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Engendering development: Demystifying patriarchy and its effects on women in rural Kenya

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The paper examines the effects of the culture of patriarchy on the development process, and particularly its effects on women. This is borne out of the perceived concerns and challenges of the third millennium development goal (MDG) which was coined with an aim of promoting gender equality and women empowerment. The challenge of this goal however is its lack of enough consideration of the cultural perspectives of a wide range of cultures some of which are discussed in this article. The paper gives a critical analysis of both secondary and primary information on the efforts of engendering development as well as the effects of patriarchy on the same. Two Kenyan districts have been purposively sampled to provide illustrative case studies that will strengthen the theoretical arguments on patriarchy and feminism. In this context, the paper examines how development has been engendered and the challenges faced in the concepts and theories supporting gender and development (GAD), women and development (WAD) and women in development (WID) arguments. The paper also analyses the voices of both men and women with regard to patriarchy in these two regions. The findings of the research indicate that lack of capacity building and sensitization remains one major strand of economic challenge among women. A re-examination of strategies used for policy implementation in some of the African societies therefore remains imperative if the MDGs are ever to be realized.

Key words: Capacity building, demystifying patriarchy, engendering development, feminism, gender equality, millennium development goals, rural Kenya.

INTRODUCTION

Patriarchy derives from the Latin 'Patriarchia' which means 'rule of the father'. In popular discussions of the time, it is more often used to refer to the 'rule of men over women'. Even more broadly, it refers to the web of economic, political, social and religious regulations that enforces the domination of women by men throughout the ages (Jones, 2000: 77). Using a single word to describe the grand web of oppressive forces serves the function of suggesting that male domination had a long history and stretches across national and cultural boundaries touching various facets of life. As such patriarchy invokes a sense of the enormity of the struggle ahead by identifying the enormity of the history that has bound women for centuries. Patriarchy can therefore be

said to be a social system composed of webs of relationships that exhibit some degree of regularity. It is system of male authority which oppresses women through its social, political and economic institutions. Therefore, the concept patriarchy remains a useful and crucial term used in contemporary feminism since it is a term which describes the totality of oppressive and

exploitative relations, which affect women. Women's exclusion from history stems from the gender formation of males and females and the double standard that this entails. Thus, the erosion in patriarchy begins to occur with structural changes in the market place and changes in wage structures. For Mary Daly, patriarchy itself is the prevailing religion of the entire planet (Daly, 1978: 83). This is not just under the web of economic arena but others see patriarchy in terms of male control of women's reproduction. Some see patriarchy as analytically independent of capitalist or other modes of

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production (Humm, 1989). The institutions and processes that compose patriarchal system are conceptualized as webs of gendered relations which sustain and reproduce male social power such as within various cultural sites that is, language, religion, media and popular culture, and education. Another cultural site is that of the household, where matters regarding sexuality, reproduction and violence are central. Indeed, male violence against women is a system of social control. Rape and domestic battery in some social contexts have been understood as systemic and systematic. Political acts which maintain certain power relations in which most men are privileged whether or not they carry out acts of violence evidences the diverse nature in which we can explore, analyze and prove the ways in which patriarchy has been strengthened in all spheres of life in most societies.

This exploitation of women is key to radical feminist thinking as patriarchal relations are articulated in processes and institutions that form structures. Hebertine Auclert from France is credited with first having used the word "feminism" in 1882 to name the fight of women for political rights (Clifford, 2001: 11). Though there are many definitions of feminism, for the purpose of this paper the definition that is used is articulated by Joann Wolski Conn (1991: 127) that "feminism is both a set of coordinated ideas and a practical plan of action rooted in a critical awareness by women of how a culture controlled in meaning and action by men, for their own advantage oppresses women and dehumanizes men". This definition defies critics of feminist thought who say that feminism merely consists of uncoordinated ideas in a maze of complaints. At the same time, it highlights that meaning in a culture can be controlled, for example by men.

Feminist theory from its inception has been pluralistic in nature. According to Rosemary Tong (1989: 2), "feminist theory is not one but many theories or perspectives and each feminist theory or perspective attempts to describe women's oppression, to explain its causes and consequences and to prescribe strategies for women's liberation". Tong further elaborates on the varieties of feminist thinking. The liberal feminist emphasises female subordination as rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints. The Marxist feminist understands female subordination as a result of the introduction of private property therefore creating a class society. The radical feminist insists that patriarchy as a system oppresses women since patriarchy is characterised by paternal dominance, hierarchy, competition and power. A psychoanalytic feminist finds the root of women's oppression embedded deep in her psyche, as a result of socialization and the internalization of asymmetrical power structures. The socialist feminist weaves the several strands of feminist theory together. The goal is to relate the myriad of forms of women's oppression. In essence, the socialist feminist understands that there are only complex explanations for female subordination (Tong, 1989: 2-9).

Over and above these perspectives, each feminist theory finds that a different feature of patriarchy defines women's subordination. For example, the radical feminist equates patriarchy with male domination- a system of social relations in which the class 'men' have power over the class 'women' because women are sexually devalued. The radical feminist insists that patriarchy as a system oppresses women since patriarchy is characterized by paternal dominance, hierarchy, competition and power. For them patriarchy is characterized by divisions and dualisms, thus hierarchy is built into the fundamentals of patriarchy; either this or dichotomy is inherently and classically part of patriarchy.

