

**A New Form of Bonded Labour:
A Comparative Study between Domestic Workers of
South Africa and India**

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ABSTRACT Post-colonial India and post-apartheid South Africa are undergoing a new phase of internal development. The high levels of unemployment in both these countries have had a devastating impact on the underclass affecting both men and women of Indian and South Africa and societies globally. This paper focuses on particular members of the underclass. The researchers look at women in particular who find themselves in the occupational role of domestic work in both India and South Africa. The oppressed Indian and South African women are among several groups in both societies that experience the remnants of discriminatory practices in different forms: caste-based apartheid in India and race-based apartheid in South Africa respectively. There are many other members of the underclass that have been and continue to be affected and subjugated by the colonial history of both these nations. High levels of unemployment in both countries effectively forces women domestic workers into a new form of bonded labour. Male domestic workers face their own challenges; however, their position is elevated as chauffeurs, chefs and butlers, with higher payments. These women in particular work in isolation, far from their familial homes with little or no support available close to their places of work. This has led to these workers experiencing psychological trauma and self-alienation as a direct result of their occupational roles as domestic workers. This paper focuses on the alienation and isolation of domestic workers of both India and South Africa, while comparing their shared lived experiences of their oppression in both these nations.

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