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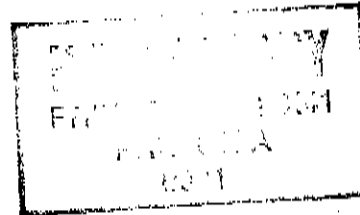
## The Impact of Rural-Urban Migration on the Rural Economy in Eastern Cape Villages

by

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### Introduction:



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Although rural-urban migration in the Third World countries is well documented process the causes and impact of rural-urban migration is a dynamic phenomena that keep changing as external forces assume different dimensions. Levels and extent of poverty in rural areas, the needs for cash income and prospects of employment in urban areas, all which are directly linked to rural-urban migration, keep changing over the years. The purpose in this paper is to explain the economic causes of migration and also to investigate the impact of rural-urban migration of rural economy. Research work on this theme has largely focused on causes of migration and the impact that this has on the economy of rural areas. A closer analysis of rural-urban migration reveals very complex, complementary and at times contradictory processes leading to rural-urban migration. Whilst poverty and continued deterioration of rural agricultural economy appears to be the main causes of rural-urban migration it is also true that rural-urban migration accelerate the deterioration of rural agricultural economy.

This paper also attempts to investigate relationship between rural-urban migration and the position of rural women in the rural economy. While numerous scholars have analysed who migrates, and to a certain extent what causes migration and the economic effects of migration there have been little in-depth study of the effects of rural-urban migration on women and the role of women in the reproduction of migrant labour force. Migrant labour systems has been studied as a male dominated event and even when women are mention in rural-urban studies their position has never been central. The role of women in this oscillatory migrant system has always been analysed in terms of the impact of male migrant labour within the demographic households. Whilst it an established fact that the high male out migration has led to modification of the structure

of family life and has transformed women's social and economic position to their detriment the central role that women play in the migrant labour system has been undermined. The intention in this article is to identify and demonstrate the central role that women play in the migrant labour system.

Rural-Urban migration reinforces unequal relations of domination and subordination not only between women and men but also between women and capitalism. The argument presented here is that urbanisation and migrant labour system is an extension of oppressive gender relations in rural areas. Urbanisation and capitalist development provides men with greater power over women and therefore the struggle of rural women against patriarchal capitalist economy becomes synonymous with their struggle against industrial urban capitalism. Based on surveys conducted in rural villages of the Eastern Cape the paper concludes that within the migrant labour system, much of the burden of social reproduction of labour power and agricultural production is borne by women to the benefit of both men and capital. Urbanisation and reproduction of migrant labour has been possible through the exploitation of women.

### **Research Objectives and Research Methodology:**

The research is based on qualitative surveys at Household and community village level seeking to understand the socio-economic impact of rural-urban migration on rural. Eight villages were selected to investigate and analyse the causes and economic impact of rural-urban migration as well as to understand the role of that women play in rural-urban migration. The rationale was to select villages under different land tenure systems to allow for comparative analysis of conditions and trends in rural-urban migration and also to understand the conditions of access to productive resources by rural women. Two villages were selected from each of the Communal land tenure, Trust tenure, Quitrent and Freehold land tenure systems. However land tenure was not the only difference between the villages. Planning and spatial layout of the villages is different as villages were affected differently by government-initiated social engineering known as Betterment Planning. Villages under trust, quitrent have been restructured and conditions of access to land resources redefined, planned and organised according

to the provisions of Betterment Planning. A survey questionnaire was designed to collect data. Interviews were conducted with heads of households and their absence an adult member of household was interviewed. The intention here was to collect all information related to household demographic structure, socio-economic position of households and power and authority distribution within the household.

Type of tenure	Size of sample	% of Female Headed Households	% of Female Rural-Urban-migrants	% of Rural-urban Migrants
Communal	150	20%	8%	38%
Quitrent	120	76%	25%	67%
Trust	120	78%	23%	58%
Freehold	50	49%	28%	61%

### **Rural-Urban Migration and Households Demographic Structures**

The impact of rural-urban migration in rural villages is first noted at household level. In all eight villages, households had a high number female-headed households and 55% of all sampled households had female heads of households, comprising of widows, migrants' wives and unmarried adult women. The majority of female heads of household is concentrated in ages between 26 and 55 years and in higher age groups the proportion of female heads decrease rapidly. Most migrant heads of households retire at an early age and therefore the number of female heads decrease from the age of fifty years. There is a significantly greater proportion of female heads of households in villages under quitrent, freehold and trust land tenure systems than households in communal land tenure systems. In villages under a traditional

communal tenure systems unmarried adult females are not legally allowed to own a dwelling plots. This explains the lower percentage of female headed households in these villages. In villages under trust and quitrent tenure systems unmarried adult females are entitled to a dwelling plot

In order to understand the position and role of women within the household demographic structure a distinction has to be made between the de facto and de jure female heads of households. This distinction is important in two respects. First it indicates the extent to which women have responsibility with power and responsibility without power. Secondly the distinction helps to show that womens' problems cannot homogenised and that the two categories experience different problems under the patriarchal capitalist societies. De facto female heads of households are those whose husband were absentee migrants and the extent of powers they have over the decision making processes were much more limited than the de jure female heads of households who are either widows or unmarried females heads of households.