According to Heidi Hartmann, patriarchy is a set of social relations with a material base operating on a system of male hierarchical relations and male solidarity. To her patriarchy is not universal, or unchanging, rather its intensity changes over time (Hartmann, 1989: 200-202). There are differences within patriarchy. To imply that the Greco-Roman patriarchy and the patriarchy in present day Africa are the very same is not valid. What is common is that there are historical contexts and in each, dualisms are articulated which validate relations of domination and subordination; consequently, ordering societies hierarchically through a kinship style of patrilineal descent. However, the form and content of the relationships between the patriarchs (fathers) and women differ. According to Jones (2000: 77), an implication of the assumption that patriarchy is to blame for women's oppression the world over, is the idea that oppression results from a universal desire of men (the patriarchs) to dominate women and that men are biologically inclined to dominate women. However, there are social structures and cultural forces such as patrilineal kinship systems or even the law that promote patriarchy. Therefore, the rule of the father means that other males are ruled over unlike what is implied by male domination (Jones, 2000: 79-80).

Indeed, the view of universal male domination is contested on various grounds. First, it mistakenly suggests that all men are biologically predisposed to subjugate women. This kind of essentialism entraps men in a nature that appears inevitable. As such it becomes difficult to envision radical social change. Secondly, when men become the sole focus, there is the tendency of having the conception of men as 'enemy'. There are incredibly few radical feminist who construe men as 'enemies'. This remains a simplistic reading of radical feminist theory that implies that all men oppress all women, and to the same extent and in the same ways. We overlook the broad institution and cultural forces that harm women quite apart from the intentions of individual men. Third, this monolithic view of patriarchy deflects attention from the effects of racism, heterosexism, ageism etc on the lives of women. This makes the complexities of women's lives and the dimensions of women's experiences be underestimated (Jones, 2000: 77-78).

There is therefore need to take into account the

varieties of dominatory relations. Better still, systematically analyze women's strategies and coping mechanisms as Kandiyoti (1988) explains can help capture the nature of patriarchal systems in their cultural, class-specific and temporal concreteness and also reveal how men and women resist, accommodate, adapt and conflict with each other. The culture of patriarchy in Kenya as well as other African countries provides a gender challenge which may be a complicated web. However, one way in which we can understand this is to consider faces of oppression, as described by Iris Young by way of theories of oppression. These shall be brought into play further on in this paper, when looking at how to analyze fieldwork cases that shall be highlighted in this paper. Having given a brief overview of how patriarchy relates to feminism, and having discussed the different strands of feminism, it would be imperative to engage the efforts through which development has been or can be engendered. This will be done in the lenses of some of the concepts propagated to encourage the participation of women in what has commonly been referred to as mainstream development. This analysis is likely to help us understand if there have been any improvements following the critics given to the patriarchal systems that encourage women subordination.

Objectives of the study

The broad objective of the paper is to analyze the processes of engendering development and examine the effects of patriarchy on the development process, particularly its effects to women. The paper endeavours to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. Theoretically analyze indicators of women subordi-nation which have stirred efforts towards engendering development.
2. Examine the concepts/theories applied in explaining the process of engendering development.
3. Critically appraise how patriarchy has influenced development approaches within Vihiga and Kisumu East communities.

METHODOLOGY

The paper relies heavily on both primary and secondary information. To elaborate on the processes of engendering development as well as the concepts used in this process, the paper reviewed existing literature from published books and journal articles. This means that the first two objectives of the study are addressed through literature search. Field data on the other hand was executed with an aim of generating qualitative data that speaks to the influence of the culture of patriarchy on women in Kenya. Two Districts in Western Kenya were purposively selected for the study due to the stronghold of the culture of patriarchy. Through purposive household survey (based on the levels of poverty), both household heads in every selected home were sampled and interviewed. Oral in-depth interviews were conducted to generate

qualitative data that was openly coded and thematically analyzed. Whereas a comparative approach of the field data with the existing literature has been used to present the field data, narratives from the voices of both men and women were also useful in depicting the scenarios as told by the research participants.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Here, the theoretical underpinnings of the struggle towards engendering development, borrowed from the existing literature to explain how female subjugation has been in itself a self explanatory tool, calls for action towards addressing the challenges facing women. Next is an explanation of the theoretical concepts that have been used to describe the changing processes and stages of women liberation and engendering development. However, the findings and discussions of this study will therefore set a stage for the paper to examine social and economic effects of patriarchy on women in selected areas in Kenya.

Towards engendering development

In the late 1995, some 25,000 women from all over the world gathered in Beijing-China. Their intention was to press their agendas upon the government delegations from 185 nations that had been invited by the United Nations to debate a programme of action for women for the coming decade. The conference among many issues illustrated the widespread recognition of and challenge to the patterns of the inequality that generate gender disadvantage. There was a remarkable commitment by diverse groups to seek measures to improve the health, educational standing and economic power of women across the world (Bonnet and Bilton, 2002: 130).

