

## **Rural-Urban Female Migration in Tanzania A Case of Dar es Salaam City**

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### **Abstract**

With reference to barmaids in Dar es Salaam city the underlying factors for marginal labour female rural-urban migration in Tanzania and the main adjustment problems faced by female migrants once they move into urban areas are examined. Above all it has been established that most of the female migrants in marginal jobs such as barmaids and house girls are from the less developed regions in Tanzania.

### **Introduction**

The participation of females in migration has been documented since the nineteenth century when Ravenstein (1885:196) stated that females were predominant in short distance migration than males. It has been revealed that women and children are forced to accompany the head of the family (husband) whenever there is any form of household migration. Nonetheless, as stated by Simmons (1991:13), the dominance of males in migration streams is gradually being eroded. Beginning with the early 1960s, there is a significant overall predominance of females among migrants to most capital cities of Latin America and the New Industrialised Countries (NICS) in Asia such as Thailand, Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea and the Philippines. Furthermore, there is a substantial presence of female migrants in most African towns and cities which suggest that even in Africa the female propensity to rural-urban migration is rising at very rapid rate (Mwageni, 1991).

However, despite all these studies less is known about female migrants than male migrants simply because females have often been looked upon as less prone to migration, and so this is treated as an uninteresting research topic.

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Nevertheless, it can be correctly be stated that the underlying causes of rural-urban migration of females do not differ from those of males. Regardless of whether female migrants are single or married at the time of migration, and especially given the fluidity of marital status, it has been suggested that females, like males, tend to move out of areas where the economic opportunities are limited to areas where there is better employment opportunities. Thus the economic motive is the principal force in female migration as in males (Standing, 1983:212; Fields, 1979).

Another factor which encourages female migration is land ownership. Indeed in most traditional societies land ownership goes to sons and not daughters, thus leaving women landless (Omari 1988:6). These differentials in land ownership if left unattended tends to stimulate more female migration. Besides this, the introduction of modern methods of agriculture and mechanised farming contributes to more migration of females. As advantageous as this process looks, in some cases it has driven women out of agricultural labour (Boserup, 1970:175). Moreover, development programmes for agricultural training and credit market improvement neglect females, and so undermines some of the basic economic activities. Hence the declining importance of their traditional activities such as agriculture, rural craft and bazaar trade may stimulate migration (Sanga, 1994:11).

Social factors may also contribute to rural-urban female migration. First, it has been intensively documented in various studies that autonomous migration of unmarried women is strongly linked to women escaping from the traditionally ascribed status such as obeying male kinsmen, or exceedingly hard work. Secondly, women may move to towns in search of husbands. Others escape customary sanctions against unmarried mothers. Then there are those women who are divorced or have deserted their husbands because they are unhappy or barren. Moreover, they may migrate as young girls who come to cities as barmaids or baby sitters (Little, 1973:19-22). Actually most of the young girls come from rural poor families (Schultz, 1971:175).

Historically, however, women experience unequal educational opportunities in the formal schooling system. Unequal access to formal education coupled with sex segregation in schools and curriculum have contributed to women having low status in wage employment and self-employment (URT, 1992). In addition, class backgrounds affect female's participation rate in education more than that of males. Usually the children of peasants and workers have much less opportunities to attend secondary and post-secondary levels of education, as compared to children of bureaucrats, professionals and business people (Mascarenhas & Mbilinyi, 1983; Malekela, 1982).

### Research Methodology

The study was conducted in Dar es Salaam City. The city was selected as a study area because it is the largest city in the country, with a large proportion of social services. Since the main aim of the study was to examine female migrants in marginal jobs, the study managed to collect a sample of 400 respondents. Since it is estimated that there are about 4,000 barmaids in Dar es Salaam City, this represented about 10% of the barmaid population. On the other hand, the selection of research areas in Dar es Salaam City followed the urban administrative structure in Tanzania. Through the help of district and ward secretaries wards with bars were identified. Each ward with bars was given an equal chance, and through random sampling 13 wards out of 36 wards were selected. These were Magomeni, Kawe, Mwananyamala, Msasani, Ubungo, Ilala, Upanga East, Buguruni, Miburani, Mtoni, Keko, Mbagala and Temeke 14 (Table 1 & Fig. 1).

