

**Working Paper on Social-Ecological Resilience Series  
No. 2011-014**

**Diversified Livelihood of Peasant Women in Southern Zambia**

**By**

**Noriko NARISAWA**

**Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies (ASAFAS), Kyoto University**

**October 2011**

**Vulnerability and Resilience of Social-Ecological Systems**

RIHN Research Project E-04

**Research Institute for Humanity and Nature (RIHN)**

Inter-University Research Institute Corporation, National Institutes for the Humanities

大学共同利用機関法人 人間文化研究機構  
総合地球環境学研究所

**Working Paper on Social-Ecological Resilience Series  
No. 2011-014**

**Diversified Livelihood of Peasant Women in Southern Zambia**

**By**

**Noriko NARISAWA**

**Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies (ASAFAS), Kyoto University**

**Kyoto, Japan**

**E-mail: narisawa@jambo.africa.kyoto-u.ac.jp**

**October 2011**

**Vulnerability and Resilience of Social-Ecological Systems**

**RIHN Research Project E-04**



**Research Institute for Humanity and Nature (RIHN)**

Inter-University Research Institute Corporation, National Institutes for the Humanities

大学共同利用機関法人 人間文化研究機構  
総合地球環境学研究所

## **Abstract**

In the field of gender and development studies, it has been admitted that African peasant women have considerable autonomy for agricultural production and managing household consumption, however at the same time, their access to resources that secure their livelihood is restricted by household gender division of labour and power structure and that increases their vulnerability.

Recently, parallel with evolving rural household livelihood diversification in Africa, new complex livelihood patterns among women who had engaged in subsistence agriculture and domestic work has been brought to light by scholars. Peasant women are now generally engaging in and expanding their non-farming activities and earning cash. It is gradually becoming apparent that women's earnings are now crucial for feeding and caring for household members and for supporting the rural economy.

In this regards, scholars have pointed out two main issues concerning women's individual autonomy and vulnerability. First, women earning an income could lead to conflict with men who are unwilling to accept it because of concerns pertaining to neglect of domestic works and erosion of men's authority by female earners. Secondly, women's earnings are very likely to flow back into the household. This trend means that women merely extend their domestic responsibilities as caregivers of their families and they bear the great burden of labour. Therefore, it must be noted that access to resource itself does not always result in positive effects on women's empowerment and rapid change in indigenous gender relations might cause even more severe situations for women.

This paper aims to show, by clarifying cash-earning activities and casual visiting activities of Tonga people in southern Zambia, that Tonga women have expanded their socio-economic activities not by claiming drastic change of gender role but behaving with rather quite manner using indigenous social relations.

**Key words: Gender, Livelihood diversification, Cash earning, Casual visiting, Tonga.**

## 要旨

ジェンダーと開発に関する研究領域ではこれまで、アフリカの小農女性は農業生産と家計消費に関し高い自律性を有するが、一方で、家族内における役割分業と権力関係により女性の資源へのアクセスは男性に比べて制限されており、そのことが女性の脆弱性の増大につながっているとされてきた。

近年、小農世帯における生業活動が多様化する中で、これまで家族のための自給用作物生産と家庭内労働に従事してきた女性の活動にも、多様な非農業活動を展開し現金を稼得するといった変化がみられている。女性による現金稼得は、各世帯の生存レベルで重要な役割を担っており、ひいては農村経済全体を下支えしている実態が明らかとなってきた。

ただし、世帯内における個人の自律性と脆弱性の視点から女性による現金稼得活動の展開に着目した先行研究では、以下の問題点が指摘されてきた。第一に、家庭内の役割放棄や夫の威信への脅威などを理由に、女性の活動が男性側に受容されにくく社会的軋轢を生じやすいこと、第二に、女性は稼ぎの大半を家族の食料や日用品の購入に充てており、それは女性に社会文化的に割り当てられた再生産労働に関わる義務の延長と労働の過重化がもたらされたにすぎないという指摘である。従って、女性による現金やその他資源へのアクセスの実現が単に彼女たちのエンパワーメントを保障するわけではなく、既存のジェンダー関係の急激な変革はかえって女性に厳しい状況をもたらす可能性があることに留意する必要がある。

本稿では、ザンビア南部に居住するトンガ女性の現金稼得活動と短期訪問活動の事例から、女性たちがジェンダー役割の抜本的な変革を求めるのではなく、既存の社会関係を利用したより穏やかな仕方で社会経済活動の領域を拡大している様相を提示する。

**キーワード：ジェンダー，生業多様化，現金稼得，短期訪問，トンガ**

## **Introduction**

### **I. Livelihood diversification and gender in rural Africa**

For the last two decades, a number of studies have been conducted on the diversification of livelihood or income by smallholder households in rural Africa. The growing value of non-farm sectors by households is generally explained as a coping strategy for minimizing risks due to the instability of socio-economic life typified by privatization, Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), chronic illness, and fatalities rather than as a strategy for income maximization (e.g., Bryceson & Jamal, 1997; Ellis, 1998). However, this household approach, premised on intra-household members' cooperation in decision-making and complementary activities, is inadequate to analyze the determinants and effects of diversification differentiated among members. For this reason, additional insights are needed to analyze diversification as individualized livelihood strategies. In particular, focusing upon gender, which refers to the socially defined roles of men and women, will be found to constrain the patterns of economic activities (Ellis, 1998, p. 23-25; Bryceson, 1999, p. 183-184).

