CAUGHT BETWEEN POVERTY AND TRAUMA

Addressing the human rights of trafficked domestic workers from Ethiopia

A research of: The Strategic Initiative for women in the Horn of Africa

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Addressing the Human Rights of Trafficked Domestic Workers from Ethiopia

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Contents

Acronyms

CSO:	Civil Society Organisation
GSA:	Good Samaritan Association
HRW:	Human Rights Watch
IOM:	International Organisation for Migration
MoFA:	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoLSA:	Ethiopian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organisation
RMMS:	Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat
SRA:	Social Research Association
TVPA:	Trafficking Victims Protection Act
UNDOC:	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
VoTs:	Victims of Trafficking

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Foreword

The objective of this paper is to highlight the human rights violations and document migrant labour conditions resulting in severe trauma among women migrant workers travelling to the Arab Gulf and Middle East countries. The paper looks at the specific experiences and impacts migration has on women, their mental health and their welfare and ability to reintegrate back into society. The paper specifically looks at rural and unskilled women migration which presents the majority of women migrants to the Gulf countries and Middle East countries form Ethiopia.

Ethiopia is one of the most populous countries in Africa, with recent estimation of the country's population placing it at almost 100 million people. Ethiopia has experienced various types of migration waves over the past 40 years or more. Apart from war and political issues, in recent years economic factors are seen among the strong drivers of migration of Ethiopian men and women to different parts of the world. Remittances to Ethiopia from migrant communities provide an integral source of income for families to sustain themselves through external shocks and to meet their basic needs. In the majority of cases, women domestic workers send almost all of their monthly income as remittances to their families, which depend on this kind of money to meet living costs. Since the 1990s increased numbers of young rural Ethiopian women have been migrating from their country to work in the Middle East and Arab Gulf countries, through either legitimate or hidden means. Either way, migrant women find themselves in Gulf or Middle East states where the demand for low skilled workers and low paid labour is high.

There are huge discrepancies between the expectation of women migrants and the reality of their situation in their host countries. While trafficked/smuggled and migrant women are focusing on the end result of their migration and the amount of money they would bring home, they lack information on the situation in the host countries regarding the nature and type of labour that expects them, the culture, traditions and the rules that will govern them as well as lacking language skills and without a familial support network which exacerbates their isolation and vulnerability. Many of the host countries that these women find themselves in have restrictive regulations for migrants

workers and often no protection or judicial systems to address abusers or traffickers. Their sense of entitlement over the worker is heightened by the significant cash outlay they have made to recruit him or her from another country. Culturally and socially the Arab and Middle Eastern countries are inherently divided societies along sectarian lines, with a deeply rooted culture of discrimination against people of African descent. This issue is quite entrenched and exposes African women migrant workers often into different forms of ill-treatment. The hazards around the domestic work are largely due to the fact that the work occurs within private and isolated spheres. The households in the Gulf countries are highly isolated territories; therefore it leaves the workers extremely vulnerable to all forms of abuse. The challenges in and around the human rights violations and abuses perpetrated against migrant women domestic workers from Africa have several layers including their race, gender and area of work.

The paper attempts to keenly identify the existing gaps in national support systems and ascertain the vulnerabilities affecting the women returnees through considering the capacity of public health institutions and the availability of mental health services for traumatized women.

SIHA network and its members in Ethiopia have focused on issues of migration and trafficking for a period of over 10 years and the findings of this paper were reached as a result of their efforts and partnership. Without their devotion and commitment, this would not have been possible.

Introduction

Increasingly, Ethiopian women are migrating abroad, and particularly to the Middle East, to work. This labour migration is stoked by a lack of opportunities for women within Ethiopia, the promise of better wages and the possibility of bettering the situations of their families. In turn, this lack of opportunity is driven by policies and practices that discriminate against women and which have undermined development. In this context, migration seems an attractive option - indeed sometimes the only option.

While labour migration does improve the situation of a few, the pressures on these women make them vulnerable to traffickers who misrepresent the terms and conditions of employment abroad. Most women find the reality extremely difficult. Alone in a strange land, they find themselves facing culture shock and loneliness, as well as long working hours with inadequate breaks. Too often, women are isolated and confined in private homes, refused pay and forced to work in slave-like conditions. It is not uncommon for them to face physical and sexual abuse. Those who survive this treatment often return home traumatised, and at times physically impaired, only to find that there is little support for their reintegration. The returnees may also face economic challenges and social disapproval, without having met their own, and their families', expectations of improving their situation.[1] They suffer from self-blame and shame, which leave them isolated. Destitute and with few other options, they risk becoming caught up in the trafficking chain again.

The increasing prevalence of trafficking and exploitative labour migration, both globally and from Ethiopia specifically, has led to greater awareness and a deeper understanding of the problem. In recent years, a number of academic and activist studies having been carried out. There is, however, still relatively little information about the aftermath

1 UNODC, "An Introduction to Human Trafficking: Vulnerability, Impact and Action," 2008, available at https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/An_Introduction_to_Human_Trafficking_-_Background_Paper.pdf.

of trafficking. Yet its consequences are visible to Ethiopians. A passerby on a street in Addis Ababa, a passenger in a taxi, a student in a school, a customer in a café or a shopper in a market all have horrific stories to tell about abused, mentally ill, physically disabled, gang raped, psychologically traumatised domestic workers who have returned from the Gulf. Some of those stories are:

- ***Do you remember that 'boyish' girl who lived close to the old bus stop? She is dead; her body came from Saudi.2***
- ***Betty told her family she would come home in a week. Her family was happy until her body came packed in a coffin.3***
- ***My sister died in Dubai. What happened? We never got an answer. My mother fell ill after that.4***

Along with these personal stories, stories in the media paint a graphic picture:

- ***"Hedja Ousman, 22, and Wube Tamene, 18, worked for families in the UAE (United Arab Emirates) and both say they were beaten, starved and prevented from contacting their families in Ethiopia."5***
- ***"Ethiopian domestic worker 'disciplined' by rape in Lebanon."6***
- ***"A female employer of an Ethiopian maid who works illegally in the UAE has been summoned by Ajman Police for allegedly beating the maid and causing her injuries... The maid had been severely beaten by her employer after she accused her maid of stealing a car key."7***

"Four men facing the death penalty for raping, killing and dismembering an Ethiopian maid have been bailed after blood money was paid to the victim's family."[8]

2 A.B. Woldemichael, personal communication, June 2015.
3 B.C. Geletu, personal communication, June 2015
4 L-, personal communication, February 2013
5 "Ethiopian maids reveal abuse from employers in UAE," 7Days, October 21, 2014, available at____http://7days.ae/ethiopian-maids-reveal-abuse-employers-uae. http://7days.ae/ethiopian-maids-reveal-abuse-employers-uae. h
6 "Ethiopian domestic worker 'disciplined' by rape in Lebanon," MigrantRights.org, April 5, 2014, available at https://www.migrant-rights.org/2014/04/ethiopian-domestic-worker-disciplined-by-rape-in-lebanon.
7 Aghaddir Ali, "Housewife accused of assaulting maid in UAE: Female employer allegedly attacked her maid in Ajman over lost car key," Gulf News, October 19, 2014, available at http://gulfnews.com/news/uae/crime/housewife-accused-of-assaulting-maid-in-uae-1.1400754.
8 Aghaddir Ali, "Family of dead maid accepts blood money," Gulf News, November 10, 2014

As horrific as they are, these stories are likely to be just the tip of the iceberg. In cases where migrants are killed, there is nobody to tell the story.

Rather than focusing on the causes and mechanisms of recruitment, this paper seeks to explore the impact of these journeys on victims. What are the causes of the trauma that they experience, and what are the consequences of that trauma in their lives after they return? This paper examines the psychological, physical, economic and social consequences of trafficking. In doing so, the research employs a phenomenological research method, allowing victims to narrate their own experiences. The research poses two primary questions:

- What is happening in destination countries that are leading the trafficked Ethiopian domestic workers to become traumatised?
- What are the major challenges that returnees face in coping with past trauma and reintegrating?

The paper also considers and makes recommendations as to how the Ethiopian government, governments in the Middle Eastern countries to which Ethiopian women are travelling, civil society and the international community can better address this trauma and take action both to prevent other women vulnerable to traffickers from becoming traumatised, and to support the reintegration of those who have survived these experiences.

Definitions

Migration - According to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), migration is: "[the] movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border, or within a State. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes; it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants and persons moving for other purposes, including family reunification."[9]

Trafficking in persons: The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (the Trafficking Protocol) defines trafficking as: "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs."[10]

Victim of trafficking: A person who has been subjected to trafficking as defined above.

