

Empowerment of Young Persons-In-Non-formal Sector: The Case of Female Adolescent
Domestic Workers In Municipal Lagos

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Foreword

Domestic workers form a group of people that most households rely upon to provide child care and home management services, particularly when the woman of the house is engaged in employment or business away from home. The conditions under which these 'house helps' live and their opportunities for possible future advancement have largely been dependent upon the perspectives of their keepers. In many cases, the workers have been suppressed in the attempt to retain their services longer and to prevent them from mixing with the outside world. In relatively few cases, these helpers – most of whom are young girls – are sent to school or given the chance to learn a skill so that they will later be able to move on to a better way of life. In general, however, female adolescent domestic workers form a voiceless, faceless group of young people who are isolated and powerless to control most conditions that determine the type of life they will live. They are often a target for sexual abuse. The lack of information concerning reproductive health as well as lack of parental counselling at a critical period of development has led to many female domestic workers becoming pregnant and perhaps attempting abortion or contracting sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS.

Adebanke Akinrimisi has taken on a great challenge by not only conducting research on this target group, but also designing activities to empower this vulnerable set of young females. Even reaching these girls has been met with obstacles from the suspicious keepers as well as the workers themselves. Yet, the society cannot continue to close its eyes to the plight of these socially marginalized young people simply because their conditions of deprivation benefit the better-off in the society. These young people deserve a better future than to remain servants all their lives trapped in conditions of ill health and family situations that resulted from poor decisions made during adolescence.

This monograph by Ms. Akinrimisi presents many revelations concerning the lives of these young females. Recognising the plight and acknowledging the rights of domestic workers is the first step to their empowerment. It is time that domestic workers are given the chance to make informed choices for determining their own future. This publication should be widely disseminated to encourage wider awareness of a group providing important services to the society, yet too often forgotten.

Prof. Janice E. Olawoye

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND/LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In the past, traditional extended family system in Nigeria encouraged the idea of parents allowing their children to live with other close or distant family members. This was done in some cases where it was difficult for the parents of such young persons to take care of them. It was also done to provide support for a young couple that might require some form of domestic assistance when they did not have children of their own or when such children were still very young. The relationship then was based on mutual benefits such that the young person assisted the host family by carrying out domestic chores that were never quantified in monetary terms. On the other hand, the host family took care of the young person by providing for his/her daily up-keep and training in form of skills acquisition that could enhance his/her quality of life and enable him/her to be self reliant. On the contrary, the trend now (in most cases) is for a married woman to keep a young person (whose age can be as low as 6 and as high as 20 or more) and pay certain fee for services rendered on a monthly, quarterly or yearly basis.

The age of the young person plays a significant role in the determination of the salary payable. Inquiries carried out by Social Alert¹ on the treatment of domestic workers in various countries revealed (inter-alia) that “there are many child domestic workers and that they are often recruited because it is easier to dominate them and also because they can be paid less than adults.”²

Sometimes these young persons, mainly girls, are from families that can only support them through primary school education. In some cases, they have not received any form of formal education. Often times, these girls are treated as second-class citizens and are seldom allowed access to educational programmes through the television, radio, or oral teachings. These girls are often treated differently from the children of their employers. These, in addition to the knowledge of their biological family’s inability to cater for them adequately, often make them lack self-esteem. The lack of, or inadequate access to reproductive health information makes it difficult for them to make informed choices and decisions that can enhance their quality of life. The lack of proper guidance and little or no love from their host families also make them highly vulnerable to domestic violence, exploitation, sexual abuse, and harassment by members of opposite sex. They are sometimes abused sexually by the husbands of their employers, or their drivers, or other males domestic workers in the same house or in the neighbourhood. With Nigeria having one of the highest rates of HIV transmission in Africa and very low level of government investment in HIV/AIDS prevention, the need to address the sexual and reproductive health needs of all segments of the population has become urgent and desperate.

¹ Social alert is a network of non-governmental organizations whose focus is on socio-economic rights with its headquarters in Belgium

² Social Alert, *Invisible Servitude – An In-Depth on Domestic Workers in the World*. Belgium, Social Alert 2000, at P.6

Furthermore, local studies in Nigeria suggest that, “by age 18, 63% of young women have experienced intercourse; by age 17, 28% have given birth;”³ 80% of women treated in the hospitals for complications arising from unsafe abortion⁴ and the age specific pattern of diagnose AIDS cases suggests that most HIV infections occur during the adolescent years.

Who is a Female Adolescent Domestic Worker?

For the purpose of the project, the meaning of ‘Adolescent’ as defined by the Nigerian Adolescent Health Policy (1995) was adopted. In other words, the beneficiaries of the project were ‘persons age between 10 - 24 years.’

Female adolescent domestic workers are often called names such as House-help, Housemaid, House-girl etc. They all carry out the same duties in the house. The International Labour Organisation in its international classification of occupation defines a ‘domestic worker’ as ‘someone who carries out household work in private households in return for wages.’ Although there is no universal definition, a female adolescent domestic worker can be said to be an adolescent girl who carries out household work in private households in return, either for wages, educational/vocational training support or shelter and general upkeep.

This definition was coined based on the findings of this study. Different categories of domestic workers were met. Some receive wages, some do not, some have their education sponsored by their employers in return for the services that they render and some undergo some form of vocational training or the other. Some are not paid wages and are not undergoing any form of educational or vocational training. Someone else receives their wages and they may not even know how much.

Housemaid on the other hand is given a broader definition by the ILO. Housemaid – cleans rooms, prepares food and serves meals, washes dishes and performs additional domestic duties in private households; dusts and polishes furniture, sweeps and cleans floor coverings and washes windows; makes beds and changes linen; washes, pares, cuts and otherwise prepare food for cooking or eating raw; prepares beverages, salad and deserts; washes dishes and cleans silverware; sets table and arranges chairs in dining-room and serves food, washed linen and other textiles by hand or machine and mends and irons them, performs additional duties such as answering telephone and doorbell, feeding pets and purchasing food and other supplies. May cook meals, bake cakes and pastries and performs other cooking work.

Although this definition is very wide, it does not take into account many other household chores this group of girls carry out in a place like Nigeria. Those who live in areas where

³ International Women’s Health Coalition Report of Activities, New York, 1999, Htt.www.iwhc.org

⁴ Federal Ministry of Health and Social Services. “*Nigeria Country Report for the International Conference on Population and Development: Cairo '94.*” Lagos, 1994: p.20

pipe borne water does not flow regularly or at all, fetch water for cooking, drinking, bathing, washing etc. Some of them take children to school and pick them up after closing hours. Some of the girls also assist their employers in selling their wares after carrying out some early morning household chores.

Knowledge About Situation of Female Adolescent Domestic Workers

Documentation on the prevalence, treatment and experience of domestic workers in Nigeria is scanty. This may be attributed to the fact that research on this issue is very minimal. Social Alert is of the opinion that it is difficult to provide statistics on issues relating to domestic workers because there is little interest in the field.⁵

Olateru-Olagbegi and Osakue (1998) reported that “due to poverty, young girls and women are brought from rural areas to urban centres under the pretext of finding job opportunities which are unavailable in the rural areas. Many of the young girls who ordinarily should not be engaged for labour are made nannies, house helps, shop attendants etc.”⁶ Mensh et al (1998) say many girls in sub-Saharan Africa are “fostered out” to other households, where they may be exploited in domestic service.⁷

On the situation in India, Social Alert reports that an estimated 20 million women, children and men are engaged in domestic work; 92% of them are women, girls and children; 20% are under the age of 14; and 25% are between 15 and 20. According to the report, most domestic workers are migrants who have moved from rural areas to the big cities in order to improve their standard of living. Young girls are said to live invisibly and hidden in the households that adopt them. At the age of 12, a girl will be expected to perform all the tasks in a middle-class household.⁸

Cheng records that ‘migration in the last 10 years in Asia has increasingly included female migrants who are usually employed in domestic services, the entertainment industry ...this work places women migrants in a vulnerable position in the isolation of the households away from public oversight.’⁹

Female Adolescent Domestic Workers and Rights Protection

There are no specific norms, procedures and institution to protect female adolescent domestic workers in Nigeria. They are also not organised. They therefore lack any systematic and accessible course for seeking justice when they experience a violation of their rights. In South Africa, domestic services accounts for the employment of 38% of

⁵ Social Alert, op. cit. at P. 26

⁶ Osakue G, Olateru-Olagbegi B. *Italios and Sponsors – A Primer of Trafficking in Women (the Nigerian Case)*. Benin, International Reproductive Rights Research Action Group, 1998.

⁷ Mensh et al, News Release – “*Social Pressures are Keys to Adolescent Reproductive Behaviour*” Population Council year at P.2.

⁸ Social alert, op. cit P.15

⁹ Cock J, *Disposable Nannies: Domestic Workers in the Political Economy of South Africa*, Vol. 8 No. 21, 1981

black women and their conditions of work are the least protected within one of the most regimented labour forces in the world.¹⁰ According to Odutola, “in many unreported cases, the masters/madams have used these children not only to serve their domestic needs but their sexual pleasures as well. The child-workers have no voices, no one to come to their defense to persecute their masters/madams and they are easily dispensed without the abusers facing any form of justice.”¹¹

Living Arrangements of Female Adolescent Domestic Workers

It is worthy of note that their living arrangements, domestic responsibilities, and restrictions on their mobility have significant implications for their reproductive health and well-being. Social Alert’s report on the situation of treatment of domestic workers in Bangladesh recalls that “they are generally on call 15 to 16 hours a day throughout the year; have no weekly or monthly holidays and have a working day that runs from 6 or 7 a.m. to about 11 p.m. They sleep on the floor of the kitchen or the living room; they often eat cheaper food in cheaper utensils after everybody else and sit on the floor; and are not allowed to help themselves to food.”¹² Mensh et. al. (1998) say that the driving forces behind early marriage and childbearing are girls’ social and economic disadvantages.¹³ It is imperative for these girls to begin to get organised in order to protect both their practical and strategic gender interests. This will enable them to challenge and transform the subordinate and vulnerable roles in which they find themselves.

Domestic Workers and Adolescent Reproductive Health Programmes

According to the former Honourable Minister of State for Health, Dr. Abubakar Ali Gombe; at the opening ceremony of the National Conference on Adolescent Reproductive Health in Nigeria in 1999, the reproductive health needs of young Nigerians, aged between 10 – 24 years, and who constitute about 20% of the entire population have been largely ignored by the health sector. He observed that in economic terms, young people are the most important group in the society and stressed that there is a strong need to assist them in identifying and addressing their perceived and felt needs.¹⁴ Unfortunately, there is no charted course for development of every Nigerian citizen. The only ones that are guaranteed a course for their development are those whose parents can afford to educate them or those who have access to some form of scholarship or privilege. Majority of those who are from poor backgrounds just do not feature in national policy agenda. Mensh et. al. recalled that “Gender issues have been greatly neglected. Girls disappear as policy subjects after receiving their last childhood immunisation, and do not re-appear until they are past puberty, pregnant, and most often married. Adolescence as

¹⁰ Cheng SJ. *Migrant Women Domestic Workers in Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan: a Comparative analysis*, Asian and Pacific Migration Journal; 1996 at P.5(1)

¹¹ Odutola B. “Child Cry for Help” (Unpublished article), 2000

¹² Social Alert Op. cit at P. 15.

¹³ Mensh et. Al. Op. cit at P.2.

¹⁴ Oyeledun B. et. al. Report of the National Conference on Adolescent Reproductive Health in Nigeria. Federal Ministry of Health, Abuja, 1999. P.3

we know it – a period in which children attain physical maturity but are not burdened with adults roles and responsibilities – does not exist for many girls in developing countries.”¹⁵

Legal Dimension to the Employment of Young Persons as Domestic Workers

The Nigerian legislation that deals with the employment of young persons is the Nigerian Labour Act¹⁶

Section 59 of the Act states that:

“No child shall be employed or work in any capacity except where he is employed by a member of his family on light work of an agricultural, horticultural or domestic character approved by the Minister”

The definition of a child according to this law is:

“a young person under the age of twelve years.”

