

## Full Length Research Paper

# Of House Madams and Maids: Middle-Class Careers and the Politics of Domestic Helps among Northern Ghanaian Women

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**A major challenge to women's empowerment remains the question of how and who takes charge of domestic responsibilities as more women join formal career paths. Many studies on domestic maids focus on women and gendered power relations by emphasizing how domestic servants question and contest their treatment by employers. Few question the practice and factors that inform its continuous existence. From in-depth interviews of thirteen middle-class women, three parents of maids, and six maids, this paper finds that career advancements for women in Northern Ghana require generations of other women to take up the work at home. Housemaids are engaged in vague informal agreements with little accountability of madams to fulfill their promises. It argues that the phenomenon negates the efforts that seek to liberate, empower and improve the conditions of Ghanaian women.**

**Keywords:** Domestic Servants, Women empowerment, intergenerational servanthood, agency.

## INTRODUCTION

### Domestic Maids and Women's Empowerment

The economic empowerment of women is regarded as a Sine-quo-none of progress for a country. A major challenge to gender advocates and feminists still remains the question of how and who takes charge of domestic responsibilities as more women join formal career paths. Research into domestic maid service has tended to approach the topic largely from an economic perspective, focusing on the relationship between the domestic worker and her employer. The relationship is often viewed as an exchange of labor for wages (Nadar, 2015), noting the typically low wages paid to these workers and the

entrapment of these women and girls in an economy that cannot absorb them into other sectors (Hoobler, 2016). Research extending beyond the strictly economic view has often separated public and private domains of power relations, thereby reserving the study of the political to the public spheres of power. The result is a tendency to ignore other forms of domination within the domestic realm.

Many studies on domestic maids tend to focus on women and gendered power relations by focusing on how domestic servants question and contest their treatment (Cock 2019, Tade and Aderinto, 2012, ). In Africa, several scholars have called attention to the

ambiguous relationship between domestic workers and their employers (Nyamnjoh 2010; Awumbila et al., .2017) while some focus on their poor working conditions, others caution that the relationship between maids and their Madams need not be viewed as a straightforward master-servant power relation. At one level, domestic servants desire physical separation from their employers, and many employers also find that live-in domestic workers take away their freedom (Nyamnjoh 2010). Nader ( 2015) for instance argues that the bilateral structure of dependence hidden in domestic work is played out in a relationship through which women of all sectors of society are negotiating and respatializing structures that have defined labor and space. Her work, like many others across the globe, showcases complex relationships of power and vulnerability anchored by abuse and maltreatment but tries to also highlight the changing landscape of what traditionally has been women's work.

One of the dramatic changes in Ghana has been the increasing feminization of the workforce and the growing participation of children in the economy. This is in part a response to the unprecedented rate of urbanization the country has witnessed over the past few years. Since the 1990s, migration to the city has been a significant factor in Ghana's growth, with most of these migrants coming from economically impoverished regions of northern Ghana to take up domestic work with close relatives. A large proportion are rural women or girls who have ended up in the city either as recent migrants or daughters of migrants. Lacking the education to enter the small white-collar market, they end up in the informal sector or serve as domestic workers.

Migration scholars ( Awumbila 2017; Zaami 2020 ) have often explored the gendered experiences and power dynamics of this group of domestic servants by looking at the push-pull factors of the phenomenon and the complex power relations that define it. Tsikata (2009) has noted that the use of under-aged domestic workers who lack a consciousness of themselves as workers and poor family relations as unpaid domestic workers often disguise the employment relationship. This results in labor statistics that contradict what is common knowledge about the prevalence of domestic work. While these studies among others offer useful insights into domestic servants in Ghana, the phenomenon is often discussed from a macro-systemic, mostly structural perspective on micro-level experiences. What is often missing is the attention to the micro-level individual actions and inactions that contribute to or disrupt the intergenerational experience of servanthood. The use of family relations as domestic workers constitutes a significant part of domestic service in northern Ghana and perhaps many

Ghanaian households, yet it is a phenomenon that has received less scrutiny in the field of gender advocacy and research.

