

## **Improving Working Conditions of African and Asian Women Migrant Domestic Workers: Gulf Co-operation Council States**

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**Abstract:** There are many African and Asian women migrant domestic workers working under exploitative and abusive labour conditions in Gulf Cooperation Council States. The objective was to examine options to improve working conditions of such workers in member states as a whole. Using desk review and in-depth interview of a Tanzanian domestic worker returnee from Oman, the article found options related to legal, cultural and policy change. Many were unilateral options by respective states consisting of ratification of international labour convention for domestic workers, extend national labor coverage to domestic workers, reform Kafala sponsorship system and conduct labour inspections in informal sector. Some were to be undertaken through collaboration by destinations and origins and covered signing of bilateral or multilateral labour protection agreements and initiating harmonized regulations of private recruitment agencies in both sides. Other options were to be exclusively adopted by sending countries and related to embassies extension of optimal support to migrant domestic workers and adopting policies which removed the decent work deficits in sending countries to prevent labour migration towards hazardous labour. Recommendations were also provided.

**Key Words:** Ratify, convention, reform Kafala, labour inspection

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### **1.0. Introduction**

The world has many women and girls who are working as domestic workers in private households (Human Rights Watch, 2011; Fernandez, 2014). It has been estimated that 67 million people over the age of 15 are employed as domestic workers and majority of them are women among which some have migrated from their country of origin to another country for work (Menegatti, 2016). Their domestic work abroad consists of a variety of tasks such as washing clothes, taking care of children or elders, running errands and sometimes they could look after employer's small businesses (Guichon, 2014).

Migrant domestic work has been important for employers because it enables them to maintain their employment outside their households (Human Rights Watch, 2014). Migrant domestic work overseas also is considered as a potential opportunity in which individuals could find work at higher wages than they could be paid at home (Amnesty International, 2014). Instead, it has exposed many domestic migrant workers to vulnerabilities of human rights abuse arising from inequality influenced by gender, race, ethnicity, national origin and social status (Menegatti, 2016). Many migrant domestic workers perform their duties under powers exercised by their employers and lose control of all aspects of their lives which makes migrant domestic work look similar with slavery (Anderson, 2004).

Regionally, the Arab states in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) had higher migrant domestic workers of both gender compared to others regions in the world (Gallotti, 2015). Ethiopia has been noted by Busza (2017) as the main source of African women migrant domestic workers (WMDWs) for the Arab states in the GCC. Some women migrant domestic workers in several GCC member states also moved from Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania (Alai, 2014; Muhangi, 2016; Human Rights Watch, 2017). Others were migrating from Mauritius to take up employment in private households of the GCC states. Asian countries that also have supplied migrant domestic workers to several GCC countries are: Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal and Bangladesh (Fernandez, 2014). From the literature, it seems that there are almost no women migrant domestic workers who move from the West, Northern and Southern America to seek domestic labour in the GCC countries.

As indicated above, migrant domestic work for most women in the region offers opportunities of gaining income which could enable them to access land, markets, credits and other resources when they return home (UN Women, 2013). They are also motivated by many other factors in the country of origin and destinations to seek domestic labour (Malit & Naufal, 2016). Private employment agencies, brokers and social networks play important roles in their recruitment, pre-departure processing and placement at the employers' households in the destinations (Malit & Naufal, 2016; Fernandez, 2014).

Regarding the working conditions of African and Asian WMDWs, International Trade Union Confederation (2017) and Robert (2017) found that many domestic workers in the GCC countries including Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates (UAE) worked under severe labour

exploitation. In most cases they were not paid, not paid in full or on time. Hours of work have been extreme in most occasions and the law of most GCC countries have not stated the maximum hours of work. Many have encountered physical and sexual abuse in private households. These arguments partly have corresponded with Fernandez (2014) who pointed out that numerous studies consistently have reported higher levels of exploitation and abuse among many domestic workers in the GCC countries. Based on these circumstances, the article aimed to examine options that could be used to improve the working conditions of African and Asian women migrant domestic workers in the GCC countries.