De facto female heads of households had delegated responsibilities and these were clearly defined by their migrant husbands. All interviewed de facto female heads of households stated that the extent of powers they have in the decision making processes were defined by their absentee husbands. In these were on issues of management of households resources and wealth involving stock, land use and how to spend household monthly income. On all these matters women have to consult their absent husbands or perhaps seek the opinion of the elders closet in-law-male relative. In the presents of the eldest son in the household who has reached mature age, migrant wives' authority and power is even less that of her own son. Most female heads of households argued that their sons were very much aware that in the absence of their migrant fathers they have more powers than their own mothers. Although it may appear that the powers and authority of migrant husbands and their sons emerge from within the households, these power relationships are defined and confirmed by the communities themselves. Therefore the subordination of women in this respect emerges from the patriarchal nature of African societies where women constitute another form of property owned by men. (Mcfadden 1995). Women become a property

of men through a number of processes including marriage rituals when father hands over her daughter to her future husband and from that moment the husband owns his wife no more than another property. So in any patriarchal system ownership of women by men is very central.

De jure female heads of households have their powers and responsibilities defined differently as there may be no immediate male within the heads. The powers and responsibilities they have is determined by the fact that there are no immediate male heads of households and therefore appeared to exercise more powers in the decision making within the households. They have powers to decide on management of household's resources and income. All de jure heads of households stated that in matters which appear to be expressing community values they have to consult the closet in-law-male relatives. Therefore at community level they experience the same limitations as the de facto heads of households. However in the presents of a son who has reached mature age. In all study villages the communities confers more powers and authority to the eldest sons and therefore exercise more powers than their mothers.

Migrants' wives were asked to describe their responsibilities, roles and experiences as de facto heads of household. Women as de facto heads of households expressed their responsibilities in very clear terms and they were able to distinguish those responsibilities, which they would not normally, do when their migrant husbands are at home from their own normal routine activities as women. The duties which are normally done by husband when at home included looking after the cattle and small stock (sheep and goats), ploughing and preparing soil for sowing and bringing crops home during harvest season. Almost all de facto female heads of households classified these activities as their husbands' responsibilities.

Migrant labourers interviewed identified these duties as traditionally their duties and that women perform these duties in their absence within the responsibility framework that they provide. They also expect their wives operate and carry-out these duties within the delegated powers that they define. Any infringement of these defined and delegated powers in either way is taken very seriously as it may be regarded as a challenge to

their authority. Although women have a responsibility to look after the cattle and goats they do not have powers to sell or slaughter these animals without the permission from their absent husband. Women argued that they have to write letters to their absent husband and request permission stating the reasons for such an actions. This is another terrain of struggle by women within the patriarchal legal system, which confirms power, and authority of men over women. However it may be wrong to assume that women accept and feel comfortable in their subordinate position, that women have responsibilities without powers does not suggests that women do not attempt to undermine the system that subordinates them. There are always tensions and conflicts between male migrant labourers and their wives and very often the source of conflict emanates from power relationships.

### **Rural-Urban Migration and Households Labour Force**

Rural-urban migration has a significant impact of household labour supply. The average size of adult household labour available for agriculture is three. The amount of labour available to each household is determined by household size and as well as the migrant labour system. Women labour force in the 16--65 age groups accounted for more than constitute over seventy five per cent of the total agricultural labour force in study villages, compared to less than thirty-five per cent that is contributed by males. Male labour in rural agriculture varies according to employment opportunities in urban labour market. The labour deficiency of these households results in their having small-cultivated areas and they cannot produce surplus over and above subsistence needs, which they can sell for cash to pay for credit.

Given the labour intensive nature of rural agriculture a large household should mean a larger supply of family labour. But in rural villages large family sizes do not necessarily imply a larger supply of family labour. Although the study villages have large households, children of less than 18years make up the greatest proportion of household members. Access to child labour for women may depend on the availability of children for agricultural and domestic tasks but vicissitudes of demography and the distance travelled by children to school each day always reduce or remove child labour. Migrants'

households and female-headed households with poor resources usually got their lands ploughed late in the season or were only able to get a portion of the field ploughed. Female headed households are further disadvantaged where traditional systems of mutual help have broken down and have not been replaced by other forms of assistance.