### ***The Elephant in the Room: Career Women and the Domestic Sphere.***

A major challenge to gender advocates and feminists remains the question of how and who should take care of the domestic sphere as more women take up formal career paths. Housework is one of the primordial feminist questions and a key site where the public-private divide plays out. The household is considered as fundamental to capitalism, but feminists agree that patriarchy thrives on denying that housework de facto is work. Society is dependent on the work performed in the home. This labor is profiled as "caring", "affection" or "love", yet the irony of housework is that while considered invaluable it is simultaneously seen as worthless and not warranting compensation (Sangari 1993).

For decades, Feminists have challenged this view and emphasized how much energy, work, and oppression goes into this construction of the female 'desire' to self-sacrifice (Fraad et al. 2009 and McMahon 1999, etc). In the context of Africa where many activities in the home sphere remain un-mechanized and labor intensive, coupled with the gendered and patriarchal cultural values that hold the domestic sphere for only women, housework still remains the elephant in the room as many women engage in career paths outside of the home.

### **Women's Empowerment: discourse vs practice**

Women's empowerment in Ghana has emerged as an important issue in recent times among political thinkers, social scientists and reformers. The economic empowerment of women is seen as paramount to a country's overall progress, and discussions still exist over the relationship between women's empowerment and their ability to participate in paid work outside of the home. Conflicting debates about the relationship between paid work and women's empowerment have often drawn from the work of theorists of different political persuasions. Paid work has become one of the primary routes through which the vast majority of women in developing countries enter the public domain ( Kabeer et al 2013). Social change is a complex and sometimes contradictory phenomenon, especially concerning gender empowerment. The erosion of certain aspects of gender subordination can simultaneously accompany the intensification or emergence of other forms (Pearson 2007).

Historical experience shows that maternalist feminist politics, which promote the values of motherhood and family commitments, have often succeeded in extending social rights. However, this has generally done little to advance women's economic citizenship – and has often served to curtail it (see Hernes 1987; see also Winkler 1998).

Many studies have identified childcare and family responsibilities as obstacles to the advancement of women especially in such traditionally male-dominated professions like science and engineering (see e.g. Baker, 2010, Goldin 2021, Mason and Goulden, 2002,). Whatever value women may attach to the unpaid care work they carry out within the family in their roles as mothers, wives, daughters, and so on, once this work is socially defined as their biological or social destiny, it constitutes a major constraint on other life options. Different women have responded to this challenge by drawing on the services of less fortunate women to fill this need. As women in northern Ghana move into paid white-color jobs, they have to rely on the services of other women to handle the domestic chores. Unlike other contexts around the world where such services are often paid for, middle-class Ghanaian women often depend on female extended relations' labor to cater for this need. The re-evaluation of family roles could in principle provide the respect and resources necessary to women as competent actors in the public arena. This re-evaluation is what this paper seeks to engage in by examining cases of inter-generational experience of domestic maid service in three geographic cities (Wa, Bolgatanga and Tamale) in northern Ghana. To understand the position and location of domestic servants in the career trajectory of middle-class women, the salient questions asked in this paper are what are the terms and conditions of such engagements of housemaids in middle-class households? Who pays for such labor and in what form? How do maids get out of their marginalized statuses, if they ever do? What and how can feminist strategy learn from the experiences of middle class career women and their maids in Ghana?

## METHOD

Data for this paper is drawn from interviews with middle-class working women, parents of former maids, and maids who have served some of the madams over the years. The respondents who were selected through snowball, cut across multiple ethnic groups and were located across three cities (Wa, Bolgatanga and Tamale) in northern Ghana. Interviews covered a period of six months (December 2018 –February, and April –July 2019). Thirteen middle-class career women (madams),

three parents of former maids, and six former maids were interviewed multiple times over the period. Five of the madams were still in active careers but with most of their children out of the home. The other eight were retired from their careers but engaged in one form of work or the other. Each of them still had a young girl in their homes to serve them as maids. Three parents (a father and two mothers) were interviewed for this project to include them to understand the basis and terms for engaging their daughters as maids to other people. Both mothers had served as maids to other relatives when they were younger. Interviews centered on the experiences of keeping and serving as housemaids (helps)<sup>1</sup> over the years. Each of the participants was interviewed at least two times with a maximum number of interviews being four times. The average duration of the interviews was sixty minutes. The themes covered included the circumstances leading to engaging or serving as a maid, the expectations and terms of engagement in these services, and the duration and termination of services. While discursive analysis of this data draws on all the interviews, two stories of inter-generational domestic servanthood are highlighted in particular to show the cyclical nature of exploitation across generations embedded in the practice of housemaids in northern Ghana. Written and verbal consent of each participant was sought before interviews by ethical procedures of the University for Development Studies (UDS), the affiliate institution of the lead author at the time.