The implication of this is that all those who engage the services of young girls who are below the age of 12 and who are not members of their family do so in contravention of the provision of this law.

The law went further in Section 59 (4) to provide that:

“no young person under the age of sixteen years shall be employed in circumstances in which it is not reasonably possible for him to return each day to the place of residence of his parent or guardian, except:

- (a) with the approval of an authorised labour officer; and
- (b) on a written contract.

However, the exception to this law is that it does not apply to young persons employed in domestic service. In other words, the law allows the employment of young persons above the age of 12 as domestic workers without any corresponding act of enforcement of the government policy on compulsory primary school education for all Nigerians.

Section 65 of the same law provides that ‘the Minister (for Labour) may make regulations providing for –

- (a) the engagement, repatriation or supervision of domestic workers;
- (b) the employment of women and young persons as domestic workers;
- (c) the housing accommodation and sanitary arrangements of domestic workers; and
- (d) the conditions of domestic service generally.

¹⁵ Mensh et. al. Op. cit. at P.1

¹⁶ (CAP. 198) Laws of the Federation, 1990.

No such regulation has been made.¹⁷ Female adolescent domestic workers are exposed to different living conditions and there is no minimum standard for their upkeep. In a worldwide study carried out by Social Alert, some domestic workers were found to be sleeping in kitchens.¹⁸

Section 5, Part 1 of Labour Regulations of the Nigerian Labour Act, provides that:

“No person shall demand or accept from a recruited worker, any payment as a reward for obtaining employment for the worker except with the consent of a Governor or the Minister.

This practice is very common with the employment arrangement of female adolescent domestic workers. The middlemen who fix them up with the employers usually take a certain percentage of their income as commission for taking them to the city and getting them a job. The level of awareness of this legal provision as well as others is very low.

The following rights of the child, are said to be infringed through the practice of employing children as domestic workers:

- The right to education.
- The right to protection from physical or mental ill-treatment, neglect or exploitation.
- The right to conditions of living necessary for the child’s development.
- The right to rest, leisure, play and recreation.
- The right to protection from economic exploitation and from performing any work that interferes with his or her education or is harmful to his or her mental, spiritual or social development.
- The right to be protected from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse.
- The right to be arbitrarily deprived of liberty.¹⁹

This is a sad situation in view of the fact that Nigeria is a signatory to the United Nations charter on the rights of the child. The charter provides specifically that:

“State Parties to the convention recognise the rights of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education or to be harmful to the child’s health or physical, mental spiritual, moral or social development.”

Furthermore, subsection 2 of the same article provides that:

“State Parties shall take legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to ensure the implementation of this article. To this end, and having

¹⁷ Ovieghara E. E., *Labour Law in Nigeria* Malthouse Press, Lagos 2001, P. 136

¹⁸ Social Alert op. cit at P. 15

¹⁹ Black M. *Child Domestic Workers – A Handbook for Research and Action*. London, Anti Slavery International, 1997.

regard to the relevant provisions of other international instruments, State Parties shall in particular provide for:

- (a) a minimum age or minimum ages for admission to employment;
- (b) appropriate regulation of the hours and conditions of employment; and
- (c) appropriate penalties or other sanctions to ensure the effective enforcement of this article.”²⁰

Similarly, Article XI (2d) OAU Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child states that:

“The education of the child shall be directed to the preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, tolerance, dialogue, mutual respect and friendship among all people’s ethnic, tribal; and religious groups.”

Most of the children that this project focus on, do not even have access to education, let alone the education being channelled towards the provisions mentioned above.

Article XI (3a) of the same charter states that:

“State parties to the charter shall take all appropriate measures with a view to achieving the full realisation of this right and shall in particular: provide free and compulsory basic education.”

Article XV (1) of the charter states that:

“Every child shall be protected from all forms of economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development.”

Article XVI provides that:

“State parties to the charter shall (1) take specific legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment and especially physical or mental injury or abuse, neglect or maltreatment including sexual abuse, while in the care of a parent, legal guardian or school authority or any other person who has the care of the child (2) effective measures under this Article shall include effective procedures for the establishment of special monitoring units to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting referral investigation, treatment, and follow-up of instances of child abuse and neglect.”

The forgoing is not to say that Nigeria does not support the healthy development of the Nigerian child, there are ample provisions in our laws and policies that promote the rights

²⁰ Article 32, United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child

of the Nigerian child, however, the implementation of such laws, policies and programmes has never been successful.

On the basis of the review of literature and limited research findings in this area, particularly in Nigeria, a study on the reproductive and sexual health and rights of female adolescent domestic workers was carried out. The study was aimed at generating data for examining the socio-cultural, economic, and legal dimensions to the sexual and reproductive health and rights of female adolescent domestic workers in Ikoyi, Victoria Island and Surulere in Lagos State of Nigeria. The essence was to promote a deeper appreciation of the situation of this neglected and vulnerable group of girls in the society so as to call public attention to their needs as citizens of Nigeria.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

Objectives of the Study

The project was designed to facilitate the development of a framework for addressing the sexual and reproductive health needs and rights of the female adolescent domestic workers in municipal Lagos, towards their empowerment as responsible individuals in the society.

In more specific terms, the project was designed to achieve the following:

- to examine the socio-cultural, economic and legal dimensions to the sexual and reproductive health and rights of female adolescent domestic workers in Ikoyi, Victoria Island and Surulere residential areas of Lagos State;
- to determine the level of knowledge and assess the sexual and reproductive health information needs of female adolescent domestic workers in the project communities;
- to assess the prevalent perceptions of the employers of female adolescents domestic workers on their sexual and reproductive health needs and rights;
- to explore eclectic strategies of information and education on adolescent reproductive health and rights of female adolescent domestic workers in the targets areas.

Area of Study

The project areas were Surulere, Ikoyi, and Victoria Island being areas located within the jurisdiction of two separate local government authorities in Lagos State (Surulere and Eti-Osa local government authorities).

Nigeria in view

The Federal Republic of Nigeria has a land area of 923,768.99sq.km, it is located in West Africa with its capital in Abuja. The country is divided into 36 States and the federal capital territory. Nigeria, a British colony became independent on October 1, 1960. It is the most populous country in Africa, with a population of approximately 123,337,822 people who belong to more than 250 ethnic groups; the following are the most populous and politically influential; Hausa and Fulani 29%, Yoruba 21%, Igbo (Ibo) 18%, Ijaw 10%, kanuri 4%, Ibibio 3.5%, Tiv 2.5%. The official language is English, Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo (Ibo) are the three major languages spoken.²¹

²¹ www.infoplease.com/ipa/H010_7847.html

Women constitute 49.6% of the nation's total population (1991 Census) and they produce over 70% of the nation's food supply.

Lagos State

Lagos State is located in the South West region of Nigeria. Lagos used to be the federal capital of the nation,²² however, it is till the commercial nerve centre of the country.

Lagos is a city with at least 8 million inhabitants and spreads over some 200 square kilometres. Surulere is a community under the control of the Surulere Local Government and Ikoyi and Victoria Island are in Eti-Osa Local Government Area. The locations are prime areas in Lagos. Although Victoria Island and Ikoyi are of a higher status than Surulere, the people living in all the locations are of similar status. Ikoyi and Victoria Island are also fast growing commercial areas too.

Sources of Data

The following research tools were used for primary and secondary data collection:

Literature Review: Available research reports, books and journals on the treatment and situation of female adolescent domestic workers worldwide were reviewed.

Questionnaires: The major survey instrument used was questionnaires. They were designed to generate information from female adolescent domestic workers on the socio-cultural, economic and legal dimensions of their sexual and reproductive health and rights. The questionnaire covered questions for ascertaining the level of information that they have about their sexual and reproductive health and rights. The survey also administered questionnaires to employers of female adolescent domestic workers in order to ascertain their prevalent perceptions about the situations of the girls as it concerns their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

In-depth Interviews: Volunteer domestic workers were interviewed in the course of this study in order to gain deeper insight to the experiences of young domestic workers. The experiences that were shared by the girls include past experiences and not necessarily those encountered at their current place of work.

Focus Group Discussions: In recognition of the limitations of the use of questionnaires as a medium for generating research information, four (4) separate focus group discussion sessions were held with female adolescent domestic workers and their employers.

²² <http://www.a.atlanta.ga.us/sister/lagos/nigeria/lagos.html>.

Sampling Procedure

Two hundred and fifty (250) domestic workers selected from Ikoyi/Victoria Island and Surulere were sampled during the survey. The selected domestic workers were from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds. The method used in selecting the girls was the “snowball: strategy (where one person leads us to the next).

Although the project set out to interview an equal sample size from both Surulere and Victoria Island/Ikoyi, the number of domestic workers interviewed in Surulere was 9.6% more than those interviewed at Ikoyi and Victoria Island. This can be justified by the higher population density in Surulere and the fact that it was easier to access the girls at Surulere, as their employers were more receptive than those of Victoria Island and Ikoyi. Although accessing domestic workers in both area was not an easy task as some of the employers showed some resistance.

During the course of the survey, one hundred (100) employers of domestic workers were interviewed with a view to assessing their perceptions about the sexual and reproductive health and rights of female adolescent domestic workers. The selected employers were from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds. As earlier noted, two (2) focus group discussion sessions were held with employers of female adolescent domestic workers in order to gain a deeper insight into how best to reach female adolescent domestic workers with sexual and reproductive health information, examine how their level of social participation can be increased, and promote their exposure to greater economic opportunities.

Table 1: Location of Sampled Domestic Workers and Employers

Location	Domestic Workers		Employers	
	f	%	f	%
Surulere	149	59.6	41	41
Ikoyi/Victoria Island	101	40.4	49	49
Total	250	100	100	100

Data Collection

The survey was conducted between June and December 2001. In some cases, self-administration of questionnaires was encouraged to enhanced confidentiality of information supplied, however, trained interviewers administered majority of the questionnaires because of language barrier and illiteracy. A series of focus group discussions (FGDs) were held with domestic workers on the one hand and their employers on the other. The aim of the FGDs for employers of domestic workers was to gain a deep insight into their perceptions about sexual and reproductive health and rights of the girls that work as domestic workers. Likewise, the FGDs held with the domestic workers was aimed at ascertaining how best to reach the female adolescent domestic workers with sexual and reproductive health information as well as gain

insight into other issues relating to their living conditions and experiences. Twenty (20) in-depth interviews were also held. The purpose of these in-depth interviews was to share the experiences of female adolescent domestic workers. This includes past experiences and not necessarily those encountered in their current place of employment.

Limitations

One major limitation to the study was the difficulty of access to the domestic workers. The project set out to conduct four (4) FGDs, however, only two (2) FGDs were held with the domestic workers, all of which were in Surulere, although much effort was put into trying to conduct FGDs in Victoria Island and Ikoyi, they all prove abortive. Most of the in-depth interviews were conducted in local languages, as some of the domestic workers do not speak or understand English language and as such the questions were limited to what could be easily translated and understood by the girls.

The employers were not so cooperative during the interview stage of this research and some refused to allow us speak with their domestic workers saying that they might decide to stop work if they have contact with us. Some of those who allowed us did so reluctantly and some of the girls were interviewed without the knowledge of their employers. Efforts to correct the impression that our aim was to discourage the domestic workers from working proved abortive. As one of the employers put it:

“If you are going to screen her for HIV/AIDS I can allow you access to her because I am afraid of the disease, but I cannot allow you to discuss other issues with her as I don’t want to lose her now.”

Another employer, a post-graduate student in one of the Nigerian Universities said:

“Please leave my house-help out of your research. You can talk to others but not mine.”

CHAPTER 3

FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY

Personal Characteristics of Female Adolescent Domestic Workers

Below is a breakdown of the personal/background characteristics of the domestic workers interviewed during the study.

