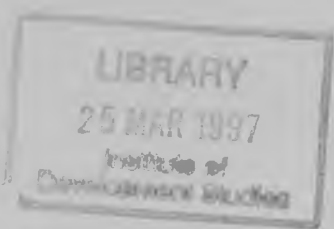
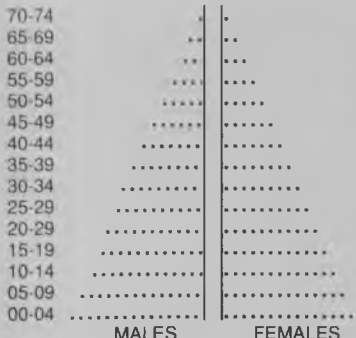


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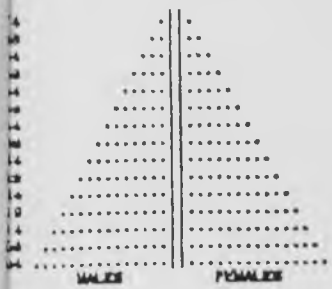
DYNAMICS OF FEMALES ACTIVITY RATE DIFFERENTIALS IN LESOTHO: RESULTS FROM THE 1986/87 HOUSEHOLD SURVEY.

by
Tiisetso Makatjane

Working Paper No. 20
July
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Lesotho has been pre-occupied with ways and means of reducing her dependence on revenue that accrues out of remittances from migrant labour to the mining industry of the Republic of South Africa. This pre-occupation stems out of the fact that migrant labour is Lesotho's principal source of employment and a crucial source of government revenue (Bureau of Statistics, 1988: 16), yet Lesotho has no control over this factor which is essential for the economic development of the country (Sebatane, 1979: 4; Lesotho, 1975: 12).

Since migrant labour is male dominated, discussions related to it have centred around men. Focusing on strategies for creating gainful employment for labour migrants, who are mainly men, has relegated women to the periphery whereas the quality of their human capital endowment is better than that of men as Lesotho is known for its high literacy among women than men. It would seem a wasted investment if this resource cannot be appropriately utilized.

The importance of reducing dependence on South Africa notwithstanding, it is equally important to create employment opportunities for the female labour force. The economic contribution of women to national development will be under estimated unless an understanding of the dynamics of female labour force participation prevails. In particular, the differences in female labour force participation and the factors underlying such differentials are of crucial importance in that creation of job opportunities for women would have to take factors that affect female labour force participation into consideration.

Results of Lesotho 1985/86 Labour Force Survey do provide valuable information with respect to female labour force participation. Female labour force participation differentials, according to education and migration status, are available from the study (see Bureau of Statistics, 1990). Differentials with respect to marital status, rural-urban residence and the relationship to the head of the household were, however, not investigated. Our understanding of female labour force participation differentials is therefore far from complete without such differentials.

According to Bureau of Statistics (1990: 51), female migrants were found to be more economically active than their non-migrant counterparts. Since in majority of cases people migrate in search for job opportunities, it was according to expectation that female migrants should be more economically active. What is left unanswered though is who the migrating women are. Knowledge about who the migrating women are is important as some women might be less likely to migrate than others yet migration is positively correlated with participating in the labour force. Knowledge about who the migrating women are would also help to determine whether some women are prone to migration out of desperation for financial support or not. This knowledge can go a long way in identifying groups which are more desperate for salaried jobs.

This paper then sets out to study female labour force participation differentials. Other than studying female economic activity differentials, the paper examines the factors influencing observed economic activity rate differentials. Particular attention is paid to age, education, rural-urban residence and migrant worker status in influencing female labour force participation rates.

1.1 THE DATA AND ITS LIMITATIONS

The 1986/87 Lesotho Household Budget Survey is the source of data for the analysis. The survey was a national representative sample survey covering private households in both urban and rural areas. The target population for the survey were individuals aged ten years and above (for a detailed sampling procedure see Bureau of Statistics 1988: 10-16 and Makatjane 1990: 3).