### ***Theme One: Three Generations of Housemaids: The Case of Sokewine, Akong-itego and Madeline (Magdalene).***

Sokewine served as house help to her elder brother and his wife at the age of thirteen years. It was not until she turned twenty-two that she left their house. By the time she was leaving her brother's house, she was five months pregnant and gave birth to a baby girl two months later (pre-term) whom she named Akong-itego, meaning lacking options. Sokewine believed she had no other option but to serve her elder brother who was responsible for the upkeep of their six other siblings and their mother after the death of their father. Nine years later, Akong-itego was brought by her mother to her maternal uncle when she was almost 10 years old. At the time, Sokewine was getting married to a man other than Akong-itego's biological father and could not raise her daughter in her

<sup>1</sup> The servants in the study chose to describe themselves as "maids" while some madams preferred to see them as "helps".

new matrimonial home. Akong-itego, then 3 years older than her cousin Abaa who was her uncle's oldest daughter, had no formal schooling experience at the time of her arrival in her new home. Each day, when her three cousins left for school, Akong-itego was responsible for cleaning around the house and doing dishes and laundry:

"I washed the children's clothes for a long time until I could do it well, before I started to wash Dada and Mama's (uncle and aunt) clothes" (Interview, December 2018).

As she grew older, her responsibilities increased to include making lunch and supper, first for only the kids, then later for the whole family including guests. Although she was still at the school age of 10 years when she arrived at her uncle's house, she was never enrolled in school by the uncle's family. Asked why she was not enrolled, her uncle's wife, the madam in this case, said:

"This was a grown girl who had no formal schooling before she arrived, and we thought that she was too old to start from primary one and whether she could catch up. We decided that she could learn a trade later when she grew older"

Asked what Akong-itego was doing while waiting to learn the trade intended for her, the madam said,

"She was the one keeping the house when everybody leaves, she did some cleaning and washing especially of the younger kids' clothes and selective cooking in the beginning for the children." (Interview, 2019)

Asked why Akong-itego couldn't have gone to school to see if she could catch up and then learn a trade later, she responded,

"It had to do with making choices with limited funds and options."

Akong-itego was twenty-three years old and five months pregnant by the time she finally left her uncle's house to start life on her own. She moved to join the young man who made her pregnant. At the time, she had completed two years of her three-year sewing apprenticeship. Even though she could sew a few styles, she did not have a certificate legitimizing her skills, and because she did not officially complete her training, both of her madams (her job training madam and her house madam) did not give her the tools and certificates needed to start her trade as promised. Asked why she left before completing her training, she noted

*"I had to leave because the insults and sometimes beating was too much. Even though they (her uncle and wife) did not ask me to go anywhere, but suddenly the work I was to do in the house everyday increased and I was supposed to finish them before I go to my (sewing practice). Most often I could not finish the housework before it is time to go to work and if I go late to my*

*sewing, my madam there will be angry and sometimes make me do extra work because of that even though I was a senior to some of the girls there. When I don't also finish the housework then mama (my uncle's wife) will also get angry and even beat me if am not lucky. Even though they all knew that I was pregnant, they wanted me to be able to do all this work that even women who are not pregnant can do. Before I became pregnant, anytime I am sick, they (the two madams) will allow me to rest and even sometimes Mama will ask Abaa and co (her cousins) to take care of me. But this time when I was pregnant and fall sick, I was not allowed to even rest. I thought that because I was now pregnant, I was not a human being any more to them so I left."* (Interview AK 1 : April, 2019)

Interestingly at the time of this interview, the baby from this particular pregnancy, Madaline, now the age of nine, was preparing to travel and stay with her aunt Abaa who was now working and living in one of Ghana's cities in the south. Akong-itego herself had set up a petty retail shed (table) selling assorted household ingredients as her source of income. When asked why she would let her daughter go to serve as house help to her cousin, Akong-itego said:

*"It is difficult for me to keep her here. Sometimes I find it hard to provide food or clothes for her. She is supposed to be in school now, but I can't afford the "small small" fees and uniforms and other things she needs to go to school. The things I sell on the table are not buying. You can see that there is almost nothing on it (pointing to the table). So when I get money, then I pay and she will go to school for some time and then stop."* (Interview AK 1; April 2019)

"Who asked Magdaline to go to Accra?" I asked Akong-itego, "Was it your idea or your cousin Abaa's?"

