



Reflections of Patriarchy Ideology in the Achievements and Challenges Faced by Women Migrants in Town

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This work serves to explain how patriarchy ideology determines what rural-urban women migrants regards as achievement; the challenges they face and efforts they make to release themselves from such challenges.

In-depth interview was conducted among the Gogo rural-urban women migrants in both Dodoma town and Dar es Salaam city. This aimed at enhancing the respondents to build up their life stories as regards their experiences within patriarchy system in their areas of origin, the way they negotiated through it and how it influenced their integration process in destination areas.

It was found out that for women migrants, acquiring whatever they missed within patriarchy system in rural areas is an achievement for them. However, women migrants are still surrounded by patriarchy system in town which becomes sources of challenges in their integration process in town. Moreover, the patriarchy ideology among women and the society at large in town, do affect they way women fight against challenges the face.

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This implies that patriarchy ideology has got its roots in every place where men are, be it in rural areas or in town. In order to eliminate its intended negative impact over women, much effort has to be directed toward educating men on the need of gender equality in society for their benefit and the society at large. Women will hardly find their right within a strong patriarchy system wherever they are.

I. INTRODUCTION

There are both achievements and challenges for rural-urban women migrants. Women migrants in town have what they realize as achievements for them. However, they do meet challenges in their doings. With reference to Todaro Migration Model, one has to assess women migrants' achievements in terms of what they expected out of the move from a rural area to an urban area. Thus, women migrants are pushed or/and pulled by their expectations about the area of residence and the area of destination. Women migrants in town do

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recognize achievements in life as they compare their present life style and what they missed or were hampered by patriarchy systems in rural areas. Before migrating, prospective women migrants had to compare their current income with the expected income at the destination. This being the case, an increase in income in town is automatically recognized as great achievement among women migrants. On the other hand, acquisition of employment by women migrants is an achievement in itself. This is also supported by an explanation that is given for rural-urban migration by Paul Knox and Linda McCarthy that rural residents that have lost their income move to urban areas for the search of a better existence.

The migrant wishes to find employment and to get access to modern infrastructure and other services that are not to be found in the rural area. These desires, according to Knox and McCarthy, are not drawn from a rational knowledge about employment opportunities or other opportunities; instead they are drawn from desperation and hope (Knox, Pau *et al*, 2005).

While on one hand migration can help to reduce poverty among women, it can propagate it on the other. According to theories of poverty, poverty may result from migration, both for the migrants in destination locations and the families left behind, often mostly affecting women and children. At the same time, female migration can indirectly help alleviate poverty by raising the productivity, education and health of the females and their families, all key to reducing inequality and poverty in the home. In several developing countries rural poverty indicated by low agricultural output and income push many migrants from rural areas towards areas with greater employment opportunities (Mbonile and Rugumamu, 2002).

Apart from achievements women migrants do face challenges in town. According to Lee (1966), on his Push-Pull Migration Model, both at the place of origin and the place of destination, there are positive and negative factors that encourage and/ or discourage people to live in that area. Challenges that women migrants meet are among the discouraging factors in their life in town.

Cathy (2008) points to the labor movement as an alternative pathway for addressing the needs of

women in the global economy while promoting gender equality. The sudden emergence of a global economy dominated by cheap labor led to the formation of new economic development strategies which have serious implications for women workers. Women migrants find employment in town which in turn provided them with a new sense of independence, autonomy, and individual resources. However, women may obtain “low-status” jobs through which they are unable to lift themselves out of poverty or provide for their families.

The global economy has produced not only the feminization of poverty but the “feminization of working poverty.” Although more women than ever participate in today’s workforce, the great majority occupy low-status jobs and are unable to lift themselves out of poverty. More women take jobs in the informal economy that lacks job security, benefits, or protection. Around the world, women are working in export processing zones, as domestic workers, as street vendors, or as suppliers at the bottom of a multinational supply chain. Cathy (2008) argued that grassroots strategies are needed to address problems related to the fact that women are used as a source of cheap labor as part of an economic development strategy, while labor standards around the world are declining.

Agencies like Department for International Development (DFID) are increasingly seeing migration as a potentially important livelihood strategy for poor women and men – and one which can provide development to both sending and receiving countries. And yet, if both women and men are to benefit from migration, a shift to a gendered human rights approach is needed which ensures that development policy and practice are not limited to the economic aspects of migration (remittances or diasporic investment for example), but that they address a broader development picture which includes culture, human rights and equality. This requires a much closer look at factors such as invisibility, lack of protection, illegal status, poor labour standards, violence and stigma. Such factors are critically gendered in terms of the different needs of men and women in relation to health, employment, resources, information, and power over decision-making.

