

# CONSTRAINTS OF PRIVATE SPHERE RESPONSIBILITIES ON AVAILABILITY OF TIME TO STUDY: A CASE STUDY OF MARRIED WOMEN STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE'S FACULTY OF EDUCATION

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## ABSTRACT

*This study sought to identify the constraints placed by private sphere responsibilities on the available time to study on women at the University of Zimbabwe's Faculty of Education. The sample consisted of twenty five women students. Data collection instruments consisted of questionnaires and focused group discussions. The study found out that patriarchy influences the amount of time available for study for women. Although the engagement of a housemaid provides some relief there are certain specific chores that require individual time. If private sphere obligations were equally shared between husband and wife more study time would be available. Married women have devised certain coping strategies to create more study time for example reducing sleeping time and cutting on social activities. Married female students find it extremely difficult to balance their work, study and private sphere responsibilities. The study recommends that: employers should consider giving women involved in further study programmes either through early dismissal from work or making more off days available; there is need for societal wide conscientisation on the importance of gender sensitivity to enable men to carry out some household chores; the Ministry of Education, Arts Sports and Culture should consider giving female students on study leave full salaries to enable them to meet certain obligations; lecturers in universities should consider making available more free slots on timetables to enable female students gain more study time, and in the schools female students engaged in further studies should be exempted from co curricular activities.*

**Keywords:** *Private sphere responsibilities, husband and wife, housemaid*

## INTRODUCTION

The Zimbabwe Government through the Millennium Development Goals is committed to the elimination of gender inequalities in society and the empowerment of women. Education is seen as the vehicle that leads to the attainment of these goals as well as promoting gender equity (Zimbabwe Government 2004; 29; Eade, 1999:1, Kabeer, 2003:179). This is in line with the views and resolutions passed at several conferences held at international level. Medel- Anonuevo (1995:2) points out that a key document in education, the World Declaration on Education for All drafted at Jomtien in 1990 acknowledges the need for women to benefit from educational opportunities and remove every obstacle that hampers their active participation. The World Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985 called on women to have improved education and employment opportunities (Dodhia, and Johnson, 2005:2).

This has seen a large influx of women undertaking further studies at tertiary level on a full-time and part-time basis. In some instances women students enroll for evening classes at such

institutions which mean that they do their studies in some cases after formal working hours. In the majority of cases this has engendered a situation where women have to accommodate both their public and private sphere responsibilities with further studies. These means that women then tend to shoulder busy schedules such that if you are looking for an extremely busy person, find a working mother- the epitome of multitasking (Sunday Times of April 12, 2009:7). The studies that women students take tend to be affected negatively by private sphere responsibilities which women are expected to perform as a result of socio cultural factors. It is the contention of this paper that these private sphere responsibilities which are dictated by patriarchy and reinforced through gender role socialization tend to put constraints on the time available to study such that these women students tend to develop certain coping strategies. The importance of education needs to be highlighted once more as 'education is the key to women's future as it enables them to widen their horizons beyond child bearing and household drudgery (Rodda, 1993:101) This paper seeks to identify these constraints of private sphere responsibilities on women students from a sociological point of view.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This paper is guided by Socialist Feminism which is a feminist theoretical perspective that locates the subordination of women in the institution of capitalism and patriarchy. Socialist Feminism is a dual system analysis intended to show how capitalism and patriarchy acted together, infusing and moulding a social structure which created women as subordinates to men both at home and at work (Kirby, 1997':168). Both capitalism and patriarchy interact in the subordination of women; they are both mutually dependent and need each other to operate freely. For capitalism the subordination of women has a number of advantages. Sanderson (1991:94) has observed that women play a crucial role in the production of labour power that men cannot, they must produce and continue to produce more off spring as future workers for the capitalists and this requires their condemnation to domestic work. In this regard labor is produced at no cost to capital. Women also constitute a reserve army of "cheap labour" that can be brought in and out of the labor market and the confinement of women to the private sphere meets this purpose. Most importantly women perform unpaid housework which benefits their men folk across all races and cultures. Hartman (1981:193) argues that the performance of housework by women is crucial to the maintenance of patriarchy, men benefit from women labor as they receive personalized service at home and they end up with a high standard of living in terms of leisure time.

Patriarchy has been defined in a number of ways. It can be generally defined as male domination of women and children that has a material base. Eisenstein in Diaz (1988):390) says that patriarchy is a system of male supremacy that arises historically and affects all social relations. Millet in McDonough and Harrison (1983:12) argues that 'patriarchy means the rule of men and is seen as a universal mode of power relationship and domination: it is all pervasive for it penetrates class divisions, different societies and different historical epochs'.

