

**PRINT MEDIA COVERAGE OF EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE OF
KENYAN MIGRANTS WORKING IN GULF COUNTRIES**

BY

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been submitted for consideration for credit or award in any other university.

Signature  Date 23/11/16

Murangiri Emma Mueni

Declaration by the Supervisor

This research report has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University supervisor.

Signature  Date 23/11/2016

Dr. Samuel Siringi

DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to my entire family and to all my teachers who have taught me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank the Almighty God for granting me the knowledge, effort, health, will and the chance to see the completion of this work. And I continue to pray for His guidance in my future aspirations.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATION

Audit Bureau of Circulation	-	ABC
Centre for African journalists	-	CAJ
Gulf Cooperation Council	-	GCC
Human Rights Watch	-	HRW
International Labour Organization	-	ILO
Muslim Human Rights Organization	-	Muhuri
Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe	-	OSCE

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ABSTRACT

The current study sought to investigate the print media's coverage of the plight of Kenyan workers in the Gulf Countries. In order to realize the aim, the study relied on a sample of fifty newspaper stories that were in the *Daily Nation* Newspaper between 2014 and 2016. The period was deemed critical in highlighting recent trends on the issue. Depending on a qualitative study approach, the study used the purposive sampling method to identify the units of analysis. In particular, only units that had stories on domestic worker exploitation from the period over the specified period of time were selected.

In the analysis of the data, the present project employed content analysis. Through the use of content analysis, data was summarized in an easy format. Based on the analysis, the study found that the framing of the stories took a negative approach. The results show that 88% of the stories were framed in a negative manner. In addition, many of the stories (86%) covered were in the body section but in the first ten pages of the newspapers. the selection of sources of information was also biased leading to the inference that the newspaper stories lacked objectivity in their reporting. The sources of the stories were largely drawn from narrations of returning victims of abuse and their families.

It is however, observed that the study only concentrated on only the *Daily Nation* newspaper. Behind this backdrop, the study recommends additional research, preferably, a comparative one to facilitate cross comparisons. In addition, news reporters, the stories would be reliable if they were based on objective reporting.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This Chapter discusses the background, problem statement and the research objectives. It also outlines the research questions, justification and limitations.

1.2 Background

As a country, Kenya faces a number of challenges that emanate from various quotas. For instance, the state has to grapple with the unemployment problem, alongside many other related concerns. Owing to the employment issue, the country has become embroiled in another problem that arises due to the efforts made by its population to find work.

With employment proving difficult to secure locally, especially among individuals with limited or no education, the preference to find jobs outside the country have become popular. The gulf countries rank amongst the most preferred among poorly skilled hours owing to the relative ease with which jobs are secured and the processing of travel documents. Among the most attention-catching headlines in the recent times include: *women abroad need state protection, ministry to register Kenyans in the Middle east, lobby points fingers at MPs in Saudi jobs scandal, and tales of brutality in foreign countries*. Captured from the Daily Nation, leading local newspapers, the overriding theme is that women workers from Kenya to the Middle East are being exploited. Despite the exploitation, the authorities are doing little to accord the victims, protection. From the coverage, it also appears that the media does not consider the role of the workers in feeding/ facilitating the exploitative relationship. Whether the reporting is reflective of the actual state of affairs remains unclear.

The Mena region – Middle East and North Africa is a destination that millions of individuals (especially migrant domestic workers aspire to work in. The main attraction is the prospect of an improved life. As a result, many people from developing countries such as Kenya often anticipate for such opportunities to emerge. The trend is puzzling given the extensive reports that document incidents of abuse as well as exploitation of foreign workers.

Mena region countries do not implement existing laws decisively thus leaving foreign domestic employees subject to abuse. Although the enforcement of domestic working laws being a challenge globally, their implementation in Mena is worse. In particular, the kafala

sponsorship system that is common in the region is so restrictive that it undermines the independence of domestic workers (Northwestern University in Qatar, 2012).

Instead the employees are reduced to dependants of their sponsors or employers. Under the kafala framework, local citizens enjoy sweeping powers over migrant domestic workers. The powers range from the right to permit entry to denying exit to the migrant workers. In case sponsorship is withdrawn, the individuals involved (workers) lose their legal rights, and become under the mercy of the employer. The power imbalance implies that workers have a limited voice in relationship.

The case of Kenyan immigrant workers into the gulf countries, and the Middle East is one that remains intriguing as media coverage depicts a picture of exploitation, despair and hopelessness. In the past 2 years, the print media has highlighted a number of cases involving the exploitation of housemaids in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Jordan, and other neighboring countries (Omondi, 2014). Without a doubt, question marks remain regarding the controversy surrounding the issue. Given that some Kenyan workers have been killed in the gulf countries while offering services, then it is arguable that there is a deeper problem. Nevertheless, the media has often portrayed the Middle East place as an un-conducive place to work. Many media reports propagate the idea that any person working in the Middle East is endangering his/ her life (CAJ News, 2013).

According to Kaberia (2014), hundreds of Kenyan women are recruited each year for employment in Gulf Countries as domestic workers. Many of them seize this opportunity because they see it as a chance to lift themselves out of poverty. These women migrate to enter into an unregulated and informal work sector where domestic workers are not protected by local laws in the destination countries, and to work in the private sphere where the abuse they might be subjected to remains hidden from the public's eye. While employed in Gulf Countries, some women are overworked which leads to lack of sufficient sleep and they are denied of their rightful wages, furthermore they are mistreated and deprived of food which makes being a productive worker a challenge.

Reports of rampant abuses of domestic workers, some of which have resulted in death compelled the Kenyan government to take action in order to minimize further abuse. The

remedy took the form of a travel ban. The Kenyan government implemented the travel ban in June 2014, with the goal of keeping Kenyans from migrating to Middle Eastern countries for domestic work. In spite of the ban, Kenyan women continue to be recruited and placed for domestic work in the Middle East on an ongoing basis. Unfortunately, women who ignore the ban expose themselves to dangers such as rape and imprisonment while in a foreign country, whilst obliging the Kenyan government to protect them outside its jurisdiction. This poses a major challenge to the Kenyan government, which has yet to implement structures of protection for citizens working in the domestic service sector in the Middle East.

The aim of the proposed study is to investigate the framing of the exploitation of Kenyan immigrant workers in the Middle East. An investigation of this nature is also likely to help in understanding the sources that the media use to base their reports, their placement and tones of stories. In addition, it is anticipated that the study would help in the understanding of the reasons for continued movement of workers to the region despite the negative coverage of the work environment by the print media in Kenya. Thus, findings from the study are expected to inform the discourse on the working conditions the immigrants face in addition to the authenticity of the reports that appear on the Kenyan media.

1.3 Problem statement

The issue of exploitation and abuse of Kenyan migrants in the Gulf area has existed for a long time. A relatively big number of people from Kenya work in the Gulf countries. Kaberia (2014) cites official figures from the Ministry of Labour indicating that 100,000 Kenyans were working in the Middle East. However, the International Labour Organization (ILO) indicates that the statistics are underestimated given that up to 80,000 Kenyans work within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia alone (Omondi, 2015).

The Nation newspaper reports have portrayed a picture of exploitation, helplessness and despair in the past years. The publications prompted the Government through the Ministry of Foreign affairs to impose a ban on travel to the Mena regions in 2014 according to Kaberia (2014).

Many domestically abused workers have their travel documents confiscated although laws across the countries in the Middle East do not support the practice. According to Vreese

(2005), other employers commonly failed to pay full salaries, subject the workers to long working hours and overall poor working conditions. Based on the news coverage, the legal framework does not do enough to protect the domestic workers rather it allows for their exploitation. The reports indicate that culture and the legal framework facilitates retaliation thus poses a danger to domestic workers' welfare. In particular, under the guidelines on immigration, migrant workers cannot swap their employees at will but must get approval from the initial employer.

However, despite the obvious concerns of the plight of Kenyans in the Gulf, there has not been a substantial study to find out how the media have covered the issue. This study seeks to explore the media framing of the issues of Kenyan migrants in the Gulf countries.

1.4 Research Objectives

1.4.1 Main objective

Overall, the study focuses on the exploration and understanding of the print media's coverage of exploitation and abuse of Kenyan migrants working in the Gulf countries.

1.4.2 Specific objectives

- To determine the placement of stories on Kenyan migrants working in the gulf countries by the print media.
- To identify the sources of information used by the newspaper to highlight the exploitation of Kenyan migrants in the Middle East.
- To identify the print media's framing of the stories on the Kenyans in the Gulf countries.
- To identify the patterns of coverage and responses of the immigration department and recruiting agencies.

1.5 Research questions

- How do the print media cover/ frame the exploitation and abuse of Kenyan migrants working in the gulf countries?
- What is the print media's categorization of the stories on the abuse of domestic workers in the Middle East?
- What is the basis/source of the media reports?

1.6 Justification/ Rationale

The media is an important source of information, and has influential powers in shaping public opinion. In this regard, conducting the proposed study is desirable because it informs the not only the scholar community but also to the larger society. Thus, the study is justified as it highlights on the working of a key player on public matters.

It is also acknowledged that the issue of violence against domestic workers in the Middle East has attracted global attention. In this regard, the study is justified given that it intends to highlight a current concern to the society. Towards that end, the study is likely to contribute by exploring the circumstances surrounding the problem, and to a certain extent identify steps that are likely to help lessen the problem.

1.7 Scope and limitation

The proposed study focuses on exploring how the media frame the exploitation and abuse of Kenyan migrants working in gulf countries. Thus, the study covers media coverage of cases involving abuse of domestic workers from Kenya working in the Middle East. The study assesses the coverage in the last two years in order to establish the trend/ pattern. In a bid to get information on the subject, the study settles on the observation of previous records such as newspaper stories only. Hence, only a single assessment of coverage is done.

In the evaluation, the study targets the print media cover/ frame the exploitation and abuse of Kenyan migrants working in the gulf countries; the placement of the stories, the tone of the stories and the basis/source of the media reports.

Media frames considered in the research include: placement of stories, story tones, type of stories. Regarding placement, the study focuses on graphics, body, headline or lead with the idea being to identify its place in the newspapers. Concerning tones of stories, the focus is on the positivity or negativity of the covered stories. While assessing the type of stories, the articles are evaluated on the basis of being news, opinion, feature or photo with caption items.

1.8 Study organization

The following study is organized into five chapters, namely: introduction, literature review, methodology, data presentation and analysis, and conclusion. In the first chapter, the background of the study, the statement of the research problem, the justification of the study,

research objectives, scope and limitation of the study are presented. The second chapter lays down the theoretical framework and literature deemed relevant to the topic. Under the theoretical framework, the framing theory is reviewed. The third chapter covers the methodology/ approach used to collect the relevant data for the study. In addition, data presentation and analysis methods are also highlighted. In fourth chapter, the focus is on data presentation and analysis. Particularly, the results are presented before attention shifts to the fifth chapter, which is the conclusion based on the findings and overall study summary. The chapter also assesses the implications for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

The chapter focuses on what is known on the topic, by reviewing characteristics and vulnerabilities of domestic workers; the case of Middle East Issues under the *Kafala* system; media and framing; framing of migrant workers in media from other countries before highlighting Kenya's Daily Nation framing of domestic immigrant workers. In the end, the gap is identified.

