

THE BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES GUIDING THE CHRISTIAN EMPLOYERS WHEN RELATING WITH THEIR FEMALE DOMESTIC WORKERS IN ROYSAMBU CONSTITUENCY

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The female domestic workers cannot be underrated since they play a vital role in many households in the world. In the modern monetary economy, families require domestic workers who assist in household chores. The Bible gives some guidance and principles on how the employer and employee, both of whom share a common humanity, should relate with each other. The first duty of a Christian is to love God then fellow human beings. This study looked at the biblical principles guiding the Christian employers when relating with their female domestic workers in Roysambu constituency. The study showed that the Christian principles of justice, dignity and respect should guide Christian employers when relating with their FDWs. The interpretation of data was done using Character and Principal-based ethical theories. The target population was composed of all Christians within the five selected mainstream churches in Roysambu Constituency where a combination of stratified and random sampling techniques were used to get a sample of 144 participants from an approximate population of 1400 Christians. The data was analysed through qualitative descriptive statistics. Finally the study concluded that analysis of the Biblical principles that govern Christian employers when managing FDWs show that the church through its teachings stress on employers handling their FDWs with human dignity, love and respect just like other family members.

Keywords: Female domestic workers, Domestic workers, employer, employee and Christians

INTRODUCTION

Globally, most modern homes have domestic workers (DWs) who particularly serve the working class. Domestic workers are also referred to as house-helpers, maids or 'yaya'. A domestic worker can be defined in many ways. According to International Labour Organization (ILO), a domestic worker is a household servant who is employed part-time or full-time in a residential place (Schwenken&Heimeshoff, 2011). In sociology, a domestic worker is defined as a paid dependent worker, working for an individual, various people or various families (ILO 2010). In addition, sociologists define a domestic worker in terms of the role she takes within a set of social relationships thereby assuming the status of the household woman (Anderson, 2000).

This study considered a domestic worker to be anyone engaged in the household chores for a pay or a wage. Domestic work is one of the oldest and common occupations for many women around the globe. Dating back to the days of ancient Greek and Roman civilizations, increase in the number of domestic workers has been linked to the global history of slavery, colonialism and other forms of servitude (ILO, 2010). In its contemporary manifestations, domestic work is a global phenomenon that perpetuates hierarchies based on race, ethnicity, indigenous status, caste and nationality (ILO, 2010). The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that there are 100 million Domestic Workers (DWs) globally, out of which 83% are women and a large unknown number of them working overseas (Omelaniuk, 2012).

The international migration has witnessed more females seeking better paying opportunities and the change of culture, (communal living in traditional societies) all have increased the demand for care work in recent years. In spite of the critical role played by FDWs, their contribution to the society is still undervalued as it is looked upon as unskilled labour (ILO, 2010). Millions of FDWs around the world are vulnerable to forced labour (Clinton, 2010). Overwhelmingly, female domestic workers from developing countries like Asia, Latin America and Africa, experience many challenges while discharging their duties. Historical studies show that in parts of the world where women's labour currently predominates in paid domestic work, men had previously been employed as DWs, and in some areas, such as Southern Africa the employment of men as DWs is still common (Moors, 2003).

The outward migration of FDWs to labour deficit countries pose many challenges, including unreliable recruitment agencies, abuse and harassment by employers, confiscation of travel and identity documents and the lack of fair and

effective dispute settlement procedures in host countries (ILO Report, 2010). FDWs have reported that the daily experience of discrimination and their isolation in the Christian employer's household are the most difficult part of their burden. This is demonstrated by their limited capacity to resist sexual advances or negotiate fair treatment both emotionally and practically (Hindman, 2009). Female domestic workers have little chance of expressing desires and opinions with any expectation that they will be respected by their employers. Even if their relationship with members of the household is good, these relationships are not on equal terms (Hindman, 2009).

Statement of the Problem

Any Christian topic of discussion must be solidly anchored on the word of God, which is the main source of all other disciplines, including development of Labour laws (Nakato, 2011). The Old and the New Testament point to remuneration as the most important means of achieving justice in work relationship. The scriptures depict that fair and timely remuneration of workers is part of the law of love. All obligations and rights of employers and workers, originate from the divine law. "The labourer is worthy of his reward" (1Timothy 5:18) and God hears their cries when domestic workers are denied their wages (James 5:4, Nakato, 2011).

