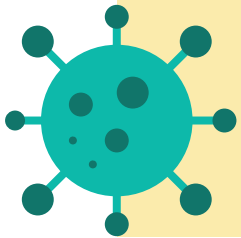




DOMESTIC WORKERS AND SOCIAL PROTECTION IN DHAKA, BANGLADESH

This fact sheet provides results from a survey completed in Dhaka in 2019 with 100 domestic workers.

RESPONSES TO COVID-19



In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Bangladesh implemented the Gratuitous Relief (GR) programme to provide humanitarian assistance in the form of food, cash transfers, and baby food. Between March and June 2020, nearly 75 million beneficiaries were reached via the GR. However, many domestic workers remained excluded from this relief.

POLICY CONTEXT

Bangladesh Labour Act 2008 explicitly excludes domestic workers. Since 2015 there has been technical recognition of their status as workers through the Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy (2015), which states that the government shall take the initiative to ensure the access of domestic workers to the Bangladesh Labour Welfare Foundation Fund.

The fund established under the Bangladesh Labour Welfare Foundation Act, 2006, provides financial support to disabled and sick workers, a survivor benefit, a contribution to life insurance and education scholarships for children of eligible workers. However, this policy is without legal backing or implementation and domestic workers in fact have little income security or protection from risks.

LONGER-TERM RISKS TO INCOME SECURITY

BDT8,000 (USD94) / month
 MINIMUM WAGE - READYMADE GARMENT SECTOR
- BDT3,000 (USD35)=
BDT5,000 (USD59) / month [40-hour work week]
 TYPICAL DOMESTIC WORKER WAGE



Occupational safety and health



70% work missed due to illness or accident in the last 12 months

72% due to an injury/illness resulting from their work

78% missed work as a result

34% missed two or more weeks

60% received no payment for time off



Care responsibilities



10% reported missing work due to care responsibilities including maternity leave, child care and care for a sick person

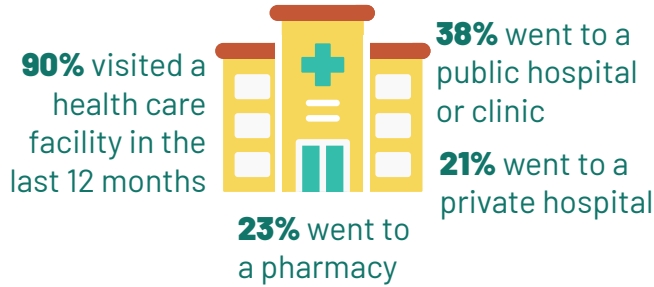
50% reported leaving children with a family member whilst at work



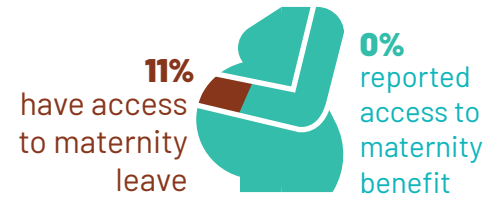
25% had taken children to work with them

ACCESS TO SOCIAL PROTECTION

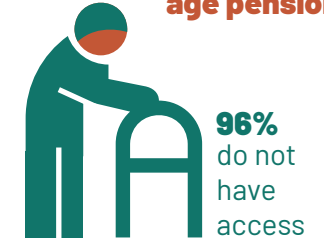
Access to healthcare



Access to paid maternity leave



Access to old age pension



COST OF HEALTHCARE ACCESS

BDT1,250 (USD14.7) TYPICAL WEEKLY SALARY



Healthcare costs more than salary

BDT1,655 (USD19.5) typical direct cost of one healthcare visit

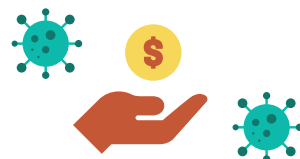
+2.6 hours = BDT67 (USD0.80) time to access health care as lost wages



RECOMMENDATIONS

Short term

Provide cash assistance to domestic workers impacted by the COVID-19 crisis through the Labour Welfare Fund



Medium term

Relax eligibility requirements for applications to the Labour Welfare Fund

Increase benefit amounts



Long term

Include domestic workers in existing national social protection programmes operating under the Ministry of Social Welfare

Introduce a universal pension scheme nationally

Ensure the **inclusion** of domestic workers in the Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006, so that the Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy, 2015 has **legal backing**.