

Trade Union Organising Domestic Workers and its Effect on Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria

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Abstract: The study examined the organising of domestic workers by Union and its effects on Socio-economic development despite their being marginalised by other social partners. The paper attempts to build on organising model through exploring the means of recognising domestic workers in view of their contributions. Quantitative and Survey method were used. Organising domestic workers have significant effect on Socio economic development and serves as platform for granting them rights and protection. Unemployment reduction, women empowerment, tax generation and crime reduction. Developing countries pay less attention to legal framework for organising domestic workers despite its huge benefits to socio economic development.

Keywords: decent work; employment relations; household workers; immigrant domestic work; union representation

JEL Classification: J49; J59; J81; J83

1. Introduction

Domestic work seems to have become critical to the growth of other sectors of the modern economy. Due to paying of less attention to organising domestic workers, their socio-economic contributions to the national economy appears to be undervalued and not visibly recognized by the state and policy makers.

Nigeria in spite of her membership and contributions to ILO appears not to have seen the need to ratifying and domesticating ILO Convention No 189 and Recommendation 201 of 2011 for organising and implementing of decent work

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agenda for domestic workers despite its obvious advantages in the economic space of the country and promotion of employment relations.

The legal framework, aside of being inadequate has some shortcomings in addressing the issues relating to domestic work employment in Nigeria, thereby making the work of domestic workers more precarious. Besides, it has no provision in Nigeria labour legislation.

Organising is essential in moving domestic workers from invisibility (which makes them vulnerable to exploitation) to visibility towards obtaining protection for them through legislation, to inform the public of their conditions, and to provide them with an appreciation of their rights as workers and a sagacity of dignity in their occupation (Tokman, 2010).

The only way to protect and promote domestic workers is to collectively organize them (Smales, 2010; Ratina, 2013). This is the gap and valuable insights this study attempts to provide. In providing answer, the fundamental question is what effect will organizing make in enhancing domestic workers social economic contributions to the economy.

Domestic employment is significantly growing and gaining ground even in the absence of state recognition. The work of domestic workers though undervalued, is vital sequel to the fact that they provide essential works that enable others to work outside the home, thus increasing the activities in the labour market and contributing greatly to the running of the economy.

Considering the present global trends, care economy has become very important to enable people to work outside home. The number of women taking part in modern employment is increasing when compared with the trends in the past decade. The ageing of societies, global economic recessions are events that have brought about reduction of the workforce and collapse of the manufacturing sector especially in most third world countries where many states lack adequate policy framework to provide jobs for their citizens. The unfolding scenario consequently, has also increased the number of people seeking for domestic work to sustain their livelihood within and outside the country. These push factors have trapped millions of children, women and men into exploitation (SADSAWU 2010; Ramirez & Jos-Mare, 2003; Marcado & Poo, 2010; D'Souza, 2010).

ILO (2011) estimates that global population of domestic workers is between 53-100 million, women are majority, 83 percent, they provide 3.6 percent of global employment and 7.5 percent of female employees worldwide. The estimate indicates that "domestic workers represent 4–10 percent of the total workforce in developing countries and 1–2.5 percent of the total workforce in developed countries. Research evidence indicates that two-third of Nigerian homes engage live-in-domestic servants (Olokun, 2015).

Olokun (2015) further states that out of the 83 million estimated global domestic workers, only about 10 percent are protected by Labour laws and also, in Sub-Saharan Africa, mostly women and children dominate this vulnerable group, out of which 72 percent of the population are domestic workers.

Domestic workers are critically valuable to lives and members of households, the family reproductive processes hinge on them; family lives are anchored on their activities. The drivers, the cooks, nannies, stewards etc are strategic to human existence, productivity and socioeconomic lives of others.

The plight of domestic workers has failed to capture attention for effective public policy in Nigeria because of the hidden nature of domestic work despite international concern to regulate the sector. Domestic employment is undervalued and poorly regulated, exploited, and many domestic employees are overworked, underpaid and unprotected in spite of their contributions to the functioning of labour market.