The material base upon which patriarchy rests lies most fundamentally in men's control over women labour power (Hartman, 1981: 197). This tends to benefit all men across all cultures. Eisenstein (1979) is of the view that sexual division of labour and society that defines peoples' activity, purposes, goals, desires and dreams according to their biological sex is at the base of capitalism and patriarchy. Two types of patriarchy have been identified and these are public patriarchy in the world of work and politics and private patriarchy in the world of the home. In the private sphere women do most of the housework. O' Connell (1994:47) points out that there is enormous variety in the division of labour from one society to the next, but broadly speaking the responsibility of domestic work – cooking, washing and so on rests primarily with women regardless of the income they earn.

Patriarchy also operates in the public sphere where the majority of women are to be found in the lower levels of the occupational hierarchy, being involved in those occupations seen as extensions of their domestic responsibilities. Such occupations include cleaning, nursing, teaching, secretarial work to mention just a few. This is seen as one area where education has an instrumental role to play by providing women with a vehicle that enables them to move out of traditional occupations at the lower levels of the occupational hierarchy and for those at the apex in the public sphere.

Patriarchy is closely related to the concepts of gender. Gender refers to socially constructed differences between men and women that are variable across all cultures. Leo-Rhynie (1999:8) says that the Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development defines gender as the socially defined/constructed differences between men and women that results in women's subordination and inequality in opportunity to a better life. Dodhia and Johnson (2005:33) say that gender refers to the roles and responsibilities of women and men that are created by social and cultural expectations about appropriate behavior and expectations. This results in a situation where roles and activities are defined as masculine and feminine. Women have traditionally been associated with the private sphere (the domestic world of the home, children, reproduction and sexuality) and men associated with the public sphere (paid work, institutionalised religion and political authority) (Andersen, 1997). It is the contention of many feminist scholars that private sphere responsibilities are mainly considered as feminine activities. Patriarchal values are inculcated into the young and internalized during the process of gender role socialization. During this process children develop and acquire a gender identity which is either masculine or feminine leading to masculine and feminine roles in society. Masculine and feminine roles can be seen as gender roles which are patterns of behavior that assign specific tasks, responsibilities and obligations to men and women (Leach, 2003). Most men are trained from infancy to depend on women for the satisfaction of their basic needs for food and comfort (O'Connell, 1994:47). There is pressure to conform and maintain one's gender identity right from childhood up to adulthood. In this regard gender appropriate behavior is enforced where some activities particularly in the private sphere become taboo for men. It is these gender roles (which are part of the patriarchal and gender framework) learnt during socialization which tends to present barriers in the education of women as well as overburden women with private sphere responsibilities. These responsibilities make a heavy demand on women's time.

### **WOMEN'S RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE PRIVATE SPHERE**

It is the contention of many feminists' scholars that in patriarchal society's women do spend a lot of time undertaking private sphere responsibilities. Women's work involves: raising families, maintaining the home, caring for the sick and elderly – a task made more onerous by the HIV and AIDS pandemic (Dodhia and Johnson 2008:35). O'Connell (1994) states that domestic work is mainly done by women and not men or boys, it is low status work. These responsibilities are largely a result of patriarchal values, patriarchal relations and gender relations in such societies. This has led some feminist's critics to argue that women shoulder a double day as they work many hours longer than men. According to the Organization of Angolan Women (1984:44) working mothers do both professional and domestic work amounting to more than 14 hours a day (8 at work, 6 at home) apart from having no weekends or holidays in the home. Gelb (2000) in Dodhia and Johnson (2005:33) points out that the working day of African women whose work is closely integrated with household production system may be 50% longer than men. Therefore the 'double day' is a reality for wage working women (Hartman, 1981).

This means that in the case of married women students who combine both public and private sphere responsibilities with further studies done particularly in the evenings little time is left for the studies. The burden of private sphere responsibilities can be fully appreciated if one considers the roles that women perform in society. Moser in Leach (2003:19) points out those women perform the following roles: productive, reproductive and community management. This means that women have a triple role to undertake in society which makes a heavy demand on their time. These roles affect women's time whether they are pursuing further studies or not. Dodhia and Johnson (2005:33) have observed that because women must simultaneously balance their production, social production and community management roles they often work as much as four or five hours per day longer than men. For those pursuing further studies these roles place constraints on the amount of time left for studying resulting in achievement related problems as well as attrition. Further socio cultural conditioning auto steer many women into the performance of these roles.