## **2.0. Methods and Procedures**

The article was prepared qualitatively by focusing on WMDWs in the GCC states as a whole and those who were working in the independent GCC Arab states. GCC countries have been chosen as a group because all had households which employed migrant domestic workers from Africa and Asia. They also possessed similar political structures, economic and cultural characteristics (Asian Pacific Mission for Migrants, 2014). Methods for information accessibility included desk review and in-depth interview of a Tanzanian woman domestic worker returnee from Oman. Before desk review was undertaken published material on the subject matter were searched and retrieved from the internet. In-depth interview was done with the woman as mentioned above at Kiponza Street in the city of Dar -es-Salaam. In-depth interview took place after seeking informed consent from the interviewee. Information gained was coded and categorized into various themes relating to options which could improve the working conditions of African and Asian WMDWs.

## **3.0. Options to Improve Working Conditions of African and Asian WMDWs in GCC States.**

Literature revealed that there are various options relating to legal, policy and cultural reforms that should be undertaken by the GCC states to improve the working conditions of the respective workers as highlighted later in this section. Some of the options were to be implemented by both countries of destinations and those of origin to maximize protection of African and Asian migrant domestic workers as shown below. In addition, the literature also indicated that improving the working conditions of African and Asian domestic workers demanded exclusive policy options to be implemented by countries of origin to mitigate migration of women towards hazardous labour. Further clarification of the legal, policy and cultural options as evidenced by the literature can be understood from the following sub-sections below.

### **3.1. Legal, Policy and Cultural Options in GCC States**

#### **3.1.1. Ratification of International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention on Domestic Workers, 2011 No. 89**

Ratification of this convention in improving the labour conditions of WMDWs in GCC states emerged from most literature including those published by Human Rights Watch (2014); Shlala & Jayaweera (2014) as well as Fernandez (2014). The convention entitles domestic workers to weekly day off, limits to hours of work, minimum wage coverage, over time compensation, social security and clear information of the terms and conditions of employment (Human Rights Watch, 2012). All member states of ILO have to ratify this convention in order to accept it domestically as a legal instrument for ensuring justice to all domestic workers including those working at home and abroad. Several countries have ratified this convention but surprisingly, most GCC countries have delayed its ratification (International Domestic Workers Federation, 2017) despite of the abuse reports over migrant domestic workers in their borders. According to International Trade Union Confederation (2014), the GCC states did not comply with ILO convention on domestic workers as stated below:

Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, UAE and Oman do not comply with ILO Convention, 2011 No. 189 because they have not ratified it (p-15).

Non-compliance of the ILO convention on domestic workers has been taken as a loop hole by private household employers to deny such workers of acceptable working conditions. Therefore, this situation has made scholars as highlighted above to recommend its ratification as a means of protecting women migrant domestic workers in respective countries. This option coincided with the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development (2017) in Romania which supported that ratification and implementation of Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) as well as application of Recommendation, 2011 (No. 201) would act as important means to improve the rights and working conditions of migrant domestic workers in Europe for countries which had not undertaken its ratification. Ratification by GCC states would compel employers to adopt provisions of the convention in managing migrant women workers in private households.

### **3.1.2. Extension of Labour Law Coverage to Domestic Workers by GCC States**

Apart from convention ratification, many of the scholars from desk review indicated that the extension of labour law coverage to domestic workers by GCC states was one among options towards rescuing WMDWs from exploitation and abuse (Human Rights Watch, 2014; Syed, 2017). This option from the desk review has been supported by Galloti (2013) argument that harmonization of national legislation to regulate the status of migrant domestic workers will improve the working conditions of GCC domestic workers counterparts in other regions such as Europe and elsewhere as stated by International Alliance of Women (2017). Amnesty International (2014) for specific example of Qatar stated:

Repeal or amend Article 3 of the Labour Law to ensure that all workers including domestic workers and other excluded categories –have their labour rights protected by law equally. p. 61

This quotation partly corroborated with interviewee's opinion having worked in Oman for a two years contract as she said:

My employer in Oman treated me well but I heard some domestic workers being mistreated. Some reports of mistreatments have been communicated on social media like Whats App and You tube. But I have never heard any of the employers being taken to court for mistreating a domestic worker. If conditions have to improve, the law to protect them must be there and enforced (In- depth interviewee)