II. METHODOLOGY

In-depth interviews were conducted with women migrants. Interviewing a sample of individuals was the method for data collection in this study. Individual in-depth interviews were carried in unstructured manner just guided by a checklist. Unstructured interview was applied because it provided a full freedom to the interviewer. This method was chosen as technique of data collection because it allowed the generation of life stories of migrant women. As migration has to do with personal choices that become incorporated in ones

history, the building of life stories became a panacea for entering into a personalized and intimate world of an individual in the issues related to the role of patriarchy ideology on reasons that lead her to migrate, what the person underwent in her migratory experience, and how the person has been struggling in order to promote her livelihood as a migrant. In depth interviews were employed to develop migrant life stories that could reflect the way a migrant woman experienced patriarchy system in her area of origin, the way she negotiated through it and how it influenced her integration process in destination areas.

Documentary review was done to collect secondary data. Documents related to research problem were reviewed. These documents included academic literature such as journals, books, research reports and maps. Also non academic reports such as consultancy reports, commissioned reports and guidelines were reviewed.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

a) *Achievements of Women Migrants in town*

Women migrants do realize achievements which can be categorized as Modernity-related achievements; Economy-related Achievements and Culture-related Achievements.

i. *Modernity-related achievements of women migrants*

Much as, it has been seen that women settle with hardships in town, on the one hand, and they do not get involved in jobs that pay quite a lot, most of the women migrants feel that they have achieved quite a lot after they migrated. Some women think that they are more modern than before:

When would I stay in such a house? When would I learn how to use a gas cooker or talk to all these people I talk to? I can go to town the way I want and to places that I could never go to when I was in the village; ... now I can plan my life with my man, and not only to be told what to do by your father. ... Yesterday, for example, I took my child for immunization at the dispensary nearby here. ... In the village, this was not that easy. ... I am comfortable, and would like to stay here. (Life Story, Masaiti Dar es Salaam, April 2010)

Once in town women migrants find themselves a bit free from male domination and to have gained self-esteem. This in line with Boyd and Grieco (2003) that women may feel empowered by taking on labour participation in a new country and gain new skills with increased employment prospects on return, and gain kudos due to the remittances they are able to send back home. On the other hand, a change on the gender relations does take place as women migrate from rural areas to town. Patriarchal obstacles to women do get reduced as they get exposed to modern life. This supports Ellis, Conway, and Bailey (1996) who

hypothesize that migration may modify gender relations as “women gain experience in the labor market and exposure to new social and cultural environments.”

ii. *Economy-related Achievements of women migrants*

Many women migrants think that having a possibility of work that pays, however little, is an achievement because this is an opportunity that opens up to so many useful things in life:

I first got a job as a house girl; later, I went to work in a bar and later in a guesthouse. ... That is how I have learnt how to live in town because they disburse me. I have hired two rooms for myself and can pay for my children school fees at the primary and secondary schools; I can eat well, and can go to hospital. ... I have even some money to send to my mother at home using M-Pesa. ... (Life Story, Chasimba Dar es Salaam, April 2010)

Another woman migrant gave testimony of her achievements:

I have been able to acquire my own plot in Dodoma town from the money I get from my job here as a food vendor; I have my own life and I like my business. ... The husband I have, I got by myself: he saw me working as a housemaid, asked to marry me, married me, and gave me capital to begin my business of selling food. ... (Life Story, Kwa-Mwatano, Dodoma, April 2010)

Comparing the life women migrants used to have in rural areas and their life in town, women say they are now better off. A woman migrant commented:

It is not secret that I do not know how to read and write but that has not been a big hindrance in my development. See, I left many (women) in my rural home; here I am in control of fish selling business. I managed to buy this plot and built this house, and my children are going to school. Sometimes I think if I had gone to school, I would have been one of the important people in this country. (Life Story, Chasimba Dar es Salaam, April 2010).

Women migrants differentiate between the wages they would get in the village and what they get as migrants in town:

I am paid well here in Dar es Salaam compared to when I was back home in Hombolo. I used to earn like 2,000/- TZS for a work that I now earn 10,000/- TZS here in Dar es Salaam. ... The way I know is that the majority of women who have migrated to town are after a good wage here and they can get it in different ways. ... (Life Story, Chasimba Dar es Salaam April 2010).

