

*IN THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE SIXTH PARLIAMENT OF
THE FOURTH REPUBLIC OF GHANA*



**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON GENDER AND
CHILDREN**

ON

THE KAYAYEI PHENOMENON IN GHANA

February, 2016



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

On 27th February, 2014, the Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection Mrs. Nana Oye Lithur made a statement on the “kayayei” (female head porters) phenomenon in Ghana.

In the statement, the Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection provided the background to rural urban migration in Ghana, the current nature of the “kayayei” phenomenon, reasons why people migrate to regional capitals to engage in the “kayayei” trade, challenges faced by the “kayayei”, national response to the phenomenon and the way forward.

Members showed a lot of interest in the statement due to the effect of the phenomenon on the society and especially women and children. Due to the interest demonstrated by Members, Mr. Speaker pursuant to Standing Order 175 referred the statement to the Committee on Gender and Children for research, study, consideration and report to the House.

0.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference was mainly situated on the presentations made by Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection as well as contributions of Members on the phenomenon.

The Committee in considering the referral narrowed down the terms of reference to the following:

- ✓ The causes of the phenomenon
- ✓ Nature of the phenomenon

- ✓ Challenges faced by the Kayayei
- ✓ National response to the phenomenon
- ✓ Recommendations on the way forward

1.0 PROCEDURE

In the execution of the terms of reference identified, the Committee adopted the following methodology:

The Committee held a workshop from the 23rd – 26th May 2014 with the Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection, Mrs. Nana Oye Lithur and officials from her Ministry to deliberate on the statement she made on the Kayayei phenomenon.

The Committee also met with Civil Society Organisations with focus on the Kayayei Phenomenon to solicit their views and seek further clarification on their operations and the way forward.

There was again a meeting to deliberate on researches that have been made on the phenomenon and the legal frameworks that can be applied to solve the problem.

The Committee finally went on field visits to various markets in the capital including Agbogbloshi market, Malata Market, Madina Market and the Darkuman Market to interact with kayayei to obtain first hand information on the phenomenon from 21st to 22nd June 2014.

2.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Committee is grateful to the following who participated in the various deliberations and the information they provided:

1. The Minister for Gender, Children and Social protection , Mrs. Nana Oye Lithur,

2. ~~Director, Department of Children~~

3. Director, Department of Social Protection

4. Director, Department of Social Welfare
5. Officials from Peoples Dialogue(NGO)
6. Kayayei from the Malata, Medina, Agbogbloshi and Darkuman markets

4.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

In considering the statement by the Hon. Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection, the under listed documents were used as reference materials:

1. The 1992 Constitution of Ghana
2. The Standing Orders of Parliament of Ghana
3. Statement by the Hon. Minister for Gender, Children and Social Protection.
4. Report on the Kayayei phenomenon by the Peoples Dialogue (NGO)
5. Report of the Ministry of Gender and Children on the Kayayei Phenomenon
6. The Children's Act 1998(Act 560)

5.0 ISSUES PERTAINING TO THE PHENOMENON

5.1 *Lack of national data on phenomenon*

It came to light that there has been no national survey on the phenomenon, although the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection conducted a study on the phenomenon in Accra in 2009 and two none governmental organisations, Peoples Dialogue and the Ghana Federation of Urban Poor also did another in 2011.

The report of the Ministry on Gender, Children and Social Protection put the number of head porters or Kayayei in Accra at 2,300 while that of the NGOs stated a figure of between 15,000 – 17,000 head porters in Accra.

These porters are mostly located in markets across the capital especially at the Agboghloshie market, Mallam Atta market, Madina market, Tema Station, Darkuman market and Ashaiman market. There are however others in Sekondi-Takoradi, Kumasi, Tamale, Techiman and Kintampo.

According to the two researches made on the phenomenon, 80% of the head porters are females mostly from the northern parts of Ghana and 20% are males engaged in truck pushing, sale of metal scraps, loading and off loading of goods from trucks.