Therefore, the fundamental service given by FDWs to their Christian employers cannot be underestimated. Gutierrez asserts that the foundation of all theological reasoning is Jesus Christ who demonstrated God's love and justice to humankind especially to the poor- the female domestic workers. Vanhoozer, Bartholomew and Treier, (2005) argue that the Biblical theme of justice provides a measuring yard for practice in the theological interpretation of the scripture. It contrasts with misconceptions that consider justice a matter of freedom from the tyranny of the majority or privilege given to the weak. Fahlbusch (2005) supports this argument by showing that God's concern is to liberate His people.

The ideal expectation of a Christian employer is that they would express humility, respect and honour to fellow human beings in all aspects of life. The Bible teaches that Justice is the governing principle of all Christians in their social life. Christian principles are summarised into two: love for God and love for one's neighbour. The first neighbours are one's family members and other people living close to them. Consequently the researcher sought to investigate whether the trend of mistreatment of FDW has crept into Christian families to the contrary of biblical teachings.

Research objective

The research sought to assess the Biblical principles guiding the Christian employers when relating with their FDWs in Roysambu Constituency.

Justification and Significance of the Study

Roysambu Sub-county is one of the Constituencies in Nairobi County, Kenya with high population of middle class where many domestic workers are hired. However there is a huge outcry in the social media regarding the suffering of FDWs and also their brutality on innocent children in many households in Kenya. Many nursing mothers have as well contemplated quitting their jobs in order to take care of their young children due to a high turnover rate of house helps. Some employers and their children have been emotionally unstable because of the inability to retain one domestic worker for long. Their career is also destabilized. Ireland (2015) observes that the concept of social justice from the Old Testament to the New Testament is widely addressed even though the scripture emphasizes God's special concern for the poor. Reymond, (2010) observes that many miracles of Jesus were aimed at alleviating the suffering of His people and restoring wholeness of life. Despite Christian teachings on morals and ethics, serious issues affecting the FDWs like abuse by employer, husband or children warrant this research so as to bring to light the problems faced by FDWs especially in Christian homes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gutierrez asserts that God's actions through Jesus' life, death and resurrection which form the basis for the Christian faith leads to concrete historical actions of love for fellow human beings and love for God as an expression of one's faithfulness to Him (Siker, 1996). He further observes that love for God establish human justice and becomes an expression of God's holiness. This is most clearly seen in relation to those who are poor. In fact, Jesus Christ identified with the poor by showing them love and taught His followers to be just to them. The Christian principles of love and justice ought to be main pillars in the relationships of all believers (Lingo, 2003).

Maul, (2012) argues that Christian principles on labour relations stipulate on freedom of association both with trade unions and peers. Domestic workers have a right to information about the trade unions that defend their rights in addressing their grievances. Thus, Hodge, (1984) terms it a great sin to deprive a domestic worker. Therefore, allowing domestic workers to join trade unions is within the Biblical principle of love and justice since it defends their rights. Workers in trade unions are more stable and secure. A good example of a trade union is the Kenya Union of Domestic, Hotels, Educational Institutions, Hospitals and Allied Workers (KUDHEIHA). Are female domestic workers aware of

such trade unions?

Beik (2005) proposes fair compensation for labour as a Christian principle that should pervade the conduct of an employer when relating with his or her domestic worker. However, Jones and Friesen (2009) acknowledge that it is difficult to reconcile Christian principles with the challenges of labour-management relations. On the contrary, the researcher focused on the challenges of FDWs and how use of Christian principles by employers could alleviate them. Nakato, (2011:194) emphasizes that Christian employers are obliged to promote social justice as they relate with their FDWs. Justice is treating ones neighbour with compassion and generosity (p: 194). In addition, Mintz and Stauffer (2007) quoting Exodus (20:8-11) argue that the Bible instructs masters to apply Christian principles to their treatment of slaves such as giving them sufficient food, decent housing, leisure time and an off day once a week to observe the Sabbath day. So the researcher interrogated whether employers allow their domestic workers to join relevant trade unions. It is vital for female domestic workers to acquire information about the unions that defend their rights since they are too confined to mingle and associate with their fellow domestic workers.

