

Title: Gender discrimination and inequality: a look into female work roles in Kenya (1996)

DECLARATION

This dissertation is as a result of my own original work and has not been presented at any University for the award of a degree.

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This dissertation has been submitted with my approval as a University supervisor.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank the following with whose help I managed to finish and submit my work; Jackie, Nduta, Lucas, Serem, Clara, Esther and Michael.

I also thank my supervisor Dr Stevie Nangendo. I am equally grateful to my family for all the support they gave me both financially and emotionally.

Special thanks to the fourth year Anthropology class 1996 for their constructive comments and help.

Finally, a lot of heartfelt gratitude goes to the informants who made this research work possible.

ABSTRACT

Gender discrimination and inequality is a subject that has been discussed for a long time. This subject has also held a lot of interest but hardly any measures or steps seem to be taken about it. Many seminars and conferences are held by taking a lot of time and money to organize. In the process, the woman who suffers, who feels the weight of it all is forgotten and this is the rural woman.

My research took me to many places and I had a chance to be with the rural woman and also the urban woman. In many cases, women suffered a dual burden of house keeping which includes cleaning and cooking and not forgetting taking care of children and salaried work. Society also has a lot of wrong assumptions about women's work. Men agreed and said that women's work was natural and to do it was going against nature. They seemed to find women's work easy as non-work and thus women should not be tired doing it.

A number of scholars have also tried to explain why men and women are different, why men and women should do different kinds of work but whatever the case women still remain marginalised and discriminated against. It is a high time governments and private organizations did something to alleviate this problem. Women comprise a large part of the population and with their marginalisation, there is bound to be very little development. In precolonial Kenya, duties were shared and it was not odd to find a duty done by both men and women with no reservations. This has changed with the monetary economy thus creating a marginal class of individuals mainly women.

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GENDER DISCRIMINATION AND INEQUALITY

A look into female work roles in Kenya.

1.1 INTRODUCTION -

This research is on gender discrimination and inequality.

Discrimination and inequality occurs in all spheres of life but this research is mainly going to focus on one aspect that is female work roles.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Gender based abuses in this world include inequality of opportunity. This inequality usually takes place in the spheres of education, employment, housing, credit and health care. On the other hand, gender based abuses extend to rape, domestic violence, lack of reproductive freedom, valuation of child care as well as domestic labour.

Most forms of gender discrimination or abuse are directed at females, for example, in the arbitrary work roles, women are disqualified from construction jobs (though not so much in the United States of America). And other relatively well paying jobs and those because women are thought to be weak. Ironically, the most prestigious jobs and those that are generally well paying do not require physical strength at all! However, much of the women's traditional unpaid and underpaid work involves physical labour, for example, housework which entails carrying and pushing heavy awkward loads for long distances often with children tied on their backs or their chests. The interrogation of women in the work force, improvement in the education opportunity, the availability of contraception and increased life expectancy has revolutionized women's place in many societies. These changes, unfortunately, have created many problems because women's work roles were merely added to the family responsibilities, the sexual division of labour has not truly been altered. As a consequence, women now suffer more from the burden of dual careers within the home and the work force environments.

It seems that the situation we are witnessing is neither the effect of biological underpinnings of sex roles nor can it simply be seen as the persistence of institutional inequalities. A more fundamental source of discrimination lies in realm of social attitudes and beliefs as I discuss below. The reality of the women situation is daily constructed from these attitudes. Women are, in part, the way they are because of the way they are thought to be.

The central problem of this study is, thus, to show discrimination and inequality in work roles in Kenya. A lot of negativity seems to have been attached to women's work. A lot of wrong assumptions are also made about women's work which is termed as natural, easy and not work. The study also demonstrates that existing views portray women's work as negative, consumer and not surplus oriented. Women's work has also been viewed as being in the kitchen.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To look at traditional and modern attitudes towards women's work.
2. To highlight the plight of women especially those with double burdens, that is, housework and employment.

1.4 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Women still remain at the margins of powerful positions in the world of employment or salaried work, despite a range of formal and informal policy guidelines designed to stop discrimination practices and a change in traditional negative attitudes towards women.

Vigdís Finnbogadóttir was the first woman in the world to win the highest position of state. She became the president of Iceland. Her initial election was made by the enormous influence of the one day strike by women in 1975. Shops, offices, banks, schools, theatres, newspapers and restaurants were closed for the day and men had to look after children to prove just how much society depended on women.

The need to integrate women in development has become a major concern to governments and various organizations worldwide. This is due to the fact that for a long time women's contribution to the community has been ignored by policy-makers, thereby, curtailing their efforts in socio-economic development world wide. Research shows that sustainable growth cannot occur if women, who comprise half of the world population, are ignored. It is, therefore, futile for anyone interested in development to ignore women's development activities.

A lot of research has been carried out of the subject of gender discrimination and inequality. However, I feel little has been done on discrimination and inequality in work roles especially in Kenya. The results of this study will therefore, be of great help especially to policy makers and others interested in the general welfare of women.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Marginalisation theory will be used in this research to show how women are marginalised world wide in all spheres of life including education and employment in both public and private spheres. Marginalization is theoretically employed in literature in several ways. It has been used specifically to describe situations and/or human groups considered as peripheral in contrast with the more modern (mainstream) political, social and economic structure. Such individuals straddle two worlds while at the same time belonging to neither. Specifically women with dual burdens are marginalised as their potential is not utilised fully in any sphere (public or private). They have to divide their ^{the} energy. On another field, women engaged in pottery production and marketing are engaged in an activity which is marginal as the profits are little. (Nanyendo 1994)

Stitcher (1969) sees marginalisation in Kenya especially with work roles segregated. Housework is largely the domain of women and will for a long time remain so. Thus this makes it impossible for women to participate fully in matters concerning development. The full potential of women is not recognized.

Bell (1984) says in education and literacy, the women were for quite a while not allowed certain levels of education and to enter certain fields. They were considered for giving birth and taking care of children. Work was only to be done in the houses and not in the job market. Education was considered harmful for their reproductive organs. Thus they were highly marginalised and were only seen ^{as} good for the home and taking care of their husbands and children.

Work roles are unchanging. Women everywhere in the world have a dual burden. Employed mothers play the role of ^{the} provider as well as ^{the} nurturer. Women have been for a long time barred from well paying jobs and if they are working, the remuneration is not the same as that of their male counterparts. Women's work is termed as natural and a lot of negativities ^{are} attached to it. It is, thus, seen as not natural for a man to do women's work.

Marginalization, according to Stitcher (1969), in pre colonial Kenya was not existing. The colonialists introduced a monetary economy and men had to look for employment in 'white collar' jobs. The agricultural work and domestic duties were left for the women, thus introducing a negation and reduction of social status of the women. The women were left for the activities that were economically and socially marginal.

Marginalization was, thus significant, for this project as it emphasizes the position of women in the society, women still remain marginalised and unable to participate fully in development.

2.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Stichter (1969) says that in Kenya, household work remains task segregated and it is still largely the province of wives. Wives rely on house girls and house boys as key helpers. In some ways the pattern of division of household labour is not new. In pre-colonial Kenya societies, a wife might well have been able to get help from a junior co-wife, a slave girl or older female children. What has changed is only the mechanism through which some women gain access to other women's labour. Today, it is predominantly a wage relationship. Various lines of feminist critiques have pointed out the considerable amount of actual production that still takes place within the home. Transforming consumer goods for end consumption or giving them use value is, as writers in the domestic labour debate point out, productive work. This is because the maintenance of consumer durables as well as their rate of deterioration is work. Consumption itself, as Weinbaum pointed out, can be work. Also, standing in a line to purchase food, arranging transportation, scheduling medical appointments, deciding what to spend is work and most middle class wives are expected to perform what Papanek has called "status production work" which entails entertaining and, in other ways, maintaining social ties which enhance family's claims to status (Papanek, 1979). Finally, the family's central activity of bearing and rearing children can be counted as work. As a measure of household contribution that of both the wives and house girls are understated while those of husbands overstated. The tasks in which the husband is most active are not the daily respective chores of meal preparation, washing, cleaning and child-care but the less frequently performed tasks of purchasing and making repairs. Considering only the most time consuming and house bound tasks, the wife does the bulk of the work.