Forced labour: The International Labour Organisation defines forced labour as: "situations in which persons are coerced to work through the use of violence or intimidation or by more subtle means such as accumulated debt, retention of identity papers or threats of denunciation to immigration authorities." The ILO goes on to clarify: "Forced labour, contemporary forms of slavery, debt bondage and

9 IOM, "Key Migration Terms," available at https://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms#Migration

10 The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 55/25 of 15 November 2000, available at http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/ProtocolTraffickingInPersons.aspx.

human trafficking are closely related terms though not identical in a legal sense. Most situations of slavery or human trafficking are however covered by ILO's definition of forced labour."[11]

Trauma: Trauma occurs when trafficking victims are psychologically distressed, feel worthless and emotionally imprisoned as a result of abuses in their places of work. Victims suffer physical trauma from beatings, starvation and sleep deprivation. The factor that distinguishes trafficking and its consequences from the effects of singular traumatic events such as disaster or rape is that trafficking involves prolonged and repeated trauma, or "chronic trauma."[12]

Reintegration: The process of facilitating the safe, dignified and sustainable return of a victim of trafficking to his/her family and community. It includes living in a safe and stable environment, having access to a reasonable standard of living, enjoying mental and physical wellbeing, enjoying opportunities for personal, social and economic development and having access to social and emotional support.[13]

Re-trafficking: A situation, in which a person has been trafficked as per the above definition, exited that trafficking situation by any means and later re-entered another trafficking situation.[14]

11 ILO, "The Meanings of Forced Labour," available at http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/forced-labour/news/WCMS_237569/lang--en/index.htm

12 C. Zimmerman et al., "The health risks and consequences of trafficking in women and adolescents: Findings from a European study," London: London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), 2003.

13 R. Surtees, "Re/integration of trafficked persons: supporting economic empowerment. An initiative of the King Baudouin Foundation (KBF), Belgium and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH," 2012; T. Moses and R. Luckasz, "Guidelines for Assisting Victims of Human Trafficking in the East Africa Region," IOM, Geneva, 2011.

14 IOM, "The Causes and Consequences of Re-trafficking: Evidence from the IOM Human Trafficking Database," 2010.

Methodology

This research was designed to explore the experiences of women involved in trafficking from Ethiopia to better understand their experiences and the consequences of those experiences. Many scholars argue that collecting and analysing the narratives of victims is the best way to understand a phenomenon.[15] Victims' views are prioritised in order to gather a truer account of the phenomenon.[16] This paper takes a feminist perspective, prioritising women's understandings of their own experiences. By focusing on their voices, we seek to make their experiences concrete to the reader and dramatise the abuses they have suffered.

The research drew on a number of methodological approaches, however, to supplement these interviews with victims and to generate insights that might not have been obtained using one single method. The research began with a literature review, in order to ensure that the field research built on, rather than duplicated, previous research. The field research included extensive engagement with victims of trafficking through multiple, in-depth interviews as well as through direct observation.

Victims of trafficking who were interviewed for this research were primarily identified through shelters that cater to the needs of returnees, run by the Good Samaritan Association (GSA) and Agar Ethiopia. In this context, it is worth noting that the interviews focus on a subset of all trafficking victims, that is, those who end up in shelters. The interviewees were pre-screened to avoid subjecting individuals who were suffering from particularly serious mental health issues to re-traumatisation. In addition, owing to the trauma that interviewees had suffered, care was taken to ensure that participants understood the purpose of the research, and that participation was voluntary and

15 N. King, C. Horrocks, Interviews in Qualitative Research. London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2010; K. Dahlberg et al., Reflective Life World Research (2nd ed). Student literature AB, 2008

16 E. Anderson, "Feminist Epistemology and Philosophy of Science," The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2011

could be discontinued at any time. Once they consented, victims were allowed to speak in unstructured interviews over a number of days. Pseudonyms are used for all interviewees named in this paper.

In-depth interviews were complemented by direct observation of the behaviour of victims of trafficking in shelters run by the GSA and Agar. The researcher observed their interactions with their families and caregivers, and with other personnel at the shelters. The researcher joined victims for meals and coffee and participated in shelter activities. This provided additional insights into the behaviour of victims, as well as helping to build trust.

In addition to interviewing victims, the researcher interviewed key informants involved in working with victims. This included staff at the reception centres and government representatives with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) and a former employee of the Ethiopian Embassy in the UAE.

Background

Trafficking and migration

As noted above, migration is the movement of persons within a country or across international borders. People move for a wide variety of reasons, among them the search for viable employment and economic betterment. However, in situations where these migrants are desperate, they are vulnerable to trafficking. Trafficking is distinguished by the fact that coercion or fraud is involved, and by the intent on the part of the trafficker to exploit the migrant. The Trafficking Protocol, which sets out the definition of trafficking cited above, makes it clear that any consent given by the victim is not relevant where fraud or coercion has been used. It is important to note that the definition does not require that the migration be clandestine; the person may have appropriate visas and other documentation, but be acting under duress or be the victim of fraud.

In some circumstances, it may be difficult to distinguish between legal labour migration and trafficking, particularly where the circumstances of recruitment are not clear. However, in the context of labour migration of Ethiopian women to the Middle East and the Gulf, it is clear that deception and exploitation are common, whether or not their movement is regular. For this reason, the paper refers to all returnee Ethiopian women interviewed as victims of trafficking.

The scale and history of labour migration and trafficking from Ethiopia

As elsewhere in the world, migration to and from Ethiopia has existed for centuries. However, scholars pinpoint the end of the Derg regime and the easing of emigration regulations at that time as the point at which migration began to increase.[17] In 1992, the Ethiopian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA) registered 3,482 labour migrants to Gulf countries.[18] This number reflects only those who had their contracts

17 A. Kafele, Z. Mohammed, "Ethiopian Labour Migration to the Gulf and South Africa," Forum for Social Studies: Addis Ababa, 2015.

18 E. Kebede, "Ethiopia: An Asssessment of the International Labour Migration Situation: The Case of Female

approved by MoLSA. It is difficult to track the level of migration with accuracy since many of those who move, whether migrating voluntarily or being trafficked, do so illegally. Nonetheless, it seems clear that the scale increased significantly in the late 1990s, driven by the availability of cheap labour from Ethiopia and the increased purchasing power of the oil-rich destination countries.[19]

The Ethiopian Immigration and Citizen's Affairs Directorate estimates that the average number of women travelling to Beirut each month increased from 23 in 1996 to 413 by 1999.[20] Other sources estimate that the outflow was significantly higher. A 1999 report by the Pastoral Commission on Afro-Asian Migrants estimated that there were 14,000 Ethiopian women employed as domestic workers in Beirut.[21] That same year, the *al-Hayat* newspaper estimated that an average of 1,000 women were arriving each month.[22]

Since then, the numbers have continued to increase. A report by the MoLSA says the number of domestic workers leaving Ethiopia annually increased six-fold over five years, from 17,393 between September 2008 and August 2009 to 104,190 between July 2012 and July 2013.[23] During this period, Saudi Arabia received the lion's share of Ethiopian migrants. Between September 2008 and August 2009, 9,399 of the total domestic workers travelled there. That number had increased more than 16-fold to 154,660 by the period between 2012 and 2013, when the Ethiopian government barred migration.[24]

Labour Migrants," International Labour Office (ILO), Genprom Working Paper No. 3, 2001, available at http://www.oit.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_117931.pdf.

19 K.A. Beydoun, "The Trafficking of Ethiopian Domestic Workers into Lebanon: Navigating Through a Novel Passage of the International Maid Trade," Berkeley Journal of International Law, 2006.

20 Y. Endeshaw et al. eds., "Assessment of trafficking in women and children in and from Ethiopia," Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: IOM, 2006.

21 ILO Report on Trafficking in Women in Africa, 24th Ordinary Session of the OAU Labour and Social Affairs Commission, February 2000, cited in E. Kebede, "Ethiopia: An Asssessment of the International Labour Migration Situation: The Case of Female Labour Migrants," International Labour Office (ILO), Genprom Working Paper No. 3, 2001, available at http://www.oit.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_117931.pdf.

22 Cited in E. Kebede, "Ethiopia: An Asssessment of the International Labour Migration Situation: The Case of Female Labour Migrants," International Labour Office (ILO), Genprom Working Paper No. 3, 2001, available at http://www.oit.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/documents/publication/wcms_117931.pdf.

23 Documents from MoLSA, on file with the author.

24 S.B.Woldemichael, "The Vulnerability of Ethiopian Rural Women and Girls: The Case of Domestic Workers in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait," Masters Thesis for a Sociology Degree, Uppsala University, June 2013.

Table 1: Numbers of legally recruited and migrated domestic workers, September 2008 to February 2013 (MoLSA)

Country	Sep 2008-Aug 2009	Sep 2009-Aug 2010	Sep 2010 – Aug 2011	Sep 2011–Jun 2013	Jul 2012 - Feb 2013
Saudi Arabia	9,399	2,396	13,446	158,959	154,660
Kuwait	6,976	10,837	25,457	28,476	20,659
Dubai	113	142	510	321	0
Others	905	19	115	175	108
Total	17,393	13,393	39,528	187,931	104,190

In October 2013, Saudi Arabia deported more than 100,000 Ethiopian migrant workers.[25] Although the government of Ethiopia made efforts to assist returnees, it was unprepared for the sheer numbers involved, and the assistance provided was largely inadequate.[26] In response, the government of Ethiopia banned migration to the Middle East and the Gulf states, saying the move was intended to safeguard the wellbeing of citizens until a lasting solution could be found.[27] Ethiopia has since begun to negotiate bilateral agreements with destination countries, in an effort to allow migration to resume under more protective conditions.[28]

Regardless of the ban, however, emigration from Ethiopia is continuing at a high rate. The US government, in its 2016 Trafficking in Persons Report, cited estimates that there are currently 1,500 Ethiopian migrants leaving each day through regular migration channels, and 400,000 Ethiopian migrants already in Saudi Arabia, the largest destination country.[29]

The profile of migrants and trafficking victims

It is clear that migration and trafficking for the purposes of domestic work are concentrated within a particular subset of the Ethiopian

25 "Saudis expel 100,000 Ethiopians," *Al Jazeera*, December 6, 2013, available at http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2013/12/saudis-expel-100000-illegal-ethiopians-201312591727221329.html.

