



## **Vulnerability, Legal Protection and Work Conditions of Domestic Workers in Addis Ababa**

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## **List of Acronyms**

AIDS	Acquire Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Form of Discrimination against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
HIV	Human Immune Virus
ILO	International Lobar Organization
IRENE	International Restructuring Education Network Europe
IUF	International Union of Food
ISCO	International Standard Classification of Occupations
MOFED	Ministry Of Finance and Economic Development
MOLSA	Ministry Of Labour and Social Affair
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SNNPR	Southern Nation Nationality and Peoples Region
UN	United Nation
UNDP	United Nation Development Program
UNPF	United Nation Population Fund
USD	United States Dollar

## **Abstract**

Domestic workers are one of the most vulnerable workers in the world, being often the targets of physical and sexual abuse and experiencing discrimination and marginalisation with regard to pay, working conditions and legal rights. One of the sources of vulnerability of domestic workers has been lack of recognition as workers and thereby inadequate legal protection of their rights. This study investigates the working conditions and available legal protection of domestic workers in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia focusing on the Megenaga area of Yeka-sub-city found that these domestic workers in the study area had little or no labour rights or protection: they rarely had clear contractual relations, worked long hours of work, had little or no privacy and were exposed to verbal, physical and sexual harassment. In addition, they often had inadequate food and accommodation and low pay.

Domestic workers are however excluded from the labour law of the country and also ignored in the list of special groups in the national women policy of the country. At the same time, the country has ratified CEDAW and is party to the ILO convention 189 (although yet not ratified and domesticated). The paper argues that it is the lack of political commitment among the state, systematic restriction by the state on the civil societies that advocate for domestic workers rights, and limited capability among domestic workers themselves due to illiteracy and poverty that are the main contributing factors for domestic workers agony and silence on their problems.

## **Relevance to Development Studies**

One of the chief concerns of development and development practitioners is social exclusion of certain groups. Understanding how social exclusion happens and how development can be made inclusive is one of the chief concerns of development studies as a field. Domestic workers are one of the large groups excluded from benefits of development in many countries. This paper, by investigating the vulnerability of domestic workers and their work conditions in Addis Ababa, contributes to our understanding of what really means women exclusion on the ground Ethiopian context. It also provides data on how social exclusion is interlinked with poverty, culture and politics to reinforce the discrimination, oppression and abuse of rights of domestic workers.

## **Keywords**

Domestic workers, Ethiopia, Legal Protection, Human right, Women

# **Chapter 1: Introduction**

“I am serving others, hoping I get something to serve myself later” (Interviewee, domestic worker)

## **1.1 Background**

“Domestic work has always been one of the oldest and most important occupations for millions of women around the world. It is rooted in the global history of slavery, colonialism and other forms of servitude” (ILO 2010:1). All over the world, an important army of workers performs domestic tasks in private households in exchange for remuneration and/or lodging and board (Ramirez-Machado 2004:1). The ILO (2010) estimates the number of domestic workers globally as reaching up to 53 million with ages between 15 years old and above alone. According to United Nations Population Fund, “absorbing up to ten percent of total employment in some countries, domestic work is an occupation for millions of women worldwide”(as cited in Chuang 2010:1631). Notwithstanding the increasing societal demand for domestic work, domestic workers in general remain among the most exploited and abused workers in the world (Chuang 2010:1632).

A conservative estimation indicates that at least 248, 600 people are employed as domestic workers in Ethiopian cities (Namukasa 2011: 19). Estimates from Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) and LABORSTA of ILO shows 1.5% of the total women in the country are currently working as domestic workers. These domestic workers are often not aware of their rights and have little access to legal protection as they work within families and are thus vulnerable to “private” abuse and exploitation.

## **1.2 Country Context: Socio-economic and Political Background**

Ethiopia is a federation of nine ethnically defined regions and two city administrations. Bordered by Sudan, South Sudan, Djibouti, Kenya, Eritrea, and Somalia, its 79.4 million populations is the largest in the Horn of Africa and the second largest in Africa. According to the most recent census in the country, more than 83% of the population is living in rural areas while about 16% is living in urban areas (Population and Housing Census Commission 2008). More than 80 ethnic groups live in Ethiopia. The country has been described as a fragile state but managed to be the only stable state in the volatile region of Horn of Africa for the last two decades after the military junta known as Dergue was overthrown by the Ethiopian people’s revolutionary democracy party (EPRDF) in 1991.

Ethiopia’s economy is highly agrarian with 46% of the GDP and more than 80% of employment coming from agriculture sector. The agriculture is typically manual and dependant on rain fall which makes the country vulnerable to climate related shocks and food insecurity. The overall economy is growing at a rate more than 7% but the service sector is growing rapidly and in

recent years, the share of the service sector in the GDP has increased significantly and is contributing about 48% of the share to the economy. The informal sector is the main source of employment for urbanities in Ethiopian cities (Brixiova and Aragie 2010).

Despite the substantial declining of poverty over the past five years, in Ethiopia poverty remains widespread. The national poverty has reduced from 36% in 2004/ 5 to 29.6% in 2011. Poverty in rural areas is higher than urban areas: the proportion of the population below the poverty line stood at 30.4% in rural areas, while it is estimated to be 25.7% in urban areas .The proportion female- headed household in poverty was reported to be higher than male headed households (MOFED 2012).

EPRDF is lined towards mixed economy and land is owned by the state constitutionally. Rural residents were granted free usage of land while in urban areas land is leased. As such, the government considers itself committed to pro-poor growth and education and health are the most funded sectors. The 2010 human development index has identified Ethiopia as the 11<sup>th</sup> best performer in terms of improving human development in the last decade all over the world. The report states that between 2000 and 2010, average life expectancy in Ethiopia has improved by 5 years (from 51 to 56). Similarly Gross national per capita income increased by 75% while as expected years of schooling increased by 4 years with mean years of schooling remained the same (UNDP, 2010).

However, the country has been blamed for gross human right violations, oppression of women and minorities. Many of human right watch and international amnesty reports have indicated the government is becoming to any one challenging its power and the human right situation continued to worsen especially after the controversial 2005 election where the opposition challenges the power of the ruling party significantly up to winning all the parliamentary seats of the capital Addis Ababa(EU Election Observation Mission 2005) The U.S. Department of State 2011 Human Rights Report accused the government with tortures, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Arbitrary Arrest or Detention, arresting political opponents, journalist and bloggers oppressing freedom of speech and writing, restriction on freedom of labour unions and so on. The same report, blamed the government using anti-terrorism law to oppress opponents while as the civil society law endorsed in 2010 was intended and used to suppress human right advocates in a systematic way. The law requires that civil societies working on human rights areas should collect at least 90% of their income within the country which caused many of them to stop operation (Amerga 2011). “The law has been used as the tool of choice by governments to constrict the space available for civil society, to create barriers against their activities and funding sources and to threaten their very existence” (ICNL, 2008:10 cited in Amerga 2011: 51).

Ethiopia is a predominantly patriarchal society and women continue to be subject of oppression and discrimination. Religion and culture are intertwined to perpetuate and serve as “excuse for women’s inferior position in the country. These excuses have for many years been supported by laws and legislation that uphold patriarchy and women’s subordination”(Cherinet and Mulugeta 2002:1). Cherent and Mulugeta give a brief overview of the situation of women inferior position as follows:

Ethiopian women's status is low where they: (a) are generally poorer than men because they earn less; (b) are less educated; (c) are increasingly becoming heads of households, with no resources to support their dependents; (d) do not enjoy due acknowledgment for their labour contribution, particularly in agriculture, and (e) do not have decision making power (Cherinet and Mulugeta 2002:1).

Rural-urban migration in Ethiopia was limited in the past:

During the Derg era, migration was again predominantly rural–rural. Rural–urban migration was discouraged by restrictions on population movements following the 1975 land-tenure reform. The land-reform law, which gave all rural citizens equal access to farmlands, required claimants to remain in rural areas if they wanted to own farm plots (Ezra 2001 :8).

These and another incentive to rural residents by the Dergue regime had been intended to reduce rural-urban migration so that the social problems like unemployment in cities will not get worse. At that time, there had been a systematic effort not to allow rural people reside in urban areas by denying migrants identity cards which then were the visible way to get social services provided by government.

Although still the most prevalent type of migration in Ethiopia is rural-to rural areas, rural–urban migration has also increased tremendously after the restrictions for rural migration were relieved. Land shortage, environmental degradation and high population growth continue to make rural population vulnerable to food insecurity. Other factors like ecological degradation, land shortage due to high population growth, declining productivity and increasing literacy rate level have made many rural people to migrate to urban areas and migration to urban areas is one of the coping mechanisms for desperate rural residents (Asefa and Zegeya 2003).

Since women are victim of discrimination and “harmful traditional practices, including FGM, discrimination against girls in food allocation, early marriage as young as 7or 8 years, rape, abduction followed by rape, and other practices” (Cherinet and Mulugeta 2002 :1) many of them are migrating to major cities like Addis Ababa in search of better life. However, due to their limited education and limited capacity of the formal labour to absorb these women, most of the migrants join the informal sector in cities. Among the informal sector domestic work attracts many of the young migrants because it requires less skill to be hired.