Inspired by Ester Boserup's (1970) famous book, a considerable number of studies have been conducted over the past few decades on the division of labour and gender roles in Africa. It has been recognized by many scholars that while the implementation of colonial and post-colonial development policies and the progress of capitalism have involved men in cash-oriented economies such as those depending on migration and cash crops, these have also resulted in women becoming increasingly economically dependent on men. Further, they have diminished their relative status by stereotyping subsistence farming and reproductive roles as the domain of women (e.g., Mikell, 1997; Berger & White, 1999).

On the other hand, parallel with evolving rural household livelihood diversification, new complex livelihood patterns among women who had engaged in subsistence agriculture and

domestic work has been recently brought to light by scholars. Bryceson (1995, p. 17) observed many rural areas of East Africa and argued that economic exigencies under the influence of SAPs led rural women to diversify their income-generating activities in order to minimize the risk of livelihood failure. Further, the study suggested that women peasants especially have been increasingly involved in trading activities, which were often encouraged by the market liberalization policies of the state. Even in West Africa, where people have an old history of trade and indigenous markets and women's commercial activities are more general than they are in other areas, rural women search for additional sources of income. Further, since the economic distress induced by SAPs, they have been trying to combine different off-farm enterprises because of the dramatic reductions or elimination of head-of-households' contributions to their hearth-holds<sup>1</sup> (Ekejiuba, 1995, p. 52-53).

## II. Bounds of women's earning for their empowerment

As mentioned above, scholars are reporting the recent phenomenon of livelihood diversification by African peasant women in almost every region of Africa. As a result of rural economic stagnation or downturns due to outside policies, the rising uncertainty of modern life, the increasing need for cash in daily life, the impact of development interventions for women, and perhaps even the spread of education for girls, women are now generally engaging in and expanding their non-farming activities and earning cash. In other words, it is gradually becoming apparent that women's earnings are crucial for feeding and caring for household members and for supporting the rural economy. In this regard, two main issues concerning women's individual autonomy and vulnerability will be pointed out.

First, it could cause a significant change in indigenous social relationships when women

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Hearth-hold' is the unit of consumption and production centred on the hearth and based on the mother-child bond in the polygamous household, and the concept to search for a more gender-sensitive analysis instead of the household model (Ekejiuba, 1995, p. 51-52).

begin engaging in cash-earning activities. Regarding gender relations, it has been generally recognized in the literature not only in Africa but also across developing societies that women earning an income could lead to conflict with men who are unwilling to accept it because of concerns pertaining to neglect of domestic works, erosion of men's prestige, and authority by female earners. In the case of African rural farmers, men have recently accepted and encouraged women to work outside the home to earn money. However, men are less eager to accept a restructuring of intra-household relations and the division of labour to accommodate women's earning, and they have worried about losing their position of power in the family. In turn, gender relations today are more economically balanced, but also more tense in overall African rural households than they were in the past (Pottier, 1994; Bryceson, 1999). In Kenya, for example, von Bülow (1992, p. 538) reports that husbands allow their wives to earn money if it remains small in scale, yet they are afraid that their wives may become too economically independent and undermine their authority<sup>2</sup>. von Bülow's analysis indicates that there are two kinds of men's reactions in this situation; one is reducing their own contribution to the household economy on purpose, and the other is forcing their wives to hand over whatever small amounts they have made. In addition, other studies in rural Africa point out that the trend toward men feeling threatened by women gaining more money and claiming part of what they earn for their own personal use seems to be more pronounced in poorer households (Kongstad & Mönstedt, 1980, p. 115; Skønsberg, 1981, p. 48; Nkhoma-Wamunza, 1992, p. 210). Similarly, Bryceson's (1999, p. 184) study from Tanzania cautions that wife beating is cited as an increasing problem as women's gains grow, especially in areas in which there are strong patriarchal traditions.

Secondly, though there is a possibility that earning cash could improve women's social status or bargaining power in household decision-making, it does not always result in such positive effects.

---

<sup>2</sup> Men's authority and prestige are maintained by not only economic and physical but also gender ideology. According to Bülow (1992, p. 538), women engaging in large-scale ventures are accused by men of behaving 'manly' and 'trying to be bigger than men' in the Kipsigis society.