From the foregoing, evidence abound that the contributions of domestic workers create room for decent employment opportunities for many men and women and are also significant in the global economy (ILO, 2011). It is noteworthy that despite the immense contributions of domestic workers to many households and the economy, they are not recognized by national labour legislation and they enjoy little or no social protection in many countries. This tends to make them a vulnerable group that remain invisible within the larger society and consequently, prone to abuses, degradation, discrimination and other infringements on their human rights.

The working conditions of domestic workers gained international attention and led to recognising the circumstances underneath which domestic work is carried out and this gave rise for quest towards setting universal standards with particular reference to domestic worker in order to facilitate their rights like other workers in the formal economy.

International Labour Organisation adopted what is termed as a historic Convention in June 2011(No. 189) and supplementary Recommendation (No. 201). The Convention is targeted towards organising and creating decent work for domestic workers. This is the first-time new instrument was designed for the promotion and protection of domestic workers' rights at work by setting out a framework containing measures and principles which can guide action to strengthen national laws, polices and institutions concerned (ILO 2012, p. 112).

2. Literature Review

Domestic work comes under the categorization of informal economy because it is performed outside the realm of labour regulations and social protection. As a result, domestic workers suffer significant “decent work deficits, including deficits in employment opportunities, legal rights, social protections, as well as organisation and representation system of social dialogue” (Chen, 2010, p. 167).

The word of Mercado & Aijeem (2008, p. 7) captures the situation of domestic workers when they asserted that “The work of domestic workers seemed to be the foundation for the growth of the economy, although domestic work has consistently been rendered invisible, deliberately and repeatedly excluded from recognition or protection”.

Domestic work is of critical significance to the development of economy and social life. Razavi (2007) argues domestic work may create socio-economic advantage in reducing household poverty. Razavi (2007) corroborated with Flint (1998) that domestic work can be used as an instrument to reduce employment and household poverty among many families. It is estimated to be the largest source of foreign exchange apart from oil and gas for many developing countries (D’Souza, 2010). The multipliers’ effect is of enormous effect in the economy and infrastructural development of the developing countries.

The remittance of funds appears to be one of the principal reasons why some countries increasingly encourage domestic workers to seek for employment abroad and it constitutes economic support to the exporting countries. It is estimated that a total income of US \$280 billion worldwide was made in 2006 (Migration Policy Institute Report, Wwww, Migration Information, ILO, 2010, p. 10).

The developing countries it was reported benefitted about three quarter from this movement of funds. Also, in the same vein it was observed that 22 countries generated 10 per cent of gross domestic product from remittances from domestic work in 2006, whereas in few other countries, the remittances amount to more than 20% (OECD Paris, 2005). Migrant workers’ remittances continue to grow, reaching US \$149.4 billion in 2002 (OECD 2005 in ILO 2010, p. 10).

The developing countries derived their second largest source of foreign exchange/earning from domestic work sector and this earning is of importance in boosting foreign exchange reserves, bridging balance of payment deficit, reducing unemployment and increasing domestic consumption (ILO, 2005 in D’Souza 2010, p. 6).

Also D’Souza notes that “these remittances have a ripple effect as \$1 in remittance generates 2\$ in local economic activity as recipients buy goods, invest in housing, education, or health care” (Kapsch, 2006 in D’Souza, 2010, p. 6). Domestic work

has become an instrument for addressing the decent work deficit and may be of vital mechanism for many developing countries towards reducing poverty level among many families and empower many women to contribute to the uplifting of the living standard of their households (D' Souza, 2010).

The domestic work appears to become a channel of employment of poor, and rural women, who have little access to education, and often from marginalised ethnic group - those otherwise with low employability (D'Souza, 2010, p. 6). The growth in demand for migrant workers in this sector has also increased job creation (D'Souza 2010, p. 35). The job creation in domestic sector extends to employment agencies sector agent, travel agencies, medical centres, transport owners, and a host of many other workers, FIWON (2015), contends that organising domestic workers will not establish fair treatment for domestic workers but will create a viable platform towards boosting national incomes, and also build wealth through taxes, pension and social insurance contributions. The benefits of social protection to domestic workers are multi-dimensional and its overall macro-economic implication is huge, consequently, it pays the state to take advantage of it.