From the interviewee above it was evident that employers who mistreated the WMDWs were not held legally responsible probably because the law did not stretch to domestic work sector. Most GCC countries such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, UAE and Oman totally excluded domestic work from the labour law (International Trade Union Confederation, 2014 & Malit *et al*; 2016). For WMDWs realization of good working conditions it was necessary to extend the GCC local laws to this sector. Though some countries such as Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE had started drafting legislation for domestic workers, their drafted legislations still had weaknesses (Fenandez (2014). Some of those weaknesses consisted of failure to stipulate the limits of working hours, recognition of rights of these workers to organize in unions, and failed also to recognize the private homes as workplaces. Though these efforts were promising legal options for African and Asian women migrant domestic workers, they had many deficiencies which needed modifications before they were fully operating in individual GCC states.

### **3.1.3. Reforms in Kafala Sponsorship System Widely Applied in the GCC States**

Not only did desk review information emphasize extension of national labour law coverage to domestic workers as a means for improving labour conditions but also they stressed a need to reform Kafala sponsorship system mostly found in the GCC states. Kafala sponsorship system did not only exist in GCC member states but also existed in other non-GCC states such as Jordan and Lebanon (Dai, 2017). While several scholars from the desk review demanded its abolition, among the majority including Murray (2012) reported as quoted below:

Reforming GCC's Kafala system to provide rights to domestic workers.....Kafala system contributes to widespread abuse of domestic workers.... p.478

In connection to the above quotation, Americans for Democracy and Human Rights (2014) on migrant labour in Qatar, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia as part of GCC members had this to say on Kafala:

It is safe to conclude that several reforms..... regarding the Kafala sponsorship system which remain operative in all three countries.... allow marginalization of migrant workers.p. 50.

Kafala sponsorship system had to be reformed based on the foregoing quotations. Kafala sponsorship system implied to have caused and facilitated exploitation of the African and Asian domestic migrant workers. Under Kafala sponsorship system, the employer usually collaborated with recruitment agency to seek migrant domestic labour (Asian Pacific Mission for Migrant, 2014). Employers were sponsors of domestic workers' stay in the GCC countries (ILO, 2015). According to Bajracharya (N.D) & Asian Pacific Mission for Migrants (2014) African and Asian WMDWs could neither change employment nor leave the country without the consent of the employer under this system. Consequently, the system tied domestic workers to the employers who assumed full legal and economic responsibilities for the whole period of employment contract which were at least for a minimum of two years contract.

During recruitment of the migrant domestic workers, the Kafala permitted the employer to pay for recruitment charges to the recruitment agency, application of entry and exit visa, seek work permits for migrant and became legally liable for offences committed by migrant worker (Zahara, 2015). Consequently as argued by

Dai (2017) employers used it as an opportunity to maximize exploitation and abuse since they were decision makers for migrant domestic workers' stay in the GCC states.

Employers had powers under the system to report to the police a domestic worker who was considered a disobedient of the employment terms in order to face legal charges and get repatriated. As stated by Fernandez (2014) Kafala has been an effective mechanism by which states of the GCC countries have externalized and privatized their surveillance functions by passing it to citizens for controlling immigrant labour. As a result, they imposed exploitation and abuses including passport confiscation, keeping workers' wages in arrears or deduct it for expenses incurred by them during their recruitment (Asian Pacific Mission for Migrants, 2014)

The demands from different scholars to reform the Kafala sponsorship system has led to some efforts by several GCC countries to introduce some changes in the system. The Refugee & Migratory Movements Research Unit (2014) has pointed out some reforms undertaken by several GCC countries with regards to kafala sponsorship system. Bahrain under mobility clause of Labour Market Mobility Regulatory Authority has allowed migrants workers to change employers without the consent of the previous employer and illegalized retention of employee's passport. In September, 2010 Kuwait announced that it will end sponsorship system to mark its tenth anniversary while Qatar drafted a charter for its migrant workers which need to be respected by all employers in projects of 2022 World Cup. According to Yalcin (2015, as cited in Hertog, 2014) & Mahdavi (2012) many of the statements provided by the GCC states in reforming the Kafala sponsorship system have remained symbolic in most parts rather than being an optimal functional commitment. This reveals that most GCC states promised to reform it but lacked effective actions and willingness to reform most of its elements which were keeping many African and Asian WMDWs under severe exploitative labour conditions. Its reform was imperative in ensuring that labour conditions of African and Asian WMDWs improved favorably.