This wage that this woman migrant gets in Dar es Salaam for the same work she does in the village is five times higher. It is from such wage proportions that they can have little savings for little investments and remittance back home.

Though women do face difficulties in their struggle to settle in town, they do not forget to remit

back home whenever they are in good financial condition. Majority of them said that they do see necessity for remitting to their parents and other relatives. Their need to remit is influenced by their remembering about the hard life they experienced in rural areas together with their relatives. They understand that parents are in poverty and they have been taking care of their children. Normally they remit money and clothes.

Ever since I left the village, I still remember the good deeds of my parents. So, I always feel responsible to send remittances to them. I know that I have to take care of my young sisters, so there is no way I can forget them. However, as a mother in town, it makes me very sympathetic with my parents' problem in the rural areas. ... (Life Story Chasimba Dar es Salaam April 2010)

And another woman migrant commented:

When I remember they type of life we lived in rural areas, I get to see the need to remit money to my parents, especially my mother. ... She was very good to me; she protected me; even she hid me when I was escaping to Dar es Salaam. ... (Life Story Kwa-Mwatano, Dodoma April 2010)

Culturally constructed roles that women play in their home villages do influence the way in which they maintain contact with rural areas. Mostly this is through investing in remittances. Women have been socialized to take care of other family members like the old, young and the sick people. Women say that while in rural areas they used to be close with many women around as friends or relatives. These friends and relatives sometimes live with their children they leave behind or keep their property. This closeness is maintained through remittance while they have migrated to town. Women say that as they become mothers they become more considerate and attach great significance to their mothers in rural areas. Of all others, the mother is highly remembered in form of remittances. Migration gives a woman ability and freedom to remit to parents. This is because migration is accompanied with separation or divorce out of which a woman gets to be free from the control of the husband. The patriarchy ideology that pushed women from rural areas to town has exposed them to economic development though through low paying jobs. Their expression of this development is also based on patriarchy ideology as they think of their mothers as best beneficiaries of their achievements in town through remittances. This was also found by Sorensen (2005) and Alvarado and Sanchez (2002) that women send home a greater share of their earnings in remittances and are also the greatest receiver of remittances. Remittances can be a vehicle for changing gender relations – winning respect for women who remit, and providing more resources and control of resources to women who receive them.

iii. Culture-related Achievements of women migrants

Rural-urban migration of the Gogo women changes women's cultural perspectives based on patriarchy in different ways. Different from the way they used to be dependent on their husbands in rural areas, some women in town have become respected people who can manage life independently. They have become more reasonable and courageous to take risk by investing. They have become understanding as regards life difficulties and how to combat them. They have known what modern life means and they are struggling for attaining that life through keeping their living environments clean and sometimes by building modern houses. They have also learnt how to value the exposure, as this woman migrant confesses:

I have been able to meet many people of other tribes apart from the Gogo. These have been good friends from whom I have learnt many things. Where I come from in Hombolo, I was confined to my village, meeting only my Gogo people and I only knew about the Gogo (Life Story, Chasimba Dar es Salaam. April 2010).

Gogo women migrants think of having the husbands of their choices as an achievement. This is reflection of the fact that they would not like to be given husbands, as the traditional Gogo custom has been. And they are happy too, when they have caring husbands, contrary to what they think about the Gogo husbands. A migrant woman originating from Mvumi Makulu said:

In fact, I thank God. After struggling for a long time, I later got a husband; ... We are in good terms, we care for each other. I do not have problems with him. By this time, I have a baby and there is a man who fetches water for me and my husband pays him weekly. In my rural home, if a man buys water for his wife, people will say the wife has bewitched him (Life Story, Kwa-Mwatano, Dar es Salaam, April 2010)

Women rural-urban migration has enhanced the women social capital in different ways. It has strengthened the social capital of some women by reducing conflicts as they are away from neighbors or relatives. They are also highly respected as they can remit to home.

While I am away, the closeness with my relatives has been strengthened as we cannot fall into conflict and we meet occasionally. When I get time to go home I go with presents for relatives, this make us to be in good terms to one another. If I had stayed in rural areas and do good business as I do here, even my relatives would have hated me because of jealousy and we would have been quarreling everyday (Life Story, Chasimba Dar es Salaam es Salaam April 2010)