After the wife, the person who most frequently performs house-hold chores is the house girl or house boy. Her work makes it possible for the wives to combine child-rearing and full-time employment. Most of these house girls are typically poor, uneducated girls from rural areas. From the those girls' point of view, after a period of time, they begin to feel exploited by the long hours and low pay. They also become uncomfortable with the subordinated position they hold in the household.

The integration of women in the work force, improvements in educational opportunity, the availability of contraception and increased life expectancy has revolutionised the place of women in many societies. These changes, unfortunately, have created many problems because women's problems were merely added on to the family responsibilities. In fact the sexual division of labour has not truly been altered. As a consequence, women suffer from dual careers within the home and the work force. Research shows that the sustainable growth cannot occur if women who comprise half of the world population are ignored.

Who determines gender roles? Do men and women have different inborn and, therefore, unchangeable strengths and weaknesses? And if they do, should they fulfill different social roles or the same? Enreineich, a feminist writer, says "Few areas of science are littered with intellectual rubbish as the study of innate... differences between sexes". There are proven differences, she concedes, but she says that the question is as ever: what do

these differences augur for social roles. in particular the division of labour, power and opportunity between sexes? Dobsons (1991) states that males and females differ anatomically, sexually, emotionally, psychologically and biochemically. Thus, there should be differences in work roles between the males and the females.

While in pre colonial Kenya, both men and women participated in joined activities of food production, the colonial introduction of the monetary economy, white collar employment and formal education related skills as essential elements of work concept, has had a significant effect on the modern definition of work and the valued placed on the male and female work. Colonialism brought new dimensions and distinctions in the definition of work. After independence men took over most office jobs (white collar), consequently, most agricultural activities were relegated to women who, by implication, occupied less educational status and had no accessibility to city jobs. A lot of negativity was implicated with women's work and a lot of false assumptions were created. Such false assumptions include statements such as, women's work is natural, women's work should not be remunerated and a woman's place is in the kitchen.

WHAT DETERMINES GENDER ROLES?

Biology determines Gender roles

Males and females differ anatomically, sexually, emotionally, psychologically and biochemically. We differ literally in every cell of our bodies. Dobson (1991) contends that men and women have always behaved differently, they have different emotions and they even care about different things. This dissimilarities are universal, according to Dobson, because they are biological in origin. Male and female roles cannot be changed nor should they be.

Dobson uses the human brain where maleness and femaleness are rooted to show that the basic differences between the sexes are neurological in origin rather than being purely cultural. He further says that to be different from men does not make women necessarily inferior to men. Males and females are original creations of God, each bearing strengths and weaknesses which counterbalance and interface with one another. It is a beautiful design that must not be disassembled.

He also uses the menstrual cycle to show how female emotions differ from that of males. He associates the four weeks of the menstrual cycle to the four seasons of the years. The first week can be termed as the springtime, oestrogen (female hormones) are released each day and a woman's body rebounds from the recent winter. The second week represents the summertime of the cycle when living is easy. A woman during this phase has more self-confidence than during any other phase of the month; it is a time for maximum energy, enthusiasm, amiability and self-esteem. Estrogen levels account for much of this optimism, reaching a peak during mid-cycle when ovulation occurs. Then fall follows, oestrogen levels fall as the body prepares for menstruation. A second hormone progesterone is released initiating the symptoms of premenstrual tension. Depression and

pessimism are experienced, irritability and aggression become increasingly evident as the week progresses. Then come the winter, the period of the menstrual flow.

How can anyone who understands this cyclical pattern contend that there are no genetically determined psychological differences between males and females? He asks. No such system operates in men.

There are other ways women are unique. Female emotions are also influenced by two other exclusively feminine functions; lactation and pregnancy. Female physiology is a finely tuned instrument, being more vulnerable and complex than their male counterparts. Why some women find this insulting, he says, is still a mystery to him.

Admittedly, he says further, some of the observed differences between the sexes are produced. He further admits that he does not know how to sort those which are exclusively genetic and those that are learned. He delineates a few of the emotional patterns typical of women as compared to men (Dobson 1991:28).

- (a) Females are more future-oriented because of their concern for children.
- (b) There is a classic difference of emotional intensity at home between the men and the women. Women's emotional investment in their homes exceeds that of their husbands.
- (c) There is aggressive competitiveness among the men as compared to women.
- (d) Males and females apparently differ in the manner by which they develop their self-esteem, the men draw self-esteem from their jobs, from being respected in business, profession or craft. Women especially those who are homemakers, depend primarily on the romantic relationship with their husbands for ego support.

He summarizes by saying that two captains sink the ship and two cooks spoil the broth; a family must have a leader whose decisions prevail in times of differing opinions. By the scriptures, the role has been assigned to the man of the house who should put the best interests of his farming above his own, even to the point of death if necessary.

Biology does not determine gender roles

According to Hubbard, women and men are physically not very different. She adds that there are enormous overlaps between women and men for all traits that are not directly involved with procreation.

Hubbard challenges scientific attempts to find innate or physical differences between men and women, differences that she says have traditionally been used to "prove" the inferiority of women. Hubbard maintains that first, apart from, or, except for their

reproductive organs, there are no significant physical differences between the sexes. Secondly, she argues, any differences that are found, with the possible exception of height, are often the result of social conditioning not in-born capacity.

Hubbard also contends that a woman's biology is a social construct and a political concept and not a scientific one. According further this is three ways. The first can be summed up in Beauvoir's dictum "one is not born a woman, one becomes a woman." This does not mean that the environment shapes us, but that the concept woman or man is a socially constructed one, and as little girls or boys, we try to fit as we grow up. How active we are and how much, what kinds of schools we go to, what work we do, all affect our biology as well as our social being in ways we cannot sort out. So one is not born a woman or a man, one becomes one.

The stratification of the work force is often explained as though it reflects inherent biological differences between women and men. Women have been disqualified from construction jobs (though not now in the United States of America) and other relatively well paid heavy labour because they are said to be too weak for it. But the most prestigious men's jobs and those that pay most in general, do not require physical strength, while much of women's traditional unpaid or underpaid work involves carrying and pushing heavy loads in many cultures, women are responsible for providing the firewood and water which usually means carrying heavy loads for long distances, often with small children tied to the chests or back. In the US where men are expected to carry the heaviest loads, most have "bad backs" which is why occupational health advocates argue that loads that are considered too heavy for women should be rated too heavy for anyone.

Biological differences between women and men are used to rationalize the stratification of the labour force by sex; they do not explain it. If society stratifies the work force into women's and men's jobs then it does so for economic, social and political reasons but such stratification is not mandated by biology.

Culture determines gender roles

The stereotype is that in filling bread winning roles, boys will be taught competitiveness. In filling domestic roles, girls will be taught nurturance.

A culture perpetuates itself by shaping each person to live in a society. This process is called socialization and its lessons are taught to children through a variety of ways and channels, for example, through family, friends, school and, even, the media.

From the moment a girl infant is wrapped in a pink blanket and a boy infant in a blue one, gender role development begins. The colours pink and blue are the first indicators used by a society to distinguish males from females. As they grow, every cultural artifice will assure that this distinction remains intact. Girls will be given dolls to diaper and tiny stoves to pretend to cook with which boys will construct buildings with miniature tools and wage with toy guns and tanks.

