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Global Gender Inequality: Review and Analysis *(pp. 49-59)*

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Abstract: Gender inequality is one of the most pervasive forms of inequality in the world. This is not just because, it is present in most societies, but also because; it cuts across other forms of inequalities in human endeavour. This paper shows that, the geography of gender inequality reflects systematic regional differences in institutions of Kinship and family, the household patterns they have given rise to and the associated gender division of resources and responsibilities. Thus, a great deal of human behaviour is not the result of individual preferences. Rather, it is governed by institutional rules, norms and conventions that have powerful material effects in people's lives. These rules may be written or unwritten, explicit or implicit, statutory or non-statutory, but sanctified by religion, upheld by convention or embodied in the standards of family, community and society.

Key words: eradication, gender, global, globalization and inequality.

1 INTRODUCTION

Gender inequality is one of the most pervasive forms of inequality, not just because it is present in most societies, but also because it cuts across other forms of inequality across the globe. Although, gender inequality is thus found throughout society, institutional analysis of it, generally start by looking at kinship and family. This is because; these are the primary forms of organization that are inherently gendered. Women's and men's roles and responsibilities in the wider society view their natures and capabilities and hence construct gender differences and inequality. In addition, a great deal of productive, as well as reproductive activity is organized through kinship and family. This is particularly the case among the poor in the third world. Consequently, even when women and men participate in the wider economy, their participation is highly structured by relations in the household (Ajakaiye, 2001).

Families and kinship are different from other institutions because of the nature of the relationship within them. Such relationships are usually based on intimate ties of blood, marriage and adoption (in contrast to the more impersonal relationships of contract and statute found in the market and the state) (Cassel, 1995). They are also generally gender-ascriptive. In other words, to be a husband, wife, brother or daughter is to be a male or a female. In most societies, women are associated with the functions of care and maintenance. These include bearing and rearing children and the wider range of activities necessary for the survival and well-being of family members on a daily basis. While men may participate in some of these activities, particularly in training boys 'how to be men' or

sharing in certain household chores, they tend to have far less involvement than women, (International Development Research Centre, 2000).

2 REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER INEQUALITY

Gender inequality varies at the regional level, suggesting geography of gender. This geography reflects systematic regional differences in:

a. The institutions of kinship and family;
b. The household patterns they have given rise to; and
c. The associated gender division of resources and responsibilities.

These have in turn given rise to regional differences in gender division of labour between production and reproduction, paid and unpaid work, and the domestic and public domains.

"The different rules, norms and values that govern the gender division of labour and the gender distribution of resources, responsibilities, agency and power are critical elements for understanding the nature of gender inequality in different societies"(Aregbeyen 1996). Regional differences mean not only that women and men participate in their national economies differently from each other, but also that these differences are not uniform across the world. Two factors are particularly important for the extent to which women plays a role in the wider economy namely, the scope of their agency and their access to socially valued resources.

i. How corporate the unit is around which the household economy is organized (i.e. the extent to which resources and, efforts are managed and allocated on a joint basis); and
ii. How rigid the 'public-private divide is, and hence women's degree of public mobility and opportunities for direct economic participation (Aregbeyen, 1996).

Research from a variety of social sciences disciplines suggests that there is a range of household types associated with distinct 'regional patriarchies'. marital practices, economic activity and welfare outcomes.

2.1 Asia

Despite variations in women's public mobility and labour force participation across the region, Asian household are generally organized along corporate lines, centred on the conjugal relationships.

In discussing the geography of gender structure in Asia, there is the need to divide the continent into three namely Western, Eastern and South-Eastern Asia for the purpose of classification alongside the structure of kinship vis-à-vis genderisation, the East Asia will be combined with the Western Asia. The Western Asia refers to the belt stretching from North Africa and Western Asia across the northern plains of South Asia, including Bangladesh and Pakistan. The Eastern part of Asia includes China, Japan Republic of Korea and Taiwan. These countries clearly have widely differing economies, histories, cultures and religions. However, they have certain historical similarities in how families, kinship and gender relations are organized and the patterns of female economic activity (Osibogun, 1998).