As mentioned above, women's freedom to spend their earnings is a source of irritation for their husbands. A number of studies in rural Africa (e.g., Geisler, 1992, p. 127; Araki, 2001, p. 183) suggest that women actually tend to use their income on basic needs like food, health, and school fees for their family, while men tend to spend their money more on luxuries and capital-intensive commodities to secure their own status in their communities. Women's earnings are, therefore, very likely to flow back into the household. This trend means that women merely extend their domestic responsibilities as caregivers of their families, and they bear the greater burden of labour. In this context, Dennis (1991) notes the importance of Nigerian women's material responsibilities for the household, and analyzes the fact that women's responsibilities for 'managing' the household become translated into responsibility for 'managing' crises at the household level under the conditions of SAPs. Similarly, Meagher and Mustapha (1997) report that Nigerian women's ceremony attendance and other forms of investment in social networks are reduced; this is because their incomes are increasingly devoted to the purchase of basic household necessities under economic pressure after SAPs. Furthermore, Bryceson (1995) suggests that gender division of labour is malleable, responding to forces which act on the internal dynamics of African agrarian societies, and she concludes that the cataclysmic political and economic circumstances of the last two decades have not shaken the bedrock role peasant women play. However, it is not in all cases that women's cash-earning activities result in rising social tensions or in no significant change in the local community. We must look more carefully into this point.

With these two main issues in mind, in this paper I will focus on how the process of cash-earning activities by women has recently evolved and been accepted by men in the Tonga society of southern Zambia where men have historically reigned as earners. In addition, I will analyze the autonomy of the Tonga women who have promoted their economic empowerment, not in a transformative process, but in a socially harmonized developing process. In the first part, I will



present an outline of diversified non-farm earning activities among women and analyze the ways in which women have developed these activities by focusing on the social spheres where they are conducted. Second, to describe the autonomy of women's spending and their activities, I will focus on casual visiting as an example of the use of money earned from individual non-farming activities.

### **Ecological and social overview of the research area**

My analysis is based on the fieldwork I conducted at M village in Monze District, Southern Province of Zambia from December 2005 to September 2006, February to March 2008, and April to September 2009. The research method included both interviews and participatory observation.

In Monze and other districts nearby, the Bantu people speaking Tonga language have lived since many centuries ago. The Tonga is matrilineal and marriage is patrilocal and polygamous. Their livelihood is based on crop cultivation and animal husbandry. Copper mine development and railway construction in the colonial times turned this area into a leading commercial agricultural region of the country producing mainly maize and supplying food for urban mineworkers (Allan et al., 1948; Chipungu, 1988). While men had taken control of agricultural income gained from cash crop production by both male and female and engaged in a variety of non-agricultural economic activities<sup>3</sup>, women's main cash-earning activity had been limited to brewing local beer called *Gankata* (Colson, 1958; Colson & Scudder, 1988). Since the 1990s, adoption of market economy, repeated incidences of flooding and drought and epidemic of cattle plague have caused the decrease in agricultural income.

---

<sup>3</sup> Traditionally, a wife was given her portion of the fields cleared by her husband and she was able to use the crops from her field not only for feeding her household but also for brewing beer and for gifts. If a husband diminished his wife's right over her crops, it was grounds for divorce (Colson, 1958, p. 109). However, as predicted by Allan et al. (1948, p. 104), today this custom is almost disappeared. No wives except only a few women in wealthy households have their fields and granaries for maize and other crops in my research area. A wife has to obtain consent from her husband for using their maize and then she cannot use even the profit from brewing beer at her discretion. Cultivating sweet potato is the main agricultural source for women to make money for themselves.

Given these changes, today farmers are pressed to search for off-farming activities more than they were in the past. Moreover, women, who have engaged in subsistence farming and other domestic works traditionally, are especially pressed to earn cash capable of establishing self-sufficiency. On the other hand, many development interventions have been introduced into Monze since the independence of Zambia in 1964. The state and donor agencies became the means through which rural people gained access to resources. Present interventions have sometimes targeted women even more than men to emphasise the importance of women's participation in development (Araki, 2001).

According to Colson (1958), there was a relatively clear gender division of labour in Tonga's economic activities. Cash-earning activities such as employment in town or trading clothes and animals were men's economic area, while women worked on their family fields, which belong to men. Brewing was the main cash-earning activity for women. Wright (1983) argued that after the introduction of new farming technologies, men's access to resources and their rights to the produce increased, and gender disparity became apparent. However, there are no reference books or papers detailing how women have diversified their livelihood and achieved cash-earning income after the socio-economic changes and interventions described above.

M village is located about 20 km east of Monze town<sup>4</sup>, the district capital. There is no bus route on the local unpaved road connecting M village to Monze town; therefore, only some share-ride vans operated by villagers are available for transportation. This transport system from village to town is available on most weekdays and some weekends, approximately between 7 a.m. and 10 a.m. and from town to village between 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. The van ride, which costs 5,000

---

<sup>4</sup> Monze town is situated about 215 km south and is a waypoint between Lusaka, the capital, and Livingstone, which is the site of the famous Victoria Falls. So, this bus route is a source of income because of the large number of tourists. Therefore, transportation from Lusaka to Monze is relatively convenient and the cost for a bus ride is an average of 35,000 ZMK.

