

Female Migration, Gender Relations and Remittances in Lesotho: On whose Terms?

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Abstract

For most of the twentieth century, the vast majority of migrants from Lesotho were young men who went to work in the South African gold mines and remitted funds to their parents and own households back home. With the retrenchment of Basotho men from the South African mines in post apartheid era migration has become more feminized in recent years. The decline in gold mine employment has had three spin-off impacts on migration from Lesotho: (a) a diversification in patterns of labor migration as new migrants seek out other employment opportunities in post apartheid South Africa, (b) an increase in female migration to South Africa as female household members replace retrenched males and seek employment opportunities in sectors that prefer female employees (such as domestic service and commercial farming) and (c) increase in internal female migration (rural to urban).

Consequently this paper attempts to investigate the increase in internal female migration in Lesotho. Four broad areas are explored in the paper: 1) the history of labor migration in Lesotho over time; 2) the characteristics of migrant workers and how these have changed over time; 3) the economic ties that labor migrants have maintained with their households of origin; and 4) the change in gender relations as a consequence of female labor migration

Finding from the study reveals that due to retrenchment of Basotho men who used to be the main source of income and livelihood strategy particularly for the rural households, more women are migration from rural areas to urban areas in search for employment opportunities. It has emerged from the paper as well that that there were significant differences between male-sending and female-sending households. The latter are worse off than the former and have even fewer opportunities for income-generating activity outside of migration. There has also been a shift in gender roles even though generally Basotho men still maintain their roles as head of households and main decision maker within the households.

Key Words: Female Migration, Remittances Gender, Relation, Lesotho

Lesotho's Socio-Economic Background

Lesotho is completely surrounded by the Republic of South Africa. While the large majority of the population lives in rural areas, only about a quarter of the total land area of 30,350 square kilometers is more or less suitable for cultivation. Most of the country consists of steep mountains that reach heights of more than 3,000 meters above sea level, and are prone to erosion. Arable land is lost every year due to the expansion of human settlements and severe overgrazing. Erratic rainfalls make investment in agriculture risky. Many Basotho try to find employment outside the agricultural sector, with a total population of 1,872,721 according to the Bureau of Statistics 2006 national census¹. Its capital and largest city is Maseru which accounts for around half to the total urban population.

Figure 1: Location of Lesotho



Source:

Lesotho (formerly Basutoland) was constituted as a native state under British protection by a treaty signed with the native chief Moshoeshe 1 in 1843. It was annexed to Cape Colony in 1871, but in 1884 it was restored to direct control by the Crown. The colony of Basutoland became the independent nation of Lesotho on October 4, 1966, with King Moshoeshe II as sovereign. Today Lesotho is under the ruling of the Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili of the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) political party which claimed victory in the national voting elections in 2007.

The sex distribution is 911,848 male and 960,873 female, or around 95 males for each 100 females. Although the majority of the population—59.8 percent—is between 15 and 64 years of age, Lesotho has a substantial youth population numbering around 35.3 percent. The annual population growth rate is estimated at 0.13 percent. Lesotho has a

¹ 2006 Lesotho population and Housing Census, Lesotho Government , Maseru, Lesotho (2010)

birth rate of 26.93 births per 1000 population and a death rate of 15.19 deaths per 1000 population². The country is also faced with a high prevalence of HIV and AIDS which was estimated at 23.6 percent in 2009.

Lesotho is a low-income country with an economy that is inseparably linked to South Africa. Lesotho currency is Loti (plural, Maloti) which is pegged at par to the South African rand. The country's currency is issued and managed by the Central Bank of Lesotho which is also responsible for formulation and execution of Monetary Policy among its other functions (www.centralbankoflesotho.org.ls). The country's gross domestic product is estimated at US\$1.8 billion (2010 estimates.)³.

