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**Paid Domestic Work and Labour Rights in Fiji:
A Case Study**

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Abstract

This research explores the experiences of paid domestic workers and their expatriate employers in Fiji to enable further understanding of employment conditions in the informal work sector, a sector characterised by the absence of labour laws and employment regulation. The study investigates the perspectives of both domestic workers and employers on the employment relationship, conditions of work and the economic opportunity provided by this type of wage work.

Responses obtained from individual interviews with domestic workers and expatriate employers were analysed to develop themes relating to the employment of domestic workers. These themes centre on the working terms and conditions of paid domestic workers, the nature of the employment relationship, and perceptions of employment law and labour rights for domestic workers.

The results of the research show that employment laws that specify worker entitlements and employer obligations are not always necessary to ensure decent working conditions. This contrasts with conclusions reached in other studies on paid domestic work, which have found that the private, isolated nature of the employment arrangement and the absence of formal labour protection have contributed to a particularly exploitative employment environment.

Paid domestic workers were provided with better working conditions than they had experienced in the formal sector and generally enjoyed a positive relationship with their employer. The experience of expatriate employers of employment conditions in their home countries played a significant role in this outcome. However, it is clear that wage workers in the informal sector are reliant on employer goodwill and integrity in determining working conditions. This finding points to a need for some form of regulation of working conditions in the informal sector and further research to determine how regulation might be achieved without disrupting the viability of economic opportunities within the sector.

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List of Abbreviations

BLV	Bose Levu Vakaturaga (Great Council of Chiefs)
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
DAWN	Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era
ILO	International Labour Organisation
FNPF	Fiji National Provident Fund
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association