Age of Sampled Domestic Workers

It can be seen from the summary given below that a greater percentage of domestic workers interviewed both in Surulere and Ikoyi were between 15 – 20 years of age. The overall mean age of the sampled domestic workers was 17.5 years. The age distribution of the domestic workers is comparable in both areas. On the average, 36% of all respondents fall between ages 10 and 17. This shows that a considerable number of the respondents are not adults and are still within school age.

Table 2: Age of Domestic Workers

Age of Domestic Workers	Surulere		Victoria Island/Ikoyi	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
10 – 14 yrs	44	29.5	21	20.8
15 – 20 yrs	68	45.6	47	46.5
21 – 24 yrs	27	18.1	30	29.7
Don't Know	4	2.7	3	3.0
No Response	6	4.0	-	-
Total	149	100	101	100

Religion

Data obtained indicated that majority of the respondents were Christians (85.3% of the respondents in Surulere and 83.1% of those from Victoria Island/Ikoyi). This does not rule out the existence of domestic workers who belong to other religious faith; it only buttresses the important that the church has the potential in assisting to empower domestic workers and to discourage the practice of employing girls of school age as domestic workers.

Table 3: Religious Background of domestic Workers

Religion	Surulere		Victoria Island/Ikoyi	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Christianity	127	85.2	88	87.1
Islam	20	13.4	12	11.9
Traditional	1	0.7	-	-

None	-	-	1	0.7
No Response	1	0.7	-	-
Total	149	100	101	100

Ethnic Background

Although a break down of the different ethnic groups of the domestic workers as shown in the table below reveals that the majority of the domestic workers are of Yoruba origin, the Yoruba girls are actually from 7 different States of the Federation. However, a high percentage of the girls are from Kwara and Oyo States. This does not connote that generally there are more Yoruba female adolescent domestic workers than young girls of other tribes in the same situation. The fact that the study was carried out in the South West (a Yoruba speaking part of the country) may have been largely responsible for this. The girls of Efik/Ibibio background that constitute the second largest group are mostly from Akwa Ibom and Cross River States while the girls of Tiv/Idoma background are from Benue State.

Table 4: Ethnic Background of Domestic Workers

Ethnic Background	Surulere		Victoria Island/Ikoyi	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Yoruba	46	30.9	31	30.7
Efik/Ibibio	41	27.5	25	24.8
Ibo	26	17.4	17	16.8
Outside Nigeria	13	8.7	6	5.9
Tiv/Idoma	5	3.4	10	9.9
Others	9	6.0	7	6.9
Hausa	5	3.4	2	2.0
No Response	2	2.0	3	3.0
Don't Know	1	0.7	-	-
Total	149	100	101	100

Marital Status

The data collected indicated that respondents were mostly single girls; only 4% of the domestic workers from Victoria Island/Ikoyi were married, and 0.7% from Surulere. Other data obtained showed that 7.9% of the domestic workers from Victoria Island/Ikoyi had children while only 1.3% from Surulere had children. Of the 7.9%, domestic workers who had children in Victoria Island/Ikoyi, 4% had 1 child, while none of the domestic workers who acknowledged having children had more than 2 children. Furthermore, data showed that all the domestic workers who agreed that they had children had their first child between the ages of 15 and 19 years. The interview returns showed that in Surulere, none of the domestic workers with children could recollect who the fathers of their children were. However, in Victoria Island/Ikoyi, 3% of the domestic workers with children knew their children's fathers, 1% had the child for her husband, while 1% had the child for an old school mate. The majority of this group both in Surulere and Victoria

Island/Ikoyi had their children in the villages with their parents. For young girls who are unmarried but already have a child, there are additional limitations to their potential to improve their lives.

Educational Status

Table 5: Educational Qualifications of Domestic Workers

	Surulere		Victoria Island/Ikoyi	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
No Formal Education	30	20.1	26	25.7
Primary Education	61	40.9	29	28.7
Secondary Education	54	36.2	43	42.6
Tertiary Education	-	-	-	-
Others	-	-	1	1.0
No Response	4	2.7	2	2.0
Total	149	100	101	100

The number of domestic workers without formal education is quite high in view of the fact that primary school education is supposed to be free and compulsory. There is a large disparity between the number of domestic workers with primary school education in Victoria Island/Ikoyi and Surulere. From table 5, it was noted that majority of domestic workers that had primary school education are in Surulere and higher percentage of those with secondary school education are in Victoria Island/Ikoyi. It is worthy to not that in both Victoria Island/Ikoyi and Surulere, there was no domestic worker with tertiary education.

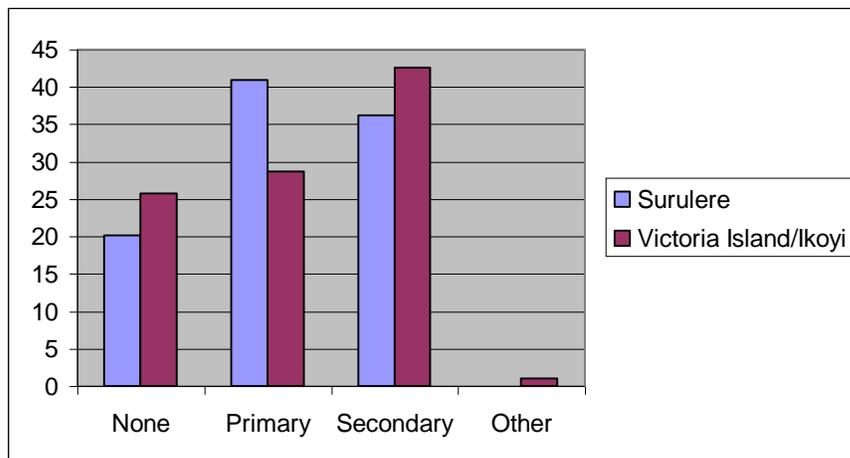


Fig. 1: Bar Chart comparing Educational Status of Domestic Workers from Surulere and Victoria Island/Ikoyi Areas of Lagos, Nigeria.

The following excerpt from in-depth interviews with two domestic workers illustrate some of the reasons for the high number of girls without formal education.

A young girl (Regina) from Benue State, who did not know her age and has no formal education, gave an insight into why she never attended school:

“Because of my parents’ lack of resources and their inability to send me to school, I was asked to live with my older sister from the same parents to take care of her children and she promised my parents that I will be sent to school where she (that is, her sister) lived in Abeokuta. I was not allowed to go to school but was turned into a domestic worker. My parents were told that I was already in school. It is my sister’s husband that brought me to Lagos to work as a domestic worker.”

Another girl, Mary, also from Benue State and who again did not know her age explained as follows:

“I was in a preparatory school and was stopped before I could go any further. My father did not believe in sending girls to school. My other siblings are still schooling. The only sister that I have is married having got pregnant while in school. This reinforced my father’s belief that it was a waste of resources to send girls to school. I believe that if my mother was educated, she would have taken up my education but she has no money of her own.”

(These interviews were conducted in Yoruba language and translated to English) Although they are not Yoruba girls, they communicated in Yoruba language fluently).

Table 6: Domestic Workers that stopped schooling

Have you stopped schooling?	Surulere		Victoria Island/Ikoyi	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Yes	92	61.7	71	70.2
No	26	17.4	4	4.0
Not Applicable ²³	20	13.4	24	23.8
No Response	11	7.4	2	2.0
Total	149	100	101	100

From the above table, the percentage of domestic workers who have stopped schooling at all levels were very high both in Surulere (61.7%) and Victoria Island/Ikoyi (70.2%). It is however, higher in the Victoria Island/Ikoyi area. It is generally known that poverty prevents many families from enrolling some or all of their children in schools or forces them to withdraw their children prematurely from schools because of the cost of

²³ The respondents in this category have never been to school, as such, the issue of when they stopped schooling does not arise.

education or the need to put children to work either within or outside the home²⁴ (see Table 7 for reasons why the girls stopped schooling).

Earlier researchers have confirmed financial constraints/inability to pay for school costs as a major reason for young people dropping out of school. Indeed, this has been confirmed by the 1999 National Demographic Health Survey (NDHS), which found out (for example) that 29% among females aged 15 – 24 who had left school cited their inability to pay for school costs as the reason for their dropping out of school.

Table 7: Why Domestic Workers stopped schooling

Reason for stopping schooling?	Surulere		Victoria Island/Ikoyi	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Financial constraint/Awaiting admission	55	36.9	37	36.6
Incomplete results/Finished	2	1.3	15	14.9
Stopped to learn a trade	4	2.7	2	2.0
Not Intelligent/No interest	7	4.7	5	5.0
Got pregnant/Got ill	2	1.3	2	2.0
Loss of parent/Lack of Sponsor	10	6.7	2	2.0
Stopped to live with relative on promise to continue education	3	2	2	2.0
Don't know	2	1.3	1	1.0
No response	26	17.4	7	6.9
Not Applicable	38	25.5	28	27.7
Total	149	100	101	100

According to Table 7, most of the female adolescent domestic workers who had stopped schooling both in Victoria Island/Ikoyi and Surulere actually dropped out of school due to financial constraints. This was a very high definitive force of why they opted to become domestic workers. Another interesting information that came out from the survey was the fact that some of the girls actually believe that having completed either junior or senior secondary school, they have 'finished' schooling. Some decided to stop not because of financial incapability of parents but because they could not cope with their studies. Most of the public schools in Nigeria today are more or less play centres for young people. The standard of education has really fallen and something needs to be done about it.

²⁴ Hodges A. ed. *Children's and Women's Rights in Nigeria: A wake up Call*. Abuja, National Planning Commission and UNICEF Nigeria, 2001, P. 165.

Reasons for Becoming Domestic Workers

Some of the girls who participated in the FGD sessions explained that they were initially living with their parents, uncles, and sister. However, when such people could no longer cater for them, they had to go and seek employment so that they can take care of themselves. Some of the respondents said that they decided on their own to seek employment when their parents could no longer fund their education. Some of the respondents have also learnt one vocational skill or the other but are engaged in the work of domestic service because they do not have the resources to start their own businesses. Many of the respondents, including those that participated in the FGD and In-depth interviews claimed that they decided to work for some time so that they can save some funds for furthering their education or to start their businesses.

One of the participants (Maria) at the FGDs explained that her sister brought her to Lagos from the village. The intention was to sponsor her through a secretarial training school. However, having just concluded her own education too, she told her to give her sometime to settle down. But Maria independently decided to work instead of staying idle waiting for the time her sister would be able to sponsor her training. There is a strong correlation between poverty and the decision to become domestic workers. It is worthy to note that during the FGD and in-depth interviews, many of the girls remarked that they would go back to school or learn a trade if only they had a sponsor.

Parental Background

In order to have a deeper insight into the factors that shape the life and experiences of female domestic workers, the study also looked into the parental background of these girls. The socio-economic and background characteristics of parents are summarized below.

Majority (71.3% in Victoria Island/Ikoyi and 77.9% in Surulere) of the domestic workers said that their fathers were alive; similarly, 87.1% of the domestic workers in Victoria Island/Ikoyi and 93.3% in Surulere said their mothers were living. Data obtained showed that a considerable percentage of the fathers of the domestic workers interviewed both in Victoria Island/Ikoyi (33.7%) and Surulere (27.5%) were farmers, fathers of domestic workers in Victoria Island/Ikoyi (13.9%) and Surulere (21.4%) were said to be traders/businessmen. On the average, 17.6% were artisans, 8.4% were civil servants, 6.4% were security personnel, and 1.2% were said to be fishermen. Also, 2.4% said their fathers were pensioners. Further, over half of the girls 53.5% in Victoria Island/Ikoyi and 69.1% in Surulere) said that their mothers were petty traders, 14% farmers, 6.4% artisans, and 2.8% teachers. This statistics show that the domestic workers come from the lower strata of the society, where poverty and lack is rife.

