



The Plight Of Domestic Workers In Mozambique: A Quest For Full Recognition Of Domestic Workers' Human Rights

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Abstract:

The discourse on human rights, of which domestic workers rights are part, has sustained controversies of epic proportions since the enlightenment period in Western Europe (16th century), and was popularised by the draft of Bill of rights in 1689 and consequently by the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948. The UDHR was lobbied to circumvent human abuses, especially by the rich and the politically influential against the poor and the weak. The UDHR is the basis of two important United Nations (UN) agreements/covenants (agreements between people or countries) known as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Mozambique is one of the signatories of the UDHR and the UN's aforementioned covenants, yet some groups of people's human rights continue disrespected and dishonoured. This paper examines the problems encountered by domestic workers in Mozambique. Our argument as substantiated by the results obtained from this study is that there is still gross violation and abuse of domestic workers rights in Mozambique. We further on to suggest, as our recommendations, some ways through which Mozambican domestic workers' conditions can be improved.

Key words: Domestic workers, human rights, problems, law, Mozambique

1.Introduction

Mozambique is one African country who has suffered gross human rights violations and abuses, especially during the Portuguese colonial rule (before national independence in 1975) and through the 16 year civil war that ended in 1992. With the end of civil war, the newly elected FRELIMO government sought to address all the problems that had for a long time haunted the Mozambican citizens such as violation and abuses of human rights. One way of guaranteeing the end of human rights abuses and ensuring the citizens' well being was Mozambique's strong step towards the adoption and endorsement of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the United Nations' (UN) The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

While Mozambique has made gestures towards the addressing of issues that threaten the citizens' general well being, some groups' human rights have somehow been excluded or rather neglected. Domestic workers are one such group that for a long time now (even during the colonial period) has been generally neglected by both the government and those humanitarian organisations that fight for the fostering of human rights. Castel-Branco (2013) confirms this when she notes that during the Portuguese colonial period, domestic work was highly regulated, but unprotected. Following independence in 1975, regulation of this sector collapsed, but domestic workers were not included in the new labour regime that emerged. The exclusion of domestic workers in the new labour regime was premised on the logic that domestic work is voluntary and depends solely on what the employer and the employee (domestic worker) agree on. We philosophise and challenge this reasoning as fallacious given that wherever two parties enter into an agreement (or contract), there should be always some form of regulation and protection (of either parties) at least by laws to make the agreement binding and avoid abuse of one part by the other. As long as the absence of a binding contract between the employer and the employee (domestic worker), and though of late "toothless" domestic workers organisations were formed in Mozambique, domestic workers' rights will continue violated and grossly abused. Consequently, domestic workers will continue suffering degrading, inhumane treatment by fellow employers.

This paper examines the problems encountered by domestic workers in Mozambique, in terms of their working conditions and salaries, with a view to make a case for the protection of domestic workers' human rights and for ending the exploitation of domestic workers. To this effect, case studies and examples of gross domestic workers'

rights violations and abuses are provided to substantiate our arguments, and recommendations (to the government and all concerned parties) on what possibly can be done to ease the plight of this important group of people are submitted.

2. Research Question And Background To The Problems Of Domestic Workers In Mozambique

Given that the main goal of this study is to investigate the violations and abuses of human rights of a particular group of people, domestic workers, the following main research question will be examined: What are the major problems encountered by domestic workers in Mozambique in their daily lives?

In order to provide answers to this key question and to understand fully the multi-faceted nature of the problems being faced by domestic workers in Mozambique, background to domestic work in the country should be provided. Technically, domestic work is defined as work performed in or for a household or households, and includes cleaning, cooking, washing, taking care of children, elderly or sick members of a family, taking care of a homestead, and gardening. A domestic worker is “any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship” (UN-NGLS 2009). Nicknamed the “patience industry” by domestic workers, it is characterized by low wages, long hours, rigorous schedules, humiliating tasks, unhealthy working conditions, and vulnerability to abuse (Castel-Branco 2013). In Mozambique, though both men and women are involved in domestic work women continued to experience economic discrimination, and they were three times less likely than men to be represented in the public and formal private employment sectors. They often received lower pay than men for the same work and were less likely to have access to credit (see Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labour 2011). As highlighted in the introduction of this paper, domestic work in Mozambique was rooted in the colonial era. This is to say that the plight of domestic workers in Mozambique dates back to the colonial era when domestic work, though highly regulated, was unprotected by the government of the time. Following independence in 1975 and as the civil war (1976- 1992) heightened the amount of people migrating from the rural areas to urban areas increased. Majority of these people had no relatives in the urban areas to look after them. Neither did they have educational qualifications to get formal jobs. Given that Mozambique is one of the most poorly industrialised countries in the world, the only form of employment the new migrants could get was that of working in the informal sector as domestic workers. The increase in