### **ROLE OF EDUCATION IN WOMEN EMPOWERMENT**

The role of education in the empowerment of women has been acknowledged widely Stromquist (1997:17) is of the view that knowledge, skills values and attitudes that women gain through education have been found to produce a series of beneficial impacts at both personal and societal level. Commentators point out those women with basic education has a better grasp of reproductive health, basic nutrition and child care. These issues can be seen to meet women's practical gender needs. Education is also seen as providing a solution to women's strategic gender needs when the issues of gender equality and gender equity take centre stage. Education is the key to women future as it enables them to widen their horizon beyond child bearing and household drudgery (Rodda, 1993:104) According to UNESCO (2000:32) technical and vocational education is of great importance to women and girls given the fact that limited access to vocational and technical training is a major constraint for women access to the labour market. The International Labor Organization's Report (2000) highlights the following advantages of education for women: it enables women to overcome barriers of discrimination and segregation, providing a route into nontraditional jobs, means of competing on the basis of objective criteria for recruitment and promotion and a means of commanding higher wages. Education is therefore seen as an avenue that enables women not only to enter male dominated occupations but also to participate in decision making position in many sectors of society.

In most patriarchal society's gender affects equality of educational opportunities since some parents are not keen on the education of the girl child. The practice is attributed to a number of socio economic and cultural factors. The ultimate result is that girls and women may wish to pursue their education up to a tertiary level through their own efforts but from the foregoing discussion private sphere responsibilities present challenges to their efforts. Women may fail to realize the full benefit of education in a socio cultural environment where private sphere responsibilities are mainly a preserve for women. Such a state of affairs tends to call for a change in patriarchal relations in the private sphere.

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Although large numbers of women are pursuing further studies at University/ tertiary level their success and achievement tends to be negatively influenced by constraints put upon them by patriarchal relations in the private sphere. This study seeks to identify these constraints and the coping strategies used by women.

Provision of further education opportunities is one way of empowering women to ensure that they actively participate in the public sphere. However private sphere responsibilities engendered by patriarchal relations in the private sphere tend to limit the available time to study consequently affecting their achievement and retention.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. Do private sphere responsibilities influence availability of time to study?
2. How do patriarchy and patriarchal relations in the home affect availability of time to study?
3. On average how much time do women students set aside daily for study?
4. Would women get more time to study if private sphere responsibilities were equally shared with spouses?
5. Does the employment of a housemaid/ house worker ease the burdening private sphere responsibilities?
6. What coping strategies do women students devise in order to get time to study?

## POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population consisted of all 67 married female students in the Faculty of Education at the University of Zimbabwe. From the population a sample of 25 married female students was selected using simple random sampling techniques.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology adopted for this study is the descriptive survey method. Surveys allow the collection of detailed description of existing phenomena with the intent of using the data either to justify or repeal current practice or to make more intelligent plans to improve them (Mushoriwa, 1998).

## DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Data for this study was collected through the descriptive survey method. The survey gathers data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of prevailing conditions (Cohen and Manion, 1987). Data gathering instruments consisted of questionnaires and Focused Group Discussions (FGD) A focused group discussion allows group interaction such that participants are able to build on each other's ideas and comments to provide an in depth interaction not attainable from individual questioning thereby stimulating an open attitude and interaction (Dooley, 1995).. The questionnaire consisted of questions that required respondents to give reason for their responses, thus emphasizing the qualitative research paradigm (Frankel and Wallen, 1996). Twenty five questionnaires were administered to married women students at the University.

## DATA PRESENTATION

The study generated quantitative and qualitative data. Data obtained through questionnaires and focused group discussions were presented in a narrative form as descriptive verbatim statements following the order of the research questions.

## FINDINGS

### Private Shere Responsibilities and Availability of Study Time

#### *Formal Employment and Further Study Activities*

The majority of the students that is sixty four percent felt that their engagement in full time formal employment affects their studies. Some of the responses they gave included the following:

- a. When I go back home I will be tired and at the same time I am expected to do household chores so by the time I want to start reading I may doze.
- b. It is difficult to balance work, home duties and responsibilities and study.
- c. There is no enough time to study.