86% of them are not married and 41% of them are single but have children. 50% of them have no formal education and 54% of them are of Dagomba, Sissala and Mumprusi extraction from the Northern regions. 58% of them were engaged in farming prior to migrating to Accra. Most of them are also school drop outs.

5.2 *Key factors for the prevalence of the phenomenon*

The following factors were identified as reasons for the prevalence:

- a. Poverty and financial difficulties experienced by young girls in the north.
- b. Climate change which has seriously impacted on rain-fed agriculture in the north.
- c. Inability to complete education due to lack of funds,
- d. irresponsible parentage and harmful socio cultural practices like early marriages and adoption.
- d. Inadequate schools and teachers.
- e. Lack of jobs

5.3 **Challenges faced by Kakayei**

In Accra, these young girls and boys go through myriads of challenges as they ply their trade. These include rape, sexual abuse, long working hours, harassment and extortion by city officials, lack of access to good health,

education and accommodation, drug trafficking and maltreatment. Early deaths are also recorded amongst them due to the experiences they go through.

5.4 National Responses

The Committee was briefed on various responses made by governments to tackle the phenomenon. These interventions include apprenticeships in dressmaking and hairdressing, soap making and batik/tie and dye production. Some trainees were given sewing machines and hair dryers as startup capital for their businesses, after which they were reintegrated back into their communities.

Most of these interventions did not yield the required result as most of the girls sent back to their communities did not have customers to patronize their services in the North or fend for themselves. Some could not also use their electric sawing machines due to lack of electricity in their villages. As a result, almost all of them returned to Accra to continue the head porting business.

6.0 OBSERVATIONS

The Committee is of the opinion that it would be prudent to address this social menace as a national or development issue rather than a problem of the three northern regions. This is because most of these migrant females are avoiding poverty and hardships as is characteristic of all migration patterns where people migrate to places where there are abundant resources. It is only when a holistic approach is adopted in solving the problem that the menace would be completely eradicated or brought to its barest minimum.

The Committee also observed that head porting serves as a means of livelihood to many of these migrants and it would not be prudent to completely ban it. It would be proper to regulate the practice by licensing the adults and banning children below the age of 18. The under aged children whose parents are in Accra should be enrolled in schools while those whose parents are in their original place of abode should be sent back to their parents and enrolled in schools.

The Committee also observed with worry the numerous interventions made by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, International organizations and Civil Society Organisations but did not yield the desired impacts. In fact the experts admitted, it would be difficult to send them back to their communities and integrate them as they prefer living in Accra than going back to their communities.

The Committee also noted that the study conducted on the kayayei phenomenon was based primarily on girls in Accra and did not cover the whole of Ghana. It does not therefore provide a clear picture of the magnitude of the problem as the numbers may be more than what was mentioned. It is necessary to undertake a nationwide data collection or national survey on kayayei as most regional capitals and towns such as Kumasi, Techiman, Takoradi, Kintampo and Tamale have large numbers of female head porters.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends short, medium and long term solutions to be implemented to reduce the phenomenon.

7.1 SHORT TERM SOLUTIONS

7.2 NATIONAL SURVEY ON KAYAYEI PHENOMENON

In the short term, the Committee recommends that a more thorough national survey should be conducted on the phenomenon by a team of officials from the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, Ghana Statistical Service and other stakeholders in order to obtain a comprehensive situational analysis of the kayayei phenomenon. The team is to identify the research gaps in the existing literature and try to fill them up. This would afford the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection the opportunity to carve an informed and realistic policy framework which would provide a clear national policy direction to tackle the kayayei phenomenon. The Minister of Gender, Children and Social Protection should also consider their situation and enroll them under the LEAP and National Health Insurance Scheme.

7.3 DONOR MAPPING

Policy frame works drawn out of the nationwide survey on the phenomenon may need a financial out lay adequate enough to bring the phenomenon to its barest minimum. The Committee therefore urges the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection to draw up a frame work aimed at identifying funding sources that can be approached for support. The Committee also tasked the Ministry to conduct donor mapping to ascertain donor agencies whose core interests lie with improving the life of the girl child and source funds to implement the policy.