Educational Background of Parents of Domestic Workers

The educational qualifications of domestic workers and that of their parents are comparable in both locations where the research was carried out. Only 1% (Victoria Island/Ikoyi) and 2% (Surulere) of the domestic workers responded that their fathers had university/tertiary education. Similarly, a high percentage of the domestic workers interviewed said that their mothers had no formal education. Only 0.7% of the mothers of domestic workers both in Victoria Island/Ikoyi and Surulere had tertiary education. This may be part of the reason why domestic workers have not been able to attain higher educational standards than what they have. Analysis of the data on the educational background of domestic workers revealed that the highest form of education they had was secondary education school education. It is obvious that there is a continuous circle of poverty and low level if education

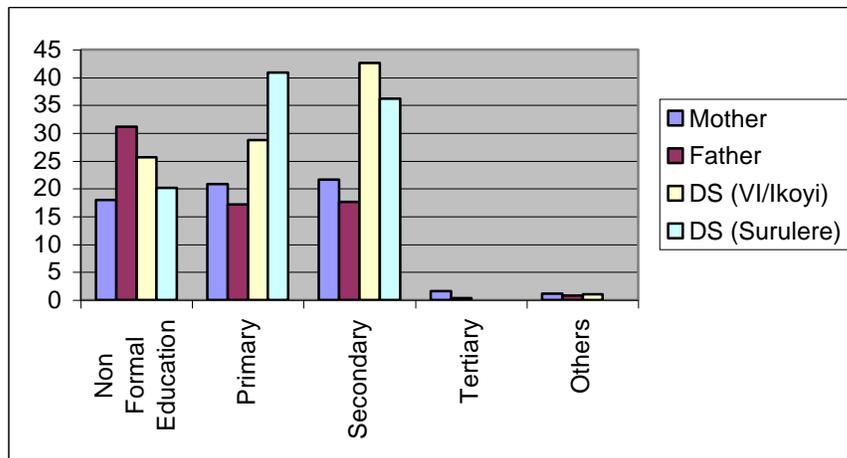


Fig. 2: Comparison of Domestic Workers and their Parents' Background

Educational and Occupational Status of Employers of Domestic Workers

On the contrary, only 1% of the employers interviewed had no formal education, 2% had only primary school education, while 6% had secondary school education. A very high number of the respondents (76%) had university education or its equivalent. Also, 11% had other forms of education such as teacher training, Ordinary National Diploma, vocational training etc. This high level of literacy among employers is understandable in view of the fact that the study was carried out in areas where more elites than illiterates reside, however, their level of literacy does not have any significant impact on employers' appreciation of the need for the girls to be involved in one form of personal development programme or the other. The seems to be an acceptance of the existence of class system, in the sense that the underprivileged are seen as being fit for certain jobs and not necessarily requiring assistance in the area of educational development.

The research showed that 9% of the respondents work from home. Therefore, the idea of employing a young girl as a domestic worker is not just because most women are working and therefore need somebody to assist them when they are at work, rather, it is about the availability of cheap labour, as well as social acceptance of the practice. Of all the employers interviewed, 34% were civil workers, 2% were medical personnel, 10% were lawyers, 4% were journalists, and 20% were engaged in trading while 16% were other professionals of different educational backgrounds.

Family Size: Actual and Proffered

Majority of the domestic workers came from large families and this might explain why most of their parents cannot cope financially considering their low economic status in the country. About 25.8% of those at Victoria Island/Ikoyi and 22.8% at Surulere have 7 or 8 siblings, while 34.7% of those at Victoria Island/Ikoyi and 40.2% at Surulere have 5 or 6 siblings. The percentage of domestic workers that have between 1 – 2 siblings is very low: 4% of the domestic workers at Victoria Island/Ikoyi and 1.4% at Surulere. However, on the question of how many children domestic workers would like to have, majority of the respondents expressed the intention of having very small families. A significant difference was observed between the number of children that their parents had and the number of children that domestic workers want to have (See Fig. 3 below).

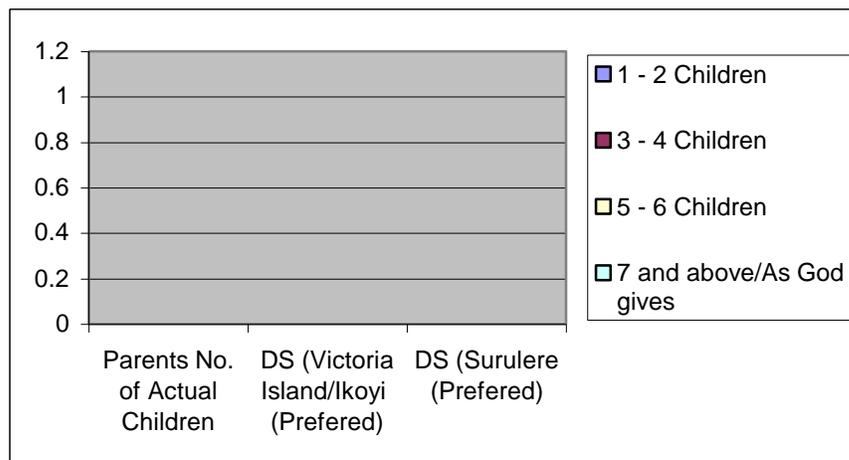


Fig. 3: Comparison of the number of children domestic workers want and the number of children their parents had according to location.

In an attempt to determine whether the family size of the host families of female adolescent domestic workers influenced their choice of family size, enquires were made into the family sizes of the employers. The survey revealed that the difference between the number of employers (38%) that had 1 – 2 children and the number of employer (39%) that had 3 – 4 children was insignificant. Only 5% of the employers had 5 – 6 children, and only 1% had 7 children. Those that did not disclose the number of children that they had on the grounds that it was traditionally wrong to count the number of children that one had were 17%.

This was compared with the responses of the domestic workers to the question of how many children they would like to have and the number of children that their parents had. The outcome of the comparison was that there seems to be a similarity between the number of children that domestic workers would like to have and the number of children that their employers have. Majority of the domestic workers expressed the intention of having very small families. A significant difference was observed between the number of children that their parents had and the number of children that domestic workers want to have. The reason for this may not be far from the appreciation of the quality of life that the employers of domestic workers are able to give to their children as against the quality of life that the domestic workers and their parents have, considering the number of siblings that domestic workers have.

(Insert Bar Chart)

Fig. 4: Comparison between the actual family size of employers, the actual family size of parents of domestic workers and the preferred family size of domestic workers.

Income and Expenditure

Salaries and Wages of Domestic Workers

The location of the domestic workers did not have any significant effect on the salaries that they earn as the same pattern of salary distribution was found in both locations. On the average, 7.3% of the respondents earn below ₦1,000 per month (₦1,000 is about \$8.6) while 25.2% earn between ₦1,000 and ₦2,000 per month and 14.2% earn between ₦2,100 and ₦3,000 per month. In other words, 46.7% of domestic workers interviewed earn below ₦3000 monthly (₦3,000 is approximately \$26). It is very important to note that less than 3% earn above ₦5,000 (approximately \$43) monthly.

Table 8: Monthly salaries of domestic workers

Salaries (₦)	Surulere		Victoria Island/Ikoyi	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Below 1,000	13	8.7	6	5.9
Btw 1,000 – 2,000	41	27.5	23	22.8
Btw 2,100 – 3,000	20	13.4	15	14.9
Btw 3,100 – 4,000	4	2.7	11	10.9
Btw 4,100 – 5,000	8	5.4	4	4.0
Above 5,000	4	2.7	3	3.0
No Pay	35	23.5	25	24.8
Don't Know	21	14.1	7	6.9
No Response	2	1.3	7	6.9
Not Applicable	1	0.7	-	-
Total	149	100	101	100

The above is not far from what employers of domestic workers agreed that they pay. The table below is a breakdown of the earnings of domestic workers from the perspective of their employers.

Table 9: How much employers paid their last two domestic workers

Amount Paid (₦)	Frequency	%
Below 1,000	6	6
Btw 1,000 – 2,000	60	60
Btw 2,100 – 3,000	4	4
Btw 3,100 – 4,000	2	2
Btw 4,100 – 5,000	4	4
Above 5,000	2	2
No Pay	9	9
NA	4	4
NR	9	9
Total	100	100

Table 9 above shows that a large number (60%) of the employers pay their domestic workers between 1,000 and 2,000 Naira per month. This is a further confirmation of the data collected from the female adolescent domestic workers that were interviewed during the course of this study. The above table reveals that most adolescent domestic workers are poorly paid considering the amount of work that they do on a daily basis.

On the question whether domestic workers felt that their salaries were commensurate to the amount of work that they do, a considerable number of the respondents (34.7% in Victoria Island/Ikoyi and 34.9% in Surulere) felt that their salary was not commensurate to the amount of work that they do. Furthermore, data showed that almost half of the respondents in both areas did not get a periodic increase of salaries while only 16.8% in Victoria Island/Ikoyi and 14.1% in Surulere had a periodic increase of salaries. They however, view their access to regular meals in their employers' homes as adequate compensation. Some of the interviewees expressed the opinion that they would rather work with Nigerians and earn low salaries than work with foreigners, especially Indians, as they are allowed to have meals in the homes of Nigerians as against foreigners who do not add the provision of meals to their package. This finding was a confirmation of the outcome of the study carried out by Oloko in 1992 where it was discovered that “young domestics themselves, in view of the fact that they were fed by their employers, complained less of poor wages than overwork.”²⁵

Furthermore, the study revealed that 23.5% of domestic workers did not earn salaries in Surulere, while 24.8% did not earn salaries in Victoria Island/Ikoyi. On further probing, most of the respondents that said they did not earn salaries had special arrangements either with their employers or the persons that brought them over to Lagos to work. Some

²⁵ Oloko B. A. “Protection and Violation of Child Rights: an Overview” in Child Protection in Nigeria Summary of Research Findings on Protection and Violation of Children’s Rights, Vol. 4. Lagos, Jeromelaiho and Associates Limited P.15

of the domestic workers did not know how much they earn (Surulere 14.1% and Victoria Island/Ikoyi 6.9%). One of the reasons why domestic workers did not know how much they earn was because someone receives their salaries on their behalf. This was captured in an excerpt from one of the interviewees during an in-depth interview session. The lady was about 22 years with a 10 year old child and had no formal education. She had this to say:

“I do not know how much I earn as my aunty who got me this job negotiated the salary on my behalf and collects it. The arrangement we have is that half of my monthly salary would go to my mother, whilst the remaining half would be used to fund my child’s education. The child stays with his father who has taken a new wife. However, the child will only be sent to school if I foot the bill.”

Similarly, Mary, a teenage girl from Benue State, who has no formal education had this to say:

“I do not know how much I earn as my brother (who is not a blood relative) collects my salary on my behalf. My madam’s daughter told me he had collected 3 months salary in advance. We are normally cheated of our salaries as they just buy us second hand clothes. I have resolved that I will collect my money from my brother through any means I can employ.”

Data showed that 33.7% of the domestic workers studied in Ikoyi/Victoria Island and 30.2% of domestic workers in Surulere said someone received their salaries on their behalf.

Expenditure of Domestic Workers Sampled

The summary contained in Table 10 represents the responses obtained concerning the use of salaries. The data reveals a large number of domestic workers that either did not earn salaries (see Not Applicable in table) or did not know how much they earn and as such, cannot say categorically what their salaries are being use for.

Table 10: What domestic workers spend their money on

What money is used for	Surulere		Victoria Island/Ikoyi	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Personal use only	22	14.8	22	21.8
Savings	30	20.1	16	15.8
Personal use and caring for members of family	12	8.1	4	4.0
Caring for members of family only	8	5.4	9	8.9
Personal use and savings	9	6	6	5.9
Don’t Know	4	2.7	2	2.0

No Response	17	11.4	14	13.9
Not Applicable ²⁶	47	31.5	28	27.7
Total	149	100	101	100

It is clear from these figures that a higher percentage of domestic workers in Victoria Island/Ikoyi use their salaries for personal care such as buying clothes, sanitary towels, and other sundry items. More girls in Surulere than Victoria Island/Ikoyi use their income for both personal effects and maintenance of other family members. Moreover, a higher percentage of domestic workers in Victoria Island/Ikoyi (8.9%) compared to Surulere (5.4%) use their salaries for taking care of their families only, they either use it to send their younger ones to school or use it for the upkeep of their parents or children back in the village. More domestic workers from Surulere than those from Victoria Island/Ikoyi are saving their salaries with the hope of either going back to school, learning a trade or starting a business.