Firstly, it will provide mechanism to assuage and avert poverty, trim down income disparity to a tolerable level, enhance human capital and productivity. Secondly, apart from helping to eradicate acute deprivation and despair, it will provide platform for workable and dependable economic improvement by stimulating income of the poor, increasing domestic demand and support growth by intensifying the domestic markets. Thirdly, social security transfers have boosted the economies of many countries. Social security transfers can be spent on local goods. Furthermore, social security creates fair growth, builds social structure and consequently, makes development more sustainable.

FIWON (2015) further argues that organising domestic workers has the capacity to bail out the country out of this current economic quagmire and foreign exchange deficit and increase Nigeria's external reserve. Nigeria can tap into this resource in the face of crashing oil/petroleum products prices. It can be a source of external funding for developing countries and boosting foreign exchange reserves, and bridging balance of payment deficits.

2.1. Domestic and Decent Work Deficit

Even though domestic work is of essence, there have been contradictions because of complex employment relationship in the domestic work. The undefined employment/ labour contract underpin all form of multifaceted behavioral attitudes on the part of the domestic employers and domestic workers.

This development is the basis of breaches of the labour contracts resulting to termination and resignation of employment, criminal and social vices and unfair

labour practices, (Paterson & Gardner, 2010). The deficiency of labour protection seems to allow recruitment agents, employers and domestic workers to act with impunity leading to exploitation in domestic work sector.

Studies have shown the fact that inadequate social protection and decent work deficits have characterised domestic workers in Nigeria, in spite of the critical services they provide. Similarly, domestic workers appear to suffer significant unfair treatment in terms of job, rights and other social protections.

They have no equal opportunities to assess available jobs in the societies and legal protections leading to exploitations. Abuses, poor employment relationship and substandard labour contract make little or no sense to the employer, since it lacks enforcement either by the trade unions or the government (Fajana, 2010; D'Sousa, 2010)

2.2. Trade Union Organising

The above development places demand on organising domestic workers in compliance with ILO Convention No. 189 of 2011 and Supplementary Recommendation (No. 201) of 2011 which was targeted towards organising and creating decent work for domestic workers. The ILO Convention consists of new instruments designed to promote and protect the domestic workers' rights at work by setting out a framework of measures and principles which can guide action to strengthen national laws, policies and institutions concerned (ILO, 2012).

Nigeria is a signatory to the ILO Convention, but has not yet ratify and domesticate the Convention. Domesticating the ILO Convention No.189 of 2011 through organising and government regulations certainly will likely make domestic workers more relevant and enhance their social and economic contributions to the Nigerian economy.

Organising and regulating of domestic work is in the interest of both workers and employers. "Spelling out the rights and duties of each party may eliminate many of the difficulties the employers of domestic workers sometimes face, ranging from frequent absence, poor quality services, quitting without notice, etc, to crimes such as theft, kidnapping for ransom and even murder" (D'Sousa, 2010, p. 48).

There is an "urgent need to provide for domestic workers the basic elements of protection which would assure them of a minimum standard of living, comparable with the self-respect and human dignity which are essential to social justice" (ILC 1965). Organising is essential in moving them from invisibility (which makes them vulnerable to exploitation) to visibility, towards obtaining protection for domestic workers through legislation, to inform the public of their plights, and to provide them with an appreciable rights as workers and a sagacity of dignity in their occupation.

The basic goal of organising of domestic workers by trade unions is to further their rights and dignity, recognise the value of their work and lay credence to their socio-economic contributions to the economy. The care economy is very essential for productivity because it frees time for workers especially women to work in the modern sector. Apart from the leverage it creates for women to work in the modern sector, its social and economic contributions also include reduction of unemployment, empowerment of women, generate tax income for the government and reduction of social crimes, and enhance welfare services for the aged and the sick.

Razavi (2007, p. 6) argues that there should be “a construction of social account matrix that includes paid domestic work as a separate sector of the economy”. Also, D’Souza (2010) also sees fair condition of work for domestic workers as a right and a social necessity. As more and more women enter the labour force, their reproductive activities, domestic tasks are delegated to household employees on whose care is the well-being of entire family.