Similar sentiments were expressed in Focus Group Discussions. Some of the responses included the following:

- I. Being in formal employment and being a student presents problems. One has a multifaceted role as a mother, student and employee. I have to perform a motherly role in the home, at work there are commitments and the college expects good performance from me. Either one of the roles forgoes the other or at times this results in frustration.
- II. The workplace is too demanding, there are lots of stakeholders to please. Hours of work are long; one gets home after 5 p.m., prepares supper and attends to children and write assignments. So one has to forgo sleep to catch up.

The responses of the students show that patriarchy affects their studies to a greater extent as they are expected to carry out certain household chores in addition to their study commitments. The performance of housework is therefore seen as being crucial to patriarchy (Hartman, 1981). Thus sexual division lies at the basis of patriarchy (Eisenstein, 1979).

#### *Engagement of a Housemaid and Availability of Time to Study*

The study revealed that fifty six percent of the students in the sample do not have housemaids. Those who have engaged housemaids felt that the housemaids present partial relief. Some of their responses included the following:

- a. It increases time during week days because the housemaid does most of the household chores and I take over during weekends.
- b. I still have a duty to monitor and indirectly supervise the maid at random, or at any given time.
- c. The presence of the maid does little because there are duties that are specifically for me.
- d. Not really, I cook since my spouse does not want the maid to cook.

Similar views were expressed during Focus Group Discussions where the responses included the following:

- I. Although we have maids there are certain things we do on our own as mothers
- II. To a certain extent it may help. There are certain household chores that can be done by maids.
- III. The maid would help me in cooking, laundry and gardening but sometimes my spouse demands food cooked by me.

These responses show that whilst the engagement of a maid is a relief in the majority of cases, patriarchy demands that women still have to undertake certain domestic obligations. These obligations could be partly explained in the way men have been socialized (O'Connell, 1994). This results in a situation where working mothers do both professional and domestic work amounting to 14 hours a day (Organization of Angolan Women, 1984). The 'double day' becomes a reality for wage earning women (Hartman, 1984) and should be construed to be a result of gender (Dodhia and Johnson, 2005).

### ***Performance of Household Chores***

Sixty four percent of the students were of the opinion that they perform a larger share of the domestic chores even if they have engaged a housemaid further placing constraints on the availability of study time. Some of the responses included the following:

- a. My husband complains about my maid's way of doing things for example cooking. During the weekends it compels me to do thorough cleaning and every day I prepare supper and breakfast.
- b. Almost all duties are in the hands of the mother.
- c. Because my husband appreciates things done by me.

Similar views were expressed in Focus Group Discussions where some of the responses included the following:

- I. I carry out all the household chores except on the days when my children are not at school.
- II. I do not have a maid and my husband does not help me. So I do it myself.

Patriarchy can then be seen to place certain domestic obligations on women's time. This can then be seen as a result of gender roles (Leach, 2003). Women have been traditionally associated with the private sphere (Andersen, 1997).

### **Impact of Patriarchy and Patriarchal Relations on Availability of Time to Study**

#### ***Impact of Patriarchy and Gender on Availability of Study Time***

The study revealed that eighty eight percent of the students felt that gender and patriarchy have an impact on the availability of time to study. Some of their responses included the following:

- a. Being a mother your children need attention. Being a mother you are expected to do some chores / duties regardless of your work status.
- b. This is because most of the domestic duties are carried out by women such as cooking, laundry, sweeping the house and other feminine duties. No man would like to help his wife to do the duties which are meant for women by society.
- c. Our culture expects me as a woman to do my role and the fact that I am studying does not stop a woman from doing her duties. Therefore gender influences the availability of time to study for women.

Similar views were expressed during Focus Group Discussion where some of the responses included the following:

- I. When I get home from work, I prepare my husband's food because he does not want the maid to prepare food for him. I do the laundry and ironing for my husband and he has all the time to study while I perform those duties.

- II. Gender and patriarchy have an effect. If we look at our culture it says men are breadwinners, we do all the duties they assign us. Women have to comply, that is patriarchy.

The availability of time to study is therefore constrained by patriarchy to a greater extent. This means that women tend to shoulder busy schedules (Sunday Times, 2009). In this respect women find themselves working longer than men (Gelb in Dodhia and Johnson, 2005).

#### ***Reproductive Roles and Availability of Study Time***

The study found out that sixty percent of the students felt that their reproductive roles interfere with their studies. Some of their responses included the following:

- a. Sometimes when I want to study, since I use early morning hours and late hours of the day, the husband would be after his conjugal rights.
- b. At times I have painful periods.
- c. It is not easy to study while you are pregnant, breastfeeding or with a baby less than five months. So some women with these challenges drop their studies.

