tions and are often subjected to physical, mental and sexual abuse. Kalyaan found that nearly 70% of migrant domestic workers are employed seven days a week, nearly 50% work 16 hours a day, and nearly 20% have been physically abused.

I had the opportunity to talk to Teresa, a domestic worker from South India. She says she is one of the luckier ones. Teresa used to be in the employment of a sheikh based in Qatar. During the ten years that she lived with them she said there had never been any cause for complaint. Each year she travelled with the family to London on a domestic work visa and occasionally visited the United States.

and looks after her interests. She said, "When I came I did not understand the system but my new employer helped me with my visa and set up my own bank account. If I have any problem I go to my employer and they help me."

She told me of another domestic worker she knew of who had been working with another Saudi family. They mistreated her and made her work every waking hour. On one of the family holidays to London, the domestic worker fled from the hotel with the help of another worker who had already been residing in the UK for a few years. The employers had kept her passport so she decided it was far better to get away from her employers than



Under the new system even if a domestic worker is being exploited or abused by the employer there is no form of recourse.

PHOTO: ILA MEHROTRA; COURTESY: WWW.KALAYAAN.ORG.UK

A few years ago, her employer decided to send Teresa to the United States to work for his daughter. This was done without Teresa's consent and soon after she started work her troubles began.

Her new employer had a temper and would be verbally abusive. She also began to hold back part of Teresa's salary and hid passport so Teresa could not leave. This meant that Teresa was not able to send the money that she had earned back to her family in India. It was only when Teresa finally went to the US authorities that her employer gave her back the money she was owed and relinquished Teresa's passport.

Since then she has been living and working in the UK as a domestic worker. She was delighted to have found a family who pays her well and on time

find an opportunity to look for it and try and take it with her. Teresa tells me that there are many more stories similar to this one, some even worse.

Then again, there are plenty of examples of workers coming to the UK and then leaving their employers without good cause and staying on to claim benefits especially housing benefits.

So at the end of the day, managed migration seems to offer a lot to the host country. The problem --- it is open to abuse and there has to be a balance. On the one hand, the workers need to be properly protected. On the other hand, they should not be able to abuse the welfare system and it is this latter point which seems to feature so prominently in the conscience of a financially struggling Western Europe.