Lesotho's economy is based on diamonds exported all over the world and water sold to South Africa, manufacturing, agriculture, livestock, and to some extent the earnings of laborers employed in South Africa. Lesotho also exports wool, mohair, clothing, and footwear. Water and diamonds are Lesotho's significant natural resources. Water is utilized through the 21-year, multi-billion-dollar Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP), under the authority of the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority. These project commenced in 1986. The World Bank, African Development Bank, European Investment Bank, and many other bilateral donors financed the project. Lesotho is a member of many regional economic organizations, including the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Southern African Customs Union (SACU). It is also active in the United Nations (UN), the African Union, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Commonwealth, and many other international organizations⁴. However, unemployment remains high (estimated to be over 50%).

Lesotho has had a unique and long migration history linked to its position of entirely being surrounded by the Republic of South Africa. For almost 150 years and until today, emigration mainly to South Africa has been a significant livelihood strategy in Lesotho, as recognized in Lesotho's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper of 2004/2005 to 2006/2007⁵. Poverty and the lack of opportunities at home has led many citizens of Lesotho to migrate internally and to neighboring South Africa, with implications for social nets and family structures. Remittances made up 25 per cent of the GDP in 2009⁶. Consequently, the country is among the top three remittance-receiving countries as a share of GDP worldwide, making remittances an important source of foreign exchange and to pay for basic necessities.

Over the past 20 years however, migration patterns from and in Lesotho have changed considerably, with work opportunities for men in the mines in South Africa decreasing and at the same time increasing female emigration from Lesotho. Internal migration has become more important for women working in the garment factories.

² July 2011 estimates, CIA World Factbook, December 30, 2010

³ <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/>

⁴ Lesotho Country profile on the Southern African Development Community website

⁵ Kingdom of Lesotho, nd

⁶(World Bank, 2010a)

The decline in gold mine employment has had three spin-off impacts on migration from Lesotho: (a) a diversification in patterns of labor migration as new migrants seek out other employment opportunities in post apartheid South Africa, (b) an increase in female migration to South Africa as female household members replace retrenched males and seek employment opportunities in sectors that prefer female employees (such as domestic service and commercial farming) and (c) increase in internal female migration (rural to urban).

Consequently this paper attempts to investigate the increase in internal female migration in Lesotho. Four broad areas are explored in the paper: 1) the history of labor migration in Lesotho over time; 2) the characteristics of migrant workers and how these have changed over time; 3) the economic ties that labor migrants have maintained with their households of origin; and 4) the change in gender relations as a consequence of female labor migration

Methodology

Initially the paper had intended to use the quantitative approach to the study but due to massive information available on labor migration in Lesotho and female labor migration ([site all the relevant documents](#)). The paper therefore has adopted two pronged approach thus desk research and qualitative approaches. The desk research reviewed all the relevant information pertaining to migration, remittance and gender relation. The Researcher has conducted one (1) focus group discussions with textile employees who are originally from Matelile in the Mafeteng Southern district of Lesotho. The focus group comprised of eight (8) women who are wives to the retrenched mine workers. The choice of the study area was mainly purposive, the Researcher did not have any funding for the study and since this is her place of origin knew women who would form part of the focus group and conducted the study when women were visiting during the month end weekend of February 26th 2011.

History of Labor Migration in Lesotho

As Allen (1992)⁷ asserted, in Southern Africa, migrant labor to the mines in South Africa as a livelihood strategy is as old as mining itself. Since the beginning of diamond mining in the 1870's, black people have left their home areas for wage labor in the mining industry in South Africa. Although early migrant labor in the mining industry in the Southern African region includes job seekers, in the commercial agricultural sector, in the homes of white colonial 'master', into construction, manufacturing, railways and into the public service for wage labor, focus here will be only on migrant labor to the mines. Allen (ibid) details the complex reasons for the history of labor in Southern Africa:

⁷ History of Black Mineworkers in South Africa: Volume I: The Techniques of Resistance 1871-1948. WestYorkshire, Great Britain: Moor Press

Defeat in war, loss of guns, economic destructions, the loss of cattle, annexation of land, increased burden of debt, an inability to pay rent or tribute, eviction from farms, anti-squatter laws, vagrancy laws, hut and poll taxes, compulsory labor, improved administration of labor laws combined with decline in the authority of chiefs, intensified population pressure on the land, famine resulting from drought, cattle disease and finally the continual oppressive presence of British imperial armed forces were all factors in totality which increasingly impoverished them to the point of absolute starvation. In consequence, many African families were either made homeless with no means of subsistence or they were rendered so impoverished that they had to find a supplementary source of subsistence. There was only one escape route for these people and that was to enter the labor market.