the number of domestic workers from the countryside and implementation of International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank structural adjustment programs by the Mozambican government in the early 1990s triggered the disintegration of the public care system. The dire need for aid and funds to finance imports such as arm weaponry during civil war, compelled FRELIMO government to negotiate its first structural adjustment package (SAP) with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1986 (commonly referred to as the Bretton Woods Institutions or International Financial Institutions—IFIs). The series of SAPs that followed thereafter, that is, in the early to mid-1990s required privatization of major industries, less government spending, deregulation of the economy, and trade liberalization. With the IMF and World Bank structural adjustment programs, there were mass retrenchments with the privatization of state industries, pushing formal sector workers into the informal sector. In fact, there are more than 39000 registered domestic workers living in and around Maputo capital- a 30% increase in 10 years - and domestic work has become the most important occupation for urban women, after self-employment (INE 2007). This being the case, it has proven beyond doubt that domestic work to Mozambique's national economy is so critical that when the Mozambican state moved to extend labour protection to domestic workers in 2008, the Ministry of Labour found it necessary to remove the minimum wage for employees. This, the government did for fear that most of the employers, who are themselves minimum wage earners in the formal sector, would no longer be able to participate in the labour force as they would obviously become unable to pay for the labour provided by their domestic workers- employers will have to pay their domestic workers the same amount they earn from the government/or the formal sector. Put differently, the Mozambican government thought that setting a minimum wage will result in loss of jobs by domestic workers as most employers will no longer be able to pay for their (domestic workers) salaries. As argued by the International Domestic Workers Network (Maina 2011), the loss of job by domestic workers is one of the eight myths presented by employers and governments against setting up strong detailed international minimum standards on domestic work. The International Domestic Workers Network (Maina 2011) sets out eight myths that have been used by governments and employer groups to campaign against stronger regulation of those rights:

- Domestic work is not really work,
- Most domestic workers are not mistreated anyway,
- Strong regulation would lead to rejection of those regulations,
- Raising the minimum wage will lead to loss of jobs,
- Legislating over working time in the domestic context is very complicated,
- If working conditions become too good, this will only attract more migrants (in western countries),
- How would such regulations to protect domestic workers be enforced?
- Stronger regulation would actually be counterproductive.

In fact as noted by Gertholtz (2012), one of the major problems she and others have found in their latest research (mainly in Asia and the Middle East) and Africa is that labour law does not recognize domestic workers as workers, so they are therefore not well protected. Such a realisation by many governments such as that of Mozambique has resulted in the reluctance of the regulation of domestic work such that despite the sharp rise in the number of workers in this sector, domestic workers were (and are still) not included in the new labour regime that emerged. Ridiculous to note is the fact that even the Organização dos Trabalhadores Moçambicanos's (Mozambican Workers' Organization –OTM), failed to note the extension of labour protection to domestic workers as key to addressing the social injustices perpetrated against domestic workers since the colonial era.