Rural-urban migration reduces the family labour during the most critical periods of peasant farming activities. Ploughing and weeding therefore become the responsibility of migrants' wives, their children and older members of households. Share-cropping in these villages is limited by the fact that it is officially illegal and the share-croppers are not protected should either the landowner or the share-cropper default. In these villages most respondents argued that a large majority of migrant landholders do not make arrangements for someone to use their land during their absence. This was because of fear by migrant landowners that should they allow somebody else to use their lands, they might lose their land rights.

Villages under communal tenure system the magnitude of male absenteeism was much less than in villages with other forms of land tenure systems. Labour shortage was therefore not a major problem in these villages. In communal villages problems, which arise from the unfavourable combination of land and labour, are usually solved by the use, at the peak demands of labour, of the system known as *llima* (work-parties). This is a strategy adopted by labour-short households and it involves organising and inviting nearest neighbours to help with a specific task such as ploughing, weeding and even harvesting. If a homestead head intends to organise a work-party, he will announce the forthcoming event at a suitable public meeting or any large gathering of people. The very word *llima* indicates that there will be plenty of food and traditional beer provided both during and after work at the organiser's homestead. Neighbours are free to bring any form of help and sometimes they may bring a team of oxen, some bring extra ploughs and some offer their labour. Whilst four or five teams of eight to ten oxen each team would be ploughing, three or four teams would be planting the seeds into the land. This often involves a huge operation and more than four hectares of arable can be ploughed in three hours. Working parties in these villages represent a form of free

labour. The only costs involved are in preparing the meal and a good supply of traditional beer. For the neighbours working parties are popular because among other things they are a form of social occasion. They bring the whole community together for a common objective. However most respondents indicated that the working party system is dying out. Work-parties attracted by the offer of entertainment have given way to the hiring of labour. Group assistance has become commercialised and individuals now have a tendency to sell their labour for agricultural assistance to a neighbour.

The capacity of households to cultivate a certain size of land was largely determined by the amount of family labour available. The larger the household the more family labour available. Because of changes in the demographic structures of households, the area of arable land under cultivation also changed from year to year. In these villages therefore the most crucial variables were the availability of labour during the ploughing season, the ability of households to raise a team of oxen and the availability of capital to buy agricultural inputs.

From the above analysis it appears that female-headed households, whether they be headed by widows or by women who never married, are increasingly insecure economically. They find it difficult to farm and any assistance from their extended family is less likely than in the past. As cooperation between rich households and the poor ones declines, the division between rich and poor becomes wider and more rigid. This is particularly the case in villages under trust and quitrent land tenure systems. Most female heads of households stated that in the past, many redistributive mechanisms existed and the extended families were expected to assist those in need. While families continue to share responsibilities today, for example people still help relatives to plough, the frequency and the extent of cooperation has diminished significantly. The break-up of the traditional extended family into small nuclear families has also contributed to changes in family relations and households demographic structures. With the emergence of smaller nuclear families people share less within a narrower family circle. These changes have resulted primarily from modification of the rural economy. Whilst the role of wage employment has increased significantly, so also has the need for cash to buy goods and services. The penetration of a money



economy and capitalist relations of production has altered old forms of cooperation and exchange.

### **Economic Impact of Rural-Urban Migration**

Economic causes of rural-urban migration are complex and involving a wide range of different complementary contradictory factors. In many instances causes of rural-urban migration are compounded by the trends and nature of the development of urban industrial labour needs. However it is possible to identify two major broad almost generic causes of rural-urban migration. The first one is the collapse and failure of rural peasant agricultural economy to support a steadily increasing rural population. The second major cause rural-urban migration is social engineering and ideological need to restructure and control the development of rural economy and the movement of rural population. The creation of '**native reserves**' by the colonial administrators and reinforced by the '**homeland consolidation**' programme not only restricted and confined Blacks into certain areas but also redefined conditions of access to productive resources within those areas. The collapse of rural peasant economy in these areas not only deepened the levels poverty but also generated a pool of free labour forces, which became available for urban industrial sector.