This process signifies de-agrarianisation and a transition to migrant labor to the mines in South Africa coming from Mozambique, Lesotho Botswana, Malawi and Swaziland with Malawi exporting the largest number of mine migrant labor. By 1972 Malawians comprised 38 percent of foreign migrant labor force but by 1989 following withdrawal of Malawian labor (by Malawi Government), Lesotho comprised the largest exporter of migrant to the mines, comprising 54 percent of the foreign migrant labor force (James, 1992)⁸. By 1990, an average of 125, 000 men were employed on the mines, each having an average of six dependants. This translated to a total of 750, 000 people dependent on the mining industry (Foulo, 1991⁹). Majority of migrant mine workers from Lesotho have been from the rural areas with average 47 percent of rural households compared with an average of 25 percent of urban households having at least one household member as a migrant worker ¹⁰(Foulo, 1991).

These migration patterns the neo-Marxist theory which sees migration as influenced by systemic factors and structures of production and reproduction i.e penetration of capitalism in Southern Africa, commodification of production which undermined subsistence farming, and proletarianisation thus putting pressure on households to accumulate capital (Pule and Matlosa, 2000)¹¹.

During the 1990s, a stagnant gold price led to a major period of declining production, mine closures and retrenchments in South Africa's low-grade gold mines. In 1990, there were around 376,000 migrant miners in the industry. By 2004, there were only 230,000: a total job loss of 1 40,000. Of those who were left, around 50,000 (about a sixth) were

⁸ James W. (1992) *Our Precious Metal: African Labor in South Africa's Gold Industry, 1970-1990*. Claremont: David Philip Publishers

⁹ Foulo T. (1991) *Migrant Workers Retrenchments: Implications for Lesotho Economy*. Staff Occasional Paper no. 6. Central Bank of Lesotho

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Pule, N. and Matlosa, K. (2000) *The Impact of Retrenched Retunees on Gender Relations in Rural Lesotho*. Gender Issues Research Report Series, No 10, OSSREA Organisation for Social Science in Eastern and Southern Africa

from Lesotho SAMP (2010)¹². Between 1995 and 2006, the proportion of Basotho miners in the total workforce fell from 30 percent to 1.7 percent. The impact of retrenchments on so many migration-dependent households in Lesotho was devastating, when almost 50,000 miners lost their jobs. Almost as many households lost their main source of income. The proportion of households in Lesotho with at least one household member working as a migrant on the South African mines declined from 12 percent in 2002 from 50 percent twenty years earlier. Young male school-leavers could no longer rely on following the men in their families who for the last four generations had followed their fathers as workers in the precious metals and diamond mines of South Africa. Mine employment has become an elusive goal for men: “What used to be the absolute economic backbone of Basotho villages and rural economies has been degraded into the privilege of a few”.¹³

The Rise of Female Migration in Lesotho

Around the same time that men were being retrenched from the South African mines, there has been dramatic growth in local female employment opportunities in Lesotho’s textile industry. The industry started in the late 1980s when Asian (primarily Taiwanese) investors relocated from South Africa to Lesotho to avoid sanctions on South Africa and to access the European market. In the 1990s, the industry continued to grow as new overseas markets were developed to take advantage of Lesotho’s unmet quotas under the Multifiber Arrangement (MFA) of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. The industry was stimulated after 2000 by Lesotho’s privileged status as a duty-free exporter to the US under that country’s Africa Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA). The Act gave Lesotho-based textile producers privileged access to the US garment market. Lesotho could also import fabrics from Asia under AGOA for use in garment manufacture without contravening US regulations on the maximum amount of Lesotho exports that had to be sourced from domestic suppliers.