During Focus Group Discussions similar views emerged. Some of the responses included the following:

- I. Right now I am pregnant and at times I feel sick and this interferes with my studies.
- II. Hormonal changes when one is pregnant may reduce the level of concentration and zeal to study.

Reproductive roles place further constraints in terms of women study activities. This is attributable to the triple roles they perform in society (Moser in Leach, 2003). At the same time women's work involves raising families (Dodhia and Johnson, 2008). Women also have a crucial role to play in a capitalist society (Sanderson, 1991).

#### ***Comparison of Tasks Performed By Men and Women in the Home In Terms Of Time***

All the students in the study were of the view that the tasks performed by men in the home do not take the same time as those performed by women. Some of their responses included the following:

- a. Men do not perform household chores and most of them are always at work.
- b. Most of the time men are resting though their roles require more energy.
- c. Most of the tasks are gender based; hence tasks performed by women take more time compared to those performed by men.

During Focus Group Discussions the students expressed some of the following responses:

- I. The husband only trims the lawn once in a while and waters the garden once in a while whereas the woman is always busy in the house.
- II. Men do not perform as many task as women so the take less time to perform these.

These views highlight the impact of patriarchy where two different spheres of activity emerge. Women have been traditionally associated with the private sphere and men with the public sphere (Andersen, 1997). Therefore it can be argued that sexual division of labor lies at the basis of patriarchy (Eisenstein, 1979).



***Patriarchy and Women's Private Sphere Activities***

All the students felt that men benefit from the private sphere activities of women. Some of their responses included the following:

- a. Women do almost all the tasks in the home and men in most cases are mere supervisors.
- b. They gain dignity and respect after being made presentable by women.
- c. Men find everything done for them, for example food prepared, clothes washed and ironed, bedding washed, bed prepared and even shoes polished.

Similar views were expressed during Focus Group Discussions. Some of the responses included the following:

- I. Most of the domestic work is done by women and men relax after work.
- II. Most duties are done for the husband and children.

To a great extent men are the beneficiaries of women's private sphere responsibilities. This results in a situation where the majority of men tend to have a lot of free time at their disposal. Socialization results in a situation where men depend on the labor of women (O'Connell, 1994). Patriarchy should then be seen as a mode of power relationships and domination (Millet in McDonough and Harrison, 1983).

**Amount of Time Devoted To Study Activities*****Amount of Time Set for Study Daily***

Eighty eight percent of the students stated that they do not set the same amount of time to study daily. Some of their responses included the following:

- a. Many aspects interrupt my study time table. As a family woman, I may spend more time attending to my family.
- b. Sometimes I might have some domestic work to do such as washing and cleaning and my study time will be affected during clean up days.
- c. Because family responsibilities change every day and at times there is very limited time to study due to pressure of obligations that crop up spontaneously.

During Focus Group Discussions similar views were raised. Some of the responses included the following:

- I. It depends with the nature of the assignment. At times 2 to 3 hours daily is devoted to study if there is no pressure of domestic work. If assignments are due one ends up losing sleeping hours.
- II. Domestic work demands a lot.

These views emphasize the idea that private sphere responsibilities have a negative impact on the time set aside to study on a day to day basis. This arises out of a situation of patriarchy and patriarchal relations where domestic work is mainly done by women and is considered low status work and men have been trained from infancy to depend on women for the satisfaction of needs (O'Connell, 1994).

***Amount of Time Set Aside To Study Weekly***

The study found out that the amount of time set aside for study weekly ranged from 4 to 40 hours weekly. Some of the responses included the following:

- a. I usually use early morning hours and weekends. During the day I will be engaged in house hold chores (9 hours).
- b. I arrive home late since I do not stay on campus. I will be tired and hungry so I retire to bed. I wake up at 3a.m. and I read for an hour before I start to prepare for school. This really affects my performance (7 hours).
- c. I have a strictly followed reading and studying period from 3 am up to 6 am. And because it will be during the early hours of the day, I rarely have disturbances (21 hours).

Similar views were expressed during Focus Group Discussions where some of the responses included the following:

- I. I use 2 hours daily, I need to rest and I would not be able to concentrate.
- II. It is 35 hours per week, giving myself 5 hours every day after lectures, if I am at work it is 2 hours per day and 14 hours weekly.

The difference in times set aside for study is a result of the amount of private sphere responsibilities that have to be undertaken. It can also be assumed that those who have engaged housemaids tend to have more time at their disposal though they also have household chores to undertake. The demands of a capitalist society place a heavy burden on women (Sanderson, 1991) and hence availability of study time is limited.