#### **3.1.4. Conduct Labour Inspection in Private Households by the GCC States**

Leave alone reform of Kafala sponsorship system, information gained from desk review also showed that several scholars such as Human Rights Watch (2014) and American for Democracy and Human Rights (2014) indicated that labour inspection had to be one among of options towards improving the working conditions of African and Asian domestic workers. Labour inspection by the Ministries of Labour through labour inspectorates would expose matters such as passport confiscation, complaints over long working hours and untimely wage payment (International Trade Union Confederation, 2014). The status of migrant domestic workers' safety and health, issues of forced labour and child labour existing in private households could be easily understood by conducting labour inspection and action taken against perpetrators.

According to ILO Labour Administration & Labour Inspection (2014) most countries in the GCC with exception of Oman had ratified the convention on Labour Inspection, 1947 (No. 81). If it was conducted effectively in private households, it would be consistent with the interests of the International Labour Organization. However, according to ILO (2014), the Arab states including those in the GCC organization had labour inspection laws which had minor reflection of the informal economy and labour migration where the migrant domestic workers belonged as a group. This means that labour inspectorates in the GCC states lacked effective performance in inspecting the labour conditions of African and Asian migrant domestic workers. Many of abuses and exploitation such as sexual harassment, rape attempt by employers, discrimination, assaults, unpaid wages and long working hours existing in the sector were not well understood due to ineffective inspection in the sector.

#### **3.1.5. Remove Racist Attitudes from the GCC States**

In spite of conducting labour inspections, some desk reviewed information indicated that eradication of racist attitudes from GCC states, would make labour conditions of WMDWs from Africa and Asia better. Regarding racist attitudes, Amnesty International (2014) and Gikuru (2013) were of the opinion that it was entrenched in the Arabic culture against women and was among of the factors which caused unworthy practices over women domestic migrant workers in the GCC. Al-Said (2017) had similar views on migrant domestic workers and had this to say on racist attitudes as quoted below.

The issue of race and racism in the Gulf need to be addressed to tackle the problem of modern day slavery....it is not only men who abused them but also it is important to acknowledge the role that matriarch and women in general have in abusing migrant domestic workers. Women domestic workers are observed by some of their employers, who happen to be Arab women as inferior. p.2

Racist attitudes turned African and Asian migrant domestic workers to be viewed inferior by both men and women of the GCC states. Fighting against racism in GCC countries through the use of media and educational campaigns was an indispensable option in seeking pathways to improve their working conditions as

suggested by Amnesty International (2014). Impact of removing racist attitudes consisted stimulation of respect, human dignity and equal treatment of non-Arab domestic women workers from Africa and Asia. Consequently, the miserable labour conditions such as torture, lack of annual paid leave, absence of maternity leave and denial of food eaten by employers that faced many women would be permanently discarded.

### **3.2. Policy Options Between the GCC States and Countries of Origin**

#### **3.2.1. Regulation and Monitoring of Private Recruitment Agencies (PrEAs)**

Apart from removal of racist attitudes as a means towards improvements, ILO (2015) suggested that acceptable working conditions could be molded through regulation and monitoring of private recruitment agencies in the host countries and countries of origin. Melnyk (2016) reported that many countries heavily regulated immigration procedures but had less oversight and distribution of resource to regulate labour standards and activities of PrEAs in the domestic work sector and therefore the scholar recommended regulations of recruitment agencies in the following words:

Licensing requirements..... Licensing implies that the government establishes administrative procedures to set minimum standards for operation, maintains a list of licensed agencies, monitors the activities of licensed agencies and issues penalties in case of non-compliance. Registration of recruitment agencies.... becomes more effective when coupled with strict monitoring and cooperation between the country of origin and destination.

Licensing and registration could provide framework of operation to PrEAs and prevent recruitment process which cheated recruits for domestic work in the GCC before their placement. Cooperation between the host countries and the sending countries was also required in this endeavor. It could harmonize regulations for recruitment agencies in destination countries and countries of origin as supported by Agunias (2012). Forging cooperation by destination and sending countries in regulating private recruitment agencies would provide rich information on PrEAs identities, their staff, office locations, names of recruits being sent by them to GCC states as well as private household which employed candidates. As it was pointed out above, many countries in the GCC states and countries of origin had less information of the agencies due to inadequate regulations and monitoring. Many WMDWs were recruited by PrEAs which did not have credentials and were mainly predatory in carrying out recruitment process which were largely deceitful thereby placing African and Asian WMDWs under miserable labour conditions.