Kinship structures in these regions are predominantly patrilinealies descent is traced and property transmitted through the male members. Marriage tends to be exogamous and patrilocal women marry outside their kin and often outside their village community, leaving their own homes at marriage to join their husband's family. Households are organized along highly corporate lines, with strong conjugal bonds and cultural rules that emphasize male responsibility of protecting and providing for women and children. Household resources and income are pooled under the management and control of the male patriarch. The payment of dowry by the bride's family to the groom is the norm in the northern plains of India, though not necessarily elsewhere in east or western Asia.

Female chastity is emphasized with severe penalties for any transgression. This is considered essential to ensure that property is transmitted based on biological fatherhood. Female sexuality is controlled through a strong public-private divide, with women secluded in the private domain. While the practice of 'purdah' is usually associated with Muslim societies, female seclusion based on norms of honour and shame is also practiced by Hindus, particularly the upper castes. Restrictions on female mobility, patrilineal marital practices have meant the economic devaluation of women and their overall dependence on men in much of this region.

2.2 South East Asia

South Eastern Asia includes the nations of Myahama, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Phillipines, Thailand and Vietnam, The Southern States of India and Sri Lanka are part of the zone. Some what less rigid gender relations are found in the way kinship and family are organized in this zone. The structure of households is still along corporate line, but with important differences. For example, a child is considered equally related to both its parents, and a person most important social grouping comprises relatives from both sides. Obadan (1997) observed that there are more cases of women as well as men being able to inherit property, and a greater incidence of matrilineal kinship, where property and descent are traced through women. While income is likely to be pooled in these households, women are often responsible for managing the household budget. A greater number of newly married couples set up their own households and more wives retina links with their natal families. The exchange of wealth of marriage tends to be reciprocal between the families of bride and groom, or else greater on the part of the latter in the form of 'bride-wealth'. Most South-East Asian countries have traditionally been more tolerant of sexual freedom for both women and men, although colonialism brought in more restrictions, particularly for women (Humphery, 1985).

2.3 Sub Saharan Africa

Research on household arrangements in Sub-Saharan Africa points to the wide prevalence of a highly complex, lineage based homestead with considerable gender segmentation. Women and men from the same homestead may work in separate groups, on different economic crops or on separate fields, and spouses may maintain individual accounting units (Maro, 1987). This present a different challenge to mainstream economic portrayals of the household (as a unified entity whose members pools and share their resources in order to

maximize their joint welfare) to that posed elsewhere. Where households are organized on a corporate basis, as described earlier, the challenges has consisted of noting the existence of gender and other inequalities in the distribution of household welfare. Thus, certain members are systematically discriminated against in the distribution of the gains to household production. However, household goods and incomes are generally not even meant to be held in common. Instead, cultural ideas, female income and resources belong to different spheres and are intended for different uses. Hence the need for a complex set of transactions in the household through which labour and incomes are used and needs met.
Much of Sub-Saharan Africa is patrilineal. Women's access to land is usually through usufructuary rights (i.e. rights to farm the land and profit from the produce, but not to ownership) through their husband's lineage group. Since women's obligations to the family include food provisioning and caring for their children, they are granted this access to enable them carry out these responsibilities. Female seclusion is uncommon, although it does occur among some communities such as the Muslim Hausa in Nigeria. However, such seclusion occurs in segmented households and Hausa women retain considerable economic autonomy. They manage their own enterprises and engage in 'internal market' transactions with their husbands. Marriage in the region usually involves the contractual payment of bride-wealth to the lineage of the women by the husband's family (Federal Ministry of Health, 2000).