The family is by far the most significant agent of socialization here. The child gains a sense of self, learns the language and begins to understand norms of interaction with parents, siblings and significant others in his or her life. Gender role socialization is pervasive in each of these.

Along with this recognition factors, toys carry with them a formidable force for socialization. Toys for girls encourage domesticity while boys received not only more categories of toys but the ones which are more complex, more expensive and suggest activities that are not home-bound.

Language reflects culture and is shaped by it, therefore, it is fundamental to our understanding of gender roles. In learning language, children are also taught that the sexes are valued differently. Not only is language ambiguous, it is discriminatory as well. We begin with the idea that the English language constantly focuses attention on gender. However, it is clearer ^{not} than when the word man is used to exclude women and ^{when} then used generically to include her. This is the intended meaning when ^a Anthropologists speak of culture as man-made or the evolution mankind. But more often the word is used to distinguish man ^{from woman} for women such as in the phrases "it is a man's world" or "this is ^a man's work." The word is definitely ambiguous and may be subject to interpretations even within one context. In both usage it is unclear where women belong, but it implies that they are somehow "part" of man. Sometimes no interpretation is necessary.

Many schools also unwittingly socialize children into acquiring one set of values to the virtual exclusion of others. The children are taught that girls and boys should exhibit behaviour that is either masculine or feminine. Thus, culture determines gender roles.

Evolution explains traditional gender roles

Mating practices are the result of an evolutionary process favouring genes that most successfully replicate themselves. According to Layng (1993), gender roles are global regardless of race, class or culture. Layng says that these differences are not only biological but clearly evolutionary in their tendencies to propagate our species. Social scientists have long been aware of the distinctive sex roles; characteristics of tribal societies around the world, but many are reluctant to conclude that this is anything other than learned behaviour. Why are both American and African men relatively disinterested in domestic chores? If it is a matter of learning or cultural conditioning, why are there not some societies where men and women do not confirm to these patterns? Should husbands, even of working wives, be excused from house cleaning and child care? Are these determined, to some extent, by the biological peculiarities of the different sexes?

Layng supports that evolution explains gender roles by saying that behaviour sex differences are universal and he also explains the natural selection of behaviour and relates this to Charles Darwin's theory of education. He also says that socio biological theory

explains human sexual aggressiveness/coyness, promiscuousness/faithfulness, domesticity/laziness and other gender specific behaviour.

According to Layng, there are certain behaviours regards of the great variability of sex roles from some society to another, that appear to be the same in both ^{what} and modern societies, for example; in courtship behaviour, most men are more sexually aggressive and most women are coy, men are more likely to seek a variety of mates and females are more likely to be domestic and nurturing unlike bands of apes, where females are the usual initiators of copulation, "presenting themselves to males", it is far more common for men to initiate sex while women are more likely to take a relatively passive role beyond flirtation. Nearly everywhere shyness or coquettishness is associated with strong female sexual behaviour. These, Layng says, happens everywhere in the world and insists that evolution explains gender roles.

Whether biology, evolution or culture determines gender roles, should women's work be stigmatized? A woman should exist between the two sexes. No sex should feel inferior or superior to the other and no work role should be looked down upon just because it belongs to a certain gender.

2.3 HYPOTHESES

- (1) Modern and traditional attitudes towards women have not changed much today.
- (2) Women today have double burdens, that is, housework and employment.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

The following techniques were used to collect data:- key informants (teachers and female religious leaders), group discussions, direct non-participant observation, recollection from childhood by the interviewer and the snow ball method. These methods were reliable. Group discussions were particularly helpful as the views of those not able to be interviewed were heard and highlighted though sometimes people tended to stray from the topic.

A number of interviews were carried out with women from various backgrounds in rural and urban settings. To avoid bias, some men were also interviewed. Research was carried out on both employed and housewives. A random selection was made in both areas at the level of households. Special efforts were made to reach as many women as possible including the Asian and European communities. A few women and men were then chosen to represent their views.

No particular locality was chosen for the research. Analysis of data generated through the techniques specified above will be mostly qualitative. Quantitative analysis will be minimal.

3.2 DATA ANALYSIS

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT WOMEN'S WORK

Women's work has no description

The notions that women's work is no work and when it is then it is easy and light is further reflected by its non-quantification in labour statistics. Women's work in the household and food crop production is barely recognized neither does it become recognized when she performs the so called 'male' jobs. The entry of women in contractual work and paid employment assumes that women's reproductive and other productive roles do not exist. The woman earns money in formal employment and yet she has to continue with household chores and food production activities hardly with any assistance at all. This is seen in many women's lives whether they have high ranking posts like managers, lawyers, lecturers or low-paying jobs such as sweepers, hawkers, or any income generating activity. Work continues in the household and she is expected to provide the same quantity and quality of work as her male counterpart whose work for most of them ends at five in the evening. Despite the reproductive and nurturing activities, she is not entitled to extra days off. In fact, women's reproductive activities are used against her in relation to her employment. For example, being pregnant or absent nurturing a sick child is considered a minus against women in formal employment.

In the research carried out few, if at all any, men help in the household chores. Such chores are considered to be women's work and this does not make women's lives any easier. These chores include; cooking, sweeping, washing and child rearing. (In one out of every five households was there a man who aided in housework.) It is a common sight to see unemployed men hanging out in shopping centres, drinking areas and doing nothing while women go to earn their daily living.

Even when she is in surplus value production as a wage earning employee, her work is presumed to be inferior and of less quality than her male counterpart. Sometimes the woman is also presumed to be incapable of performing work at the same level with her counterparts. Women are also poorly remunerated compared to males of the same grade.

In Kenya, married women are sometimes denied equal salary, housing and other related benefits. Married women are denied a house, house allowance and medical benefits while married men have access to all these. The married woman is only provided with medical benefits for herself and not the spouse. In the army, men are allowed to marry, women are not. In getting loans, most women are denied unless they have their husbands at their sides, though, this is changing. Hence the argument used against women in employment is that if a woman worked, it does not benefit the family while if the man works, the whole family benefits. It enhances the laying off of women in times of acute over employment. It is the way the society is organized that denies a woman that right yet belittles her because she does not have that right.

This lack of recognition and equal remuneration of women's work is explained by the male fear that if a woman has access to the control of resources like money and housing, she will dominate the man; an idea that is unpalatable among most African men. The men fear the woman using economic power against them. The neglect of housework can thus be summed up in the following axioms;

- 1) Women belong in the family while men belong at work.
- 2) Therefore, men work, while women do not work.
- 3) Therefore, housework is not a form of work.

3.3 WOMEN'S WORK IS EASY

For a long time, women's work has always been assumed to be light, easy and not tiring and it requires no technology and thus no remuneration. Most of the time concepts about women's work are that they come naturally, it is normal and therefore, not exerting. The assumption that women's work is easy and natural implies that it is easily done and, therefore, there is no need to consider recognition of such work, improvement of the working conditions or enumeration.

It is also not rare to hear an answer from a woman who stays at home (a housewife) saying that she does not work. (An assumption by the whole society that women's work is so easy and thus not recognizable). Birthing activities are considered to be so natural

that they do not require technology or birthing services to help her give birth with minimal problems. Birthing services receive minimal attention in the planning of health services in Kenya compared to the common illness in mind such as malaria, chest infections and many others, suffered by both males and females. In most rural areas, birthing services are offered by traditional birth attendants who are usually not qualified. Women are expected to work an eight to five job and then accomplish housework which is thought to be easy and will take a short time. What is not shown here is that a woman's work (house work) can be done the whole day and as a job. It involves a lot of strenuous activity such as fetching water uphill (for the rural woman), taking care of the sick child, moving heavy furniture, to mention but a few.