**Table 1: Surveyed Wards, Bars and Number of Respondents**

| District     | Sample wards                                  | Sample bars | Respondents |
|--------------|---|-------------|-------------|
| Kinondoni    | Magomeni, Kawe, Mwananyamala, Msasani, Ubungo | 21          | 150         |
| Ilala        | Upanga East, Ilala, Buguruni                  | 10          | 100         |
| Temeke       | Miburani, Mtoni, Keko, Mbagala, Temeke        | 28          | 150         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>13</b>                                     | <b>59</b>   | <b>400</b>  |

In addition, the data was collected using simple closed and open questionnaires having both open ended and closed questions. Interviews were administered to the respondents and on several occasions they were supplemented by discussions and observations.

Besides this, there were several research problems and limitations encountered during the research. First, due to the fact that the information collected in the study was very personal and private in nature, some of the respondents were not willing to disclose everything. Secondly, some respondents were reluctant to answer questions because such an activity takes a long time. They also wanted to know if the government will help them to secure some funds so that they could start self-help projects of their own. Thirdly, some respondents demanded incentives for participating in the research. Fourthly, some bar owners were often very suspicious about the information being collected. In order to solve these problems several tactics were used such as interviewing the respondents when they were relaxed from work, or at home.

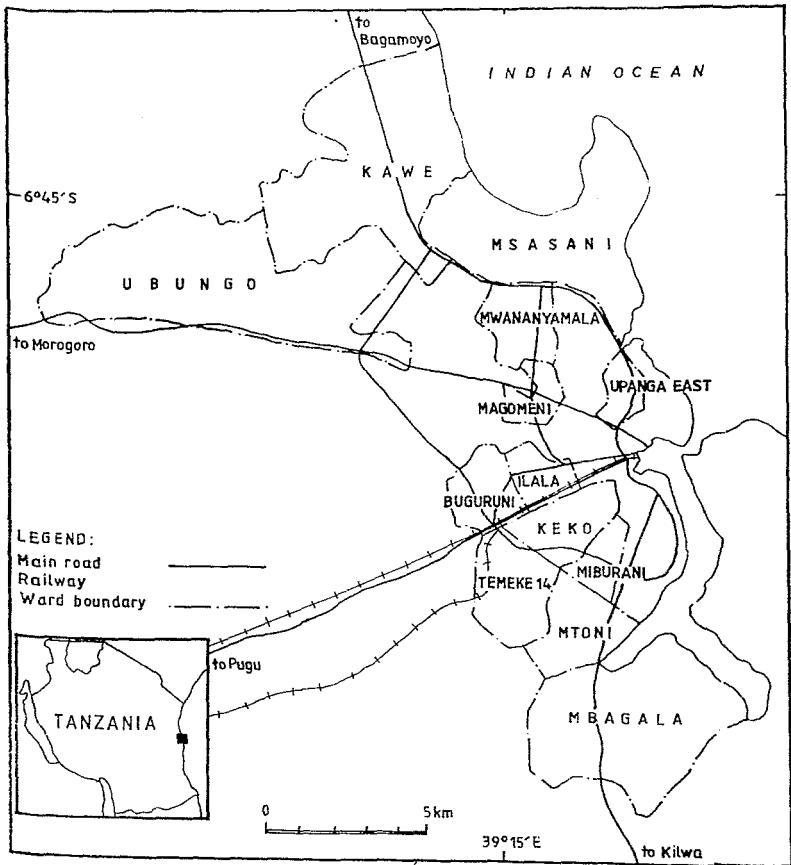


Fig 1: Location of Study Wards in Dar es Salaam Region

### Socio-Economic Characteristics of Barmaids

As underscored by Shryock and Siegel (1976:349), an analysis of the characteristics of migrants is of prime importance in the demographic studies since they affect social and economic relationships both in the area of origin and destination. Indeed, the most widely documented socio-demographic factors which influence migration include age, education, and marital status. As far as age is concerned, the majority of female migrants (87%) were aged between 15-29 years, and had a median age of 21 years. This is because most females

employed as barmaids make their first move when they are very young, or immediately after completing primary education around age 13. Furthermore, barmaids have to be young to suit the interest of bar owners and customers. This strong desire for young girls was emphasised by one of the bar supervisors: "We do not employ old women because most of our customers like young charming girls full of smiles."