A total of 14646 women aged 10 years and above, whose interviews were successfully completed, form the basis of the analysis. No attempt was made to exclude women at very old ages in order to make the results of this study comparable with earlier ones. Women whose ages were not stated have been excluded from the analysis.

The variant of the "gainful worker approach" was used to determine economically active population. That is, respondents were asked to state their "main usual occupation" for the 12 months prior to the survey.

Use of this variant of the gainful worker approach to estimate active population, however, has its own demerits. These include:-

- (i) The difficulty of measuring current unemployment. The number of respondents who are normally farmers but were unemployed during the survey if the survey was conducted during the season when there was less or no activity in agriculture cannot be determined;
- (ii) Inability to distinguish job seekers for the first time from the rest of the other job seekers;
- (iii) Under-estimation of labour force participation in an economy where a sizeable proportion of the population is engaged in multiple activities. Respondents who are engaged in more than one activity, only the main activity is recorded. Moreover, asking about "main usual activity" approach tends to under-report female economic activity to a larger extent than if respondents are asked to report both primary and secondary activities; and
- (iv) Over estimation of the actual size of the labour force. There is a tendency for some retired persons to report their former occupation as their usual activity.

These limitations notwithstanding, the quality of the data is sufficient for the purposes of the present study.

Following the 1985/86 Lesotho Labour Force Survey definition, women who reported that they were self employed (employer, own account worker), unpaid family workers, regular salary earners, casual workers and unemployed but seeking jobs were considered economically active, while students, retired, homemakers and disabled were considered inactive. This once more was done to enable comparability between the results of this study with the results of earlier ones such as the 1985/86 Lesotho Labour Force Survey.

Respondents were not asked to state the time they spent on their activities. This presents a problem when classifying respondents such as casual workers as "employed" as they might have devoted less than a recommended number of hours per week to their activities to qualify as "employed". Fortunately only 2 percent of respondents reported themselves as casual workers and this is not considered large enough to bias the results. It is to be noted though that about half (49 percent) of casual workers were residing in rural areas.

One other problem was with respect to the distinction between "homemakers" and "housewives". The instructions to the enumerators suggest that these are two different groups of women yet one would have thought they are the same. For example, on page 2 of form I of the interview schedule "homemaker" is listed as an occupation on its own (Bureau of Statistics, 1988A Appendix I page 2) while enumerators were instructed to record housewives under "other" (Bureau

of Statistics, 1988A Appendix III page 2). Responses to the occupation question do, however, suggest that housewives were classified as homemakers as expected. This is based on the fact that 31 percent of respondents were classified as homemakers as against 3 percent whose occupation was recorded as "other". If housewives were recorded under other one would have expected a proportion larger than 3 percent for the "other" category. It is, therefore, arguable that few housewives had their occupation recorded as "other".

The survey population was classified according to migrant worker status. Migrant worker status was defined on the basis of location of place of work. Three categorisations were used. These were namely; migrant worker outside Lesotho (members of the household working outside the country); migrant workers inside Lesotho (members of the household working within the country but away from their place of usual residence) and commuters who comprised of respondents who commuted between their places of usual residence and places of work and those who worked at home (Bureau of Statistics, 1988A: 6). This information is used to identify who the migrants are and their characteristics. This is important when creating job opportunities for women as migrant worker status can give an indication as to who among women are more desperate for wage employment or financial support.

1.2 METHOD OF ANALYSIS

Female labour force participation rates for various groups of women are calculated and the differences between them are tested for statistical significance. As indicated earlier, migrant women were found to be more economically active than their non-migrant counterparts (Bureau of Statistics, 1990), the effect of migrant worker status as well as that of factors such as education and rural-urban residence are therefore adjusted for when comparing differences in female labour force participation with respect to marital status or relationship to head. The effect of age is also adjusted for in all comparisons.