Domestic work allows other women workers with family responsibilities to achieve equilibrium between work and family life, it is fundamental to the smooth functioning of the economy. With a definite and fair employment relationship, domestic workers could be an economic tool towards reduction of household poverty and close income disparity between male and women.

2.3. Theoretical Framework Trade Union Organising Model

Organising model of trade union was propounded by Heery, Simms, Simpson, Delbridge and Salmon (2000). The central tenet of organising model according to (Heery, *et al.* 2000) is that the trade unions should strategically organise and further the interest of their members through full time or volunteer members committed to the advancement of their course through building strong network, effective leadership and instilling confidence among the workers.

The key components of the organising model seem to be its emphasis on mobilisation of the rank and membership to participate in the activities of the unions which gives members a sense of belonging as a group. The authors posit that when the members share in the decision and in all the activities of the unions, they will also be sharing in its victories (Bank & Metzgar, 1989).

Organising seems to be an essential process through which unions can secure four key institutional goals. It provides a means of generating income through subscription or union check off dues, establish collective organisation within undertakings, fix and maintain collective bargaining relations with employers and confers legitimacy on unions (Heery, 2003). Heery (2003) proposed three basic dimensions in the pattern of union organising development.

The first level is the level of commitment to organising, which comprises plans, budgets, objectives, targets and procedures for audit and reviews. It may also serve as a means of channeling union resources towards organising. The financial budget seems to be the central determinant of the strength of organising and the relative size of the organising function.

The belief of organising model according to Heery, *et al.* (2000) involves strong emphasis on establishing personal contact that is likely to involve spending time talking to workers about their plights and precarious position. This also demands a participatory role on the part of the workers in strengthening and responding to the effort of the trade unions and other organisations to facilitate their struggles.

The union in carrying out this function may involve the identification and recruitment of volunteer leaders among the workforce who will engage in spreading the information and encourage their colleagues to join, participate and be part of the struggle. To achieve these objectives, proactive recruitment appears to be essential either as a full time or volunteer, both may likely facilitate the drive for membership through strategic mapping of the “workplaces” which constitute the key component of organising model.

The objective is to identify members’ workplaces in order to reach out to them to join the unions. In organising domestic workers, the trade union appears to seek to forge ahead with a vision that links the struggle to change conditions for domestic workers towards building a broad based movement for fundamental social transformation (Marcado & Poo, 2009).

The model provides basic knowledge that might help the labour movement in its quest towards organising domestic workers in Nigeria. Organising involves identifying and exploring locations where these workers are situated. This may demand a new approach different from the usual organising of trade unions in firms. The structure and spatial location of domestic workers in diverse private households might necessitate a new dimension for strategic mapping, recruitment of trade union organising agents to handle grass root mobilising and establishing representation for collectivity that will fight for the rights of domestic workers.

Organising model of trade union by Heery, *et al.* (2000) has been adopted by several countries based on the premise that their tenets and practical applications seem to have the potentials towards addressing the key and fundamental issues, grievances, barriers and challenges bedeviling the organising of domestic workers into unions, and associations which are perceived as an unorganisable feat to achieve.

This may likely extend to protection of the basic philosophy and rights at work as provided by No.189 of ILO Convention 2011. The ILO Convention stipulates that the ILO Member States should ensure that policies exist to protect fair terms and conditions of employment as well as decent working conditions (Article 6), also

includes minimum wage coverage (Article 11), effective protection against all types of intimidation, abuse, molestation and hostility against domestic workers (Article 5), right to a safe and healthy work environment and (Article 13), on social security, protection and in addition, domestic workers are allowed to have an organization that should collectively bargain on their behalf.

3. Research Methodology

The study focused on trade union organizing domestic workers and its effect on the socio-economic development of the national economy. The hypothesis of the study states that organising domestic workers have significant effect on the socio-economic development of the national economy.

Non-experimental design was adopted for this study using survey research method. Interview and structured questionnaire were used as research instruments to gather information for the study. The nature of the study lends credence to these methods of inquiry.