As might be expected along with these similarities, there are important differences in the social organization of kinship and gender relations across the African Sub-continent, and even in the same country. The organization of gender relations in Uganda varies from region to region, but is generally and strongly patrilineal and patriarchal structures predominated, with women's economic autonomy and independent access to land being relatively more constrained than elsewhere in East Africa. Under customary law and practice in Uganda, women were minors without adult legal status or rights. In general, in much of Eastern and Southern Africa, women's labour contribution tends to be subsumed in the cultivation of household fields over which men have ultimate control. However, studies from Zambia reported evidence of joint management of economic activity by both sexes. United Nations Development Programme (1997) observed that in parts of West Africa (e.g. Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Ghana and Nigeria) on the other hand, women generally have rights to separate holdings through their husband's lineage. Both women and junior men also provide labour on household fields that are controlled by the compound head. These domestic groups are characterized by strong lineage ties and weak conjugal ties. Moreover, women enjoy direct access to land in matrilineal areas, many of which are also in West Africa (including Cote d'lvoire, Southern Ghana, Malawi and Zambia), as well as in arrears of Muslim influence. Matrilineality means married women are able to retain links with their families of origin and gain access to land as members of their own lineage groups. As a result, their obligations are not limited to the conjugal unit, but extended to natal family networks.

In addition, there are more polygamous marriages in west and central Africa (with women in such unions). The equivalent figures are 20-30 percent in East Africa and 20 percent or

less in Southern Africa. Polygamy contributes to pattern of separate (rather than pooled) spousal budgets, assets and income flows and may include separate living arrangements. Women exercise considerable economic agency in the family structure and are not dependent on their husbands in way that they are in much of South Asia (United Nations Development Programmes (1997).

2.4 Latin America and the Caribbean

Boserup (2010) noted that countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have experienced very different histories and patterns of economic development within three broad cultural traditions namely, indigenous, Hispanic and Afro-Caribbean. This has led to considerable diversity in their household arrangements. Nevertheless, many of the countries share certain features in common, including the intersection of colonialism and slavery, and large urban populations (around 70 percent); the region belongs to the weaker corporate end of the spectrum. The Spanish and Portuguese colonizers introduced their own version of the public-private divided into Latin America, associating men with the Calle (street) and women with the Casa (home). However, this division is far stronger among the upper classes in areas with Hispanic and hence Roman Catholic, influence. It is far less often found among the black and indigenous populations. While legal marriage may be the social ideal, as well as the norm in many parts of the region, there is a high incidence of consensual or visiting unions. In some areas of Latin America, this appears to reflect partly indigenous antecedents and partly the precariousness of marriage when male mobility is an integral part of economic strategies. In the Caribbean, it reflects the impacts of slavery, which weakened ties between children and their fathers as slave children became the property of their mother's owner. One result of this is a high number of female-headed households made up of children from different unions.

Boserup (2010) further noted that women's economic activity in the public domain varied across the Latin America and Caribbean regions, where were higher rates in populations with a strong Africa or Asian presence than in countries on the Atlantic Coast, where the Spanish influence is stronger.

3 UPDATING THE GEOGRAPHY OF GENDER INEQUALITY

There have been significant changes, since the period that informed Boserup's analysis, including:

a. the oil shocks of the 1970s and subsequent debt crisis and recession;
b. the structural adjustment programmes (SAPS) of the 1980s;
c. the collapse of transition to the market economy of others; and
d. the acceleration of the forces of economic deregulations, liberalization and globalization.

Boserup (2010) stated that most economies today are far more oriented to the market, far more open to international competition and far more integrated on a global basis than they were in the 1960s.

4 GLOBALIZATION AND THE RISE OF FLEXIBLE LABOUR MARKETS

Two factors have been particularly significant in driving the pace of globalization:

i. the changing technology of transport and telecommunications, which served to compress time and space across the world; and
ii. the dismantling of the regulatory frameworks that had provided some degree of national stability in markets for labour and capital in the post-war decades.

There has been a massive increase in world trade flows. Trade now accounts for 45 percent of world Gross National Product (GNP) compared to 25 percent in 1970. Much of this increase is in the manufacturing sector, which accounts for 74 percent of world merchandise exports compared to 59 percent in 1984 (Boserup, 2010).

4.1 Gender and Labour Force Participation in the 1980s And 1990s

Comparing women's labour force participation around the globe is problematic, and the difficulty of capturing often irregular, casual forms of work in the informal economy is compounded by the different definitions used in measurement. In this paper, the conventional definition of labour is used (i.e. activities done for pay or profit, while this does not fully capture women's contribution to the economy, nor show what is happening in the unpaid economy, it reveals the restrictions. Thus, in recent time, women's labour force participation has considerably increased in almost all regions of the world except Africa, where it was already high.