### **1.3 Domestic Workers in Ethiopia – A profile**

Previous studies on background of domestic workers identified that there is “apparent reluctance of female citizens from Addis Ababa to join domestic work”( Getachew 2006 :49). As a result, most of domestic workers in Addis Ababa, for instance came from Amhara, Oromia and SNNPR (Kifle 2002). A study in Addis Ababa found out that “poverty of the family is the single most important cause (destitute family, disintegration of family or death of one or both parents) of children entering into domestic work” (Kifle 2002 :26). Getachew (2006) added additional push factors that included escape from family violence, escape from unhappy and early marriage, and attraction by city life

(Getachew 2006). As a result, “majority of the domestic workers in Ethiopian cities are migrants from rural areas”(Namukasa 2011:19). The widespread poverty in rural areas is the major factor of rural-urban migration. Since land is owned by the state and cannot be sold, particularly the young generation categorically is faced with land scarcity and “forced to migrate to cities in search of alternative livelihoods” (Van Dijk and Fransen 2008:3 as cited in Fransen and Kuschminder 2009). However, the romanticised picture of the city presented to the rural girls by successful migrants from their place of regional, also contribute to women running to the cities. However soon after arriving to the cities, for many of these girls finding employment is tough and for many domestic works will be the gate way to the city life (Mohammed 2010).

With limited capacity of the formal sector to absorb large number of rural-urban migrants, however, the latter usually engage in the informal sector like domestic work. Thus, each month “thousands of Ethiopians move from rural to urban areas such as Addis Ababa for domestic works” (Namukasa 2011:19).

Most of domestic workers have lower education level. For instance, a previous assessment on the educational level of domestic workers in one sub city of ( Gulele) Addis Ababa found that only 40% of the respondents had attended primary school while the balance 60% were found illiterate (Getachew 2006). The dominance of women with low educational qualification in the domestic work sector is because the work relatively does not require sophisticated skill. “To be employed in domestic work in Ethiopia does not require sophisticated skill or expertise. The work outlined in many families requires only brute force, the energy of youth, and probably less than a week's orientation” ( Kifle 2002 :23).

The paths of joining domestic work are important to understand the situation domestic workers found themselves. Kifle (2002) identified two main paths through which women employed as domestic workers:

Once they reach Addis Ababa, there are two routes for joining paid child domestic labour. The first is through a broker (*delala*) where they are usually employed with a modest wage, and the second is through relatives or friends of the family in which the child finds a temporary lodging (Kifle 2002:24).

## 1.4 Statement of the Problem

The invisible work site, (the home), the lower status credit to the work and the lower level of education the workers usually attain have made domestic workers vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Legal protection for domestic workers is unavailable usually and is hardly implemented on the ground whenever there is. Ramirez-Machado points out that “the vulnerability [to abuse and discrimination] of this category of worker comes first of all from the relationship of submission and their isolation” (Ramirez-Machado 2004:3).

With the background of critical global situation of domestic workers, and also the historical lenience of slavery culture until recently in Ethiopia, the working conditions, legal protection and capability of domestic workers to claim their rights is a neglected and under researched area, resulting in many domestic workers accepting precarious and irregular employment relations and a life lived at or under the poverty threshold (Ramirez-Machado 2004)

This study therefore was intended to assess the working condition and legal protection of domestic workers in Addis Ababa using the lens of national and relevant international human and labour rights instruments.

## 1.5 Objective of the study

The objective of this research paper is to explore the experiences and working conditions of domestic workers in the light of available legal protection in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Although historical changes provided, this is a contemporary study and focuses on the current situation of domestic workers.

## 1.6 Research Questions

### ***1.6.1 Main Research Question:***

How do the experiences of domestic workers in the study area compare and measure up to the rights reflected in relevant national and international legal instruments?

### ***1.6.2 Sub- Questions:***

- What national and international legal instruments are relevant in protecting the rights of domestic workers?
- What are the conditions of work and employment patterns of domestic workers in Yeka sub-city Addis Ababa, Ethiopia?

## 1.7 Relevance and Justification

Having spent two years as social worker in Labour and Social Affairs office of Yeka sub –city of Addis Ababa, I have had personal contacts with domestic workers visiting my office in need of legal or social support from my office. Since those days, the legal protection and working condition of domestic workers was my concern. My frequent encounter with them enabled me to understand the vulnerability of domestic workers to exploitation and abuse. However, in my literature review, I found out that the hitherto literature mainly focuses on international migrant domestic workers as explained above and the vulnerability of internal (within country) migrant domestic worker is neglected. When the literature addresses the demotic worker issues, it synonymises domestic workers with international migrants.

However, it should be noted that there are differences between international migrant domestic workers and internal migrant domestic workers. The extent of cultural stereotype, for instance, might be deep and catchy when the domestic worker is an international migrant. Secondly in case of internal migrants both domestic worker and their employers usually are subject of the same law while in international migrant the citizenship status might cause difference in terms of treatment by law. Previous studies on international migrant domestic workers have highlighted the vulnerability to exploitation and human right abuse of domestic workers ( Lutz 2002 , Ramirez-Machado 2004) Thus,

the relevance of this study is that it will contribute to our understanding of vulnerability and abuse of domestic workers within the same country.

## **1.8 Methodology**

### ***1.8.1 Approach***

The study follows human rights approach “[which] emphasizes that the rights of domestic workers are universal, stringent entitlements” (Albin and Mantouvalou 2012:1). The year 2006 was a relevant point of departure as it marked the beginning of global efforts towards achieving better protection for domestic workers all over the world which human rights advocates and associations of domestic workers, whenever they exist, push towards the recognition of domestic workers as “workers” entitled with human and labour rights. These pressures culminated in the adoption of ILO Convention No 189 and supplementing Recommendation No 201 which aimed at regulating the terms and conditions of work for domestic workers and which is used , in this study as the standard to compare the realities of living and working conditions of domestic workers in the study area.

### ***1.8.2 Research Methods***

A cross sectional qualitative research design was employed to gather primary data for this study. This is because the main intention of the research, examining the legal protection and conditions of work of domestic workers and how they describe their condition. In this regard, the crucial feature of qualitative research, is to “work up one’s research materials, to search for hidden meanings, non-obvious features, multiple interpretations, implied connotations, unheard voices”(Have 2004 :1). Given the descriptions of the nature of domestic work sector in the background section (invisibility of the work site, power difference between employer and employee and so on) it blends itself in to qualitative research.

#### **1.8.2.1 Study Area**

Megenagna Area of Yeka Sub-city in Addis Ababa is selected as main area of emphasis for this study. There are two reasons for selection of the area. First, the area is a newly developed relatively middle and upper class residence area where in households who have the economic capacity to hire domestic workers are living. Secondly, the researcher has been working in the area previously and knows the area well including the places where participants of the study can be found.

#### **1.8.2.2 Data Source**

Both primary and secondary data<sup>1</sup> were collected to answer the questions the research has posed. Primary data were collected from the study participants (explained below). Secondary data were collected from Annual labour abstract of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Ethiopia and other interna-

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<sup>1</sup> The findings of the secondary data are discussed in the next chapter.

tional organizations like ILO. The primary data were mainly meant to answer the research questions, while as the secondary data is intended to aid the process of answering the question by setting the context for understanding the data historically and at the national system. For instance, the interview reveal the amount of remuneration for current domestic workers but this can be aided by information on the past trend of remuneration for domestic workers from literature like annual abstracts of the ministry of labour and social affairs. The sections below describe from whom and how primary data were collected.

#### **1.8.2.3 Participant Selection Procedures**

The participants of the study were domestic workers themselves, officials from labour and social affair office, and brokers of Domestic workers. 15 domestic workers meeting the above mentioned eligibility criteria were selected and participated in the study. While the initial plan was also to include NGO staffs working in the area, the personnel were not interested to comment on the issue. The reason for their nonparticipation was because of the nature of the subject of the study, which according to the rather controversial CSO law of Ethiopia (endorsed 2008), CSOs like this one who receives their fund from aboard cannot work and comment on human right issues.

The selection of domestic workers was, however done through an NGO which provide support for domestic workers in the city to attend education and care of themselves from HIV/AIDS. The name of the NGO is not disclosed here because the organization requested to remain anonymous (see *Filed Work* and *Ethical Consideration* sections). Explaining the objective of the paper to the organization and illicit support from it, the researcher recruited participants of study among domestic workers who are beneficiaries of the services of the organization. To be selected to participate in the study, domestic workers had to fulfil two eligible criteria. First, they should be migrants from regions out of Addis Ababa. Selecting migrants enables to examine the contribution of being migrant to any possible exploitation. Secondly, they need to be either presently working as live- in paid domestic worker (not as visitors) or should have been working so in the past. The decision to limit to paid-in live workers is since they have more interaction with their employers (and therefore can provide detail information) and to make the study manageable.

The key informants for the study were brokers of domestic workers (through whom domestic workers are connected to households) and officials from Labour and Social Affairs office of Addis Ababa City Government. Eight key informants were interviewed. Three of the key informants were from the Labour and Social Affairs office of Addis Ababa (one chair of the office, one social worker and one lawyer) while the remaining five were brokers of domestic workers in the study area, *Megenaga* are of Yeka sub-city.

#### **1.8.2.4 Methods of Data Collection**

Two techniques of data collection were employed for this study. First, direct, in-depth interviews with the three groups of participants (Domestic workers, brokers, and officials from labour and social affairs office).The interviews were conducted at different locations. Some of the interviews with domestic workers happen in cafeteria, and some in the premises of the NGO office. Interviews with brokers were conducted in their offices when they have one and otherwise in the cafeteria around their work site. Interview with officials from

labour and Social Affairs office were conducted within their office. Interview guide, of different contents for each group, were prepared to structure the points to be discussed during each interview.

The focus of both interviews with domestic workers aimed to generate detailed data on the themes like.