"It was both of us." she responded, "Abaa came to visit me and saw that the child was not in school and she said that was not good. So I told her I could not afford the money."

"So was it you who first suggested that she should take her to Accra or Abaa? I just want to know who decided on Accra and why you didn't think of leaving her here and paying for her to go to school," I probed.

"You see where I live? (Pointing to her room) how can a growing girl be here and be able to attend school? The whole situation to me, I just think that God listened to my prayer for help and sent Abaa to help." she answered.

It is not clear from the interview, whether the purpose of sending Magdalene to the city was for her to continue school or serve as a housemaid, and Akong-itego could not assure that her cousin would indeed send her daughter to school.

### ***Story Two: History Cannot Repeat Itself: The Case Of Gladys And Her Daughter.***

Gladys was picked up from her village by her maternal aunt (Terri) when she was barely eight after the death of her mother. At the time, her aunt had just delivered her last child and carried with her the six-week-old baby home to mourn her sister. She returned to the city with 8-year-old Gladys who had no formal schooling. When the baby was three years old, by then Gladys was eleven, Aunt Terri decided to enroll both Gladys and her baby in the same school, with Gladys in first grade (P1) and the baby in pre-school (Nursery 1). Gladys happened to be very curious about learning, picking up very quickly and was soon promoted to a higher class.

"I moved from P1 to P3 in one year," Gladys said. (GA Interview, 2019).

Because both Gladys and the baby attended the same school, the two would come home together at the end of their school day, the baby waiting in a playroom provided by the school for the children of working parents until Gladys's would end two hours later. By the time Gladys graduated from upper primary and went into middle school, her baby cousin whom she was tasked to look after was old enough to be in the regular school and their schedules were easier to manage. Gladys did very well at the basic level and successfully entered senior secondary school as a mature teen of eighteen years. Her troubles started at this level when she developed a series of health problems and could not consistently stay in school. After three years in a five-year high school program, Gladys dropped out with a pregnancy. After having the baby whom she named Patience, she enrolled in a skills training program with the support of her aunt. At the time of the interviews, Gladys had become a well-established weaver with a dozen young ladies at various stages of apprenticeship under her. Baby Patience was pursuing her dream of becoming a trained nurse with the support of her mother.

"I think she is fulfilling the dream I could not achieve," Gladys said.

"I always wanted to be a nurse like my aunt Terri, but God knew I would love to be a better weaver..." ( GA interview, 2019).

According to Gladys, she was able to complete her training in two years instead of three because she had secondary education and could read and write well.

"I think my ability to read and write helped me a lot. When my madam saw that I was catching up so fast, she would give me more work.....at a point, I was managing her money. I used to be good in the business subjects in school....accounting, commerce..." (GA, interview, 2019).

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

As noted earlier, the question of who takes care of the tasks in the domestic sphere as women assume career paths outside of the home remains the elephant in the room of women's empowerment. While career women in other parts of the world resort to paid services of mostly other women and also sometimes men as housemaids, many women in northern Ghana engage distant relatives and extended family to perform such duties. The circumstances and terms of such engagements are the focus of this section of the paper.

#### **They Come To Us with a Plea and Return Our Kids with Curses: Circumstances and Conditions of Engagement.**

There are no written or even verbal agreements on terms of engagement-for the services of these girls before they arrive in their new homes. Agreements often come in the form of informal solicitation either by the madam or the parents of the maid. According to the parents of former maids, when madams come to ask for the services of their daughters, they often present themselves as kind but overburdened mothers in need of the support of their daughters to help raise their children. The children the madams use to win the sympathy of housemaids and their families are culturally regarded as belonging to the entire extended family. "They are equally our children." As the father of a former maid describes,

"If not because of my brother's children, I would never allow my daughter to be a maid to anyone. But when the woman (madam) told me she sometimes takes the baby to the hospital where she works, I could just imagine my little nephew crawling around all the sick people while the mother is busy.....that made me ask my daughter to go and help." (K A; interview, 2019)

All the madams agreed that the need to balance child care with the demands of their career/work was the primary reason they engaged the services of maids.