2.0 RESULTS

2.1 OVERALL USUAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITY RATE FOR LESOTHO

The activity rate for females aged 10 years and above in the country is estimated at 38 percent. This figure is the same as the estimate of the 1985/86 Labour Force Survey of 36 percent (Bureau of Statistics, 1988: 17). However, the two rates are lower compared to the 1978/79 Migration and Labour Force Survey figure of 72 percent although the reference period was 6 months and the minimum age was 12 years in 1978/79 as compared to the reference period of 12 months and minimum age of 10 years for the recent surveys (Bureau of Statistics, 1988: 19). While Bureau of Statistics suggests that the discrepancy could be due to differing methods of data collection between the surveys (Bureau of Statistics, 1988: 19), it is also plausible that homemakers were classified as part of the labour force in the 1978/79 Migration and Labour Force Survey. Inclusion of homemakers among usual economically active individuals raises the activity rates for the 1985/86 Labour Force Survey and the 1986/87 Household Budget Survey from 36 and 38 percent to 76 and 69 percent respectively, and these rates are comparable with the 1978/79 figure.

2.2 DIFFERENTIALS IN USUAL ACTIVITY RATES.

2.2.1 MARITAL DIFFERENTIALS.

Women who were separated, divorced and widowed (SDW) were the most economically active followed by married women and then never married women (Table 1). The rate for never married women was relatively low. One of the underlying factors for this low rate in this group could be due to the fact that the majority of never married women (64 percent) were students. With respect to SDW women, their high participation rate was expected since they lacked financial support from husbands compared to currently married women.

Table 1: Female Activity Rates by Marital Status: Lesotho 1986/87.

| Marital Status | Observed Activity Rate % | Age Adjusted Activity Rate % | Number |
|----------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------|
| Never married | 27 | 22 | 5393 |
| Married | 43 | 44 | 6375 |
| SDW | 49 | 55 | 2878 |
| Total | 38 | - | 14646 |

Source: Lesotho 1986/87 Household Budget Survey Data Set

Note: Observed difference are statistically significant at 5 percent level.

A sizeable proportion of the differentials is concealed by the age structures of the various groups of women. Adjusting for the effect of the age structure increased the differences in participation rates between never married women and SDW, never married women and currently married women and currently married women and SDW women by 50, 38 and 83 percent respectively. If women had the same age structure and the only difference was with respect to their marital status, their participation rates would be those reflected in Table 1 as being adjusted for age.

Murray (1981: 154) argued that the decision by Basotho women to seek employment in South Africa is due to desperation for wage employment and lack of alternative sources of income within their areas of usual residence. Wilkinson (1987: 231) also pointed out that the majority of women migrating into Maseru Urban did so for economic reasons other than moving with or to join husbands, which is the case elsewhere in Africa. The figures in Table 2 would seem to support the argument that lack of financial support is another factor influencing differentials. SDW women were not only the most economically active, but they were also more inclined to migrate in search for wage employment (Table 2). SDW women were about twice as more likely to be migrant workers in South Africa than the rest of the other women. Since 'work' is often interpreted to mean paid employment (Murray, 1981: 153; Sembajwe and Makatjane, 1988: 26) seeking employment away from home enhances economic participation of women in wage employment due to under-reporting of other economic activities.

Table 2: Distribution of Working Women by Marital Status and Migrant Worker Status: Lesotho 1986/87.

| Marital Status | Migrant Worker | | Commuter % | Total % | Number |
|----------------|-------------------|------------------|------------|---------|--------|
| | Outside Lesotho % | Inside Lesotho % | | | |
| Never married | 6 | 26 | 68 | 100 | 674 |
| Married | 6 | 11 | 83 | 100 | 1603 |
| SDW | 12 | 11 | 78 | 100 | 889 |
| Total | 8 | 14 | 78 | 100 | 3166 |

Source: Lesotho 1986/87 Household Budget Survey

2.2.2 EDUCATIONAL DIFFERENTIALS

Differentials in activity rates by educational attainment portray a positive association between female labour force participation and educational attainment. Women with secondary education and higher reported the highest economic active rate while those with incomplete primary education reported the lowest participation rate (Table 3).