- Whether they are obliged or not to remain in the household or with its members during their periods of rest or leave (Article 9).
- Are they benefiting from Minimum wage standard, if any like other workers (Article 11).
- To whom do they report any actual or potential human rights violation threats by their employer or the middle persons and if any, what is the legal remedy they have been given so far by any concerned organ? And finally what measures do you take in the absence of such legal help.
- Are they informed of the employers or the host family's ongoing situation such as the size of the household, tasks they are going to carry out, the working hours and accommodation?
- Though they are domestic workers how far do they know that they have human rights to be respected like every citizen?
- Does the reality usually meet their expectation which is based on the information they have been given by the middle person when they are employed?

The second method of data collection was Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Two focus group discussions, each consisting of seven domestic workers as participants were conducted within the premise of the NGO office. The focus of the FGDs was to cover the underlying reasons behind the current working and living conditions of domestic workers. Accordingly, taking points from results of the interview, discussants were asked to share their view on factors that could explain any possible exploitation or abuse.

#### **1.8.2.5 Field work**

The field data collection was held from June 25- September 1, 2012. The most significant challenge during field work was the difficulty to get interviewee's through the NGO. The initial plan was to select interviewees from among the beneficiaries of the Ngo working for their education and skill development. However, it took along time of negotiation and renegotiation to do so since the organization refused to allow me accesses them through it. Since 2009 civil society organizations in Ethiopia who receive their funding from aboard are not allowed to advocate human right issues by CSO law of the country(Civil Societies Proclamation No 621/09). Since the NGO receives its funding from aboard, their refusal to my request to recruit interviewees through them, understandably, was emanating from their fear that this might be interpreted by the Ethiopian government as advocating for the human rights of domestic workers. However, after a lot of discussion with them, the organization finally allowed me to recruit domestic workers to interview among their beneficiaries but demand to keep the anonymity of the organization.

#### **1.8.2.6 Ethical Considerations**

Given the hierarchical relationship domestic workers have with their employers, cautious measures were taken to ensure this safety. One of such measures is to keep confidentiality of the information; names of the participants were not disclosed. Only code names are used for domestic workers here in this report. Secondly, verbal consent form was taken from every respondent after detail explanation about the procedures of the interview. Participants were told not to answer any question they are not comfortable with, they could reject to be recorded at any point of the interview and also they could stop the interview if they wanted to. In addition, based on the demand of the nongovernmental organization that I recruited domestic workers to interviews, the name of the organization is not revealed in this report.

### **1.9 Limitations of the Study**

Lack of well-organized statistics conducted on the area of domestic workers in Ethiopia was one of challenge for this paper. For instance in selecting participants of the study, the researcher intended to know the major reason why women migrate from rural areas to urban Ethiopia. Knowing this would have enabled the researcher in ensuring diversity along causes in selecting participants. However, no such data was found. Secondly this study is a much focused assessment and its findings cannot speak all about the situation of domestic workers in Addis Ababa or in the country although it generally points to that.

# Chapter 2 : : Review of Concepts and Legal Instruments Relevant to Domestic Work

## 2.1 Related Literature and concepts

This chapter reviews a brief presentation of the meaning of domestic work, the historical process of feminization of the job and the relevant legal instruments available for legal protection of domestic workers. The last part of the chapter summarizes the theoretical framework of the study.

### ***2.1.1 Who is domestic worker? : Scope of domestic work***

The ILO convention on decent work domestic workers takes a broad definition of domestic workers. According to convention no.189, article 1, “A domestic worker may work on full-time or part-time basis; may be employed by a single household or by multiple employers; may be residing in the household of the employer (live-in worker) or may be living in his or her own residence (live-out)”. A domestic worker may be working in a country of which she/he is not a national. Domestic work includes mental, manual and emotional aspects, including care work that is necessary to maintain people and communities (Anderson 2000).

However, there is no common statistical definition across countries for what constitutes domestic work. The ILO’s definition of domestic workers, which is based on the International Standard Classification of occupations (ISCO), included four categories of domestic workers

1. Housekeepers and related workers
2. Child care workers
3. Home- based personal care workers
4. Domestic helpers and cleaners

A combined list of the four types of occupations mentioned above would give us a relatively comprehensive list of domestic workers including maids, cooks, waiters, gardeners, gatekeepers, , chauffeurs, care takers, , babysitters and so on” (Chen 2011).

While the shared characteristics among domestic workers (low status, mostly lacking protection and so on), are profound we should also consider considerable heterogeneity that exists within the “domestic workers” population and that the similarity should not mask the differences. One criteria of heterogeneity among domestic workers is the employment arrangements. Some domestic workers are hired by employing household themselves or via third party agency. Some of the domestic workers work for a single employer others for multiple employers. Some live within the premises of the house of their employer while others live –out of the employers’ home (in their own home or with relatives’ home). Some domestic workers may specialize in one specific task while others work all kinds of tasks for their employer. Thence, “while recognizing the distinctive features of domestic work sector and the challenges

most domestic workers face in common, we need to recognize the special needs that some domestic workers may have emanating from the work condition they are in”( Chen 2011:3).

### ***2.1.2. Feminization of Domestic work***

Globally, one of the historical transformations of domestic work in historical perspective is the feminization of the job. Studies indicate that domestic servants have not always been exclusively women. “Until the middle of the 19th century the work was predominantly done by men in many European countries” (Lutz 2002:93). Following the industrialization and urbanization in many western countries the “transformation of the rural servants into urban domestic workers', as the trend was known, led to feminization of domestic workers as a characteristic of urbanization and industrialization” (Friese 1991: 201 cited in Lutz 2002:94). Even then, Hill (1996) argues, there were sexual divisions of labour between male and female servants in the tasks they were assigned to work.

However in Ethiopia, it is likely that domestic work has been women’s occupation since long time (Pankhurst 1968). Historical perspectives in the issue usually do not deal this gender dimension of the issue but mention that during the long extended time of slavery in Ethiopia, from which domestic working evolved and which was abolished only in the first half of 20th century, the women slaves usually served in the home while the men slaves worked in the agricultural fields (Pankhurst 1968). Edward Newman, in his book Slavery in Abyssinia<sup>2</sup> , explains “the common types of service for female servants were grinding cereals, gathering woods and fetching water, while male domestic servants followed their masters during journeys, carrying rifle, looking after cattle and the like” (cited in Tesfaye 2007 :36).

### ***2.1.3 Vulnerability of Domestic workers***

Domestic workers are among the world’s most vulnerable workers (Ramirez-Machado 2004). One of the sources of vulnerability is the intimacy that often characterises the relationship between the employer and the domestic worker which makes the treatment of the workers as family members- not as workers. Mantouvalou (2012) explained that such “sense of intimacy can be false, though, because the relationship between the domestic worker and the employer is characterised by a difference of status that the latter is often keen to maintain”(Mantouvalou 2012:2). Sometimes the status difference can have also a cultural component in which the cultures of domestic workers serve as a base of creating asymmetric status between employing households and domestic workers. For instance, Getachew (2006) identified a couple of vulnerability of domestic workers in Addis Ababa due to “rural styles of dressing, walking, etc. which were taken as epitomes of backwardness and lack of civilization by the urbanite-elite employers” (Getachew 2006 :49).

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<sup>2</sup> Abyssinia is the term which refers to pre-modern Ethiopia.

In other source of vulnerability for domestic workers is the invisible site of work. “The location of domestic labour, [the home], makes the workers more vulnerable to abuse by the employers” (Mantouvalou 2012:2) domestic work is hard to supervise because accessing the home is considered as penetration of privacy. Among the domestic works, live- in domestic workers are the most vulnerable ones. “According to the law and practice ILO report, living and working in their employer’s negative, impact on workers’ personal autonomy and mobility and can influence decisions as to their future, including the decision to found a family of their own” (Tijdens and Klaveren 2011 :13).

There are also health risks associated with domestic work. Long hours of work of laborious activities like cleaning, washing clothes manually, exposure to excessive smoke and heat when making Injera ( a common bread among Ethiopians), provided with unhealthy food. Washing toilets and other places without adequate utensils and so on (Getachew 2006).

#### ***2.1.4. Common Human Right Violation against Domestic workers***

Human right violation against domestic workers domestic workers have been reported by media, internationally human right organizations such as Human right watch, and Amnesty international. Physical violence, psychological violence, and sexual violence against domestic workers have been reported in many studies (Human right watch, Tesfaye 2007, Getachew 2006). In Ethiopia, as in many parts of the world, the extent of sexual violence is not fully known. Many people do not want to disclose their experience of sexual abuse and only small portion of women who report it. Despite the lack of complete data, sexual abuse remains a solid experience for many women in the world. This becomes especially true for domestic workers who are more vulnerable to sexual abuse because they spend their time hidden in private homes, are at inferior position and are mostly women (Anderson 2000).

## **2.2. Legal Instruments relevant to Domestic work**

Law is an important tool to promote legal and labour rights of women. In recent years, the issue of abuse and exploitation has been one of the agenda of international organizations like ILO, Human Rights Watch, UN agencies and other regional entities. ILO has endorsed in 2011 Convention 189 (decent work for domestic workers) along with Recommendation No. 201 that would provide protection to domestic workers in ratifying countries. Human Right Watch (2006, 2008) has been publishing a series of reports on the human right violation of domestic workers especially in Middle East countries. UN Agencies (UNPF, UNIFM) and other have also involved in assessing the working situation of domestic workers.