ZMK<sup>5</sup>, takes approximately an hour. The other option is to take a cab that can be hailed in town; however, this option is not practical for most villagers because the expensive fare is more than 10 times the cost of a local van. Therefore, despite the short distance, transportation to town is not convenient for villagers. M village was comprised of a population of about 260 people in 53 households at the time of the study in 2008. The number of households categorized by types of marital status was as follows: monogamous male-headed ( $N=25$ ), polygamous male-headed ( $N=5$ ), unmarried ( $N=23$ ). Households of unmarried household heads could also be categorized as male-headed households ( $N=7$ ) and female-headed households ( $N=16$ ).

The region experiences three distinct seasons in a year: the hot rainy season, the cold dry season, and the hot dry season. In general, the rains occur from November to March. The mean annual precipitation (for the 5 years from August 2001 to September 2006) is 693 mm/year with large fluctuations<sup>6</sup>. The residents subsist mainly through crop cultivation and the pasturing of livestock. Maize is very significant for the villagers not only as a staple crop but also as a cash crop. As space is limited, however, I am not concerned with the details of farming activities engaged in during the rainy season, and will limit the discussion to women's non-farm activities, mostly engaged in during the agricultural off-season.

### **Women's non-farming livelihoods**

#### **I. Underlying condition of women's non-farming activities**

In the rainy season, women mainly engage in cooperative agricultural work in the fields of their own families and extended families to produce food and cash crops. On the other hand, in the dry season, they spend much more time in non-farming activities. These two activities are, however,

---

<sup>5</sup> Zambian kwacha, the currency of Zambia. Exchange rate of Zambian kwacha was about 3,800 kwacha to one US dollar in February 2008.

<sup>6</sup> According to the data from the Kaumba Agricultural Office, which is located 7km west of M village.

not independent of each other. In particular, the latter is based on the former activities as follows. First, working vigorously in agricultural fields in the rainy season, that is, performing one of the domestic duties, makes it socially acceptable for women to engage in economic activities during the dry season. Second, surplus maize, the main agricultural product in the rainy season, generates income that allows for leisure activities. These, in turn, create opportunities for women vendors, as will be explained below.

## II. The variety of women's non-farming activities

Of all adult women in M village ( $N=72$ ) at the time of my research in 2006, more than half (67%) had engaged in some kind of non-farm economic activities. Comparing the percentage of women engaged in these activities by marital status, more married women engaged in them than single women (the unmarried, the divorced, or widows). Apart from the feeding and trading of animals or poultry and employed labours, selling some kind of goods was a common characteristic in all women's non-farm activities. These activities could be categorized into five groups according to the variety of items as follows: home brewed/cooked goods such as local beer and fried snacks, processed goods purchased in town such as commercial beer and dried fish, gathered goods such as edible bush roots, agricultural goods such as sweet potatoes, and handicrafts such as doormats and clay pots. With regard to differences in marital status among women who engaged in vending, married women had a tendency to engage in low-yielding work only during the hours in which they were not tending to domestic affairs, while single women tended to engage in high-income jobs that required long hours outside the home. Both married and unmarried women could engage in selling brewed/cooked and processed goods, but there is no local market in M village or surrounding areas. Where do they sell them?

Women who brewed local beer usually sell it from the front yard of their own homes, where

mainly men gather to ask for it. In recent years, especially since the 1990's, women have also begun to sell many other goods noted above, although only local beer had been sold there some decades before. In addition to the yard as a drinking space, women vendors take advantage of opportunities and places where many people from within and without are likely to gather in crowds, for example, sports events and field days by agricultural instructors. That is, they dramatically change these places into 'local markets'. Especially in the agricultural off-season, many women vendors can be found traditional ceremonies like weddings and girls' initiations. When such grand ceremonies are held, women vendors usually go there together with their husbands. The presence of their husbands makes it possible for women vendors to openly engage in economic activities to earn money. Further, earning cash makes it possible for them to pay handsel for participating in dancing and enjoying a series of events at these ceremonies. Because these places are originally public spaces for social activities, women of any age and social status can access them for economic activities.

As for the use of money earned from individual non-farm activities, women mostly pay school fees for their children if they have no other urgent need for cash at the moment, such as the cost of treatment for sick family members or organizing familial ceremonies. In fact, however, my participatory observation revealed that women also use their earnings not only to fund ongoing cash-earning activities, but also to join social activities such as the following: farmer's cooperatives, women's clubs, church groups, and sports clubs. One of their other predominant social activities in the agricultural off-season is casual visiting, the details of which I will explain in the following section.