The pattern of differentials is in accordance with expectation. Educated women were more active as expected. The high participation rate for women with no education compared to women with incomplete primary education, which is contrary to expectation, could be a reflection of women's perception of "work". Women with no education are more likely to report activities outside wage or formal sector employment than women with incomplete primary education. This is a result of the education system which indoctrinates people to only consider wage or formal employment as economic activities. Other than the fact that women with incomplete primary education might have under-reported activities outside the formal sector, it is difficult to understand why they should be less active economically than women with no education.

Table 3: Female Activity Rates by Educational Attainment: Lesotho 1986/87.

| Educational Attainment | Observed Activity Rate % | Age Adjusted Activity Rate % | Number |
|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------|
| No Education | 37 | 32 | 1600 |
| Incomplete Primary | 30 | 30 | 7793 |
| Completed Primary | 41 | 44 | 3164 |
| Secondary and Above | 62 | 63 | 2088 |

Source: Lesotho 1986/87 Household Budget Survey

Note: 1. One woman whose education was unstated excluded
Observed difference are statistically significant at 5 percent level.

Adjustment for the effect of the age structure generally reduced the magnitude of the differences. Major declines in the magnitude of differentials is between women with no education and those with incomplete and complete primary education. The difference in the observed activity rate between women with no education and those with incomplete primary education and those with complete primary decline by 71 and 200 percent respectively. This would suggest that other than one's perception of "work" suggested above as responsible for differentials between women with no education and those with incomplete primary, the effect of the age structure is also responsible. Differentials among women of other educational categories show a moderate effect of the age structure with a decline ranging from 10 to 27 percent in the magnitude of the differences.

2.2.3 RURAL-URBAN DIFFERENTIALS

Women in urban areas were more likely to be economically active than women in the rural areas. This pattern is maintained even after the removal of the effect of the age structure suggesting that the age structure has no effect on rural-urban differentials (Table 4). Since availability of wage employment is better in urban areas; there were 7 women per hundred who were regular salary earners in rural areas compared to 22 and 28 in Other Urban and Urban Maseru respectively; it is not surprising that women residing in urban areas were more economically active than women in rural areas.

Migrant worker status information supports the hypothesis that there are few wage employment opportunities in rural Lesotho. According to Table 5, working women residing in rural areas were seven times more likely to be employed outside Lesotho than those residing in Urban Maseru. Furthermore, 80 percent of women classified as migrant workers outside Lesotho were from rural areas. The large proportion of women in urban areas who were classified as commuters also suggests better job opportunities in these areas, Urban Maseru in particular.

The definition of economic activities could also partly explain observed differentials. Whereas women who were employed as domestic helpers to do household work; a practice common in urban areas; were classified as employed, a woman in the rural areas doing the same type of work but for herself is classified as either a homemaker or a housewife. The concentration of domestic helpers in urban areas; more than half (80 percent) of domestic helpers were residing in urban areas; suggests that the definition is mainly biased against rural areas.

Table 4: Female Activity Rates by Rural Urban Residence: Lesotho 1986/87.

| Residence | Observed Activity Rate % | Age Adjusted Activity Rate % | Number |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------|
| Rural | 33 | 33 | 9274 |
| Other Urban | 44 | 44 | 1946 |
| Maseru Urban | 49 | 49 | 3424 |

Source: Lesotho 1986/87 Household Budget Survey

Note: Two women whose residence was unstated excluded

Observed difference are statistically significant at 5 percent level.