Thus, globally domestic working is recognized as a “work” and is already under existing international labour standards and human rights frameworks (cf. the ILO Convention no.189 of domestic workers). However, still in this “21st century, domestic work around the world is mainly informal and characterized by widespread violations of human and labour rights, ranging from the worst forms of child labour and bondage to the invisibility of the work” (Caracciolo et al. 2011:5)

In this section two distinct sources of rights for women in Ethiopia are discussed: National laws and regional or international conventions. The next chapters will highlight the realities of domestic workers and the applicability of these laws on the ground.

### ***2.3.1. National laws***

The Federal Constitution of Ethiopia, the supreme law of the land promulgated in 1995 serves as the main source of national laws. The constitution has demonstrated a renewed legislative support for women thorough its various articles. For instance, Article 25 of the constitution prohibits discrimination based on gender. Article 35, which is entitled to and exclusively deals with Rights of Women, has a total of 9 sub articles detailing the rights of women, among others, to equal enjoyment of rights, entitlement to affirmative action, equal rights of property ownership, equality in employment and payment, and right of access to family planning education, information and capacity. A number of other constitutional provisions, namely those embodied in articles 7, 33, 38, 42 and 89 also have a direct bearing on the protection of the rights of Ethiopian women (Biseswar 2008 :413).

In addition to the renewed commitment to the rights of women stipulated in the Constitution, the Ethiopian Government has its own National Policy on Women approved in 1993. The three main objectives of the women policy are promulgated as:

- Facilitating conditions conducive to the speeding-up of equality between men and women so that women can participate in the political, social and economic life of their country on equal terms with men and ensuring that their right to own property, as well as their other human rights are respected and that they are not excluded from the enjoyment of the fruits of their labour or from performing public functions and being decision-makers;
- Facilitating the necessary condition whereby rural women can have access to basic social services and to ways and means of lightening their work-load; and
- Eliminating, step by step, prejudices as well as customary and other practices that are based on the idea of male supremacy and enabling women to hold public office and to participate in the decision-making process at all levels (Transitional Government of Ethiopia 1993: 25–26 cited in Biseswa 2008 ).

However, the labour law of proclamation number 377/2003 excludes domestic workers from coverage. Although Article 3 (sub article 3) of the proclamation states that the council of ministries will issue a special, regulation, no such kind of regulation is issued so far. This exclusion is contrary to CEDAW's demand of states to abolish 'all other private instruments of any kind with a legal effect which is directed at restricting the legal capacity of women shall be deemed null and void' (Article 15 sub article 3).

The only legal document issued by Ethiopian state that addresses domestic workers explicitly is the Ethiopian Civil Code which has been endorsed in 1960s. A separate section in the Code deals with the contracts of domestic servants living in their employer's home (page 433). Accordingly, Article 2601

states that “Where the employee lives with the employer's family, the latter shall in regard to living-quarters, food, times of work and rest, take all reasonable steps to safeguard the health and moral well-being of the employee”. Art. 2602. – declares the Obligation of employers to look after the employee. And sub article 1 of Article 2602 states that (1) “Where an employee who is living with the family of the employer and being fed by the latter falls sick, the employer shall, during the currency of the contract, provide any care which the illness of the employee requires, either by way of medical attendance at his house or by sending the servant to hospital”. However, Sub article 2 of the same article declares that “such obligation shall be limited to one month where the illness occurs after at least one year from the beginning of the contract, and to two weeks, where it occurs after at least three months from the beginning of the contract”. In addition, sub-article three of the same article gives the power to the employer to “set off any expenses which he thus incurs against the wages that become due during the period of illness (p:433). Since the country was under feudalism, it is not surprising at that time the law reflected such paternalistic view for the awareness of human rights was low and employment was limited to the government sector.

#### 2.2.2. International conventions

Besides local efforts, the government in Ethiopia has always been among the first to become a signatory to the many international conventions (Biseswar 2007: 423). Some of these ratified conventions:

- The Convention on Discrimination of Employment and Occupation (ratified in 1966); article 2 of the convention states “Each Member for which this Convention is in force undertakes to declare and pursue a national policy designed to promote, by methods appropriate to national conditions and practice, equality of opportunity and treatment in respect of employment and occupation, with a view to eliminating any discrimination in respect thereof” article 3 of the convention
- The Convention on the Political Rights of Women ( ratified in 1969);
- The Convention for the Suppression of the Trafficking of Persons and of the Exploitation and Prostitution of Others (1981);
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (1981);

Of these conventions, Hainfurther (2009) argues that, CEDAW is the most comprehensive and all inclusive international convention in relation to promoting rights of women. CEDAW is the most widely ratified law in the world and is a good benchmark to analyse the rights of women in general and domestic workers in particular. CEDAW is the sole international legal instrument specifically designed to promote and protect women's rights in a holistic and systemic way.

CEDAW addresses gender inequalities in all spheres and at all levels within the family, community, market and state. CEDAW recognizes and address violations of women's human rights in the private sphere of the home.

Under CEDAW the promotion and protection of women's human rights is based on three main principles: Substantive equality, non-discrimination and

state obligation. The Substantive equality principle requires states to have gender sensitive policy design and gender responsive outcome from laws, policies and programmes. Principle of non-discrimination is based on the definition of discrimination in Article 1 of the convention which reads' any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has an effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. Taking a broader definition of discrimination, the principle of non-discrimination of CEDAW seeks to eliminate both intended (direct) and indirect discrimination. Most importantly the convention makes no distinction between private and public actors. As such the principle of non-discrimination covers actions of governments, as well as actions of private actors- from individual to families, communities, business corporations and religious institutions in the political, social, economic , cultural and so on (Article 3-11). The convention also clearly mandates governments to ensure actions of non-government actors do not discriminate against women.

The third principle of State Obligation affirms that all states parties are legally bound to meet their obligations as stipulated in the convention. This obligation has two components: *de jure* and *de facto* legal protection of women. The first is to ensure *de jure* gender equality, which refers to obligation of governments to ensure what is contained in law ensures the equality of women (Article 15). However, the mere recognition of rights alone is not enough for eliminating long-standing discrimination against women and achieving substantive equality of women and men. Hence, governments are responsible to ensure the *de facto* equality among men and women (Article 3, Article 4, and Article 24).

Furthermore, among the ILO instruments Ethiopia has ratified convention No. 87. Freedom of association and protection of the right to organize convention in June 1948 and is also party to the ILO convention No. 189 explained below.

### ***2.2.3. Legal Protection of Domestic Workers in the ILO convention<sup>3</sup>***

The ILO convention on domestic works (Convention no. 189, as it is called) is the major single international legal instrument to promote decent work for domestic workers. It has set the standards that states should strive to fulfil for many issues that domestic workers have been requesting. The major contents of this proclamation are summarized as bellow.

#### **2.2.3.1. Formation and Termination of Contract**

Contract lays foundation for claiming one right. Convention No. 189 recognizes this and states the need for states for to promote the establishment of

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<sup>3</sup> Ethiopia is yet to ratify the ILO convention 189 but signed the convention. The purpose of the discussion of the convention here is twofold: Helps us to organize the areas of legal protection for domestic workers and thereby set and organize the framework on how this approach will analyse the working conditions of domestic workers in the study area.

formal contact and “to ensure that domestic workers are informed of their terms and conditions of employment in an appropriate, verifiable and easily understandable manner and preferably, where possible, through written contracts in accordance with national laws, regulations or collective agreements” (Article 7). According to the convention, the contract should enable workers to know details of the employer, ( the name , address) , of the job ( work to be performed, normal working hours starting date and duration of contract), and food and accommodation if applicable( when the workers live in the house hold) and condition of termination of the contract ( like notice period including any period of notice by either the domestic worker or the employer (article 7 a-k).

#### **2.2.3.2. Working Hours and Time off**

As noted above the ILO convention no. 189 emphasizes the need for setting working hours clearly in the contract. In addition article 10 sub article 3 of the convention states that “Periods during which domestic workers are not free to dispose of their time as they please and remain at the disposal of the household in order to respond to possible calls shall be regarded as hours of work to the extent determined by national laws, regulations or collective agreements, or any other means consistent with national practice”. Article 10 sub-article 1 of the convention states “each Member shall take measures towards ensuring equal treatment between domestic workers and workers generally in relation to normal hours of work, overtime compensation, periods of daily and weekly rest and paid annual leave in accordance with national laws, regulations or collective agreements, taking into account the special characteristics of domestic work”. It is also stated that Weekly rest shall be at least 24 consecutive hours article 10(2). During weekly and daily rest period, workers are not obliged to remain in the household or within household members.

#### **2.2.3.3. Remuneration**

Concerning the remuneration, Convention no. 189 calls up on states to ensure that domestic workers enjoy minimum wage coverage and in conditions where such wage exists that it is established based on sex (article 11). Article 12 also states that “domestic workers shall be paid directly in cash at regular intervals at least once a month”.

#### **2.2.3.4. Freedom of movement**

Freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining Article 3 (sub-article 3) is one of the pillars of the convention. In taking measures to ensure that domestic workers and employers of domestic workers enjoy freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, Members shall protect the right of domestic workers and employers of domestic workers to establish and, subject to the rules of the organization concerned, to join organizations, federations and confederations of their own choosing.

#### **2.2.3.5. Working condition**

Article 13 (sub article 1) states that “every domestic worker has the right to a safe and healthy working environment”. Article 9 also affirms that domestic workers should be free to reach agreement with their employer on whether to reside in the household.