7.4 INTER-MINISTERIAL COLLABORATION

The Committee noted that, the problem of kayayei cannot be tackled by a single ministry because issues related to the phenomenon cut across various ministries. It therefore recommends an Inter- Ministerial collaboration between Ministries such as Agriculture, Interior, Health, Justice, Roads, Education, Employment and Labour Relations, Local Government and Rural Development, Chieftaincy and Culture and the National Youth Development Authority to help solve the problem of kayayei. Each Ministry should also faction out activities or policies aimed at improving the welfare of the girl child or promoting the welfare of the Kayayei.

7.5 INCREASE BUDGET OF GENDER MINISTRY

Owing to insufficient budgetary allocations and irregular releases of funds, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection does not have the required funds and personnel to tackle the problem. The Committee observed that tackling the kayayei phenomenon would involve huge financial commitments which currently, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection does not have. The Committee therefore recommends that the budget of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection should be increased to accommodate the kayayei menace.

7.6 IMMEDIATE INTERVENTION IN IDENTIFIED MIGRANT AREAS

Data from the survey conducted by the People's Dialogue indicates that 51.4% of the Kayayei are of Dagomba extraction, 29.7% are Mamprusis, 4.5% are Gonjas, 5.9% are Sissalas, 0.9 % Akans and 7.7% are from other ethnic extractions.

The Committee therefore calls for immediate intervention in the form of education and advocacy within the identified migrant areas. The interventions should aim at discouraging the practice and encouraging the girls to stay at home.

7.7 EDUCATION ON FAMILY PLANNING

Committee members also noted that most of the Kayayei migrate to the south to seek for greener pastures because they come from large families where parents do not have sufficient resources to cater for them. The Committee recommends the scaling up of family planning education within their communities to inform parents of the need to plan their households in order to have an improved standard of living.

8.0 MEDIUM TERM SOLUTIONS

8.1 INCREASE AND STRENGTHEN HUMAN RESOURCE CAPACITY OF GENDER MINISTRY

The Committee noted that with the realignment of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, the mandate of the Ministry has increased and there is the need to recruit more staff to handle the additional responsibilities.

The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection lack offices in the districts. The Ministry relies on District Social Welfare Officers for ~~information. It is therefore unable to track emerging social problems at the~~ micro level effectively. The Committee recommends that the Ministry should be empowered to acquire permanent offices and trained staff in the Districts

to ensure efficiency in data collection. The capacity of the staff should also be strengthened with regards to the data collection, collation and analysis.

8.2 INCREASE VISIBILITY OF DISTRICT ASSEMBLIES AND TRADITIONAL RULERS

The Committee also noted that District Assemblies and Traditional Rulers have a major role to play in combating the kayayei phenomenon by providing the required infrastructure for development such as Schools, roads, electricity, hospitals and exploitation of local resources to improve the lot of the people. It is only when these resources are available that people would desist from migrating to the urban centres. Again, district officers should ensure that all children of school going age are enrolled. They should also lead advocacy programmes in communities where outmoded cultural practices such as female genital mutilation, early marriages or forced marriages compel the girls to migrate down south.

8.3 STRICT ENFORCEMENT OF THE CHILDREN'S ACT

Section 16 of the Children's Act expressly requires District Assemblies and local authorities to protect the welfare of children. The Committee therefore urges all District Assemblies to collaborate with the Ghana Police Service and the Departments of Social Welfare in the districts to strictly enforce section 16 of the Children's Act which prohibits children under the age of 15 years from working.

8.4 INCREASE PUBLIC EDUCATION

The Committee calls for increased public education on the dangers of harmful socio-cultural practice and their effect on the wellbeing of Children. In Communities where the phenomenon is rife, government, civil society organizations and the media should mount educational campaigns and advocacy programmes to sensitize the youth especially girls from the three northern regions in Ghana on the need to go to school and not migrate to the south.

