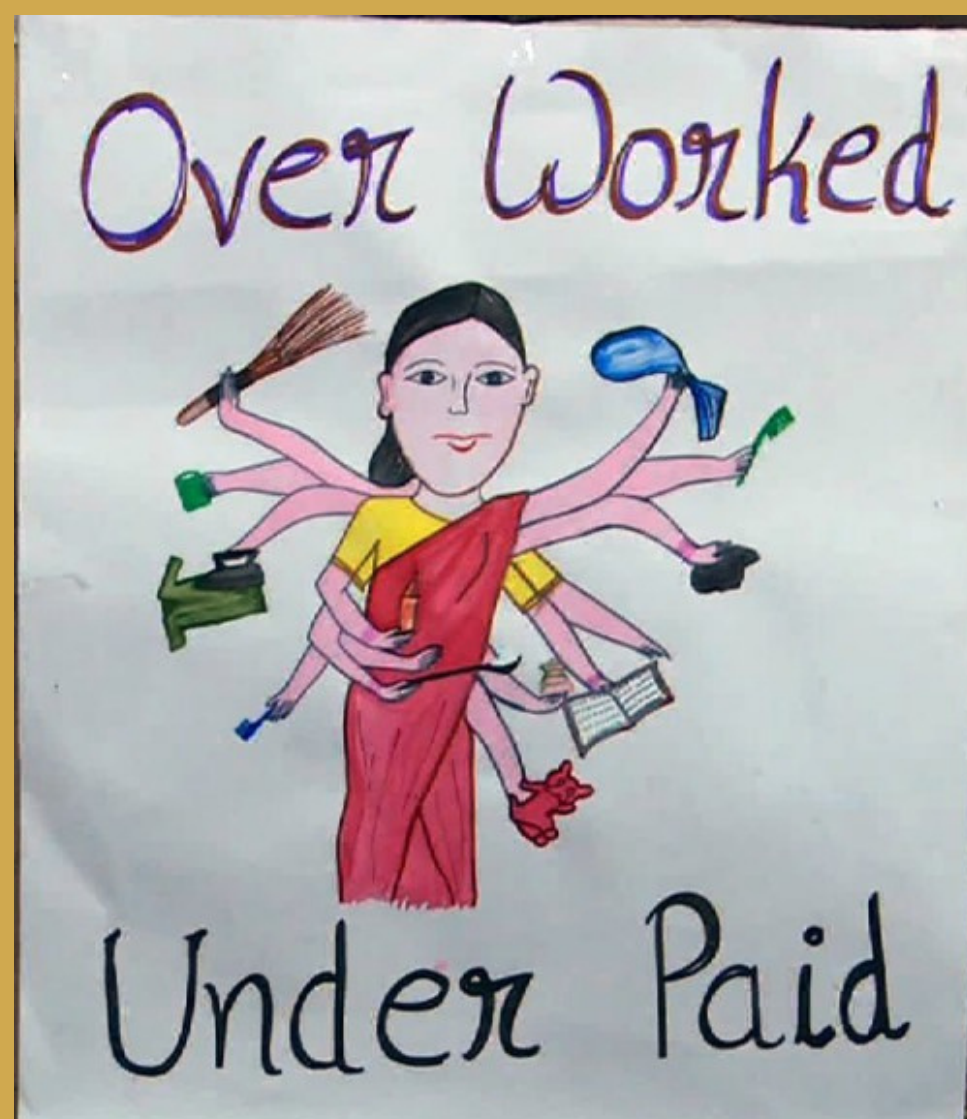


PAID DOMESTIC WORK: A SOCIO-LEGAL DISCOURSE



Is paid domestic work an economic activity? Yes. Is it acknowledged as such Maybe, not. What is the reason behind this persisting dichotomy? How do we make domestic workers visible in the legal space? Could we re-imagine the ideas of work, workers, and workplace for them? Does the law have any answer to their social and political marginalization? We invite you to join us in our quest for answers.

PANELISTS:

1. PROF. (DR.) NEETHA N., CENTRE FOR WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT STUDIES, NEW DELHI
2. MS. ELIZABETH KHUMALLAMBAM, COMMUNITY FOR SOCIAL CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT & NATIONAL PLATFORM FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS
3. ADV. CHIRAYU JAIN, VARIOUS COURTS OF DELHI

EVENT DETAILS:

Date: Tuesday, 2nd May, 2023
Time: 3 PM to 5 PM
Venue: Room No. 406,
National Law University, Delhi.

MODERATOR:

Dr. Sophy K.J.

Associate Professor and Director,
Centre for Labour Law
Research and Advocacy (CLLRA),
National Law University, Delhi.