"...For five years of my work and married life, I could manage with my work and the house. It was just my husband and I; cleaning the house was a once-a-week thing. But when the baby came, it was a different challenge altogether."

The choice of which child/daughter is made available to a madam as housemaid depends on multiple factors that include the economic strength of the parents of the maid, the status of the child within the family, whether they are an only daughter, orphaned or born out of marriage and the performance of the individual child in school. The low socio-economic status of the family of the maids was a

common feature in all of the participants interviewed. In the case of girls raised only by their mothers, they were often more likely to be released to madams as maids, especially if the particular girl was not the only female child and if she was not schooling or not doing well in school at the time. The reason is that typically single-parent households headed by mothers are more likely to be experiencing poverty and coupled with the fact that the particular child may not be doing well in school, provides an easy situation to mortgage her out to ease the burden on the mother. From the account of one of the mothers, she had to let go of her third-born daughter, one who wasn't doing very well in school as opposed to two older girls, who had been successful in school and were kept home in the hopes of someday furthering their education. By the madams' accounts of the profiles of these maids, many of these girls had either dropped out of school or had not schooled at all by the time of their engagement.

Of the unspoken conditions of these girls' engagements with their madams, one was the hope of receiving some form of vocational or skills training by the end of their service, one to be provided by the madam. The terms and conditions of these engagements are rarely ever clearly defined, whether by the duration of their services provided or by the resources allotted to the maid while serving under said madams. Things like cash allowances rarely exist as a form of compensation, and it is mainly up to the madam's benevolence to provide things like personal effects to their maids. In addition to the terms of their stay, the conditions by which these maids are terminated very often are loosely defined if not entirely unspoken. Looking at how the services of these maids are terminated, very few maids ever complete the skills training promised, and hardly are they formally dispatched/handed over back to their families. Five out of the six maids interviewed for this project left the homes of their madams on bad terms, three of them with pregnancies. Even the two mothers who served as maids before their daughters similarly left their madams. The madams' accounts of how their maids finally leave indicate that very few (only one in this study) ever complete their skills training or are sent back to their families on good terms. One parent lamented that

"When the madams need the services of their daughters, they do so with pleas but return their children with curses." (Interview, 2019)

Among the reasons for the impromptu termination and departure of maids from their madams' homes are insubordination, theft and pregnancy. On the part of the maids, however, it is interesting that none of the reasons for their departure from their madams were identical. All,

but one, of them agreed that abuse and inhumane treatment were the primary reasons for their early separation. As each of them grew older, they recognized the persistent abuse from their madams, especially when compared to their children, and in response performed subtle and sometimes overt acts of resistance resulting then in their departure from the house. What is interesting though is the fact that these maids were almost always enrolled in their career training when they are already adults, too late to guarantee success.

### ***The Vicious Cycle of Servanthood: How Maids get out of Poverty, if they ever do.***

"...Poverty itself sets up well-nigh insurmountable obstacles to its conquest" (Bauer, 1965).

Drawing from the economic theory on poverty by Nurkse (1971) whose book, "Problems of Capital Formation in Underdeveloped Countries", a well-known and influential piece of research, P T Bauer explains that the model of the vicious circle of poverty and underdevelopment is a particular model designed to explain the continuation through a time of a zero or negligible rate of economic growth. (Bauer, 1965; 4). In this study and anecdotal observation of girls/females in domestic maid service, it appears many of them are caught up in a vicious cycle of poverty and marginalization with little end in sight from domestic servanthood, one that typically continues along a generational path throughout the family of these maids. Typically, poverty in the family of a maid is what triggers the decision to send a girl, and on a few occasions some boys, into domestic servanthood. Girls offered as domestic maids are usually from poor homes where the parents are already overburdened with the upkeep of the family. Combined with poor performance in school by the individual girls, it is often easier for the families to release them to another family to ease the burden.