In view of the meagre salary that domestic workers earn, the enormous responsibility that they shoulder, and the continuous rise in the levels of inflation in Nigeria, one wonders how much domestic workers can save towards achieving their plans for the future.

Work Conditions

Work Hours

The summary presented below in Tables 11 and 12 show the resumption and closing time of domestic workers. What the tables suggest is that majority of the domestic workers resume work between 6.00 a.m. – 7.00 a.m. and only a few close form work before 8.00 p.m. This is a general phenomenon in both Surulere (55%) and Victoria Island/Ikoyi (61.4%). Data showed that a higher percentage of domestic workers resume work before 6.00a.m. in Surulere (29.5%) than in Victoria Island/Ikoyi (13.9%). This can be attributed to the fact that majority of the domestic workers in Surulere live with their employers, while there are more daily workers among the domestic workers in Victoria Island/Ikoyi. The interview returns showed that a higher percentage of domestic workers close between 9.00p.m. and 10.00p.m. at Victoria Island/Ikoyi (16.8%), than in Surulere (6%). Quite a substantial percentage of domestic workers close after 10.00p.m. both in Victoria Island/Ikoyi (35.7%) and Surulere (49%). Responses show that there was a slight disparity in the percentage of domestic workers in Victoria Island/Ikoyi (11.9%) and Surulere (14.8%) who close well after midnight. This exceeds the 8-hour daily work period as recommended by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). It confirms the notion that domestic workers rise very early and close very late into the night.

Table 11: Resumption Time of Domestic Workers

Resumption Time	Surulere		Victoria Island/Ikoyi	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%

²⁶ This category of respondents do not earn a salary and as such have no money to spend

Before 6.00 a.m.	44	29.5	14	13.9
Between 6.00 -7.00 a.m.	82	55	62	61.4
Between 7.00 – 8.00 a.m.	5	3.4	13	12.9
Between 8.00 – 9.00 a.m.	-	-	2	2.0
Between 9.00 – 10.00 a.m.	3	2.0	3	3.0
No specific time	1	0.7	-	-
No Response	14	9.4	7	6.9
Total	149	100	101	100

Table 12: Closing Time of Domestic Workers

Closing Time	Surulere		Victoria Island/Ikoyi	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Before 8.00 p.m.	9	6.0	7	6.9
Between 8.00 -9.00 p.m.	9	6.9	17	16.8
Between 9.00 – 10.00 p.m.	24	16.1	20	19.8
Between 10.00 – 11.00 p.m.	48	32.2	21	20.8
Between 11.00 p.m. – 12.00 a.m.	25	16.8	15	14.9
After 12 midnight	10	6.7	3	3.0
Any time I finish my work	12	8.1	9	8.9
No Response	12	8.1	9	8.9
Total	149	100	101	100

Considering the long work hours of domestic workers on a daily basis, the study probed further to find out if these girls had any break time during the day. Surprisingly, majority of them responded in the affirmative, 65.3% for Victoria Island/Ikoyi, and 63.1% for Surulere. This break time was however, not regulated and rest could only be taken if chores have been completed, or when their employers and the children that they take care of are not at home. However, the number of respondents that did not have any break time was higher in Surulere (32.2%) than in Victoria Island/Ikoyi (27.7%). According to one of the respondents:

“There is nothing like break time in this type of work, you just have to continue to work, my employer will not be happy with me for spending so much time with you.”

It was observed that domestic workers who work without having any notable break periods are those who live where pipe born water supply was not regular. It is noteworthy that as shown in the case of break time, a higher percentage of the domestic workers said that they did not have any day/days off work at Surulere (58.4%) than those at Victoria Island/Ikoyi (52.5%). The disparities in these figures are not so wide and one can safely conclude that there is very little difference in the work conditions of domestic workers in the two areas.

Relationship with Employer

Employee – Employer relationship is a very key factor when considering job satisfaction. Contrary to widespread and general beliefs, on the average, over half of the domestic workers to which questionnaires were administered said that they could share their personal problems with their employers (Surulere 56.4% and Victoria Island/Ikoyi 43.6%). However, 52.5% of the respondents in Victoria Island/Ikoyi said that they could not discuss issues relating to their bodies with their employers. Contrary to the response from the administered interviews, the FGDs revealed that domestic workers would ordinarily not discuss personal issues with their employers. This position was confirmed during in-depth interview sessions. Partly responsible for this, is the lack of trust that domestic workers have for their employers. In many instances, the relationship between the parties is characterised by mutual suspicion.

During the FGDs held with employers of domestic workers, it was confirmed that domestic workers do not have free discussions with their employers. According to one of the respondents:

“there is hardly a good rapport between madams and their domestic workers. Most of the girls do not open up such that even where the madam tries to assist them, they do not get positive response that would encourage them to go on.”

They also expressed the view that employers are sometimes sceptical about how they interact with their domestic workers because of the feeling that if the girls know too much they might begin to misbehave. This low level of interaction make the domestic workers bear a lot of pain in their hearts as many of them broke down crying when sharing their experiences with the field officers.

Job Retention Pattern of Domestic Workers

One of the important findings of the study was that female adolescent domestic workers do not stay in any employment for long. As at the time of the interviews, approximately 49% of the respondents had spent less than a year with their employers. When asked when they would leave their present employers, 21.2% said they would leave by the end of that very year, 15.2% said that they would leave anytime they like and 12% of the respondents said that they would like to leave as soon as possible.

On the part of employers, 13% responded that their current domestic workers had stayed with them for less than one year, while 55% reported that the domestic workers had stayed between 1 – 2 years. The table below shows a fair picture of the number of years that the current domestic workers of the respondents have stayed with their employers.

Table 13: Number of years current domestic workers have spend with employers

No of years spent	Frequency	%
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Less than a year	13	13
1 – 2 years	55	55
3 – 4 years	9	9
5 – 6 years	4	4
7 years and above	3	3
Don't Know	3	3
No Response	12	12
Not Applicable	1	1
Total	100	100

Table 14 is also a confirmation of the high rate at which Female Adolescent Domestic Workers (FADW) change their jobs. Sixty six percent of the employers of domestic worker have had between 1 and 4 domestic workers.

Table 13: Number of Domestic Workers Employers have had

No of Domestic Workers	Frequency	%
1 – 2	36	36
3 – 4	33	33
5 – 6	12	12
7 and above	2	2
Don't Know/Can't Remember	12	12
No Response	5	5
Total	100	100

The above finding is consistent with that of an earlier study carried out by Oloko²⁷ whereby it was found that young domestic workers had a high turnover. The said study revealed that approximately 25% of the young domestic workers left their first and second employments in less than six months, whilst 21% remained with their employers for a duration of six to twelve months. Only 40% of employers in that survey claimed that they had young domestic workers who had lived with them for two or more years. The high turn over is attributable to one of many factors, poor work conditions, poor remuneration, poor employee – employer relationship and what can be referred to as the “middle man syndrome.” Middle men and women who fix these young girls up with different employers always want to ensure that they maintain control over where the girls work so that the commission that they receive on the income of the girls are forever guaranteed. The fear is that if they stay too long with any particular employers, they might become too close to such employers and their loyalty would be to the employers rather than to them. They are therefore withdrawn at the end of every year on the grounds that they are going to visit their parents after which new employers are found for them.

²⁷ Oloko B. A. op. cit.

Reproductive and Sexual Health Issues

Attitudes Towards Sex and Pregnancy Prevention

The interview returns showed that as at the time of the study, 37.6% of the domestic workers in Victoria Island/Ikoyi and 19.5% of the domestic workers in Surulere who responded acknowledged that they had sexual partners. However, responses from the in-depth interviews showed that although, some of them did not have sexual partners, they are exposed to sexual harassment and assault or rape either by their employers' husbands, sons, male household staff or neighbours. One interesting thing however, was the fact that they never report such incidences to their employers. Some did not tell their employers because of threats made to them by their assailants. It was obvious from the interview sessions that domestic workers who had experienced some form of sexual abuse or the other did not undergo any form of healing process as they often broke down crying when narrating their ordeals to the field officers.

One of the participants at one of the FGD sessions shared the experience of her friend with the forum. According to her:

“My friend had a bad experience where she used to work. She was 14 years old when the incident happened. Her employer was always out of the house to work. The girl does all the house chores. She cooks, cleans, and serves the employer’s husband food. The man started developing interest in her. He started playing with her in an unfamiliar manner. When she tried to discourage him, the man threatened to kill her if she dare tell her employer or anyone at all. He eventually rapped her and when he tried to ‘do it’ with her another time, she threatened to shout and report him to his wife. So he stopped.”

In an attempt to assess the level of knowledge of female adolescent domestic workers on reproductive health issues, respondents were asked how many times they felt a woman needed to have sex before getting pregnant, the data collected (See Table 15) revealed that most of the domestic workers did not know. From the study, 53.7% of the respondents in Surulere and 42.6% of those in Victoria Island/Ikoyi did not know how many times one needed to have sex before getting pregnant. This confirms the notion that although many young people are sexually active, they have very low level of knowledge about reproductive health issues. In a case study of young people in five different countries by the World Health Organisation, it was found that substantial percentage of youth believe that sexual debut or occasional sex carries no risk of pregnancy.²⁸

Table 15: Number of Times one needs to have Sex before getting Pregnant

No. of Times	Surulere		Victoria Island/Ikoyi	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%

²⁸ Brown A. et al (eds.), Sexual Relations Among young people in developing countries: Evidence from WHO case studies No. 4. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2001.

One time	26	17.4	22	21.8
More than once	25	16.8	17	16.8
Don't Know	80	53.7	43	42.6
No Response	18	12.1	19	18.8
Total	149	100	101	100

Knowledge About Contraceptive Methods

The interview returns showed that 43.6% of the respondents from Victoria Island/Ikoyi and 49.7% of the respondents in Surulere were not aware of any method that they could use to protect themselves from getting pregnant. About 10.7% of the respondents in Surulere and 4% of those in Victoria Island/Ikoyi said that they use medications like Ampicilin, Andrews liver salt, lime etc., all of which are not proper family planning methods but which peers had told them they could use. A respondent at an in-depth interview said she used Andrews liver salt and had not gotten pregnant and as such felt it was a very effective contraceptive. When asked where she got her information from, she agreed that it was from a friend. A key finding from this study was that despite the fact that the use of condom as a contraceptive device has been widely advertise, its usage among female adolescent domestic workers was very minimal.

Table 16: Methods used by domestic workers to prevent getting pregnant

Method	Surulere		Victoria Island/Ikoyi	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Safe Period	6	4.0	14	13.9
Abstinence	16	10.7	9	8.9
Contraceptive/Pills	-	-	9	8.9
Use Ampicilin, lime and salt, Andrews liver salt etc.	16	10.7	4	4.0
Withdrawal	1	0.7	2	2.0
Condom	-	-	2	2.0
None	17	11.4	13	12.9
No Response	22	14.8	4	4.0
Not Applicable ²⁹ (Don't Know any method)	71	47.7	44	43.6
Total	149	100	101	100

Knowledge of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) and HIV/AIDS

The survey ascertained the respondents' knowledge of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). In Victoria Island/Ikoyi, 46.5% of the respondents knew about some STDs while 49.5% did not know about any STD. Likewise, in Surulere, 35.6% knew about one STD

²⁹ This category of respondents do not know any method that they can use to protect themselves from getting pregnant and as such do not use any method to protect themselves.

or the other while 53.7% did not know about any STD. This implies that a large percentage of the respondents did not know about STDs even though on the average, of 28.6% acknowledged being sexually active.