The Beijing conference stressed the empowerment of women as one of the central development goals of the 21st century. It adopted a platform for action which called for the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the design, implementation and monitoring of all policies and programmes including development programmes. The conference itself was seen as a landmark on women's empowerment but there is not much evidence to show that the recommendations of the conference were implemented and that they have improved the statuses of women especially in the developing nations.

Despite the agendas of this particular conference, and related conferences that have been held worldwide on gender issues, and, besides the formation of feminism movements, with a pool of faithfuls in each movement, there is no substantial evidence that women have been liberated. If anything, there is gaping evidence that they continue to suffer inequalities in different ways. Key to the failure of implementation of structures that dictate against subordination of women in most African countries are the socio-cultural factors tied with traditional beliefs and practices. In addition, the material conditions in which

women work continue to deteriorate in many countries due to economic and social decline, war and conflict and the spread of HIV and AIDS. Though women can be said to be oppressed in a myriad of ways, in the developing nations, women in Africa are greatly affected. The multi-varied roles of women have gone unrecognized yet they maintain a vital contribution to the welfare of the family, and community at large.

The study of sex and gender is concerned with documenting the existence of differences between the sexes and explaining why those differences exist (Marini, 1990). Quoting a number of scholars, Akosua, Beoku and Osirim (2008) argue that one of the important achievements in gender knowledge in the past decade is the revolution in our theoretical conceptualization of what gender is as a social phenomenon. There is increasing consensus among gender scholars that gender is not primarily an identity or role that is taught in childhood and enacted in family relations. Instead, gender is an institutionalized system of social practices for constituting people as two significantly different categories, men and women, and organizing social relations of inequality on the basis of that difference. This is an observation also evidenced in the works of Marini (1990) who argues that gender role differentiation is associated with gender differences in behavior, attitudes, and dispositional traits. This differentiation also leads to gender stereotyping, or the formation of consensual beliefs about differences between the sexes.

There are a wide range of theories on development that have tried to advocate for equal participation of women in the development arena in a way that their efforts would be recognized. This is because as Patricia Kelly (1989) argues, gender is a key term for refining theories of development insofar as it unfolds the "statistic self," revealing fundamental aspects in the organization of production and labor. This assertion is based upon practical and intellectual considerations. Mounting evidence has shown that development strategies throughout the world have had a differential impact upon men and women, with the latter often experiencing the most deleterious effects. This therefore implies the relevance of engendering development. 'Engendering' is a term that is used to refer to ways in which gender based roles have been demystified to ensure participation of males and females, especially in the community development process. Engendering development means engaging men and women equally in the production process. This is geared towards enhancing equality in development. On the other hand, gendering is the dynamic way that makes female roles adapt, are established or confirmed, clearly demonstrated in the historicity of gender relations in both private and public spheres. Due to the changing nature of economy and human needs, there is need to engender development process and streamline the stereotypes that have characterized the arena of development.

Engendering is a term that has been used in line with the suggested policies of empowering women. Empowerment as Jane Parpart (2002: 338) explains has become a popular, largely unquestioned 'goal' of such diverse contradictory development institutions as the World Bank, Oxfam and many more radical non-governmental organizations (NGOs). By the 1980's as Parpart argues, empowerment was being advocated as a necessary ingredient for challenging and transforming unequal political, economic and social structures. It was regarded as a weapon for the weak-best wielded through participatory, grassroots community-based activities.

Mukhwana and Were (2009) explain that considerable gender disparities exist in the Kenyan labor market. Although women constitute about 50% of Kenya's total population, they account for only about 30% of the total formal-sector wage employment and earn less than men, even after making adjustments for the type of employment, occupation, and hours of work. The scholars argue that women's participation rates are higher (compared to men's) in rural areas, where they are actively involved in subsistence activities and agricultural production in addition to unpaid domestic work. This is further evidenced by Kabaji (1997: 8) who expounds on the fact that most African women are farmers and petty traders dealing in agricultural products. They spend more than eight hours in a day working in the fields in order to provide for their families with basic needs. Studies have documented that women work 12-13 h a week more than men, as the prevalent economic and environmental crises have increased the working hours of the poorest women. They work hard to cope with their household chores like collecting firewood and fetching water from wells or rivers that may be far away from home, besides other activities. Most of these activities are recognized as 'minor' household jobs that are meant for women and are hardly shared with the spouses or the sons. It is not incorrect to observe that most of these activities are geared towards community development in their own special way.

David Belshaw (2001: 86) on the other hand posits that, women in Africa are less educated, earn less, control less and are less well represented in most economic and political spheres. Poor women already on the margins of the economy suffer most during implementation of economic recovery programmes. This is because they do not take part in decision making processes neither are their voices heard, yet they know the economic situation far well. Belshaw also explains that women's roles such as child bearing, rearing and household management put their health in jeopardy. They are therefore incomparably more vulnerable to disease attacks than men. In addition, most women in Africa and specifically in Kenya do not have a say over land as a resource despite the fact that they are the farm caretakers.

On the other hand, along with their expanding labor

participation, Kenyan women have experienced a higher unemployment rate compared to Kenyan men. Estimates for the late 1990s show that Kenya's overall urban unemployment rate was about 25%, with female unemployment at 38% compared to male unemployment at 12.5%. Although estimates for 2005–2006 show a decline in the urban unemployment rate to be 19.9%, female unemployment is still higher at 25.9% compared to male unemployment at 15% (Mukhwana and Were, 2009).