## 2.3. Analytical Framework

In recent years the issues of domestic workers and their (legal and social) protection have been promoted by ILO (2003, 2008, 2011), Human rights Watch (2006, 2008) and others as human and labour right issues. The general tone of the activities of human right advocates is as follows:

Domestic/household workers have to be recognized as workers/employees. They need to be covered by labour legislation in each and every country, like any other workers. There is no place for “servitude” or discrimination in legislation. The vulnerability of migrant domestic/household workers needs extra attention (IRENE and IUF 2008 preface).

In line with this the ILO convention no 189 is an attempt to provide framework for governments to give the domestic workers a decent work, one of the human rights particularly promoted by ILO. Thus, The Convention is intended as a human rights instrument with an explicit claim of decent work is a human right for the domestic workers

This study, therefore, used human/labour rights based approach as framework to analyse the legal protection and work conditions of domestic workers in the study area. Mary Robinson, Former High Commissioner for Human Rights defined the human rights-based approach “means describing situations not in terms of human needs, or areas of development, but in terms of the obligation to respond to the rights of individuals. This empowers people to demand justice as a right, not as a charity.”(Cited in de Alwis2008). The rights-based approach “identifies claim-holders and corresponding duty-holders. The approach seeks to make duty-holders accountable to claim-holders, both in terms of protecting, promoting, and advancing these rights and in terms of preventing the violation of those rights” de Alwis (2008 :4)..

### Concluding Remarks

The vulnerability of domestic workers to abuse, exploitation and oppression and the reported experiences of such human right abuses warrant states need to give adequate legal protection for domestic workers. The need to legal protection would be pressing even in country like Ethiopia where having slaves as domestic servant was a legal practice before decades. However, as this chapter showed, there is a lack of adequate legal protection for domestic workers in Ethiopia. This has taken two manifestations :1) in a form of constrained protection as reflected in the civil code of the country which has limited provision on domestic workers and the notion is humanitarian not as a right and 2)total exclusion from labour law of the country there by lack of recognition as workers. However, the country has ratified CEDAW and hence can serve as a ground to claim rights of domestic workers. This study therefore takes the approach of inquiring to what extent the available rights of domestic workers are observed and implemented in practice in the study area The next chapters present the working condition of domestic workers and highlight the extent domestic workers rights are implemented on the ground..

## Chapter 3 : Work and Living Conditions of Domestic Workers

This chapter presents the realities of domestic workers in terms of their working and living conditions. But first a synopsis on the background of the 15 domestic workers and of the eight key informants from who first hand data were collected.

### 3.1 Background of Participants

Table 3.1  
socio-demographic characteristics of participant domestic workers

Code Name	Age	Years of service as Domestic worker	Place of origin	Marital status	Educational level	Remark
Fistum	28	7	Gojjam	Single	Illiterate	
Zemzem	24	4	Wollo	Single	"	
Alemitu	32	9	N/Gondar	Divorced	"	
Nunesh	37	10	Gurage	Married	"	
Konjit	21	5	Gojam	Divorced	"	
Zewdie	26	8	South Gondar	Divorced	"	
Zenash	22	4	Tigray	Divorced	Primary school	
Ferhiwot	28	10	Sidama	Divorced	"	
Senatayehu	36	10	Sidama	Widowed	"	
Mimi	29	12	Gojjam	Divorced	Secondary school	
Abebech	21	5	Jimma	Divorced	Primary school	
Genet	22	6	S/Gondar	Single	"	
Selam	28	7	"	Divorced	Illiterate	
Helen	26	4	Oromia	Divorced	Secondary school	
Chalitu	26	7	Jimma	Divorced	Primary school	

Source: Filed Work, August 2012

As the table above shows, participant domestic workers, reflecting the general trend, posses' low level of education with the highest registered level of education being secondary school attendants and many of them are illiterate. In addition, all of them are migrants from regions and have at least four years' experience as domestic worker.

Although many of the participants are in their adult age at the present , many of them started to work as domestic workers while they were young some even when they below 18 years. Looking in to their age, it can be observed that the domestic work sector attracts the young and early adult aged segment of the society. This would make them even more vulnerable to abuses and exploitation at least in the early days of their work as domestic workers. In addition, significant number of (10 out of 15) the women are divorced and

among them about 6 were married before they reach 18 years. This shows that early marriage was a contributing factor for their migration to cities.

## 3.2 Contract Formation

The ILO convention, as discussed earlier, emphasizes the need for formal contract between employer and domestic workers. The contract as a document is the one which shall evidence the terms agreed in the event of a dispute. However, data from the participants indicated that 12 out of 15 of the domestic workers do not have written contracts. Konjit , who have been working for five years in different households explain:

I did not enter in to any contract. I came to the broker here and waited for people who wanted to hire domestic worker. ... if the broker asked me to deal with them, I ask the range of jobs to be performed and tell them my salary. If they agree then we will go with them trusting their words. (Interview with Konjit, Domestic Worker, August 5, 2012)

Similar stories have been reported by other respondents too. Furthermore, some of the domestic workers particularly those with few years of service and those who migrated recently from rural areas even do not know what is “contract”(*wele* in Amharic) means. Furthermore, the brokers are well informed of the terms of the verbal agreement and sometimes serve as witnesses in times of dispute.

The verbal agreement usually is focused only on the amount of salary. However, in cases when the workers are being hired for a specialized task or tasks (like only cooking, or cleaning or combination of tasks only), the domestic worker and the employer might discuss on the inventory of the activities to be performed. Nevertheless, as I will discuss later, domestic workers usually are forced to perform jobs that are not initially mentioned in this discussion.

Written contracts<sup>4</sup> could be produced by the brokering agency when the domestic worker demands to have it and if the employer agrees. However, most of the time contracts are not written for a number of reasons. First, as mentioned above, domestic workers have little awareness about them and their relevance and therefore they do not ask for it. Only domestic workers with better education and those who have been living in the city for long time ask for them. Second, since domestic workers are also hired through relative network, they trust their employer and culturally it is wrong to ask for contract with relatives or networks of relatives (if one ask contract with relatives it is interpreted as you do not trust or suspect your relative or their friends). Third, employers see contracts as evidence that will appear against them in any possible dispute with the domestic worker and hence do not want to have it. However, in some instances the employers want to have them as guarantee since the liable person for the domestic worker will sign confirming he will be accountable for her deeds including theft by the domestic worker, (see sample contract appended). Nevertheless, most of the time, the employers are the ones who refuse to have written contracts (Key informant C, Broker, August 27, 2012). Fourthly, the brokering agencies do not encourage written contracts since they

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<sup>4</sup> See sample written Agreement in Appendix

may bring additional jobs, “hassles” ( in one of the brokers term) for them He explained that If written contracts are there the original copy have to be kept within the broker agency to present as evidence in times of dispute. This is a tough job for the agencies many of whom lack formal office and standardized bookkeeping expertise. Furthermore, some brokers do not have legal license and therefore their work is illegal and do not want to be identified by appearing as witnesses in such times of disputes.

Even when the written contracts are produced, as was the case in the three of the domestic workers who had written contract, they have very limited general statements and are very brief. Ideally, according to the ILO convention 189 the contracts should include many details about where the work will happen, time of work, rest hours and salary and so on. Of the many details that are supposed to appear in the contract, only two appear: name of both employer and employee and the amount of salary to be paid to the domestic workers. There is a pre-arranged form with in which both parties put their signature after names once the amount of salary is filled in it. The other details are believed to be unnecessary as to be explained latter.

### **3.3 Precarious Working Conditions**

#### ***3.3.1 Working Hours and Time off***

Domestic workers practically have no definite time to work and work for long hours. The working hour of many domestic workers I talked to is shockingly over extended. Many of them work for more than 16 hours per day. Zewdie, a domestic worker for the last 10 years states that in every household she worked in the last ten years the rule is that “domestic worker should work every time as long as there is something to be done”. Another domestic worker, Konjit also explain that

Usually I wake up 5:00 pm to prepare breakfast for everyone in the house and then go to bed around 12:00 am after ensuring that everyone has got dinner and they will wake me up then after if they need anything else( Interview with Konjit, Domestic worker, August 5, 2012).

Many of the domestic workers do not have day off. One of the domestic workers states

Having rest day is unimaginable in many ways. First the task is so huge and I am overloaded that I should work every time to finish. Even if I finish, the madam will create a new task for me to do. It seems that she does not want me to have a break and I cannot remember a day I took a rest..... (Interview with Zewdie, domestic worker, August 4, 2012).

She also explained that at times, she was ordered to clean the shop of the owners in the city if there was nothing to do in home. Zewdie stated that she sometimes argued with her madam on her overload and work without rest. However, her employer becomes nervous and frequently nagged her saying “you are here to work, not for vacation”.

However some domestic workers mentioned that they agree day off during the time of employment and have a day in a month to rest. Accordingly, the last Sunday of each month is their day off. However, they have no freedom to go out alone without any household member. Most of the time if they are

ever allowed to go to city, they are accompanied by someone from the family. While many took it as a way of controlling and compromising their freedom, some of the domestic workers took it as provision of protection from the household to any possible danger while in the city.

Article 11 sub articles 1(e) of the CEDAW requires states to grant a paid leave for women workers. However, in violation of this right, findings showed that domestic workers by far large domestic workers are forced to work long hours and are denied of right to rest and leisure. It is also contrary article 7 (g) of the ILO domestic workers convention no. 189 which demands paid leave and daily and weekly annual rest for domestic workers. Although the ILO Domestic workers convention no. 189 requests at least consecutive 24 hours of rest per week ( article 10), this seems a pie in the sky for many domestic workers. Furthermore, while the workers have been complaining, employers were demanding them to work for long. This indicates that the thinking of 'domestic worker job can't be done' among employers. No national law has a say on this directly.