3.4 A WOMAN MUST NEVER BE TIRED

Because of the assumption that women work is easy it is further concluded that a woman requires no offs and leisure activities. The structuring of leisure activities in Kenya refers to beer drinking halls where men go after a long day's 'work' in the offices or industries. These beer halls, however, are only seemingly for men. Women who go to relax in bars are considered dirty and cheap and more often than not are highly stigmatized. Football is also mostly attended by men and in any case who will take care of the house when we are both there? The men ask. In traditional Kenya society, a good woman was seen busy all the time and that was part of what was used to judge a woman for marriage. An idle woman raised a lot of eye brows particularly if the men were around. In Kenya most leisure activities open for women are joining women's church and prayer groups and with housework, the woman has few choices but to work all the time to provide basic services in her household. There is constantly work to be done in the household by the women. Many women frowned at the question of leisure. In fact, only women in the urban areas seemed to engage in a few activities and, even then, the children are in the vicinity! They are her responsibility! Watching television, but with an eye in the kitchen, was what most of them seemed to do after all woman's work is easy, thus, how can you be tired? An example is from one of my informants Yeti Yego.

YETI YEGO. RURAL HOUSEWIFE

Yeti is a fifty year old woman living in Eldoret. She has no education as her brothers had to go to school. There was no need to get educated as she was getting married, she adds. She has eleven children, seven boys and four girls. The youngest is twelve years old and of school going age.

Yeti has no household appliances to help her ease work neither does she have a housegirl or houseboy. She has no employment. Her work includes fetching firewood, cooking, cleaning the house, taking care of her shambas, going to the market to sell vegetables to make money, fetching water and taking care of her husband and children.

She learned to do this from her mother as they were her duties. Her mother did all the work and took care of them but they helped her occasionally. "The men cannot do

housework,' she says, it is naturally a woman's job.' She does not complain as she feels that it is her duty but yet she would like a better life for her girls. Despite being poor she is educating her girls and boys so they would have a better life than hers. She laughs at the idea of a man entering a kitchen to work. "He will be ridiculed and called a woman behind his back!" A woman is judged by the amount of work she does. If she is dirty her house is dirty. She advocates for change that men should help their wives to ease their burdens and not to be like her husband who drinks the little money he gets from doing odd jobs here and there and then expect to be fed in the house. He never lifts a finger to help her,' she says.

3 5 WOMEN AND THEIR WORK AS 'NATURAL'

Women and their work have been defined as natural and close to nature. Femaleness is closely associated with nature by virtue of women's activities and the definition of the female body. Women's activities such as menstruation, gestation, delivery and lactation are associated with the female sex organs, which in most cases and more often than not, are viewed as negative.

Giving birth and taking care of the child is seen as a natural responsibility for the woman. Being in the kitchen is also associated with the naturalness of a woman. Most societies do not consider a woman as an adult or to have a "head" and when she has one, it is empty, if she has any brains they are comparable to that of an infant like a famous song in the sixties which said that:-

"Akili ya bibi sawa na mtoto kidogo" (Literally, woman's intelligence is like that of an infant).

Worth mentioning are also communities like the Challenging and Kisii who equate their women to children and the animals around (property). Women's perspective is shaped by biological doctrine: women belonged naturally to the family, men, must gradually become attached to their occupational or professional life. In the hearts of men, professional duty must take over the place formerly occupied by domestic duty. While the family (as the province of the woman) would continue to be centre of moral education and security.

Thus, in considering a woman's work as natural, it is considered and seen to be part of her. Due to this factor, a lot of women's work is ignored and, therefore, not viewed as work. Right from a formal sector a woman continues with her 'natural' duties in the household leaving her drained and exhausted. Again, this gives the woman a double burden reducing her contribution to the society as a whole. A classic example here is an interview carried out with Christopher Mwamburi, a sales representative.

CHRISTOPHER MWAMBURI. SALES REPRESENTATIVE

Christopher is a sales representative at a firm in Mwatate. He is twenty years old and well educated. He is single and has no children. Christopher feels that a woman's ~~duty~~ are god-

given and natural. "A man cannot conceive and take care of children neither should he cook," he says. "The man should take care of his wife and make sure she is comfortable financially whether she works or not." He rarely cooks or does any house work and hopes to get married soon so as to have someone do it.

The interview stops as he has to rush off to work.

3.6 WOMEN'S WORK SHOULD NOT BE REMUNERATED

The notion that women's reproductive and productive work within the household should not be remunerated is very common in Kenya. The negativity or the contradictory definition of women's work is related to this notion. Distinctions need to be made here between what is considered "mothers" work and "women's" work in generation.

The mother's work of giving birth and nurturing is seen as natural and God-given and, thus, no pay or price should be attached to it. Their work is recognized especially when having given birth to boys and again credit goes to the man. "he is a total man". It is also seen as inconceivable placing value on mother's work (giving birth) - it is seen as a desecration of a holy duty which I believe is true. The other justification for the non-payment of work is the assumption that women's work is not work.

3.7 WOMAN'S PLACE IS IN THE KITCHEN

This statement goes without saying. All communities in Kenya view the women's place to be in the kitchen. This comes with the assumption that women's work is natural. Cooking is associated with the naturalness of a woman and, thus, it is her duty. In the African societies, a man found in the kitchen is openly ridiculed and frowned upon. The woman is seen as domineering her man. This is because of the activity associated with women's work. A man doing women's work is seen to go against nature.

This is not to say that men do not cook. Research shows that some men do not mind doing the cooking once in a while because it is primarily a woman's duty. In the rural areas, it was totally out of the question after all why did I marry? Ask several men. A classic example here is one of my informants, Onesmus Onsongo.

ONESMUS ONSONGO. TEACHER

Onesmus is a primary school teacher in one of the rural areas in Kenya. He is married and has five children, all boys of school going age. His wife is a nursery school teacher and their working hours are basically the same. "Why should I employ a house girl and I am married?" He asks. "That is naturally my wife's work and I wouldn't have married her in the first place if she would not do it." he adds. He says that she does not need help as that is her work and it is easy. "A woman's place is in the kitchen and she should accept that" he says.

A man has his duties and so does the wife. So why should they change? I bring home the bulk of the money and take care of the finances. Her little money is used to buy food and that is the way God wanted it.”

Onesmus rudely adds that the interview is over and his wife should not be interviewed.

MARY NDUKU. HOUSE GIRL

Mary Nduku left school at an early age and like thousands of house girls she is of low education. She has to work to keep going and send money to her elderly parents back in Machakos. She is only seventeen years and feels unappreciated and overworked. She feels something must be done to alleviate the problems facing house girls today.

After a period of time, most house girls begin to feel exploited by the long hours, low pay and as well as being uncomfortable with their subordinated position in the household.

On a normal day, Mary Nduku's work starts at five o'clock in the morning. She is a house girl at one of the affluent estates in Nairobi. Preparing breakfast, ironing clothes for the whole family of eight, preparing the children for school, cleaning the house, shopping for food, preparing the meals, washing the clothes, taking care of the young children not yet of school going age, are part of what she has to grapple with in a day's work. She is the last to lie down to sleep at eleven o'clock after the rest of the family. Her pay is quite meagre as compared to the work she does for the family, she complains. She is constantly on her feet and takes rests only when the children take a nap in the afternoon.

None of the children helps in the house chores as it is considered none of their work. She is paid for it. The wife of the house who is a lawyer, helps only in the preparation of evening meals as she is always tired from her grueling day at work. The husband has no time for housework either after all he pays someone to do it. The modern equipment and gadgets in the house which are supposed to save labour help but do not make life any easier. These gadgets ^{water} fridges, gas stoves, running water, electric irons and others. It is possible that the time spent at procuring and preparation may have decreased. The urban middle class woman or house girl does not spend long hours hauling water, making charcoal or pounding grain that a rural woman would.