To Akosua, Beoku and Osirim (2008), like other multilevel systems of difference and inequality such as those based on race or class, gender involves cultural beliefs and distributions of resources at the macro level, patterns of behavior and organizational practices at the interactional level, and selves and identities at the individual level. The difficult task before gender scholars now is to develop the implications of this reconceptualization by identifying key components of the gender system and analyzing the processes by which these components maintain or change the gender system. We believe that it is from this challenge that gender theories revolving around equality were developed since the 1970's in a bid to express how women have in one way or the other suffered socio-economic and political inequality. Though the theories might not have made a great impact, it is worthwhile to revisit them and examine the points of weakness that might not have allowed the achievement of intended goals. The section below revisits three main theories developed to enhance participation of women in the development process.

WID, WAD and GAD

Patricia Kelly (1989) posits that studies of the status of women were not uncommon during the first half of the 20th century. However, the inception of a distinct area of interest on that subject is generally associated with the publication of Ester Boserup's landmark volume, 'Woman's Role in Economic Development in 1970', which represented the first comprehensive attempt to examine the specific effects of modernization policies upon women in the Third World. Boserup's work energized and briefly anticipated an outpouring of writings that made women visible as part of societies all over the world. Patricia explains: Boserup's pioneering contribution, and the research it inspired, viewed gender inequality as the effect of women's displacement from productive work caused by imperfections in the modernization process. According to Boserup, colonialism first, and then industrialization, had exacerbated women's subordination and distorted preexistent patterns of reciprocity between men and women. The solution to the displacement of women from productive labor lay in the implementation of measures that bore striking resemblance to those

supported by earlier advocates of modernization. Birth control programs, the incorporation of women into the paid labor force, and most singularly, an improvement of educational levels were expected to narrow social inequalities between the sexes. Almost three decades earlier, modernization theory had explained Third World backwardness as an effect of shared cultural and psychological inadequacies. It had also made a plea for cultural change through the assimilation of behaviors and worldviews stemming from advanced industrial countries (Kelly, 1989).

In Africa, the story was the same. Colonization and industrialization further exacerbated the challenges faced by women. On the one hand, men flocked in cities in search of white color jobs and on the other, the gender differentiation created by colonialism and missionary work strengthened the commonly held notion that women are unequal. In the later years in the early 1980's after the oil crisis of the 1970's that exacerbated the economic inequalities, the introduction of structural adjustment programmes in most African countries, Kenya included further affected gender relations and especially in the economic, health, education and industrial sectors. This has been examined elsewhere and therefore may not form a major part of discussion here. It is however worthwhile noting that introduction of SAPs in Kenya affected women's well being more than their male counterparts.

Many cultures in Africa always view women as unequal. Men are generally viewed as overseers and women are therefore engaged in menial jobs. This means that most of their time is used in agricultural activities. It would therefore not be illogical to argue that despite the contribution of Boserup's landmark volume in Africa, little has been effected. The Africa Recovery Briefing paper also commends the work of Ester Boserup and examines the ways in which this pioneer piece led to development of gender theories that highlight relevance of equity. The recovery briefing notes that the work of female development professionals and UN agencies noted the important roles that women play in agricultural economies, compared with the low or negative impact of development policies on their status and access to resources. This led to efforts to better integrate women into development processes, within a framework that saw societies in the South gradually "modernizing" along lines similar to those of the industrialized North. The emphasis of this "women in development" (WID) perspective was on women's productive roles, fueled by a belief that by simply improving women's access to technology, credit and extension services, women's productivity would increase and this would positively influence the development process. Critics of the WID perspective argued that it failed to take into account women's reproductive roles and ignored the larger social processes that shape women's lives (Africa Recovery Paper, 1998). The perspective meant bringing into the

fore new techniques that women were not used to but also without basic capacity building for them to realize that the approach was not an intruder into the cultural observances. By leaving out the reproductive roles of women and especially in the African context, this meant a social gap, and the theory was therefore not water-tight and cannot be argued to have yielded much results.

A closely related approach was known as "women and development" (WAD). Derived from a political economy perspective, it focused on the relationship between women and development processes, rather than on strategies for integrating women into development, noting that women have always been important economic actors in their societies. The proponents of WAD realized the weaknesses of WID, first one being that WID implied that women had not initially been taking an active role in development process. This of course was not the case. Like WID, however, the WAD viewpoint concentrated on the productive sector, at the expense of the reproductive side of women's work and lives (African Recovery Paper, 1998), meaning that the extra jobs of women and especially of child bearing and rearing was not in mainline development. The realization of these faultlines led to the GAD era of the 1980's.