These changes reflect a number of factors:

a. Demographic transition (i.e. the change from high to low rates of births and deaths) in most regions and a decline in fertility rates have allowed many more women to go out to work.
b. The increasing enrolment of young men in secondary and tertiary education, as well as the growing availability of pensions for older men, partly explains diminishing male participation.
c. The changing nature of labour markets has resulted in what can be described as a 'double feminization' of the labour force internationally. Women have increased their share of employment, while employment itself has started to take on some of the 'informalized' characteristics of work conventionally associated with women.

Another major change in patterns of work in recent decades has been in the distribution of the labour force between different sectors of the economy. Only in South Asia and Sub-Sahara in Africa has female labour remained largely concentrated in the agricultural sector. East and South-East Asian countries , are characterized by high levels of female labour force participation and by a more even distribution of female labour across agriculture, industry and services (See table 1).

In Indonesia, there was an overall decline in national labour force participation, partly due to a restrictive time period for measuring economic activity and partly because the working age population was increasing over this period. However, female rural labour force participation continued to increase, outweighing these two factors. In rural areas, women's labour force participation declined slightly in agriculture, but increased in manufacturing and trade. In Vietnam, too rural households rely heavily on off-farm and self-employment to supplement earnings from farming. In the Philippines, female employment is high, with women making up 37 percent of the total labour force.

According to United Nations (2008), industrialization as part of globalization is currently as much female-led as it is export led. Thus, there have not only been changes in the distribution of women's labour between different sectors of the economy. There has also been a change in their participation in the 'traded' sector of the visible economy. In some parts of the world, this has taken the form of higher participation in export manufacturing employment as economies moved from a capital-intensive, import-substituting industrialization to a labour intensive export oriented one.

Table 1: Employment by Economic Activity

	Agriculture %				Industry%				Services%			
	Percentage (%) of male labour force		Percentage (%) of female labour force		Percentage (%) of male labour force		Percentage (%) of female labour force		Percentage (%) of male labour force		Percentage (%) of female labour force	
	1980	1996-98	1980	1996-98	1980	1996-98	1980	1996-98	1980	1996-98	1980	1996-98
Middle East/ North Africa												
Morocco	48		72		23		14		29		14	
Egypt	45		10		21		13		33		69	
Algeria	27		69		33		6		40		25	
Kuwait	2		0		36		3		62		97	
Oman	52		24		21		33		37		43	
Saudi Arabia	45		25		17		5		39		70	
LIAE	5		0		40		7		55		93	
Yemen Rep	60		98		19		1		21		1	
South Asia												
India	63		83		15		9		22		8	
Bangladesh	67	54	81	78	5	11	14	8	29	34	5	11
Pakistan		41		66		20		11		39		23
Nepal	97		98		1		0		8		2	
Sri Lanka	44	38	51	49	19	23	18	22	30	37	28	27
East Asia												
Rep. of	31	11	39		32	34	24		37	35	37	

Korea			14				19				67	
Dem. People's Rep. of Korea	39		52		37		20		24		28	
Japan	9	5	13	6	40	49	38	23	51	56	56	71

Employment by Economic Activity

	Agriculture				Industry				Services			
	Percentage of male labour force		Percentage of female labour force		Percentage of male labour force		Percentage of female labour force		Percentage of male labour force		Percentage of female labour force	
	1980	1996-98	1980	1996-98	1980	1996-98	1980	1996-98	1980	1996-98	1980	1996-98
South East Asia												
Morocco	48		72		23		14		29		14	
Thailand	68	52	74	50	13	19	8	16	20	29	18	34
Malaysia	34	21	44	15	26	34	20	28	40	46	36	57
Indonesia	57	41	54	42	13	21	13	16	29	39	33	42
Lao PDR	77		82		7		4		16		13	
Vietnam	71	70	75	71	16	12	10	9	13	16	15	20
Philippines	60	47	37	27	16	18	15	12	25	35	48	61
Cambodia	70		80		7		7		23		14	
West Africa												
Ghana	66		57		12		14		22		29	
Cameroon	65		87		11		2		24		11	
Burkina Faso	92		93		8		2		5		5	
Cote d'lvoire	60		75		10		5		30		20	
Mali	66		92		2		1		12		7	
Gambia	78		93		10		3		13		5	
Senegal	74		90		9		2		17		8	
Nigeria	52		57		10		5		38		38	
East Africa												
Tanzania	80		92		7		2		13		7	
Kenya	23		25		24		9		53		65	
Uganda	84		91		6		2		10		8	
Southern Africa												
Zimbabwe	29		50		31		8		40		42	
Zambia	69		85		13		3		19		13	
Mozambique	72		97		14		1		14		2	