In addition, as observed by Newman & Matzke (1984:179) many migrants to the cities in developing countries are in fact at the bottom of the socio-economic scales, i.e., landless and without marketable skills, and so in one way or another they are internal refugees seeking for a way to escape rural poverty. Generally, most barmaids do not need formal skills to be barmaids and so 326 (81.5%) out of 400 respondents had only primary education. Nonetheless, with time this marginal job has started to absorb females with secondary and tertiary education (Table 2). However, an in-depth discussion with respondents with secondary and tertiary education revealed that most of them were the victims of retrenchment policy carried out by the government in the 1990s. Also, it was not easy for these to secure wage employment due to the prevailing economic conditions facing most developing countries, and Tanzanians in particular. Besides this, since most barmaids came from poor households and poor educational background, they had little capital and skills to start their own small-scale self-help income generating projects. Hence the only alternative remaining was to join this profession irrespective of their education level or job satisfaction.

**Table 2: Migrant Barmaids Level of Education**

| Level of Education | Respondents | Percentage   |
|--------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Adult Education    | 1           | 0.3          |
| Primary Four       | 40          | 10.0         |
| Primary Seven      | 326         | 81.5         |
| Post Primary       | 2           | 0.5          |
| Secondary          | 31          | 7.8          |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>400</b>  | <b>100.0</b> |

However, when we examine their educational level and the reasons for attaining such a level it became evident that most barmaids were not able to get to secondary education because they were not selected to join government secondary schools, and their parents were unable to pay school fees in private secondary schools. The rest left school due to early forced marriages and truancy. Others feared that they would not perform well and hence saw no need to "waste" their parents' money.

More often the marital status of potential migrants is important when someone decides to migrate (Newell, 1988:89). The Dar es Salaam City Survey (DCS) shows that the majority of the respondents were single. The divorced and widowed constituted about 25% and 5% respectively, while married barmaids were less than 1%. As a whole this indicates that females who are not in marriage contracts are more independent than married ones, and are in a better position to decide when and where to move. In addition, this may be a reflection of recent trends of marriage where due to hard economic conditions it is not easy for females to get married; or due to deliberate decision for females to remain single (Mbonile, 1993:142). Concurring with the findings of Caldwell (1969) and Sabot (1979) the second group which have the same freedom of migration as single females are the divorced and widowed women.

Nonetheless, the case of married women working as barmaids is very interesting because nobody expects to see married women working as barmaids. Actually it was the prevailing hard economic conditions which forced them to become barmaids so that they could supplement their husbands' income. But most of them were allowed to work as barmaids with their husbands on conditions that they respect themselves. On the other hand, widowed women worked as barmaids because their children depended on them. In most cases, their deceased husbands left nothing to inherit which would provide the young children with basic needs.

The socio-demographic characteristics outlined above are reflected in the fertility patterns of barmaids. Nearly 202 (51%) of the respondents had no children followed by those with 2-3 children (Table 3).

**Table 3: Number of Children Ever-Born while Working as Barmaids**

| CEB     | Reasons |     |     |      |     |     | Total |
|---------|---------|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-------|
|         | None    | 1   | 2   | 3    | 4   | 5   |       |
| None    | 0       | 1   | 30  | 267  | 71  | 13  | 382   |
| One     | 11      | 0   | 0   | 1    | 1   | 0   | 13    |
| Two     | 1       | 0   | 1   | 1    | 0   | 1   | 4     |
| Three   | 1       | 0   | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0   | 1     |
| TOTAL   | 13      | 1   | 31  | 269  | 72  | 14  | 400   |
| Percent | 3.3     | 0.3 | 7.6 | 67.3 | 8.0 | 3.5 | 100.0 |

*Reasons:* None- I do not have any reasons; 1 - Nature of job does not allow; 2 - Economic hardships; 3- I do not have a husband; 4- Those I have are enough; 5- Others (e.g. diseases).