The "gender and development" (GAD) approach emerged in the 1980s, as an alternative to WID. It links relations of production to those of reproduction, thus taking into account all spheres of women's lives. Like WID, this perspective aims at economic efficiency. However, unlike WID, it is not preoccupied with women per se, but with the social realities that shape views of sex and assign specific roles, responsibilities and expectations to women and men. Through gender analysis, it focuses attention on the differences and constraints under which men and women work, using those insights to tailor policies and programmes that will improve overall productivity. Using the language of economics and efficiency to help deliver resources to women, gender analysis is seen as a non-confrontational approach to planning. However, the GAD perspective also has some critics. Some argue that by focusing on what separates women and men, it neglects the social relations that also connects them, as well as how changes may be brought about in men's and women's respective roles. In addition, by not emphasizing social relations sufficiently, it has been argued, the GAD perspective cannot explain how powerful gender relations can subvert the impact of resources directed at women or adequately identify women's interests and what trade-offs they are willing to make to fulfill their ideals of motherhood or marriage (Africa Recovery Paper, 1998).

A number of critics have been given to these approaches but this study borrows from Patricia's work who argues that despite differences in explanatory emphasis and conceptual repertory, theories of development shared, from their inception, four main characteristics. First, they adopted highly abstract vantage points based on aggregate statistical analysis, often to the neglect of specific differences of a national or regional character. Second, they gradually moved from an emphasis upon culture and national character, as variables explaining underdevelopment, to a focus on structural factors resulting from particular relationships among industrialized and poor countries over time. Third, they slowly shifted from an exclusive focus on poor countries to parallel processes taking place in advanced industrial centers. Fourth, most studies originally underplayed the impact of development policies upon segments of the population divided by class, gender, and ethnicity.

Approaches to economic development have varied in consonance with two major paradigms: The first, orthodox discourse, derives from classical and

neoclassical economics, and from sociological interpretations that assign priority to social action and institutional analysis. The second, critical discourse, has evolved from Marxism and thus emphasizes class antagonisms and structural arrangements in production (Kelly, 1989). The oversights have therefore meant unsatisfactory results, and therefore research has indicated that despite the awareness, today, the participation of adult women in the nonagricultural labor force is generally highest in the Soviet bloc, the Scandinavian countries, the countries of northwestern Europe, Canada, the United States, and Japan. In these countries over 40% of women aged 15 and over are working in nonagricultural jobs. In no country, however, is the proportion of women in the non agricultural labor force greater than 60% (Marini 1990).

Despite a chronological count on the evolvement of these approaches, they do not hold in reality especially in the African perspective. The first challenge is that from the African context, women are unaware of their rights and pursuing the recommendations of the approaches means awareness, which in our case has not been availed to these women. Secondly, the economic challenges facing women in most African nations are enormous. This limits their efforts to pursue anything else that is outside the basic needs of their families. This is strengthened by cultural issues of patriarchy which relegates submission on the part of women. The case studies drawn in the next section evidence these sentiments.

Culture, gender, and development: Examples from the Kisumu East and Vihiga districts

Culture is the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and, emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It is the organization of human beings into permanent groups and can only be maintained if humanity devotes large parts of their effort to the work of conservation (Neibuhr, 1951;

Serageldin, 1994; Clapp, 1996). Simply defined, culture is a people's way of life. Though many scholars affirm that the living conditions of modern man have been so profoundly changed in their social and cultural dimensions that we can speak of a new age in human history, it is observable in some communities that certain cultures have been maintained. Others have been changed to favour patrilineal societies, giving men propriety and authority over women. Culture can be said to have affected economic structures both positively and negatively. It has also been related to poverty levels in some regions. The thesis for this article is that cultural beliefs and practices have been linked to patriarchy and subsequent female subjugation, which has affected the economic livelihoods of the people of Vihiga and Kisumu East districts in Western Kenya.

The poor constitute slightly more than half of the population of Kenya. The poor are those members of the society who are unable to afford minimum basic needs, comprising food, shelter and clothing. In Kisumu East district, poverty is perceived as a constraint to development, a scourge that perpetuates dependence on donors, government, NGO's and relatives. Poverty in this region has also been perceived as a curse, a persistent and desperate socio-economic and a cultural situation. These descriptions of poverty are manifested in different ways including food inadequacy, prostitution, child labour, street children, squatters, high mortality and morbidity rates, HIV/AIDS, malnutrition, among others (Kilonzo, 2005: 30). Most of Kisumu's population is poor. Most of those affected by the high poverty levels are women whereby 66% of them are subsistence farmers. Farming however, in this area is a challenge due to constant floods.

Vihiga on the other hand is a complete contrast of Kisumu East in that it has abundant rains and potential fertile soils. The populace grows several crops and fruits. The district has a vast ground water potential as well as two gazzetted forests covering an area of 4,160.6 ha. Flooding problems are not experienced in Vihiga. Despite these potentials, 65% of the population in Vihiga district is poor. The rural poor constitute 53%, whereas the urban food poor constitute 38% (G.O.K, 2001). The major causes of poverty as a field survey revealed include landlessness, dense population, joblessness, infertile/exhausted soils, HIV/AIDS scourge, illiteracy, cultural beliefs, inherited property, dependency syndrome, gender related issues, among others.