The majority of rural households in Lesotho are subsistence farming households. Since working in agriculture was considered as engagement in an economic activity in the survey, an observed economic activity rate of 33 percent for rural women is considered an under-estimation. It is highly likely that most rural women did not consider engaging in agricultural production as "work" presumable on the understanding that "work" meant formal or wage employment. The same observation was made in the Mohale's Hoek district in southern Lesotho (Sembajwe and Makatjane, 1988: 26).

Table 5: Distribution of Working Women by Rural-Urban Residence and Migrant Worker Status: Lesotho 1986/87.

| Rural Urban Residence | Migrant Worker | | Commuter % | Total % | Number |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------|------------|--------|
| | Outside Lesotho % | Inside Lesotho % | | | |
| Rural | 14 | 17 | 69 | 100 | 1463 |
| Other Urban | 4 | 17 | 79 | 100 | 557 |
| Maseru Urban | 2 | 9 | 89 | 100 | 1146 |
| Lesotho | 8 | 14 | 78 | 100 | 3166 |

Source: Lesotho 1986/87 Household Budget Survey

2.2.4 RELATIONSHIP TO HOUSEHOLD HEAD DIFFERENTIALS

With an economic activity rate of 72 percent, non-relatives were more active than the rest of the other household members (Table 6). Daughters-in-law had the next highest activity rate of 54 percent followed by heads with an activity rate of 51 percent. Spouses, daughters and other relatives had the lowest rates of 36, 30 and 31 percent respectively.

Table 6: Female Activity Rates by Relationship to Head of Household: Lesotho 1986/87.

| Relationship to Head | Observed Activity Rate % | Age Adjusted Activity Rate % | Number |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------|
| Head | 51 | 50 | 2094 |
| Spouse | 36 | 36 | 4739 |
| Daughter | 30 | 31 | 4242 |
| Daughter in Law | 54 | 54 | 782 |
| Other relatives | 32 | 32 | 2264 |
| Non-relatives | 72 | 73 | 520 |

Source: Lesotho 1986/87 Household Budget Survey
Observed difference are statistically significant at 5 percent level except for the differences between daughters and Other Relatives and Spouse and Daughter-in-Law.

The low rate for daughters could be due to the fact that close to 60 percent of the daughters were students. The rate for "other relatives" was partly affected by inclusion of grand children in their group. A third of other relatives were grand children and 69 percent of grand children were students.

The high participation rate of non-relatives was, however, expected since the majority (72 percent) of this group was made up of domestic employees. There is, however, hardly any difference between the observed activity rates of spouses, daughters and other relatives.

Adjustment for the effect of the age structure generally does not change the pattern of differentials. In the majority of cases adjusting for age has left the magnitude of the differentials unchanged or they have decreased by a small margin. Non-relatives and daughters-in-law, however, continue to report the highest economic activity rates even after adjusting for age.

When discussing marital differentials it was indicated that SDW women had the highest propensity to migrate which seemed to contribute to their high economic activity (Table 2). Since more than 80 percent of de jure female heads were SDW women and more in need for financial support, de jure female heads of households should have had the highest proportion of women employed outside the country as was observed in Table 2 for SDW women. This contention is not supported by the figures in Table 7. Daughters and daughters-in-law have the highest propensity to migrate than de jure female heads. In fact de jure female heads and spouses were 2 to 4 times less likely to be classified as migrant workers outside Lesotho compared to daughters and daughters-in-law. The same pattern is observed for migration within the country. Daughters and daughters-in-law were about 2 to 3 times more likely to be classified as migrant workers within the country than heads or currently married women.