Similarly, majority of the domestic workers, (87.1% and 79.2% from Victoria Island/Ikoyi and Surulere respectively) have heard about HIV/AIDS. Despite the high level of awareness of HIV/AIDS, further probing towards ascertaining in-depth knowledge of the disease revealed that majority only knew that a victim of AIDS experiences lost of weight and later dies. Nothing more than this was known about the disease. Only 18.8% of the respondents at Victoria Island/Ikoyi and 12.1% of those at Surulere knew that they could protect themselves by the use of condom. The FGDs and in-depth interview held revealed that some believed that the only solution to the issue of HIV/AIDS and how a woman could protect herself was to pray.

All the above confirm previous findings from researches on issue relating to young people that they have a low level of knowledge or reproductive health issues and some level of drug abuse. Contrary to the outcome of our assessment of the level of knowledge of female adolescent domestic workers on reproductive and sexual health information, most (55%) of the employers interviewed expressed the opinion that their domestic workers had access to adequate information about their body and how they could protect themselves from contracting diseases. The reason for this kind of response might be because the employers probably felt that to answer otherwise would mean that they were not performing their responsibility as guardians of the girls. However, discussions at the focus group discussion sessions revealed that the period of stay by most of the girls with any particular employer was always too short for any meaningful relationship to be developed for such intimate discussions.

(Insert Fig 5)

Fig 5: Level of Awareness of HIV/AIDS by Domestic Workers

Despite the high level of awareness of HIV/AIDS, over half of the respondents in Surulere (53.7%) and a little less than half in Victoria Island/Ikoyi (49.5%) did not know about other sexually transmitted diseases. Although approximately 40% of respondents in both areas knew about other STDs, in response to the question on how a woman could protect herself from contracting STDs, 28.7%, and 20.8% in Victoria Island/Ikoyi and Surulere respectively did not know how women could protect themselves from getting infected with sexually transmitted disease. However, 18.8% and 12.1% in Victoria Island/Ikoyi and Surulere respectively mentioned the use of condom as a method of prevention, 23.8% and 32.2% in Victoria Island/Ikoyi and Surulere respectively talked about abstinence, 9.9% and 8.7% in Victoria Island/Ikoyi and Surulere respectively said by not sleeping around and 0.4% in Victoria Island/Ikoyi said through prayers.

(Insert Fig 6)

Fig 6: Proportion of Domestic Workers that have knowledge of other Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Awareness of Issues Relating to Menstruation

Majority (92.1%) of the respondents in Victoria/Island/Ikoyi and most (81.9%) of those in Surulere have started menstruation. Amongst them, 51.5% of those from Victoria Island/Ikoyi and 48.3% of those in Surulere had heard about menstruation before their experience, while 38.6% and 34.2% from Victoria Island/Ikoyi and Surulere respectively did not know about menstruation until they experienced it. A high proportion (40.6% in Victoria Island/Ikoyi and 41.6% in Surulere) of the domestic workers make use of toilet tissue for their periods. This suggests that they were not educated on what to use for their periods or they might probably have picked up the idea of using toilet tissue from friends or because it was cheaper than sanitary towel. Domestic workers in Victoria Island/Ikoyi (36.6%) and Surulere (29.5%) make use of sanitary towels/pad, while 10.9% in Victoria Island/Ikoyi and 6% in Surulere make use of cloth.

The data collected showed that 51.5% of the domestic workers in Victoria Island/Ikoyi and 39.6% of those in Surulere use their personal funds to procure what they use during periods and this probably is another reason for the use of toilet tissue by most of the girls. The data also showed that their employers supply about 37.6% of the respondents in Victoria Island/Ikoyi and 34.9% of those in Surulere with what they use for their periods. However, out of those that received supply of toiletries from their employers, majority of them still use toilet tissue. The implication of this is that some educated people also do not have appropriate education on menstruation and the care for the body or the issue of cost might be considered more critical in deciding on what to use as against the issue of personal hygiene.

Upon further probing, most of the domestic workers acknowledged that they have menstrual pains during their periods (63.4% in Victoria Island/Ikoyi 57% in Surulere). When asked if they knew the cause of the pain, 57.4% of those that experience pain among respondents in Victoria Island/Ikoyi and 52.3% of those in Surulere did not know the cause. Respondents in Victoria Island/Ikoyi (12./9%) and Surulere (4.7%) said they knew the cause of menstrual pain, but on further probing, they gave responses like:

“It is because I take too much sugar or sweet things.”

“I feel it is because of the surgical operation (appendicitis) that I had last year, because prior to that operation, I never had menstrual pain.”

These attest to the fact that they did not know the cause of the menstrual pain they have and they did not bother to find out why. Some of them confirmed that they assumed that it was normal for a woman to have such pain.

Sources of Information

Access to information is very critical to any process of empowerment. The data obtained during the survey revealed that a large percentage of the respondents in Victoria Island/Ikoyi (53.4%) and Surulere (66.4%) had access to both television and radio and most (62.4% in Victoria Island/Ikoyi 52.3% in Surulere) of the respondents in this group watch television on a daily basis. Only 1% of the girls read daily newspapers/magazines in Victoria Island/Ikoyi while none of the respondents in Surulere read daily newspapers/magazines. However, 10.7% of the respondents in Surulere and 5% of those in Victoria Island/Ikoyi had no access to any of the sources of information mentioned above. More respondents in Victoria Island/Ikoyi (38.6%) had access to all the different sources of information that is, electronic media, newspapers, novels etc. while just 5% of the respondents in Surulere had access to all the sources of information mentioned.

In essence, their major source of general information was through the electronic media. The implication of this for the current study, in view of the difficulty encountered in our effort to make contact with the girls as well as converge them for focus group discussions, was that the easiest means of reaching female adolescent domestic workers was through electronic media.

Table 17: General Sources of Information

Access to sources of Information	Surulere		Victoria Island/Ikoyi	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Radio and TV	99	66.4	54	53.4
Newspapers/Magazines	-	-	1	1.0
Novels and Books	1	0.7	2	2.0
All of the above	33	5.0	39	38.6
No Access to any	16	10.7	5	5.0
Total	149	100	101	100

In response to the question on the type of programmes domestic workers like to watch to watch on television, 58.7% in Victoria Island/Ikoyi and 39.6% in Surulere expressed preference for movies, films, home videos etc. More respondents in Surulere (21.5%) than in Victoria Island/Ikoyi (15.8%) said that they would watch any type of programme. Only 5% of those in Victoria Island/Ikoyi and 8.7% of those in Surulere like to watch health or religious programmes.

Sources of Information on Sexual and Reproductive Health Issues

According to Table 18, domestic workers received information about sexuality, contraception, pregnancy etc. from various sources. The largest proportion (29.8% in Victoria Island/Ikoyi and 22.8% in Surulere) heard about such issues from friends, boyfriends, society, and employers' daughters. The electronic media (radio and television) was the second largest source of information on sexual and reproductive health issues (16.8% of those in Victoria Island/Ikoyi and 15.4% of those in Surulere).

Only 1% in Victoria Island/Ikoyi and 1/3% in Surulere learnt about sex and contraception from their employers. Books formed one of the least sources of information for the girls as only 1% of those in Victoria Island/Ikoyi said that they learnt from books. None of the girls at Surulere learnt about reproductive health issues from books. Furthermore, 5% of the girls in Victoria Island/Ikoyi and 4.6% of those in Surulere said they learnt from personal experiences. This finding indicates that female adolescent domestic workers obtain information about sexual and reproductive health information from several sources. It also indicates the major role that friends (peers) play in the dissemination of information. However, peers group information on issues such as this is often incorrect and misleading.

Table 18: Sources of Information on Methods of Avoiding Pregnancy

Sources of Information on methods of prevention of pregnancy	Surulere		Victoria Island/Ikoyi	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
TV/Radio	23	15.4	17	16.8
Books	-	-	1	1.0
Employer's Daughter	1	0.7	3	3.0
Society/Friends	24	16.1	19	18.8
Personal Experience	7	4.7	5	5.0
Fiancée/Boy friend	-	-	3	3.0
My Employer	2	1.3	1	1.0
Don't Know	3	2.0	-	-
No Response	17	11.4	7	6.9
Not Applicable ³⁰	72	48.3	45	44.6
Total	149	100	101	100

Employers' Knowledge of Sexual Harassment of Domestic Workers

On the issue of exposure to sexual harassment, 65% of the employers agreed that they have heard about domestic workers having sexual relationships with their employers' husbands. Another 32% said that they have never heard of, or had any such experience, while 3% did not respond to the question. The response of the employers who agreed to having knowledge of sexual harassment of young adolescent domestic workers and the personal experiences shared by some of the domestic workers who participated at the focus group discussions are confirmation of the fact that these girls are exposed to one form of sexual abuse or the other. Response from the focus group discussions with domestic workers showed that the girls did not report such experiences to their employers. This, they said was because they were often blamed for attracting trouble. This was also confirmed by some of their employers.

³⁰ Domestic workers that responded Not Applicable do not know methods of avoiding pregnancy and as such cannot tell any source of information for same.

Sources of Information on HIV/AIDS

Enquiries about where they got information of issues relating to HIV/AIDS showed that quite a substantial percentage of the respondents (51.5% of those in Victoria Island/Ikoyi and 43% of those in Surulere) heard about HIV/AIDS through the media, that is, radio and television. Furthermore, 33.6% of those in Victoria Island/Ikoyi and 32.9% of those in Surulere got the information from friends. On the average, only 2.8% of the domestic workers heard about HIV/AIDS from their employers, while 14.8% of the domestic workers knew they have heard about HIV/AIDS but could not say specifically where they got the information.

Previous studies on adolescent reproductive health support this finding. Among young females in several sites in Guatemala (Mendez, 1994), Chile (Kleincsek, 1994) and adolescent factory workers in Chiang Mai, Thailand (Rugpao, 1997), the vast majority - 70% obtained HIV/AIDS information from television and radio.³¹ This trend is attributed to the consistent public education and information campaigns on HIV/AIDS. However, as earlier mentioned in the paragraph on *Knowledge of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) and HIV/AIDS* above, despite the high level of awareness of the disease, in-depth knowledge of mode of transmission and other related issue are limited.

Desire For Knowledge and Awareness of Sexual and Reproductive Health Issues

A promising finding of the research was the desire of majority of the domestic workers (87.1% in Victoria Island/Ikoyi and 84.6% in Surulere) to participate in personal development and health educational programmes outside their homes as well as their employers' (70%) acceptance on paper to allow them participate in such programmes. Although 70% of the employers responded positively when asked if they would allow their domestic workers to attend educational programmes outside their homes, the attitude of the employers during the survey exercise was not encouraging enough to warrant the setting up of an educational/enlightenment programme that would require the physical presence of the domestic workers.

It is interesting to note that in response to when and where the domestic workers thought the programmes should be held, approximately 34.8% said it had to be around where they stay and that the appropriate time for the programme would be dependent on if their employers would grant them the permission to attend. Another interesting issue that has implication for their participation at such educational programmes is the fact that domestic workers do not stay with any particular employer for too long.

Future Ambition of Domestic Workers

Despite the fact that 22.4% of the domestic workers interviewed had no formal education, the in-depth interviews showed that only a few did not have an idea of what they would like to do in the future, although they often never have any concrete plan of how to

³¹ Brown A. et al op.cit.

achieve their dreams. This also came out clear in the contribution of the girls that participated in the FGDs. When asked what their plans for the future were, some expressed the view that if they were able to save some money, they would go and learn some trade of vocation and thereafter start their own businesses. Some of them wanted to go back to school and be well educated and some wanted to be traders.

Some of those who were either in secondary school or undergoing a vocational training wanted to complete their education or programme. A particular participant at one of the FGDs held in Surulere wanted to complete her education because according to her: *“no man would like to marry an illiterate and if a woman does not possess any skills and she gets married, she would be treated like a carpet by her husband.”*

Appreciation of Gender Issues

In order to assess the level of appreciation of issues of gender relations by female adolescent domestic workers, questions on roles of the different sexes were asked during focus group discussions. The participants were of the view that a woman should respect her husband, cook for the family, and take care of the children. The husbands they said, should pay the house rent, settle all bills, and provide money for food and other necessities, some of the participants felt strongly that it was wrong for a man to clean or cook and that when they eventually get married, they would not be happy if their husbands performed such roles in the home. This is a clear reflection of traditional understanding of gender roles and it incidentally reinforces women's insubordination to men. It therefore calls for the exposure of female adolescent domestic workers to issues of equity and fairness in gender relations.