26 IRIN, "Deported from Saudi Arabia, Ethiopian Migrants find dilemma at home," January 9, 2014, available at http://www.irinnews.org/news/2014/01/09/deported-saudi-arabia-ethiopian-migrants-find-dilemma-home.

27 A. Kribu, "Ethiopia: Ban on Middle East and Arab Persian Gulf states jobs begins," The African Report, October 25, 2013, available at http://www.theafricareport.com/East-Horn-Africa/ethiopia-ban-on-middle-east-and-arab-persian-gulf-states-jobs-begins.html.

28 "Ethiopia to Sign Labor Exchange Deals with Saudi Arabia, UAE," Ethiopian News Agency, March 23, 2016, available at http://www.ena.gov.et/en/index.php/politics/item/1030-ethiopia-to-sign-labor-exchange-deals-with-saudi-arabia-uae

29 US Department of State, "Ethiopia: 2016 Trafficking in Persons Report," 2016, available at http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2016/index.htm.

population. Because domestic work is seen as a feminine preserve, this subset consists nearly exclusively of women. A 2009 MoLSA study provided additional detail about the typical profile of a migrant:

- 91% were single
- 83% were between 20 and 30, and
- 63% had attended some secondary school

Within Ethiopia, migrants come from a number of regions. In 2008-2009, the area around Addis Ababa provided the largest number of migrants, but over time this has shifted to other regions, with Amhara and Oromia representing the largest source areas by 2013. The majority of migrant domestic workers come from rural areas, where access to education is minimal and job opportunities are scarce.30 According to an interviewee from the Ethiopian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), the fact that rural women are less educated and have less access to media and information makes them more vulnerable to exploitation by brokers and employers.[31]

One woman interviewed for this research had already been a domestic worker for some time before she emigrated. As she explained it, she had left her family "forever" at an early age for employment as a domestic worker. She had been exploited, beaten and humiliated by her employers since the age of 13.[32]

Drivers of trafficking and labour migration

Human trafficking operates in a gender-specific way, most frequently affecting women and girls. The US Department of State estimates that between 600,000 and 800,000 people are trafficked across international borders each year, and that 80% of them are women and girls.[33]

Gender inequality and the resulting social and economic marginalisation of rural Ethiopian women[34] have played a significant role in driving female migrants to the Middle East. Migration is considered to be the only way for some Ethiopian women and their families, especially those in rural communities, to improve their lives. Contributing to the exodus

30 S.B. Woldemichael, "The Vulnerability of Ethiopian Rural Women and Girls: The Case of Domestic Workers in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait," Masters Thesis for a Sociology Degree, Uppsala University, June 2013.
31 Ibid.
32 Interview with victim (Edget), June 2015
33 US Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report," 2004, available at http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2004/
34 All references to women include adolescent girls. The United Nations defines adolescents as individuals aged 10–19.

is their lack of access to resources, education and job opportunities. This lack of opportunity is fuelled by gender discrimination, and social and economic policies that limit women's access to economic opportunities. For example, while unemployment is generally high in Ethiopia (17.5% according to the CIA World Factbook),[35] it affects women disproportionately. In fact, the ILO estimates that 27% of women are unemployed compared to 13% of men.[36] One woman interviewed for this research described being forced to migrate because she was unable to farm:

> ***My husband inherited land from his father. But he was so negligent that he didn't want to farm. I hired people to plough the land so that I could plant seeds. It was a very good result in the first year. But I couldn't continue, because my brother-in-law turned against me, asking how a woman could dare to farm his late father's land. He beat me with a stick so hard that I passed out. When I regained consciousness, I decided to migrate as a domestic worker.37***

Although they have no access to wage-earning employment, women are expected to perform round-the-clock household duties. However, these are not considered to contribute to the economic development of the family. Domestic tasks, as feminist theorists argue, are overwhelmingly feminised and undervalued types of work, and are not considered to contribute to the household.

Another phenomenon reportedly driving women to migrate is the desire to avoid early marriage. Girls in rural areas may get married as early as 13 years old. Early marriage can be motivated by the desire or need to maintain the family's good name and social standing,[38] but it denies girls educational opportunities, leads to poverty and economic insecurity and has a serious negative impact on their health and decision-making capacities.[39] Seeking to escape this, girls as young as 13 have been lured by brokers who falsify their ages to get travel documents.[40] This is made easier by a lack of birth registration, especially in rural areas.

35 CIA World Factbook, available at http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2016/index.htm.
36 Cited in AlJazeera, "Saudis Expel 100,000 Ethiopians," December 6, 2013, available at http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2013/12/saudis-expel-100000-illegal-ethiopians-201312591727221329.html
37 Interview with victim (Birhan), June 2015
38 B. Alemu, "Early marriage in Ethiopia: Causes and health consequences," Pathfinder International, Ethiopia, 2006.
39 Ibid.
40 ILO, "Trafficking in Persons Overseas for Labour Purposes: The Case of Ethiopian Domestic Workers," 2011, available at http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---Africa/---ro-addis_ababa/documents/genericdocument/wcms_207325.pdf.

Another key driver of both trafficking and labour migration is the differential between wages in Ethiopia and in destination countries. In Ethiopia, a domestic worker can expect to earn about USD 50 per month, whereas in Gulf countries, similar work can make USD 180 per month. This differential creates opportunities for workers themselves, as well as for brokers and traffickers who can profit from providing access to cheap labour.[41]

Although the movement is characterised as being voluntary, the vulnerable position of women makes them easy targets for traffickers. Luring them with promises of better working and living conditions, local brokers manipulate women, who find the situation they face on arrival far from what they were promised.

Legal framework

The exploitation of female migrants continues due to significant limitations in the legal framework that ought to protect them. There have, however, been significant developments in this area in recent years which may have a protective effect.

International law

The cornerstone of the international legal regime is the Trafficking Protocol to the Transitional Organized Crime Convention. The Protocol defines trafficking as noted above, and commits states to criminalising trafficking in their national jurisdictions, preventing trafficking and protecting those who have fallen victim to it. The protocol was drafted in 2000 and came into effect in 2003. Ethiopia acceded to the protocol on 22 June 2012.[42] Ethiopia has also ratified the United Nations Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air (2000).

Ethiopian law

The US Department of State (2016) reports that the government of Ethiopia does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. However, it also notes that it is making significant efforts to do so.[43]

41 S.B. Woldemichael, "The Vulnerability of Ethiopian Rural Women and Girls: The Case of Domestic Workers in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait," Masters Thesis for a Sociology Degree, Uppsala University, June 2013.

42 United Nations Treaty Collection, "Status of Ratifications: Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime," available at https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XVIII-12-a&chapter=18&clang=_en.

43 US Department of State, "Ethiopia: 2016 Trafficking in Persons Report," 2016, available at http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2016/index.htm.

Trafficking has been criminalised in Ethiopian law for some time. The 1995 Ethiopian Constitution states that: "Trafficking in human beings for whatever purpose is prohibited."[44] Article 597 of the 2004 Criminal Code likewise prohibits trafficking of women and children and provides for penalties of five to 20 years' imprisonment, and a fine of up to 50,000 Birr (2260 USD). Although acts of trafficking committed against men are not fully covered by this legislation, the related provisions in Article 596 and 598 prohibit the enslavement and unlawful sending of Ethiopians abroad, also covering the trafficking of men in some situations.[45]

In July 2015, Ethiopia adopted new anti-trafficking legislation which has been hailed as a significant step forward. The law, called Prevention and Supervision of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants Proclamation No. 909/2015, defines trafficking broadly in conformity with international law, and increases the punishments that can be applied.

Under the new law, human trafficking is punishable by 15 to 25 years in jail and a fine of 150,000-300,000 Birr (7,000-14,000 USD). The punishment is harsher if the victim is a child, a woman or anyone with a mental or physical impairment, rising to life imprisonment and a fine of 200,000-500,000 Birr (9,300-23,300 USD).[46] Inflicting physical or psychological harm on victims is also punishable in this category.

In addition, the government of Ethiopia has attempted to address the problem by regulating recruitment. Measures include the Private Employment Agency Proclamation No. 104/1998 and the Employment Exchange Services Proclamation No. 632/2009. The proclamations emphasise protections on the rights, safety and dignity of Ethiopians by establishing Private Employment Agencies (PEAs) to legalise migration, and by deploying labour attachés in countries of employment to ensure that workers' rights are protected. The government passed additional amendments to these proclamations in 2015.[47]

While these are useful in combatting trafficking, legal measures alone are insufficient. First, enforcement is critical. The US State Department

44 1995 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Ethiopia, Article 18, available at http://www.servat.unibe.ch/icl/et00000_.html

45 The Criminal Code of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2004.

46 US Department of State, "Ethiopia: 2016 Trafficking in Persons Report," 2016, available at http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2016/index.htm.

47 Ibid.

noted that Ethiopia pursued traffickers more aggressively in 2015 than it had before, convicting 69 traffickers under the new anti-trafficking law (compared with 46 convicted in the previous year).[48] Second, unless the demand side of the migration equation - that is, the factors that make people desperate to migrate and more vulnerable to trafficking - is addressed, then these actions - which address the supply side of the trafficking dynamic - only risk driving migration further underground and making migrants themselves more vulnerable.[49]

Laws in the Gulf

Even if well enforced, Ethiopian law is only part of the puzzle of addressing the issue of human rights violations against migrants and victims of trafficking. The reality is that the legal system in receiving states also plays a role in either protecting migrants or in making them more vulnerable. Unfortunately, the law in the many receiving states fails to adequately protect migrants.