Table 7: Distribution of Working Women by Relationship to Household Head and Migrant Worker Status: Lesotho 1986/87.

| Relationship to Household Head | Migrant Worker | | Commuter % | Total % | Number |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------|---------|--------|
| | Outside Lesotho % | Inside Lesotho % | | | |
| Head | 5 | 9 | 86 | 100 | 799 |
| Spouse | 5 | 10 | 85 | 100 | 1173 |
| Daughter | 20 | 30 | 50 | 100 | 542 |
| Daughter-in-Law | 14 | 18 | 66 | 100 | 125 |

Note: 1. Other household members excluded

Source: Lesotho 1986/87 Household Budget Survey

The apparent contradictory evidence between Tables 2 and 7 is most likely a reflection of an incompatibility between seeking employment outside place of usual residence and household responsibilities. That is, much as SDW female household heads should have been the most desperate for financial support, absence of somebody to look after their households, particularly children and farming land and/or livestock for those who have access to farming land and own live stock, debar them from seeking employment away from home.

More than half of all SDW women who were migrant workers outside Lesotho in Table 2 were daughters. This supports the practice whereby women who are in the separated, divorced or widowhood state who had not formed their own separate households from those of the parents of their husbands and or accumulating any property of their own and are not particularly in good terms with their in-laws return to their natal home. At their natal home they become more prone to migration and can easily seek work away from home as they do not have household responsibilities like household heads (both de jure or de facto). Moreover, if they have young children who otherwise would have restricted their seeking work away from home, their parents would look after the children on their behalf. This would also apply to daughters-in-law who are staying with their in-laws as they can leave their children with their in-laws when they have to seek employment away from home.

The fact that seeking employment away from home is conditional on the presence of somebody to take care of household responsibilities affects both men and women. Murray (1981: 166) gives an example of a man who could not seek employment in South Africa after the death of his wife on the grounds that nobody would look after his children. In another example, when asked whether they would like their families to join them in South Africa, the majority of Basotho men who had ever worked in South Africa indicated no desire for their families to join them in South Africa. They reasoned that there would be nobody to take care of family affairs (Sebatane, 1979: 61). This probably explains the small proportion of both married women and female household heads employed away from their usual place of residence.

Age can also explain the low propensity for SDW female de jure households heads to migrate than other women in the SDW state. It is an established demographic fact that migration is age selective. That is, individuals in the young ages have a higher propensity to migrate than individuals in

the older ages. Since two thirds (67 percent) of SDW female heads were aged 50 years and above while not less than 56 percent of both daughters (69 percent) and daughters-in-law (56 percent) were aged less than 35 years could partly explain why daughters and daughters-in-law in the SDW state were more likely to migrate to the Republic of South Africa as reflected in Table 7.

3.0 ADJUSTING FOR OTHER FACTORS

So far only age has been controlled for. But it is equally important to adjust for effect of other factors such as rural-urban residence, education and migrant worker status. Our interest in this section is to find out whether economic participation rates would change if women had the same education or same rural-urban residence or the same migrant worker status. In other words, if women had the same education or rural-urban residence or migrant worker status except their marital status or relationship to household head, what would their economic participation rates look like.

Considering first rural-urban residence, it was indicated earlier that there are more job opportunities in the formal sector in urban areas than in rural areas. Coupled with the fact that "work" is often interpreted to mean wage or formal employment, it was argued in section 2.2.3 that this character of urban areas explains why women residing in urban areas were found to be more economically active than their rural counterparts. This would suggest that adjusting for rural-urban residence would reduce labour force participation rates between women by marital status and relationship to head if any one group of them was concentrated in urban areas.

Participation rates in Table 8 where rural-urban residence has been adjusted for are not different from observed participation rates. Generally differentials in participation rates have remained unchanged or have declined by a small margin except differentials between daughters-in-law and non-relatives where differentials declined by 39 percent. It can be concluded therefore that rural-urban residence is not responsible for observed differences in economic activity rates. This is not to suggest that it was not correct to argue that women in urban areas portrayed a higher participation rate due to better job opportunities in the urban areas. This is rather because rural-urban distribution of women by marital status or relationship to household head was similar. That is, the proportion of any group of women, say never married women or daughters-in-law, was the same

in both rural and urban areas. For example, 59, 66 and 65 percent of never married, currently married and SDW women respectively were residing in rural areas while 26, 22 and 21 percent of these women were respectively residing in Urban Maseru.