### **Casual visiting at a distance**

While a considerable number of studies have been conducted on labour migration in Africa, little is known about short-term travelling by rural residents that is not undertaken to look for a job or

to get an education. This type of travel is called '*kwendeenda*' in the Tonga language. In this paper, I call it 'casual visiting', to borrow Cliggett's phrase (2003, p. 547), and I define it as an individual visiting some place, not for migration but for a short stay anywhere outside the Monze District.

Of the interviewees who were heads of all households and their spouses in M village in 2008 ( $N=88$ ), 60 people (68%) made such visits once or more over a three-year period<sup>7</sup>. From the gender viewpoint, women made slightly more visits (71%) as compared to men (65%). It is noteworthy that in both monogamous and polygamous households, wives made more visits as compared to husbands. Given that casual visiting accompanied by a spouse occurred in only four of all cases, wives seem to be able to leave their husbands to make these excursions. According to my observation, women generally leave their children with their husband or relatives unless infants are at the breast.

#### I. Characteristics of casual visiting: Time of year and destinations

Casual visiting as viewed from the time of year indicates that more than half of the interviewees (in 39 of 70 cases<sup>8</sup>, 56%) visited from August to October. These three months at the end of the dry season comprise the agricultural off-season in this area. Usually male farmers conclude their agricultural jobs after the maize harvest in May, and females can also be free from any job in their field after the women's crop, like sweet potato, is harvested in July. Then in November, all farmers begin to prepare their fields by ploughing and sowing maize seeds immediately after the rains. Therefore, it is clear that villagers, both men and women, have a pronounced tendency to leave

---

<sup>7</sup> Interviews were conducted with heads and their spouses of all households. All these people were interviewed on their casual visiting for the past three years from April 2005 to March 2008. In this research, however, I do not define casual visiting for the past two years from April 2005 to March 2007 for informants who have already experienced casual visiting for the last one year from April 2007 to March 2008. Therefore, it must be noted that the total number of villagers' casual visiting for the past three years in fact must be more than the result of my research.

<sup>8</sup> Of the interviewees who had experienced casual visiting for the past three years ( $N=60$ ), 53 interviewees answered only one experience, 5 answered two, 1 answered three and 1 answered four. Therefore, the total number of sample cases is 70.

home for casual visiting before the next busy farming season arrives<sup>9</sup>.

Next, comparing the frequency of casual visiting to the nine provinces in Zambia, the Southern and the Lusaka Provinces have by far the highest rate of visitors from M village. As for Southern Province, in which M village is located, it is clear that interviewees visited a diverse area. In the northern part of the country, people from M village moved over a long distance outside the province<sup>10</sup>. More noteworthy is the fact that the five provinces visited by interviewees are the only provinces in the country that have railroad access. Comparing destinations in more detail, a majority of people (in 58 of 70 cases, 83%) visited not rural but major town areas. For example, Lusaka City had by far the highest rate of visitors. Apart from Lusaka, destination areas in order of frequency of visitation were Mazabuka, Livingstone, Choma and Kabwe. Three of these towns apart from Kabwe are district capitals within the Southern Province, and Livingstone is the province capital. Lastly, Kabwe is the capital of the Central Province, situated about 360 km north of Monze, and has flourished as the site of the now closed Kabwe (formerly Broken Hill) Mine.

More specifically, with regard to destinations of casual visiting, most people, both men and women, (in 62 of 72<sup>11</sup> cases, 86%) visited and stayed at a relative's home. For this reason, one can safely state that casual visiting by villagers maintains a social network of relationships with relatives. Accordingly, the next section examines reasons for casual visiting with a focus on visiting relatives mostly living in towns.

## II. Visiting relatives in towns: Visions from rural women

---

<sup>9</sup> At the same time, however, there are a few people going out even during the agricultural season. The reason for this is that the timing cannot be chosen for some kinds of visiting, such as taking care of the sick and funeral attendance.

<sup>10</sup> Kasama, the capital of Northern Province situated more than 1,000 km and costly about 100,000 ZMK by train from Monze, was the farthest from the study area among all destinations of casual visiting.

<sup>11</sup> Of the interviewees who had experienced casual visiting for the past three years (N=60), 53 interviewees answered only one experience, 5 answered two, 1 answered three, 1 answered four, and 2 answered two destinations per visiting. Therefore, the total number of destination cases is 72.

It has been recognized by studies on labour migration and remittance in Africa that migrants generally maintain close links with their home villages. They do so not only by sending money and materials to relatives in those villages, but also by hosting visitors from the home village, keeping a young sister, brother, or even a nephew or niece for an extend period, and occasionally by returning to visit the home village. These studies have generally pointed out that migrants maintain a commitment to their home villages as a strategy for keeping their rights and places there, which in turn serves as ‘insurance’ for the future in case they choose to or need to return home (e.g., Geschiere & Gugler, 1998). That is, casual visiting by villagers has been illustrated only from the point of view of town dwellers. This section examines the role of casual visiting by villagers to relatives in towns, from the perspective of gender.