In particular, concern has been raised about the kafala system that governs labour migration in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, as well as much migration in Lebanon and Jordan.[50] This system requires that migrant workers have a "kafeel," or sponsor, in order to obtain work permission and acquire or maintain legal immigration status. The main issue with this system is that it restricts labour mobility. Workers cannot leave their kafeel for more attractive employment. If workers question the terms of their employment, kafeels can have them deported. In Saudi Arabia and Qatar, migrant workers need to get official "exit permits" before they can leave the country, and these can be blocked by employers. In other countries, workers who leave their employment without permission can be reported as "runaways" and even face legal charges.[51] This imbalance of power makes migrants vulnerable to exploitation.[52]

48 Ibid

49 See e.g. O. Yakushko, "Human Trafficking: A Review for Mental Health Professionals". Educational Psychology Papers and Publications. Paper 91, 2009

50 MigrantRights.org, "Understanding Kafala: An Archaic Law at Cross Purposes with Modern Development," March 11, 2015, available at https://www.migrant-rights.org/2015/03/understanding-kafala-an-archaic-law-at-cross-purposes-with-modern-development/.

51 Human Rights Watch, "'I already Bought You'. Abuse and Exploitation of Female Migrant Domestic Workers in the United Arab Emirates," 2014, available at https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/10/22/i-already-bought-you/abuse-and-exploitation-female-migrant-domestic-workers-united; MigrantRights.org, "Understanding Kafala: An Archaic Law at Cross Purposes with Modern Development," March 11, 2015, available at https://www.migrant-rights.org/2015/03/understanding-kafala-an-archaic-law-at-cross-purposes-with-modern-development/.

52 A. Khan, "Why it's time to end kafala," The Guardian, February 26, 2014.

In addition, many Gulf countries have labour laws that provide insufficient protections to workers in general and migrant and domestic workers in particular. The failure to provide clear standards in law for the treatment of workers facilitates their exploitation.

However, there have recently been some positive developments in this regard. For example, in October 2015 the government of Saudi Arabia passed 38 amendments to its labour law to include prohibitions on confiscating the passports of migrants and failing to pay salaries in a timely manner. Employers are also now required to provide employees with copies of their contracts. However, the new regulations do not extend to domestic workers or workers who are in the country for less than two months, which excludes a substantial number of vulnerable Ethiopians.[53]

In Kuwait, labour laws similarly exclude domestic workers - but a new law passed in June 2015 imposed labour standards for domestic workers for the first time. The law limits the working day to 12 hours, prescribes one day off a week and stipulates 30 days of paid holiday per year. Although enforcement mechanisms are weak, the law represents an important step forward.[54]

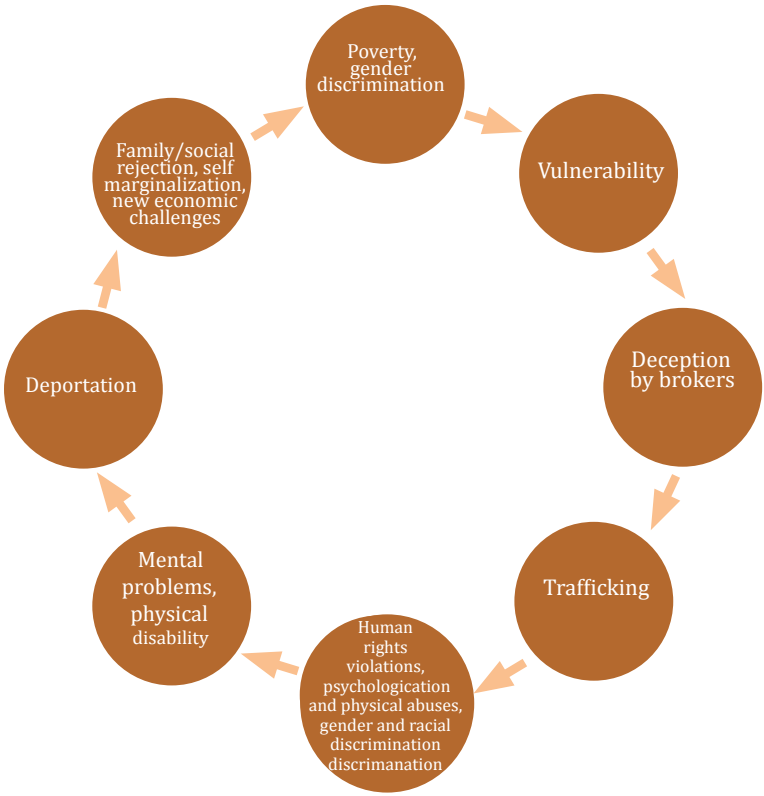
53 Human Rights Watch, "Saudi Arabia: Steps Toward Migrant Workers' Rights," November 15, 2015, available at https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/10/22/i-already-bought-you/abuse-and-exploitation-female-migrant-domestic-workers-united.

54 Human Rights Watch, "Kuwait: New Law a Breakthrough for Domestic Workers," June 30, 2015, available at https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/06/30/kuwait-new-law-breakthrough-domestic-workers; MigrantRights.org, "Another Look at Kuwait's New Laws for Domestic Workers," August 15, 2016, available at https://www.migrant-rights.org/2015/08/another-look-at-kuwaits-new-laws-for-domestic-workers/.

Experiences in Exile

As noted above, women from Ethiopia migrate to the Gulf (and elsewhere) in search of decent work and better wages to support both themselves and their families. What they commonly find, however, is an extremely difficult situation that is often in stark contrast to the promises made by recruiters. Issues include culture shock, wages, confinement that may amount to dehumanising or slave-like conditions, discrimination on account of their gender, race and/or religion and violence.

Figure 2: Forces driving cyclical migration of Ethiopian women



Culture shock

Culture shock is the effect of immersion in a foreign culture on the unprepared visitor.[55] Ethiopian women travelling to the Gulf find a culture that is in many, many respects different from the one that they left. Every aspect of their new lives is strange - the language, the household appliances, the religion, the culture and the overall environment.

Previous research has cited the impact of culture shock on Ethiopian migrant workers. Beydoun documented the feelings of anxiety and ostracisation that result from the "alien" way of life of their employers. The fear of losing their cultural identity, which is strongly attached to home, increases the anxiety of migrant workers.[56] In addition, the language barrier they face can make them distressed and cause practical problems.

As discussed above, the women who are most vulnerable to trafficking come from rural areas, mainly Oromia, Amhara and Tigray. Most had not travelled previously, and were unfamiliar with other cultures. In addition, their areas of origin are severely underdeveloped. According to GSA staff, they have no transportation facilities, electricity or schools. The context that these women find in the Gulf is more developed and urban. Most had never lived in a city before. They may find carrying out their tasks as domestic workers difficult because they are unfamiliar with the tools and appliances that they are expected to use. Receiving instructions is made more complex by the language barrier. In addition, recruiters tell employers that women are experienced, aware of their duties and familiar with the appliances they will be using, which can lead employers to feel frustrated and increase the possibility for disagreements and abuse.

Information obtained from interviewees indicates that Ethiopian domestic workers learn Arabic more quickly and easily than domestic workers from other countries:

> ***It is really surprising to see how fast the Ethiopians start to speak the language. I don't have any scientific explanation, but I can say it might be as a result of their commitment***[57]

55 A. Toffler, Future Shock, (New York: Bantam Books, 1970).
56 K.A. Beydoun, "The Trafficking of Ethiopian Domestic Workers into Lebanon: Navigating Through a Novel Passage of the International Maid Trade," Berkeley Journal of International Law, 2006.
57 Interview with DK, former diplomat in UAE, June 2015

While they may be committed, their facility in learning is also likely because many speak or are familiar with Amharic, which is structurally similar to Arabic, and both are Semitic languages.

However, a language barrier still exists, which puts pressure on Ethiopian domestic workers. One of the returnee informants, Edget, managed to establish basic communication with her employers within a couple of weeks, but her experience on arrival made her anxious:

> ***I felt so nervous when my employer talked to me in Arabic on the first evening of my employment. I couldn't sleep that night worrying how I would survive without knowing their language.***[58]

This barrier can provoke disputes between employers and employees. Kanko, who came from rural Arsi in the Oromia region, told her story in Oromifa - her mother tongue and the only language she speaks and understands:

> ***Since I was not able to understand Arabic, when they ordered me to do one thing I might do another. Their response was to beat me.***[59]

When the abuse became too much to bear, Kanko ran away.

Religious differences can also feed culture shock. Christian domestic workers in Muslim households face difficulties when they are expected to perform unfamiliar religious practices. Exacerbating the problem, many brokers encourage Christian women to present themselves as Muslim, saying that this will result in better job opportunities. Some are told to adopt Muslim names or to take passport pictures wearing headscarves. Some are forced to reinvent themselves upon arrival:

> ***I was told I was a Muslim when I arrived at the airport. I had to remove my cross from my neck. Pretending was not an easy task for me, especially during their fasting period. It made me sleepless and stressful.***[60]

Another returnee recounted a similar experience:

> ***When I arrived at Kuwait Airport the agent told me that I was a Muslim. I didn't know. I didn't dress like a Muslim. I didn't have a picture with a headscarf in my passport, and I even wore a cross on my neck. I was told to remove the cross. How can I be a Muslim***

58 Interview with victim (Edget), June 2015
59 Interview with victim (Kanko), June 2015.
60 Interview with victim (Worqe), June 2015

while knowing nothing about the religion? The agent told me I would survive. But I didn't. My employers threw me away when they found out I am not [a Muslim].[61]

Others found following religious practices difficult, particularly as they were unused to them and not motivated by faith. One woman described her experience:

Imagine fasting coupled with the workload. During Ramadan, I had to work day and night, and I can't sit and eat for hours like them. I thought I was going to die of starvation.[62]

The experience of the first woman, Worqe, of pretending to be a Muslim affected her health and led to her dismissal.