#### ***Availability of Time to Study between Weekdays and Weekends***

Sixty eight percent of the students felt that they get more study time during the week than on weekends. Some of their responses included the following:

- a. During the weekends I do a lot of cleaning of the house, so I have less time to spare for reading
- b. During the weekends when I am at home I have other chores to do and also going to church.
- c. On weekends I would be doing household chores in compensation for the whole week.

During Focus Group Discussion the responses included some of the following:

- I. During weekdays I study during early and late hours of the day and on weekends it's only during the day.
- II. After school yes because I will be free but on weekends I rarely study.

Domestic responsibilities also place constraints on the availability of time during weekends. Thus working mothers also engage in professional and domestic work and have no weekends or holidays in the home (Organization of Angolan Women, 2005).

#### ***Preferred Period of Day for Further Studies***

The study revealed that fifty six percent of the students have a preferred time of the day in which they engage in study. Some of their responses included the following:

- a. During the night because there is little disturbance. Everyone in the home will be asleep.
- b. I sleep at 2100hrs every day, so from 1900 hrs when I have supper to 2100 hrs I carry out some research on the internet.

- c. I use early morning hours and late hours of the day because I will be engaged in household chores and also much of my time is spent waiting for transport since I use Old Mazowe road which has unreliable transport.

These views are supported by responses obtained during Focus Group Discussions where some of the responses included the following:

- I. I normally study at night because that is the time available after work.
- II. During the night when everyone is asleep.
- III. I use early morning hours and late hours of the day because I will be engaged in household chores and also much of my time is spent waiting for transport since I use Old Mazowe road which has unreliable transport as a result of private sphere responsibilities most women tend to study during the night. This situation is a result of women's activities in the private sphere (Sanderson, 1991; Dодhia and Johnson, 2008).

### **Sharing Of Private Sphere Responsibilities and Availability of Study Time**

An overwhelming majority of the students felt that if household tasks were equally shared between men and women more study time would be available. Some of their responses included the following:

- a. Women will find more time to study because they will not feel tired and also less time will be spent on household chores.
- b. This is because some of the duties women have to do will be done by men and women will be able to use that time to study.
- c. Because we will draw up a duty roaster so that some of the days I will be free and hence I will be able to study whilst the husband does some of the work.

Similar views were expressed during Focus Group Discussions where some of the responses included the following:

- I. Household tasks will not occupy most of our time.
- II. Doing household tasks reduces a woman's time to study but if the tasks are shared then women would get more time to study.

These views imply that society has to challenge the sexual division of labor that forms the basis of patriarchy (Eisenstein, 1979). It also requires a change of mindset as men have tended to depend on women (O, Connell, 1994).

### **Coping Strategies to Ensure Availability of Study Time**

Fifty six percent of the students felt that there are certain coping strategies that they devise in order to increase the amount of time available for study. Some of their responses included the following:

- a. Doing thorough cleaning during weekends.
- b. Utilizing the early hours of the day and late hours of the day to study.
- c. Being an early sleeper and an early riser.

Similar views were expressed during Focus Group Discussions where some of the responses included the following:

- I. Reducing sleeping time.
- II. Cutting on social life, no television.

These coping strategies arise as a result of the triple role women have to play in society (Moser in Leach 2003) as well as the demands of a capitalist society (Sanderson, 1991).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This study seeks to make the following recommendations:

1. Employers should consider giving women involved in further study programmes either through early dismissal from work or making more off days available.
2. There is need for societal wide conscientization on the importance of gender sensitivity to enable men to carry out some household chores.
3. The Ministry of Education, Sports, Arts and Culture should consider giving female students on study leave full salaries to enable them to meet certain obligations.
4. Lecturers in universities should consider making available more free slots on timetables to enable female students gain more study time.
5. In the schools female students engaged in further studies should be exempted from co curricular activities.

## CONCLUSION

The study has shown that patriarchy impacts negatively on the availability of time to study for female students in tertiary institutions. This has resulted in situations where the burden of private sphere responsibilities falls on women. Patriarchy results in a situation where men tend to have a lot of free time. Given this state of affairs women students have devised certain coping strategies to enable them to get more study hours. Even in situations where some families hire housemaids women generally feel that there are certain specific private sphere responsibilities that require their individual attention. Therefore in situations where a housemaid has been engaged women still need to do housework.

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