The concern for heightened levels of poverty and the views elicited from respondents about gender roles in development fuels this discussion. This calls for an immediate response in development processes of the two districts of our focus. The pertinent question however, is what form of development, by whom and for what purpose? An interesting observation about the two case studies of our discussion, that is, Kisumu East and Vihiga districts is that culture has it that the woman remains the responsible producer in the family. When a woman is

married in either of these areas, she is described as someone who is "going to cook". The riddle is further unfolded by statements such as 'someone does not cook what is not available'; she has therefore, to avail food and cook it. This is not only associated with the Luos of Kisumu East district, but also the Luhyas of Vihiga district, which are the major ethnic communities in the region of study. Vihiga consists of 3 Luhya dialects namely: Abanyore, Abatiriki and Maragoli. Kisumu East district is basically occupied by Luos. The other ethnic communities in this region are minorities.

The general belief in these communities should be that women should be the caretakers of the homes and this implies that they should feed and clothe their families. We should however, be quick to point out that this is not a homogenous practice. There are a few specks of families in these dialects where gender roles are diversified in a way that men do what is commonly referred to by other community members as women's work. However, this group consists of the minorities. Explaining the position of an Abanyore woman in the community, a subsistence farmer and a housewife, Flora Inonda (Oral Interview [OI], 25/7/2007)[1] corroborated that there are two groups of the Abanyores when it comes to the position of women in the homes. The first and the majority is that of women who are subjugated and carry the burdens of the home with little or no assistance from the husbands. This group is normally looked down upon by men in the society. They do not have rights but have to suffer under all the burdens of the family. The other group of women is the one that enjoys 'equality' with men. They enjoy the opportunity of sharing most of the chores with men. Men can also do casual jobs to get money for food as the women work in the family farms. Flora was however very categorical to point out that Abanyore women are subordinated and suffer in the hands of men.

Culture also has it that men are free to marry, as they want. It is common for men to have extra marital affairs but not women. In this case men dictate, the "going out and coming in of women". A woman has to seek for permission to go to the market for food produce, which in most cases is the fruit of her labour in the farm. Women do not own property; especially land, in this area. They do not even own children they give birth to! Children are also a man's property. She is only a caretaker who can be replaced at a man's will. Despite the efforts of a woman to take care of land and produce for the family, their efforts are thwarted by limited and exhausted pieces of land. Food is therefore expensive especially in Vihiga district. Some respondents observed that this has been the major demoralizing factor to men; the reason why they do not put much effort in production of either cash or subsistence crops. Farm work has been left for women who hardly control the skimpy harvests.

The highest percentage (85%) of trade in this region is done by women. Poverty levels have it that the sales are

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[1] Flora Inonda, Oral Interview, Majengo, 25/7/2007

meant for hand to mouth income. The little amounts received from the sales provide for the family's basic needs. Almost everything in Vihiga district, including natural resources, such as water and firewood requires money. Water sale is a major source of income for the young males. Three sticks of firewood are sold for Ksh.10, meaning that a dollar can only purchase 20 sticks of firewood. This is just unaffordable to the common persons most of whom live lives worth less a dollar per day. One young lady during the interviews emphasizing the problems faced due to lack of natural resources explained her family's experiences by noting:

"We really suffer in this community. I do not think where you come from suffer our kind of unending problems. Today in the morning (she went on) when I was leaving the house my mother was complaining that she could not prepare *githeri* (mixture of maize and beans) because there was no firewood. The dilemma is that we did not have any other food. Only some *unga* (flour) in the pot and no vegetables. Firewood in this land is like gold. The problem is magnified by the ever-present rains and so getting dry maize straws to use as firewood is a challenge. The cows are tethered in people's compounds and as such it is not possible to collect cow dung for fuel. Even if they were to be grazed, the dung never gets to dry because of the rains. The rains are not a blessing to many because the soils are over used and infertile. It is crazy living in Vihiga" (Beverly Okolla, OI, 31/7/2007)[2].

As Okolla talked, the disturbing thought was that it is all about women. They are in the center of all this unpleasant drama. Men are behind the scenes. The question that Okolla asked, though we did not have a sufficient answer for, was, "what do you think the future will be like in fifty years to come for this (her) community?" It was easy for us to predict that if something is not urgently done in the community development procedures, in fifty years time, the situation will be chaotic. This is taking into consideration the ever-increasing population. Currently, the district has a population of 550,800 (2002 District census) occupying an area of 563 km² and higher than the 2.4% national average. The most affected are women and children.

The patriarchal culture is deeply embedded in the Abanyore community. The women as the study discovered never used to sit on chairs. They were subjugated and therefore chairs were meant for men who were the kings/rulers of women. Women served as servants (Okungu, OI, 9/7/2006)[3]. These cases are in no way different from the daily happenings in the lives of most African women. They have accepted "their positions" as "inferiors" in the patriarchal society, giving men every opportunity to abuse and misuse their dignity and esteem. Hazel Ayanga (2003) points out that men

have been socially conditioned to be hardhearted and oppressive. They believe that the oppressive traits are part-and-parcel of their being human. These oppression is going on despite the fact that women contribute most in socio-economic development.