It is normal for individuals faced with culture shock to become stressed, anxious and tense.[63] The difficulty of dealing with these changes is intensified where individuals are separated from their families and other support networks. Stress is also exacerbated where the individuals are young and have no previous experience of travelling. Even where domestic workers reported that their employers were considerate and made an effort to explain things, culture shock caused strain. Some had nightmares about their family members dying or burning.

One migrant, Enat, was 14 years old when she first migrated to Saudi Arabia through an irregular channel, with the consent of her parents. Her journey started on foot from her rural village to the city of Ataye, facilitated by a broker. From there, she and other migrants traveled by car to the Ethiopia-Sudan border. After several days of travel by car and on foot, the migrants arrived in Saudi Arabia. Although Enat was hired by a "nice" family household with a reasonable workload, the situation still affected her psychological well-being:

I didn't feel I would become accustomed to the situation there. I felt stressed. I started to have auditory hallucinations. I couldn't sleep, I couldn't eat and I even couldn't pray. They [the employers] took me to hospital, and I started to take drugs. They said it was mental illness.[64]

She experienced constant hallucinations, which she described as evil spirits. Physicians identified them as symptoms of a psychological disorder resulting from stress.

61 From an interview conducted for a previous study in 2013 by S. Woldemichael.
62 Interview with victim (Hawi), June 2015
63 A.Toffler, Future Shock, (New York: Bantam Books, 1970).
64 Interview with victim (Enat), June 2015

Racial discrimination

In addition to other difficulties, women migrating to the Middle East from Ethiopia also face racial discrimination. The ancient tradition and practice of discriminating against black people, common in the Arab world, still exists in this globalised era. According to Beydoun, Lebanese employers routinely use the derogatory term "abid," meaning "slave," to refer to their workers.[65] In addition, Fernandez argues that Ethiopians are seen as being at the bottom of the labour pool in the Gulf:

> ***A status quo is maintained among domestic workers by employers based on racial distinction and is ordered in a radicalized hierarchy, with Filipino women at the top, signaling the highest status and commanding the highest salaries, followed by Indonesian and Sri Lankan women, and African women at the bottom.[66]***

Although employers undervalue domestic workers in general, Ethiopians are perceived as less expensive than domestic workers from any other country. Fernandez states that demand for Ethiopian domestic workers is on the rise as they are considered as "cheaper" and more compliant than other domestic workers.[67] This reputation for compliance and willingness to accept low wages is perhaps related to negative stereotypes about Africa in general, and Ethiopia in particular.

Edget, who worked in Dubai for three years and Kuwait for four years, claims that her employer in Kuwait attempted to sell her when she demanded to return home. When one of her potential buyers tried to force her to iron a pile of clothes, she refused to do so and fought for her right to be sent back home as her contract had finished. The woman intimidated her, telling she wouldn't be able to come back if she went to Ethiopia, since migration was barred. The woman locked her in a room and threatened to beat her. Edget recounted how this woman spoke to her:

> ***She [the potential buyer] also said there is nothing to eat in Ethiopia. People are eating soil so I had better stay in Kuwait working for multiple households to fill my belly. It is awful to imagine how those people perceive us.[68]***

65 K.A. Beydoun, "The Trafficking of Ethiopian Domestic Workers into Lebanon: Navigating Through a Novel Passage of the International Maid Trade," Berkeley Journal of International Law, 2006.

66 B. Fernandez, "Cheap and disposable? The impact of the global economic crisis on the migration of Ethiopian women domestic workers to the Gulf," Gender and Development, Vol. 18, 2010, pp. 249-262

67 Ibid.

68 Interview with victim (Edget), June 2015

A lack of awareness among Ethiopian domestic workers about their rights exacerbates their low wages and poor conditions, according to the Ethiopian former diplomat with the UAE. Indeed, even where the embassy attempts to intervene on behalf of a worker, it is sometimes difficult to do so. You may hear domestic workers challenging the embassy, saying: *"My employers are not rich enough to pay me more."*[69]

Violations of workers' rights and slave-like conditions

Although women are promised good wages and decent working conditions, this is not what they find. They are forced to work long hours without rest, insulted and treated inhumanely, have their movement and ability to contact home restricted and are, at times, not paid the agreed wages.

Restricting women's freedom of movement is a key component of preventing them from asking for help. Often passports are confiscated, leaving women vulnerable to accusations of illegal migration and unable to return home. For example, Worqe recounted:

> ***When I arrived at Kuwait Airport, the agent took my passport and warned me to behave the way my employers required me to.***[70]

Women were also, in some cases, cut off from communication with friends and family, restricting their ability to cope as well as to ask for help. The majority had little to no contact with family members back home. They were unable to contact their agencies when they faced problems. All of their actions and movements were under the supervision of their employers and based on their good will. One informant, Worqe, was not able to contact her family for more than a year, not even to make a phone call to let them know she had arrived safely.

Women are also induced to stay in abusive situations because many have incurred debt, either personally or on the part of their families, to make the journey. Worqe recounted how she had hoped to pay back her mother's debt of 466 USD through her work. Another young woman, Fitsum, said that her mother had borrowed 8,000 Birr (about 370 USD) to pay for her to migrate. These experiences are common. Many of these women were willing to tolerate abuses in part because they had gone into debt in order to make the journey. Many, lured by promises of good

69 Interview with former Ethiopian diplomat to the UAE, 2015
70 Interview with victim (Worqe), June 2015

wages and working conditions, had borrowed money, or their families had sold cattle or land to cover travel expenses.

Most women are expected to work very long hours, without rest. For example, for two years in Saudi Arabia, Mimi faced an unbearable workload and sleep deprivation:

> ***I always worked for at least 18 hours a day, and my employers were never satisfied.***[71]

Another woman, Edget, said that her workload and isolation left her sleepless and stressed.[72] Thinking about their families and their desperate situation induced women to tolerate abuse, but the denial of salaries was harder to bear.

Despite promises of good wages, workers found that wages were either very low or not paid at all, despite the difficult working conditions. A former diplomat in the UAE elaborated:

> ***In the UAE, legally recruited domestic workers get paid the same salary of 500-700 dirham (23-32 USD) per month for over five years. But they are considered lucky for at least getting paid some money, compared to those who are manipulated for free. When the embassy interferes in the matter, the employers usually ask a strange question: "Why would I pay more for an Ethiopian?"***[73]

Others find that their salary is delayed, or not paid at all. For many this is the worst part:

> ***I didn't mind about the workload, because I grew up working hard. I know that wouldn't kill me. I didn't mind about the lack of sleep or even the beatings for that matter. But not getting my salary that was unbearable. Every month I had to cry and beg my employers to pay me.***[74]

Another woman, Emuye, recounted similar experiences:

> ***The madam doesn't want to see me eating. It is food that they would throw away. She even gets angry at seeing me drinking water, God is my witness. I never complained about all these [things], but I always had to argue with her about my ever-delayed salary.***[75]

Another woman, Worqe, was fired when her employers found out that she was not a Muslim, and refused any back pay.

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71 Interview with victim (Mimi), June 2015
72 Interview with victim (Edget), June 2015
73 Interview with DK, a former Ethiopian diplomat in the UAE, June 2015
74 Interview with victim (Mimi), June 2015
75 Interview with victim (Emuye), June 2015

> ***I worked like a slave and never got any money. I can't go back home, because I have debts to pay here and in my country.***[76]

Fitsum's account of her time in Dubai resembles the experiences of Worqe, Mimi, Emuye and many more domestic workers who were belittled and dehumanised by their employers:

> ***They do not consider you as a human being. They hate you without a reason, and you can't ask why. They just want you to work without rest, without any payment. It feels like you are a robot.***[77]

Gender-based violence

As noted above, gender discrimination makes women more vulnerable to trafficking. The same discriminatory attitudes make them more vulnerable to violations and abuse at their destinations.

It has been clearly documented that women travelling abroad for work are vulnerable to sexual abuse and assault by male employers or their relatives and friends. For example, in 2006 Beydoun reported that Ethiopian domestic workers in Lebanon were subjected to sexual abuse, stating that where rape resulted in pregnancy, women were forced to have an abortion or were deported in order to cover up the crime.[78]

The precise scope of the problem is unclear because sexual abuse is seldom reported, and interviewees are rarely willing to divulge such information. There are indications, however, that it is pervasive. According to the GSA and Agar, returnees regularly come back pregnant and gave birth in the shelters. Some are mentally disturbed, and can't recall or won't talk about what happened to them. In some cases, GSA and Agar give the children of these women to orphanages until they recover. There are also those who return with sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV and fistula. In addition, most interviewees described instances of sexual abuse occurring to other women.