This research relied on both primary and secondary data sources to generate data towards achieving the objectives of the research. Primary data focused on the use of questionnaire and structured interview. The secondary data were taken from statistical data of the organisations involved in this project, journals, and textbooks and internet were used as sources of the study materials by the researchers.

The population for the study is 676 subjects. It constitutes all the domestic workers that are registered members of Federation of Informal Workers' Organisation of Nigeria (FIWON) within the selected seven locations/clusters in Lagos state. The member of the population include; 29 Industrial Unions in Nigeria, Ministry of Labour and Employment (Labour officers and Inspectors),

A multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted in selecting the sampling elements for the study A representative sample of 120 domestic workers were randomly selected using quota/simple random sampling technique of 20 percent of the sample frame proportionate to the cluster's share of the total population of 598. All the 6 staff of domestic work organising department of FIWON constitute part of the sample size, all the 31 staff who are labour officers/inspectors from Ministry of Labour and Employment, Lagos and, 32 respondents were selected by simple random sampling from the 29 Industrial Unions in Nigeria.

3.1. Research Instrument and Measuring Variable

The survey instrument was questionnaire which consists of 12 items; Likert 5 points scale for the principal stakeholders of the research. This research included other

groups of respondents which are stakeholders, their opinions and whose views are critical to the organising of domestic workers. Response categories for the scale ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree. A nominal value of 1 was assigned to strongly agree and 5 assigned to strongly disagree. Points of value were assigned to each choice of response, all values assigned are nominal and therefore high number does not indicate favourable or unfavourable with respect to the variables in questions or as the case may be.

3.2. Validity and Reliability

The questionnaire were validated by experts in the field of sociology and employment relations and used for pilot study and after the preliminary investigation; they went through pretest to determine their reliability. The questionnaire was subjected to Cronbach Alpha Test which yielded Cronbach's Alpha .764 which is an acceptable value (Malhotra, 2007), this indicated a strong relationship between the variables contained in the questionnaire. The intrinsic validity coefficient is 0.87 which is estimated by the square root of reliability, (Guilford, 1954).

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

This section contained the statistical analysis using appropriate inferential statistics with the aid of Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS). The purpose was to test or establish relationship and difference where necessary. The hypothesis postulated in the study was tested, the results and interpretations presented to substantiate or de-substantiate the hypothesis. All statistical analysis was tested at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance.

The following explicit regression model is specified and estimated to achieve the outcome of the testing of the hypothesis formulated for the study:

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \epsilon_i$ (ii) Where; Y = Socio economic benefit of domestic Job, X_1 = Political advocacy, X_2 = Meetings, X_3 = Financial Supports, X_4 = Visiting, ϵ_i = Regression Residual, β_0 = Intercept Term, β_1 = Marginal effects of the independent variable

4.1. Test of Hypothesis

H0: Organising domestic workers does not have significant effect on the socio-economic development of the national economy.

H1: Organising domestic workers have significant effect on the socio-economic development of the national economy.

Table 1. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.428 ^a	.183	.160	2.39503

a. Predictors: (Constant), Visiting, meetings, financialsup, politicaladvocacy

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	183.750	4	45.938	8.008	.000 ^b
	Residual	820.270	143	5.736		
	Total	1004.020	147			

Dependent Variable: socioeconomifactor

Predictors: (Constant), Visiting, meetings, financialsup, politicaladvocacy

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.644	.851		6.629	.000
	Politicaladvocacy	-.346	.128	-.255	-2.690	.008
	Meetings	.300	.139	.211	2.158	.033
	Financialsup	.361	.102	.304	3.531	.001
	Visiting	.190	.083	.178	2.289	.024

The value of F Cal 8,008, $p < 0.05$, DF, 4,143, the null hypothesis is rejected and we conclude that organizing domestic workers into union has significant effect on the socio-economic development, therein the objective of the study is achieved.