PHILLIP MUTISO. HOUSE BOY

Phillip is twenty-four years and of poor education working for an Asian family. His day starts early in the morning at five thirty and ends at five o'clock. Phillip's work includes dusting, mopping, washing and ironing clothes, washing dishes, straightening the beds, going to the shop and serving food for visitors and the family. "It is a woman's job and I hate it but I have no alternative," says Phillip. He feels embarrassed to talk about his job as he says or associates it with women. Due to his low education he has to swallow his pride and work for his small family back in Wundanyi.

According to Phillip, although it is a woman's affair, doing or working for the Asians does bother him though he is well paid for it. They give him assistance whenever his children are sick or whenever he is in a low financial situation.

He is not allowed to touch any electrical gadgets as he is not trusted to handle them well. He does not do the cooking as they do not trust him either, thus, his work is not as demanding as other house boys and house girls. None of the Asian male do house work he observes as it is meant for the servants and their wives. The men provide the financial income while the women and servants like him to do the house chore.

SUSAN MUTURI, SCHOOL TEACHER

Susan Muturi is a fifty two year old woman with four children. She is a secondary school teacher and is well educated up to the university level. Her children are all at the university level and none of them stay at home. She has a house girl to help her with house work.

Mrs. Muturi's role model was her mother who showed her house work and what needed to be done. Her mother never worked outside the home. The money she earns is little but she purchases the food in the house. It is not her money but the family's money. Her husband finances the schooling of the children and other family budgets.

Although she does not have much work now that her children are all grown up, she still feels that something should be done to alleviate the problems women are undergoing. "It is not fair," she says, "taking care of children, cooking, washing and at the same time keeping a job in the public sector is quite hard. A lot of sacrifices have to be done and in most cases it is by women." Her husband does not help her at all in the house. "Men should see to it that not so much work is left to the women: the negative attitude towards women's work should also stop."

MARY OCHIENG, SECRETARY

Mary is thirty five years and married with four children, two boys and two girls. They are all of school going age. She is well educated and undertook a secretarial course as she liked it. Mary's husband is a clerk in one of the many firms in town. Due to a lot of financial constraints, she cannot afford a house help so ^{when} ~~grapples~~ both the job (employed) and housework. Mary's day begins at five o'clock. She has to prepare breakfast for her family and ~~prepare her husband for work~~ and her children for school. She then leaves for work and comes back only to be assailed by accumulated housework. She has to wash the clothes, clean the house, prepare the evening meal and also try to have time for her children's homework. The children can not help her as they have plenty of work after school. She has no modern equipment which saves labour and has to use charcoal to cook. She feels overworked and feels there should be shared responsibility in the household

duties. Her husband does not help in the household duties as that is the reason why he married.

Her source of role identity is her mother who brought her up in a typical rural setting. She cooked, washed, collected firewood and did all the chores her mother asked of her. Her brothers helped her father with the animal and never did they do housework.

She feels that this has to change as time has changed and women are getting into job market. It is not easy to run a job (paid) and a household without the help of the men and the children. "We need to change the inequities in the treatment of women. Women's daily experience, options and responsibilities differ from those of our great grandmothers. The meaning of womanhood has fundamentally changed over the last three generations, a transformation that has allowed women to hope for a future based on sex equality, a wish seldom voiced by women of past generations," she says. "Thus," she adds, "roles in the house should not be gendered. Both male and female should work and co-operate together for the better of the household."

PERPETUA SIGILAI, CLERK

Perpetua is a clerk in a small firm in the rural areas. She is single and lives with her parents and brothers and sister. She is twenty eight and not so well educated.

Perpetua feels that ~~the~~ woman is overburdened especially if she has to cook, wash and clean the house as ^{her} the mother expects it from her. The brothers do not help as it is a woman's work. "It gets pretty exhausting and something should be done to alleviate this problem," she adds.

CAROLINE IGOBWA, LAWYER

Caroline is a twenty eight year old lawyer in the city. She has one child and does not intend to have any more. Her husband is also employed. She has a house girl who helps her do the housework but in the evening she has to do the meals and spend time with her daughter. "It is quite taxing and especially if your formal employment is demanding. There is hardly time for leisure, you are constantly working." Her husband helps once in a while but does not fail to remind her it is a woman's work and it is hers. Taking care of a household and children and going to your paid work is not easy at all and something should be seen to it that this changes. Women who cannot afford house help should be helped also by their husbands."

POOJA SHAH, HOUSE WIFE

Pooja is a thirty year old housewife with children. She is not educated and is unemployed. She does all the housework including taking care of her children. She has electric gadgets which reduces time in doing chores.

She cannot work outside the house as the housework takes her attention fully and she feels that she would not manage. Her husband does not help either in the house as these are her duties. Life is easier for her though as she also has a car and a driver. She does not have to queue for a bus or matatu or walk to the nearby market.

CHAPTER THREEDATA ANALYSIS3.8 FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH WOMEN'S WORKSex determination

Male - female identities, relationships, roles and other behaviour patterns can be traced to the views enhanced by the origins of the physiological sexual differentiation. Many factors have been explained in being male or female ranging from those which are purely mythical and religious to those that are based on Science. Thus being male or female would not be problematic if other values were not imputed to being male or female at the expense of it. An example is the attitude used on one sex as superior or inferior, stronger or weaker or negativities associated with a sex.

(a) The "North-South-Left-Right" Basis of women subordination. Male superiority. Female inferiority.

The determination of sex among the early Greeks was attributed to the male seed. When the male seed was at its strongest, a male child was born whereas a female child was associated with the weakness of the semen. Hommer and Aristotle attributed the determination of the sex of goats to the winds.

The North winds bore male children while the birth of females was attributed to the south winds when they were blowing. Other ideas related sex determination to the position of the embryo in the uterine wall. These were called the 'left-right' theories of sex determination which mostly existed before the Scientific Revolution.

In the Second Century, Galen (1981) argued that the male child was as a result of semen from the right testis and the female child was as a result of semen from the left testis. Other Aricenas attributed sex determination to the side where the semen was deposited. According to him, a male child was as a result of semen deposited on the right side while the female child was as a result of semen deposited in the left side of the uterus.

Eggs from the right side of the uterian tubes were for a long time believed to produce a male child while the ones from the left side produced a female child. It is not rare in many African communities, especially Kenya, to hear that a child or a baby lying on the left is a girl, while that on the right side is a boy.

These left-right theories were deposed in the mid (18th when the Swiss physician Albretch von Haller put them to test. Cases of a man with one testis but producing both males and females were put forward by him. Conversely a woman who had no right uterine tube produced both male and females.

The seriousness of the left-right dichotomies lies in the differential values imputed to being male or female.

These theories lack a scientific basis but they are still held dearly by many communities today. The right-left theory of sex determination discussed above portrays the inherent male-female dichotomy along with the symbolic meanings which have been attributed to it.

In many cultures leftness has been associated with femaleness, weakness and, therefore, with inferiority. Rightness, on the other hand, is associated with maleness, strength and, thus, with superiority. Male superiority and female subordination have been based on this left-right dichotomy leading males and females to be defined along these lines.

This 'left-female inferiority versus right-male superiority' syndrome is demonstrated by the linguistic and symbolic usage and meanings of left and right. This is very common especially in Kenyan communities. For instance, in the national language Kiswahili, the word for the right hand is "mkono wa kuume" "ume" is the core of the word "male". The Akamba also refer to the right hand as "kwoko kwa aume" - "aume" being the core of the male word. They refer to the left hand as "kwoko kwa aka", "aka" being the core of the word female. Among the Abaluyia, the right hand is referred to as "Kusecha" "secha" being the core word of the "male" the left hand is "Kukhasi" "khasi" means woman or female.