### ***3.3.2 Low Remuneration***

The monthly salary of domestic workers at the time of data collection was in the range between 500 and 650 Birr (28 -36 USD) per month. At its face value, this money cannot be considered as lower income by the country standard especially given the expectation that the food and accommodation of the workers to be covered by employers. Even this amounts almost two times the initial salary of public servants 357.00 birr (21USD) who need to work only 40-46 hours per week by the labour law of the country. However, the amount of many domestic workers earn is extremely low we consider the long hours of work. If we break down this amount in to payment per hour even a worker who worked for 14 hours, the shortage hours of work reported by participants of the study, then the maximum per hour payment will be 1.5 birr(0.09 USD) birr per hour. This payment is lower than  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the lowest minimum wage for civil servants in the country.

Furthermore some employers never pay promised salary for domestic workers. Many of the participants had experienced dismissal without any salary after working for years. Genet, for instance explains

It has been four months I am struggling to get my salary of six months from a household I have worked for 2 years. I have been asking the madam to pay me salary before she dismissed me. She always told me she will pay me in sum and it was better for me if the money is saved with her. I believed her and kept silent thereafter. However, after six months she dismissed me with no reason and she was unwilling to pay my salary (Interview with Genet, Domestic worker, August 3, 2012).

Although there is minimum wage for public servants in Ethiopia, there is no minimum wage for private employment sector. The implication of the non-existence of minimum wage is that domestic workers have no right to demand a certain amount of minimum salary and are forced to negotiate with their employers. However, given there is power difference between the domestic workers and employers, and abject poverty among domestic workers, most of the time are forced to take up the job even at lower wages. Hence they don't the

right to minimum wage nor they have the capability nor effectively negotiate for better wages.

Yet, many of the domestic workers have hope that they will have a better future by saving their meagre payment. They consider their present plight as a sacrifice for their better future, although they are insecure about what their life looks like in future. One of the domestic workers said “I am serving others hoping I get something to serve myself later” (Genet, domestic worker, August3, 2012)

### **3.4 Inadequate and abusive Living conditions**

Living conditions of workers, as used here, is a generic term used to refer the food and accommodation of domestic workers. It also is intended to include the right to privacy of domestic workers while living in the houses of domestic workers; hence, the discussion takes up each of these topics.

#### ***3.4.1 Inadequate Food and Accommodation***

Regarding food, although there are exceptions where domestic workers were sharing the same dish with other household members, in many cases discriminatory and dehumanizing practices were reported. One of most frequent forms of such dehumanizing practices is different food for domestic workers. Sentyehu, a domestic worker, says in her current household, she has never had the privilege to eat the same food with other household members. “I always eat the same food, Shero [a kind of sauce prepared with powder of bean and is the cheapest food] with *Injera*” (local bread prepared out of powder of a tine cereal called Teff). She says she never had adequate food to eat as her quota is two injera per day (about 0.25 USD) and *Injera* is given to her counted accordingly to keep separate for herself. Any food in the house is locked by the madam. Recounting the same experience in her previous household, she indicated that she was dismissed from her previous job because she ate a banana left over by the other household members over a table. Selam and Helen also reported the same experiences.

For many of the domestic workers, hunger is the most challenging problem since they have to work for long hours without taking proper food. Genet said she usually eat bread with tea in the morning and *Injera* with sauce in the evening, nothing in between. Alemitu said she left a household recently because she was always hungry. Alemitu added that she was supposed to work full day and night without any adequate food and even without mentioning it to her employer about it.

Another most frequent form of dehumanizing practice related to food is reserving left over of other households to domestic workers to eat. Konjit, states that every day she has to wait until other household member have had food since she can only eat their left over. Others (Zenash, Friehiwot, Abebch, and Mimi) also had the same experience either in their recent home or in past. Many prefer still this rather to having a different food than other household members. Even some took it as normal.

In relation to accommodation, most domestic workers indicated that they sleep in corridors or sofas within the salon. For many having a private room is

unimaginable. Some also reported that they sleep in kitchen. One of the domestic workers indicated that she was forced to sleep on a veranda of the house:

When my [divorced] madam's friends come to the house to take drugs and chat together, they would not leave the house until late in the night and sometimes would stay at home throughout the night. In other days I sleep on the sofa but when they come I have to sleep on the veranda. I have been sleeping there for three months, was thinking she would find me alternative place to sleep. But no change at all and after three months I left the home because I felt that I would get ill soon if I continued sleeping there every time they came( Interview with Zenash, Domestic worker, August 15, 2012).

This is contrary to even the humanitarian notion embedded in the rather outdate 1960's civil law of the country. Although article 6201 of civil law does not promote rights of domestic workers as workers it demands employers of domestic servants to give adequate accommodation within their house. Similarly, it violates article 11 (e) of the CEDAW which demands "the right to protection of health and to safety in working conditions". However as the stories presented above shows, this indeed has been violated and domestic workers are provided with accommodation only whenever there is a free one. My interview with officials in office of labour and social affairs also indicated that there is little awareness of this right and there has never been inspection by the state to the implementation of the provisions in the civil law or in the CEDAW ( interview with Key Informant A, B, D, different days in August 2102).

### ***3.4.2 Violation of Privacy***

Every participant indicated they had been experiencing invasion of privacy of varying degrees. In many cases, employers had a great degree of control over their workers' personal affairs. For instance, employers get furious to find out that their live-in-domestic workers were involved in any sexual relationship. Reportedly employers curiously control their worker and do not allow them to develop any relationship (even if friendship) with other people.

Domestic workers have got restrictions on the calls they receive from relatives and friends. Some employers even do not allow any calls from outside while many allow only limited calls. Zemzem stated that her previous employer snatched her cell phone soon after she arrived in the house and told her that any kind of phone call is not allowed from her relatives and friends. Nunesh said she left her previous home because she was not allowed to talk over the phone to her boyfriend.

Brokers whom I interviewed however read the restriction of cell phones by employers differently. They explained that employers fear that domestic workers by using cell phones may do arrangements to steal expensive materials and runaway or they may give information to some other person to do the same and that such experiences had happened to some employers.

## **Chapter 4 : The Agony: Domestic Workers Experience of Violence and Abuse**

Violence “is a pattern of behaviour employed by one person in a relationship to control the other” (Yigzaw et al. 2004:133). Domestic violence is a common problem. Violence can take three main features: verbal or psychological abuse includes acts as physical intimidation, threats of abandonment, uttering humiliating things), physical abuse (any form of violent act which can result in physical harm including slapping, punching, kicking, beating with any object, twisting the arms, strangulation, using a knife or a gun against a woman) and sexual violence (an attempt or actual forced sex without the consent of the other party).

Domestic Violence is perhaps the most frequent type of human right abuse in the world. However, in most studies the analysis of domestic violence is often restricted to violence against family members like women and children ( Tesfaye 2007). In doing so, many studies ignore domestic violence against non-family members who reside within the same home such as domestic workers (Getachew 2006). However, the lower and “outsider” status given to domestic workers make them prone to a number of abuses. This chapter presents the experience of abuse against participant domestic workers.

### **4.1 Verbal Abuse**

This form of violence is very common kind of violence against domestic workers. It has been identified as the commonest of all types of violence ( Getachew 2006, Tesfaye 2007). In this study too, verbal abuse against domestic workers is found to be frequent and widespread.

The most common forms of verbal abuse mentioned by domestic workers included nagging and use of derogatory labels, jokes on domestic workers and their mistakes. Some other frequently mentioned verbal abuses included:

“Telling you to do something is like pouring water on a stone, for both there is to no effect”,

“You lazy.... you are so dull .....

You stupid...”

The verbal abuse by the employers towards their domestic workers reflects the inferior position they gave to the workers. One of the domestic workers explained how her former employer used derogatory names to call her to deliberately hurt her psychologically:

She always calls me “slave” and had never used my name. She calls me again and again without purposes, every time I pass beside her and every time she saw me in a way that reminds my inferior position. (Zenash, a domestic worker, August 15, 2012).

Generally the hitherto violence research focus have been to assess violence Committed against female by male or vice versa (Getachew 2006:74). . In this study attempts made to examine whether females or males were more

likely perpetrators of the violence committed against domestic workers. The main perpetrators of verbal abuse according to domestic workers were women employers. Many of the domestic workers indicated that they have been belittled, nagged, threaten or humiliated by madams (wives) than male employers. This is contrary to the widely held view that men are the main perpetrators of violence and women are the victims (Getachew 2006). However, this could also be understood from the higher level of interaction between domestic workers and madams compared to between domestic workers and husbands. Many of the domestic workers indicated that they usually take orders from wives and the male employers have little role in giving orders to them. Thus, the frequent contact between domestic workers and wives can be understood as leading to higher rate of verbal abuse by wives against domestic workers. In addition, children with in the household were identified by some domestic workers as the main perpetrators of verbal abuses. This indicates that domestic workers get the lowest status within the family below everyone in the household including children.

Furthermore, many of the domestic workers took such verbal abuses for granted and hardly do anything to stop them. A domestic workers remark in this regard seems to reflect the general view domestic workers have to it. She said “....you know that is the usual practice and almost every domestic worker face it that is something I accept and many others do” (Zemzem, domestic worker, August 14, 2012). An expert from the Labour and Social Affairs office summarizes the issue:

Many of them [domestic workers] come from rural areas where there is a deep rooted culture of taking verbal abuses as normal. Besides their low level of education means they would not clearly know what right violation it is. Thus, in most cases the verbal abuse is a kind of occupational hazard for them (Key Informant 1, August 16, 2012).

