

SOCIAL PROTECTION OF DOMESTIC WORKERS: SUNNAH PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

The marginalization of domestic workers is a pervasive issue worldwide, particularly evident in Nigeria where these workers face dehumanization and discrimination. This discordance with the Sunnah's core principles necessitates a thorough examination of policies rooted in Islamic teachings to uphold domestic workers' dignity and labour rights. Employing a methodology blending library research and descriptive analysis, this study systematically collects, organizes, and analyses pertinent hadiths to illuminate the lexicon within the Sunnah pertaining to domestic workers. Through this process, various concepts and terms emerge, such as 'Asifu,' 'Ajiru,' 'Tabi'u,' 'Kafi,' and 'Khadimu,' delineating the nature and mode of their service. Furthermore, the study clearly distinguishes between domestic workers and slaves regarding their duties, rights, and freedom. It emphasizes that while domestic workers may provide services of a religious or worldly nature, those rendered solely for financial gain hold no additional reward in this life or the Hereafter. Sunnah principles underscore protecting domestic workers' legal rights, necessitating clear delineation of their duties and fair compensation, either within contractual terms or customary practices. Additionally, the Sunnah advocates against overworking domestic workers and emphasizes timely wage payment. Recommendations include forgiveness for transgressions and visiting workers during illness, reflecting a compassionate approach. Conversely, according to Sunnah, domestic workers are expected to fulfil their employment obligations with sincerity. This paper contends that the conscientious adoption of its findings will significantly contribute to safeguarding the labour rights of domestic workers.

Keywords: Social Protection, Domestic Workers, Sunnah.

1. INTRODUCTION

Domestic workers hold a significant place in Islam, as their services

contribute to enhancing the quality of life for their employers. This is exemplified by Prophet Musa (Peace be Upon Him – PBUH), who served as a shepherd for ten years in exchange for his wife's dowry (*mahr*), as documented in the Quran (al-Qasas 28: 27). Similarly, the Prophet Muhammad PBUH himself engaged in shepherding in Makkah, as noted in the authentic hadith (Al-Bukhari, 1997, hadith no.: 2262), and employed Abdullah bin Uraiqit, a polytheist, as a guide during his migration from Makkah to Madinah, as recounted in Al-Bukhari (1997, hadith no.: 2264). These historical examples underscore the roles of shepherds and guides, which align with contemporary perceptions of domestic workers. In essence, the concept of domestic workers is firmly rooted in both the Quran and Sunnah, accompanied by provisions for their social protection.

However, domestic workers are currently experiencing unprecedented mistreatment worldwide. They endure excessive workloads, inadequate compensation, and various forms of abuse, with juvenile and migrant domestic workers being particularly vulnerable to exploitation (Human Rights Watch, 2013; Ismail et al., 2021). This troubling trend is notably pronounced in Nigeria, where the situation is deteriorating rapidly. Many domestic workers in the country are subjected to exploitation, abuse, and even forced servitude. Illustratively, on December 19, 2016, a ten-year-old housemaid was tragically murdered by her employer in Ikorodu, Lagos State, Nigeria. Similarly, another distressing incident occurred on May 20, 2017, when an eight-year-old house girl was fatally beaten by her employer, Oby, in Lagos (Usman, 2020).

Conversely, there have been instances in recent years where domestic workers have resorted to violence against their employers, either as a form of retaliation for exploitation or due to malicious intent. One such case involved Noah Matthew, a house helper who was accused of fatally stabbing his employer, Mrs. Caroline Uba, aged 40. Consequently, he was apprehended and detained by the police on February 19th, 2023 (Nwoke, 2023).

Consequently, the issue of social protection for domestic workers has garnered attention from prominent organizations such as the International Labour Office, Geneva, and Human Rights Watch. This concern has spurred the establishment of advocacy groups like the National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA) in New York, USA, and the National Domestic Workers Movement in India (Midori, 2012). Furthermore, the International Labour Office (ILO) Geneva has developed labour laws to safeguard domestic workers' rights. In 2022, the Nigerian Senate considered a bill to regulate the employment of domestic workers under the purview of the National Directorate of Employment (NDE) (Iroanusi, 2022), while challenges faced by domestic

workers in their interactions with employers remain largely unaddressed.