Improving the Social Participation and Economic Opportunities for Female Adolescent Domestic Workers

On the question of how to improve the level of social participation as well as economic opportunities for female adolescent domestic workers, discussions held with employers during the focus group discussion sessions revealed that some employers of domestic workers were willing to sponsor the girls through one form of vocational training or the other, however, they expressed the view that some of the girls are not interested in learning anything. It was specifically mentioned that most girls from Akwa Ibom State, have been sensitized by their parents on why they needed to go to the city to work and earn an income and do nothing more. The fear was that if they agreed to be trained by their employers, they would not be paid salaries, as such, they would not be able to send money home to their parents. The problem of poverty is a strong determining factor for the decision to either become a domestic worker or for parents to send their children off to work as domestic workers. If the practice of sending young girls off to work as domestic workers must be checked, then the question of poverty needs to be addressed at the national level. Some of the parents of the girls did not have means of livelihood and therefore depended on the income of their children.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR WAY FORWARD

Summary of Findings

The aim of this study was to enable us facilitate the development of a framework for addressing the sexual and reproductive health needs and rights of female adolescent domestic workers in municipal Lagos, towards empowering them to become responsible individuals in the society. Answers to questions asked have given a lot of insight into what domestic workers knew, what they needed to know and how best to reach them with the kind of information that is good for their development. The following are therefore a summary of the findings from the study and their implications for programme development for addressing the needs of female adolescent domestic workers.

- Female adolescent domestic workers' right of access to comprehensive reproductive health information and participation in decision-making on issues that affect them are often not respected.
- Female adolescent domestic workers have very high level of misinformation and lack of knowledge of reproductive health issues.
- Female adolescent domestic workers believe strongly in role differentials between men and women.
- Poverty plays a significant role in the decision to either take up a job as a domestic worker or to send one's child off to worker as a domestic help
- Many female adolescent domestic workers have plans for their future although; they often lack the support and resources that they require to help them realise such desires.
- Female adolescent domestic workers are exposed to high levels of economic exploitation.
- Many female adolescent domestic workers have experienced sexual abuse of different sorts and have neither discussed it with any one nor undergone any form of healing therapy.
- The conditions of service of female adolescent domestic workers are not regulated as such, there are varying experiences with their employers.
- The social participation of female adolescent domestic workers in the society is very low as a majority of them do not have access to people outside the home of their host family and they do not have break times/days off.
- Female adolescent domestic workers do not stay more than one to two years with any particular employer.

A Call for Change

In his call for the eradication of the practice of engaging children ad domestic workers in Nigeria, Odutola described it as a “National Disgrace.”³² Although he recommends

³² Odutola B., “Child’s Cry for Help” (Unpublished article) 2000.

legislation for criminalizing the practice, noting that only adults should be engaged in domestic work if they feel like, it is significant to note however, that the practice of engaging people (both children and adults) as domestic workers has become a deep-rooted cultural practice in the country and legislation alone cannot change it. The ills of the practice have become a social problem and they have to be addressed as such. There is the dire need for a re-orientation of the society towards changing people's perception about girls who are engaged as domestic workers. The relationship should be one of mutual benefit. Whilst the young girl is helping the host family to fill the gap and enable its members achieve their objective, there should be a plan for the girl to transform into an independent and empowered woman in future. The new government policy on compulsory education for all Nigeria citizens must be strictly adhered to by anyone who has a young person residing in his or her house. Principle 6 of the Guiding principles for Addressing Adolescent Reproductive Health in Nigeria clearly supports this position. It provides that:

“the State and families should give the highest possible priority to children. The child has the right to standards of living adequate for his/her well being and the right to the highest attainable standards of health, and the right to education. The child has the right to be cared for, guided and supported by parents, families and society and to be protected by appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sale, trafficking and sexual abuse.”³³

Consequently, the following suggestions are hereby put forward for the promotion of positive change in the area of youth development in Nigeria:

1. In view of the fact that female adolescent domestic workers have a low level of knowledge of reproductive health and sexuality issues coupled with the fact that the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Nigeria is on the increase, the Ministries of Health and other related agencies including NGOs need to put in place concrete plans on how to reach this group of girls (as well as other vulnerable groups who are not in the formal sector of the society) with comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information that they require, using the electronic media as a tool for achieving this.
2. There is the need for the Minister of Labour to rise up to the challenge of developing rules for regulating the conditions of employment of domestic workers as provided for in section 65 (d) of the Nigerian Labour Act.
3. It is hereby suggested that government should, through the social welfare department and other related agencies run public educational campaigns to

³³ Nigerian Adolescent Health Policy (1995), Principle 6, Guiding Principle for Addressing Adolescent Reproductive Health in Nigeria.

discourage parents from allowing their young people who are of school age to take up jobs as domestic workers instead of going to school. The welfare department also need to be reformed towards having an effective monitoring systems in order to check the excesses of people who employ young people of school ages as domestic workers. Young people should also be educated on the availability of such monitoring systems so that they can report cases of abuse.

It must be observed that the effective implementation of this will only be possible with government's genuine commitment to the eradication of poverty in our society.

4. Our Ministries of Education and the law enforcement agencies should be mobilized to enforce the government policy on compulsory education, however, this should be preceded by intensive public enlightenment programmes that will make parents and guardians appreciate the importance of education to the life of these girls as well as the development of the country.
5. In view of the fact that the Labour Act allows the engagement of certain categories of children in specific types of employment, it is necessary to amend the Labour Act to include a provision on compulsory education for children irrespective of the work that they do.
6. It is necessary for NGOs who work to promote gender equity and fairness to pay attention to the information and training needs of young people who are not in the formal sector.
7. In view of the fact that the decision to take up jobs as domestic workers by young people is intricately linked to the lack of available support systems for skills development, it is important for our ministries of labour and productivity, education and other related agencies as well as NGOs to run skills acquisition programmes that girls whose parents are unable to sponsor can attend for their personal development.

In conclusion, the signing of international conventions by the Nigerian government should not be treated as an end in its self. In other words, genuine commitment should be given to the implementation of international conventions that Nigeria is a signatory to. Young people are the future of the nation, if efforts are not made to ensure that all young people are self reliant on an individual basis, all those who have no access to development opportunities will end up being liabilities on those who have, and the nation in general. The time has come for Nigeria to put a stop to the process of grooming dependent citizens.

CHAPTER 5

REPORT OF INFORMATION DISSEMINATION SEMINAR

Consequent upon the analysis of all data collected during the survey held in implementing the project titled: “Empowerment of Young Persons in Non-Formal Sector: The Case of Female Adolescent Domestic Workers in Municipal Lagos,” a well-attended Information Dissemination Seminar was held on Thursday, the 26th day of March, 2002. The outcome of the survey was shared with the 39 participants that were at the seminar. The participants were made up of domestic workers, employers of domestic workers, representatives of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), members of the media and the public in general.

The seminar was held with the aim of presenting the findings of the survey conducted under the project as well as to provide a forum for all stakeholders to participate in the process of developing appropriate interventions for addressing some of the identified problems during the following year.

Dr. Keziah Awosika, a renowned Economist, and Women’s Human Rights Advocate chaired the seminar. In her opening remarks, she informed participants that she had been a part of the project right from inception having conducted the training of the field officers who carried out the survey. She commended the project coordinator for choosing to work on issues relating to adolescent domestic workers noting that, they are a highly vulnerable group in the society. She said that there was the need to look into the larger society and see the role that poverty plays on issue relating to adolescent domestic workers.

With the aid of an overhead projector and prepared slides, the project coordinator gave a brief overview of the project and presented the summary of the findings from the survey as stated on page 42 of this report.

In their response to the presentation, participants at the forum commended the efforts of the research team and agreed that the findings of the research were credible and a true reflection of the problems that domestic workers face. Adolescent domestic workers were said to be a neglected group of adolescents who have a dire need for access to quality information specially on issues relating to reproductive and sexual health and rights. Financial constraints as well as lack of institutional support from the society was identified as some of the major reasons why many parents allow their children to take up the job of domestic workers. They emphasized the need to educate parents at the grassroots levels to resist the temptation of allowing their children to be taken to the big cities by ‘middle men’ on the promise of material rewards. This, they advised, should be done in collaboration with community based organisations and community development associations in order to have meaning impact.

In reaction to one of the major outcomes of the survey that the electronic media was a major source of information for domestic workers, participants called for the use of this

category of media for educating both the domestic workers and their employers. The use of flyers and small pictorial newsletters to disseminate information to those who do not have access to the electronic media and who cannot read much was also suggested.

The seminar called for the enforcement of the government policy on compulsory education for all young people, and advocated that government should provide free education to every Nigerian citizen up to secondary school level. NGOs were also called to develop skills acquisition programmes for domestic workers so that they can have good opportunities to plan for their future. The need for strong networking amongst organizations working on adolescent issues, to enable them form a critical force that can push for policy formulation on issues relating to domestic workers was emphasized.

Participants further observed that some of the impediments to the discussions of sexuality matters between employers and domestic workers as presented in the outcome of the survey include: the employers' inability to see the domestic worker as one of their children or sisters; the stigmatization of domestic workers who want to talk about sex; the myth that domestic workers and their employers are from different classes and as such, there should be no unnecessary familiarity; ignorance of the fact that domestic workers need information on sexuality and reproductive health issues; the fact that many domestic workers do not feel free to relate intimately with their employers; and lack of time on the part of the employers to discuss intimately with the girls.

Furthermore, the participants noted that sexual harassment and abuse are not only perpetuated by outsiders or strangers, but also by the employers' husbands or sons etc. as well as other employees within the household such as drivers, security guards, washer men etc. and sometimes, neighbours. Employers are therefore advised to protect their domestic workers from sexual harassment and abuse in the home.

One very important observation that was made at the seminar was that the use of designation "Domestic Servants" was degrading and as such, the project title should be changed. Suggestions given were "Household Personnel" and "Domestic Workers." This was why the designation "domestic servant" was removed from the initial project title. It was also suggested that the approach to be adopted during the intervention stage should be multi-dimensional, that is, taking into account all parties, the domestic workers, their parents and employers.

The suggestion was also made that in view of the fact that majority of the people surveyed belonged to either the Christian or Muslim faith; employers of domestic workers should be reached through the churches, mosques or other religious bodies. The need to take advantage of religious programmes to pass across the message of the plight of young adolescent domestic workers was emphasized.

Participants at the seminar also discussed a new phenomenon on our university campuses, where young girls and boys provide domestic services to university students and get paid in return for jobs done. Though majority of these children live with their parents, because of poverty, they are encouraged to take up such work after school.

Other suggested intervention strategies are as follows:

1. In view of the fact that domestic workers do not stay with any particular employers, the seminar emphasized the need to target the employers who are a constant factor in the phenomenon and run sensitization/awareness campaigns for the employers of domestic workers to ensure that all employment arrangement with female adolescent domestic workers take issues of the future development into consideration.
2. There is the need to look closely at the issue of poverty and its role in the decision to become domestic workers. Advocacy efforts should be intensified to promote the creation of wealth as well as the reduction of poverty in the country;
3. Advocacy efforts should be geared towards encouraging government to have more vocational schools for skills acquisitions for young girls. The programme should include counselling to improve the self esteem of the girls and to encourage them to have a plan for their future;
4. Awareness should be created in the society on the criminal dimension to the role of “middle men” in the recruitment process of young girls as domestic workers;
5. Effort should be made to promote the evolvement of an association of domestic workers in order for the girls to be able to raise their voice on issues that affect them as well as to be able to have a common front for addressing issues of oppression that some of them face;
6. The use of home video for educating domestic workers, employers and their parents should be explored;
7. The project should make use of Information, Education and Communication materials for example poster, handbills, stickers etc. in addition to media campaigns;
8. The project should liaise with non-governmental organisations that can assist in the area of economic empowerment.