In fact only a small proportion (5%) had about 4 or more children. In reality barmaids are forced to have few children or none at all because of the nature of work which have a higher labour force participation rate than women who live in

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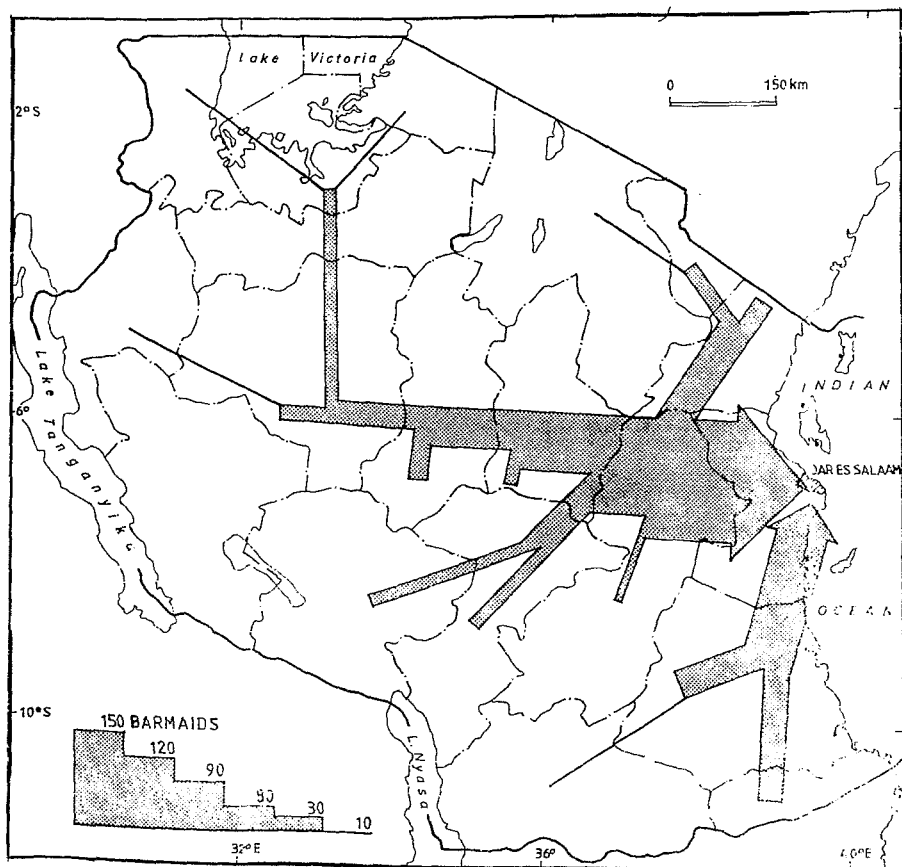
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southern regions creating a special urban culture called *wamachinga*, denoting one of the major tribes in the southern regions. The *wamachinga* are street vendors who invaded streets such as Congo, Tandanti and others in Dar es Salaam City. During the peak of *wamachinga* invasion, these streets were completely blocked to motor vehicle traffic. Nevertheless, other *wamachinga* were plying various areas of Dar es Salaam City carrying goods in their hands or on their heads. It is only recently that the City centre streets were rid of the *wamachinga* (*The Express*, Feb. 19-22, 1995; *Daily News*, Feb. 17, 1995).



**Fig. 2: Barmaids by region of origin**



The other factors which influence out-migration in rural areas include the harsh environmental conditions such as drought, famine and disease. Discussions with migrants from the southern regions revealed that the big wave of female migrants from Linda and Mtwara regions occurred during the big floods in 1992 and 1993. These unusual floods occurred because of the destruction of Makonde Plateau catchment area in Mtwara Region by over-cultivation and deforestation.

As stated by Mbonile (1996), heavy household female activities were narrated by a number of female migrants as the main cause of out-migration in rural areas. In addition, inadequate social amenities stimulated some females to migrate for most rural areas lack basic social services such as clean water supply, electricity, good transport, educational opportunities, medical services, cultural and entertainment activities, and many other facilities.