Once sent into domestic servanthood on a non-binding familial agreement shown to be common throughout this study, the tendency is for maids to serve their madams for many years without acquiring any employable skills that will ensure they are capable of providing for themselves when they leave. Some madams deliberately wait so long to enroll their maids in skills training to delay their stay thereby prolonging their services to them. In the end, many of these maids either escape the homes of their madams or are sent back to their families before they graduate from their training as a result of either abuse or pregnancy. The story of Sokewine and her daughter Akong-etigo reflects the experiences of many females serving as domestic maids to middle-class

career women in northern Ghana. None of the thirteen career women interviewed could attest to any of the girls serving them as maids graduating with gainful skills and support to settling after their services. Only one acknowledged that of her maid almost completing her training, but ultimately was sent away because of sexual advances made toward the maid by the madam's husband, and the madam believed it too risky to let her stay to complete her training. When these maids are sent home with no gainful skills ensuring a livelihood for themselves, they end up producing children they struggle to care for. In the instance of a daughter being born, such a female will likely end up rendering the services of that child to some other close relative as a housemaid, thus creating a vicious cycle of maids producing future maids.

The story of Gladys on the other hand, shows the possibility of breaking this vicious cycle of familial servanthood if only madams look beyond their career interest to put more commitment into developing the talents and skills of the girls who serve them. Though Gladys was too old at eleven to start first grade, she was still allowed to attend school and thankfully, progressed steadily. Even though she could not graduate from high school, the experience nevertheless was valuable toward her success in becoming a head seamstress and in supporting her daughter Patience to pursue an education that had not been attainable for her.

### ***Agency, Strength and Opportunities***

Hirschman's work on 'exit, voice and loyalty' (1970) provides a useful entry point into a discussion of the different categories of agency from the perspective of the disempowered. We take 'voice' to refer to the different ways in which people individually or collectively seek to bring about desired forms of change in their lives. As Hirschman pointed out, voice is closely related to the ability to 'exit' unfavorable situations or relationships. The exit option in turn depends on the various kinds of resources that different actors have to fall back on should they have to carry out this threat. This study points to the fact that attention to the access to various resources and the extent to which they are available to maids independent of the social arrangements may influence their decision and capacity to leave abusive treatments. Nyamnjoh (2010), in a study of migrant domestic maids and their madams, argues that although maids are often viewed as deferential workers, their deference is more apparent than real. Citing Cock (1980), he notes that because maids are often in powerless situations which block any overt expression of dissatisfaction, many maids often adopt a "mask of deference" as a protective

disguise that allows them to conform to the expectations of their employer and to shield their real feelings. He agrees that among other things, they do not accept the legitimacy of their subordination in the social order, are highly conscious of being exploited, and are quite aware of the structures that make this possible (p. 183). Human beings have a high capacity to adapt to changing situations and would certainly develop nuanced strategies to resist and contest their exploitative circumstance. In the case of paid domestic servants in other contexts, the resources they have to fall back on are often the payment (however small), they receive for their services. However, in the case of housemaids in this study, the informal familial arrangement creates a system whereby maids have to resort to petty theft of money mostly belonging to the madams or form sexual relations with men who can provide some sort of financial care in place of a means of livelihood which would have been provided by the skills training promised by the madam.

While these coping mechanisms by maids indicate the agency of the human being no matter their level of subordination or marginalization, the reality remains that certain categories of women have taken up the domestic duties and household chores for other women to climb the social and career ladder in the public sphere, and in pursuit of such careers several female chances of empowerment have been sacrificed, thereby creating a situation of one step forward, two steps backward in the field of women empowerment.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **Some Insights**

This research argues that in bridging the gender gap in African societies like Ghana, a major question still to be addressed is the issue of what to do with how domestic responsibilities and childcare work are formally structured, as women venture into careers outside the home. It is possible to have a win-win situation if advocacy and gender empowerment groups focus on addressing this question, especially in the case of childcare by ensuring comprehensive childcare structures, such as childcare centres, are provided and that domestic contracts must be drafted, regardless of whether the family is employed. This may not capture all domestic work arrangements, but having governance structures and standards of employment in place and their promotion through public health and other community mechanisms could serve to normalize better conditions for the majority of workers, whether all of this work is always formalized or not. Although advocates

have engaged in different strategies to ease the burden of childcare and housework on women in general, many tend to shy away from addressing the practice of domestic servanthood due to them being beneficiaries. The provision of a childcare facility in the school where Gladys attended not only allowed parents to leave their children while at work, but also made it possible for girls like Gladys to complete their school day while continuing service to their madams. Considering that childcare is one of the primary reasons why domestic servants are engaged in most cases, addressing the child-care needs of working mothers at the workplace would greatly mitigate the domestic burden that makes it difficult to balance both their career and domestic duties.

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