Since activities such as performing agricultural work which are common in rural area were considered an economic activity, it might not be surprising that adjusting for the effect of rural-urban residence did not affect observed activity rates. That is, once performing agricultural work is considered an economic activity women residing in urban areas have the same chances of being in the labour force as are women residing in rural areas. Moreover, economic activities were based on the usual state hence the timing of the survey would also not have affected economic activity even if the survey was at the time when there was no activity in agricultural work. Otherwise if economic activities were not based on the usual state and the survey was conducted at the time when there was a lag of activity in agricultural work, that would have given urban women relative advantage over rural women. This is because agricultural work is seasonal while formal employment in urban areas is not necessarily seasonal. Probably adjusting for rural-urban residence would have made a difference if only wage employment was considered.

Table 8: Female Activity Rates by Relationship to Head of Household and Marital Status Adjusted for Rural-Urban Residence, Education and Migration Status: Lesotho 1986/87.

| Character | Observed Activity Rate | Activity Rate Adjusted for | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | | Residence | Education | Migration |
| Relationship to Household Head | | | | |
| Head | 51 | 50 | 52 | 39 |
| Spouse | 36 | 36 | 36 | 33 |
| Daughter | 30 | 30 | 29 | 37 |
| Daughter in Law | 54 | 57 | 52 | 57 |
| Other relatives | 32 | 32 | 33 | 40 |
| Non-relatives | 72 | 68 | 72 | 48 |
| Marital Status | | | | |
| Never Married | 27 | 26 | 26 | 33 |
| Currently Married | 43 | 43 | 42 | 40 |
| SDW | 49 | 49 | 53 | 42 |

Source: Lesotho 1986/87 Household Budget Survey

It has been established that there is a high correlation between education and economic participation in Lesotho (Bureau of Statistics, 1991; 1990). This was also confirmed by the results in Table 3. This would suggest that adjusting for education would reduce economic participation rates among women if a certain group of women is more educated than the rest. The results in Table 8 do not support this hypothesis. That is, adjusting for education does not change observed participation rates when comparing participation rates among women by marital status and relationship to household head. The differentials between women in these categories have either remained the same or have changed slightly. SDW women were the only group whom adjustment for the effect of education increased their participation rate. That is, if their education was the same with the rest of their counterparts, their participation rate would have been 53 not 49. The change in their participation was expected as their educational distribution was different from the rest of other women. They were the least educated compared to their counterparts. Only 6 percent of SDW women had attained secondary education or better compared to 15 and 17 percent for never married and currently married women respectively.

It is equally important to establish whether observed rural-urban economic participation differences were a result of differences in female education between rural and urban women or differences in migrant worker status. According to the figures in Table 9, adjusting for education does reduce the differences by a sizeable proportion. For instance, the difference in participation rate between rural and urban Maseru women is reduced by 50 percent when education is adjusted for. When comparing participation rates between rural and Other Urban and Other Urban and Maseru Urban, the differences are reduced by 45 and 57 percent respectively when education is adjusted for. This is according to expectation because educated women were concentrated in Urban areas; 23 and 52 percent of women with secondary education or better were residing in Other Urban and Urban Maseru respectively. Put differently, only 6 percent of women residing in rural areas had secondary education or higher compared to 22 and 30 percent in Other Urban and Urban Maseru.