This situation has persisted into the recent times culminating into the formation of three domestic workers organisations namely: The Associação de Empregados Domésticos de Moçambique (Mozambican Domestic Workers' Association - AEDOMO), the Associação das Mulheres Empregadas Domésticas (Women's Association of Domestic Workers - AMUEDO), and the Sindicato Nacional de Empregados Domésticos (National Union of Domestic Workers - SINED) (See Castel-Branco 2012). Coinciding with the formation of these organisations, a Decree (40/2008) was passed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention. The passage of Decree 40/2008 coincided with a global resurgence of interest in extending labour protections to this historically marginalized sector in Mozambique. A sustained campaign, led by domestic workers from around the globe, culminated in the 2011 adoption by ILO of Convention 189 (C189). In fact on the 16th of June 2011, at the 100th session of the International Labour Conference, representatives of governments, workers unions and employers

organizations adopted the Domestic Workers Convention (C189) as well as the non-binding Domestic Workers Recommendation (R201) (see UN-NGLS 2009). The adoption of both the Convention (C 189) and Workers Recommendation (R201), marked in the history of international labour rights a landmark as it laid down basic labour rights and principles for domestic workers – a group that historically has been denied such rights. Domestic workers in Mozambique, however, remain plagued with serious problems as the domestic workers' organisations continue like barking dogs without teeth, and the Mozambican government remains reluctant to ratify the C189. It is these realisations and observations (of some domestic workers' working conditions) that prompted this research. In the sections that follow, we focus on the study area and the methodologies we employed in carrying out this research.

3. Research Methodology And Study Area

While the discourse on domestic workers has, to a larger extent, gathered momentum in Mozambique and by the world over in the last couple of years, violation and abuse of domestic workers' human rights is still a common phenomenon in the country. In domestic work, the domestic worker's place and relevance in terms of human rights (freedom of speech, freedom to choice/decision making) is overridden by the employer's choice/decision making. Domestic workers, who in most cases are passive recipients, have no or limited space to negotiate their choices, decisions, will and needs. What is even more worrying is the fact that in most cases, domestic workers end up doing chores that are beyond their job descriptions. It is this kind of background which prompted us to carry out this research. The research design for this work was largely qualitative, and as part of our research design we relied on literature studies, content analysis and in depth interviews. We carried out our study among the domestic workers in Manica and Sofala Provinces (of Mozambique) in 2012, and we sampled a representative category of women and men that were domestic workers or at once working as domestic workers. As data on this politically controversial economic issue is not easy to gather we interviewed only 50 people (25 women and 25 men) from the two aforementioned provinces, particularly in the areas they were found.

Given that the study is exploratory in nature, we largely depend on qualitative research design in order to allow space for an in-depth understanding of women's and men's lived realities in the social, cultural, economic and historical contexts they are in or once been. Qualitative research methodology involves detailed verbal descriptions, cases, settings

and systems obtained by interacting with, interviewing and observing social phenomenon (Bless and Higson 2000). Qualitative methodology is rich in description and best captures men and women's lived experiences/life histories, views, wishes, hopes and expectations on issues around domestic work since it provides a contextualised description of the studied people's behaviour patterns. Such behaviour patterns are important in helping us understand how and why different domestic workers working for different employers respond the way they did. Qualitative methodology, thus, was chosen because it sheds light on the factors that impinge the implementation of the statutory instrument as it encourages men and women (who are domestic workers) to say more about their situations and how it can be dealt with.

4.Sampling

To carry out this study, purposive sampling was used to select the respondents since the researchers were very familiar with area they were studying. Participants, thus, were chosen according to the researchers' own knowledge, belief and/or opinion about the most convenient and appropriate respondents from the studied areas. The other key data collection tools that were used in gathering data for this research were as follow:

4.1.Unstructured Interviews

Unstructured interviews were deployed as a data gathering tool with a view to make a penetrating assessment and gain the deeper understanding of the factors that impinge or constrain the full implementation of the Domestic Workers Convention (C189) Domestic Workers Recommendation (R201). In framing research questions for the unstructured interviews, we were guided by the works of Erik Hofstee. As espoused by Hofstee (2006), background type questions are important when carrying out interviews and it is also important to keep the interviewee to the topic being discussed, but it is also rewarding not to be too inflexible. Hofstee goes further explaining that one of the merits of interviews; especially in-depth is that the interviewee may even give you more than what you will have asked/bargained for. This is confirmed by Nanda and Warms (2007: 66), who assert that "unstructured, open-ended interviews explore a particular topic in depth". Yet, one should be careful in administering such interviews as they can produce misleading responses, thereby affecting results. Fifty domestic workers (25 men and 25 women) were interviewed to enable the researchers to get an informed insight and as much information as possible around issues of domestic work. This [data] gathering tool

was considered suitable and appropriate for this study as it allowed the researchers to capture meaning and significance of both the spoken word and bodily language/expression. This was quite fundamental in revealing hidden convictions given that in the majority of cases the participants/victims found issues of domestic work very sensitive and not easy to share with a third part.