Christian employers are to care for the souls of their domestic servants by reading and explaining short portions of divine truth and their particular application (Mintz&Stauffer, 2007). The author further emphasizes that Christian employers and domestic servants are equal before God hence the same great principles of moral and religious obligation should govern both classes. Christian homes should be an environment where principles of justice and equity are expressed. *"Masters give unto your servant that which is just and equal; knowing that you also have a Master in heaven" (Colossians 4: 1, Hodge, 1984: 283)*.

When Biblical principles are followed by Christian employers, chains of exploitation and abuse to FDWs loosen up. Isaiah 58:6 describes the acceptable fast; to undo the heavy burdens and to let the oppressed go free while breaking every yoke. In Jeremiah 21:12, the Lord pleads with Christians to deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest His fury go out like fire against the evil doer. As illustrated, there are guideposts in the Bible on how Christians should relate with their female domestic workers for mutual benefits. Christian principles of love and justice demand Christian employers to apply them in their daily interactions with FDWs for mutual beneficial relations.

Mainstream churches though many, have common social teachings on labour relations. The church has the right to speak out on social matters that affect religion and morality. There are common social teachings in the mainline churches that are anchored on Biblical principles of love and justice. Such teachings are to be practised by believers in any working relationship. They include; dignity of work in a given working environment. A Christian family is the first and vital cell of society that sheds light on the dignity of work which is destined to bring human beings to fulfilment (Catholic Church Pontificium 2005: xix). Similarly, Sawchuk (2004) asserts that for over one hundred years, the Christian social teaching on work is viewed as a duty and a right from God because it is the means by which an individual sustains life and contributes to their family, community and nation.

In Catholic social teachings, Henriot, *et al.* (1987) argues that there are some female domestic workers who are exploited by greedy Christian employers. It was in this spirit and for this purpose that the Second Vatican Council reaffirmed the traditional teaching of the church with regard to the right of workers to organize and bargain collectively and under certain conditions, to resort to strike (Benestad& Butler 1981:324). One of the Catholic social teachings says that "Christian love of neighbour and justice cannot be separated (Henriot, *et al.*). Therefore, preaching the gospel requires a dedication to the liberation of humanity in this world. The gospel message gives the church the right and duty to proclaim justice on all levels and to denounce instances of injustices. Christian employers should promote the dignity and rights of each human being so that to liberate them from injustices.

Westminster Catechism of the PCEA highlights the two rules of love (love for God and love for neighbour) as inseparable. Further (Kelly, 1986) concludes that to love God means that you love your neighbour failure to which you do not love God. Female domestic workers are the nearest neighbours to Christian employers since they are living with them. Likewise, the Seventh Day Adventist Church (SDA) in their social teaching on love and justice cite that the obedience to the law of God develops an upright character resulting in love for the Lord and concern for fellow human beings, domestic workers included (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 2005). The word of God should impact the life of a Christian thereby producing the two virtues.

According to Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) Catechism, the faithful followers of Christ should maintain friendly relations in their interactions with FDWs regardless of their diverse background (Drinkwater& Crichton, 1986: 26). In light of this, Christian employers are admonished to establish a cordial relationship with their domestic workers. Domestic workers could be non-Christians but the social teachings of the Church demand love and justice to be extended to them too. Moreover, these sentiments are echoed by the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) claims that ; "our greatest responsibility as a Church is the task of making men, women and children living in the neighbourhood and beyond to be disciples of Jesus Christ for the honour and glory of God" (Kelly, 1986). The transformation of FDWs' character is paramount and this could be achieved through divine intervention and Christian living. (Matthew 39: 1-5; Kimanyi, 2012). Therefore, the social teachings of the Church encourage Christian employers to evangelize their FDWs and others in their interactions thereby enhancing a warm relationship as they keep challenges at bay.

Theoretical Framework

This study used the principle based theory of change to interpret and analyse data. The character and relationship-

based ethical theories (Cowden & Pullen-Sansfacon, 2014) generally refer to a variety of notions such as virtue ethics and the ethics of care. These theories rely on the type of a Christian employer and the relationship she should develop with her FDW. The principle based theory of change was useful in describing the fundamental attributes of a Christian employer and the kind of relationship the employer should have with her FDW. These attributes are: love, justice, patience, appreciation among others