Among these communities, and others, the right is associated with strength and normality while the left hand is associated with weakness and abnormality.

Mary Wanjiku Wachira 76 years old recalls that among the Agikuyu (though it was not attributed to male or female), the left hand could not be used as it was a taboo. She remembers being left-handed and her mother doing everything to ensure that she used her right hand. She recalls her left hand being tied with a string (like an arm sling around the neck) to immobilize the hand. Sometimes something heavy was bandaged on the left hand to stop her using it. "Giving a man anything to eat using the left hand was highly insulting and more often than not received a thorough beating," she continues. By the time she was five years she could no longer use her left hand.

The left hand is highly stigmatized and carrying out activities like shaking hands, eating is considered abnormal. Today many children who are left-handed are also highly discouraged. Handling things over with the left hand is considered disrespectful especially women are forbidden to do so to men and likewise. Despite there being no proof of this left-hand theory, it is taken as a fact and natural that since left is weaker, women are weaker by association and that what they do are basically inferior. The proponents of this left-hand theory postulate emphasizes the role that culture plays through socialization in defining the normal-superior and strong right human side (by association with maleness) against the inferior, abnormal and weak left side associated with women. The notion of equating the right hand to the male sex and the left hand to the female sex was not found

In all the societies, for example, the Kisii call the left hand "Okoboko gw'okobee" and the right hand "Okoboko gw'okorio" not associated with maleness or femaleness.

(B) The Christian religion and Gender differentiation.

Religion has further contributed to the heroidal distinction between the male and the female. It enhances and justifies the female subordinate positions and roles.

The Roman Catholic church apologized to women through the pope in a personal letter addressed to "every woman" in the world. The pope was sorry for all the wrongs that have been done to women through gender discrimination and inequality including equal pay for equal work, as well as protection for working mother. However, he maintains that they would not accept women as priests, cardinals, bishops which he further said was not as a result of an arbitrary imposition but based on the fact that Christ willingly and freely chose only men as apostles.

In Judeo-Christian creation stories, Adam was created first in God's image and Eve created from one of his ribs to give Adam companionship. According to the Christian ideology, male/female differences are God-given and, therefore, natural. Countless Biblical verses and the Quran exhort the female to act differently from males according to this God-given premise. Not to forget to mention are the Christian wedding ceremonies where wives are reminded to be obedient to the male as the head of the house, obedience meaning subservient and being attentive to all his needs and to do work for him what is considered a duty and non-work. The Bible, though, does not state that women should be treated wrongly or looked down upon by men. All men are equal and we should love one another as Christ loved the church, thus, in the Biblical sense the male/female differences in nature are attributed to divine creation implying it is unquestionable.

On the discussion of marital rape in Kenya where a law was to be drawn, the church violently reacted to this and strongly insisted that there was no marital rape. The law was thus dropped. Interesting to say, not all women feel strongly about marital rape. The pope's letter drew/praise from a section of Kenyan women who lauded his attributes to the women's movement. Thus, though Christianity respects women and every one is told to love one another, it still subjugates women, for example, the Roman Catholic church which does not allow women priests.

(C) Traditional Kenyan mythology

In Many Kenyan traditional mythology, most creation stories do not have gender differentiation. Most stories portray women and men as equals and in some women are as valuers, for instance, the Queen mothers of many communities.

Among the Agikuyu, for example, the traditional creation story was that (Ngai) God, the creator, made man and woman (Gikuyu and Mumbi) and placed them on Mount Kenya (Kirinyaga).

Gikuyu and Mumbi had nine daughters after whom the nine Kikuyu clans were named and they are in existence even today. These daughters were married to nine men whose origin is not known and of little importance yet Agikuyu men feel more superior than females. The differentiation is given and no attempts are made to explain.

There is also a legend among the Agikuyu about women rulers, for instance, the famous Wangu wa Makeri. There was once a time when all land and power were owned by the women and how these roles changed no one knows. It is not clear how the dichotomous gender identities came into being and how they evolved to today. By controlling female sexuality, men propagate their species by making women bear progeny for them to perpetuate male patrilineal clans. This is demonstrated by the Agikuyu myth.

The Kenyan mythology beliefs, lest they be dismissed lightly, have a significant effect on the basis for gender definition, the sexual and other differences between the male and female sexes, role and behaviour patterns. Ironically, even though mythology shows that males and females are equal, male dominance is taken for granted.

(D) PHYSIOLOGICAL AND HORMONAL BASIS OF GENDER DETERMINATION

Being male or female, according to science, has attributed to the physiological and hormonal factors that are naturally preprogrammed in utero during the embryonic stage of human development.

According to the physiological point of view, gender differentiation is based on the physical and muscular constitution. The males are more muscular as compared to females. As a result of this, the males are considered strong and superior compared to the females, who are weak. Thus, by the virtue of their muscles and muscular power the men can elicit compliance by force from the females.

While masculinity and femininity are both equally positive and complementary attributes, femininity has been negated as far as work is concerned. The work that women do (nurturing and tending) requires tenderness and care which are positive inborn traits associated with femininity. The irony of the masculine and feminine qualities, as they relate to work, is that the masculine strength is no longer used to assist the 'delicate' woman in the multiplicity of her work roles such as cultivation, harvesting and transporting all of which require masculine characteristics!

These physiological and hormonal differences should not be used to subordinate one sex on the basis of strength and superiority but to be used to share work roles and, thus, reduce the burdens placed on one gender.

(E) Hormonal differentiation

Femininity, to some extent, the naturalness of gender differentiation on the basis of masculinity, and has been emphasized and encouraged by nature science. Androgen, the male hormone, has been associated with masculine characteristics such as aggression, dominance and activity. Studies showed females injected with androgen prenatally developed masculine tendencies without a change in the genitalia. They have tomboyish behaviour, tumbling, falling and thus, these sex hormones are seen to programme gender behaviour prenatally. The hormones create a disposition or tendency that may be incorporated on the basis of gender into either a masculine or feminine post-natal phase of differentiation of behaviour.

These arguments, thus, have the natural and biological traits inherent in the sexes as a justification for the role differences between males and females. Females work roles are seen as natural and in-born according to the hormonal view points. The roles that are set for women cannot be done by men as they are seen to go against nature.

(F) The Genitalia Basis of gender differentiation

Gender differentiation has also been determined sometimes using the physiological genital differences. Various qualitative and symbolic meanings have been associated with the possession of a vagina and penis. The possession of different genitalia has also been implied to have or mean different distinct roles. The possession of the genitalia has also been associated with one's definition, meanings, values, roles and behaviour patterns (Freud 1924)

A common and very simplistic argument for gender differentiation is that the vagina and penis are physiologically different, thus, they should not be seen in similar terms of values and roles associated with ~~then~~ ^{thereby} precluding the equal complementarity of the sexual organs in terms of their functions.

(G) The psychoanalytic theory of gender differentiation

According to Freud (1924), the psychoanalytic explanations for gender have their basis on the anatomical distinction between the sexes. The different genitalia are associated with psychological and symbolic meanings. The penis is considered to be more superior organ. The differences in meanings are based on the different symbolism associated with genitalia. The penis is associated with more importance and value more than the vagina. This is so because of the visibility and erectability of the penis, the vagina is invisible and inverted and because of its ^{its} invisibility and receptivity, it is considered to be less active and aggressive. The female organ has also been associated with dirt as compared to the penis. It has been looked at with a lot of negativity because of its functions such as menstruation and childbirth. The males are associated with positive and powerful attributes because of the penis whereas the women are looked at with lesser qualities and functions because of the notions of the vaginal inferiority.