As mentioned earlier, to a certain extent government policy is responsible for stimulating female out-migration from the less developed regions in Tanzania. As stated by Sabot (1979:97) poverty at the area of origin and the socio-economic background of a family in the rural hierarchy may influence the younger generations to migrate. For example, the low prices for farmers' products can be tolerated by the old generation rather than the younger generations which require quick sources of monetary income. Besides this rural areas are adversely affected by poor infrastructure and the absence of effective business training and advisory services. Most often peasants have been forced to sell their crops on credit, and in some areas crops have not been bought at all by the inefficient cooperative unions. As whole this discouraged peasants' attempts to increase their income through agriculture which is the backbone of rural economy. Those living in border areas have sometimes been forced to illegally sell their crops to neighbouring countries to make their ends meet. This, in fact, gives little choice for peasants in the rural areas but to allow their children to migrate so that they can help supplement daily needs.

### **Barmaid Adjustment at the Area of Destination**

Migration is a complex phenomenon which involves households and other institutions which undergo varied socio-economic adjustments both at the area of origin and destinations (Mabogunje, 1970). Indeed, in the case of migrant barmaids in Dar es Salaam, that the existence of relatives and friends is sometimes more important than economic motives simply because most prospects migrants must have a base before being self-reliant after arrival in the city.

### ***Accommodation***

The Dar es Salaam City Survey revealed that in most cases the majority of migrants leave their villages with nothing more than a fare which enables them

just to reach the area of destination. Also, once they arrive in the city they stay for a long period seeking for an urban job, as well as accommodation.

As a whole, the problem of accommodation in Dar es Salaam as in other third world cities is very critical due to rapid urbanisation of primate cities. To find accommodation, low income earners are forced to use several methods including being accommodated by relatives (74%) and friends (11%). Since most of these new arrivals are jobless, they heavily need the assistance of accommodation from established lodgers. Hence tribal clusters are very common, leading to established lodgers having a heavy burden to feed the new-comers and some being overcrowded. Indeed, during the study it was discovered that about one-third of the respondents were still living with relatives or friends. The presence of relatives/friends, or fellow tribesmen, brings a relief to the female migrants especially when confronted with accommodation problems. These sometimes secure accommodation left vacant by the departure of pervious tenants who have found accommodation elsewhere, or who have left the City, or even know the way to go about in getting accommodation. In fact about 33% of the respondents were assisted by friends, 20% were assisted by fellow tribesmen, and about 5% were assisted by fellow employees.

As a whole, due to the nature of the work, most bar owners do not provide accommodation for their workers. If at all the barmaids happen to get accommodation from the employer, then a single room will be shared by four up to six barmaids. However, in some bars it was discovered that several barmaids who cannot get transport late during the night sleep in coaches, and in some other insecure premises within the bar. Others are accommodated by customers who come to bars to drink and pick women with whom they spend the night.

### *Employment*

After crossing the hurdles of accommodation, female migrants are faced with the task of looking for employment which is the prime factor for migrating to the city. Normally, paid employment for migrant women is usually in the lowest wage, least secure and low status jobs such as house-girls, and petty trade. Also, as observed by Findley and Williams (1991:65), the proportion of female migrants in domestic and personal services has been estimated to be between one-third and one-half with fewer than a quarter finding jobs in blue collar professions.

The degree at which these female migrants are affected by lack of employment is clearly indicated when the former jobs or economic activities which were done by migrants soon after arrival in Dar es Salaam or joining the present are examined. Nearly 36% of the respondents indicated that they worked as house girls before becoming barmaids. Therefore, it can be argued that being a

house girl is just a stepping stone to the other type of employment, and that there is an age limit to a person to work as house girl. There is a period when the housewife feels that she is threatened by a mature house girl. This leads to the house-girl being mistreated by a housewife or children, and so the only alternative left to the house-girl is to leave the area. But most often they quit the former employment because they want to be independent, or they are deceived by their boyfriends who later abandon them. This reason is clearly stated by the divorced barmaid:

Look here, I decided to part with my husband because his income was not good. Here, I mean, he was no longer working while I had to eat and clothe myself. Should I have stayed and glared at him? It could not be possible! It was much better that I fumble around on my own.