2.2 Domestic workers: Characteristics and vulnerabilities

The abuse and exploitation directed to some migrant domestic workers internationally is well documented and can often include levels of forced labor, servitude and/ or slavery (Smales, 2011). The following literature does not seek to map all the instances or types of exploitation but rather, it has the objective of examining the perpetuation of the vice across the Middle East region. Reports concentrating on Kenyan cases and various Arab States are the focus of the review. Among the issues captured are migrant domestic workers' revelations of physical, psychological and/or sexual abuse as presented by Begum (2014). According to Mantouvalou (2015), many immigrants have faced the confiscation of their passports besides being prevented from leaving their places of work unaccompanied. In addition, domestic workers have complained of being forced to work for long hours, at either minimal or no compensation at all (Leghtas, 2014). Working in such conditions endanger the physical health as well as the psychological safety of the domestic workers, thus highlighting the need for enhanced protective measures to secure the wellness of the vulnerable individuals. Based on a report by the House of Lords/House of Commons (2013) part of the blame on the troubles facing domestic immigrant workers should be apportioned to restrictive immigration and labour laws in destination countries.

Reference to the International Labour Organization (ILO) shows that domestic work is work done in or within a household(s) (ILO, 2011). Thus, on the basis of the standards of the international body, there is no doubt pertaining the prominent position that domestic work occupies globally. For example, taking the duration between 1995 and 2010, the ILO reports that the number of domestic workers rose from 33.2 to 52.6 million. Further, the ILO (2013) indicated that the domestic work sector was largely dominated by the female section of the population given that the sex accounted for up-to 83% of the workforce globally. In the

absence of precise statistics because of data limitations, it is evident that women form a larger percentage of immigrant domestic workers. Piper (2008) conceded that the trend was critical in paving the way for the feminization angle that the migration was taking as a big number of women moved from the developing to foreign lands in order to secure work as household workers.

Existing research on the topic has shown changes. For instance, a study by Hofmann and Buckley (2013) indicates that the perception that women and children migrated to join their families has changed significantly. For the researcher, women are now operating as independent immigrants in such of job opportunities. The view aligns with the position taken by Beneria, Deere and Kabeer (2013) who observed that profound transformations had taken place in the structuring of families as gender roles shrank in the global division of labour.

Unlike in the case of men, women are increasingly entering the labour market from the informal sectors of the economy. Unlike the case of the formal sector, the informal industry does not have sufficient protections. In effect, participants in the sector are left highly exposed to manipulation and exploitation. The position is affirmed by the OSCE Office (2014) which found that the sector was badly affected by the entrenched discrimination on the basis of gender. Such malpractices have an impact on the social, political, and economic rights due to women either at their homes or places of work. In practice, women face problems while pursuing education and employment opportunities. Satterthwaite (2008) found that the feminization of the migration process has enhanced based on the selection bias of workers globally. according to the author, 'worldwide forces have contributed to the intertwining of gender roles leading to sex discrimination (Satterthwaite, 2008). As a result, it is not surprising that while migrant men have the chance to join both low and high skilled jobs, women do not have access to such opportunities.

Reference to Health and Safety Executive (2015) perceives vulnerable workers as individuals who are at risk of being denied rightful work entitlements. Such workers also lack the capacity to secure their privileges. Based on the observation by Health and Safety Executive (2015), vulnerability is an outcome of precarious employment that is based on inadequate labour laws which fail to protect susceptible groups. Based on the account of Anderson, precariousness describes a scenario when domestic workers find themselves, hence, it is different from vulnerability. However, making reference to domestic workers as vulnerable,

does not mean that the feature is inherent. Based on the position of Satterthwaite, vulnerability is influenced by cultural, political as well as economic forces that come together to facilitate the identification of axes such as sex, gender, nationality, or race, aspects that are targeted at disempowering specific groups such as women and children in some ways. According to Ori and Sargeant (2013), precariousness might not reflect a totally dangerous situation although such workers can find themselves in such circumstances. Ori and Sargeant (2013) observed that precariousness included the absence of acceptable standards. The implication is that describing work as precarious might blur our understanding of the dangers associated with domestic work.

2.3 Migrant Domestic Workers under the Kafala system (Middle East Issues)

In order to understand the functioning of restrictive regimes, reference is made to the Kafala system which is largely applied in the Middle East region. The *Kafala* system is an immigration system that applies to low-skilled migrant workers, such as domestic workers. The scheme is applicable to many countries from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states. Other countries namely; Jordan and Lebanon also apply the framework (Abikan, 2008). Literally, the term *Kafala* is a representation of a 'surety, a bail, a guarantee, a responsibility or amenability' (Abikan, 2008). The depiction of obligation and responsibility is supported by the use of the term when in regulating the relations between employers and workers in employer-low-skilled worker associations. According to Roper & Barria (2014), the nature in which the *Kafala* system is implemented is not the same across the states. For example, in the GCC countries all migrant workers operate under the *Kafala* system. In Lebanon the system applies to low-skilled workers who primarily originate from Africa and parts of Asia (Azfar & Harroff-Tavel (2011).

For migrant workers to be accepted, and obtain entry visas, the *Kafala* system requires that either a citizen or institution from the state needs to employ them, or such worker is only allowed to work for the sponsor during the entire stay. The employer takes both economic and legal roles over the worker (Abikan, 2008). Taking Saudi Arabia's system of *Kafala*, the employer is tasked with the responsibility of the recruitment fees of the worker, medical exams completion, and possession of the national identity card. One of the most controversial attributes of the scheme is that the *Kafala*-supportive states require that worker's residency permits depend on their continued employment by their sponsors. The above feature puts the

employee at the mercy of the employer. Consequently, for workers to change employment or to leave the country, their sponsors must provide them with an ‘exit visa’ (Roper & Barria, 2014).

To a large extent the sponsorship arrangement benefits the respective state because it enables it to regulate the flow of labour, in addition to monitoring worker activities. Hence, it is possible to mitigate security issues (Roper and Barria, 2014). The organization is however detrimental to the migrant domestic worker. Such concerns have led the Special Rapporteur on human rights to note that the *Kafala* system allows unscrupulous employers to take advantage of hapless employees (Roper & Barria, 2014). Such form of dependency is complicated as it comprises legal, economic as well as livelihood dependency on the sponsor or the employer. On its own, legal dependency worsens the vulnerable position since fear of arrest in addition to deportation intensifies. The nature of the situation affects the worker’s choice to flee or report abusive cases. Consequently, it is not surprising that the ILO Committee of Experts rightly noted that the *Kafala* system facilitated the perpetuation of forced labour (ILO, 2012).

A report released in 2014 concerning the *Kafala* system to labour bondage in GCC countries provided a hint on the effects the system has on workers. Among the common forms of exploitation in the Gulf region include: non-payment/ underpayment of wages, passport confiscation, poor living conditions, prolonged working hours, violation of agency fees and recruitment, substitution of contracts and restricted movement, sexual, emotional and physical abuse (APMM, 2014).

Employees’ power over their workers under the *Kafala* system is heightened by the enactment of many additional laws. For instance, one of the laws is the one on the crime of ‘absconding’. Taking Kuwait for instance, when a worker is reported to be missing, police have the authority to cancel her permit of residency, and give a directive for her detention and subsequent deportation (HRW, 2010). In addition, within Saudi Arabia, reports show that approximately twenty thousand migrant domestic workers ‘abscond’ their duties since annually (Nikolas, 2015). Since workers’ legal status is linked to employer, after fleeing, automatically they become undocumented immigrants. The possible effect laws like the one on ‘absconding’ is that many workers decide to work under the bad conditions, which might

expose them to bigger risks associated with exploitation. This is supported by Naufal's and Malit's interviews which revealed that the undocumented status forced many domestic workers to struggle in silence while bargaining for higher pay. It is also noted that the absence of an employment contract creates the grounds for the violation of the workers' labour rights (Nikolas, 2015).

The international community has also weighed on the matter leading to its observation that the *Kafala* system is a failed framework (Crépeau, 2014). Not only for domestic workers, but also for many people who enter states that use the system because they experience the negative impact associated with it. Some of the criticisms is labour exploitation among migrant workers who entered Qatar to work on projects for the upcoming 2022 World Cup (Pattison, 2013). Based on the above account, it is reasonably assumed, that a system that unequivocally fails to uphold labour and human rights of workers is not worthy supporting.

The restrictive legal framework within the Middle East region limit the options that domestic workers have when faced with challenges. As a result, persons who run away from their employers have few limited alternatives for legal or physical protection. Ori and Sargeant (2013) observed that although the governments provide shelter, such facilities are scarce for domestic workers, and few victims are accorded the opportunity to shelter in the government houses. It is also known that within the countries, the governments have not set up official emergency shelter for workers who flee harsh working conditions. In addition, few embassies engaged in the provision of shelter facilities to domestic workers facing abuse. The situation is worsened for domestic workers who sought the assistance from recruiting agencies. The author reports that those workers who reported to agencies faced additional abuse through beatings and forced labor for other families. Overall, many domestic workers who seek help are subjected to additional turmoil because agents and authorities pay little attention to their plight.

Consequently, many abused workers avoid going to the police. A big percentage reported that going to report to the police would attract additional persecution, thus it would be a poor step to take. On the contrary, employers have the power to cause the deportation of non-cooperative workers at will by simply reporting them to the police.

2.4 Media and framing

As a concept, media framing reflects an action, a process or a method that involves the construction, or shaping a thing, whether material or immaterial (Framing 1989). The author proceeded to observe that framing came from the word *frame*, which largely refers to direct or share (thoughts, powers and actions), with the intention of attaining a given objective (Frame 1989). Based on the above introduction, the connection between the media and representation or framing of issues can be discerned in the field of mass communication.

According to Entman (2004), in the field of communication, framing involves selecting or highlighting given facts, issues or events before drawing associations among them in order to enhance an intended evaluation, interpretation or resolution. Based on the above writer, in many times, framers are interested in furthering the interests of the elite. Price and Friedman (2009) reported that during the 1930s, the media was thought to have the power to direct or persuade audiences. The audience was seen to be passive and only available to be fed with ideas by the media. With time, research on the field expanded as scholars took a more nuanced approach to understanding the media. Thus, agenda-setting found its way into study rooms.

McCombs and Shaw (1972) were among the pioneer researchers into the field with specific interest in the 1968 presidential elections. Based on their study, viewers rated issues highlighted by the media to be more important than others. The two researchers concluded that the trend amounted to agenda-setting. Understanding that the study is important given the perceived link between framing and agenda-setting research is critical. Agenda-setting is largely focused on the act of the media shifting stories to feed the public. It is however noted that news media do not only tell people what to think of, but also how to think about them, or the line of reasoning to take. The later part which focuses on the attempt to direct the thinking of the audience is where the aspect of framing emerges. Although some observers perceive framing as part of the agenda-setting, others such as Shah, McLeod, Gotlieb and Lee (2009) hold a contrary opinion. However, the latter group of scholars contend that they two hold involve similar psychological processes although they entail dissimilar cognitive processes.

De Vreese (2005) observes that framing can be examined in two different ways: frame-building and frame-setting. The author indicates that frame-building captures elements that impact the structural quality of frames of news. According to Kwansah-Aidoo (2005), frames framing applies to the manner in which journalists select facts or stories. Based on his

study, de Vreese (2005) observed that the formation of news frames takes cognizance with factors such as journalistic occupational constraints, editorial policies, and or new values and external influence from high-ranking people in the society. According to Kwansah-Aidoo (2005), frames highlight some issues while at the same time downplay others. The author goes on to indicate that journalists write stories in a particular way to influence people to read or take a certain perspective. The above factors explain the building of frames.