Principle Based Theory of Change

Stassen's (2008) Just Peace-making theory and West (2006) Christian ethical approach theory are principle based liberative motive on social justice to marginalized people in the community. Stassen's (2008) Just Peace-making theory seeks to promote concrete, scripturally grounded practices in promoting justice to all. He observes that "Ethics" is much more than just a set of rights and wrongs. The precepts of this theory propose embracing the way of Jesus (Biblical principles) as the solution to tackling significant challenges every day. The Biblical principle of Justice is an essential part of Christians, thus they should make fairness the core of their social response to other persons and the rest of creation. Application of this tenet would produce Christian principles and strategies in the management of female domestic workers by employers. This theory was found useful in data analysis since Christian social ethics of love and justice would transform the unjust conditions for FDWs. The liberative dimensions of fundamental Christian ideas and practices would serve as guideposts for crafting a transformative ethic. Another paradigm used to study employer-domestic workers relations is the normative approach proposed by West (2006) which is also referred to as the Christian ethical approach. The author's overall approach begins with current social-economic realities, drawing on moral, theological visions and ideas in order to properly understand and respond to them. In its various theological perspectives, this approach follows the methodological concept of liberation theology which seeks to relief those that are oppressed through Christian principles of love and justice.

West argues that a foundational part of faithfulness for Christians involves seeking out a deliberate, thoughtful process for crafting ethics that is responsible to social problems. Such a process increases the possibility that Christian employers would be able to recognize the issues of injustice when dealing with their FDWs. West's dialogical method of developing Christian social ethics would transform the marginalized conditions for FDWs through Christian faith and practice. Christian ethical goals would inspire actual practices that move the society away from such a high tolerance for social injustices like heavy workload for low pay, lack of appreciating the work done by FDWs and discrimination during meal time. Through principle based theories, the challenges faced by FDWs would be alleviated and stability and satisfaction on their part would reduce their high turnover rate.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed the descriptive survey design. Creswell (2005) defines survey design as a form of quantitative research in which an investigator identifies either the sample or the population, collects data through questionnaires or interviews and draws conclusions or makes inferences about the population. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) defines a survey design as an attempt to collect data from members of a population in order to determine the current status of that population with respect to one or more variables. In this study, the combined definition of descriptive survey design has been utilized in assessing the management of FDWs in Christian homes.

Descriptive survey design was the most appropriate for this study as it enabled collection of data from wide population of respondents, that is, Christian employers and female domestic workers in Roysambu constituency. This research obtained both quantitative (statistical) and qualitative (attitudes and opinions) data, which made it possible to investigate the management of FDWs in Christian homes. The descriptive survey design brings out the nature and standards of existing conditions thus determining the relationship that exists between specific events (Orodho&Kombo, 2002). This was achieved by examining the Biblical principles that should guide Christian employers when managing their FDWs. The study interrogated how female domestic workers are treated by Christian employers thereby describing the relationship that exists between them. The research data for the study was obtained through administration of questionnaires and conducting interview schedules to the identified sample. The construction of the research instruments (questionnaires and interview schedules) utilized the procedure proposed by Gay (1976).

Data collection

The researcher collected data from secondary (Library research) and primary resource (field research). For the field research, Interviews were conducted and the questionnaires administered on Saturdays and Sundays so as to target Christian employers in their worship places. The days were convenient since a number of female domestic workers were off duty. Questionnaires were distributed to the respondents by the researcher. On establishing a rapport with all the respondents, the purpose of the study was explained. Queries were answered and clarity made in the research tools

after which the respondents gave their feedback.

Target Population

Orodho and Kombo (2002) define target population as a set of elements that the researcher focuses upon and to which the results obtained by testing the sample should be generalized. According to the Census report 2009, the total number of households in Roysambu constituency was 52,927. This household population includes Christian and non-Christian households residing in Roysambu and households without FDWs. Similarly, the total population of Roysambu constituency was 147,545 people (youths, children, and the aged) (Census 2009). However, the target population in this study comprised 1400 Christians with FDWs from selected five mainstream churches namely: PCEA-Kahawa West, SDA-Githurai Central, ACK-Zimmerman, Baptist church-Roysambu and Roman Catholic Church-Kahawa, within Roysambu Constituency, which had an approximate population of 1400 Christians with female domestics workers (January-December 2014, Church Membership Registers for Mainline churches). The research targeted five wards of Roysambu Constituency namely: Kahawa West, Kahawa Ward, Githurai, Zimmerman and Roysambu ward.