Between 2000 and 2004, textile exports more than doubled, the number of factories, heavily subsidized by Lesotho Government building grants, rose to 47 and the workforce to 65,000. Over 90% of exports went to the US. The phasing out of quotas maintained under the WTO Agreement on Textile and Clothing in January 2005 caused a crisis in the Lesotho industry. As other low-wage economies such as Bangladesh were able to increase textile exports. Exports fell, factories shut down as their owners (no longer constrained by quota restrictions) relocated to Asia, and thousands of jobs were lost (an estimated 1 5,000 in 2005-6 alone).

Government responded by granting further concessions to producers and securing “ethical buying” contracts with major US buyers such as The Gap, Walmart and Levi Strauss. By mid-2006, the industry had rebounded with factories re-opening and employment levels once again reaching almost 50,000. From the beginning, the textile companies preferred female to male labor. Female workers are considered more “docile”

¹² Cruch, J. et al, (2010) Migration and Development in Lesotho, Southern African Migration Program, Cape Town, South Africa

¹³ Ibid

and "nimble" by employers. They are certainly ultra-exploitable. Today, over 90% of Basotho employed in textile factories are young women, most of whom are internal migrants. The numbers have risen even as the number of male mineworkers has fallen, leading some to characterize Basotho female textile workers as the 'new miners'.

But, the emerging employment opportunities for young women "have come to a group which is structurally different from that of men, the 'traditional' breadwinners and wage earners." In many households, young women have displaced young men as the primary wage earners. There is a large difference in salary between male miners and female garment workers. In 2002, for example, miners earned an average of M2, 900 per month, while garment workers received only M650 per month. The situation was even worse in 2006, when miners were receiving a substantially higher wage of M4, 500 a month, while the garment workers' salaries had not changed. The supply of labor willing to work for the national minimum wage that is the most offered by the employers greatly outstrips the demand for employees at this wage. The front gates of every textile manufacturing are always surrounded by hundreds of, mostly, women wanting any employment available.

Economic Ties (Remittances)

According to on-line dictionary, remittance is a transfer of money by a foreign worker to his or her home country. Money sent home by migrants constitutes the second largest financial inflow to many developing countries, exceeding international aid. Estimates of remittances to developing countries vary from International Fund for Agricultural Development's US\$301 billion (including informal flows) to the World Bank's US\$250 billion for 2006 (excluding informal flows). Remittances contribute to economic growth and to the livelihoods of people worldwide. Moreover, remittance transfers can also promote access to financial services for the sender and recipient, thereby increasing financial and social inclusion. Remittances also foster, in the receiving countries, a further economic dependence on the global economy instead of building sustainable, local economies¹⁴

Remittances have implications for both sending and recipient countries as well as households. Household formations, gendered migration patterns, and gender relations may have an impact on who sends remittances, how they are sent, who receives them, as well as how they are used. Table 1 illustrates the impacts of remittances on different levels of society.

¹⁴ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/remittances>.

Table 1: Key impacts of remittances on poverty at different level

Recipient	Poverty-reducing impacts	Other impacts
Household	Income and consumption smoothing Increased savings and asset accumulation, collateral for loans; liquidity in times of crisis Improved access to health services and better nutrition Access to better education for longer, reducing child labor Increased social capital Improved access to information	Dependence on remittances leaves households vulnerable to changes in migration/employment cycles High proportion of remittances used on nonproductive and short-term consumption gains Differentiated access to additional resources in accordance with sex or age Adoption of innovations unsuited to local environment
Community	Improved local physical infrastructure Growth of local commodity markets Development of local capital markets and new services: banking, retail, travel & construction Establishment of new development institutions Changes to cultural practices, especially regarding girl children Generation of local employment opportunities Reduction of inequality between households, particularly poor households Possible multiplier effects of the greater consumption allowed by remittances. Enables people to pay for health and education services	Initially can increase inequality between households Spatial concentration of remittances might increase regional inequalities Distortions in local factor markets (particularly land and labor) Transmission of negative cultural practices that reduce local quality of life
International	Reduction in inequality among countries as remittances exceed official aid transfers in some regions	Dependence on unreliable sources of foreign exchange subject to cyclical fluctuations Potential for money laundering