According to de Vreese (2005), frame-setting reflects the interplay between individuals' prior knowledge/ dispositions and media frames. As the author highlights, researchers are more concerned with understanding the consequences of framing. In his contribution to the topic, Gastil (2008) observed that research has demonstrated that frames affect how audiences receive and perceive news items. Particularly, what is presented in a negative manner can be used to underscore negativity. Besides the consequences, many studies have focused on understanding how news outlets frame stories. Iyengar (1994) focused on how the media framed issues either episodically or thematically. According to the author, episodic framing focused on a single, specific issue/ event taking place while thematic framing focused on placing events or issues under a broader analytical purview. In practice, thematic framing is less common. Research has demonstrated that episodic framing is common with specific focus on issue outcomes (de Vreese 2005).

With the advent of the internet, media framing, and research on it is likely to undergo certain changes. The reason is that the infinite amount of information is likely to alter the information landscape significantly. Metzger (2009) argued that competition among frames is likely to pave the way for obtaining a holistic perspective/ view on an issue/ event. It is however noted that the audience plays a big role in the selection of the media and the frames they are exposed to. Exposure to a certain platform might contribute to the development and reinforcement of frames and attitudes.

2.5 Framing migrant workers in the media

A number of studies have assessed the plight of migrant workers. For instance, studies by Liu (2008) and Wan (2006) indicated that the immigrant group is underrepresented and handled with prejudice by the Chinese media. According to Liu (2008), media reports continued to orchestrate the construction of falsehoods on the representation of realities regarding

immigrant groups of workers. In addition, the study by Wan (2006) indicated that media coverage of the workers always focused on their identity as workers rather than as citizens or residents of a city. A study by Li (2007) found that the coverage bordered on eight topics: migration and management, crime, relationship with industry, relationship friends and relatives, relationship with cities, transportation on holidays and entertainment sources. Li (2007) acknowledged that although the relationship of workers and industry received broad attention, their associations with people around them, as well as their daily lives were rarely discussed. Thus, the approach by the media portrays the immigrant workers as a burden to the society.

The study by Wan (2006) reported that industry safety (physical harm to workers in unsafe working conditions) was the dominant topic employed by the *Lanzhou Evening News*. Salary, the protection of individual rights and social security were the common topics. Jin and Mao (2007) also found a similar pattern since four other topics were also common: (a) policy such as on migrant workers' insurance, (b) accidents within and outside workplaces, (c) protection of individual worker rights, and (d) social assistance. Thus, the newspapers were concerned with migrant workers' housing, employment, medical care, children's education, skills training and social security. The publications also reported on issues of salary disasters, crime and accidents. Issues bordering on cultural life and work safety were also covered although rarely. However, migrant workers' physical and mental health in addition to other daily life issues did not find space in the newspaper.

Beder (2004), observed that the people whom journalists choose to interrogate shaped the news coverage. The same applied to quotes, research, and on-air appearances. In a bid to observe objectivity, journalists need to strike a balance on opinion that emanates from different sides of an argument. However, in China, many journalists tended to use people coming from the mainstream establishment as their sources of information. Such individuals are believed to have more credibility than others do. Entman (1989) supported the perception having aobserved that highly placed government officials and official corporate spokespersons were seen as the safest and trustworthy sources that led to legitimate stories. Few, if any quantitative studies have reviewed the authenticity of the sources of information when covering the migrant worker;s portrayal in the media. In addition, the results were not uniform. For instance, the study of Chongqing newspapers led to the realization that

government sources were highly cited (41.7%), closely followed by nongovernment entities and officials (31.4%), and immigrant employees themselves (17.4%). In a different research, Li (2005) observed that migrant workers served as the main source (48%), closely followed by government at (40.2%). In another study, two years later, Li (2007) found that the proportion of migrant workers stood at over 60% while government represented 28%.

2.6 Bias in Story Coverage

Ideally newspapers or other sources of information should take an objective approach in their presentation. However, Baker (2015) observed that such does not always occur as elements of bias are common, not only among small media houses but also among leading news outlets. According to Baker (2015), media houses understand that the information they give the public influences public opinion greatly, in terms of opinion-shaping and decision-making on public or private matters. In the absence of accurate reporting, citizens are disadvantaged because the information they use might be distorted.

According to Tien Vu, Guo and McCombs (2014), a reporter is bound to present a balanced story so that as an individual reads, listens and watches, he/ she does not get a feeling of a distorted report. The author identifies a number of biases that characterize news stories. The categories include: bias by omission, bias by selection of sources, bias by story selection, bias by placement, bias by labelling and bias by spin.

Altheide (1997) observed that bias by omission occurs when a reporter leaves out one or other sides of the story by choosing to focus on the angle he prefers. In addition, the reporters ignore any evidence that might disprove the story lines that they prefer. Bias by omission occurs within a story or in the long-term when a newspaper/ media outlet focuses on reporting a set of events without regard to others.

According to Kliger-Vilenchik (2011), another form of bias is based on the selection of sources of information. In this regard, the author refers to the reliance on sources or informants who support a predetermined perspective on a story. In addition, when reporters use terms such as “experts believe”, “most people believe” or “observers say”, these are also markers of bias. Like in all court cases where expert witnesses have been used, it is always certain that the experts always support the position of those parties that have called them. For

example, an expert called by a prosecution often testifies in favour of the prosecutor. Similarly, in cases involving media stories, reporters show bias by calling witnesses who support the framing of their stories.

Kliger-Vilenchik (2014) observed that another form of bias is story selection. In this regard, editors or reporters are focused on highlighting stories that align with their agendas. At the same time, they make deliberate attempts to put aside stories that are in opposition to a given perspective. For example, newspapers might decide to ignore studies or new information that undermines a dissimilar position concerning an issue. In addition, in cases where stories are contrary to the newspaper's position, such instances are given limited airtime.

In the assessment of Baker (2015), bias occurs based on story placement. According to Baker (2015), story placement measures the weight that editors assign a story. Studies have indicated that, an average newspaper reader and routine news story, many people focus only on the headline (Baker, 2015). *Bias by placement involves instances where a website (or newspaper) or an article or event is aired; a pattern that places news stories in a way that downplays information that is supportive of supportive or opposing views* (Baker, 2015).

According to Altheide (1997) bias occurred based on the labelling approach of stories. Further, Altheide (1997) found that bias by labelling was in two forms. The first is tagging stories with victims having extreme labels while at the same time leaving other groups unlabelled, and in some instances use mild labels. The additional kind of bias by labelling occurs when a reporter not only fails to identify a positive or a negative but describes the person or group with negative labels, such as "left for dead" or "at the mercy of the employer." In taking such a perspective, the reporter alludes to an air of authority to the source that is underserved.

Baker (2015) has identified another form of negative framing which he called bias by spin. According to the author, bias by spin occurs when the story has only one interpretation of an event or policy, to the exclusion of the other; *spin entails tone alteration when a reporter's subjective views on objective facts takes precedence by making a side's ideological perspective to look better friendlier than the other*. A number of news stories fail to reflect a

specific spin. Others digest the spin put on an event by taking all sides but when the story reflects one while excluding the other, bias by spin has taken place.

2.7 Kenya's newspapers framing of domestic immigrant workers

Despite widespread media reports on domestic work in foreign countries, no published study has been carried out to document the media coverage of immigrant workers from Kenya. The state of affairs implies that only an examination of news articles can illuminate the topic.

Reference to the Daily Nation of October 2014 demonstrates the sensationalist nature of the coverage of the issue. The paper carried the title, *lobby points finger at MPs in Saudi jobs scandal*. Citing Haki Africa, as its source of information, the Daily Nation indicated that prominent politicians owned about 10 recruiting agencies which are responsible for the recruitment and transfer of Kenyan domestic workers to the Middle East region.

The reporter of the article proceeds to indicate that in the previous month, the government had received an unprecedented number of complaints from families of Kenyans working as domestic workers in the gulf countries. The paper further alleges that Kenyan citizens are promised plum jobs but on arrival in their destinations they end working as house helps. In brief, the above news article portrays the exercise as embroiled in deception as innocent Kenyan citizens are duped into working as domestic workers in foreign countries.

On 12th February 2016, the Daily Nation reported that the government of Kenya was in the process to offer a safety net for workers in the Middle East. According to the reporter, 'it is expected that the program which was approved by the cabinet would protect immigrant workers, 'most of who have suffered the worst abuses and even torture'. From the framing of the story, the impression created is that working in the Middle East is a difficult endeavour that calls for concerted efforts to redress.

Based on the illustrative Kenyan cases, the trend lies on portraying a high level of exploitation of Kenyan workers working in the Middle East. The initial shock that the workers encounter, is that once they reach their destination, they find that they were booked for domestic work rather than the posh jobs they were promised.

In addition, they realize that they are captives in a foreign land, since their visas are issued under the Kafala system which puts them at the mercy of their employer.

2.8 Literature Gap

The literature presents diverse findings. For instance, Beder (2004) indicated that the news is shaped by the people whom journalists choose to interview. For Entman (1989), in China, most journalists use people from the mainstream establishment whom they believe to be credible.

It is also evident that few studies in migrant worker media coverage exist on information sources, and the findings are not uniform. For example, the study of Chongqing newspapers showed that government sources were cited the most (41.7%), followed by nongovernment organizations and individuals (31.4%), and migrant workers themselves { 17.4% } (Liu, 2008). In another study, however, Li (2005) found that migrant workers were the dominant source (48%), followed by government (40.2%). The implication is that researchers have relied on different sources to inform their studies.

Apart from the lack of consistency in the existing studies, and the widespread coverage of the cases of the exploitation of domestic workers by the Print media in Kenya, no published academic research has been carried out on the issue in the country. Thus, the proposed study comes in to add to the literature with specific reference to Kenyan cases.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

In summary, the chapter presents the methods employed in the collection and analysis of the data. The research intends used a case study method since it focused on the Daily Nation newspaper. It is evident that the method eases data collection through the employment of different approaches as explored in the paper. Owing to the provision of different data collection techniques, the present project employed content analysis in researching the topic.

3.2 Research approach

Conducting qualitative research is a useful approach in studying different phenomena. After collecting the most appropriate data, doing a qualitative research follows various steps depending on the objectives of a study (Jacobs 2006). Having identified the suitable data, the focus shifts to the synthesis of the results from the stories. This step however precedes the establishment of the quality of each unit of analysis. The results are then interpreted before presenting an impartial and balanced report upon the completion of the synthesis. In this regard, a researcher is expected to point any flaws or inadequacies that may manifest themselves when reviewing the data.

Few steps are necessary in conducting a qualitative research especially after data collection (Jacobs 2006). After collecting data, the data is coded for ease of analysis. This precedes identification of themes, patterns and ideas based on the data. Secondly, numerical computations are deemed necessary to highlight trends. Numerical measures are used to derive qualitative analyses as well as recommendations. In addition, descriptive statistics are used to display the findings.

Content analysis which goes hand in hand with narrative analysis is also adopted. In this phase, the focus is on content. This stage is important in understanding the context of a research. In doing a content analysis, the focus is on attaching value of data manifestations to frequencies. Thus, using a critical appraisal approach must be employed. In this step, combining the findings is required. In this regard, a researcher needs to aggregate results from individual units based on the synthesis. Finally, a report is prepared focusing on the nature of the objectives of the study.

3.3 Population and sampling

The present study drew its sample from The Daily Nation newspaper. Founded as Taifa in 1958, the paper has grown to become the country's number one based on unit sales (Rhodes 2013). The newspaper is a dominant paper in the country based on its broad reach of the population. The paper has also covered the issue of domestic worker exploitation in the Middle East extensively, thus it is a potentially useful source of information on the subject.