Register Here :



Coordinator:
SAUMYA

Contact us at:
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PANEL DISCUSSION
ON
PAID DOMESTIC WORK: A SOCIO-LEGAL DISCOURSE

Organised by:
CENTRE FOR LABOUR LAW RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY

At:
NATIONAL LAW UNIVERSITY, DELHI

On:
TUESDAY, 2nd MAY, 2023

About the Centre:

Centre for Labour Law Research and Advocacy (CLLRA), at National Law University, Delhi, is established to reinvigorate the constitutional philosophy of ‘decent work for all’ by ensuring dignity at work and enjoyment of equal social, cultural and economic opportunities for workers. We focus on understanding the labour policy paradigm from an interdisciplinary perspective and converse with social realities to undertake meaningful advocacy and outreach initiatives.

With the objective of bringing forth interdisciplinary areas in labour before the students and other interested participants, we organise discussions and debates on various aspects of labour. Under our *Labour Law Discussion Series*, we are organising a ***panel discussion on paid domestic work performed by women***, with a special focus on the form of labour and working conditions of women.

About the Panel Discussion:

Is paid domestic work an economic activity? Yes. Is it acknowledged as such? Maybe, not. This dichotomy has long been recognised; yet, it is one that continues to persist. In the neoliberal capitalistic era, paid domestic work becomes the backbone of the market economy and legally recognised ‘workers.’ Despite producing this surplus value, paid domestic workers themselves are invisible in the labour market. The conventional idea of a *workplace* in labour laws does not envisage people’s dwellings, where a domestic worker typically labours, as a space for production, consumption, or commodification; rather, they are private spaces that arbitrarily remain out of the purview of the State in this case. Similarly, the conventional idea of *work* does not envisage domestic work and care work as requiring any skill or possessing much monetary value. In popular perception, these are stereotyped as feminine and unskilled jobs. Hence, they are devalued.

Despite successive socio-political movements and legislative attempts, legal logics have not evolved. Except under a few statutes such as the Unorganised Workers’ Social Security Act (UWSSA), 2008, the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, and the Minimum Wages Act, 1946 in a few states, paid domestic workers are not recognised as *workers*. Except the sexual harassment law, these statutes will not be in force very soon; and thus, we will be taking a step back. The new labour codes will continue with the conventional legal concepts wherein domestic workers have no space. The question is, why are we not able to bring about meaningful changes in our laws? What inhibits the lawmakers to recognise domestic work as *work*? Is there no hope left for legal recognition?

The legal invisibility of paid domestic work creates a fertile ground for exploitation of domestic workers. They are prone to trafficking along with sexual harassment and violence. They are also trafficked for labour and are at the risk of bondage. Within the confines of a home, which is their workplace, they may be subjected to abuse, overtime work, underpayment, or non-payment of wages. The element of *care* involved in domestic work is often overlooked during its valuation and it is degraded to manual work requiring no skill, attentiveness, or responsibility. There is also a lack of regulation and oversight of the

intermediaries who procure the domestic workers from remote areas and facilitate their employment.

Legal invisibility does not solely account for domestic workers' exploitation and precarity. Social and political marginalisation is an aspect as pertinent as the legal. The caste, class, and gender identities, among other possible ones, produce intersecting patterns of control at the site of paid domestic work and lend to its dehumanisation. Furthermore, heterosexual patriarchy and structural neo-liberalism contribute to the subjugation and undervaluation of paid domestic workers like no other forces in the past.

These concerns have bothered the activists and scholars for long. We wish to bring these forth our students and other audience. In light of the new developments in realm of labour law, we wish to re-explore any hopes for legal recognition of paid domestic work. Why is there a persisting rigidity in the legal constructions of *work*, *workplace*, and other such concepts, despite their clear shortcomings? How have the Indian courts of law dealt with issues of domestic workers? In the evolving labour-law regime in India, what should our demands be – a sector-specific legislation or recognition of domestic work under the consolidated laws? In either case, could the laws account for the other socio-cultural factors of marginalisation associated with domestic workers? What do the feminist and other social movements say about the struggles of domestic workers? Is there a need for better coordination or unification of these movements for the cause of domestic workers? How has the movement by domestic workers and activists fared in India? What is the way forward?

The Panel Discussion seeks your intellectual engagement with such questions.

Eminent Panelists:

- Prof. (Dr.) Neetha N., Centre for Women's Development Studies, New Delhi
- Ms. Elizabeth Khumallambam, Community for Social Change & Development and National Platform for Domestic Workers
- Adv. Chirayu Jain, various Courts of Delhi

Moderator: Dr. Sophy K.J., Associate Professor and Director, Centre for Labour Law Research and Advocacy (CLLRA), National Law University, Delhi.

Other details:

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Time: 3 PM to 5 PM

Venue: Room No. 406, National Law University, Delhi, Sector 14, Dwarka, New Delhi

Registration link: <https://forms.gle/A3ecOkb8e46ZU2RYA>

Email: cllra@nludelhi.ac.in