Source: adapted from Admos Chimbowu et al in SAMP, 2006, p.12

Literature available (UN-INSTRAW, 2007; SAMP, 2010; add more will work over this at 2.00am) indicate that remittances from the South African mines come through several means that include:

Formal methods

The Deferred Pay Scheme in Lesotho was set up in 1974 "to ensure that a higher percentage of money paid to Basotho mineworkers was invested or utilized in the domestic economy as against a prior situation whereby the opposite was seen as the

case"¹⁵. The scheme was also meant to increase the appreciation for savings among mineworkers.

The Deferred Pay Fund was administered by a Board of Trustees responsible for

- Investing Fund resources on the advice of the Managing Director of the Lesotho Bank in such a manner that the securities shall be realizable on demand;
- Make arrangements for interest accruing from the moneys invested to be paid as soon as practicable to employees at a rate equal, or approximately equal, to the rate payable by the Savings Bank Branch of the Lesotho Bank on normal deposits made therein.¹⁶

The Board of Trustees was chaired by the Principal Secretary of Labor and Employment. It was also made up of representatives from Lesotho Bank, the Ministries of Employment and Labor, Agriculture and Finance of Lesotho and the Ministry of Labor of RSA. Employers were sometimes allowed to make statements in the meetings of the Board of Trustees, and employees were also represented, be it on an individual basis and not through trade unions.

A revision of the Deferred Pay Act in 1979 stipulated that sixty per cent of the basic wage should be deposited at Lesotho Bank, with the exception of pay during the first thirty days of the contract. However, it was also stipulated that, in the case of an emergency: “the employee may make a written request to his employer that a sum of money, to be specified in the request, shall be paid from the deferred pay standing to his credit to the person named in that request”.¹⁷

Deferred pay (Amendment) Order N° 1 of 1989 stipulated that moneys in the fund that were not immediately required for repayment should be invested in treasury bills or other securities issues or guaranteed by the Government. Subsequently, Order N° 18 of 1990 decreased the percentage deferred pay to thirty per cent of the wage, while employees could voluntarily agree to a percentage up to fifty per cent. No deductions were allowed in respect of the first and the last thirty calendar days of a contract, while two withdrawals per contract period were allowed, each not exceeding fifty per cent of the deferred pay standing to an employee’s credit. The Board decides on the interest rate payable on the accounts at Lesotho Bank.

Financial practice of deferred pay in Lesotho

Most miners in Southern Africa were recruited by The Employment Bureau for Africa (TEBA), a non-profit organisation, the recruiting arm of the mines. It has offices in all but one of the districts of Lesotho. TEBA sells its services to the gold- and coal mines. In principal, miners recruited through TEBA receive their income on an individual savings account with TEBA Cash in the Republic of South Africa. TEBA Cash is a private commercial South African savings bank and the TEBA offices in Lesotho serve as

¹⁵ Ministry of Employment and Labor 1995b, Lesotho Government

¹⁶ Deferred Pay Act N° 18 of 1974, sections 5(a) and (b)). Lesotho Government

¹⁷ Deferred Pay Amendment Act N° 1 of 1979, section 5(3)). Lesotho Government

agents. Withdrawals from the accounts can be made at the mines. According to TEBA, interest rates paid on the accounts compare well with those on savings accounts with other commercial banks in the Republic of South Africa.