However, there are victims who dare to speak out. An Ethiopian domestic worker said her male employer forced her to clean his office naked every day while he watched. Afterwards, he would rape her. Another woman, Likelesh, one of the key informants from Agar, is still suffering from trauma as a result of being raped over the course of a six-month period five years ago.

76 Interview with victim (Worqe), June 2015
77 Interview with victim (Fitsum), June 2015
78 K.A. Beydoun, "The Trafficking of Ethiopian Domestic Workers into Lebanon: Navigating Through a Novel Passage of the International Maid Trade," Berkeley Journal of International Law, 2006.

> ***I ran away from my employer, because I couldn't survive with the little food she was providing me. Unfortunately I fell into a worse situation. A Sri Lankan woman who found me wandering around sold me to an Indian man. He raped me in every possible way for six months. I used to pass out every time he forced himself in me. My womb got almost out of its proper place.*** [79]

Likelesh whispered as she narrated her story, partly out of embarrassment and partly out of fear of social stigma from fellow returnees and the shelter's staff. According to the GSA director, even though many victims don't dare to tell of such experiences, in some cases their psychological and physical symptoms mean it is possible to guess.

Deportation and return

After their expectations, hopes and dreams are crushed, many domestic workers end up being deported. When they arrive at Addis Ababa airport, they don't know what to do or where to go since their families are unaware they have returned, often empty-handed. There are even situations in which they don't realize where they are until they are approached by airport personnel, who know to direct them to GSA and Agar.

For example, three girls were brought to the GSA shelter by Ethiopian Airlines staff. According to one of the returnees, they had been deported from Dubai, and none of them had a place to go since their families were not aware they had come back. In order to refer the girls to the shelter, an airline employee had to fill out forms. "What is your name?" the employee asked. The returnee just glanced at him and gave no response. He looked at her passport and filled in the necessary information on the form. "Do you have any money?" he asked. She nodded and pointed to a very small light green bag on the floor, which was the only property she had. It was empty. This experience of returning home empty-handed is shared by many victims of trafficking.

Failure to fulfill expectations

Many Ethiopian women become victims of human trafficking in order to earn a better living for themselves and their families.[80] Indeed, as noted above, their families have often risked considerable resources

79 Interview with victim (Likelesh), June 2015

80 G. Wakgari, "Causes and Consequences of Human Trafficking in Ethiopia: The case of Women in the Middle East," American Research Institute for Policy Development, 2014.

to get them abroad, in the hope that this strategy may lift them out of poverty. Because of this, migrants may suffer from self-blame and shame if they do not succeed. Previous research has demonstrated that failure to send remittances before returning home is usually considered shameful by domestic workers.[81] That shame and guilt, as well as social stigmatisation for failing to meet expectations, worsens the mental health of victims.[82]

Worqe, whose story is recounted above, exemplifies this phenomenon. When she finally got the chance to speak with her mother, she detailed the abuses she had suffered, including being denied pay for two years, attempted rape, being perceived as a thief, beatings, starvation and considering suicide:

> ***I told her: I am starved, I am beaten, I am insulted, I am devalued, I am abused. My mother cried a lot. Yes, I was hungry. Of course I was suffering... My mum cried fearing to lose me. I regret telling my mum about my problems. I regret making her worried.[83]***

Even after all that she had suffered, Worqe felt she could not leave because she had been unable to repay the debt that her mother had incurred in facilitating her migration. She also worried about the effect her story would have on her mother. This story is emblematic of the huge hope that is placed on those who migrate, and the pressure on them to meet their families' expectations. Inability to meet these expectations can cause significant psychological damage.

Fitsum also returned with shattered dreams:

> ***I had the aspiration to change the livelihood of my family when I migrated to Kuwait.[84]***

Fitsum recalled her dream of escaping poverty through labour migration. When the meagre income her mother earned from selling injera, a typical Ethiopian flatbread made with teff flour, became inadequate for the family of seven, she decided to migrate to feed her family and send her younger siblings to school. After failing to do so, she now feels guilty:

81 N. Ketema, "Female Ethiopian Migrant Domestic Workers: An Analysis of Migration, Return-Migration and Reintegration Experiences," University of Oregon, 2014.
82 C. Zimmerman, et al., "The health risks and consequences of trafficking in women and adolescents: Findings from a European study," London: London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), 2003.
83 Interview with victim (Worqe), June 2015
84 Interview with victim (Fitsum), June 2015

> ***I endured painful and humiliating experiences for two years, hoping at least to pay my mother's debt; in vain. I felt guilty for putting my mother in such a position.***[85]

A young businessman who travels regularly to Dubai, interviewed at a market in April 2013 for another research project, said that the shame of the domestic workers should be a shame for the whole nation:

> ***I encountered a lot of heartbreaking situations there [in Dubai]. I once saw a girl on a flight to Ethiopia. She was begging on the plane. She said she had worked for three years and didn't get paid. She exposed her breast to get people's attention and sympathy. She was crying, screaming and begging. I hung my head.***[86]

In other cases, domestic workers are able to send money home, only to have their hopes dashed by their family's mismanagement of the money they have sent. For example, Birhan recounted what happened when she sent the first two years of her salary to her husband:

> ***He spent it recklessly. He even sold part of the land he had inherited from his father. He didn't send our two children to school. I was very disappointed and decided to go back to Dubai. I didn't send him anything in those 11 months. He insisted, but I refused. He became angry, and we are not together any more. I didn't succeed in the second migration either. My life fell apart, and so did my family. I left my son with my in-laws and my daughter with my parents, and I am here, far away from them, not knowing when we will be together again.***[87]

85 Interview with victim (Fitsum), June 2015
86 Interview with businessman, April 2013.
87 Interview with victim (Birhan), June 2015

The Consequences

The consequences of trafficking on humans are complex and far-reaching. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "all forms of trafficking, because of the abusive and exploitative nature of the crime, produce harmful effects on trafficked individuals."[88] Because trafficking and the experiences it generates often last for a prolonged period of time, they may be more traumatic than one-off events.[89]

Returning to their home country is not a pleasant experience for traumatised trafficking victims. Not only were they, in most cases, vulnerable prior to their departure, but they may return bearing new psychological, physical, social and economic burdens. According to the GSA, there are returnees who refuse to reintegrate into their families even after their recovery. They feel ashamed of their empty-handedness, and fear rejection and social stigma. Some want to remigrate or stay in Addis Ababa as domestic workers or day labourers.

The challenges that domestic workers face during the reintegration process are discussed here under four interwoven themes: psychological, physical, economic and social.

Psychological consequences

As noted above, women who migrate or are trafficked face a range of difficulties that can induce trauma, from removal from their culture and their support systems, to mistreatment, to physical and sexual abuse. According to the US State Department, the "trauma associated with trafficking and its psychological effects can be devastating and, if left unaddressed, can undermine victims' recovery and potentially make them vulnerable to re-victimisation."[90] Psychologically traumatised trafficking victims can display various symptoms such as memory loss, depression, feelings of extreme sadness and hopelessness about

88 UN Office on Drugs and Crime, "An Introduction to Human Trafficking: Vulnerability, Impact and Action," 2008.

89 C. Zimmerman et al., "The health risks and consequences of trafficking in women and adolescents: Findings from a European study," London: London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), 2003.

90 US State Department, "Addressing the Internal Wounds: The Psychological Aftermath of Human Trafficking," 2012, available at http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2012/192359.htmhttp://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2012/192359.htmhttp://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2012/192359.htm.

the future and, in the worst-case scenario, may attempt suicide.[91] They may also suffer from panic attacks and various forms of post-traumatic stress disorder that can lead victims to be a hazard to themselves or others.[92]

Many returnee victims sheltered at GSA and Agar manifested the above described symptoms and more as a result of their traumatic experiences. The founder and director of GSA said:

> ***All of the victims of trafficking who come to GSA are mentally unstable. Many of them don't remember anything about their past and don't recognise where they currently are. Some of them don't speak a word, others scream loudly and others try to harm themselves, their fellow returnees and the shelter's staff members. Some try to jump over the fence or down from the building.[93]***

Some victims of trafficking isolate themselves and sit in one place for hours, staring and barely moving. Others spend days and nights in their beds, only getting up for meals or to go to the bathroom. Some barely speak to fellow victims, while others are suspicious of everyone.

This suspicion is understandable when we consider that some victims have been mistreated not only by employers in the Middle East, but often also by Ethiopian friends and/or family. Edget, a returnee who is taking medication and recovering from her psychological problems, still doesn't trust anyone as a result of betrayal by her former Ethiopian employer:

> ***This woman who I worked for since I was 13 years old exploited me for more than seven years as her domestic worker before I went to Dubai. After I migrated, since I didn't have anyone else to depend on, I sent all my salary to her so that she could save it for me. When I came back after three years because of sickness, she denied me my money. I remigrated when I got better... I went to Kuwait but started to feel sick again. I was having auditory hallucinations. My employers took me to mental hospital and I started taking medication for four years. Though I felt better, it didn't go away fully. I decided to come back to my country. But I couldn't get my money, which I had sent to my former employer.[94]***

91 Ibid
92 C. Zimmerman, et al., "The health risks and consequences of trafficking in women and adolescents: Findings from a European study," London: London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), 2003.
93 Interview with the director of GSA, June 2015
94 Interview with victim (Edget), June 2015

Edget still pushes the rest of the world away and isolates herself as a result. She helps the shelter's kitchen staff by washing dishes and arranging them, but barely speaks to the staff. It took days to make her feel at ease enough to be interviewed. When she finally opened up, her story came not only in words but also in tears. Through days of contact, Edget narrated her story. She was angry at being betrayed by her former Ethiopian employer and losing three and half years' salary. In the meantime, she kept her distance from "the others" in the shelter, saying she said she could not trust them.