The analysis of who migrates, what are the causes of rural-urban migration, the social-economic profile of migrants suggests rural-urban migrants can be classified into major two major categories. The first are the poor (poorest of the poor), those who are illiterate, who lack capital resources like cattle, small stock. The purpose of entering migrant labour system for this group is to earn an income for households. Income derived from urban industrial sector is the only reliable source of income for this group. The second category is young ambitious migrants, who have limited capital resources and access to land and other productive resources. For this category of migrants, the purpose to migrate is to supplement income derived from agriculture. In all villages income from migrant labour system continues to be an important component of the household income, where in all rural villages where 3 out of every 5 adult males is a migrant worker. Thirty-five percent of migrant labourers work in Gauteng and 26 percent work in Cape Town and 21% work in East London and Port Elizabeth and others work

in other urban centres within the Eastern Cape. There is a gross dependence on remittances, an average of 40%, followed by state pensions 35% and agriculture 15% and the balance from other income generating activities.

Two important points arise out of this. One is that Government policy at the time used the homelands system, together with the influx control system as the means to controlling urbanisation. The second important point here is that inward and outward migratory patterns still exists. Although the apartheid state that drove the centrifugal forces no longer pertains, the centripetal forces that push people to undertake migratory journeys for work or to seek employment in urban centres still does. The question that needs to be posed here is will rural development, of which land reform may be construed as an aspect, assist in controlling rural-urban movement, i.e. urbanisation. To put it more bluntly, will land reform and agricultural development in rural areas and/or displaced urban settlements, keep people from drifting to the major urban centres? What probably need to be understood today are the precise migratory patterns. Developing a series of categories of different migratory patterns may assist in proposing land reform and development policies in accordance with the following:

- the way people use migration as a strategy in household survival,
- the possibilities of developing economic nodal points along migratory routes (for example, a question might be: do migratory routes coincide with provincial and national SDIs?),
- the priorities of central government in relation to urbanisation and rural development.

The fact that households in villages under trust, quitrent and freehold land tenure systems have the highest percentage of migrant labourers, most of whom work in Gauteng, coupled with the fact that remittances in these households contribute the highest component of total household income, suggests that households in these villages rely on this stable urban based income. It is now a well-established fact that rural agriculture is supported and maintained by urban-rural remittances. Households who receive reliable remittances are likely to have their lands ploughed. Migrants seek actively to sustain their connections with their rural communities because of a number

reasons including continued access to social security that rural communities provide, access to land which all afford them permanent security by contrast with the endemic insecurity of life in towns. On the other hand it is to the benefit of urban employers that migrant labourers retain their contacts with home rural villages for obvious reasons of externalisation of costs of reproduction of labour.

Rural-urban remittances fulfil a number of different functions and migrants were asked why they remit. Several different reasons were offered by migrants for sending cash home and these can be listed as follows:

1. Attempt at maintaining family and marriage ties between absent husband and wife with children.
2. Sons who wish to support their homes (and ensure their inheritance) capital for investment in homestead stock and crop.
3. Production, and subsistence cash upon which poor households depend almost totally.

Migrant labourers remit largely to maintain family and marriage ties. This appeared to be the most important reason for remitting. There was no difference in amount remitted or in frequency of remitting between migrants who had arable land and those who had no access to arable land. But it appeared that migrants who remit regularly are more respected by their households and are feared by their wives. Remittances therefore constitutes a means of control over women's activities and migrants exercise more power and have more authority when they remit regularly. This is another source subordination and control over women by men.

There are always tensions and conflicts between migrant labourers and migrants' wives on how to spend the remitted income. The extent to which this conflict emerges because of different priorities between migrants and their wives or is due to the fact that remittances represent a source of power for men and subordination of women is subject to debate. Migrant labourers appear to exercise some control over the money remitted to their families. Most migrant labourers stated that they often instruct their wives to set

some remitted income aside for purchasing cattle and also earmarked a portion of their remittances for investment in arable production. A smaller portion was also released directly into the hands of dependents. There is therefore tension between various short-term and long-term uses of income. Migrant labourers stated that they were under pressure to provide for their future retirement while still in wage employment. Migrant labourers perceive their wives as not committed to long-term family investment.

In households, which had land and livestock, these long-term and short-term objectives could be reconciled to some extent. But in those households which had neither land nor livestock or which had only livestock there was a bitter struggle between husbands and wives in particular and more generally with other dependents. There were more oppressive relations between migrants and their wives in households, which had no, access to land and livestock. Women in these households were more keen to look for informal jobs and engage in informal sector but migrants most migrants wives indicated that they had to get permission from their absent husband. Migrant labourers are often reluctant to allow their wives to take local jobs and this is often a very critical source of conflict not only between the spouses but also it challenges the traditional patriarchy economic system.

In seeking long-term security, migrant labourers tended to invest in agriculture and indicated a preference for cattle in particular. This was partly attributed to the social status attached to cattle and also because women cannot abuse this form of investment.