Malawi	78		96		10		1		12		3	

	Agriculture				Industry				Services			
	Percentage of male labour force		Percentage of female labour force		Percentage of male labour force		Percentage of female labour force		Percentage of male labour force		Percentage of female labour force	
	1980	1996-98	1980	1996-98	1980	1996-98	1980	1996-98	1980	996-98	1980	1996-98
Caribbean												
Jamaica	47	29	23	10	20	25	8	9	33	46	69	82
Trinidad and Tobago	11	11	9	3	44	37	21	13	45	52	70	83
Latin America												
Brazil	34	27	25	20	30	27	13	10	36	46	67	70
Mexico		26	9			27	20			47		71
Argentina	17	2	3	0	40	33	18	12	44	65	79	88
Chile	22	19	3	5	27	31	16	14	51	49	81	82
Peru	45	7	25	3	20	27	14	11	35	66	61	86
Commonwealth												
UK	4	2	1	1	48	38	23	13	49	60	76	86
Australia	8	6	4	4	39	31	16	11	53	64	79	86
New Zealand		11		6		33	13			56		81
Canada	7	5	3	2	37	32	16	11	56	33	81	87
Europe & Central Asia	26		27		44		31		31		42	
Latin America & Caribbean		23	17	13		27	14			50		73
Middle East & North Africa	39		46		25		10		23		8	
South Asia	64		83		14		10		23		8	
Sub-Saharan Africa	62		74		14		5		24		22	
Europe EMU		6		5		41	18			53		77

Source: International Development Research Centre 2009, United Nations Statistics Division.

Women's high rates of participation in export-oriented manufacturing started in the East Asian 'miracle' economies and Mexico and spread to other parts of Asia and Latin

America. However, the spread has not been universal. In South Asia, it has mainly taken off in Bangladesh where there has been an astonishing rise in the female labour force in the manufacturing sector, since the early 1980s due to the emergence of an export oriented garment industry. Other countries in Asia that have seen a dramatic increase in both labour-intensive export manufacturing and the share of women in the manufacturing labour force include Indonesia, Malaysia, Mauritius , the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. On the other hand, as export production has become more skill and capital-intensive in a number of middle-income countries, the demand for female labour in manufacturing appears to have weakened (for example, in Puerto Rico, Republic of Korea, Singapore and Taiwan).

Women form at least as high a percentage of the workforce in the 'internationalized' service sector, including data entry and processing, as they do in export manufacturing. Indeed, they make up the entire labour force in this sector in the Caribbean. In a number of countries, such as the Philippines and Thailand, where tourism had become the largest provider of foreign exchange by 1982, a considerable percentage of this income is generated by the sex industry, which largely employs women.

5 CONCLUSION

The increasing presence of women in paid work, and their increased share of employment, does not mean that gender inequality has disappeared. Gender is a key organizing principle in the distribution of labour, property and other valued resources in the society. Women should not be restricted to house hold domestic activities alone, they should be given free access like men in the society. Women should not be relegated in political appointments, they should be equal right of men and women to political offices, so as to allow the women to contribute meaningfully to the progress and development of their country. Farmlands should be made equally available to both women and the men for agricultural activities in the world, so as to increase the level of food production. House hold resources and income should be evenly distributed among men and women across the globe, so as to permit a sense of belonging of women without any form of discrimination. Thus, Unequal gender relationships are sustained and legitimized through ideas of differences and inequality that express widely held beliefs and values.

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