In the selection of the sub-units of analysis, the purposive sampling approach was applied. The choice was based on the categorization of units as observed earlier. The sampling permits a researcher to decide the study units (Wiederman 1999). Such decisions are based on an inclusive criteria encompassing: willingness and capacity to participate or to be in possession of special knowledge (Wiederman 1999). The focus in selection was on units that could contribute appropriate data on the basis of depth and relevance. Thus, only those newspapers that cover the exploitation of workers in the Middle East were selected for the study.

3.4 Data collection

The research involved the identification of newspapers that had the appropriate content for the research. In this regard, the researcher reviewed the Nation newspapers from the year 2014 to 2016. The content from the newspapers covering gulf country stories were used to identify the forms of frames that the print media use in reporting the exploitation and abuse of Kenyan migrants in the gulf countries

In the section below, the focus is on the strategies deployed in the data analysis exercise. Content analysis which is the strategy used is reviewed below alongside the data collection table that is used.

3.5 Data analysis and presentation

The study is largely quantitative in nature. Therefore, it relied on illustrative cases of the Daily Nation newspaper. The paper was chosen because it is by far the most widely read paper in the country. Primarily, the researcher focused on collating data into a manageable format. The arrangement precedes the advancement of a narrative on the basis of the findings. The interpretation takes an opinionated perspective. Although numerical data is shown, weight is given to qualitative aspects of the data. The analysis focuses on establishing trends

instead of highlighting each detail of the data. In practice, the analysis must align with the research objectives.

The data collected is presented using tables and other figures such as graphs. The data is also coded and transformed into percentages and numbers to ease its analysis. The use of descriptive statistics is preferred in capturing the features of selected units and the implications of the data based on the study objectives.

3.5.1 Content analysis

Content analysis is an approach that employs a summary form of content through the enumeration of various aspects of content. Through such method, a more objective evaluation is facilitated rather than comparing content on the basis of a listener's impressions (Stambor, 2005). Content analysis usually targets the analysis of written words, hence is largely a quantitative method. It is noted that many times, the outcome of content analysis includes numbers and/or percentages. In this study the content is from some of the stories which were published in The Daily Nation in the past three years. This helps in highlighting the media's reporting of the matter. The enumeration of events or attributes of data by use of the method serves two purposes: to eliminate subjectivity from summaries and to streamline the detection of trends (Stambor, 2005).

Although in the present case, the content that is analysed is from the print media, it is known that such content can be in any form. However, it is often converted into written words before it is analysed. The initial source can be broadcast programs, printed publications, recordings, the internet, and/or live situations. All content is a creation of people.

When carrying out a content analysis, researchers need to be in a position to tally content, into a collection of units that are roughly same in size (Stambor, 2005). No limits are imposed on the number of units to corpus although in general larger numbers of units are preferred (Stambor, 2005). When the units being counted differ greatly in terms of length, and preference for a given theme exists, a long unit is desired because it provides a greater chance of inclusion. This explains why in the current study, the researcher has chosen the period between 2014 and 2016.

Table 1: Content Analysis

	JUL 14	Aug14	Sept14	Oct14																
NO.OF STORIES PUBLISHED																				
TYPES OF STORIES																				
NEWS																				
OPINION																				
FEATURE																				
PHOTO WITH CAPTION																				
STORY PLACEMENT																				
BODY																				
GRAPHIC																				
LEAD																				
HEADLINE																				
THE TONE OF THE STORY																				
NEGATIVE																				
NEUTRAL																				

The above table provides the template that is used as the basis of data entry and analysis. As demonstrated, the table comprises aspects pertaining to number of stories, story categories, story placement and tone of the stories.

3.6 Validity and reliability

Issues bordering on internal and external validity and reliability are addressed to guarantee that the study is beneficial. Dependability, credibility, transferability, trustworthiness and conformability are considered in evaluating the study findings. This ensures that the research is not only, valid, but also reliable. It is noted that the use of a uniform content analysis

framework in data collection is expected contribute to the validity and reliability of the findings. The method allows for crosschecking for consistency and inconsistencies.

The aspects of reliability and validity are contemporaneous with those that are investigated in other research methods. In a content analysis study, reliability refers to the stability, or the propensity for coders to unfailingly re-code data in the same way across a given period. The tendency for a cluster of coders to categorize classes of members in the one way, known as reproducibility is also essential. In addition, accuracy, or the degree to which the categorization of a text matches agreed standards is also considered critical (Budd, 2002).

The main difficult in content analysis research is the questionable nature of the conclusions drawn based on its inference-based procedures. According to Budd (2002), the question borders on the determination of the level of implication that is permissible. Reasonable generalizations can be drawn from substantial amounts of data, although the concern of proof would still persist.

Based on the above account, the generalizability of one's inferences, is thus dependent on how one derives content categories, and on how reliable the groups are. Berelson (2002) observed that one must define the categories accurately to measure ideas and/or items one that are under investigation.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

In practice, ethical considerations affect research. The current study evaluated an issue that bordered on the behaviour and practice of reporters thus sensitive as it touches on private matters. In many cases, individuals or organizations prefer to exercise caution in reference to their conduct. Therefore, such organizations raise issues based on the possibility of divulging confidential data. Although the information used is in public domain, hence does not in any way violate individual or organizational interests, the data is only used for the purposes of understanding the topic. Thus, the use of the information is expressly limited to the purposes of the study only.

The researcher ensured that permission was sought from the University of Nairobi before embarking to field work a certificate of field work was issued (See appendix v) to enable the researcher to go to the field.

After final defense the researcher was issued with a certificate of corrections (See appendix vi) upon making the corrections and amendments suggested by the defense panel .The study was further subjected to plagiarism which was tested by the school's quality department and found to be within acceptable levels of plagiarism (See appendix vii). The declaration of Originality (See Appendix viii) was attached in the project in line with the research guidelines of the University of Nairobi.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DATA PRESENTATION

4.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the data collected from the selected study units. The data are presented in the forms of tables, and bar charts as deemed appropriate for ease of understanding. Finally, the chapter concludes by analysing the data based on the study objectives. As indicated in chapter one, this study focused on the explaining the print media's coverage of exploitation and abuse of Kenyan migrants working in the Gulf countries, based on the case of the Nation newspaper.

4.2 General characteristics

The study sought to find out the coverage of the exploitation of domestic workers plying their trade in the Middle East region spanning a period of three years (from 2014 to 2016). As a result, the collected data captures the Daily' Nation's framing of the domestic worker issues in the region. The table below presents a part of the overall collected data. The complete table is attached to the appendix.

Content Analysis Table	2014										
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sept	Oct.	Nov.
NO.OF STORIES PUBLISHED	2	1	0	1	2	2	4	2	2	7	2
TYPES OF STORIES											
NEWS	1			1	2	2	4	2	1	4	2
OPINION											
FEATURE	1	1							1	3	
PHOTO WITH CAPTION											1

In 2014, a number of twenty-six (26) stories were found. In 2015, the number of stories found was fourteen (14); while in 2016, only ten (10) stories were accessed. Thus, a total of stories under review is 50. The above data is captured in the pie chart below.

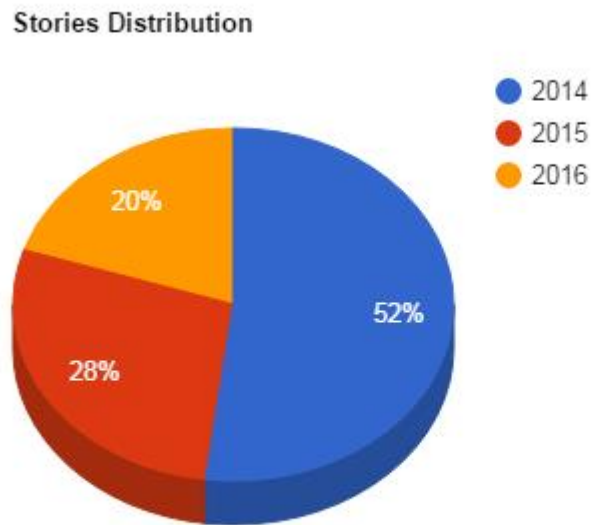


Figure 4.1 Distribution of stories of the immigrants in the Gulf countries

The month of October 2014 yielded the biggest number of stories that were published on the subject matter while other months such as March, during the same year no story on the issue was accessed. The declining trend in frequency demonstrates that in 2015, the cases found fell to 14, and subsequently to 10 in 2016. However, since the year is not over, the cases might increase. Perhaps, the negative coverage by leading media houses might also have discouraged those seeking opportunities from proceeding to the region thus lowering the number of stories on mistreatment.

The type of stories published on the issue would fall into four major categories. News, Opinion, Feature and Photo with Caption were the main groups of the stories. Based on the outcome, the biggest number (38) fell into the news category. Eight (8) of the stories were classified as feature stories; six (6) fell under Photo with Caption while only one (1) was an opinion article. The number of stories by category is thus fifty three (53). The number exceeds 50 which is the sample size because some stories overlapped between the categories. For instance, a story classified as a news item might also be categorized as Photo and Caption

based on the inclusion of photos or captions about the subject. Thus, a total of stories under review is 50. The above data is captured in the pie chart below.

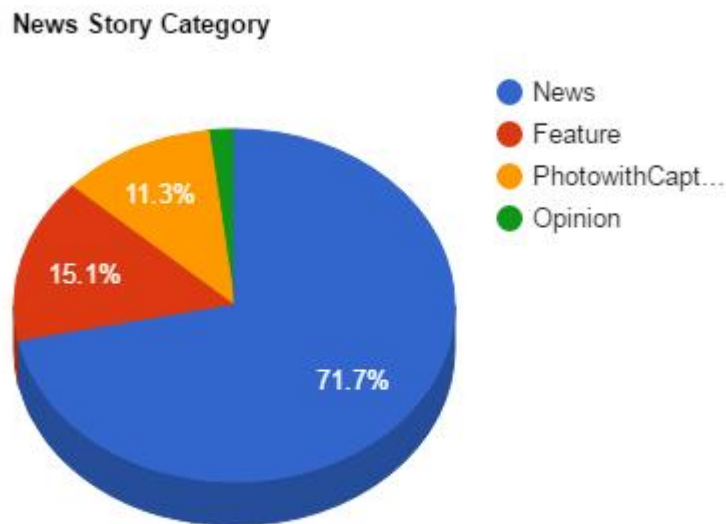


Figure 4.2: News story categories on immigrants on the Gulf country

The issue of story placement is also considered a major attribute in the framing of issues in the media. As such the study assessed the placement of the exploitation stories in the newspaper. The placement of the data fell into four groups namely: body, graphic, lead and headline. Based on the collected data, a big number of the stories were placed in the body part of the newspapers. In particular, forty-three (43) of the stories covered were in the body section; two (2) were considered graphics; and 5 lead stories. None of the stories was placed as a headline article. The above data is captured in the pie chart below.