With regard to patriarchy ideology, findings indicate that rural-urban migration has led to cultural changes in favor of women migrants. Women migrants

have been able to carry independent life expressed in terms of ability to invest alone, owning houses, and having husbands of their choice. Generally the economic and cultural related achievements of women migrants in urban areas have made them free from oppressive patriarchy gender relations. On the other hand migration has increased their social capital which they were denied by the patriarchy ideology in their rural societies. They no longer have conflicts with neighbors and their social capital has increased through remittance to relatives and friends in rural areas. This conform the report by United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2000) that, there is change in gender roles in the family caused by the migration of female members as most of the women migrants found that their experiences with migration had an empowering effect on them.

b) Patriarchy and the Challenges for Women Migrants in town

It should, however, not be thought that, life in Dar es Salaam has been so smooth for all women migrants. They have had quite a number of challenges. Although women migrants claim to have gained autonomy on their life, some problems have been encountered by some of them. Problems and success to migrants are vivid to migrants as Shortall, (2006) indicates that most of Turkish women migrants gained more freedom and improve their socio-economic status. The cost benefit analysis between women migrant interest and the actual situation in the destination area has categorically discussed not be the same. He found that while others had met their expectations others had fallen into mislabel life like forced labor, prostitution, racism and violation of human rights.

Some Gogo women migrants have ended up being prostitutes, as this woman migrant narrates:

Ever since I came in Dar es Salaam, things were not easy; I have struggle a lot. My aunt who brought me here passed away and was left alone to take care of myself. ... As I had escaped from home, I could not go back and decided to stay here. ... I worked in several bars; now I am working in one bar, but what makes me survive here in town is getting men who value me as a good woman.(Life Story, Chasimba Dar es Salaam April 2010)

A migrant woman, who once worked in a leather industry in Dar es Salaam, narrates her experience on redundancy discrimination. She says:

Employers do target women over men for retrenchment. This has hurt us so much; you cannot even bargain since there are many other women looking for the same job at even a lower payment. So, if you insist, you are fired and another one gets in to do your work: they fire you today

and tomorrow they employ another person. (Life Story, Chasimba Dar es Salaam April 2010)

Another bar attendant said:

....You see, here in Dar es Salaam, most of the people undervalue us. In our workplace, most people want to pay us low money because they know we women are stuck and worried people and we do not have money because we have to take care of our children. ... Sometimes you come to think that being a woman is a problem. ... (Life Story, Masaiti Dar es Salaam April 2010)

For those who are totally illiterate, life is not easy in town. They have been missing jobs that require reading and writing. Working as bar attendants or shopkeepers, for example, are not easy positions for illiterate women migrants. When they work as bar attendants, they get losses so frequently that their salaries are retained for compensation.

Some bar attendants have had nasty experiences of being given little salaries so that they surrender for sexual relations with their bosses. Other women have had bad experiences of having their agreements with their bosses changed for less payment. They face this problem in construction works where women themselves do not sign contract, but only men:

In construction works we do not have control over the right payments we are supposed to receive. It is men who make agreements on the total amount to be paid and they subcontract to other workers. In such circumstances, we get paid less than we are supposed to receive. (Life Story, Chasimba, Dar es Salaam, April 2010)

... Again, working as house maids is not of good payments because they assume you are given food and accommodation freely. But when you go for work in bars, for example, payment is based on the number of bottles you sell rather than the time spent while being there trying to serve or wait for customers.... (Life Story, Chasimba Dar es Salaam, April 2010)

Another reason given for low pay is that businesses are not profitable. For that matter, it is not possible to have enough money to pay workers. For house girls/maids, reasons can be very weird:

When working as a house maid my employer used to claim that she had to pay me lowly since there were table utensils that broke while I was handling them. So she had to pay me lowly so as to compensate. She did not consider that it might have happened so unfortunately. Sometimes it went to an extent of giving me little food as a punishment. All those led me to think of getting married and settle or run my own business. ... (Life Story, Kwa-Mwatano Dodoma, April 2010)

This woman received low pay because she was responsible for breaking the utensils in the house: she was compensating for the loss. Sometimes, however, in the households, housemaids are provided with little

salary so as to limit their smartness. Women have claimed that jealousy makes the wives of men to think that their husbands may fall in love with house girls in case they are paid good salaries and are able to keep themselves smart. These women employers give wages in pieces with reasons that their salaries are not yet out or their business are not doing well or that they are keeping the money for them.

Apart from lacking work skills, women do leave rural areas being financially bad. Traditionally, women do not own land and they are not free to deal with long distance business like going to far open markets. They are most of the time occupied by home responsibilities. By the time they decide to migrate to town, no proper preparation is done. They do start life in town as poor people and have to struggle hard in order to raise their status.