One church per the mainstream denominations in this study was randomly sampled. All the sampled churches, representing the various denominations, adhere to the same social teachings regarding Master- Servant relations as taught in their churches. There is uniformity in teachings and thus one church, selected randomly would be a true representation of what is taught to its sister churches. The female domestic workers were key respondents in this study because they provided specific information concerning their relationship with the Christian employers and the reasons as to why they keep quitting their jobs. Christian employers were vital for this study since they had enough experiences in dealing with FDWs while using Biblical principles and social teachings of the church.

Data Analysis

The data was coded and analysed by use of descriptive statistics and the results were subjected to a liberation theory of change as proposed by Stassen (2008) and West (2006). The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques because they complement each other. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics. The data obtained in Kiswahili was translated in to the English Language. The responses were categorized into particular themes in light of the statement of the problem under investigation. All the coded data under the major themes was placed together to make a write-up. Frequency tables, percentages and bar graphs were used to present the data. The analysis however, was an interpretation of the collected data in relation to the management of female domestic workers within Christian homes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Response from FDWs

Part A of the questionnaire shows the biographic data of the FDWs involved in the study. Part B outlined the answers to the questions that helped the researcher to understand the Biblical principles governing the employers in their relationship with FDWs. Also it showed how FDWs are treated in Christian homes. This identified the FDW faced which ultimately resulted to their high turnover rate.

Table 1: Biographic data of the FDWs involved in the study

Marital Status	Married	Single	Total				
	13	35	48				
Gender	Male	Female	Total				
	0	48	48				
Education Level	Primary	Secondary	College	Total			
	12	23	13	48			
Age (Yrs)	13 - 18	19 - 24	25 – 30	31 - 36	Over 37yrs	Total	
	8	18	15	6	1	48	
Number of years as a domestic worker	0-4 years	5-9 Years	10-14 years	15-19 years	20-24 years	No response	Total
	35	7	2	2	1	1	48

The table shows that all the 48 respondents were females, out of which only 13 were married while 35 were single. The

findings also indicate that most employers prefer single female domestic workers probably because they have fewer marital responsibilities. Married women who seek domestic work are few in number. A small number (13 out of 48) have reached college hence were able to move to greener pastures as opportunities paved way. The table further shows that majority of the respondents have not attained college education, thus have no specialized training to enable them get other jobs.

Majority of the female domestic workers are aged between 19 and 30 years. In this age bracket a good number dropped out from their secondary school while others completed. West's Christian ethics theory was found useful since Christian social ethics would transform the unjust conditions for FDWs, through Biblical principles. This theory denounces the injustice of employing young girls (under 18years) which is punishable by civil law. Due to the nature and magnitude of domestic work, those underage were highly exploited due to their naivety and timidity. Therefore there is a need to promote the dignity and rights of each human being through transformative Christian ethic.

FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

To assess the Biblical principles guiding the Christian employers when relating with their FDWs in Roysambu Constituency, the study found two main Christian principles that govern both the Christian employers and domestic workers. These are: first, human dignity, love and respect and second, fair remuneration in accordance with the workload. Christian employers ought to treat their FDWs fairly with human dignity, love and respect just like other family members. Secondly, they ought to pay them fairly and on time. When these two are implemented a harmonious relationship would be achieved. The Bible is the standard measure by which Christian employer's integrity and justice are to be proved in their daily relations with FDW.

The study concluded that the female domestic workers should be treated as part of family with love and justice being experienced in all social interactions. Christian principles reveal that both Christian employers and their domestic workers are equally loved and valued by their creator hence they ought to love one another. Analysis of the Biblical principles that govern Christian employers when managing FDWs show that the church through its teachings stress on employers handling their FDWs with human dignity, love and respect just like other family members. The church also teaches justice for all and patience in the social interactions between the Christian employers and their FDWs. This is demonstrated by paying them fairly in accordance with workload, allowing them a day off to rest per week and being patient when correcting them. These liberation virtues could be made always with the intention of improving the female domestic workers' efficiency and abilities.

Based on the findings, the study recommended that Christian employers practise the Biblical principles together with the common social teachings of the churches when managing their female domestic workers Christian employers should cultivate and nurture the spirit of justice in labour relations. Any form of taking or keeping property of others is against the eighth commandment; "you shall not steal" thus, deliberate retention of goods, business fraud and unjust wages is evil (Exodus 20:15). Christian employers ought to appreciate the services rendered by their female domestic workers.

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