#### **3.2.2. Forging Bilateral and Multilateral Labour Protection Agreements Between the GCC States and Sending Countries**

Besides regulations and monitoring of PrEAs in destinations and countries of origins, bilateral and multilateral labour protection agreements over improving working conditions have emerged in several literature including International Trade Union Confederation (2014) and Murray (2012). This implies that African and Asian WMDWs were exploited and abused probably because there was less availability of bilateral and multilateral labour protection agreements signed between destination and countries of origin. Malit (2016) argued that Kenya had no any labour protection agreement over its unskilled workers in the Gulf oil producing countries because of perceived fear like cutting trade, repeal humanitarian aid and limit immigration with Kenya by GCC states.

This was not only a problem for Kenya but also applied to several sending countries in Africa. For instance, the Human Rights Watch study about abusive working conditions of Tanzanian women migrant domestic workers in Oman was banned from official launch in November, 2017 by Commission of Science and Technology (Robert, 2017). This was probably because of similar fears existing in the government of Tanzania. After banning the official launch of the report, it meant that Tanzania could not use it to negotiate a bilateral agreement to protect its women domestic workers in Oman. Economic development of GCC countries has been taken as an advantage to maintain miserable working conditions of many women migrant domestic workers since the sending countries hesitated to demand negotiations for bilateral labour agreement due to the fears of losing some economic benefits from GCC states.

Despite of bilateral agreements countries also could sign the regional multilateral labour agreements. These could be done at two levels whereby the first constituted multilateral agreements signed by six GCC states collectively. According to AFP Global New Agency (2014) GCC states had established an agreement on a new contract for improving working conditions of African and Asian migrant women domestic workers. These efforts probably raised from criticism directed towards the GCC states over miserable working conditions of migrant women domestic workers. The agreement stipulated that the domestic workers would be entitled to weekly day off, annual leave, right to live outside their employer's houses, eight working hours and banned

passport confiscation. Multilateral agreement like this one was a potential effort to reduce the abuses but its effectiveness was doubted considering non-ratification of Convention, 2011 (No. 89) by GCC states and lack of support from the labour laws which did not recognize domestic work as employment as earlier elaborated in this article. For these agreements to take force the legal adaptation to International Labour Organization's convention were necessary among the GCC states.

### **3.3. Exclusive Policy Options in Sending Countries**

#### **3.3.1. Increase Scope of Support to WMDWs Problems Among Embassies and Consulates**

Apart from bilateral and multilateral labour agreement as one of the options, Americans for Democracy and Human Rights (2014) and Jayaweera & Shlala, (2015) reported that sending countries had to increase the scope of support provided by embassies and consulates in GCC states. Their support had to cover informal workers such as the domestic workers. This group which constituted unskilled labour was laid out of reach by embassies. Employers of domestic workers were also reluctant to make information about embassies available to domestic workers as a domestic Tanzanian woman worker returnee from Oman reported:

I always requested my employer to take me to the embassy or provide me with contact address of our embassy but he refused. I never had any information of people who could assist me during abuse. I had no contact with Tanzanian embassy in Oman (In-depth interviewee).

It was not only the employers who hesitated to provide information about embassies to domestic workers but also Sabban (N.D) noted that with exception of Philippines and Indonesian embassies in UAE many had passive role in solving problems facing domestics. This implies that many embassies established by sending countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania or Uganda did not provide proactive support to female migrant domestic workers when they were in problems with their employers. The scholar argued that they were required to become proactive to educate domestics on situation of employments, provide support services like counseling during problematic cases of abuse, conduct literacy, computer, internet and cooking training for them to feel better about themselves. However, the proactive role of embassies could not take place unless the sending governments created specific mandatory policy for extending their scope of support to deal with matters which concerned with African and Asian migrant women domestic workers. Extension of their scope of support to WMDWs could relieve the workers after falling in conflicts with the employers. Embassies could help in accessing legal aid in order to have their grievances heard and obtain their rights they deserved in domestic employment.