These findings reveal that Gogo women migrants have faced problems in town due to patriarchy ideology existing in their working environment. Women have ended up as prostitutes due to a tendency of appealing to men in case of economic hardship; they have unsecure job due to low skill as they were denied education opportunity as women; and men disvalue them as women by giving them low pay and abusing them sexually. Such findings conform Nigatu Regassa and Ansha Yusufe, (2009) that in most cases the intended pull factor for migration might not actually be reachable due to the poor skills and the overall negative attitudes of the community towards women. As a result, women who migrated from rural areas are forced to be engaged in activities such as housemaid, domestic works and other low paying and risky activities which ultimately expose them to various abuses such as sexual harassment, labor exploitation, rape, unwanted pregnancy, physical abuse and the like.

c) *Patriarchy and Migrant Women Coping Strategies*

Women being active actors do not succumb to the challenges posed by patriarchy in their destinations, particularly the little pay. This is because when they migrated financial gains were important, apart from other expectation, which could as well be met if they gained financially. For this matter, women engage in a number of strategies, namely: accepting little wage, changing jobs, and engaging in small businesses.

i. *Accepting Little Wage*

In most cases, women migrants accept the little wages they get. They fear to complain as this can make them lose their job without proper arrangements. One of the respondents said:

There is no alternative I can take. We need money and jobs are the only sources of money available. It is better to accept the little available otherwise we cannot live in this town. But while we get this little money, we do other things which your boss should not know. ... (Life Story, Chasimba, Dar es Salaam April 2010)

So, women have learnt not to refuse little pay, but they do other things, as will be seen below, for instance engaging in small businesses. Sometimes, some of the businesses are not that clear, for instance prostitution. When life is tough, women accept themselves as women in an inferior position. This is as Heering, et al (2004) put it that most of women migrants have hardly any education, and surely will end up in the bottom segments of the labour market in receiving countries, such as domestic work.

ii. Changing Jobs

While receiving little salary, women migrants make underground efforts for securing better jobs. When they get a better job than the former one, they do change the job without giving notice to their bosses. However, not all women manage to carry their own business in town, instead they accept little salary.

When I was not ready to carry out my own business, I kept on changing jobs whenever an alternative was available. But it is in most cases not easy to complain because the arrangements for job agreements are not so official and you cannot have the base to complain. We base on trust for payments from those who are in contact with the boss who give work or the contractors in building activities. (Life Story, Chasimba, Dar es Salaam April 2010)

Some of women have lost hope, in efforts they make toward combating life in town. They find their efforts as if they are only for survival and not development.

Almost there are no alternatives for me. If I had a house of mine, I would have left within a short time, otherwise it is not easy to leave and get another job in the short time, as I wish. But I have worked in several houses as a house girl due to changing the location after mistreatment by the bosses (Life Story, KwaMwatano, Dodoma, April 2010)

Due to patriarchy constraints some women migrants do remain poor and have lost hope in destination areas. This is in line with Kothari (2002) that migration can both reduce and perpetuate poverty. Nevertheless, the dominant perception of migration among policy-makers, academics and officials in India continues to be that migration is only for survival and that migrants remain poor. The image of the migrant continues to be that of a powerless, impoverished and emaciated person who is trapped in poverty.

The fact that patriarchy ideology lead to low pay to women and that woman are disvalued, women do keep on changing job. Bad relationship with the boss for domestic workers is a factor for changing job for women in town. This conforms ILO report (2008) that the best example where women migrant face problems is domestic work where, because of the highly personal relationship with their employers, psychological,

physical and sexual abuse is common. In some countries, women migrants are required to work unpaid overtime, their wages are with held and they do not enjoy weekly rests.

iii. Small Businesses

For those who manage to secure little capital they decide to do their own business. These businesses include fish selling, food vending, vegetable selling, local brew selling and selling bans and second hand clothes. Other migrant women join together and have a joint business like selling food at construction areas. Being in a group makes women migrants get small loans from micro finance institutions. Others have decided to deal with their own business, rather than getting employed.

IV. CONCLUSION

It may be concluded that rural-urban migration is an achievements in itself as regards women struggle to escape patriarchy constraints in rural areas. However, women migrants do not make significant achievements in town as they are constrained by the power of patriarchy ideology. They achievements that women demand to have attained are measured in terms of what they were deprived of by the patriarchy system in the rural areas. Women migrants are still facing challenges of patriarchy system in town and the measures they take as women are conditioned by patriarchy driven women capability to do so. Elimination of patriarchy systems both in rural and urban areas would be the great solution to most of women's problems as they struggle for development.

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