TABLE 9: Female Activity rates by Rural-Urban Residence Adjusted for Education and Migration Status: Lesotho 1986/87.

| Character | Observed Activity Rate | Activity Rate Adjusted for | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------|
| | | Education | Migration |
| Rural-Urban Residence | | | |
| Rural | 33 | 35 | 37 |
| Other Urban | 43 | 41 | 39 |
| Urban Maseru | 49 | 44 | 41 |

Source: Lesotho 1986/87 Household Budget Survey

It was argued throughout the earlier sections of the paper that migration enhances women's participation in the labour force. It has also been shown that there are other women who are more prone to migration than others (see Tables 2 and 7). This suggests that adjusting for migrant worker status would reduce participation rates between women. The figures in Tables 8 and 9 generally support the argument that some women are more active because they are more prone to migration. On the other hand migrant worker status is highly correlated with female labour force participation. Almost invariably, differences in economic activity rates have decreased by half in most cases when migrant worker status is adjusted for.

4.0 DISCUSSION

Women who were SDW, highly educated, residing in urban areas, those not related to the head of the household within which they reside and daughters-in-law were generally more likely to be more economically active. Although the differences in the age structures of various groups of women explains a sizeable proportion of the observed differentials, the age adjusted activity rates of these women were still higher than those of their counterparts.

Other than the explanation offered by the effect of the age structure, a number of factors which seem to influence differentials in observed activity rates among Basotho women have also been highlighted. Lack of financial support is one such factor which compels women to seek wage employment away from home and thus be more active. SDW women do not only appear to be highly active, but they even go to an extent of migrating to South Africa to enhance their employment

opportunities in the formal sector. The migration option, however, is affected by the availability of somebody to look after the family. The higher probability of daughters and daughters-in-law to be employed away from their place of usual residence does support the hypothesis of incompatibility between migration in search of wage employment in the formal sector and household responsibilities. That is, due to less family responsibilities, availability of parents with whom to leave their children if any and being in the productive ages, daughters and daughters-in-law had the highest probability of seeking employment away from home.

The individual's perception of "work" has also emerged. It is apparent from the discussion that some women did not consider working in agriculture as an economic activity. The lower economic activity rate for women residing in rural areas as well as the lower participation of women with incomplete primary education compared with women with no education provides evidence. It is equally probable that interviewers too did not perceive subsistence farming as an occupation by not probing to find out whether women had not performed any agricultural work when responding that they had not performed any economic activity. Rural women normally admit that they had done agricultural work if further probing is done by interviewers after they had mentioned that they had not performed any economic activity.

There is also the definitional problem for classifying women as either economically active or inactive. As mentioned earlier, remuneration for the type of activity an individual is engaged in makes a lot of difference. A domestic helper doing household work is categorised as economically active because she is remunerated for her work yet any woman doing household work for herself is inactive and this affects mainly rural women.

Lastly, when adjustment is made for other factors, migrant worker status emerged as the most important factor. Generally adjusting for this factor reduced the magnitude of the differentials by at least 50 percent in the majority of cases. Education was also important when looking at rural-urban residence differences. This was in order because educated women were concentrated in urban areas.

There are some factors which were alleged to be responsible for differences in the observed participation rates which could not be tested due to limitations of the current data set. Incompatibility between seeking wage employment away from usual place of residence and

household responsibilities is one such factor. Previous research has indicated that Basotho migrant workers expect their wives to stay at home and look after the households. This suggests that wives of migrant workers are less likely to seek employment away from place of usual residence. It would be interesting to investigate the role of this factors in influencing female labour force participation in Lesotho. Probably this should be seen as agenda for future research.

The results of the study have certain implications as far as job creation for women is concerned. More wage employment opportunities are needed for the rural areas. It has been shown in the paper that, wage employment is concentrated in urban areas and this trend needs to be reversed. While in the past most industries were located in Maseru and Maputsoe due to availability of services such as electricity in these areas, when Lesotho High Lands Water project is complete, availability of electricity in rural Lesotho for bringing services to the rural communities would not be a problem. To mention one example, industries for cleaning wool and mohair before export could be placed in the rural areas where these products are produced.

Such a move would not only expand job opportunities for women, it would also curb rural-urban migration which has been a problem for the country. This could also minimise disappearance of farming land being used for residential purposes in urban areas to mention just a few.

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