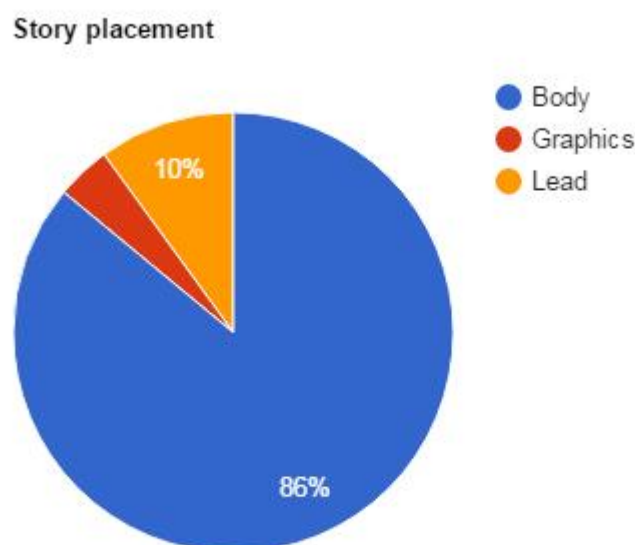


Figure 4.3: placement of stories on immigrants in the gulf areas

Reviewing the papers, it was also possible to identify the tone of the stories. Based on the study, the tones could be negative, neutral or positive. Stories that portrayed the domestic worker’s plight in the Middle East in a negative light were deemed negative while those that took an objective perspective without taking sides was deemed neutral. However, stories depicting the working conditions of the domestic workers were taken to be positive coverage. From the outcome of the study, a big number of the stories depicted the plight of domestic workers in the region negatively. Specifically, only six (6) out of the fifty (50) stories took a neutral perspective while none of them portrayed the venture as positive. The state of affairs is summed by the establishment that the tone of the remaining forty-four (44) stories was negative.

Based on the study, it is evident that bias by omission is present. In the fifty selected cases, only six were deemed to have taken a neutral position. In other words, the objective mantra that should be respected when reporting stories was ignored. In addition, there is no evidence to support the view that the newspaper attempted to find positive stories about housemaids

working in the Middle East. It is without a doubt that positive cases about house girls working in the region exist.

In almost all instances, the stories that depicted a neutral position were not by reporters by opinion or feature writers. Thus, it is discerned that all reporters of the news painted working in the Middle East for domestic workers in a negative way. The above data is captured in the pie chart below.

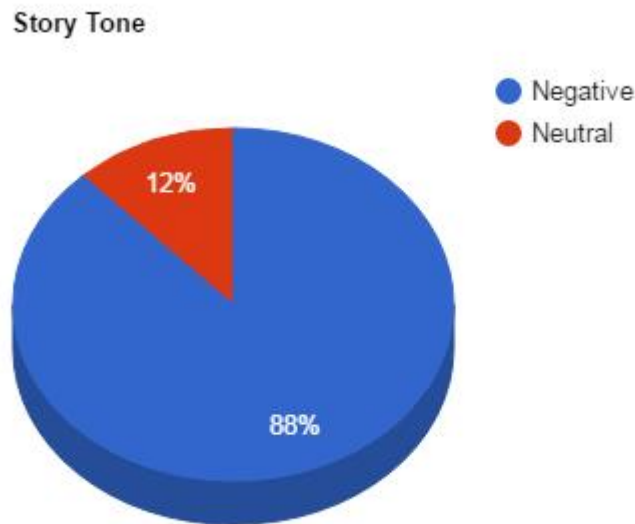


Figure 4.4: The tone of stories of Immigrants in the Gulf areas

4.3 Data analysis based on research questions

4.3.1 Framing of exploitation

The present study sought to address three questions. The first question sought to address how the print media covered/ framed the exploitation and abuse of Kenyan migrants working in the gulf countries. In answering the question, data relating to the tone of the stories gives a highlight on the matter. Overall, the results demonstrate that forty-four (88%) of the stories were framed in a negative manner. Below are some of the stories that were published.

Selected Headlines

Headlines	Dates
Modern-day 'slavery' in Mideast as Kenyans return in coffins	JULY 25 2016
Action needed to prevent abuse of domestic workers	DECEMBER 19 2015
I already bought you! It's a rat's life for Kenyans sold into bondage	NOVEMBER 18 2014
Domestic workers endure life in hell	AUGUST 18 2014
Help us bring our daughter back home	JULY 18 2014
It's true Kenyans are mistreated in Saudi Arabia, Mr Ambassador	APRIL 15 2014
Greener pastures in Saudi stink	MAY 5 2014
Kenyan woman, 25, suffering in Lebanon camp	SEPTEMBER 10 2014
Send a protest note to Saudi Arabia over the mistreatment of Kenyans	SEPTEMBER 7 2014
Tales of agony in foreign land	JANUARY 7 2014
Kenyan workers in Saudi must find the mistreatment familiar	APRIL 2 2014

The titles given to the stories also present a disturbing picture regarding the plight of the immigrant domestic workers in the region. The above sample of the story headlines proves the observation.

The first title of the three stories has the word slavery and coffins. Such strong terms are a clear exemplification of the negative view that the media has taken on reporting the domestic worker exploitation in the region. Although the second news item title is not so negative, the message is clear that abuse is being perpetuated. Based on the third story, the author proceeded to accentuate the problem by indicating that the exploitation of the Kenyan workers as "the tragedy of slavery in the 21st century". The use of the terms: rat, bondage and slavery in the story is a clear demonstration that the reporters/ publishers of the news have taken a negative perspective in the covering of the exploitation of Kenyan domestic workers in the middle east. The above is an example of the negative coverage of the stories in the newspapers.

4.3.2 Source of media reports

Regarding the question on what is the basis/source of the media reports, it became clear that the victims, their families and official sources were contacted. The news articles are largely drawn from accounts of returning domestic workers and their families. Taking for instance, the story of November 18 2014, the coverage is about the arrival of the body of a domestic worker at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport. In the same story, it is highlighted that another family had received a body of their loved one who died under mysterious circumstances. The news writer acknowledges that the family received scanty information indicating that their daughter was found hanging from a staircase in a building at her place of work. The brother of the deceased indicated that the cause of death was unclear. However, a medical report accompanying the body highlighted that the death was suspicious and needed additional investigations. From the above account, the media's sources of information were family members of the domestic workers, and medical reports.

The Saudi Arabia embassy has also waded into the matter to shade light on the issue. Based on the Daily Nation of August 25 2015, the Saudi embassy provided information insisting that it is only lawbreakers who found themselves in trouble. In other words, all law-abiding domestic workers would not face any form of mistreatment. The Saudi embassy also highlighted that the Kenyan authorities were to blame for failing to misguide its citizens on working in the Gulf countries.

Other sources of data include direct conversations via telephones and data from organizations such as the Muslim Human Rights Organization (Muhuri). The observation is affirmed based on the Daily Nation publication of August **18 2014**. In the news article, the reporter indicates to have made contact with some domestic workers in Riyadh Saudi Arabia in an effort to establish their whereabouts and welfare. The writer of the article concedes that he got the peoples' contacts from the Muhuri entity.

Overall, the biggest source of data is families of the victims. In other instances, the victims themselves give the information to the news centres. In rare cases, the news stories rely on official information such as from embassies and the ministry of foreign affairs. In light of the above finding, it is questions abound about the authenticity of the information although it is

indicative of the unfavourable working conditions that characterize the Middle East region, especially for domestic workers.

The above aligns with the literature which highlights that the selection of informants is a source of bias. Based on the results, the element of bias, on the basis of selecting individuals sympathetic to the negative framing of the story is evident. From the above, family members of the victims, and victims themselves are the biggest sources of information on the stories. It is apparent that a victim of an ordeal cannot have positive views on an issue. The findings also find that organizations contacted for information are those that are against the working of Kenyans in the Middle East. The selection of the respondents is unfair because it does include individuals who are working in the region without any hitches or organizations that support individuals to work there. Only in few stories has the embassy been contacted, and in the case, the reporter attempts to portray the office in bad light. According to the reporters, even the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is doing little. The findings support the position that the reporters have already taken a position, and they perceive those that do not share their views as being supportive of the suffering of the Kenyan immigrant workers in the Gulf Countries.

4.3.3 Story placement

The placement of stories is a central aspect in news presentation. It is assumed that the closer an item is to the front; the more important it is deemed to be. This is based on the fact that readers often begin at the front, and might not delve into other stories further from the front. Five of the stories were considered very important since they were lead stories that appeared at the front page. Many of the stories were not deemed that significant since they were placed in the body as filler and shorter stories. However, it is noted that a big number of the stories on the exploitation of domestic workers in the Middle East region fell in the first pages (between page 3 and 8). As a result, the newspapers have thrust the issue into the public as a major issue affecting the society. By placing them in such strategic positions, the public is influenced in how it perceives the issue. Thus, it is held that the placement of the stories is targeted at influencing public opinion on the issue.

Reference to the literature also supports the view that story placement is a basis for bias in reporting or news coverage. Placement is an indicator of the value that an editor places on a

news item. The above findings support the literature reviewed since it is evident that many of the stories were placed within the first ten pages.

Story selection is also another area where newspapers demonstrate bias. The literature highlighted that in this regard, editors or news reporters decide which stories to give prominence. Alternatively, the media houses concentrate on stories that are supportive of their agenda. Although the present study does not find evidence in support of the view that the *Daily Nation* did not pursue other stories, perhaps similar ones occurring locally, it is observed that it gave more coverage to incidences in the Middle East than in other regions.

4.4 Analysis based on research objectives

Primarily, the study focused on exploring the print media's coverage of exploitation and abuse of Kenyan migrants working in the Gulf countries, using the case of the Daily Nation Newspaper. From the results, the emergent idea is that the media portrays the Gulf region as a hostile place to work for Kenyan domestic workers. The media house gets its information from largely from families of victims, an aspect that highlights a possibility of reliance on one side of the stories. The study established that it is only one story that was based on official embassy information from the Saudi authorities. Although Kenyan authorities have also responded to the issue, both authorities place the blame on the victims although families of the victims observe that the working environment in the Middle East is harsh. The framing of the stories is represented graphically, subsequently.

Story Framing

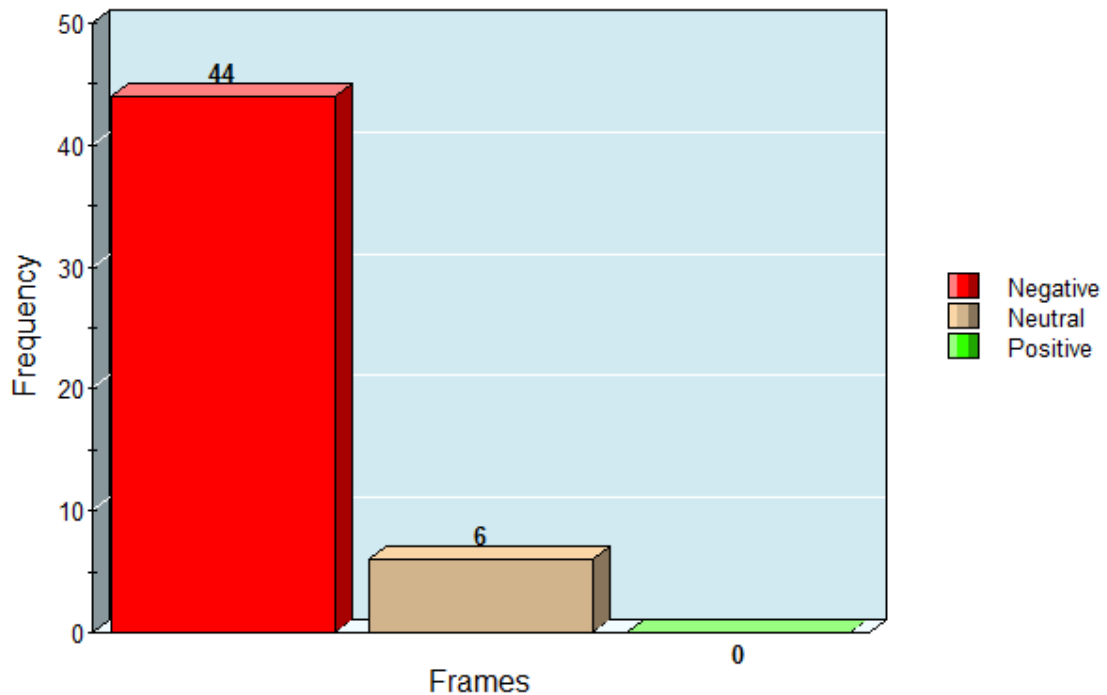


Figure 4.5: Framing of the immigrant story by the Nation newspaper

The study also addressed other specific objectives. One of the objectives was to establish the placement of exploitation and abuse of Kenyan migrants working in the Gulf countries by the print media. Based on the analysis, a vast majority of (43/50) were in the body section. The remaining stories appeared as graphics and lead stories. It is noted that the stories appeared between the second and eighth page meaning that considerable weight was assigned the stories. Thus, the study attained the objectives that it set out to achieve. The placement of stories is captured in the next bar graph.