While developed countries have implemented policies and labour laws to address the mistreatment of domestic workers, a significant portion of this workforce worldwide continues to lack adequate social protection. Notably, Nigeria faces substantial challenges in ensuring that the legal rights of domestic workers are upheld. Therefore, the primary focus of this paper is to systematically gather, structure, and analyze data concerning the social protection of domestic workers as outlined in the Sunnah. To maintain clarity and precision, this study exclusively relies on authentic hadiths (*ahadith sahihah*) pertaining to domestic workers, aiming to distinguish their regulations from those governing slaves.

2. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS: SOCIAL PROTECTION, DOMESTIC WORKERS, AND SUNNAH

To provide clarity and precision, it is essential to elucidate the terms "Social Protection," "Domestic Workers," and "Sunnah". "Social protection" is a composite term derived from "Social" and "Protection". Etymologically, "Social" originates from the Latin word "socialis," denoting activities associated with human society or the well-being of individuals (Hornby, 2015). Conversely, "Protection" refers to the act of supporting individuals or groups in vulnerable positions (Hornby, 2015). Conceptually, "Social protection" encompasses a range of strategies aimed at shielding people from poverty, helplessness, and social exploitation, with particular attention to marginalized or defenceless groups (Christina et al., 2023).

In essence, "Social protection" embodies a suite of policies designed to safeguard vulnerable individuals from exploitation, including protecting their legal rights. Such protection may manifest in various forms, encompassing financial assistance and material support. It is crucial to emphasize that social protection is not a mere privilege but a fundamental entitlement (Ab Manan et al., 2021; Harun et al., 2018). Likewise, the term "domestic workers" comprises two distinct components: "domestic" and "workers."

"Domestic" finds its roots in the Latin word "domesticus," connoting associations with home life and the absence of foreignness (Hornby, 2015). Conversely, "worker" denotes an individual engaged in labour within a specific industry or with particular materials (Hornby, 2015). According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No.189, a domestic worker is technically defined as "any person who offers domestic work within an employment relationship." Domestic work is characterized as "work

performed in or for a household or households" (International Labour Office, n.d.). This encompasses a diverse range of tasks, including but not limited to cleaning, washing, cooking, ironing, childcare, tending to sick family members, household security, and chauffeuring for the family. Domestic workers may be engaged on a full-time or part-time basis, and their living arrangements vary, ranging from residing with their employers to maintaining separate residences (International Labour Office, n.d.).

Sunnah is an Arabic word which literally means "path" (Ibn Manzur, 1993). In technical terms, Sunnah holds various interpretations. During the era of *Sahabah* (the Companions), Sunnah encompassed any practice or saying attributed to the Prophet PBUH, whether it be obligatory, recommended, or permissible, aligning with the perspective of scholars of Hadith (Noraini & Nor Asmira, 2018). However, scholars of Usul al-Fiqh exclude hadiths describing the Prophet PBUH's physical appearance from the Sunnah concept. From the perspective of Islamic jurists, Sunnah denotes recommendations derived from the Qur'an or Hadith, such as directives for Muslims to seek knowledge and maintain honesty in trade. Additionally, in the realm of Aqidah, Sunnah is juxtaposed with Bid'ah, with its evidence drawn from both the Qur'an and Hadith. In essence, within the context of this paper, Sunnah encompasses the sayings, actions, tacit approvals, or physical descriptions of the Prophet PBUH.

3. SUNNAH'S PERSPECTIVE ON EMPLOYING DOMESTIC WORKERS

Upon reviewing Sunnah, it becomes evident that domestic workers fulfil two primary categories of services: those pertaining to worldly affairs and those intertwined with religious duties.

- a. Employing domestic workers who offer worldly-related services is unequivocally permissible in Sunnah. It does not only portray the legality of employing domestic workers but also protects the social rights of domestic workers. The basis for this is that one of the companions said, "My son was an 'Asif (a domestic worker) for the family of this man" (Al-Bukhari, 1997, hadith no.: 2724). For the Prophet PBUH to remain silent about employing the 'Asif is a tacit approval for his action.
- b. On the other hand, domestic workers who offer religious-related services can be sub-grouped into two:
 - i. If religious-related services are solely offered for wages without considering the intention of worship, the service attracts no other

reward in this life and the Hereafter. This is in accordance with the narration of Ya'la bin Umayyah when he said that the Prophet PBUH declared a military expedition. Having been an old man without any servant, I employed someone to serve me throughout the expedition with the agreement to pay three Dinars as wages. When the booties of battle were brought, I wanted to give him his share of the booties, but then I remembered the Dinars. I came to the Prophet PBUH asking him about the issue. He replied that he deserved nothing in this expedition. He further added that no reward for him in this world and the Hereafter, apart from those Dinars which were given to him" (Abu Dawud, 1997, hadith no.: 2527).