### *1. ‘Just paying a visit’ and other reasons*

To start with, I will explain how people arrange to visit relatives at a distance, focusing on their way of raising transportation money. Of the interviewees who had visited relatives ( $N=52$ ), there were a number of cases (28 of 62 cases, 45%) in which interviewees raised money for one-way fares on their own from some sort of cash-earning activity. There were 18 cases (29%) in which interviewees borrowed transportation money from their friends and neighbours. In these cases, people always paid their debts as soon as they got home by using money brought from the relatives who had hosted them during their visit. In the remaining 16 cases (26%), interviewees had access to free transportation<sup>12</sup>. These results indicate that most people visited their relatives by earning or borrowing transportation money, and this trend was common to men and women in this area. Despite the difficulty of finding transportation money, why do villagers often pay visits to their

---

<sup>12</sup> Sometimes people in towns send reserved buses or come themselves by their private cars to get their relatives in villages. Or villagers are often provided transportation money by their nearby relatives before they leave.



distant relatives? Next, I will discuss the reasons rural residents visit distant relatives living mostly in town areas.

Of the interviewees who had visited relatives ( $N=52$ ), the most common reason offered by both men and women was ‘just paying a visit’, which I categorized as no special reason (in 30 of 62 cases, 48%)<sup>13</sup>. While I recognize that reasons for visiting relatives could not be identified through my structured questionnaire, my participatory observation provided some insight in this regard. For example, M village women happily shared visiting plans such as: “My husband has already gone to Lusaka without finishing weeding in our fields... anyway, I am also going to pay a visit to my niece in Livingstone after doing all my jobs!” Then they actually left home as planned. When asked what they did during their visit, they usually gave answers such as, “Well... just chatting with my hosts and watching TV on the sofa all day. And I got cheap but nice clothes for my children in the big market. I also visited the hair salon, how do you like my new hairstyle?” In addition, they unanimously said that they needed to spend some time away from home ‘for having a good rest’ after doing very physically demanding work in their fields during the rainy season. Further analysis is needed to clarify unexpressed reasons implicated in ‘just paying a visit’.

The remaining cases (32 of 62 cases, 52%) were categorized by definite aims. Of these, there were four main reasons for visiting relatives: The first was health related, for example, visiting or taking care of the sick, taking someone into their care, or going to the hospital when someone was sick (16%). The second was funeral attendance (15%). The third was economic reasons (11%). The fourth was wedding related, including premarital party attendance (10%). Comparing gender differences, there was a remarkable tendency for women to visit their sick relatives more than men, and this trend may be related to the gender division of labour. For example, Foster’s study (1993, p.

---

<sup>13</sup> No one responded with multiple answers in my research, however, an initial visiting purpose of visiting/taking care of the sick that I categorized as ‘health related reasons’ could be associated with the secondary objective of ‘funeral attendance’ if the sick died during one’s stay. Here such cases were consistently treated as ‘health related reasons’.

252) showed that of the 150 ‘helpers’ looking after inpatients who were interviewed at Monze Hospital, 75% were women and the majority were farmers. She suggests that taking care of the sick is viewed primarily as women’s work in this area. In addition, this trend may also exist because of the shortage of hands in town to look after the sick due to other family members working to earn a living outside of their homes.

## *2. Economic profile*

Aside from health related reasons and attendance at ceremonial occasions, there were economic reasons (the third reason noted above) for visiting, such as looking for jobs, conducting business, and collecting an inheritance. Further, although there were only 4 of 62 cases (6%) in which interviewees answered, ‘asking for financial assistance’ as their visiting reason<sup>14</sup>, my further question revealed that most of interviewees actually were given some money by their host relatives during the home stay.

Of the interviewees who had visited relatives ( $N=52$ ), there were 42 of 62 cases (68%) in which interviewees received money from their host relatives per trip. Of these 42 cases, those in which interviewees were given 25,000-99,999 ZMK accounted for 50%, 100,000-199,999 ZMK accounted for 19%, and 200,000-400,000 ZMK accounted for 31%. Comparing gender differences, women received relatively more money from their hosts than men did, in both ratio and amount. Considering payments received for various types of jobs and commodity prices in the study area<sup>15</sup>, such incidental income obtained by visiting relatives may be very valuable to villagers. Considering

---

<sup>14</sup> For example, a single man who was divorced and born in 1978 visited his uncle in Mazabuka to ask for cash to buy tubes for his father’s oxcart tires. He stayed there for a week and got 70,000 ZMK. And another single woman who was a widow and born in 1962 visited her younger sister in Chirundu, a border town within Southern Province, to ask for cash to pay for her children’s school fees. She stayed there for two weeks and got 250,000 ZMK.