## 4.2 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is also not uncommon against live-in domestic workers. Significant number of stories of physical abuse comes from the in-depth interview with domestic workers have come into picture. Findings of the study indicate that the most common forms of physical abuse are slapping, being spat on, and being kicked by foot or having nearby objects thrown at them. The presumed causes for physical abuses as viewed by the workers included mistakes while on work, answering back to the instructions of employers, disagreements with family members, and sometimes even in the lack of any obvious reason , as a form of employers letting out their anger and frustrations from others.

As like the verbal abuse, the main perpetrators of physical abuses against domestic workers are reported to be women. This in fact emanates from the fact that the women (mainly house wife) are the one who usually give instruction to domestic workers. For instance, one of the domestic workers with more than seven years of working in different houses explained her situation in the current home:

I have been in conflict with the wife/mother of the house ..., she does not like the things I do and how I do them. So she usually gives me specific instructions. But since sometimes I get overwhelmed by the workload around

the house, I would either forget them or do them in another way. When this happens she will abuse me and also beat me (Interview with Fitsum, Domestic Worker, and August 17, 2012)

Another source of conflict between women and domestic workers, which lead to abuse mostly, is suspicion by house wives of any love affair between men and the domestic workers. Such distrust will cause negative view by wives against domestic workers which is expressed through abuse against domestic workers. Chalitu, a domestic worker, explains her experience in this regard as follows

The madam suspects me having a special relationship with her husband. She controls me in every detail like trying to make sure that I and her husband are not in the same room and are not talking. If suddenly we happen to gather she will immediately call me and order me to do something. But the bad thing is she always had negative thinking about me. So she expresses that by hitting and nagging me always. One day I was watching a movie on TV and she was asleep. The husband was also watching the movie and I was watching it sitting on the sofa with pyjama. All of a sudden she came and beat me without any reason and she did not say anything. When her husband went to sleep later she told me that I should stop trying to seduce her husband otherwise she will hit me again and again (Interview, August 22, 2012.).

Because of such frequent suspicions by female employers, many do not like to work for married households. Many of the domestic workers indicated that they would prefer to work for single men than married households to avoid such abuses. However, female employers were not the only perpetrators of physical violence. Rather for some domestic workers violence came from other household member. As explained above, at the moment they join a certain households; domestic employers become the lowest status holder in the family and thus a threat to abuse comes virtually from most family members. Findings from this study indicate also that children and male employers do also abuse domestic worker physically. Selam , who worked as domestic worker for the last 7 years, stated that in the household she is currently working for the biggest threat comes from the daughter of the family. She stated, “their daughter moved from aboard recently and she is making my life hell since her arrival. She never wants to do anything for herself even cleaning her private materials. She always orders me “crazy” things and if I hesitate to do them, she slaps and hits me”(Interview with Selam, Domestic worker, August 4, 2012). Genet, another domestic worker also states that her male employer, who is addicted to alcohol, is the main perpetrator of physical violence against her in the household she is working for presently. She explains:

He comes late in the night after other family members have gone to bed and it is my duty to wait for him and open the door for him. Immediately he enters the house, his first job is complaining about silly things and throwing something at me. Am really confused what to do about it because he is taking it as a habit of doing so at night and asking me to excuse next morning (Interview with Genet, Domestic Worker, August 3, 2012)

Most domestic workers took these abuses for granted in a way that indicates the acceptance of their inferior position in the household. Most of them look at it as a compromise to continue their job since they don't want to lose their job by complaining about it. Genet's idea, who said she had worked for five households in her six years career as domestic worker, said she always de-

cided to cope up with such physical abuse which she has experienced in many of the households, is the typical answer many would give: “I have to live with it to change my future life” she said adding that her plan is to start small business back her origin in South Gondar once she saves enough money.

### **4.3 Sexual Violence**

Despite the culture of hiding, some of the participants of this study have disclosed experience of sexual abuse. The experiences of sexual abuse reported by the domestic workers ranged from unwanted body contact to attempted rape. The main perpetrators for sexual abuse were male employers and male adolescent in the home.

Strangely, among the reported five case of attempted rape (reported by three domestic workers), in four cases the perpetrators were older people all described by the domestic workers as “*shemagele*” (Amharic term for elderly)<sup>5</sup>. This is culturally unacceptable among many Ethiopians who consider elderly people as wise, knowledgeable and having ethics. Also this finding is contrary to the widespread belief that sexual violence against domestic workers is mainly triggered by youths (Yigzaw et al. 2004). The widely held respect for elderly people also means nobody will believe domestic workers complaint of sexual harassment by the elderly. The social acceptable characterization of elderly people as ethical, moral and wise is contrary to their practice of sexual harassment against domestic workers. What makes elderly people to be the main perpetrators of sexual harassment is beyond this study, but is an important insight that should be investigated by future researchers to seek its prevalence in other areas too and the explanations for it.

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<sup>5</sup> The attempted in three cases came in form of visiting in night by the male employers without the knowledge of their wives but in their presence.

## **Chapter 5 : Explaining the Silence: Constrained Capacity of domestic workers and unnoticed plight of Domestic workers**

The above description of the working and living conditions of domestic workers have clearly indicated how domestic workers are enduring, abuse, exploitation and human rights denial. Each of the headings in the previous chapter has described the widespread violation of human rights of domestic workers: restrictions on freedom of movement and communication, lack of adequate living and working conditions, denial of salary, penetration to privacy and verbal, physical and sexual abuse.

There is however no any organized movement to enable domestic workers claim their rights at the moment. Under CEDAW, women are guaranteed the right to equal exercise of the freedom of movement to protect their rights and to dismantle any disadvantage based on sex. However, there is no any kind of movement among them or on behalf of them in the country to advocate for better living and working conditions for domestic workers. It seems that either their plight as domestic workers go unnoticed or nobody cares about it.

Then what would be the main explanations for lack of organized movement against this gross injustice?. The first set of explanation related to the characteristics of domestic workers themselves. They lack adequate awareness of human rights themselves, have low capabilities and have no fall back alternatives. As explained in the first chapter and in the background section many of the workers are illiterate and all of them have education not exceeding secondary school. Participants of the focus group discussion thought that their low level of education constrained their capacity to know their rights and also their capacity to claim their rights. “I am illiterate, hence don’t know anything” was the common phrase that came again and again even during the focus group discussion. Similarly, a key informant from the labour and social affairs also explains this more:

One of the reasons for their acceptance of compromised working condition, I think is the fact that most of them are not [well] educated. In some cases where we had tried to help domestic workers, we realised that they do not know about rights issues. In a way this points out the need for awareness creation and capacity building among the domestic workers community [key Informant Interview C, August 18, 2012].

Brokers also stated that though some employers want to hire educated workers, many prefer that domestic workers be less educated to enable them “control and suppress them”. As a result migrants from rural areas and those who are educated less are mostly wanted also because their salary will be less than others.

In addition, the widespread poverty in rural areas and lack of any other better opportunity in the city forces them to endure the exploitation hoping for betterment of situations in the future. Almost all domestic workers I talked to hope one day they will save money and start their own life rather than going back to rural areas.

For the rural, poor and illiterate migrant coming to the city, domestic service seems to provide an ideal solution to the problems of unemployment and lack of accommodation. Driven by poverty and the lack of employment opportunities in the rural areas, these domestic workers are forced to earn some money to support their families - even if it entails being separated from them. Their very desperation makes them all the more vulnerable. Their need to keep a job, no matter how bad the conditions, forces them to remain in situations of extreme exploitation with no recourse to legal protection (Motsei 1990:1).

The extreme poverty faced by these women from their home country makes them to see the slightest improvement on that as heaven. Hence for them, today's exploitation and abuse is a sacrifice for their better future life, albeit the reality seems more dark than they thought (Tegegne 2009)

Furthermore, the hidden nature of the work site for domestic workers also contributed to their silence. Domestic workers live within the home, or on the same property as, the employing family; often, the family forbids the worker from leaving the premises alone – and sometimes the worker will not be allowed to leave at all. Some employers compound the isolation this kind of seclusion causes by forbidding any contact with the outside world – even through telephone or mail. The social exclusion created by the cloistering of migrant women in domestic service can take a heavy toll: many women do not have the opportunity to form friendships or create community ties. The resulting solitude exacerbates women's constructed vulnerability to abuse, and deprives them of possible support when violations occur.

The state apparatus is offering hardly anything to reduce the plight of domestic workers in Addis Ababa. The Labour and Social Affairs office of the sub city is at present lacking both legitimacy and manpower to assist the domestic workers. Its lack of legitimacy emanates from lack of proper legal framework to oversee the situation of domestic workers. A key informant from the office said "we had a number of cases where domestic workers come to us seeking assistance. However, mostly we do a kind of mediation between employer and employees since we lack the legal ground to inspect any violation" (Key Informant B, August 2012). That is because, as will be discussed below, the labour law excludes domestic workers stating that the Council of Ministers will issue a specific regulation on domestic working which has never been issued 10 years after the labour law was issued.