Besides this, to make ends meet, nearly one-half of the respondents participated on petty trade with capital being either owned by themselves or belonging to their friends or host.

#### *Working Conditions of Barmaids and Income Generating Activities*

The work of barmaids involves serving drinks to customers, and arranging tables and chairs outside the bar especially during peak hours when customers flock in large numbers. In reality, working as barmaid has its positive and negative effects. First, there is no job security in the sense that barmaids can be hired and fired at a short notice. Secondly, there is no fixed salaries as most of the bars are owned by individuals who unilaterally decide the salary for barmaids. Consequently, the women who opt to work in bars are in most cases desperate, which makes them accept arbitrarily conditions and terms of service stipulated by the bar owners. Honestly, there is a 'take or leave it attitude' because the bar owners know that the barmaids must be desperate. Therefore, as observed by Lugalla (1990) they take the advantage of the poverty of barmaids to offer employment on the conditions which suit them.

In terms of wages, some receive meagre wages, while others receive no wages at all. Generally, the salary scales differ from one bar to another ranging between Tsh 2,500 to Tsh 14,500 per month, but in some bars such as Igongwe and Bulyage Social Club some barmaids said that they were not paid any salary but they liked working because they got some 'tips' from the so-called good Samaritans (customers). In reality, as observed by Lugalla (1990:448), most Tanzanian barmaids—unlike their counterparts in Western Europe—are essentially prostitutes. They work as barmaids not because they earn enough from it, but because the profession of barmaid exposes them to a variety of male customers.

Actually, on the fact that the basic minimum wage during the survey was Tsh 10,000, nearly 97% of the barmaids were underpaid. It was only a few barmaids such as those in OTTU Sports and Social Club at Ilala Boma who were paid proper salaries—they were getting over Tsh 11,000—and were employed on permanent terms. However, bearing in mind that the rate of inflation in Tanzania is 30%, no one can believe that the salary paid to these barmaids was enough to sustain them even for three days. If it was not for the tips, prostitution fee, lunch and transport allowances and uniforms given by the employer they would not have managed to continue working as barmaids. Nevertheless, it is important to note that not all bar owners provide such an assistance. For example, lunch was given to those working at Buguruni Social Club under the conditions that the barmaid should be in the afternoon sessions which starts from 11.00 am. In addition, breakfast is provided to barmaids who happen to be in the morning sessions. It is only uniforms which are provided to barmaids, by every bar so that they become more attractive to customers.

It is interesting to note that some bar owners are very much concerned with the health of their employees and families. For example, some management allowed barmaids who breast-fed to leave for home earlier, or to work in the morning sessions only.

Besides job insecurity, barmaids experience sex abuse at the most intolerable rate. Given that barmaids attend all kinds of characters, some customers misbehave by hulling insults or fondling their bodies. All along, a barmaid is expected to remain calm and not lose her temper, since doing so may lead to the termination of her job. In order to survive, the barmaids have to acquire diplomatic instincts. Sometimes the customers use different means if they want to 'get their back' on a woman, but it is up to the barmaid to get rid of him if she does not like him. Sometimes, some customers may harass the barmaid by fondling her buttocks, but the barmaid is forced to ignore it.

For example, at Wapiwapi Bar one customer unzipped the barmaids skirt and at the same time abused her by saying: "What do you have after all, you are just a JABA. Look here, you are wearing a huge sports pair of shorts." In fact the customer felt no compunction in unzipping her skirt and abusing her by saying she is a JABA material (meaning that she is like a Japanese company which sells second-hand cars which are well-known for not lasting long). Nonetheless, not surprising enough, the barmaid just smiled, then answered the customer politely that it was normal for her to wear a pair of shorts because once the customers are intoxicated with beer they go out of their senses. To use her own words: "Yes I have to wear a short beneath my skirt because when you are drunk you are not human beings at all. Hence I have to defend myself by wearing this pair of shorts."