- ii. If religious-related services are purposely offered for the Sake of Allah and wages are collected as a support to facilitate the service. This kind of service attracts other rewards in this life and the Hereafter. Salamah bin al-Akwa' said that he was a youth when he was employed as a domestic worker by Talha bin Ubaidullah to water his horse, rub its back, and serve him doing domestic jobs, (Muslim, 1807/132) and the Prophet gave him the share of a horse rider and a foot-soldier for attacking the camels' rustlers of Abdur-Rahman bin 'Uyaina who came to Madinah to rob the camels of the Prophet PBUH (Abu Dawud, 1997, hadith no.: 2527).

The point of reference in the above hadith is that even though Salamah bin al-Akwa' was employed as a domestic worker when he attacked the bandits, the attack was not for wages but for the sake of Allah, and that is the reason he was given the share of a horse rider and a foot-soldier.

4. VARIETY OF TERMS FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS IN SUNNAH

Several terms have been used in Sunnah to refer to a domestic worker, such as: 'Asif, Ajir, Tabi', Kafi, Khadim. They are briefly discussed as follows:

- 1- **Al-'Asif (العسيف)**: refers to a domestic worker employed to provide service for a household. A companion said: "My son was an 'Asif (Domestic worker) for the family of this man" (Al-Bukhari, 1997, hadith no.: 2724).
- 2- **Al-Ajir (الاجير)**: has been used to denote an employer who offers domestic service for a Mujahid during the expedition. Ya'lah bin Munyah said that the Prophet PBUH declared a military expedition, and I had no servant to serve me. Due to my old age, I looked for an Ajir (hirer) who could serve

me during the expedition and he would receive three Dinars (Abu Dawud, 1997, hadith no.: 2529).

- 3- **Al-Tabi'** (التبعية): signifies a domestic worker who is always with his/her employer on a journey as can be inferred from the literal meaning of the word. Salamah bin al-Akwa' said he was a Tabi' (a domestic worker) for Talha b. Ubaidullah watering his horse, rubbing its back, serving him doing domestic jobs in exchange for eating his food (Muslim, 1991, hadith no.: 1807/132).
- 4- **Al-Kafi** (الكافي): indicates a domestic worker who offers satisfactory service to his employer as it can be inferred from the literal meaning of the word. This can be substantiated by the hadith in which A'ishah said: the early people among Companions in Madina did not have kufah which is the plural of kafi i.e. a domestic worker food (Muslim, 1991, hadith no.: 847)
- 5- **Al-Khadim** (الخادم): has been used in numerous Hadith to denote serving people for money, food, or for free. Among the usages of Al-Khadim in Sunnah are:
 - a. Wife: A wife who serves a visitor for free. It is authentically narrated that Sahl bin Sa'd reported that Abu Usaid al-Sa'idi invited The Prophet PBUH to his wedding feast, and his wife had been serving (Khadim) them on that day while yet a bride (Al-Bukhari, 1997, hadith no.: 5183).
 - b. Slave: The word Al-Khadim has also been used to refer to a slave be it male or female. It is someone who is legally owned by another person and works for them for free. Mu'awiya bin Suwaid said that he slapped his father's slave and then ran away. When he came back to perform the Zuhr prayer behind his father, his father asked the slave for revenge on him, but the slave granted him a pardon. The father then said: We came from Muqarrin family and had only one slave girl (Khadim) and one of us slapped her during the lifetime of the Prophet PBUH (Muslim, 1991, hadith no.: 1658 /31).
 - c. Domestic worker who offers service for free: An example of a domestic worker offering services without financial compensation is illustrated by the case of Anas bin Malik, who served as the Khadim of the Prophet in Madinah for a duration of ten years (Al-Bukhari, 1997, hadith no.: 6038).

- d. Domestic worker who offers service for wages based on the agreement with his employer: This can be substantiated by hadith al-Mustawrad bin Shadad reporting that the Prophet PBUH said that our employer should marry, if he does not have a domestic worker (Khadim), he should employ a house help (Khadim) (Abu Dawud, 1997, hadith no.: 2947). Imam al-Khattabi said commenting on the hadith: if he does not have a domestic worker, a domestic worker should be employed for him to serve him for the period of his service (Al-Khattabi, 1932).

Scanning through the above names depicts that no derogatory words were used in Sunnah to refer to the domestic worker, but rather each word was derived from the mode of service rendered.