Kahindi (2002: 39) makes an observation that about 90% of the food produced in Kenya is by women, and regrettably, men control about 90% of the output. This farm care is coupled with all household chores and this means that most women in Africa work far too much than men. To prove this point, I carried out a trial study in Luanda Division of Vihiga District in Western Kenya. Robina Shikholi (16/5/2006)[4] a hardware shop owner observed that a woman carries all the work load of the home. She gave a work-day's schedule for most women as follows: Preparing children to go to school; milking the cows (if any); ensuring the cattle are well taken care of by looking for their food since the land is too small for tethering or paddocking; planting and weeding in the family farm; collecting firewood and fetching water; looking for food by working in people's farms for a pay or selling some of the food produce at the market; cooking and taking care of the aging parents besides taking care of the small children. In addition to these time-demanding chores, Robina stated that most of these poor women are always ready for battering especially when the husbands come home drunk and demand for 'good' food that is not available. Asked why women have to endure all these sufferings Joan, a green grocer in Luanda market said:

"But if this happens to me, what can I do? I cannot go back to where I was born. Besides, if I run away my children will suffer. In this community, the children are men's property. The woman owns nothing and though she bore the children, she cannot claim ownership in case of separation. So, do you still encourage me to leave my children? I know they are mine even if the culture states otherwise; I am the one who struggles to feed, clothe and educate them. If I run away from my brutal husband, my children will go to the streets. Another woman will immediately take my place. Men here are allowed to marry as many women as they want. So I will be the looser. I must struggle to keep my family going that is why I must come to the market every day to sell kales and tomatoes" (Joan Mwelesi, OI, 19/5/2006).[5]

Aaron (OI, 3/6/2006)[6] a 26-year-old married man confirmed Joan's sentiments by observing that the man is the head of the house and the wife must live within his rules. He is a tailor (the business not so stable) and claimed to own every form of property in his home. He therefore controls what the wife and the children do. I was surprised when he bluntly said:

"Personally I beat my wife very often when she does not

[2] Ogolla Beverly, Oral Interview, 31 July 2007, Ebusakami
[3] Okungu, Oral Interview, 9 July 2006, Luanda Market

[4] Robina Shikholi, Oral Interview, 16 may, 2006, Luanda
[5] Joan Mwelesi, Oral Interview, 19 May 2006, Luanda
[6] Aaron, Mukhwana, Oral Interview, 3 June 2006, Mwitubi

obey my orders. Women at times behave like children and have to be 'straightened up'. They at times talk too much and have to be shut up!"

The position of a woman I gathered from this trial study is that most poor women are under the dictatorship of their husbands. They (women) contribute so much towards the well being of the family as well as the society, but this is done under dictatorship. They cannot control their activities and be decision makers by themselves. What they do, how they do it and when and where to do it is controlled by men. Robina the hardware shop operator confirmed this when she observed that she had to give birth to the number of children the husband wanted before she was allowed to operate the business. She explained:

"My husband thought I was still young and was out to look for 'better men'. I had to be patient and give birth to the number of children he wanted before he could allow me to start the business. He however has to know every move I make in the business. I run a hardware shop and if by any chance I make a decision without his knowledge, conflicts arise. He is always suspicious that I am capable of scheming something".

Despite the bulldozing of women by men, it is vivid that their contribution to the economy cannot be underrated. They are multi-specialists-meaning that they play varied roles in the society.

Pietila and Vickers (1994: 33) observes that activities performed by women are divided into three categories: Production of goods and services, so-called reproduction and maintenance of human capital; the social functions; activities performed as part of traditional customs or political processes including many duties; and obligations which women are supposed to perform, irrespective of whether they involve an economic dimension or not. Most of these activities performed by women are not incorporated into the mainstream development. They are viewed as women-affairs despite their significance in the society. These 'insignificant' roles are what greatly contribute to the sustenance of the economy.

On the other hand, Africa has been accounting for an increasing proportion of the world's poor, partly because of its more rapid population growth and partly due to sluggish economic performance (Meereboer, 1994). Poverty has however, in most cases been feminized. Many indications point towards the increasing share of women among poor and fragility of women's positions in their struggle to maintain their families. Meereboer notes:

"The rising percentage of female-headed households amongst the lower income households is both an indication of the greater poverty of these households as well as the disruption of the traditional social security systems (if there have been any). It also points to the different nature of female poverty, the strong likelihood for the inter-generational transmission of poverty in the households, and the greater difficulty these households face in finding all permanent escape from vicious circle (Meereboer, 1994: 16).

Apart from single motherhood, other women have been the heads of their households even when the husbands are still alive. Bullock (1994: 17) explains that more and more women are finding themselves the only adults in the households. The numbers of female-headed households are therefore rising and in most countries in Africa, they exceed 20%. In rural areas, women heading households are often doubly penalized; they are deprived of the man's physical labour and do not have full legal rights and access to credit and services that most men would have. Women headed households are over represented among the poor and rural and urban areas.

OPERATIONALIZING AXES OF OPPRESSION

Having delimited fieldwork cases in both Kisumu East and Vihiga as already indicated, we proceed in this section to operationalize axes of oppression. This is done in the view that it is important to explicitly explore avenues through which women tend to be oppressed. We had already indicated that we would look at different faces of oppression and use them to make sense of the experiences narrated by the women cited in this paper.

Having described Robina's description of a woman's workday schedule in the area of Vihiga, it brings to fore the face of oppression, oppression as exploitation. The work done in preparing children for school, taking care of cattle, fetching water and firewood, cooking and taking care of the aged is often not remunerated. In this manner, Marxist and materialist feminists then examine just how money is made. Robina indicates the way there are time consuming chores and clearly we see the way women at the end of the day remain on the low or even zero-paying end of the production line.