Most miners remit part of their wages to the TEBA-offices in the different districts of Lesotho at their own initiative. But if in need, relatives in Lesotho can make a request for a remittance at a TEBA office. TEBA informs the miner, and at his consent money is transferred to the relative. A commission must be paid to TEBA. However, miners do not receive all their income on an account with TEBA-Cash. In principle, the mining companies transfer the required 30 per cent of their total wage bill to a collective account at Lesotho Bank. Employees can make a maximum of two emergency withdrawals before the end of their contract. The purpose of the withdrawal must be stated on a form, and approval is at the discretion of the mining companies, while the "emergency" content of the withdrawal may be checked by Lesotho Bank. At the end of their contract, miners receive a deferred pay certificate from the mine. This they take to TEBA, which identifies the miners and gives them an interest certificate. This task is carried out by two employees at each TEBA-office, and TEBA assumes the costs. With this certificate miners can go to Lesotho Bank and withdraw the remaining balance.

Informal Money Transfer Systems (IMTS)

IMTS account for the overwhelming preponderance of remittances from South Africa to Lesotho and within. Using friends and co-workers to carry cash and goods home is also relatively popular and, once again, quite feasible given geographical proximity. Problems that arise within this method pertain mainly to slowness and theft. Very few migrants cite either the cost of transactions or the lack of banking facilities as a problem for them. Basotho migrants do not generally see a problem in need of a solution. This does not mean that if cost-effective financial services were available, migrants would not use them. Some certainly might. But at the moment, most seem happier to take remittances with them when they go home.

Results from the focus group discussion with remittance senders suggested that the sender decide how much to send particularly if the sender is a male migrant and the decision on how remittances will be spent had to be communicated with the woman. The women indicated that they did not make sole decision on how to spend the money. Although there were disagreements, few respondents indicated that there was serious conflict about the use of remittances, probably because such a small proportion is ever truly discretionary. Once school fees are paid, health costs met, and clothing and groceries bought, there is not much left. Conflict arises when a spouse feels that the wage earner is wasting remittance money on non-essentials or is being dishonest:

As one Mpho married female aged 30 states pointed during the focus group

My husband was no use to our family at all and if things could be reversed it would be better if I went to work instead of him and maybe there would have be some change in our lives. My husband did not send money and even when he brought it with him, he takes it to buy beer and entertain himself. He fought for it if I refused to give him the money. When he came home he did not even want to take a spade to dig the garden. He said he came home to rest as he worked hard in the mines. Him working in South Africa brought only negative impacts and he was no use at all to the family. Her spouse has worked for 10 years on the mines as a migrant. She had no idea how much he earned (but it is probably in excess of \$4,000 a year). She claimed she only got \$400, all of which she spent on food and clothing, including for her niece and her husband's mother. The family, she said, did not have enough to eat many times during the course of the year. She was unhappy about compulsory deferred pay because she would otherwise "never see a cent of it." However, only her husband is able to withdraw the funds in Lesotho, which he did "without my knowledge and ate alone."

Results from the focus group also indicated that female migrants also use IMTS to remit money that they earn. Using friends and co-workers to carry cash and goods home is the only way. According to the women the majority of women earn an income of around \$106.67. Since most of them were migrants from rural areas, they seek for accommodation at places around the textile factories. This money is therefore used to pay rent, buy food, and the little that is left is send home. They also reported that they cannot afford to go home each an every month because they cannot afford transport. The women reported that the money they earn cannot meet the all demands in the family in comparison with what male migrants used to earn.

Consequence of Female Migration on Gender Relations

"Gender relations refer to a complex system of personal and social relations of domination and power through which women and men are socially created and maintained and through which they gain access to power and material resources or are allocated status within society"¹⁸ Gender relations in Lesotho are closely tied to shifting employment opportunities resulting from the retrenchment of men from South Africa's mining industry and the emergence of new employment opportunities for women in Lesotho's textile.