Placement of Stories

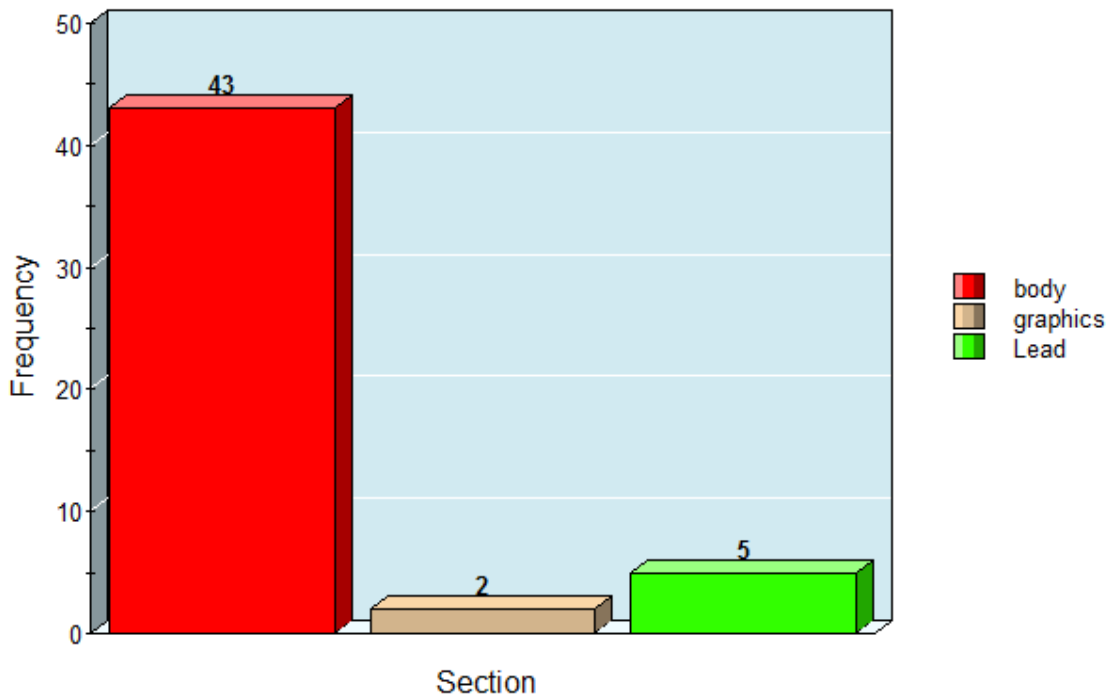


Figure 4.6: Placement of the Stories of immigrants by the Nation newspaper

4.5 Chapter Summary

In summary, the study generates significant results that highlight the coverage of the exploitation and abuse of domestic workers working in the Gulf countries from Kenya. The outcome affirms that although the household employees face many problems while working in the Middle East, the media has not done enough to accurately capture the situation. Whereas, the media has managed to bring the issue out to the public, it has failed to take a balanced approach to reporting the issue.

Concerning the framing of the stories on domestic worker abuse in the Middle East region, the results show clearly that the coverage takes a negative perspective. This is in line with the literature which demonstrates that news coverage is largely influenced by a number of biases. The negative bias is supported by the choice of the headings of the stories and their placement in the papers.

Bias is also demonstrated based on the choice of the sources of information. Based on the study outcome, the news articles largely took the victim perspective. Thus, it ignored other sources such as authorities that would have generated useful data for their reports. The finding also aligns with the literature reviewed which indicates that news reporters can take one side on an issue to distort the view of the public on an issue. In brief, the choice of victims of abuse and their families for interviewing does not reflect the whole picture on domestic abuse since the perceived or real abusers and authorities have not been consulted widely to share their part of the issue.

The study also finds that the manner in which the stories are placed is targeted at influencing public opinion. The position is held since the stories appear in the front pages of the newspaper. This is also supported in the literature as a form of bias in the reporting and framing of news articles.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Overview

In the final chapter, the concentration is on the summarizing the findings, concluding and giving recommendations. The summary of the study highlights the main areas covered across the five chapters while the conclusion and recommendations are based on the research's findings.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The present study was focused on evaluating the coverage of the exploitation of domestic workers operating in the Middle East. In order to address the issue, the research focuses on the way the Daily Nation has covered stories pertaining to the region from 2014 to 2016. As a result, the study had the primary objective of evaluating the Daily' Nation's framing of the domestic workers' exploitation in the region.

Issues that touch on life are emotive in nature. From the background of the study, it is evident that securing employment in Kenya is a challenge. In order to address the problem, a number of Kenyans move abroad. One of the preferred destinations is the Middle East region. Although at the point of departure, many individuals have lofty ambitions, once they get to their preferred points of work, their aspirations turn sour, albeit on the basis of newspaper reports.

The fact that Kenyans continue to head to the Middle East despite the negative coverage of domestic workers in the region raises concerns. In practice, bad news should discourage individuals from visiting the supposedly hostile regions. Since Kenyans have defied the reports, reviewing the framing of the stories to add clarity to the issue became not only desirable but also timely. On the one hand, it was thought that, either Kenyans seeking work as domestic workers in the region were too naïve or the media was sensationalizing the matter. As a result, the study sought to assess the print media's cover of the exploitation and abuse of Kenyan migrants working in the gulf countries; the print media's categorization of the stories and the source of the media reports.

Based on the review of the literature, it emerged that diverse findings exist. In this regard, researchers who have studied the topic presented divergent views on the matter. For example, Beder (2004) found that the decision on who to interview influenced the content and the framing of the news. In other words, the framing of an issue on the media depended on a journalist's selection of people to interview. The revelation supported the one found by an earlier study by Entman (1989), which indicated that most journalists relied on individuals from the mainstream establishment, simply because they were seen to be more credible. In essence, the two researchers were clear that the reporting of news was not as objective as people/ public thought. In this regard, room for bias existed, especially if journalists did not manage to identify credible and informed informants/ interviews. It must be noted that in the present study, it became clear that many of the stories were generated either from victims who had escaped from the middle east or their families. Such sources of data cannot be taken to be wholly truthful since they align with only one side of the story. In this regard, it is discerned that the sources of the Daily Newspaper while covering the exploitation of domestic workers in the Middle East are contestable.

The literature also revealed that studies on media framing of the suffering of domestic workers has attracted extensive research, albeit, internationally. Across the studies, different sources of data have been cited. For example, the study of Chongqing newspapers indicated that government sources were largely cited (41.7%), followed by nongovernment organizations and individuals (31.4%), and migrant workers themselves (17.4%). Overall, it was summed that researchers have relied on different sources to inform their studies. Besides such inconsistencies, the widespread coverage of the cases of the exploitation of domestic workers by the Print media has not attracted a study that has been published in the academic circles in the country. Thus, the study was undertaken to add to the literature using Kenyan cases.

In the collection of data, the study focused on the period ranging from 2014 to 2016. The choice of the period was targeted at highlighting recent trends on the topic. Depending on a qualitative study approach, the study used the purposive sampling method to identify the units for the task. In particular, only units that had stories on domestic worker exploitation from the period over the specified period of time were selected. In other words, the criteria for selection were duration and topic appropriateness. The choice of the Daily Nation was

based on the paper's dominance in the print media category in the country thus it was expected to provide adequate data for the study.

In summary, the methodology chapter presents the methods employed in the collection and analysis of the data. The research intends used a case study method since it focused on the Daily Nation newspaper. It is evident that the method eases data collection through the employment of different approaches as explored in the paper. Owing to the provision of different data collection techniques, the present project employs content analysis in researching the topic. Through the use of content analysis, data is summarized in an easy to understand and analyse format. In practice, content analysis focuses on the analysis of the frames that are used to report an issue thus facilitating clarity of understanding of issues under consideration.

Overall, the study finds that the framing of the stories took a negative perspective. From the results, 88% of the stories were framed in a negative manner. Regarding story placement, many of the 86% of the stories covered were in the body section but within the first ten pages of the newspapers. Thus, they stood a big chance of being read by the public.

The news articles do not portray objectivity in their reporting since the sources of their stories are largely drawn from the narrations of returning domestic workers and their families. A story narrated by a victim might not accurately depict the circumstances surrounding an issue such as domestic worker exploitation. The present study did not find a newspaper article that thoroughly interrogates a story to ascertain the account of a victim or family by establishing communication with the employer in the Middle East or an authoritative source from the other end. It is only in one instance where the Saudi embassy was consulted, and surprisingly, it denied the negative allegations, by indicating that only those Kenyans who breached the law found themselves in problems.

5.3 Implications for Future Research

Concerning future research, reference is made to the source of data for the study. Although content analysis is a useful data analysis approach, conducting interviews with reporters and victims involved in the issue of domestic worker abuse would help to highlight some aspects

of the topic. For instance, the reporters would be allowed to support the credibility of their news stories and share other sources of their stories.

The present study has limited its research to only one media house. In essence, only a single case has been used to cover the issue of media framing of immigrant domestic workers in the Gulf Region. Although the findings generated are useful, in future conducting a study that interrogates more cases would be ideal. In such an event, it would be more informative because cross-comparisons can be made from a comparative study.

In light of the findings of the present study, various implications emerge. Firstly, the study finds a grey area in terms of sources of the sources of stories. Basing newspaper reports on victim and family accounts is not opposed. Based on the literature, the selection of sources of information is a source of bias that newspapers need to address if their reporting is to be deemed balanced. In other words, it would be beneficial if the newspapers would carry additional investigations by following up the cases to get the other side of the story. Such information can be obtained by covering the issue based on employers' accounts from the Middle East. In addition, given that not all domestic workers working in the region have complained, pursuing neutral views would also be helpful. A balanced coverage of the stories would allow the public to make an informed opinion on the matter.

5.4 Recommendations

The government of Kenya has a duty to protect its citizens just like any governments across the world. In this regard, it is the responsibility of the government to ensure that recruitment agencies involved in the hiring and transfer of domestic workers to the Middle East adhere to ILO standards on domestic work. In addition, state authorities should closely monitor the agencies and impose strict penalties for those involved in malpractices or violations of the workers' rights. In order to be effective, the authorities must set clear guidelines on recruitment practices. Furthermore, creating procedures that allow domestic workers to report all forms of abuse and related allegations by their agents and employers once they return would provide an ideal practice to stem the vice. Given the low level of information at the disposal of the domestic workers, it would be useful to inform and sensitize them about their rights and provide them with knowledge about the place of work in the Middle East.