8.5 CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR

The Committee also recommends that corporate entities within the private sector should be sensitized to channel part of their social responsibility programmes towards the improvement of the welfare of Kayayei in the Capital. In this regard, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection should prepare a policy document on the phenomenon, together with the funding requirements and solicit help from corporate entities to ameliorate the plight of the young girls.

8.6 ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES

The Committee was informed of the review and adoption of the National Migration Policy by the Ministry of the Interior and the Child and Family Welfare Policy Department of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection. The Committee is of the view that these policies when adopted and carefully implemented can reduce the Kayayei phenomenon drastically. The Committee therefore urges the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection to ensure that the preparation of the policies are fast tracked and implemented.

8.7 ESTABLISHMENT OF A FUND

The Committee recommends the establishment of a Trust Fund, the proceeds of which would be used to train these young girls in various vocations of their choice and reintegration into their communities. The fund managers should be carefully chosen and held accountable for the use of the funds. The Committee further urges the Ministry to maintain on going partnerships with funding institutions and international organizations like UNICEF to enable them solicit support for their activities aimed at curbing the phenomenon.

9.0 LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS

9.1 CREATION OF SHELTERS IN THE THREE NORTHERN REGIONS

The Committee also noted that the planned intervention of creating shelters in the capital to house these migrant girls is not the right way to address the problem as it would serve as an incentive for more girls to migrate down south. The Committee is of the view that long-term solutions to this menace should include setting up skills development centres in the northern part of Ghana to house these young migrants.

These centres should be manned by master craftsmen who will serve as trainers. The Committee also suggests that after their training, markets should be found for their services so that they can earn income from their trade. They can be given contracts under government programmes like the School Feeding Programme and the Free School Uniform Programme so as to earn a living. Furthermore, Social Protection programmes like the LEAP and NHIS should effectively target areas where the migrant girls hail from.

9.2 EVALUATION OF ECONOMIC WEALTH OF THE NORTHERN REGIONS

The Committee noted that the economic wealth of the northern regions has not been effectively assessed and factored into national development. Most factories and businesses have been cited in Accra and that acts as a major pull factor for migration to the south. The Committee recommends the evaluation of the economic wealth of the northern regions of Ghana and the setting up of small scale businesses to provide employment for the youth.

The Committee also urges government to take a second look at the Savannah Accelerated Development Authority initiative to ensure that its programmes and policies are viable to create the needed employment and promote economic development in the north.

9.3 DEVELOPMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE NORTH

The Committee also noted that as a result of the development deficit in the northern sector, most people migrate south to access quality services and improved standards of living. The Committee therefore urges Government to

9.3 DEVELOPMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE NORTH

The Committee also noted that as a result of the development deficit in the northern sector, most people migrate south to access quality services and improved standards of living. The Committee therefore urges Government to vigorously resource the regions and provide infrastructure in the three northern regions to discourage migration.

The rice industry in northern Ghana should be revamped to attract most of the youth who migrate to the south into rice production.

9.4 RESTRUCTURING OF MARKETS

The Committee noted that one of the reasons for the proliferation of the female head porters is the unplanned nature of our markets. The Committee recommends that the markets should be restructured to create wider spaces to allow carts and other loading trucks to gain access to the markets. This would discourage clients from patronizing the services of these young girls.

10.0 CONCLUSION


The Kayayei phenomenon has gained a national dimension and requires national attention and a comprehensive policy to bring it down to the barest minimum.

The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection should be given the needed support in developing policies that would help in the reduction in the level of migration.

The Children's Act should also be strictly implemented to ensure that children are not used in the Kayayei trade. The budget allocation to the Ministry should again be increased to enable it tackle all socio-cultural issues effectively and efficiently.

In the light of the above the Committee recommends the report to the House for adoption.

Respectfully submitted



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HON. LAADI AYII AYAMBA
CHAIRPERSON



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MS. ANITA QUARTEY-PAPAFIO
CLERK