5. DISTINGUISHING FEATURES BETWEEN DOMESTIC WORKERS AND SLAVES

There is a clear distinction between domestic workers and slaves regarding means, duties and rights. The brief analysis of those parameters is as follows:

- a. Employment is the main channel of getting domestic workers, while the conduit of obtaining slaves is through capturing on the battlefield or through gifts. However, domestic workers are at liberty to render their service for free, while it is strictly prohibited for one to enslave or render oneself for enslavement. This is in accordance with the narration of Abu Huraira that the Prophet PBUH said:

Allah says that he will be against three sets of people on the Day of Resurrection and one of them is the one who sells a free person as a slave and eats the price (Al-Bukhari, 1997, hadith no.: 2227).

- b. The duty of a domestic worker is to deliver service as stipulated in the agreement between him and his employer or in line with what can be established by accepted custom, while the duty of a slave is to serve his master within his strength.
- c. The right of a domestic worker is to be given wages at the right time, while the right of a slave is to be fed, clothed and not be overloaded with work beyond his ability. However, Sunnah underscores the significance of emancipating slaves as enshrined in Abu Huraira's narration that the Prophet PBUH said:

If somebody emancipates a Muslim slave, Allah will protect each part of his body from the Hell for emancipating the equivalent parts of the slave's body, even his private parts will be protected from the Hell because of freeing the slave's private parts (Al-Bukhari, 1997, hadith no.: 6715).

Based on the above hadith, Ibn Kathir (2010) opines that the workers among the companions who offered domestic service to the Prophet PBUH for free were different from the slaves.

6. FOUNDATIONAL LEGAL RIGHTS FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS

Sunnah had laid down the bedrock of legal rights for domestic workers more than fourteen centuries before bodies such as the International Labour Office (ILO) and Human Rights Watch raised concerns about their legal protection. This is crystal clear in a hadith narrated by Abu Huraira and Zaid bin Khalid Al-Juhani that a father approached the Prophet PBUH asking for a review of the verdict passed on his son. His son had illicit sexual relations with his employer's wife while working as a domestic helper. Scholars among the Companions had already informed him that his son would get a year's banishment and 100 lashes by flogging, but instead, he offered the employer a slave and 100 sheep in exchange for his son's freedom. The Prophet PBUH pledged that he would judge between him and his opponent in accordance with Shariah. He PBUH went on to say that the slave and the one hundred sheep should be given back to him and that the son should receive a hundred lashes and a year-long banishment. He PBUH then called on Unais to go to the wife of the employer and ask her, and if she pleads guilty, to stone her to death. She confessed and he stoned her to death (Al-Bukhari, 1997, hadith no.: 2724).

In the aforementioned hadith, the Prophet upheld the dignity of the employer and the employee while also judging the domestic worker and his opponent according to Shariah. Sunnah also blocks the means of adultery (*zina*). This is to preserve the lineage and progeny of Muslim societies. On this basis, most Muslim scholars believe that hiring a houseboy or house-girl to work in a household with members of the opposite sex is forbidden. Abd al-Malik bin Habib interpreted the term "Al-'Asif" in the hadith of Al-Bukhari (1997, hadith no.: 2724) as a houseboy who became puberty during his employment, having not yet achieved that age when he was hired (Ibn Al-Mulaqqin, 2008). By implication, it is permissible to employ an opposite sex as a domestic worker if he/she has not attained the puberty age.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES AND WAGE FAIRNESS IN DOMESTIC LABOR

The nature and scope of domestic employment must be spelt out in the agreements to prevent worker abuse. Domestic labour must also be proportionate to wages. If the agreements do not provide a graphic definition for the task, it must adhere to accepted practices. Anas bin Malik once said, "I offered the Prophet of Allah PBUH domestic work for ten years", but the Prophet never asked me, "Why have not I done something that is known to be done by a domestic worker?" (Muslim, 1991, hadith no.: 5723). The phrase "that is known to be done by a domestic worker " suggests that there were some household tasks that Madinah's domestic workers were customarily known to perform.

Furthermore, according to Shariah, it is forbidden to withhold domestic workers' wages, and it is considered a severe offense to do so without a valid excuse. This is stated in the hadith of Abu Huraira, where the Prophet PBUH is reported to have said: Allah states that three groups of individuals will face punishment on the Day of Resurrection. One of these groups is the one who hires a worker and receives complete service from him but does not give him his due compensation (Al-Bukhari, 1997, hadith no.: 2227).