4.2. Focus Group Discussions

Besides unstructured interviews, focus group discussions (FGD) were also used as a data collecting tool for this research. Focus group discussions are “informal interviews with small groups zeroing on specific topics or subjects” (Mwanje 2001: 34). The FGDs were conducted mainly to understand in greater detail the problems facing domestic workers in Mozambique including their experiences, wishes, hopes, views and activities in their working areas. Ten focus group discussions each comprising of five participants was constituted to examine the living experiences and problems facing domestic workers in Mozambique. This data collection tool was quite fundamental because as generally known information generated through an interactive process of collective reflection which a Focus Group Discussion provides is vivid and inclusive. Most of the FGDs conducted generated excitement and interest among my respondents as some of them were happy to be given an opportunity to discuss openly issues to do with problems and experiences in their area.

4.3. Primary Sources

Primary sources such as books, newspapers and other documents containing comments by domestic workers or their representatives were also used as sources of information to corroborate the narratives elicited both by unstructured and focus group discussions. Having discussed research methodology for this research, the next sections discuss the problems that domestic workers in Mozambique face.

5. Problems Facing Domestic Workers In Mozambique: Discussion Based On Research Results

Information obtained from the respondents generally showed that domestic workers in Mozambique still have serious problems especially given that the Domestic Workers Convention (C189) and Domestic Workers Recommendation (R201) have not yet been fully implemented for domestic workers the country-over to enjoy the benefits that the

'instruments' can deliver. Though one of the domestic workers' organisations, SINED led their group in calling on the Mozambican state to ratify ILO Convention 189 on Domestic Work, during international domestic workers' day in 2012, the ministry of labour mandated to spearhead the empowerment of domestic workers in general and the Convention in particular does not have total authority and decision making autonomy to effectively execute its duties in representing the voice and will of [domestic] workers. The ministry lacks sufficient institutional and resource capacity to implement the effective enforcement mechanism that would guarantee the well being of workers in the whole country. Besides, there are many other fundamental constraining factors that obstruct step up towards the easing of problems being faced by domestic workers in Mozambique. The major constraining factors that were revealed during research were these below:

5.1. Doing More Than Domestic Work

It was revealed by some respondents that what disturbs most in domestic work is that more often than not domestic workers end up doing more than what they were employed for. One of the male domestic workers in Maputo lamented:

- I was employed by my 'boss' as a security guard to safeguard his homestead while at work during the day. However, most of the time, I am asked by his wife to do domestic chores such as washing clothes and cleaning the yard. This is in spite of the fact that I am paid for only for securing their homestead.

The revelations as these above concur with reports by domestic workers from Kenya where IRIN/Plusnews (2009) reported:

- When Nora Adhiambo, 21, started working as a housekeeper for a family in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, she expected to cook, clean and look after their young children; not that she would have to regularly have sex with her employer.

"He would force me to have sex with him; every time he would sleep with me without a condom and this went on for two years," Nora told IRIN/PlusNews. "He threw me out when I told him I was pregnant; I realised later that I had not only left that house with a pregnancy but also HIV."

These testimonies by some of the victims (domestic workers) clearly show that domestic workers are in most cases victims of circumstances with nowhere to fall back at in terms of statutory laws.

5.2. Low Salaries, No Defined Number Of Working Hours

The research also revealed that salary negotiations were another serious problem that domestic workers in Mozambique are facing. As Castel- Branco (2013) revealed in her research with domestic workers in Maputo, salaries range widely in Maputo, with some domestic workers earning less than US\$20 a month; others as much as almost US\$300. This information auger well with the findings we obtained in Maputo during our research. In Manica province, salaries are even lower than what counterparts in Maputo receive. One of the respondents, Maria (not her real name) revealed that she earned 300 MT (approximately US\$10) for working full time as a domestic worker. Working full time means, the worker doesn't have defined working hours as s/he stays at the employer's homestead doing whatever the employer may ask her/him to do. This means that Maria works more than twelve hours a day, far more than the eight hours a day that is required by law. Worse still, her salary is far low than what one can imagine. The situation of salary in Mozambique is aggravated by the step that the government took in 2008 when the Ministry of Labour removed, from statutory laws, the minimum wage talk fearing that most of the informal employers (for domestic workers), would no longer be able to participate in the labour force as many of them (informal employers) are themselves minimum wage earners.