A good example about the vagina inferiority is found among one of the Maasai's mythology. Once all the Maasai men and women were equal. There were only women warriors known as Ilpongolo and morans - the young men. At that time, women had no vaginas but only tiny holes to pass urine. One day the morans found an occasion to push the ends of the bows into the women's bodies and created vaginas. After sexual intercourse the men said that there are women after all, the women lost their bravery and fertility began. The vagina and the penis are looked at with different perceptions. The penis with superiority bestowing different gender identities and behaviour patterns. The possession of the genitalia and its associated meanings, has significant implications on the definition of men's and women's work.

(h) The Socio-cultural determinants of gender distinct behaviour

Culture has the most influence on the determination of gender behaviour (Fromm 1943). Fromm argues that there is no proof or substantial empirical evidence that in humans, sex hormones are responsible for sex different characteristics such as assertion and male dominance against women. Gender distinct behaviour is more of a product of culture impositions and it varies from culture to culture. According to Fromm (1943), one of the proponents of the cultural schools of thought in gender differentiation, there are social factors that have strong effects as they can either increase, eliminate or erase biological-rooted differences. There are certain ethnic groups in Africa where the women are trained to be aggressive, walk like men and shave their hair. There are also situations where women dress in trousers and wear similar hair cuts like men to an extent that they are indistinguishable from the men. It is the socialisation and training for adult life rather than biological factors that cause contrasting behaviour patterns between the males and females. As seen in most Kenyan societies, the girls are brought up to be nurturant and obedient while for boys self-reliance and achievement are emphasized. The socialization patterns, thus, elicit submissive behaviour in girls and aggressive behaviour in boys. Values and behaviours associated with maleness and females are learned, acquired and assimilated through socialization. The boys are encouraged to play outside, fight back physically, play with toys like guns, cars all which stand for masculinity. The girls are encouraged to be sweet, gentle and obedient. They play with dolls and are encouraged to stay in the house. Girls and boys, therefore, base their behaviour on the socialization agents who reinforce this dichotomous behaviour patterns. These socialization agents include teachers, parents, neighbours, peers, friends, brother, sisters, media heroes and the society as a whole. Through this, sex specific behaviour patterns are modelled and reinforced among the children. The use of language and literature also enhances this roles and differences along gender, lines for example:

"stop crying like a girl" - one is meant to be strong as a man.

In many literature books the boys and men are portrayed as heroes, masculine and strong. The girls are weak and are to be saved. The step-mothers are evil and ready to cause harm. An example of this literature for the children are the Greek myths like, "Hansel and Gretel', Beauty and the beast', Rapunzel, snow white and the seven dwarfs,' devilla." During socialization, the artefacts also play a role in gender differentiation. The things surrounding a girl are different as those surrounding a boy, and thus, socialization plays a distinct role in the differentiation of gender distinct behaviour.

(i) Patriarchy male supremacy

Patriarchy is described as a system of power in which the male possess superior power and economic privilege.

The dominant superior male and subservient inferior females have been seen as a product and characteristic of historically inherited patriarchal cultural traditions. According to Nelson (1987), women are assigned to lower castes under patriarchy and are treated in all respects as inferiors who are subordinate to males. Women are often sold among the men as property which gives men the justification to mistreat them. Their economic dependence on men also forces them to exchange subordination with the cheque book. Malinowski (1976) states that legal and social attitudes shape the attitudes of men so that in patriarchy where men have absolute power they tend to use it to subjugate women. Studies by Malinowski on patriarchal and matriarchal communities shows that male dominance is characteristic of patriarchal and not matriarchal societies. He gives an example of the Trobriand islanders. The men are not the head of the family and thus their personal attitudes towards their wives are entirely changes. The men will seldom quarrel their wives and hardly try to brutalize them. This is entirely different from that of a patriarch.

Thus, notions of male dominance and female subordination can, therefore, be seen to be based on social-cultural factors that include the system of patriarchy. Other natural factors like that of a woman's menstruation, gestation lactation and caring for young ones have make them more sedentary and less mobile wheel, on the other hand, men are not tied down by natural activities (responsibilities) are more mobile. Men have had to be aggressive due to their nature of activities like hunting and protecting their homesteads. In some communities, such as among the Maasai, a man had to kill a lion before getting married. These socio-cultural and historical factors go a long way in differentiating sex specific behaviour. Culture is, thus, a large contributing factor in the prescription and proscription of gender identity and behaviour.

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

There was a language barrier especially in the rural setting where few housewives or women spoke English or Kiswahili. A translator was thus called for. Some women tended to shy away from some of the questions in the presence of their husbands who insisted on being present during the interview. A special request had to be made for the husbands to leave. Some women refused to be interviewed and no amount of pleading could convince them, thus they were left alone. Some men refused their wives to be interviewed and the men had to be interviewed instead. Others men were in a hurry and thus the interview had to be hurried. Most men were not quite receptive as they claimed the interview would poison their wives' mind. With a little persuasion they agreed.

No major problem was encountered, all in all it was an enlightening experience.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 WOMAN OF AFRICA

Sweeper
 Smearing floors and walls
 with cow dung and black soil
 cook, ayan, the baby tied on your back
 vomiting.
 Washer of dishes,
 planting, weeding, harvesting,
 storekeeper, builder,
 Runner of errands,
 Cart, lorry
 Donkey...
 woman of Africa
 What are you not?*

* OKOT P'BITEK: SONG OF OCOL: E.A.P.H
 NAIROBI, (1970) P. 41.

4.2 AFRICAN TRADITIONAL PERSPECTIVE

In African traditional ways of life roles in the development of the community were shared and divided according to sex and age. These roles were governed by certain norms some of which were based on myths or certain cultural and religious values. However, whatever the case this was, it is rather obvious and indisputable that women fully participated in all aspects of making the community to be able to sustain itself throughout. And the women have continued to do so up to today.

However, in some societies it is sad that the role of women was not fully recognised and the credit for everything in these communities went to men. Indeed, the question of where the women were entitled to any credit was out of question. The women themselves accepted and internalized it as a way of life and they, therefore, never saw the emphasis of what they did and achieved as necessary as they were part and parcel of the community.

Some examples of these communities in Kenya are the Meru and Akamba who never fully recognised the women's roles. Interestingly, among the Meru the work of constructing a house was and is still done by both men and women. Men cut the poles and construct the structure. The women cut the grass, make the mud and, in certain cases, thatch the hut. The question now becomes, who actually builds houses among the Meru? The answer is men, naturally. This shows how the role of the women in most societies was ignored or overlooked and the credit surprisingly, going to the men. This according to the men. What is the aid of this sentence?

~~Among~~ the Akamba the making or starting of a new farm from a virgin forest is the work of the men while women did the planting, cultivated and harvested. Amazingly, again, when it comes to the question of who feeds the family the answer is still the men. Here again, the role of the women feeding the family is ignored or what she does or her contribution is not seen as worth mentioning.

However, this has not always been the case. This is because some African countries, women held very important positions, e.g. those of Queens, Queen mothers, and what they said or did was highly respected and recognised. In some communities, for instance the igbo in Nigeria, women had stronger positions than the men as they played an active role in trade. Among the hunters and gatherers, no sex held a superior role. Men and women tended to be viewed as equal since they both had vital roles to play in supporting their families and communities. Instances of matrilineal and matriarchal societies are found in Malaysia, Java, the Philippines, India and in Southern and West Africa, whereby women are treated equally and recognised by men. Women and their work roles are recognised and also respected. This study was, however, done mainly in the patrilineal societies of Kenya where a lot of female discrimination occurs. As mentioned above among such societies are the Meru and the Akamba.