Self-stigmatisation and destructive or self-destructive behaviour are common among returnees. During an observation session at GSA, two girls were brought in by Ethiopian Airlines employees after being deported from Saudi Arabia. One of the girls became violent, attempting to beat fellow victims as well as GSA employees. She grabbed the neck of a six-year-old boy who was living in the shelter with his mother. She screamed and tried to remove her clothes. It was difficult to calm her down until her brother arrived and took her to a local mental hospital. She burst into tears when she saw him.

The second girl kept quiet initially, but then started behaving abnormally. She poured a bucket of water everywhere, washing her legs and leaving the water running. She fought with a guard and another returnee who tried to stop her from spilling the water. The presence of the two girls created tension among returnees and shelter employees. The shelter's nurse later said that both girls tried to open the car door and escape while being driven to the hospital.

Shelter gates at both GSA and Agar are secured with locks in order to deter the returnees from escaping. Although the shelters take great care to protect the wellbeing of returnees, escapes and suicides do take place. The director of GSA recounted:

> ***There was one girl who came to the shelter who was mentally ill. She didn't talk with anyone. She always hid herself behind doors. The only clue she gave was that her family had borrowed a lot of money to send her to Saudi Arabia. She finally committed suicide. We found her hanged with her own scarf in a bathroom.***[95]

A similar scenario occurred at Agar, where a girl hanged herself at night. Although many others recover or are recovering, they all bear scars.

95 Interview with the director of GSA, June 2015

Physical challenges

The fact that most victims of trafficking are positioned within a private realm, hidden from public view, exposes them to acute risks of physical violence. In some cases, the abuse that victims of trafficking suffer - including beatings, rape and being thrown from buildings - leaves physical scars or other permanent damage. Restrictions on their movement abroad may also prevent them from getting appropriate medical care in the immediate aftermath of these incidents, making the consequences more long-lasting.

Likelesh - who survived months of being raped - noted that her uterus had been damaged by the repeated attacks, but that she was unable to get proper care:

> ***I haven't got proper treatment until now. Even though I went back to Ethiopia after the rape, I migrated to Qatar and then to Kuwait only to come back in a few months because of the pain in my body. I still have irregular bleeding and a problem when I sit on the toilet. I was begging people for a place to sleep before I sheltered in Agar.***[96]

Staff at GSA recounted some horrific cases of women who had passed through their doors with physical damage so severe as to be irreparable. One young woman had reportedly been thrown from a building:

> ***She came in a wheelchair. There was nothing that could be done in hospitals here. The only thing the GSA could do was buy her some cows so that her family could use them for milking and to take care of her. When we went to visit her after a year, we found her ... completely destroyed physically and emotionally.***[97]

In another case, a young woman returned completely paralysed:

> ***There was a girl who came from Kuwait on a stretcher, completely paralysed... Ethiopian Airlines transported her from Kuwait after we agreed to accept her. Our organisation doesn't say no regarding victims, no matter how grave the case is. We decided that if she was going to die, [we should] let her die in her own country. She was not able to eat, so food was given to her through her stomach with a needle. We have neither qualified health professionals nor medical equipment for such a grave illness. We asked a hospital for help with this, but we were refused. We did all we could until her family came and took her to their village.***[98]

96 Interview with victim (Likelesh), July 2015
97 Interview with the director of GSA, June 2015
98 Interview with the director of GSA, June 2015

She died after a month. Reflecting on the woman's death, the director of GSA reflected:

Sometimes I think death is a blessing when 'life' is worse than death.[99]

Economic challenges

As noted above, many families incur debt or sell off assets in an effort to pay for women to emigrate. Sending a daughter, a wife or a sister to the Gulf is considered an investment. The hope is to improve the future of the family, to have decent housing, to be able to send children to school and to secure a stable economic future. This aspiration makes individuals and the whole community vulnerable to manipulation, creating a fertile ground for traffickers. Families can easily be convinced either to sell property, land or oxen or to borrow money to cover the cost of facilitating recruitment and travel.

Some of the stories of women are as follows:

- ***My parents sold cattle to send me abroad.***
- ***My widowed mother borrowed a lot of money to pay for a broker and cover my travel expenses.***
- ***My family sold land.100***

Another case was recounted by a GSA staff member:

> ***In one case, a father borrowed 15,000 Birr (700 USD), promising to pay back double [the amount] within a year, hoping his underage daughter would be successful. But his daughter returned back in eight months and stayed at GSA for three months getting psychological treatment, even though the girl was sent through a legal agency.101***

This expenditure, as was noted above, puts significant pressure on women to stay in difficult and dangerous situations. Many see maintaining their employment, however problematic, as the only means of repaying the debt. In the event that the debt is not repaid, they fear both recrimination from their families and the economic damage caused by the lost investment.

In cases where families have borrowed and invested a lot of money, the migrants might be forced by their relatives to repay the debt. There is an Amharic saying: "Yetim fichiw duqetun amchiw," which can be

99 Interview with the director of GSA, June 2015
100 Interviews with victims, June 2015
101 Interview with GSA staff, June 2015

translated as "[you, the woman, must] grind it anywhere, and bring the flour." In other words, the obligation is to provide, regardless of the source of these provisions. Some consider the grave predicaments that domestic workers face in destination countries insignificant compared to the poverty at home. Previous research has indicated that many community members feel migrant domestic workers have an obligation to send remittances, even if doing so involves subjecting themselves to physical and sexual exploitation.[102]

According to information obtained from the two shelters, many families of returnees are happy to find their family member safe, regardless of the new economic burden brought by debt. Some, however, refuse to welcome the returnees home:

> ***A father of one girl came to the shelter and asked if she had brought money with her. When he learned that she came empty-handed, he refused to accept her and left the shelter without her.103***

Another social worker told the story of a father who, during the 2013 mass deportation of Ethiopian migrants from Saudi Arabia, wondered how his daughter could dare to come home within three months of her migration without repaying the debt he had incurred to send her abroad.[104]

Likelesh, who returned with serious health issues as a result of repeated rapes, expressed the devastation of returning penniless:

> ***I was the only one who helped my aged parents, who live in another town. But I lost my health, and I came home empty-handed and was forced to beg people to let me sleep in their houses and eat. Now Agar provides me shelter and food, but for how long am I going to be dependent? I have not a penny to buy even hair oil.105***

As Likelesh's story makes clear, the impact of failed migration affects not only the migrants themselves, but also their families. While the assistance that is offered is welcome, it is insufficient to allow them to establish a stable economic situation for themselves and their families.

Others who do manage to earn money abroad are disappointed with the outcome. Some find the pressure of providing for their whole families too much to allow for any real change. There are many who have worked for

102 N. Ketema, "Female Ethiopian Migrant Domestic Workers: An Analysis of Migration, Return-Migration and Reintegration Experiences," University of Oregon, 2014.
103 Interview with GSA staff, June 2015
104 Interview with Agar staff member, June 2015
105 Interview with victim (Likelesh), June 2015.

more than a decade and are still bearing the burden of their families' hand-to-mouth way of life. Others lack the skills to manage the money that they made. Edget has 100,000 Birr (about 5,000 USD) which she saved from three and a half years working in Kuwait. GSA helped her to open a bank account and deposit her money. But, having nobody to consult on what to do next, she asks: "*What am I going to do with this money?*"[106]

Social consequences

Returnees face psychosocial difficulties as well as stigmatisation by family members whose expectations are not met. This significantly impacts their ability to reintegrate into their former lives.[107] Some returnees prefer to isolate themselves to avoid vilification or rejection by their families. This anxiety, combined with their emotional scars and the difficult situations that forced them to migrate in the first place, means that many returnees refuse to return to their villages. In the two shelters, returnees claim that they don't remember the addresses of their families or any of their relatives. Although memory loss can sometimes be a symptom of trauma, in some cases it is clear that the returnees wish to avoid reunification with their families. Some may hope to return abroad or to make money in Addis Ababa.

One returnee described her fear as follows:

> ***What would people say when I return empty-handed? What would people say when they see I didn't change the clothes I wore when I migrated? What would people say when they see I am not healthy? What would people say seeing me pregnant?***[108]

Another returnee, Meseret, came home with a nine-month-old daughter who she says was born to an Ethiopian man she had married in Saudi Arabia. After four years, she returned due to psychological trauma:

> ***I was not feeling well. I keep hearing voices. I don't know where they come from. I couldn't sleep for many days.***[109]

Meseret maintains that she cannot remember her family's address.

In another case, it appeared that the family was unwilling to accept a returnee due to the stigma of health problems. In the words of the GSA director:

106 Interview with victim (Edget), June 2015

107 N. Ketema, "Female Ethiopian Migrant Domestic Workers: An Analysis of Migration, Return-Migration and Reintegration Experiences," University of Oregon, 2014; A. Jobe, "The Causes and Consequences of Re-trafficking: Evidence from the IOM Human Trafficking Database," IOM Geneva, 2010.

108 Interview with victim, June 2015

109 Interview with victim (Meseret), June 2015

> ***A girl came back to Ethiopia after being diagnosed with HIV. It is not clear whether she became infected before the migration or after. When her mother and sisters learned that she was HIV positive, they declined to welcome her. She used to support them when she was employed abroad as a domestic worker.***[110]

Even though the anticipation of being stigmatised by families and communities is not always borne out, it happens frequently enough to make these concerns understandable.

