



**INDONESIAN DOMESTIC WORKERS'
WORKING CONDITIONS
IN SAUDI ARABIA**

A NEWSPAPER ANALYSIS

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR MASTER DEGREE
ON WOMEN'S STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE
MARCH 1996**

IN MEMORY OF MY FATHER

CONTENTS

<u>ABSTRACT</u>	iv
<u>STATEMENT</u>	v
<u>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</u>	vi
<u>LIST OF CONTENTS</u>	
CHAPTER I	1
INTRODUCTION	
1.1. Objectives of the Study	4
1.2. Methodologies	6
1.3. Organisation of the Study	12
CHAPTER II	15
INTERNATIONAL LABOUR MIGRATION IN LITERATURE	
2.1. International Labour Migration from Asian Developing Countries	15
2.2. Female Migration in Asian Developing Countries	20
2.3. Feminist Research on Domestic Work	23
CHAPTER III	30
LABOUR MIGRATION : POLICIES, CONVENTIONS AND WORKER PROTECTION	
3.1. Women in Development Policies	31
3.2. The Indonesian Women in Development (WID) Policies: A Critique	33
3.3. The Indonesian Labour Policies : A Critique	36
3.4. Regulations Pertaining to Overseas Workers	39
3.5. Labour Migration Policies of the Gulf States	41
3.6. Problems of Deployment of Indonesian Overseas Workers	42
3.7. International Labour Conventions and Recommendations for Migrant Workers	44
CHAPTER IV	48
CHARACTERISTICS OF INDONESIAN DOMESTIC WORKERS IN SAUDI ARABIA	
4.1. Characteristics of Indonesian Women Population	48
4.2. The Deployment of Indonesian Domestic Workers Overseas	53

CHAPTER V	
INDONESIAN DOMESTIC WORKERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR WORKING CONDITIONS IN SAUDI ARABIA	59
5.1. Introduction	59
5.2. Women's Experiences of Maltreatment	62
5.2.1. Abusive and Physical Exploitation	63
5.2.2. Sexual Exploitation	67
5.3. Women's Responses to Maltreatment	69
5.4. Visual Images of Domestic Workers	71
5.5. Conclusion	72
CHAPTER VI	
ANALYSIS OF INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT'S PERSPECTIVES OF DOMESTIC WORKERS' WORKING CONDITIONS IN SAUDI ARABIA	75
6.1. Introduction	75
6.2. Quantitative Content Analysis	77
6.3. Qualitative Content/Interpretative Analysis	79
6.3.1. Overall Thematic Analysis	79
6.3.2. Semantic Macrostructures	80
CHAPTER VII	
CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATION	102
7.1. Concluding Summary	102
7.2. Policy Recommendations	106

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1.: Percentage Distribution of Females by Educational Attainment, 1971-1985	50
Table 4.2.: Population Aged 15 Years and Over by Educational Attainment, 1985-1990	51
Table 4.3.: Percent of Female Household Heads, 1971-1985	52
Table 4.4.: Number of Indonesian Overseas Contract Workers, 1969-1994 (in thousand)	54
Table 4.5.: Number of Indonesian Overseas Contract Workers in Saudi Arabia, 1983-1992	55
Table 4.6.: Distribution of Family Use of Remittances from Sample of Overseas Contract Workers in Java	57

Table 6.1.: Number of Newspaper Articles on Issues of Domestic Work, 1984-1995	78
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APPENDIX OF TABLES

Table 6.2.: Size Coverage of 1984 Newspaper Articles	111
Table 6.3.: Size Coverage of 1985 Newspaper Articles	112
Table 6.4.: . Size Coverage of 1986 Newspaper Articles	113
Table 6.5.: Size Coverage of 1987 Newspaper Articles	114
Table 6.6.: Size Coverage of 1988 Newspaper Articles	115
Table 6.7.: Size Coverage of 1989 Newspaper Articles	116
Table 6.8.: Size Coverage of 1990 Newspaper Articles	117
Table 6.9.: Size Coverage of 1992 Newspaper Articles	118
Table 6.10.: Size Coverage of 1993 Newspaper Articles	119
Table 6.11.: Size Coverage of 1995 Newspaper Articles	120

<u>BIBLIOGRAPHY</u>	121
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ABSTRACT

The deployment of Indonesian women as domestic workers overseas has become a controversial issue in Indonesian society, particularly among religious organisations and women's organisations. This debate is fuelled by increasing reports on maltreatment encountered by domestic workers abroad. The treatment they receive suggests that the Government of Indonesia has not been able to render sufficient protection to the overseas workers.

This thesis explores the background and contents of this debate in two-pronged analysis. Firstly, it examines the Indonesian Government's perspectives of domestic workers' working conditions in Saudi Arabia on the basis of newspaper articles obtained from Kompas (an Indonesian quality newspaper) during 1984 to mid-1995. The aim here is to reveal the main themes and underlying assumptions of the issues through the Government's statements in the newspaper articles. Secondly, an attempt is made to assess the perspectives of returned domestic workers by analysing their published interviews. In contrast to the Government's statements which tend to underplay the difficulties experienced by overseas workers. These interviews portray domestic work in Saudi Arabia as a risky occupation. Finally, the thesis provides some policy recommendations for the Government of Indonesia to improve protection of Indonesian domestic workers overseas, particularly Saudi Arabia.

STATEMENT

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university. To the best of the candidate's knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published, or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

The author consents to the thesis being made available for photocopying, and loan, if applicable, if accepted for the award of the degree. It is expected that when such use is made of this work, it will be acknowledged by reference in any other work.

Signature

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following people for their helps on this thesis:

My supervisor, Dr.Susanne Schech for her patience and guidance;

The staff of the Department of Women's Studies at Adelaide University for their support;

Dr. Margie Ripper, for her enthusiasm;

Prof. Dr.Graeme, J. Hugo for providing me with a lot of materials;

Dr. Heather Paul for her editorial assistance;

My friends at Kathleen Lumley College for giving me support and assistance;

My husband, Yantonius and our children Kania and Donny for their continuing patience and encouragement;

My parents-in law Mr. Chaidoer Martamin and Mrs. Sjamsiar for watching over my children and the house;

Last but not least, my aunt Yurhani and my two maids, Tasniah and Iyem for helping to take care of the children and running the household while I was away to complete my studies.