8. PROMOTING EMPATHY: SUNNAH'S EMPHASIS ON KINDNESS TO DOMESTIC WORKERS

Sunnah promotes compassion towards domestic workers while cautioning against excessive work demands. 'Amr bin Harith relayed that the Prophet PBUH affirmed that those who alleviate the burdens of domestic workers will receive divine rewards on the Day of Judgment (Hibban, 2012, hadith no.: 4314). This directive finds practical application in the Prophet's own actions. Anas bin Malik recounted his introduction to the Prophet PBUH in Madina by his stepfather Abu Talha, who recognized Anas's capabilities and entrusted him to serve as a domestic worker for the Prophet. Anas served the Prophet both at home and during travels. Remarkably, the Prophet PBUH neither interrogated Anas about his actions nor questioned his decisions to refrain from certain tasks (Al-Bukhari, 1997, hadith no.: 6911).

Although the Prophet PBUH's domestic servants rendered their services without financial compensation during his lifetime, he occasionally inquired about their needs. An illustrative example is the interaction between the Prophet and Rabi'ah bin Ka'b, one of his domestic workers. When asked about his needs, Rabi'ah expressed contentment with his material provisions but

aspired to share in the Prophet's reward in the Hereafter due to his elevated status bestowed by Allah. In response, the Prophet suggested offering multiple prostrations as a means of assisting him in achieving this aspiration (Ahmad, 1995, hadith no.: 1657; Muslim, 1991, hadith no.: 489/226).

9. VISITING THE SICK AND FORGIVING MISTAKES

Visiting sick domestic workers, regardless of their religious affiliation, aligns with the Sunnah's commitment to safeguarding their social rights. An illustrative instance recounted by Anas bin Malik involves a Jewish youth who fell ill and served as a domestic helper for the Prophet PBUH. Demonstrating compassion, the Prophet PBUH personally visited the ailing youth, occupying a seat by his bedside and initiating a conversation about Islam. In response to the Prophet's teachings, the youth's father encouraged him to follow the guidance of Abu al-Qasim (an honorific for the Prophet PBUH), leading to the youth's conversion to Islam. The Prophet expressed gratitude for the youth's acceptance of Islam, acknowledging divine protection from the consequences of disbelief (Al-Bukhari, 1997, hadith no.: 1356).

The hadith also indicates the permissibility of hiring non-Muslims for domestic work, provided their employment does not contravene the moral or religious principles of the employer. Additionally, one of the hallmarks of a virtuous Muslim is the capacity to pardon errors, particularly among the vulnerable, as endorsed by the Sunnah. The Prophet PBUH epitomized this quality in his interactions with Anas, as attested by Anas, who lauded the Prophet's exemplary conduct. An illustrative incident involves Anas, who, when assigned a task by the Prophet PBUH, hesitated due to his young age. Instead of reprimanding him, the Prophet approached Anas with kindness, gently grasping his neck, and inquired with a smile about completing the task. Anas, prompted by this gentle approach, affirmed his commitment to fulfil the directive as requested (Muslim, 1991, hadith no.: 2310/54).

10. ACCOUNTABILITY AND INTEGRITY: SUNNAH'S DIRECTIVE FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS

The Sunnah delineates the responsibilities of domestic workers towards their employers, emphasizing their accountability for their services on the Day of Judgment. It is incumbent upon them to discharge their duties with utmost sincerity, as highlighted in the narration by Al-Bukhari (1997, hadith no.: 893). Accordingly, domestic workers are obliged to fulfil their obligations in accordance with the agreed terms and conditions, refraining from any action that may cause harm or pose a threat to their employers.

Nonetheless, if domestic worker harbour concerns that their employer may fail to uphold an agreed-upon condition, they can temporarily suspend their services as a recourse to assert their rights. Allah says in the Quran:

If you (have reason to) fear from a people betrayal, throw (their treaty) back to them, (putting you) on equal terms. Allah does not like traitors (Al-Anfal 8: 58)

It can be inferred from "throw (their treaty) back to them, (putting you) on equal terms" that the domestic worker should notify the employer before going on a temporary stoppage of service.

11. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

This section summarizes the main findings concerning the social protection of domestic workers as outlined in authentic hadiths. These findings illuminate various aspects of the relationship between domestic workers and their employers, emphasizing rights, duties, and ethical considerations.

11.1 *Classification of Domestic Workers in Sunnah*

The Sunnah categorizes domestic workers using terms such as 'Asifu, Ajiru, Tabi'u, Kafi, and Khadimu, indicating the diverse roles and responsibilities they may hold within households. Understanding these classifications is crucial in delineating the scope of their duties and entitlements.