Migrant labourers with better jobs were able to remit reasonable sums relatively often. When households held land, migrants stated that they were willing to remit for investment in the maintenance and use of land, thus they had a reason to remit not merely for their dependents' subsistence, but also to ensure that their fields were worked and that their land was ploughed at the most opportune time, that seed and fertiliser were purchased and that planting was effected properly. This was more frequent in villages where subsistence's agriculture had collapsed to much lower levels and where rights to land were linked to beneficial use of the land. Migrant labourers in

these villages stated that they expected their wives to arrange and oversee these activities, which included hiring tractors and planters and they were provided with money for this purpose. From the migrants' perspective, the purpose of remittances was to provide further income in the form of subsistence agricultural production and also to secure their future in the village, and they had to acknowledge that they needed their wives' management skills to look after some of their long-term village interests.

Although women may have rights to family land, they often lack the resources to make farming worthwhile. They tend to have limited means of ploughing and little labour to work the land. Households headed by female are significantly poorer than male-headed households. It was also observed that female households have fewer farming implements and less family labour, in comparison with households where the male heads are present.

### **Women as rural-urban migrants**

It is often assumed that migrant labour system is a male dominated process and women's' role is defined as problematic only in so far as they are poor farmers, incapable of maintaining sustainable peasant agriculture once their husbands depart. However migrant labour system is not a male event and the collapse of peasant farming is largely a result of the socio-economic system within which women work as farmers.

Evidence from the study villages suggest that migrant labour system has been for many decades dependent on women' ability to perform duties which are normally done by men. The geographical separation of men and women has also meant a restructuring of the traditional division of labour to the detriment of women. Although urban industrial relations of production are territorial separated from rural villages, their activities have a direct bearing on the lives rural women. All interviewed male migrant labourers acknowledged the fact that it was only because their wives could carry out these duties that they were able to leave the villages and migrate to cities. However this shift in the division of labour must be understood not to imply that migrant labourers have lost power and control over such matters but that men are able to reduce their responsibility

and have minimum share in the burden of management of household resources. They retain full control and have final say on all matters related to household resources. Many studies have shown the dependency of industrial capitalism (at least in its initial stages) on the availability of cheap labour from the African Reserves and that subsistence peasant agriculture played a very important role in subsidising the cost of labour (Wolpe 1972, 1983, 1995, Legassick 1974, 1976; Legassick and Wolpe 1976 and Murray 1984). All these point to the importance of subsistence agriculture as a necessary aspect in the reproduction of labour power. African villages have been instrumental in the development of industrial capitalism in two respects. First, as a pool of army of cheap labour force and secondly as centres for the reproduction of labour force through the maintenance of subsistence agriculture. This suggests that the processes of production and reproduction of labour force were extremely important for the development of capitalist economy in South Africa. However an important question of who maintains the subsistence agriculture and who is responsible for the reproduction of labour force is never asked. It is answers to these questions, which could reveal the genesis of subordination of women and their struggles against both the external forces of a capitalist system and against a more subtle indigenous patriarchal system.

Whilst it is true that migrant labour system was and is still dependent on male migrants retaining access to rural subsistence production and that production being insufficient to meet family needs, there is more than that functionalist perspective. Migrant labour system contributes not only to the perpetuation of dependence and underdevelopment African villages but also to the transformation of division of labour which all reinforces women' subordination. The costs of reproduction of labour are subsidised by rural subsistence production, which bore the costs of the reproduction of labour and maintenance of workers when they are unemployed (Wolpe 1983, 1995; Mini 1993; Walshe 1963 1963; Legassick 1976, Arrighi 1970.). All these studies show that the externalisation of costs of reproduction of labour has been an important strategy for the capitalists. The former South African Native Reserves and the Bantustans have long been recognised as centres for cheap labour production but most studies have failed to recognised that fact that it women who are victims of the process. The most important

reason for capitalism to pay for migrant labour power below its costs of reproduction is the availability of a surplus power which is produced and reproduced outside capitalist mode of production and this is often women. Women perform most rural activities that have use value but no exchange value. These activities include reproduction functions and related activities that can be summarised as general core and management of the household and its members. For most women home is work and work is home. They have responsibility but they are wielding no economic power in terms of resources and income they command as individuals. Most migrant labourers, during wage bargaining processes are incapable of articulating the duties and functions performed by their wives and therefore women's labour continue to be free labour.