According to the informants in the focus group discussion, when men were still working in the mines, many women saw themselves living a life of luxury on their husbands' remittances, however this did not prevent them from fulfilling their household duties and sustaining their livelihoods. Agriculture is the main activity in Lesotho and is the important part of their livelihoods. The majority of women in Matelile were involved in farming mainly for subsistence. They did not sell their produce as it would mean that they would have to go out and sell their vegetables, at the market, and that would mean and this would take them away from their household duties, so they would rather farm for their families or sell small portions of their produce from home. They had enough money,

¹⁸ (IFAD, 2000, p. 4).

so it was not necessary for them to sell their produce. Women enjoyed farming as it was also a social activity where they would work together and spend some time with each other. Nowadays, women can no longer really socialize as they used to because everyone is preoccupied with their own household affairs. When they are visiting their families over the weekends, they no longer visit or chat to one another since they have many duties to perform.

There were other women who were working, while their husbands were away, but they did not deviate from their gender roles, as many of the jobs were stereotypical female jobs like nursing, or housekeeping (domestic work), sewing clothes etc. The wages from these jobs were just sufficient, and did not exceed what their husbands were earning from the mines. Women would also stay at home rearing chicken or selling vegetables from home while their husbands were away. This was permissible as it was not tough work, and in a sense, was part of “housework”, because it was done at home. Women also had opportunities to get together and form co-operatives because they had the finances to do so. They would contribute certain amount of money or buy chickens in a collective effort and share goods amongst themselves. This however stopped once they were no longer receiving money from their husbands.

Before the mine retrenchment, men and women’s labor roles were clear cut. Men would work on the mines and women would stay at home and be the homemakers. After retrenchments, gender roles were shifted somewhat to accommodate prevailing circumstances but only to the extent where there was mutual help in some households. Men were still largely re-asserting their gender roles, which kept women in their positions with an extra burden in that they did not have as much autonomy as they did previously and were now living in tough times where they were needed to look after the household in a way that they had never had it before. Some women even quit the jobs they were doing before they were married in order to fulfill their roles as married women. They were married to men who were going to work in the mines. Mine work only provided temporary stability that people really did not think about. Women especially seemed to believe that their husbands would work on the mines forever, and did not necessarily anticipate that their financial circumstances would change after retrenchments.

The women’s stories clearly indicate that their daily routines changed since the men returned home. They no longer have routines in their own time, but have to restructure their time in a way that accommodates their husbands and in a way that they should be able to perform their duties under their husbands’ authority and be able to work at the same time. Women’s work is now structured in a way that they have to assume the responsibility of being bread winners as compared to when their husbands were away, and in the process migrate to urban centre of Maseru and Maputsoe to seek for employment mainly in the textile factories and to some extent as housemaids.

Men on the other hand following their retrenchment engage in subsistence and small scale farming. In line with Bebbington (1999)¹⁹ suggestion of livelihood transitions, following mine retrenchments, households have opted for rural-agricultural activities as forms of income diversification activities.

Francis (2000)²⁰ writes that as men lose their bread winner status and women become primary income earners, tensions arise within the household as women lose control over their incomes, and men lose their decision-making power due to loss of their roles as breadwinners. In this paper however it was found out that this was not the case. Working women reported that men still made decisions on what the bulk of the income would be used for. Similarly, although the husbands would make decisions on who to engage in sharecropping arrangements with, the bulk of the work such as weeding, and harvesting would be done by women. Without question, the husband is seen as head of the household and therefore the decision-maker. This was a social norm, in the name of tradition, it goes without saying that the husband is the head of the household and this is not up for contestation thus setting limits to bargaining for household headship even in the case where the breadwinner status is reversed in favor of the wife.

¹⁹ Bebbington A. (1999) Capitals and Capabilities: Framework for Analyzing Peasant Viability, Rural Livelihoods and Poverty. World Development, Vol. 27 (12)

²⁰ Francis E. (2000) Making a Living: Changing Livelihoods in Rural Africa. London: Routledge

The story of 'Me¹ 'Manthabiseng¹ Mosotho woman aged 28 years from the focus group discussion. 'Me 'Manthabiseng's husband Ntate¹ Tokelo worked in the mines since 1995 when he was 19 years of age. The couple married in 2000 and has two (2) children. When 'Me 'Manthabiseng married she was working as a shop assistant for a local store (she is also from the same village). Six months after the marriage Ntate Tokelo began to complain that he did not want a working wife especially his " young pregnant wife". Manthabiseng had to resign from work and become a stay home wife. Her role was to look after the household while his husband, engage in subsistence farming and look after the children. The money that her husband brought as remittances from mining was sufficient enough for the household.