11.2 *Concept of Khadim in Sunnah*

Khadim emerges as a pivotal concept in Sunnah literature, encompassing individuals engaged in domestic work for compensation or without it, including both male and female servants. This broad definition underscores the diverse nature of domestic labour arrangements during the time of Prophet PBUH.

11.3 *Distinction Between Domestic Workers and Slaves*

A significant distinction highlighted in the Sunnah pertains to the differentiation between domestic workers and slaves concerning their rights and obligations. While both may engage in similar tasks, the legal framework surrounding their status differs significantly, underscoring the importance of recognizing and respecting these distinctions.

11.4 *Spiritual Dimension of Domestic Work*

The Sunnah elucidates the spiritual dimension of domestic work, cautioning against the provision of religious services solely for monetary gain. This underscores the holistic approach of Islam towards labour, emphasizing sincerity and intentionality in all endeavours, whether material or spiritual.

11.5 *Precedence of Legal Protection in Sunnah*

Remarkably, the Sunnah predates contemporary discussions on labour rights, having established principles of legal protection for domestic workers long before international organizations raised concerns. This historical perspective highlights the progressive nature of Islamic teachings regarding social justice and equity.

11.6 *Adherence to Islamic Norms in Domestic Work*

The Sunnah underscores the importance of aligning domestic work practices with Islamic norms and principles through customary practices or contractual agreements. This ensures that labour arrangements remain consistent with Islamic ethics and values, fostering a harmonious relationship between employers and domestic workers.

11.7 *Prohibition of Exploitative Practices*

Emphasizing compassion and fairness, the Sunnah prohibits overworking domestic workers and withholding their wages, affirming their right to just and humane treatment. This directive reflects the overarching principles of justice and equity in Islamic jurisprudence.

11.8 *Ethical Responsibilities of Employers*

Employers are encouraged in the Sunnah to demonstrate compassion and empathy towards their domestic workers, forgiving them for wrongdoing and extending support during illness. This ethical imperative emphasizes the reciprocal nature of relationships within the household, rooted in kindness and mutual respect.

11.9 *Obligations of Domestic Workers*

Similarly, domestic workers are enjoined in the Sunnah to uphold the terms and conditions of their agreements with sincerity and integrity. This

underscores the importance of fulfilling contractual obligations as a manifestation of ethical conduct and professional integrity.

The findings derived from Sunnah literature provide valuable insights into the ethical framework governing the relationship between employers and domestic workers in Islam. By adhering to these principles, stakeholders can ensure the protection and well-being of all parties involved, fostering an environment of equity, compassion, and mutual respect.

12. CONCLUSION

This study explored the social protection of domestic workers through the lens of authentic hadiths, seeking to elucidate their rights, duties, and ethical considerations as outlined in Sunnah literature. The findings underscored various aspects of the relationship between domestic workers and employers, highlighting classifications of domestic workers, distinctions between domestic workers and slaves, and the spiritual dimension of domestic work. Additionally, the study elucidated principles of legal protection, adherence to Islamic norms, prohibition of exploitative practices, and ethical responsibilities of both employers and domestic workers.

These findings carry significant implications for practitioners, policymakers, and stakeholders in the Islamic finance industry. By aligning labour practices with Islamic ethics and principles, stakeholders can promote social justice, equity, and humane treatment within the workforce, fostering harmonious and sustainable relationships. Hence, this study contributes to the literature by providing comprehensive insights into the ethical framework governing domestic work in Islam. By drawing from authentic hadiths, the study offers a nuanced understanding of the rights and responsibilities of domestic workers, filling gaps in existing research and enriching scholarly discourse on labour rights.

Practitioners and policymakers can leverage these findings to inform the development of policies and regulations to safeguard domestic workers' rights. By implementing measures that promote fair treatment, timely payment of wages, and adherence to Islamic norms, stakeholders can enhance the well-being and productivity of the domestic workforce, ultimately contributing to sustainable economic development. Additionally, future research endeavours could explore additional dimensions of social protection for domestic workers, including the impact of cultural and socioeconomic factors on labour practices, the role of Islamic finance institutions in promoting ethical employment

practices, and comparative analyses of labour rights frameworks across different cultural and religious contexts.

This study underscores the timeless relevance of Islamic teachings in addressing contemporary issues related to labour rights and social protection. By upholding the ethical principles elucidated in Sunnah literature, stakeholders can foster inclusive and equitable labour practices, thereby advancing the broader goals of social justice, economic prosperity, and human dignity in Islamic finance and beyond.

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