The women described by Robina are exploited in an area that is the home where they seldom share benefits of the labor that they expend for the family. As such, women in Vihiga reproduce, raise and care for the people in the home, the same people who end up being workers in the capitalist system; the very system does not pay them for the work they are doing (Jones, 2000). Moreover, the work that these women in Luanda and Kisumu East do would traditionally be defined as 'feminine' and carried with it connotations that such work requires less skill and education and might as well be overlooked or underpaid.

Christine Delphy (1984) suggests that women are generally socialized to want well-ordered domestic space and men expect women to do the work because they are socialized not to care about housekeeping –'they don't see dirt'. Owing to this socialization women end up doing

the lion's share of household chores because they supposedly 'want to' (Jones, 2000: 83). Robina and Joan the greengrocer agree with Aaron who suggests that women are sometimes exposed to battering. Aaron maintains that this is because women disobey orders, behave like children and need to be straightened out. In this regard, the other face of oppression we consider is that of oppression as violence. Such gendered forms of violence by and large are part of systemic and structural component of women's oppression. When such violence is referred to as systemic, it not only captures the reality that it is widespread but that cultural beliefs and practices do create a social climate where violence is tolerated or accepted as natural (Delphy, 1984). When Aaron states bluntly that women at times behave like children he gives an analogy that he has imbibed from his community, his childhood experiences and what he has seen happening in his community. However, besides physical violence there are other forms of violence which take subtle forms such as telling degrading jokes about women, quick looks that demean and dismiss women and in sum, all these inflict emotional pain on women.

Robina also mentions an aspect of dictatorship where men decide what to be done at their own will. When decisions are made solely by one group and for the interest of this one group, there comes with it myriad problems. One such position is that of oppression as powerlessness. In this case, as Robina states it concerns the degree to which women are given power and control over their environment. It has more to do with how decisions are made. This sense of powerlessness leaves many women in Vihiga and Kisumu East trivialized and silenced, invisible and not respected. A gendered division of decision making implies that the voices of women are muted and their opinions are not weighed upon.

Having described these three faces of oppression in the life worlds of Aaron, Robina and Joan, two others remain which are oppression as marginalization where the focus on marginalization is people whom the system of labor cannot and will not use for example, lesbians, gays or the elderly, or even those infected by HIV/AIDS. The last is oppression as cultural imperialism. This involves how groups develop and apply cultural standards to define, interpret and regulate beliefs, attitudes and actions. Universalizing one's standards and imposing them on others. These latter two forms of oppression were not explicit in the fieldwork, nevertheless they bear upon how patriarchy in the 21st century may be operationalised.

CONCLUSION

Engendering development aims at having both women and men equally involved in the production process. This paper has shown that currently, this is not the case in Vihiga and Kisumu East East districts of Kenya. Theories

of development have traditionally elicited weaknesses that have hindered their actualization of intended goals on the African continent. This paper has therefore examined the effects of patriarchy on development and particularly its effects on women. It has given a critical analysis from field survey in two Kenyan districts in rural Kenya. In defining the interrelationship between patriarchy and feminism we have shown the way patriarchy as a concept remains a crucial term within contemporary feminism as it describes the totality of oppressive and exploitative relations which affect women. We have localised its application within an African context-particularly in the Kenyan context.

This paper has made attempts towards engendering development by way of demystifying patriarchy in particular social contexts in contemporary times. It has paved the way into how patriarchy may be used more precisely by way of faces of oppression. This paper has also examined how development may further be engendered and the challenges faced in the concepts and theories supporting gender and development (GAD), women and development (WAD) and women in development (WID) arguments. Field work narratives included in this material do expound on the effects of patriarchy upon development within communities in Vihiga and Kisumu East. These cited cases show the interplay of culture, gender and development in these districts.

In order for men and women in this region to be further equally engaged in the production process we suggest that traditional gender roles in the public and private spheres be re-evaluated. The need for education on the relevance of women involvement in the development process is called for. In this way, matters regarding decision making relevant in the production process shall not remain tilted in favor of only men. To empower women, there is great need to sensitize them about the availability and uses of credit facilities and capacity building programmes as essentials for improving productivity and sustaining production. Most women lack collateral in terms of land title or livestock and other property required to guarantee loans. In these current times of economic recession, women's potential productivity and their ability to repay loans are underestimated or even ridiculed. This has continued to hamper efforts towards engendering development in the region.

We suggest that work that is usually not remunerated be shared among both women and men so that women can also have some time to engage in that kind of work that is remunerated. This too calls for sensitization and especially in the part of men, who need to take responsibilities that have entirely been left in the hands of women. The misconceptions that women occupy lesser positions than men should be a center of focus in sensitization programmes of both men and women. This then calls for the involvement of the government and

other development stakeholders in related policy implementations. If the third MDG is to make any notable change, then there is need to tone down and educate against the culture of patriarchy that subjugates women.

We suggest that violence be shunned in every form so that both women and men in this region are at liberty to engage in the production process without fear. It is our hope that through these, forces that diminish the lives of women in Vihiga and Kisumu East shall be denounced and that both women and men in these regions shall move ahead to a future where they all flourish.

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