5.3. No Written Contract

For the fifty respondents we researched with, only two revealed that they had a written contract signed by them and their respective employers. The rest revealed that when they were employed, their contract were just by word of mouth. This was in spite of the coming in force of the Decree 40/2008 which says that domestic workers have the right to a [written] contract as verbal contracts are normally problematic. If a conflict arises, for example, between the employee and the employer, a verbal contract has no standing such that the latter may decide to alter it to the employee's disadvantage. This in no doubt places the burden of proof to the domestic worker who if the verbal contract was entered without the involvement of a witness may always loose the case. Still on the Decree 40/2008 is the fact that the Decree does not include a minimum wage. As noted

by (Castel-Branco 2012a) given that employers' incomes vary widely, the National Assembly argues that a minimum wage would undermine the employer's ability to secure care for the young and elderly, and also trigger mass retrenchments. Castel-Branco (2012a) goes on to give an example of some advocates who argue that it could even reduce wages as in Mozambique we have some colleagues who earn Mts 2000, Mts3000, or even Mts500, such that it becomes highly unlikely that even if it were to be set, the minimum wage would more than Mts2000. Besides, even the Decree 40/2008 itself does not account for the asymmetrical power relationships between the employer and employee such that employees can be fired even without a justified cause. Monica (not her real name), a domestic worker in Maputo, for example, revealed that she was fired by her employer after breaking a water glass. This was only eight days into her first month. Though Monica was given the money for the eight days she had worked for, she found it unfair to be dismissed from work for such a small mistake. In rural Manica, another male domestic worker, John (not his real name) reported to have been fired by his former employer after allegedly said to have broken two eggs that were on the shelf. To make matters worse, it was four days into his third month and was sent away without being paid for the days he had worked for. As any 'fair mind' can judge, these alone cannot be considered as 'reasonable' justifications to dismiss workers from service. Given their low levels of education and that these domestic workers had no signed contracts that define and clarify their terms of employment; it was difficult for them to take up disciplinary measures against their employers.

5.4. No Paid Time Off

While most of the domestic workers, especially those from Manica rural indicated that they were normally paid even for those times when they are off, majority in Manica urban and Maputo revealed otherwise. Even for those from Manica rural, we found that their employers normally paid them when they fall ill or go attending funerals just to compensate the long hours they normally serve when they are at work. And for those in the urban areas in Manica and Maputo, it was revealed that when they want a leave of absence to attend a funeral (to go and pay last respect), then the funeral has to be that of a direct family member such as the worker's mother/father, wife/husband or sibling. Otherwise, a worker is not paid for leave of absence to attend a funeral of a distant relative or friend. One Maputo domestic worker, Jacinto (not his real name) recounted his sad story:

- I was employed as a caretaker. After working for seven month, my wife's sister in the rural Chibuto fell sick. A message was sent to me but due to limited time at my work, I couldn't strike the chance to visit her. After a month, another message was sent (from the rural areas) that she had passed away. According to our Changani tradition, when such a relative feels ill or passes on we are obliged to visit the place. I told my employer, but he declined to let me go arguing that she was a distant relative. I latter on convinced him and he finally released me, but when I came back after five days there was already a new employee- I was already replaced. He only paid me for the days I had previously worked for and told me he no longer had anywhere for me to work.

Though mandated by Decree 40/2008 that Jacinto has to negotiate paid leave days or time off, it was evident that he wasn't treated so. From the research results obtained, it was revealed that negotiating paid time off for unexpected emergencies such as illness and funerals were highly contentious.