Some of the other recommendations target the MENA region where Kenyan domestic workers ply their trade. Among the proposals is the need to reform the Kafala system which facilitates the exploitation of domestic workers. In this regard, there is a need to improve the recruitment approach as well as establishing oversight on agencies involved. In addition, the authorities should improve access to assistance services such as redress mechanisms for individuals who are exploited. Besides, it would be helpful if the Middle East countries committed to extending protections established under their national laws to cover the plight of domestic workers. Authorizes in the middle east countries should explore measures that border on assisting domestic workers who encounter problems. In this regard, making plans to expedite the processing of temporary travel documents for abused domestic workers who cannot recover their passports should be the target.

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Appendixes: (i)

Figure 4.1 Coverage of plight of Kenyans migrants in the gulf area between 2014 to 2016

	2014										
	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov
No. of Stories Published	2	1	0	1	2	2	4	2	2	7	2
Types Of Stories											
News	1			1	2	2	4	2	1	4	2
Opinion											
Feature	1	1							1	3	
Photo With Caption											1
Story Placement											
Body	1			1	2	2	4	2	2	7	2
Graphic	1										
Lead	1	1									
Headline											
The Tone of The Story											
Negative	1	1		1	2	2	4	2	2	7	2
Neutral	1										
Positive											

	2015						2016			
	Feb	April	May	Aug	Sept	Dec	March	May	July	
No. of Stories Published	1	2	2	2	1	2		2	1	4
Types Of Stories										
News	1	2	2	2		1		1	1	4
Opinion					1			1		
Feature						1				
Photo With Caption	1	1								2
Story Placement										
Body	1	2	2	1	1	2		2	1	3
Graphic					1					
Lead				1						1
Headline										
The Tone of The Story										
Negative	1	2	2	1		2			1	3
Neutral				1	1			2		1
Positive										

Appendixes: (ii)

Modern-day 'slavery' in Mideast as Kenyans return in coffins

Most parents do not know the whereabouts of their daughters and only await their calls.

Monday July 25 2016

Jackline Muthoni during an interview on September 16, 2014 at Nation Centre. She said she was mistreated while working for a family in Lebanon. At best, the migrant women enjoy good working conditions and kind employers while, at worst, they are treated like slaves and die as a result. PHOTO | JEFF ANGOTE | NATION MEDIA GROUP .

In Summary

Eight years ago, New York-based Human Rights Watch voiced its concerns about the labour, immigration and criminal justice systems in Middle East countries.

Wanjiku is one of the many victims of Middle East's "Kafala" (sponsorship) system, which ties domestic and other migrant workers' employment visas to their employers; a system that fuels exploitation and abuse.

Rose Adhiambo, 24, went to Lebanon in 2009 after a Mombasa-based agent promised her — like they do to everyone — a hefty pay.

ADVERTISEMENT



By STELLA CHERONO

[More by this Author](#)

Nobody really knows how Eunice Wanjiku, 38, died three years before her body was discovered at a Saudi Arabian mortuary.

Today, what she went through remains buried beneath the blossoming flowers that sprout on the site of her grave.

For more than 1,000 days, morgue authorities tagged Wanjiku's body as "unidentified", and it was only after the government threatened to dispose of the cadaver that her Kenyan family got to know about the death of their daughter.

The single mother of one was among the many Kenyans caught up in the Middle East's "modern-day slavery", where domestic workers face serious human rights abuses and death — thanks to the continent's contract labour policy that puts migrant workers into servitude.

Eight years ago, New York-based Human Rights Watch (HRW) voiced its concerns about the labour, immigration and criminal justice systems in Middle Eastern countries, describing the abuse and labour that female domestic workers face as "amount(ing) to slavery".

Wanjiku is one of the many victims of the Middle East's "Kafala" (sponsorship) system, which ties domestic and other migrant workers' employment visas to their employers, a system that fuels exploitation and abuse.

More so, she was a victim of continuing human trafficking that the government has been unable to stem.

Kafala gives the employer immense control over the worker — and most employees lose their right to leave the house on arrival.

"The stories some of these girls tell me and other women representatives are really sad, and really, something has to be done," said nominated Senator Emma Mbura, who has been pressuring the government to make arrangements for the women working in the Middle East to be brought back home.

Most parents do not know the whereabouts of their daughters and only await their calls.

COMMITTED SUICIDE

Wanjiku's parents — ChegeKahiga and Grace Gathoni — had hoped that their daughter would return, even after communication between them and her was abruptly cut.

It was a hope that they kept alive as they continued with their lives in King'eero Village, Kabete Sub-County, in Kiambu. Then the news came last year — and it was shattering.

“We received a call from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nairobi who broke the news to us after asking us whether we knew her,” said Mr. Kahiga.

The information was that Wanjiku had committed suicide after running away from an unspecified employer — a narrative that appears in most of the bizarre murder cases.

It is only after a post-mortem examination was carried out on her body that they learnt the truth: Ms Wanjiku died of strangulation.

While this raised a lot of questions on the cause of her death, and why her employer and agent and the Saudi Arabian government had not contacted them when their daughter died, no answers were forthcoming.

Her father said Wanjiku had moved to Saudi Arabia in 2011.

“For the first one year, she kept calling and we would speak on the phone for quite a long period of time. Then we suddenly could no longer reach her.”

That was in March 2012. Like many parents whose children are in the Middle East, Kahiga neither had the contact of the local agent nor the employer.

All this time, the body of his daughter lay in a freezer with an "unidentified person" tag somewhere in a country the family had only heard of.

The family was not compensated, and the grave is the only remaining memory of their daughter's sojourn to Middle East.

The number of Kenyans who have died through the Kafala system is not known — yet recruiting agents continue to send naïve and unsuspecting teenagers to the Middle East with the promise of a better life and better pay.

At best, the migrant women enjoy good working conditions and kind employers while, at worst, they are treated like slaves and die as a result.

FAILED ATTEMPT

Rose Adhiambo, 24, went to Lebanon in 2009 after a Mombasa-based agent promised her — like they do to everyone — a hefty pay.

At first, she was hesitant about her decision after learning that several Kenyans had lost their lives there.

But caught between incessant poverty at home and the promise of a good life abroad, she left for Lebanon.

For six months, Adhiambo was paid on time and communicated with her family. It was only after she sought permission to visit Kenya that her employer said she had “bought” her.

In the recruitment process, employers are supposed to pay air tickets and visa fees while recruiters charge exorbitant fees that are supposed to be recovered after a person is placed within a home.

The workers are denied any travel and their passports confiscated. As with the Wanjiku case, nobody knows what happened to Adhiambo.

But days later, she made news all over Beirut after her employer claimed that she had jumped from the sixth floor of the apartment where they lived in the Lebanese capital.

Beirut newspaper *Al Ahbar* claimed she had tied polythene bags together to form a rope while her employer was away, and that she fell to her death as she tried to escape, probably using the rope.

Her parents later received her body, wrapped in gauze and put in a metallic casket.

Beside the body was her passport, which had initially been confiscated from her, and a letter that stated that she had died while trying to escape from her employer’s home.

Five years down the line, her parents, Maurice and Jael Otete, are yet to receive any tangible information on her death from the Lebanese government or Kenya’s embassy in Beirut.

Appendixes: (iii)

I already bought you! It's a rat's life for Kenyans sold into bondage

And that's the tragedy of slavery in the 21st century.

Tuesday, November 18 2014

Relatives load the body of a slain family member into a hearse on arrival at the JKIA. Last week, the family of a woman named Joyce Wanjiru received her body in the same manner. From the scanty information they received, Wanjiru was found hanging on the staircase of a storied building where she worked, "her head facing downwards". "The cause of the death is not clear," said her brother, Kung'u. "The medical report we received states a "suspicious ordeal" upon the deceased and recommends further investigations." FILE PHOTO | NATION MEDIA GROUP

In Summary

It was Njeri who shot a short video clip weeks before she came back home and posted it on social media. In it she begged for assistance to fly back to Kenya, and her plea attracted the attention of both the media and the government. The state, however, took long to rescue her, and so she decided to escape from captivity.

At the time of publishing this story, reports indicated that there were three other bodies of Kenyan women lying in Saudi Arabia, too far away for grieving families to reach them. Many girls sign contracts that are written in Arabic out of ignorance — and probably intoxicated by the chance to fly out — and as a result cannot defend themselves when things take a turn towards hell.

ADVERTISEMENT



By BERNARDINE MUTANU

More by this Author

A young girl's body was flown back into Kenya on Thursday last week, and as her family wailed at the airport, their tears were just a drop in a sad, disconsolate ocean, for many more such families are going through the same ordeal.

A recent report by the Human Rights Watch indicates that such pain is not uncommon for families that send their children to particular countries, especially Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Lebanon

I just feel lucky to be alive and back home,” Ann Njeri chimed a few days after she arrived back into the country from Saudi Arabia, the promised land she believes is her hell on earth. “I feel so happy that God saved me.”

On the day she decided enough was enough, her domestic employer confiscated her mobile phone after learning that she had been communicating with her family back in Kenya, but that did not deter her from prodding to be taken back to her Saudi agent.

“He took me by night to the agency offices in Qurryat. I was hungry and sick but I did not mind it because all I wanted was to be out of his house,” she said.

The 27-year-old from Limuru became increasingly afraid she would die of hunger, thirst, stress and burn-out several weeks after arriving in Saudi Arabia.

She said she was only allowed to eat leftovers by her employers, who told her that they did not have any obligation to provide her with food since they had “bought her for a lot of money”.

She had heard a lot of stories back in Kenya about slavery in the Middle East but ignored them because all she wanted was a job. The allure of “working abroad” also ensnared her, as it has many other Kenyan youth, and so earlier this year she was among several other Kenyan girls who boarded a plane at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport and flew out to Saudi Arabia.

Despite numerous media reports warning girls to be careful when seeking employment outside the country, Njeri was excited at the new opportunity, but that thrill soon turned into regret a few hours after arriving in Saudi Arabia.

Her employer started mistreating her, constantly reminding her that she was his slave, and that he did not have any obligation to treat her as a human being. Shocked by the indignity, she decided to run away to her agent, whom she hoped would arrange for her return to Kenya.

“I wanted to get home as soon as I could,” she said. “I regretted ever stepping out of my country. It was horrible in the house... and worse at the agent’s office. After staying in the office for three weeks without enough and proper food, I fell sick but they would not take me to the hospital.

DECIDED TO ESCAPE

So I decided to escape when one day a cleaner left a door ajar. A few metres from the office, however, I lost my breath and collapsed. I came to a hospital bed and I was informed that a police officer had rescued me from the street and taken me to the hospital.”

Doctors transfused her with blood and water, and then, out of curiosity, asked her what had happened. She told them she had been underfed and overworked for days, and that she was running away from “bondage” when she collapsed.

The doctors informed the police of Njeri’s plight, and the police instructed the agent to ensure that Njeri had her passport and return air ticket within two days.

She stayed at the hospital for four days before being released to police custody, where she stayed for another three days before being flown back to Kenya.

Now Njeri is happy to be back home, the lesson learnt. She, however, fears for the hundreds, probably thousands, of girls trapped in Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries, girls who left the country happy, but who have been turned into modern-day slaves who have no hope of ever regaining their freedom and dignity until they sweat it out through their contractual agreements.

In the three weeks she stayed at her agent’s office, for instance, Njeri says nine Kenyan girls were brought in by different people, all with the same story: they had been mistreated by their employers, and they wanted to either go back home or be transferred to different households.