### **Rural-Urban Migration and Access to Land Resources**

Migrant workers have been, and continue to be, an integral part of the household in rural villages. As the table 2 indicates migrant workers remittances contribute on average 45% to household income'. Rural peasant agriculture is currently sustained through remittances. Two important issues arise out of this scenario. (a) Of those migrants 80% work in the major urban centres. These are long distance migrants, who often leave their households to be run by *de facto* female heads, usually wives. Land policy at the moment supports female-headed families, particularly those in rural areas. The legislation on this score is a little ambiguous: would *de facto* female household heads constitute a beneficiary of land reform policies, or would it be the *de jure* male migrant head even though such a person is more often not at home? Even if female-headed households are the legal beneficiaries, the *de facto* situation of male authority and control, not to mention violence, might outweigh any intention the state has in changing the status quo. This as de Wet points out raises the issue of how the Constitution law and the Bill of Rights deals with customary law with regard to tenure. Can the rural poor, and in particular women, afford to take matters to court to exercise their rights under the Bill of Rights, rather than under customary law. (b) There are different kinds of migrants and their destinations, and intentions, appear quite different. If as de Wet (1987) has suggested, there are two kinds of migrants leaving rural villages; those in stable long term employment in places such as Gauteng, and those

who are driven by sheer desperation to the squatter settlements in urban centers with no fixed occupation, and as farm labourers on commercial farms, then this affects the way households derive incomes. In short the primary sources of income within a multiple package of livelihoods, and the consequent consumption patterns, differentiates them. As May (1996) has suggested in the context of KwaZulu-Natal, the distinction between different types of households based on an ensemble of livelihood packages not only affects the way households plan or make strategic and tactical decisions, but also is important has to what kind of measures can be undertaken to either develop productive employment, or support welfare measures to alleviate poverty.

Two important points arise out of this. One is that Government policy at the time used the homelands system, together with the influx control system as the means to controlling urbanisation. The second important point here is that inward and outward migratory patterns still exists. Although the apartheid state that drove the centrifugal forces no longer pertains, the centripetal forces which push people to undertake migratory journeys for work or to seek employment in urban centres still does. The question that needs to be posed here is will rural development, of which land reform may be construed as an aspect, assist in controlling rural-urban movement, i.e. urbanisation. To put it more bluntly, will land reform and agricultural development in rural areas and/or displaced urban settlements, keep people from drifting to the major urban centres? What probably need to be understood today are the precise migratory patterns. Developing a series of categories of different migratory patterns may assist in proposing land reform and development policies in accordance with the following:

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- the priorities of central government in relation to urbanisation and rural development.

The most crucial problem facing women in rural villages is the question of access to



land as defined by land tenure systems. In all sampled villages women have no direct access to arable land on their own right but through or by virtue of a prior relationship with man. Provisions of tenure systems preclude direct allocation of arable land to women. The extent to which this can be attributed to traditional customs or to colonial and post-colonial government manipulation of traditional communal land tenure and formalisation of customary law is subject to debate. A precise analysis of the genesis of women's subordination with regard to access to land constitute a challenge to both traditional customary laws as its provisions provide the basis for communal tenure system and to official government land laws as they set the basis for the provisions of trust, quitrent and freehold tenure systems. It is through such a careful analysis that the origins of the oppression of women in the processes of production and reproduction of labour force can be identified.

Precise identification of those specific provisions of individual land tenure systems, which discriminate against women, constitutes an important task in the programme of rural land restructuring. The World Bank report of 1993 (based on the Conference on Land Redistribution Options in South Africa 1993) attributes the subordinate legal position of women with regard to landownership to Customary Law. The World Bank has also recommended the redefinition the term Household to include female-headed households who would then enjoy equivalent status as male-headed households. Whilst this may put female-headed households on equal position with male headed households experience from African countries suggests that this official position is not always a panacea to problems of women subordination. There is always a gap between government official position and daily on the ground practices. In Zimbabwe women's legal status with regard to land was redefined by (Legal Age of Majority Act 1992) and women have become eligible for land allocation but most women still have access land to land through man. On resettlement schemes plots are normally given to man as head of household and married couples do not have joint ownership (Pankhurst 1991). The precise problem is that communal land tenure system is based patriarchal relations, which precedes all other forms of economic, political and social control (Bozzoli 1983; 1995, McFadden 1995). In their struggle to retain authority and control over women, men are able to draw upon external community based social resources.

Women are being called upon to maintain a system of subsistence living, which is framed by a patriarchal ideology, and their capacity to do this is being undermined by both external and internal forces. In addition, legal provisions also have a serious impact on women's activities.