	P	Political advocacy	Meetings	Financial support	Visiting	
Socioeconomic development	R=.428 R ² =.163 F=8.008;P<0.05	B=.346 T=-2.690 P<value=.008 Ns	B=.300 T=2.158 P<value=.033 Ns	B=.361 T=3.351 P<value=.001 Ns	B=.190 T=2.289 P<value=.024 Ns	.618

4.2. Interpretation of the Result

This objective of the study was achieved with the aid of regression analysis in order not to flout the assumptions of OLS, a colinearity diagnostic statistics VIF and tolerance value were computed. Since all the tolerance value were high ranging from 0.595 to 0.496, which are far above 0.1, the worrying level and the variance inflation factor (VIF) values ranging from 1.057 to 1.691 were also lower than the worrying level of 10 and above, thus there were no multi-collinearity problems among the independent variables in the data multiple regression analysis conducted to determine the contribution of the independent variable to the variation of the dependent variable.

The R-square (R²) value, of 13.8% shows that the variance in the socio-economic contributions was explained by the contribution of political advocacy, meeting, financial support and visiting/personal contact and organising domestic workers. Besides $F=8,008$, $P<0.05$, $df=4,143$, the model is fit to predict the response variable.

The analysis shows the contribution of independent variables, political advocacy explains 25.5% of the variance in the socio-economic benefits. The negative sign shown by the statistics that the more there are publicity about forming union for domestic workers, the less the tendency to achieve success, other are meetings, financial support and visiting /personal contact with their contributions as 21.1%, 30.4%, 17.8% respectively.

5. Discussion of Findings

The analysis on the effect of organising domestic workers and its effect on socio-economic development of the national economy, see the data on table (1 and 2) suggest that organising domestic worker into union will significantly have effect on the socio-economic development of the national economy. The value of F cal 8.008, $p>0.05$, $DF, 4,143$, the null hypothesis is rejected and we conclude that organising domestic workers into union has significant effect on socio-economic development. This is consistent with (D'Sousa, 2019, p. 11) that "there is a definite correlation between burgeoning of associations or unions of domestic workers and the recognition of their human and labour right".

The researchers observed that domestic work is of critical significance to the development of the economy and social life. Razavi (2007) posited that domestic workers are of socio-economic value to the society as they provide opportunity for many who would otherwise be engaged in household labour to express themselves in the modern sector. Also, D'Souza (2010) also sees domestic work as a social necessity.

There is therefore the need for the state to facilitate the organizing of this group of workers who are critical to the socio- economic lives of many households in the society. The domestic work tends to be freeing many women who would not have had opportunity to showcase their potentials in the modern sector to do so due to family responsibilities. It would also allow other women workers with family household tasks to achieve equilibrium between work and family life.

Furthermore, domestic workers would complement and save resources which otherwise would have been invested in providing social services for the citizenry in many states. With a definite and fair employment relationship, domestic workers have incredible prospect for obliteration of poverty and hunger, advancement of gender equality and empowerment of women in Nigeria.

6. Conclusion and Implication for the Study

The evidence from the study shows the contributions domestic workers can make in the socio- economic development of the national economy if they are allowed to be organised by the trade unions. The organising may not only grant the rights and protection of domestic workers but might create a viable platform for their recognition by the state and visibility in the larger society.

In contemporary society, care work at home is vital for the economy outside the household to function well. Domestic work is of critical importance to the development of the modern economy and social life because it will mitigate the gap created by the absence of many women at homes and equally creates employment for many who would step in to bridge the gap.

The basic aim of organising is not to unionise domestic workers as may be perceived but to provide for them the basic elements of protection which would assure them of a minimum standard of living, accompanied with the self-respect and human dignity that would enable them to discharge their duties to their various constituents without fear of intimidation. Organising is essential to prevent exploitation of domestic workers by the employers through national legislative framework that will protect the rights of both parties in line with the provisions of Convention No. 189 of 2011 of the International Labour Organisation.

The care economy is essential for productivity because they free time for workers especially women to work in the modern sector. Apart from the leverage it creates for women to work in the modern sector, its social and economic contributions also include reduction of unemployment, empowerment of women, tax and income generation for the state and reduction of social crimes and also enhance welfare services for the aged and sick persons.

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