However, misunderstandings are not between customers and barmaids alone, but also among barmaids themselves. When this happens, the management takes stern measures to ensure that disputes are settled without affecting the work performance of barmaids. The management of some bars have gone to the extent of forming disciplinary committees which normally meet once in a week to settle such problems. Despite all these quarrels among themselves, most barmaids pointed out that the main problem to their work are the abuses and harsh language from customers. Added to this was the refusal by bar management to allow them attend their sick relatives, and oppression in terms of low salaries.

**Supplementary Activities**

The fact that unemployment among women in urban areas is high suggests that severe economic problems are prevalent among barmaids. In response to this economic crisis, barmaids are involved in supplementary activities such as food vending, furniture making, operating small kiosks, repair and maintenance services, tailoring, shoe repair, local beer brewing, hair braiding, and urban farming (Jamal & Weeks, 1984; Maliyamkono & Bagachwa, 1990:42).

Similarly, like any other urban resident, barmaids have developed a variety of survival strategies (see Table 5). Over half of the respondents sell burns, *chapati* and *vitumbua*. Usually the barmaids do not sell these themselves, but they either use their children, relatives, or sometimes hire young children to do the work. The selling of sweets and nuts near school surroundings or bus stops accounts for about 11% of supplementary activities. Some sell water and green vegetables, notably *mchicha*, which are grown in open spaces outside their premises.

**Table 5: Barmaids' monthly salary by income generating activities**

| Salary Scale                                | Category of income generating activities |            |            |           |            |
|---|--|------------|------------|-----------|------------|
|   | 1  | 2          | 3          | 4         | Total      |
| No Salary                                   | 0  | 0          | 4          | 3         | 7          |
| 1,000-4,999;                                | 0  | 2          | 10         | 12        | 24         |
| 5,000-9,999;                                | 4  | 123        | 200        | 30        | 357        |
| 10,000+                                     | 6  | 3          | 3          | 0         | 12         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                | <b>10</b>                                | <b>128</b> | <b>217</b> | <b>45</b> | <b>400</b> |
| Percent                                     | 2.5                                      | 32.0       | 54.2       | 11.3      | 100        |
| $\chi^2 = 83.63$ $\chi^2_{0.05.15} = 24.99$ |  |            |            |           |            |

**Activities**

1. Selling green vegetables/water
2. Selling fried fish
3. Selling bites e.g. buns
4. Selling sweets and nuts

Furthermore, an in-depth discussion with barmaids showed that the majority of them were able to make ends meet by accumulating tips (*keep change*). The money obtained from tips such as these, salary or other means is saved in the form of money exchange popularly known as *upatu*. In this form of money saving, members contribute an agreed amount of money which will be given to one member at a time. Despite the problems of some members sometimes being unfaithful, *upatu* enables low income earners like barmaids to accumulate enough money to buy expensive goods such as dining tables, cupboards and music systems.

Although it was not easy to estimate the exact amount they get a computation of Chi-square test showed that there was an association between respondents salary and the category of income generating activity, and the association was significant at 5% level.

Despite the fact that female migrants are confronted by a lot of problems at the area of destination, this does not stop them from maintaining links with their areas of origin through different measures such as letter writing, visitations and sometimes remittances. In terms of visitations, the majority of barmaids visit the area of destination once or twice in a year. In terms of remittances they furnish their home villages with luxury goods such as clothes, sugar, soap, and salt. Only a small proportion remit agricultural inputs such as fertilisers.

## Conclusion

This paper discussed the determinants of migration of barmaids, and the problems they face once they arrive at the area of destination. From the study it is quite vivid that economic motives are predominant. Furthermore, the majority of barmaids are from less developed regions, or former labour reserves. They are mostly young, unmarried, and less-educated, making their penetration to the modern sector almost impossible. The major problems they encounter once in urban areas is lack of employment in the wage sector, and accommodation, leading most of them to join marginal and low paid jobs such as barmaids and house-girls. In addition, since their salaries do not make ends meet, they get involved in supplementary activities to subsidise their meagre incomes.

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