Provisions of Betterment planning in the Eastern Cape made it illegal for landless households to own stock and therefore rights to arable land are also linked to grazing rights. The intention here was to resettle as many people in Betterment villages as possible whilst at the same time restricting stock ownership to prevent environmental deterioration. In trust and quitrent tenure systems landless households are not entitled to grazing rights and therefore cannot keep cattle and small stock. As female-headed households constitute the greatest percentage of landless households this also suggests that they are most disadvantaged households with regard to stock ownership. What is more significant with regard to future land reallocation is that specific legal provisions make impossible for landless women to own stock. Whilst certain provisions of Betterment Planning will still have to be retained, those aspects, which discriminate against certain categories of the peasant farmers, have to be removed.

Analysis of cattle ownership by sex of head household revealed that on average female headed households own between two and three cattle. The minimum number of cattle for a plough team is six (Bembridge 1987). This indicates that few female-headed households own enough cattle for ploughing. More than two-thirds of female heads of household who had not cultivated their land mentioned the shortage of draught animals as a major problem. Others stated that even when they do own enough cattle to raise a team of oxen they often face other difficulties. They may not have labour power to span the oxen. Thus the family will either have to join forces with others to share a plough and labour or else hire a tractor or oxen. This was particularly the case in villages, which had a serious shortage of male labour during the ploughing seasons. Without direct access to land women's alternative means of land use and production such as share-cropping are constrained and opportunities for investment, credit and marketing are limited and most instances non-existent.

Women are severely disadvantaged as farmers, as they lack equal access to the land and cattle. Because women have fewer resources for crop farming, they tend to farm smaller pieces of land, at higher cost and with smaller harvest than men. The small cultivated area, in turn mean that the credit rating of female-headed households, based on ability to repay, is very low thereby restricting access to inputs. One of the characteristics of women peasant farmers appeared to be apathy. Sixty five per cent of the female-headed households had never applied for credit during the five years prior to the survey. Although it is widely recognised that modern inputs increase output substantially female-headed households felt insecure to apply for credit facilities. The local shopkeepers in the Amatola Basin and Sheshegu stated that female-headed households are reluctant to request credits for fear of inability to repay. But it appeared that local shopkeepers were also not ready to offer female heads of households help. The majority of female heads of households, when asked about the reasons for their low or non-use of farm inputs, indicated that it was not because they were refused credit as such but that they felt that, given their labour constraint and small arable lands, their ability to produce a surplus over and above their family requirements, which would then enable them to repay debt, were minimal. In fact these households were afraid to take input credit because of the high risk involved.

Women are also precluded from obtaining credit because they do not control other resources and therefore are unable to provide the necessary collateral. This situation is complicated by the fact that married women are treated as dependent and therefore may not enter into any loan contract without the consent of the husband. Widowed women have still to bring a male relative in order to enter into a loan contract. Therefore the likelihood of the female-headed households improving farm output and farm income is limited, first, by the labour deficiency which tends to limit the size of the cultivated areas and secondly by their lack of capital in the form of stock and cash.

Specific provisions of land tenure systems are directly related to subordination and oppression of female-headed households. In trust and quitrent tenure systems dwelling plots are fixed in size and are not flexible to allow for increase in household size. The

tendency for these homesteads is to break up into much smaller family units with a large number of children and very few adults. This has an effect of reducing agricultural family labour. The effects of labour migration on family labour is more severe than in other villages. In communal villages the size of dwelling plots is not fixed and the size of homesteads continues to grow as the household size increase. The effects of the migrant labour system on family labour availability are thus less severe in these villages.

Despite the difficulties faced by women in the formal labour market, women find themselves under increasing pressure to obtain employment. They are pushed out of the subsistence sector by their responsibility to provide for their children and by the low productivity of arable agriculture. While it is true that men constitute a largest proportion of migrant labourers, it is also true that women constitute a significant percentage of rural-urban migrants. Structural constraints within the capitalist economic system and in South Africa the contained urbanisation has deliberately kept the number of migratory women low. However the volume or the number of migrant women may not necessarily be significant in this paper, but it the conditions under which this process is taking place and the impact that these conditions have on women. Migrant labour system and African urbanisation is a manifestation of an inhuman socio-economic system, which operates, in complete disregard of sex and age of rural people. The imposition of added responsibilities as a result of migrant labour system meant that rural women had to maintain a rural socio-economic system, which was increasing being transformed and undermined by the penetration of modern capitalist system. With limited resources at their disposal many rural women decided to leave their home villages. There are many women migrant workers who have left their families in the rural villages.