Appendix I

Survey Questionnaire for Domestic Workers

Location of Interview:

Name of Interviewer:

Commencement time:

Date:

No. of Visits:

Language of Interview:

Section A: personal Data – Please tick as appropriate

1. How old are you?
2. What is your educational qualification?
No formal education Below primary 5 Primary School Certificate
JSS 1 – 3 SSS 1 – 3 Other (please specify)
3. Have you stopped school? Yes No
4. If yes, why did you stop?
5. What is your father's occupation?
6. What is his educational background?
7. What is your mother's occupation?
8. What is her educational background?
9. Is your father still alive? Yes No
10. Is your mother still alive? Yes No
11. How many children do they have?
12. What ethnic group do you belong?
13. What religion do you practice?
Christianity Islam Traditional Religion None Others (Please Specify)
14. What is your marital status?
Single Married Separated/Divorced Widowed
15. Do you have children? Yes No
16. If yes, how many children do you have
17. At what age did you have your first child?
18. Who is the father of the child?
19. Where is the child?

Section B; Sources of Information

1. Do you have access to Radio/Television/Books/Magazines/Novels?
2. What sort of programmes do you like watching or listening to?
3. How many times a week do you watch television or listen to the radio?
4. With whom do you share your personal problems?
5. Do you discuss issues relating to your body and your personal problems with your keeper?

Section C: Economic Issues

1. How much do you earn?
2. How do you receive you salary? Daily? Weekly? Monthly? Annually?
3. Does anyone receive your salary on your behalf? Yes No
4. What do you do with it?
5. Is your salary commensurate to the amount of work that you do? Yes No
6. How much do you feel you should be earning per month?
7. Do you get salary increase periodically? Yes No
8. Since when have you been on this salary?
9. When do you resume work?
10. When do you close?
11. Do you have any break time in between? Yes No
12. Do you have a day/days off from work? Yes No
13. What do you do during you day off?
14. Do you receive money for other sources? Yes No
15. What are the other sources?
16. What are such monies meant for?
17. How many years have you spent with your present employer?
18. At what age did you start working as a house help?
19. How many places have you worked before?
20. What was the nature of work you did?

SECTION D: Knowledge of Sexual and Reproductive Health Issue

Menstruation

1. Have you started menstruation? Yes No
2. Did you know about it before your first experience? Yes No
3. What do you use during your periods? Pad Cloth Toilet Paper
4. Who provides it for you? My Keeper Myself My Mother
5. Do you have pain during your menstruation? Yes No
6. Do you know what is responsible for the pain? Yes No

Relationship/Sexuality

1. What do you like most about yourself?
2. Do your think that other people find you attractive? Yes No
3. Do you think that a girl should keep her virginity until she is married? Yes No
4. At what age do you think that a woman should start having children?
5. When do you think that a woman should stop having children?
6. How many children do you plan to have?
7. Is it right for a girl to have a male friend? Yes No
8. Do you have a boy friend? (sexual partner) Yes No
9. How many times do you need to have sex before you get pregnant? One time
two times three times more than three times

10. Are you aware of any method/methods that you can use to protect yourself from getting pregnant?
11. Which of the methods do you use?
12. Where did you get this information from?

HIV/AIDS & STDs

1. Are you aware of the disease called HIV and AIDS? Yes No
2. Where did you get your information from?
3. Are you aware of any other sexually transmitted disease? Yes No
4. How can a woman protect herself from having any of these diseases?

Information/Educational Programme

1. When will you leave your present employment?
2. If you are invited to attend a health information/educational programme, will you be interested in participating? Yes No
3. On what day of the week and time will be convenient for you?
4. Where do you think such a programme should be located?

Appendix II

Survey Questionnaire for Employers of Domestic Workers

Location of Interview:

Name of Interviewer:

Commencement time:

Date:

No. of Visits:

Language of Interview:

Section A: Personal Data

1. How old are you?
2. What is your ethnic background?
3. What is your religion?
4. What is your occupation?
5. What is your educational qualification?
No formal education Below Primary 5 Primary School Certificate
JSS 1 – 3 SSS 1 – 3 University Education Other (please specify)
6. Marital status: Single/Married/Separated/Divorced/Widowed
7. How long have you been married?
8. How many children do you have?
9. Do you live with you husband Yes No

Section B: Information on House helps

10. How many house helps have you had?
11. Where were they from?
12. Where, in your opinion do the best help come from?
13. How long does each one stay with you on the average?
14. How much did you pay the last two house helps you had per month?
15. How would you describe your current house help?

Section C: Reproductive Experience and Rights of House helps

16. Do you think that your current house help has access to adequate information about her body and how she can protect herself against diseases?
Yes No
17. In what way do you think that her access to such information can be improved?
18. Can you allow your help to participate in a development programme outside the home at least once a week? Yes No
19. Have you ever heard of any house help that had a sexual relationship with her madam's husband? Yes No

Time Interview ended:.....

Appendix III

Focus Group Discussion Guide for Domestic Workers

Conditions of Service

What do you like/dislike about the job that you do?

How do girls get into this jobs? (Who makes the decision and why?)

Are there written agreements regulating the relationship between an employer and her house help? Do you think that it is necessary to have written agreements?

Sexual right

It is possible for a girl to be forced into sex without her consent by a man (for example madam's husband, Driver, madam's son etc). Have you ever heard of this sort of occurrence before?

If you find yourself in this sort of situation, how will you handle it?

At what age do you think that a girl should get married and what are the responsibilities that she should shoulder in such a relationship? What do you think should be the responsibilities of a husband?

Reproductive Health/Right

What do you know about family planning?

What are the sexually transmitted diseases that you know?

Are there methods that a woman can use to protect herself from contracting sexually transmitted diseases?

Personal relationships

Do you discuss issues relating to your problems and body with your madam?

Do you freely discuss issues relation to your body that is, menstruation?

Are you able to talk to your madam if you are broke and need personal things like sanitary towels etc?

Appendix IV

Focus Group Discussion Guide for Employers of Domestic Workers

Do you discuss issues relating to her body and relationship with the members of the opposite sex with her?

What are your views about the practice of engaging young girls as house helps?

In what way do you think we can plan for the future of such girls?

Do you think that the following should be regulated by law?

- What salary is being paid?
- Who receives the salary of young worker
- Hours of work?
- Days of work?
- What a girl worker should be entitled to towards her personal development?

Do you trust the girls? Do you have a problem with the girls going out and not coming back in good time?

Have there being cases of girls getting pregnant or abused sexually under your employment or that you have heard of?

Girls of what socio cultural background do you prefer?

Appendix V

In Depth Interview Guide for Domestic Workers

1. Introduction
2. Background Information, that is, age, religion, ethnic group etc.
3. What is your educational qualification? Have you stopped school? If yes, why did you stop?
4. Who brought you to Lagos? What informed the decision for you to be a domestic worker?
5. Do you receive salary? If yes, how much? If no, why not? What do you do with your salary? How much do you earn? Do you feel that the amount is okay for the work you do?
6. Do you know what sex is? Have you ever had sex? Have you ever been sexually abused? By whom? If yes, would you like to discuss the details? What did you do when you were sexually abused?
7. How do you think we can solve the problem of sexual abuse?
8. Do you know how to avoid getting pregnant or protect yourself from sexually transmitted diseases? Where did you get your information? How do you think this kind of information can reach other domestic workers?
9. What do you think the role of a woman is in the home?
10. What are your plans for the future?

Appendix VI

List of participants at Information Seminar Tuesday, 26 March, 2002

S/N	NAME	ADDRESS
1.	Jimoh Omo Florence	22, Shaki Crescent, Aguda, Surulere, Lagos
2.	Ibeneme Unto	64, Ijesha Road, Surulere, Lagos
3.	Egenti Chinelo	64, Ijesha Road, Surulere, Lagos
4.	Akudolu Okwu	6, Oladeru Coker Street, Lagos
5.	Bimbo Aina	TMG, 5, Abiona Close, Off Falolu Road, Surulere, Lagos
6.	Busola Aina	8A, Estport Aven, Soluyi, Gbagada, Lagos
7.	R. O Ogunmiluyi (Mrs.)	Eti Osa Local Govt., 24, Glover Road, Ikoyi, Lagos
8.	Uche Obaseki	Radio Nigeria, Ikoyi, Lagos
9.	Uju Obiora	Shelter Rights Initiative, Surulere
10.	Dupe Adekunle (Mrs.)	49, Ago Palace Way, Okota, Isolo
11.	Shade Odefemi	2, Akinyele Street, Surulere, Lagos
12.	Sumbo Sola Philips	Sumbo59@yahoo.com
13.	Jolaoso, E. O.	Surulere Local Government, Surulere, Lagos
14.	Faith Njoku	Radio Nigeria, Ikoyi, Lagos faithnjoku@yahoo.com
15.	Funmilayo Rotimi	Blk D, Flat 4, Naval Officers Quarters, Victoria Island, Lagos
16.	Mrs. Abimbola Agba	Blk D, Flat 4, Naval Officers Quarters, Victoria Island, Lagos
17.	Ndidi V. Anyanwu	8, Fola Agoro, Shomolu, Lagos email: hdi@infoweb.abs.net; hudev2001@yahoo.com
18.	Stella Oseyi	LRRDC, 386, Muritala Muhammad Way, Yaba, Lagos Tel: 2880694
19.	R. N. Ejirika	Radio Nig., Ikoyi. Tel: 2690301 -5
20.	Toyin Jaiyesimi	Cadivani Concerns Ltd., 104, Itire Road, Surulere. Tel: 850016
21.	Chime Onwubiko	LEDAP, 270, Ikorodu Rd., Anthony village, Lagos
22.	Glory S. Otuk	31, Akinkunmi Street, Itire, Lagos
23.	Maria Asone	71/73 Odejayi Street, Surulere, Lagos
24.	Chineye Okoro	14, Adegega Street, Surulere, Lagos
25.	Jonah E. N.	13, Ijemose Street, Surulere, Lagos
26.	Ebere Uzor	8, Ayo Davies Street, Surulere, Lagos
27.	Emem Sunday	31A, Akinkunmi Street, Surulere, Lagos
28.	Chinyere Opara	Women, Law and Development Centre, 8A,

		Olukole Close, Lagos
29.	Jite Olatunbode	94, Awolowo Road, Ikoyi, Lagos
30.	Bola Adeoye	22, Daniel Makinde Street, Ketu, Lagos
31.	Mikhail Adeoye	22, Daniel Makinde Street, Ketu, Lagos
32.	Ihenacho Ifeoma	Civil Liberties Organisation Tel: 493324, 7746694 Email: clo@clo.org.ng
33.	Pius Adejo	Youth Concerns Inc. 89, Palm Avenue, Mushin, Lagos
34.	Tunji Farinu	71, Odejayi Crescent, Surulere, Lagos
35.	Osundero, M. O.	CHIDARC (Formerly CHISAP) Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State
36.	Mrs. F. T. Ogunyemi	CHIDARC P.O Box 35, Ijebu-Ode Ogun State e-mail; togunyemi@hyperia.com
37.	Emma Ekpo	Radio Nigeria, Ikoyi, Lagos.
38.	Dr. Keziah Awosika	Women, Law and Development Centre WLDCN, Surulere, Lagos.
39.	Tinuke Odukoya	Centre for Women's Health & Information. 39 James Robertson Rd, Surulere, Lagos e-mail:cewhin@yahoo.com

Appendix VII

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
IDI	In-Depth Interviews
ILO	International Labour Organisation
NDHS	National Demographic Health Survey
NGOs	Non Governmental Organisations
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
STDs	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

Appendix VIII

List of Field Officers

Ms. Busola Aina

Ms. Folake Adeleye

Ms. Shade Odefemi

Ms. Sumbo Sola Philips

Ms. Tinu Adeoye

Ms. Tunrayo Fafiyebi

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