4.3 MODERN PERSPECTIVE

With the coming of the colonialists, missionaries and education in Kenya Africa, or where a lot of change has taken place worth mentioning is the way some traditional roles have taken an entirely different direction or have experienced complete changes according to the needs of a changing world. With access to equal educational facilities and opportunities as well as technical knowledge women now have equal employment opportunities and are therefore making contribution towards the national development. Women of all categories have organised themselves and formed self-help groups, merry-go-rounds with activities ranging from the growing of vegetables, family planning awareness groups, general welfare, operating bus companies and many others. This type of organisation has been aimed at improving the welfare of these women, their families as well as the community at large. The role of women is, indeed, a driving force behind the improvement of the economic well-being of the country not only in Kenya but all over the world. In Kenya women have taken an active role in the field of food production which is a very significant contribution towards national development. This is significant because a hungry nation cannot embark on any development programmes or projects. The women in Kenya have also played significant roles in various development activities which has made the government establish a favourable policy towards women and development and it has realised the necessity of helping the women in this regard. The appointment of women to high government posts is also another indication of the growing recognition of the woman's role. An example is the appointment of Mrs. Nyiva Mwendwa as the Minister of Culture and Social Services. There are also frequent reviews of our legal system on the matters relating to women.

Despite a reduction of the gender difference in the occupational world in recent years, one occupational role remains entirely feminine and that is of housewife. There is no law which bans men from this occupation but the weight of economic, social and psychological pressures is against their entry into it. The equation of femaleness with housewifery is basic to the structure of modern society and to the ideology of gender roles which pervades it. Today women are faced with a double burden which they have to carry. This burden includes housework and the job market. At the end of the day, housework is still looked at as women's work and they still have to do it. Research has shown of a few cases of men who help their partners in housework and although they do it they would not admit it before their friends so as to avoid ridicule. Others do not mind doing it at all and they appreciate it.

It has also been shown this is not always the case ~~do~~ there are work roles that are gendered and to do them would be going against nature.

4.4 MALE / FEMALE SEX ROLES

This list of roles show how men and women participated in joint roles in pre colonial Kenya. This has changed after the introduction of monetary economy by colonialists.

In the traditional African community the female roles included:

- (i) Looking after children
- (ii) Planting, hoeing, weeding and harvesting crops like (a) maize (b) millet (c) beans (d) cassava and many others
- (iii) Cooking
- (iv) Fetching and cutting firewood
- (v) Storing and caring for food supply
- (vi) Tending hives and making honey
- (vii) Grinding grain and pounding cane for beer
- (viii) Thatching hives and making honey
- (ix) Sewing skins
- (x) Making pottery, basketry and beadwork
- (xi) Trading in grains
- (xii) House chores (such as washing dishes, clothes, sweeping)

The male roles included:

- (i) Hunting and fighting
- (ii) Legal and ritual duties
- (iii) Clearing the field, breaking up the soil surface for women
- (iv) Tending and trading livestock
- (v) Erecting building structures, fences and granaries
- (vi) Collecting honey and making honey
- (vii) Planting certain crops like bananas

Because of the socio-economic changes, the traditional mode of production has changed. The most obvious changes are seen in the division of labour, with more children and young people enrolling in education, most of the duties which used to be performed by them have become the responsibility of the older people.

Rural-urban migration too has affected as a result many duties that used to belong to the males have now fallen into the hands of females creating some adverse effects on the general well-being of the family members especially the infants. Today, apart from taking care of their homes which includes washing dishes and clothes, taking care of children and husbands as well as sweeping and cleaning,

Women are still to be found in the work force. The men play largely the role of bringing home the pay cheques and they also play a large role in the house hold economy which includes paying rent and paying school fees, among others.

CONCLUSION

These are a few views chosen as illustrators of the views on work roles. Many women share the same view of change, that their plight should be highlighted and something done about it. In the foregoing research, it has been demonstrated that existing views portray women's work as negative, non-work and not worth of remuneration.

Emphasis has been laid on highlighting the existing definition of women's work and the basis for this definition on grounds that these negative views need highlighting in order that changes can be made to alter these views and give women's work the recognition it deserves.

It has also been proved that women carry dual burdens of housework and salaried work. Their work includes cooking, cleaning, washing clothes and utensils, fetching firewood, digging and taking care of children.

Despite a reduction of the gender differences in the occupational world in recent years, one occupational role remains entirely feminine and that is the role of housewife. Changes should be made in order to integrate women in development projects. Attitudes about women's work should also change. There is a need for policy makers to incorporate women in development plans if nations are to develop. Finally, whatever the differences between males and females, they should not be used to marginalise the women instead both sexes should work together for the good of the nation.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Hallo, How are you. My name is _____ and I am a student from the University of Nairobi. I am carrying out a research on gender work rules. The findings will be used to write my dissertation in B.A Anthropology. I hope you will spare time to answer my questions.

1. BACKGROUND DATA

- I) Name and age of respondent
- II) Number and sex of children
- III) Children at school? home?
- IV) Occupation of husband
- V) Occupation of woman paid work whether done at home or outside home
- VI) Hours of husbands absence at home
- VII) Who looks after the children when wife is out?
- VIII) Woman's education
 - 1) Primary school 2) 'O' levels 3) 'A' levels
 - 4) University 5) Extra training/further education
- IX) Hours of woman's paid absence at home

DOMESTIC WORK CONDITIONS

- 1) Number of people in the household
- 2) Type of home
- 3) Amenities: any television, radio, water running from taps, electricity, energy (electricity, firewood, charcoal
- 4) Are there any household aids?
 - 1) Washing machine
 - 2) House girl/maid, houseboy
 - 3) Dishwasher
 - 4) Anything that makes work easier and bearable
 - 5) Does spouse help? if so, with what
 - 6) Do offsprings (children) help?

DOMESTIC WORK ROUTINE

- 1) What do you do in an ordinary day?
- 2) When do you get all your work done?
- 3) When does your day begin in an ordinary day?
- 4) If working, (job market) when do you do housework?
- 5) When does your day end?

ATTITUDES TOWARDS WORK (Paid and unpaid work)

- 1) What are your feelings about housework? (Ask any male present)
- 2) Do you feel there should be shared responsibilities? (in the house hold)
- 3) Do you think your work is easy and fairly manageable?
- 4) Do you think there should be a distinction between male and female roles (both man and women)

SOURCE OF ROLE IDENTITY

- a) Who brought you up (if mother or female relative)
- b) Did she work outside the home when respondent was a child? if yes,
- c) Do you know why?
- d) Was she happy? if not why?
- e) Do you remember wanting to be like your mother?
- f) Did your mothers life impress you if so how and if not why?
- g) Was there a distinction in work done in the house between you and your brothers or your mother and your father?
- h) What sort of work roles did you play as a child?

6

- i) Have you worked since you got married if yes, has it been difficult? if yes, why have you continued to work?
- ii) Why do you work now? (paid job)
- iii) Do you enjoy in your work?
- iv) What do you enjoy
- v) Do you ever have days for resting?
- vi) What do you feel generally about working mothers? (ask any male around)

MARITAL RELATIONSHIP: ORGANISATION OF THE ACTIVITIES

- 1) Does your husband help
 - i) Occasionally
 - ii) Regularly
 - iii) Not at all in the household
- 2) If yes in what way? if not why?
- 3) What do you do in the evenings (and the men)
- 4) How often do you go out and where?
- 5) Weekends, what do you do?
- 6) What are your duties as a s (i) Wife
(ii) Husband
- 7) What are your ideas of leisure activities? Do you participate?

Thank you very much for your co-operation. It is highly appreciated.

N/B Names have been changed for anonymity as requested by people interviewed.

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