Prior to 1986 relaxation of Influx regulation the urbanisation of South Africa's African women occurred under restrictive conditions. The effects of this were to reduce the African women number of African women below the level, which might otherwise have occurred. While this is true women have always been present South African cities. Official statistics tended to reinforce the oppression of women by belittling their numbers as insignificant. The Influx control made the urbanisation of women even more difficult than male migrants to the benefit of both men and industrial capitalists. The fact that

women were illegal migrants and there was no recruitment of female labour power left men as the only who can sell their labour power in the market. Men could enter urban employment through a number strategies including The Employment Bureau of Africa. Competition by female migrants was conveniently removed by the Influx control legislation. For the industrial capitalists and other urban employers the fact that women were illegal migrants meant that women's labour power could be exploited with no fear or respect of law therefore women's labour power was even cheaper than male labour. Women could enter formal employment at the lowest level of wage income.

Looking at age distribution and marital status of migrant women. Almost all migrant women were of working age group, that is between 16 and 55 years. Fifty four percent of these were unmarried adult female and a smaller percentage comprised of widowed and divorced single parents. More than 75% of female migrants were de jure heads of households. Reasons for migration by women varied from those, which were not different from male migrants to those peculiar to women.

1. Seeking urban employment opportunities, as rural villages have no formal employment opportunities.
2. Attempting to improve the quality of life of their families by looking at urban employment.
3. Creating new urban based household resources: Women have come to realise that rural subsistence agriculture is no longer capable of meeting their demands and that the only hope is urban employment.

Migrant women were asked not only how they got to cities but also how their migration affected their relationship with their husbands, community, including their networks of family friends. Evidence from this study suggests that female migration to cities represented a major challenge to the patriarchal power relations. By migration to cities women are attempting to assert their economic independency and to release themselves from oppressive household power relations.

Almost all interviewed female migrants stated that the primary reason for leaving their rural homes to cities was to seek urban employment and that they perceive cities as having better opportunities. However most women argued that urban employers were more bias towards male migrants and were all hoping to enter urban labour market through those sectors where male labour power was not necessarily a major requirement. Most of these rural migrant women have little or no training for industrial urban employment. The popular opinion among migrant women is to go to large cities and although these may be quite distant from their rural villages large cities were perceived as having a wider range of opportunities with better wage income. Contacts with friends or relatives who were already in urban employment were very important for migrant women. Such friends (home-girls) and relatives would act as hosts until an individual finds employment and becomes independent. Entering urban employment is not easy for women especially migrant women from rural villages. Migrant women reported that some urban employers would discriminate against rural migrant women and prefer to employ urban-born women because rural migrant women are perceived as having lower intelligent. However some very low paying employment would still prefer rural migrant women and these included such sectors as domestic employment. Whilst these differences may appear very pertinent, they illustrate that women's problems cannot homogenised and women's struggles are on different terrains.

It is important to note that no married females were engaged in migrant labour system and this category of women encountered urban environment through their migrant husbands. Most women heads of household argued that paying for ploughing has become expensive and increases the risk of incurring substantial losses due to the high cost of hiring and the possibility that the harvest may be small.

The traditional role African villages and their dual role as pools of cheap labour power and centres for reproduction of migrant labourers is no longer sustainable.

The capitalist economy has transformed and altered subsistence agriculture to the levels where it has just become unsustainable. The above evidence indicates that although the restructuring of gender division of labour in rural villages was an essential

element for migrant labour system, it is very clear that the capacities women to carry out responsibilities were severely limited. Some limitations such as access to land other forms of capital resources was restricted by the very system within which women were expected to operate. However it would not be true to say that women accept their position with little struggle. Whilst most migrant's wives stated that remittances from migrants offered migrants' wives more than basic needs for subsistence, for most women the money remitted for agricultural purposes offered more than simply a source of capital for agriculture. The money offered some form of income over and above the bare minimum needed for daily subsistence, by allowing for investment in other income generating activities outside agriculture. Remittances were often used to provide for initial capital for the informal sector. Women could use the remittances they receive to purchase items such as vegetables, fruit, for informal sector activity. Money earned in this way was then used to underwrite further investments of this kind, while some of the remitted money was put into agriculture as originally planned. This was more common in villages in which agriculture has collapsed to much lower levels and in which there was greater dependency on cash income as a major source of living. Most women involved in the informal sector stated that they derived their initial capital from migrants' remittances. Moreover most women stated that the fact that they knew they would receive money from migrants at the appropriate time gave them confidence to raise loans and advances from neighbours and the local shopkeepers. These loans too were frequently used as the basis for other small income informal generating activities such as brewing and selling traditional beer. Money accumulated from informal sector was used to purchase all items which migrant husbands either omitted to provide for or commonly made available only when they saw fit.

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