Another social issue which has emerged for returnees can be referred to as the "*qomo meqiret*" or "who will marry me" dilemma. Many migrant domestic workers spend several years in their destination countries of employment pursuing their dreams of a better life, delaying their dreams of getting married and having children. When they return home, particularly if they have not been successful, they may be concerned that they will be unable to find a partner. This is especially true for those who are older than the median age of marriage in the country. Tayesch, a 29-year-old returnee, expressed these concerns:

> ***I am old with a story of failure, a daughter of poor farmer parents who owe their creditors a large sum of money. What kind of man will dare to marry me?***[111]

Assistance to returnees

Article 6 of the Trafficking Protocol calls on States to "consider implementing measures to provide for the physical, psychological and social recovery of victims of trafficking," in particular by providing:

- Appropriate housing;
- Counselling and information, in particular as regards their legal rights, in a language that the victims of trafficking in persons can understand;
- Medical, psychological and material assistance; and
- Employment and educational training opportunities

Victims' assistance and rehabilitation is also raised in Ethiopia's new anti-trafficking law, which provides for the creation of a government fund - with contributions from national and international organisations - to provide material support for victims of trafficking. This includes the construction of rehabilitation centers and shelters, and the provision of professional training.

110 Interview with GSA director, June 2015
111 Interview with victim (Tayesch), June 2013.

This support is desperately needed, not only due to the devastating consequences detailed above, but also to prevent victims with no other options from being trafficked again. Despite the need, the aftermath of trafficking is frequently overlooked by various stakeholders including the government. As a result, there remains a significant gap in knowledge about the recovery and reintegration of victims. During the course of this research, only two organisations were found to be providing victim assistance services - GSA and Agar. In both organisations, returnees are provided with basic necessities - shelter, food and medical assistance. The shelters also try to empower the returnees economically and reintegrate them into their families and communities, as well as attempting to meet their long-term needs. But they are not sufficiently funded and resourced to address the full range of economic, social and psychosocial difficulties in the reintegration process. In order to resolve these shortcomings, they collaborate with and seek support from other organisations:

> ***We don't throw out victims, even if their families do. We are here to find solutions. We are trying our best. We look for other organisations to assist us in our effort. Some organisations give permanent shelter to victims. Though it is not easy to deal with such issues, we strive to do our best anyway.***[112]

Similarly, Agar solicits support from private colleges, training centres and hotels in order to train and employ returnees after their initial recovery.

> ***In the reunification and reintegration process, in addition to our collaboration with IOM, we also cooperate with training schools, hotels and other industries to skillfully and economically empower returned victims of trafficking. Some five-star hotels give us priority in this regard, opening training and job opportunities. IOM provides working materials costing 10,000 Birr (464 USD) based on the skills that the women/girls gain through training. For those who decide to return to their families and villages, the organisation buys cattle with that 10,000 Birr. In addition, Agar collaborates with district authorities in helping the returnees to find a space to establish their own businesses - cafés, restaurants or hair salons based on their expertise.***[113]

112 Interview with GSA Director, June 2015.
113 Interview with Agar employee, June 2015

There are noteworthy gaps in that assistance provided to returned victims of trafficking by the Ethiopian government. Even though the problem is long-standing, and indeed, ever-increasing, assistance was only provided in the aftermath of the mass deportations from Saudi Arabia in 2013. The government took action to reintegrate the returnees as an emergency response to the crisis, but since then has fallen short of its responsibility to assist victims. If the government and civil society are unable to address the range of victims' needs, they may fall victim to re-trafficking.

Conclusions and Observations

This paper has presented an overview of the problem of women being trafficked from Ethiopia to the Middle East and Gulf countries, with a view to leveraging these understandings to better confront the issue. In order to address the situation of these women, a holistic view must be taken. This must include the marginalisation that makes women vulnerable to trafficking, the exploitation that they suffer at the hands of traffickers, the violations of their rights that are perpetrated by their employers and the lack of reintegration support for those who find their way home.

This research has made clear that discrimination against women in terms of access to education and economic opportunities makes them vulnerable to trafficking. Rural women are most vulnerable, both because of limited development in the areas they come from, and because traditional views that discriminate against women tend to be most prevalent there. This research clearly reveals that the cycle of poverty starts and ends in the women's original locations. Their lack of access to resources and development and the abuse they often suffer in their villages and towns push them to migrate. Even where they are aware of the risks, women will continue to make risky decisions in the hope of improving their own situations and those of their families, having limited or no other viable options. In this context, it is critical that any solution to trafficking includes measures that address both development and gender discrimination.

In addition, the social and cultural alienation that women experience restrict their access to information, information that could help them resist the vulnerability caused by poverty and discrimination. Again, rural women - who are generally less educated and have less access to information - are least resistant to the manipulations of traffickers. Preventing trafficking will thus require the provision of accurate and accessible information about migration.

In this context, the government and relevant civil society organisations should conduct awareness-raising programs with outreach at the

national, regional and village levels, with a special focus on female potential migrants. Awareness-raising sessions should offer information about the possible risks for migrants, as well as information on legal migration routes and practical strategies for mitigating risks. They should encourage prudent decision-making by targeted women and their families, and seek to increase understanding and lessen stigma in the population at large.

In addition, the Ethiopian government and relevant civil society organisations should disseminate information to migrants prior to departure explaining their rights, and provide information on where migrants can turn for redress in the event that their rights are violated while abroad. Basic orientation information on rudimentary communication, languages, cultures and traditions and the use of home appliances would also be useful to prepare women for the challenges they are likely to face.

It is important to observe that many women had also been abused inside Ethiopia before travelling to the Middle East. Many traffickers and smugglers are members of the community, who accumulate financial gains by sending women to work abroad. In this context, it is important to continue improving the enforcement of existing laws against trafficking. The 2015 law against trafficking is positive, and has already created the basis for more effective prosecution of traffickers. More sustained and consistent prosecution, however, will be needed in order to create a strong deterrent effect.

The research also found that it is when women travel abroad that they are exposed to the greatest abuse. As the numbers of migrants rise, so too do incidences of trauma etcetera. Even if they are not abused, migrant workers are still vulnerable to culture shock, which can be traumatising in and of itself. Inexperienced domestic workers are shocked when they are first introduced to strange and incomprehensible ways of life. The unknown culture, language, religion, food and home appliances, and the many unfamiliar situations that must be learned in a short period of time, plague unsophisticated domestic workers. They start to suffer feelings of bewilderment, frustration and anxiety, which lead to psychological instability.

Unfortunately, for most, culture shock is only the beginning of their troubles. Their predicament gets worse when employers treat them

in an inhumane manner, denying them food and sleep, refusing to pay their salaries and beating and belittling them. Many are locked in to the residences of their employers for extended periods of time. Some are the victims of extreme violence. Rape by employers, relatives of employers or even law enforcement agents while in detention is also common. In the worst-case scenario, women are killed. Such abuse damages the women physically and mentally, and exacerbates their social and economic problems.

The countries in which these women are employed must take action to defend their rights. Existing labour and criminal laws must be robustly enforced. Employers who beat, rape or murder employees should be held criminally responsible for doing so. Where necessary, existing human rights protections in immigration and labour law should be strengthened. In particular, the kafala system should be abolished and replaced with an immigration system that gives migrant workers greater mobility and allows them to escape abusive environments.

In addition, Middle Eastern countries that receive migrant women should raise awareness of labour and immigration law standards in order to ensure that employers know what treatment is unacceptable. More must also be done to ensure that workers have access to systems of reporting and assistance so that they can report abuses committed against them. Ethiopia can also take action to ensure that workers have access to redress by deploying more labour attachés and other embassy staff in the main destination countries, and giving them resources and training to assist migrants. The government should ensure that these personnel reach out, to the extent possible, to migrants in order to ensure they are aware that they can approach embassies for assistance. In addition, the government of Ethiopia can take action by negotiating with destination countries to provide greater legal protections for migrants. Any agreements should also contain enforcement mechanisms, as current legal guarantees are often left unenforced.

In addition to the direct impact of abuse, failed aspirations and dreams of bettering their families' lives also cause domestic workers to suffer from shame and self-blame. The debts that their families incur for their recruitment and transport add economic, social and psychological burdens for the women.

This trauma causes ongoing complex and far-reaching consequences after victims return, including physical disability, reproductive health complications and psychosocial problems. Isolation and depression can cause them to harm themselves or others. They also face stigmatisation because of their physical and mental status, as well as economic difficulties. Rather than offering the economic deliverance that their families had hoped for, the debt incurred for their travel and/or the physical and psychological consequences of their travel can worsen the economic situation of their families. This can cause conflict within the family and social obstacles to reintegration.

In spite of the depth of their needs, both psychological and practical, victims lack access to services. There are limited mental health resources in Ethiopia generally, and cost and distance may limit access to those that exist for victims of trafficking. Although NGOs do their best to offer services, a lack of support minimises their capacity. This lack of assistance hinders women's recovery and reintegration.

In addition to psychological support, though, women need training and assistance to enable them to work productively. The research made it clear that there is currently very little investment in the reintegration of girls. However, training for income generation could have a positive impact on women and girls struggling to rebuild their lives after returning. Unless victim assistance is taken into consideration by government and NGOs, the returnees will become trapped in the trafficking chain again.

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