#### **3.3.2. Promotion of Decent Work in Sending Countries**

This was last option among many which preceded above and emerged from ILO (2015) which insisted that there was a need to promote decent work in countries of origin to mitigate labour migration towards hazardous labour. ILO (2015) argued that country of origin had decent work deficits reflected by unemployment, underemployment and intergenerational poverty particularly serious for women. This argument was partly supported by O'Neil et al, (2016) who emphasized that people migrated to overcome poverty, escape conflicts or cope with economic and environmental shocks. Promotion of effective policy implementation by countries of origin to reduce decent work deficits in health, education, gender inequality, environment and labour could negatively affect migration among African and Asian women towards exploitative and abusive domestic employment in the GCC countries. Prevalence of decent work deficits encouraged many to migrate and succumb to exploitation such as less wages than promised in the contract, long working hours, restricted movements, forced labour and worst forms of abuse in many households of GCC states. Promotion of decent work was a policy option in nature and had to be implemented by sending countries exclusively of the host nations in the GCC states.

## **4.0. Concluding Remarks and Recommendations**

The article revealed that there were many African and Asian WMDWs in GCC states being employed under exploitative work conditions. The paper found that to improve these working conditions, depended on adoption of several options by stakeholders. Many of such options were related to legal, policy and cultural options which had to be undertaken unilaterally by the GCC states or collaboratively with the sending countries and others had to be exclusively implemented by countries of origin in Africa and Asia. Based on these options the article provides the following recommendations.

1. GCC states had to incorporate international legislative labour framework on women migrant domestic workers by ratifying the domestic workers convention to which the national labour laws could be adapted to protect WMDWs as argued by ILO (2002).
2. Other conventions which advanced interests of women at work such as Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957, No. 105, Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention 1958, No. 111

- and Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as published by ILO (2015) and UN General Assembly (1979) were to be ratified and implemented effectively to save WMDWs from exploitation.
3. Domestic labour laws in the GCC states had to recognize domestic work as one form of employment and stipulate all labour standards without exclusion. Their enforcement also called for impartiality and addressing the needs of WMDWs during the legal processes.
  4. De-humanizing elements under kafala sponsorship system like arbitrary nonpayment and deductions of wages by employers, passport confiscation and employer sponsoring exit visa had to be abolished by all GCC states. This would reduce powers of employers over domestic workers and prevent them from arbitrary control, exploitation and abuse.
  5. Labour inspection by all GCC states in the informal sector including private households employed WMDWs had to be done effectively, strengthen inspectorate personnel capacity and distribute adequate material, finance and training for inspection to report exploitation and abuse prevailing in the sector.
  6. Curriculum of education in schools and the media for all GCC states had to contribute towards provision of education on racial equality to change the mind set of racist attitudes from members of GCC Arabic societies.
  7. Development of common regulations for monitoring the private recruitment agencies had to be done by both destination countries in GCC and countries of origin in order to set common standards of assessment and reporting about migrant domestic workers for GCC states.
  8. Control mechanisms of recruiting brokers and social networks also had to be devised to prevent fraud in recruitment of WMDWs from Africa and Asia.
  9. Bilateral and Multilateral Labour Protection Agreements had to be signed by GCC states and sending countries in Asia and Africa. Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) which had binding force was relevant in the labour protection agreement rather than the non-binding Memorandum of Understanding as two forms of agreements as explained by Bello (N.D) and Wickramasekera (2006).
  10. Sending countries had to allow their embassies and consulates in GCC states to provide active role in supporting WMDWs by providing funds to embassies to enable them to provide legal aid and safer houses to accommodate those who were running away from humiliation and discrimination.
  11. Poverty reduction among women by providing education, training and more employment opportunities would have a negative effect towards migration to GCC states and attract those who were living in domestic work to move away from exploitation and settle in their parent countries.
  12. Women employment in parent countries had to respect equal and fair wages which met the prevailing cost of living indexes to enable women to afford essential needs. Other issues that had to be considered by parent countries also included implementing quality labour conditions such as gender equality, maternity leave provision, abolition of sexual harassment, safety and health and social security arrangements so that women could be retained in their countries to advance their social, economic well-being without migration.

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