In addition to the above reasons, there are also key macro country level factors that have a role in explaining the silence on domestic workers human rights violation. The first and perhaps the most important is lack of political will at country level. There is marginal emphasis on protection of workers in general and informal workers in particular. There has been a time when the issue of legal protection for domestic workers was raised by one member of the parliament as issue of concern<sup>6</sup> . This lack of political will also is at the

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<sup>6</sup>Then member of the house of people's representative, Hon. Bulcha Demeksa, asked the government representative to enact a regulation laying minimum wage for domestic workers. However, the reaction among other parliamentarians and the answer from the government representative in charge at the moment was of lack of concern about domestic workers.

centre of the exclusion of domestic workers in many laws including the Ethiopian Labour law Proclamation no.377/2003. As explained above, Ethiopian labour proclamation no. 377/2003 does not include domestic workers. Article 3, sub article 2(c) states that the proclamation does not include those saying contracts of personal service for non-profit making purposes. Furthermore, there is no any proclamation that included the issue of domestic workers in the country's legal regime. This causes lack of *de facto* and *de jure* vulnerability of domestic works in the country. The same reason should also be at the stake of the failure of ratification of many laws relevant to domestic worker including ILO convention no 187.

Secondly, attitude towards domestic workers among general society members in Ethiopia is unfavourable. Domestic work is not considered as work. And also domestic work is carried out in the privacy of homes and the law is generally reluctant to get into the private sphere of people, especially so where the migrants are afraid of speaking out.

The third is the little attention the issue has received among non-state actors. Most of the civil societies working in Ethiopia focus on issues like poverty reduction, health sector expansion and vulnerable and orphaned children. There has been proliferation of civil societies in Ethiopia in the last two decades particularly nongovernmental organizations, both national and international, many of them came to the country to address “ the high international profile of the famines in the mid-1980s saw a major operation by Western NGOs, some aspects of which continue to the present are working by focusing exclusively on food security and had almost no real links with Ethiopian organisations outside of government”(Center for International Studies at Dublin University 2007:9 ). In addition to non-governmental organizations, other civil society actors like trade unions are hardly operating visibly and are not politically independent to raise issues of disinters by the government (Clark 2000). Hence it could be argued that plights of domestic workers are being kept confined to household they work for and they are voiceless and have no one to speak on their miserable conditions of work and living.

## Chapter 6 : Conclusion

The main objectives of this paper were to analyse the available legal protection for live-in domestic workers in Addis Ababa and uncover their living and working conditions. Available legal texts were consulted to examine the legal protection of workers while as primary data was collected from 15 domestic workers and eight key informant interviews were held to assess the conditions of work of domestic worker in Megegenga area of Addis Ababa.

The findings of the study show that is a rhetoric commitment to women rights in the country. This has been declared in the constitution (article 35) of the country which declares equal right of women in every aspects including in work and in some way calls for the affirmative action to balance historical injustice against women. Many human rights articles directly taken from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Conventions are included in the constitution calling for human rights observation in the country. Similarly, in theory the National women policy goals aim at bringing equality of women in the ground, albeit that is too far to see at the moment. However, as if women domestic workers are not part of the “women” group, they have been excluded from key labour laws. The labour proclamation NO.377/2003 of the country excludes domestic workers by merely stating a special regulation will be issued by council of ministries. However, after almost a decade such law is not issued. When the national women policy identify special vulnerable groups within the women population of the country, domestic workers were skipped from the list.

The study found that domestic workers in the study area are subject to gross human rights violations, exploitation and abuse such as lack of clear contract and inapplicability of contracts, long hours of work and overload, violation of privacy, verbal, physical and sexual harassment, Inadequate food and accommodation and Poor payment. However, it is fairly difficult to argue that these agonies of dogmatic workers emanate from the sole result of lack of legal protection for domestic workers. For instance the country has ratified CEDAW and is party to the ILO convention 189 (although yet not ratified and domesticated). For instance CEDAW any indirect discrimination of women in any sector and obliges states to ensure that rights of women are protected. As such, the CEDAW could serve as a base to advocate for eradicating of cross unjust practices like abuse and inhuman treatment of domestic workers by their employers. For instance, even by the outdated, and paternalistic oriented law of Civil code of the country (article 6201), employers are obligated to give adequate accommodation to their domestic workers which, as the findings showed is not observed and no government entity has inquired into it. The case is not to bring the paternalistic articles in the civil code, (which are contrary to the human rights approach where workers should be given accommodation rights not as a form of charity as stated in the civil law) but to demonstrate that even when legal protection exists, these have not been implemented. As a result the study has showed that although legal protection for domestic workers is limited in Ethiopia, a couple of cultural factors (view of domestic workers as inferior and denied of any rights), illiteracy and severe poverty among workers themselves, are contributing towards the persistence

of abuse against domestic workers and the silence. The state has failed to show any political commitment to address these injustices when they come to their attention and also has limited the spectrum for advocacy by civil societies mainly through the NGO law of the country which bans NGOS getting their funding from aboard to work in human right issues. As a result at the moment neither there is proper state institution to promote their rights nor strong viable movement among or on behalf domestic workers. Their agony is hardly noticed and their voices remain in the private homes, never in the public.

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## Appendices

### Appendix I Domestic Workers Employment Contract Form

**የኢትዮ አውራድ ማረተኞች አገኝና አይነት.**  
**09 12 84 49 42**

ቀን \_\_\_\_\_

1. የቀጣል (ወ) መ.ስ. ስም \_\_\_\_\_ አድራሻ \_\_\_\_\_  
ክ/ክተማ \_\_\_\_\_ ቀበሌ \_\_\_\_\_ የበት ቀጥር \_\_\_\_\_  
ስልክ ቀጥር \_\_\_\_\_ የመጀመሪያ ቀጥር \_\_\_\_\_

2. የተቀባዩ (ወ) መ.ስ. ስም \_\_\_\_\_ አድራሻ \_\_\_\_\_  
ክ/ክተማ \_\_\_\_\_ ቀበሌ \_\_\_\_\_ የበት ቀጥር \_\_\_\_\_  
ስልክ ቀጥር \_\_\_\_\_ የመጀመሪያ ቀጥር \_\_\_\_\_

3. የተያዘገር (ወ) መ.ስ. ስም \_\_\_\_\_ አድራሻ \_\_\_\_\_  
ክ/ክተማ \_\_\_\_\_ ቀበሌ \_\_\_\_\_ የበት ቀጥር \_\_\_\_\_  
ስልክ ቀጥር \_\_\_\_\_ የመጀመሪያ ቀጥር \_\_\_\_\_

1. የቀጣል መ.ስ. ስም ፊርማ  
2. የተቀባዩ (ወ) መ.ስ. ስም ፊርማ  
3. የተያዘገር (ወ) መ.ስ. ስም ፊርማ  
4. የመስክር  
5. የተከፈለው ክፍያ  
6. ተርጓሜ ክፍያ 20%

ማስቀመጥ: ተፈጻሚ ክፍያ በንግድ ለማረጋገጫው ቅጽ ተጠቃቅ አይደለም::  
የክፍያ ተፈጻሚ ለማረጋገጫው ቅጽ በንግድ ለማረጋገጫው ቅጽ::  
አስፈላጊ ስራ-ተኞች በለመግባባት ወይም በለላ ቅጽ ከተለያየ በንግድ ይርጋጋል::  
መቅረብ ወይም መመለከ አለበትም::

## Appendix II Domestic Workers Contract Form (English Translation)

### Yohens Employment Agency

Telephone 09 12 84 49 42

Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Employer full name

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Sub-city \_\_\_\_\_ district \_\_\_\_\_  
House No \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ ID number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Employee full name

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Sub-city \_\_\_\_\_ district \_\_\_\_\_  
House No \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ ID number \_\_\_\_\_

3. Responsible person on behalf of domestic worker

Full name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Sub-city \_\_\_\_\_ district \_\_\_\_\_  
House No \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ ID number \_\_\_\_\_

1. Employer full name and signature
2. Employee full name and signature
3. Full name and signature of responsible person on behalf of domestic worker
4. Wage
5. Paid commission for brokers
6. Commission amount 20%

**NB:** - The agency is not responsible for any problem between the employer and the domestic worker after this contract is signed. Our responsibility is limited to connecting the two parties.

When this contract terminates for any reason the parties should either dismiss it or return back the form to the agency.

## **Appendix III Interview Guide Questions for Domestic workers**

1. Back ground information (Age, sex, marital status Place of origin
2. Years of working as domestic worker
3. Tell me how you begun to work as a domestic worker? Through whom you get employed?
4. How many households you worked for so far?
5. How do you describe your work condition (probe food accommodation, privacy, working hours, rest). Are you obliged to remain in the household during your time of rest?
6. How do you describe the mount of pay you get?
7. Have you ever heard of human rights? What do you think it means?
8. As a person working for another household, what do you think are your rights?
9. Sometimes you will get conflict with others with in a household
10. What is your future plan?

## **11. Appendix IV Interview guide for Key Informants (BOLSA officials)**

1. Had you personally have any contact with domestic workers in the town?
2. Is there any program/intervention that your office is implementing in relation to domestic workers?
3. Any assessment or survey result you can share me in relation to domestic workers in town?
4. Did your office ever receive any complaint from domestic workers? If yes, would you summarize the main issues of complain so far? What did happen to the complaint?
5. There are brokers who recruit domestic workers to employers. Did your office have any contact or intervention with them? Was there any time you work with them in relation to domestic workers? Ant thing you would like to share me in relation to them?
6. If you were asked to summarize the problems faced by domestic workers in the city, how do you answer that question?
7. What do you know about the contents of ILO Convention No.189 that talk about rights of domestic workers? If yes, which of the rights contained in the convention are practiced?
8. Do you think Ethiopian law recognizes domestic workers as workers? If yes would you direct me to the relevant laws? If not, what is the position of your office on whether they need to be recognized as workers or not? What do you think are the factors that limited the legal recognition of domestic workers as workers?