<sup>15</sup> Examples of payments and prices in 2008 were as follows: monthly salary of a primary teacher is about 1,000,000 ZMK, the wage for weeding in another’s field per half a day is 2,500 ZMK, sugar per kilogram is priced at 5,000 ZMK, local beer per cup is priced at 500 ZMK.

that both opportunities for employment and the amount of cash income are more restricted for women than for men, and that gift money from relatives is generally regarded as personal discretionary funds<sup>16</sup>, gift money for women is especially valuable and its worth cannot be measured simply by the amount. Yet, sometimes villagers retained little or no surplus gift money after paying round trip fares to return home. Obviously, visiting relatives does not always have the economic benefit of cash income, but visitors usually bring back many other kinds of gifts as well.

To sum up the points so far, some cases of casual visiting have the effect of gaining financial and material assistance from host relatives. Such effects are, however, limited for other cases, considering transportation costs. On the other hand, casual visiting would also have the effect of allowing visitors to rest their tired bodies after the agricultural season (women could be liberated from housework) and to enjoy the leisure time. Furthermore, it seems reasonable to conclude that villagers as well as town relatives invest their money and time to maintain social networks by casual visiting of relatives.

### **Conclusion**

Over time, the story of African peasant women's economic marginalization and the erosion of their autonomy as a result of development and transition to a cash-oriented economy have been commonly established among scholars and development practitioners. However, I posed a question whether there are new signs of change in this tendency.

As this study made clear, women's cash-earning activities in the dry season have recently been diverse and autonomous in the Tonga society. Women have created 'local markets' by attending social activities in the community to vend various goods, combining these amusing, joyous, and

---

<sup>16</sup> Even if a woman was provided transport money by her husband, she could spend the money received from her host relatives on herself.

celebratory spaces with economic ones to earn cash. Moreover, it is noteworthy that women spend their earnings on not only food and materials for their families but also maintaining and constructing social networks paying handsel for local ceremonies or transportation to visit distant relatives.

These results lead to the conclusion that Tonga women could be empowered, not by requesting rapid restructuring of gender roles and social relations in the local community, but by utilizing existing social norms and institutions in a conciliatory way. Further discussion is needed regarding ways to reflect the flexibility and diversity of gender relations and women's autonomy in macro-policies empowering rural women in Africa.

## **Acknowledgements**

This study was financially supported in part by the Project “Vulnerability and Resilience of Social-Ecological Systems” of Research Institute for Humanity and Nature (RIHN) and the Research Fellowships of Japan Society for the Promotion of Science for Young Scientists. My sincere appreciation goes to the project leader Dr. Chieko Umetsu of RIHN and my academic supervisor Prof. Shuhei Shimada of ASAFAS, Kyoto University. I am indebted to the staff of University of Zambia and Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives in Zambia. My special thanks also go to all the people in Monze who welcomed and supported me.

## References

- Allan, W., Gluckman, M., Peters, D. U. & Trapnell, C. G. (1948). *Land holding and land usage among the Plateau Tonga of Mazabuka District: A reconnaissance survey, 1945.* (Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 14) Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Araki, M. (2001). Different meanings and interests over women's clubs in rural Zambia: An ethnography of development in practice. *African Study Monographs*, 22(4), 175-193.
- Berger, I. & White, E. F. (1999). *Women in sub-Saharan Africa: Restoring women to history.* Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Boserup, E. (1970). *Woman's role in economic development.* London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.
- Bryceson, D. F. (1995). African women hoe cultivators: Speculative origins and current enigmas. In D. F. Bryceson (Ed.). *Women wielding the hoe: Lessons from rural Africa for feminist theory and development practice* (pp. 3-22). Oxford: Berg Publishers.
- Bryceson, D. F. (1999). African rural labour, income diversification & livelihood approaches: A long-term development perspective. *Review of African Political Economy*, 26(80), 171-189.
- Bryceson, D. F. & Jamal, V. (Eds.). (1997). *Farewell to farms: De-agrarianisation and employment in Africa.* Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd.
- Chipungu, S. N. (1988). *The state, technology and peasant differentiation in Zambia: A case study of the Southern Province, 1930-1986.* Lusaka: Historical Association of Zambia.
- Cliggett, L. (2003). Gift remitting and alliance building in Zambian modernity: Old answers to modern problems. *American Anthropologist*, 105(3), 543-552.
- Colson, E. (1958). *Marriage & the family among the Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

- Colson, E. & Scudder, T. (1988). *For prayer and profit: The ritual, economic, and social importance of beer in Gwembe District, Zambia, 1950-1982*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Dennis, C. (1991). Constructing a 'career' under conditions of economic crisis and structural adjustment: The survival strategies of Nigerian women. In H. Afshar (Ed.). *Women, development and survival in the third world* (pp. 88-106). New York: Longman.
- Ekejiuba, F. I. (1995). Down to fundamentals: Women-centred hearth-holds in rural West Africa. In D. F. Bryceson (Ed.). *Women wielding the hoe: Lessons from rural Africa for feminist theory and development practice* (pp. 47-61). Oxford: Berg Publishers.
- Ellis, F. (1998). Household strategies and rural livelihood diversification. *Journal of Development Studies*, 35(1), 1-38.
- Foster, S. (1993). Maize production, drought and AIDS in Monze District, Zambia. *Health Policy and Planning*, 8(3), 247-254.
- Geisler, G. (1992). Who is losing out? Structural adjustment, gender, and the agricultural sector in Zambia. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 30(1), 113-139.
- Geschiere, P. & Gugler, J. (1998). The urban-rural connection: Changing issues of belonging and identification. *Africa*, 68(3), 309-319.
- Kongstad, P. & Mönsted, M. (1980). *Family, labour and trade in western Kenya*. Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies.
- Meagher, K. & Mustapha, A. R. (1997). Not by farming alone: The role of non-farm incomes in rural Hausaland. In D. F. Bryceson & V. Jamal (Eds.). *Farewell to farms: De-agrarianisation and employment in Africa* (pp. 63-84). Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd.
- Mikell, G. (Ed.). (1997). *African feminism: The politics of survival in sub-Saharan Africa*.

Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Nkhoma-Wamunza, A. (1992). The informal sector: A strategy for survival in Tanzania. In D. R. F. Taylor & F. Mackenzie (Eds.). *Development from within: Survival in rural Africa* (pp. 197-213). London: Routledge.

Pottier, J. (1994). Poor men, intra-household bargaining and the politics of household food security. In I. Yngström, P. Jeffery, K. King & C. Toulmin (Eds.). *Gender and environment in Africa: Perspectives on the politics of environmental sustainability* (pp. 156-174). Edinburgh: Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh.

Skønsberg, E. (1981). *The Kefa records: Everyday life among women and men in a Zambian village*. Oslo: Oslo University Press.

von Bülow, D. (1992). Bigger than men? Gender relations and their changing meaning in Kipsigis society, Kenya. *Africa*, 62(4), 523-546.

Wright, M. (1983). Technology, marriage and women's work in the history of maize-growers in Mazabuka, Zambia: A reconnaissance. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 10(1), 71-85.



## List of Working Paper

- No. 2008-001 Moses Mwale, *Synthesis of Soil Management Options for Better Targeting of Technologies and Ecological Resilience under Variable Environmental Conditions*
- No. 2008-002 Thamana Lekprichakul, *Impact of 2004/2005 Drought on Zambia's Agricultural Production and Economy: Preliminary Results*
- No. 2008-003 Gear M. Kajoba, *Vulnerability and Resilience of Rural Society in Zambia: From the View Point of Land Tenure and Food Security*
- No. 2008-004 Lawrence S Flint, *Socio-Ecological Vulnerability and Resilience in an Arena of Rapid Environmental Change: Community Adaptation to Climate Variability in the Upper Zambezi Floodplain*
- No. 2008-005 Tetsuya Nakamura, *The Livelihood of 'Escarpment Tonga': A Case Study of One Village, Southern Zambia*
- No. 2008-006 Chihiro Ito, *Re-thinking Labour Migration in Relation to Livelihood Diversity in African Rural Area: A Case Study in Southern Province, Zambia*
- No. 2009-007 Matheaus Kioko Kauti, *Rural Livelihood Security Assessment for Smallholders Undergoing Economic Changes and Agro-Climatic Events in Central Kenya*
- No. 2009-009 Gear M.Kajoba, *Vulnerability of Food Production Systems of Small-Scale Farmers to Climate Change in Southern Zambia: A Search for Adaptive Strategies*
- No. 2009-010 Chileshe L. Mulenga, *Resilience of Rural Households and Communities to Economic Shocks, HIV/AIDS and Recurrent Droughts: The Case of Households and Communities in the Mwami Area, Chipata, Zambia*
- No. 2009-011 Bennett Siamwiinde Siamwiza, *An Historical Analysis of Vulnerability and Resilience in a Semi-Arid Region of Zambia*
- No. 2009-012 Chewe M. Chabatama, *Ecological Adversity and Food Supply in Northwest Zambia*
- No. 2011-013 Elizabeth Colson, *Resilience as a Way of Life in Gwembe Valley*
- No. 2011-014 Noriko Narisawa, *Diversified Livelihood of Peasant Women in Southern Zambia*

## **Vulnerability and Resilience of Social-Ecological Systems**

Resilience Project Home Page: [www.chikyu.ac.jp/resilience](http://www.chikyu.ac.jp/resilience)

社会・生態システムの脆弱性とレジリアンス  
レジリアンスプロジェクトHP: [www.chikyu.ac.jp/resilience](http://www.chikyu.ac.jp/resilience)

## **Research Institute for Humanity and Nature (RIHN)**

Inter-University Research Institute Corporation, National Institute for the Humanities

457-4 Kamigamo Motoyama, Kita-ku, Kyoto, 603-8047, Japan

[www.chikyu.ac.jp](http://www.chikyu.ac.jp)

大学共同利用機関法人 人間文化研究機構

総合地球環境学研究所

〒603-8047 京都市北区上賀茂本山 457-4

[www.chikyu.ac.jp](http://www.chikyu.ac.jp)