Tokelo earned \$7733 a year. \$2900 was sent by Teba (compulsory deferred pay) and he sent a further \$1066 which he usually brought it himself. He made the decision on how the money should be spend in the household. He bought goods in South Africa for the household, especially clothing for the children, and brought them home with him. The money he sent was spent on food, clothing, transport, building a house and special events. The rest was spent on medical expenses, fuel, alcohol and tobacco. Since his mother got sick, he also paid someone to hoe her field. He also paid for the funeral of a cousin and provided food for an uncle. He had no other source of income. Once all of the household expenses were covered, there was very little left.

Tokelo was retrenchment from the South African mines in 2009. He has been engaged in subsistence farming since he came home. The family do not have any other source of income other than what Tokelo earned in the mines it became tough for the family to sustain its livelihood. The family made a decision that 'Manthabiseng should go to Maseru and seek work and leave the husband with their children. 'Manthabiseng is now working in Maseru earning a salary of \$106.67 a month. She said she spent her salary on rent, food and other necessities and remits \$34 back home. The decision on how to spend her salary still lies with her husband. Since there is no additional money left 'Manthabiseng cannot afford to home every month, instead she goes home after every two months.

'Manthabiseng said as far as gender roles are concerned there has been a major shift of roles in her household. She said previously she used to do her "woman" roles while her husband looked after her but at the moment she has assumed the responsibility of being a woman and a sole breadwinner in the family. According to her this does not create any conflict in her family as she knows very well that Tokelo is the head of the household and that any decision in the family should be taken by her husband irrespective of whether he is working or not. At the

Conclusion and Recommendations

It has been evident from this paper that due to retrenchment of Basotho men who used to be the main source of income and livelihood strategy particularly for the rural households, more women are migration from rural area to urban areas in search for employment opportunities. Feminization of migration is proceeding rapidly and this means that a homogenous de-gendered “migrant” might be emerging. However there are still major and entrenched differences between male and female migrants in terms of their socio-demographic profile, their occupations and opportunities in Lesotho and their remitting behavior.

From the paper it become it has emerged that there are significant differences between male-sending and female-sending households. The latter are worse off than the former and have even fewer opportunities for income-generating activity outside of migration. The gendered nature of migration and its differential impact on men and women needs to be recognized and factored into all debates and policies for mainstreaming migration in development in Lesotho.

Before the mine retrenchments, men and women’s labor roles were quite clear cut. Men would work on mines while women assumed the responsibility of looking after the households. In the era of retrenchment although the man is still considered as head of household and the main decision maker, women have assumed the responsibility of being the sole breadwinners. Women migrate into urban areas leaving their husband to care for the household and the children. From the study there has been no trace of violence as a shift of roles.

Currently there are no policies regarding migration of women from rural to urban places. The only policy which women operate under is mainly the employment-related statutes in Lesotho them include the Lesotho Constitution, Lesotho Labour Code, Occupational Health and Safety Act, Workmen’s Compensation Act, Workmen Compensation amendment bill.

In addition to the Policies, there are several laws and strategic programs that protect the rights workers. The Better Work Program is a partnership between the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the International Finance Corporation, the private sector arm of the World Bank. It was launched in August 2006 to improve labor standards and competitiveness in global supply chains. The program assists enterprises to improve practices based on core ILO labor standards and national labor law. The emphasis is on improving worker-management co-operation, working conditions and social dialogue. This in turn helps enterprises to meet the social compliance demands of global buyers, improves conditions for workers, and helps firms become more competitive by increasing productivity and quality.

There is a need therefore to have migration policy that would factor into all debates and policies for mainstreaming migration in development in Lesotho.