5.5.Lack Of Adequate, Safe Tools And Compensation For Workplace Accidents

Lack of adequate, health as well safe tools and compensation for workplace accidents were revealed to the other serious problems that domestic workers in Mozambique are facing. Due to lack of legal instruments that defend domestic workers in terms of conditions of service and compensation for workplace accidents, some employees get injured at work only to receive no compensation but dismissal from work. One Manica former domestic worker, Armantinho, who is now a shoe mender at one of the townships in the province, recounted his story:

- I was a domestic worker in Chimoio town. One weekend, my employee asked me to go out with his open truck to look for firewood for cooking at home. We entered into the forest, and it was a few days after veldfires in that area. As I was stretching my hand to reach a dry log by my side, I felt my right leg sinking right underneath. I felt like someone was pulling me from below. I screamed for help, but my employer came late to my rescue. My right leg had already burnt to the bone. He quickly drove me to the hospital where they found no option but to have it amputated. I spent four months in the hospital. When I came out of hospital I received no compensation from my employer. I took up the matter to the police but

I don't know what he gave them. They (police) kept on postponing the hearing until I was tired of making a follow-up.

Armantino's story is only one of the many workplace accidents and nasty experiences that domestic workers in Mozambique stumble upon in their life journey. Some domestic workers were those that reported lack of proper, adequate and health/safe tools for use at their workplaces. Such working conditions compounded with poor salaries aggravates the already miserable lives of many domestic workers in Mozambique. From a humanitarian perspective, the Mozambican government, members of the public and non-governmental organisations have to do something as a matter of urgent to address the plights of domestic workers in the country. Below are some of the recommendations we suggest as panacea to the domestic workers' grievances.

6.Mechanisms To Cushion The Domestic Workers' Plight: Some Recommendations

6.1.Civic Education

As revealed in the discussion above, some of the domestic workers could not take action against their employers/former employers for lack of knowledge of who and where they can get legal assistance. This problem is most rampant among domestic workers because most of them are uneducated and some are even illiterate. For the fifty domestic workers we researched with only less than 25 % had grade 12 (*decima segunda*), 50 % had grade 7 (*setima classe*) and the other 25 % had only attended school up to grade 4 (*quarta classe*). These results auger well with prior studies which noted that the level of literacy of the total population (male and female) is estimated at 47.8% (Giroth, July 2008), estimated 60% of adults still cannot read and write, with the illiteracy rate higher among women (USAID, 2009; Rambe and Mawere 2011) and illiteracy rate currently pegged at 43% (Ali, September 2009). The effective use of legal institutions and other such structures for the advancement of domestic workers' rights is incapacitated when people have underdeveloped literacy practices. Also, the general lack of awareness of the existence of domestic workers organisation especially by the rural domestic workers meant that the organisations are far from being utilised. This is precipitated by the unavailability of communication tools such as radio, internet, and television in the rural set up which makes the lack of knowledge and updates about different issues that affect domestic workers a huge hindrance for the domestic workers organisations to have a desirous effect. Thus ignorance of the current affairs has serious negative repercussions

on domestic workers' welfare especially in relation to issues of abuse and violation of their rights. As such, the general lack of awareness and low levels of education such as these in Mozambique means domestic workers require civil education from the government, domestic workers organisations, and other such non-governmental organisations to educate them about their rights and obligations as domestic workers. Part of what domestic workers can be educated about is the rights of [domestic] workers, what they (domestic workers) do if they feel injustice is being perpetrated against them by their employers. In terms of the latter, domestic workers can possibly be advised to initially try to resolve the abuses and violations on their own and if the abuses continue they may turn to friends, neighbours and then domestic workers organisations or police stations for assistance. Such stages as suggested here are important given that domestic workers build on their relationships with other domestic workers in the communities to protect themselves from abuses and violations of their rights perpetuated against them (by their employers) within the private realm. If such networks among domestic workers are encouraged, they are likely to help them in providing emotional assistance, raising awareness and building consciousness about [possible] instances of abuses by employers.