“One said she had been raped by four men,” Njeri said. “She was in a very bad state. Another was completely sick and could not walk and we had to assist her move around; and yet another had her hands burnt. Their cases made me even more afraid.”

ATTRACTED MEDIA AND GOVERNMENT

It was Njeri who shot a short video clip weeks before she came back home and posted it on social media. In it she begged for assistance to fly back to Kenya, and her plea attracted the attention of both the media and the government. The state, however, took long to rescue her, and so she decided to escape from captivity.

Such incidents put both the agents and the state between a rock and a hard place because the girls sign contracts with their employers to work for a particular period, and when they run away they are deemed, by law, to have absconded duty, which is a labour offence in Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries.

But the exodus back is happening, laws or no laws. On the plane back, for instance, Njeri travelled with another young girl from Mombasa who had been badly injured after, she said, her employer poured boiling cooking oil on her. Last week, two other girls — Jackline Wangari and Mary Njeri — flew back into the country after just a few days with their employers.

These, though, are, in a macabre way, the lucky ones, for many more others come back maimed or, worse, dead. Joyce Wanjiru is one of them. She left her Ruiru home for Saudi Arabia in June this year, but died just weeks later in unclear circumstances.

Her brother, Patrick Kung’u, told DN2 that they spoke for the last time on June 7, soon after she arrived in Saudi Arabia. “But then, just four months later, we received a call from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs informing us that my sister had passed on.”

'SUSPICIOUS ORDEAL'

From the scanty information the family received, Wanjiru was found hanging on the staircase of a storied building where she worked, “her head facing downwards”.

“The cause of the death is not clear,” said her brother, Kung’u. “The medical report we received states a ‘suspicious ordeal’ upon the deceased and recommends further investigations.”

Wanjiru’s body was flown back on Thursday last week, and as her family wailed at the airport, their tears were just a drop in a sad, disconsolate ocean, for many more such families are going through the same ordeal.

At the time of publishing this story, reports indicated that there were three other bodies of Kenyan women lying in Saudi Arabia, too far away for grieving families to reach them.

A recent report by the Human Rights Watch indicates that such pain is not uncommon for families that send their children to particular countries, especially Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Lebanon.

Househelps in the polled countries do not have rights and are often treated as slaves, and because they are new in these faraway lands, they have nowhere to run.

As the title of the report — I Already Bought You — suggests, girls who fly out to work as househelps are bought by their employers, literally.

They are either sponsored to enter, live and work in the countries; or are acquired from their agents.

The receiving agents in these foreign nations pocket between Sh222,000 and Sh356,000 for every househelp acquired by an employer. The agents claim the money is for travel facilitation of the girls, which in this case includes visa and passport processing, and air tickets. Foreign UAE employers give an extra Sh120,000 for each househelp they acquire from the agents.

As a result, employers feel that househelps are their “property”, and so they have the right to manipulate, molest and basically treat them as they desire.

LOCKED INDOORS

The girls are usually locked indoors as the employers fear “losing them” since acquiring another would mean more monetary investments.

In the UAE, where 99 victims of abuse and exploitation were interviewed for the human rights report, researchers listened to harrowing experiences that sounded as if they were straight from the slave trade era.

While Anne Njeri ate from a dust bin for more than three weeks and occasionally sipped baby’s milk so as to survive, another girl from the Philippines who relocated to the UAE told Human Rights Watch that her employers regularly slapped her in the face and kicked her.

“They have a stick for you,” she told researchers. “If I make a small mistake they would hit parts of my body — back legs, back and head. Sir would slap or punch me in the face. If they come back from the mall and I am not finished, they would beat me. They would say: ‘If you had done work then we won’t hit you’.” The report indicates that, in some instances, the girls were forced to work for up to 22 hours a day.

Prohibitive labour laws in the UAE give undue and full advantage to employers over the house girls. The emirates’ immigration and recruitment policies suggest that employees are bound to their employers through the restrictive Kafala system, which is a visa sponsorship programme through which employers seeking house girls sponsor their entry into, and stay in, the country.

“Under the UAE’s visa sponsorship system, a foreign worker’s ability to enter, live, and work legally in the UAE depends on a single employer, who also serves as the worker’s visa sponsor,” says Human Rights Watch. “Not only does this system give employers inordinate control over the worker, but UAE laws have few safeguards for migrant workers to escape from this dependency in cases where the relationship becomes exploitative or abusive.”

BEATEN AND RAPED

Due to the dependency and helplessness, girls are beaten, raped, underfed and exploited. Human Rights Watch says that, apart from working for long hours, most girls are paid according to their employer’s discretion and not as agreed.

Many girls sign contracts that are written in Arabic out of ignorance — and probably intoxicated by the chance to fly out — and as a result cannot defend themselves when things take a turn towards hell.

The Kafala system has been criticised by human rights organisations and the international community, and even though UAE is in the process of amending its laws, house helps still have a long way to go before they can regain their sense of dignity and belonging.

The report says that most of the girls who abscond and are lucky not to be arrested end up in brothels run by other absconders.

Despite various measures taken by the government, the business of selling girls to the Middle East is still rife in Nairobi as several agents continue to operate in the full glare of authorities.

KAZUNGU ORDER

This is even after Labour Cabinet Secretary Kazungu Kambi issued a directive to the agents stopping their operations and asking them to re-apply afresh for trade licenses.

Kambi thought this would weed out the fakes in the industry, but he seems to have been misadvised. Because Ethiopia stopped agents from hiring househelps from the country in 2012, the agents now target Kenya and Uganda, where they have found easy and ever-willing prey.

Their success is easily illustrated by the numbers; over the years, recruiting agencies in Kenya have grown from a few tens in the 1990s to 980, according to the Ministry of Labour.

Since January this year, over 27,000 Kenyans have gone to Saudi Arabia to seek employment, while the UAE alone has employed at least 146,000 househelps from Asia and Africa. Some of these will have nice stories to bring home this Christmas. Most of them won't.

And that's the tragedy of slavery in the 21st century.

Appendixes :(iv)

Domestic Workers Endure Life in Hell

Kenyan women employed as domestic servants bear the brunt of what can at best be described as life in hell in some Middle Eastern countries.

Saturday August 18 2014

In Summary

Those who attempt to run away but get arrested end up being locked up in police cells before being repatriated.

Most of them are unable to communicate with relatives back home after the agents who recruited them confiscate their travel documents and phones, close communication channels and vanish into thin air after getting their cut in the lucrative deals.

Complaints lodged range from being held incommunicado and sexual abuse to physical assault, deprivation of food, overwork and abusive language.

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By MARK AGUTU magutu@ke.nationmedia.com

Kenyan women employed as domestic servants bear the brunt of what can at best be described as life in hell in some Middle Eastern countries.

At the mercy of their employers, women employed in these jobs endure untold hardship and suffering, some almost to the point of losing their lives.

Most of them are unable to communicate with relatives back home after the agents who recruited them confiscate their travel documents and phones, close communication channels and vanish into thin air after getting their cut in the lucrative deals.

“Those working as housegirls are the ones in big trouble. They are never allowed to leave the secured homes and cannot even make calls. They suffer in silence,” said Ms Ann Wangui, who spoke to the *Sunday Nation* on the phone from Riyadh in Saudi Arabia.

Those who attempt to run away but get arrested end up being locked up in police cells before being repatriated.

“Right now I know of two Kenyans locked up in a police cell here in Riyadh as the immigration department looks into their cases. One is called Wairimu and the other Japheth and they are both from Nairobi,” she said during the telephone interview.

Ann went to Saudi Arabia four years ago as a domestic worker but managed to secure her release and now operates small businesses.

Two other women who gave their names as Salma and Warda said their problems set in upon reaching what they had hoped would be “a land flowing with milk and honey”.

Salma said that even though the workload is heavy, she would endure it were it not for mistreatment and demeaning attitude exhibited by the rich employers.

Warda, who said she hails from Bamburi in Mombasa, too, lives as a refugee but does odd jobs. “I would really want to come home but where would I get such kind of money?” she said.

The women were traced through contacts provided by Muslim Human Rights Organisation (Muhuri) which has been at the forefront in tracing Kenyans stranded in the Middle East and helping them return home.

The organisation’s records also confirm that domestic workers were the most afflicted by their employers in the Arab countries.

Complaints lodged range from being held incommunicado and sexual abuse to physical assault, deprivation of food, overwork and abusive language.

PHOTO WITH CAPTION: I

Help us Bring Our Daughter Back Home

Mary Wangari still recalls the last conversation she had with her second-born daughter, Esther Muthoni.

Wednesday, July 18 2014



In Summary

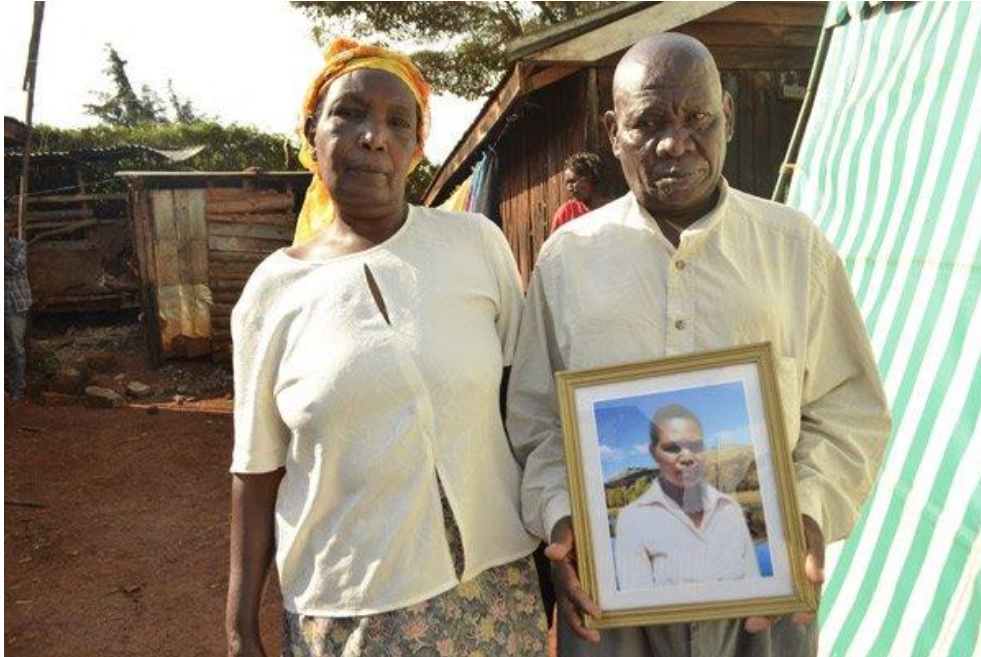
This couple's first-born girl died in Saudi Arabia a month ago, now they desperately want her sister rescued

Photo With Caption :2

Kenyan woman, 25, suffering in Lebanon camp

A 25-year-old Kenyan woman has been languishing in a deportation camp in Lebanon since July 22.

Wednesday, September 10 2014



Eunice Wanjiku's parents, ChegeKahiga and Grace Gathoni, with her photograph. MsWanjiku died in Saudi Arabia under mysterious circumstances and her body remained there for three years. More than 30 Kenyans from Nakuru County are stranded and starving in a transitional detention camp in Saudi Arabia. FILE PHOTO | NATION MEDIA GROUP

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AND ABUSE OF KENYAN MIGRANTS WORKING IN GULF COUNTRIES

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