6.2. Empower Domestic Workers' Organisations

Results obtained from this research revealed that although the Mozambican state has enacted and adopted progressive legislations to combat abuses of human rights in general in the name of Decree 40/2008 and formation of *Organização dos Trabalhadores Moçambicanos's* (Mozambican Workers' Organization –OTM), cases of abuse perpetrated against domestic workers continue to increase unabated particularly in both the urban and rural communities. This has been largely attributed to the failure by the government (through the responsible ministries) to adequately implement and enforce the rule of law due to a compound of constraining factors. As this study revealed, one of these factors is that domestic workers' organisations are more of toothless barking dogs with no power to take up issues when cases of abuses of domestic workers by employers are tabled before them. Schuler's (1992) analysis of how organisations visa-vi-law provides useful insights in understanding the persistence of abuses and violations of domestic workers' rights despite calls and endeavours made to address them. She identified a substantive level, (the actual law itself), a structural level (the organisations and structures that enforce the law), and the cultural level (the beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes held by the wider community). The three levels mentioned above are

complementary and work closely with each other. As can be seen, the domestic organisations alone cannot be expected to deliver the goods on their own unless they are not hampered by cultural beliefs and the structures that enforce the rule of law.

7.Absence Of Domestic Organisations In Rural Areas

The absence of domestic workers organisations in the Mozambican rural areas undermines efforts by the international organisations who may want to help the vulnerable workers in these areas through awareness campaigns. If properly working, domestic workers organisations are critical since they can offer a variety of support services, addressing domestic workers' physical and emotional needs including their needs for temporary and possibly long-term shelter especially in those instances when they are instantly and unexpectedly dismissed from work. Of the participants we research with, only twenty per cent said they were aware of at least one of the three domestic workers organisations in Mozambique: The Associação de Empregados Domésticos de Moçambique (Mozambican Domestic Workers' Association - AEDOMO), the Associação das Mulheres Empregadas Domésticas (Women's Association of Domestic Workers - AMUEDO), and the Sindicato Nacional de Empregados Domésticos (National Union of Domestic Workers - SINED) (See Castel-Branco 2012). Majority of those who were unaware of the existence of domestic workers organisations were from the rural areas. The effects of the absence of domestic workers organisations in the rural areas of Mozambique squarely concur with the observations by Gonzalez-Sanchez's (1998) who noted that lack of legal awareness of the law and fear of exacerbating the aggression by the abusers largely accounts for the dismal failure to arrest cases of [domestic] violence particularly in rural areas. It can therefore be argued that the presence of domestic organisations in the country alone is meaningless unless those organisations can reach out all the people they were formed to represent.

8.Competition Between Domestic Workers' Organisations

As noted by Castel-Branco (2012), and rightly so, despite almost identical demands, strategies, and tactics, workers' organisations such as AEDOMO, AMUEDO and SINED, do not communicate, let alone collaborate. They are deeply entrenched in competition and distrust between each other collaboration and unity among members of different domestic organisations difficult to achieve. In her interview with AMUEDO secretary as to why the latter's organisation did not collaborate with the other

organisations in campaigning for a lobby against domestic workers' abuses, Catel-Branco (2012) for example, revealed that AMUEDO secretary general had this to say: 'I started first. SINED and AEDOMO don't know anything. OTM has set them up to demoralise and weaken AMUEDO'. Though workers' unions are normally challenged by lack of funding, they should organise themselves in such a way that instils confidence in the people they represent (domestic workers) and potential donors who can assist with money to fund their activities.

9. Conclusion

This paper has provided insight into the problems that domestic workers in Mozambique are facing, and the various factors that constrain the full implementation of the Domestic Workers Convention (C189) and Domestic Workers Recommendation (R201). As has been revealed by this study, abuse and violation of domestic workers' rights in both rural and urban areas is widespread, pervading the whole community and systematically carried out. Factors such as competition between domestic workers' organisations, absence of domestic organisations in some areas such as the rural areas, low education levels and lack of power by domestic workers organisations have been revealed to be some of the major factors that hinder progress on the eradication of abuses of domestic workers by their employers. In view of these factors, we have argued that as long as the domestic workers remain disarrayed and do not speak with one voice in their representations of domestic workers, then abuses and violations of domestic workers' rights will continue rising. We have, therefore, recommended civil education of domestic workers and the empowerment of domestic workers organisations if a halt is to be made as far as abuses and violations of domestic workers are concerned.

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