

**TANGAZA COLLEGE  
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA**

**INSTITUTE OF THEOLOGY  
PASTORAL DEPARTMENT**

KELLY SANKALIMBA C.P

**THE IMPACT OF WOMEN DEVELOPMENT IN THE CHURCH: Case  
Study of the Catholic Women at Holy Savior Parish, Kafue Zambia**

**Moderator**

**Rev. Fr. Kocholickal, George, S.D.B.**

**A Long Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
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## **DEDICATION**

In a special way I dedicate this paper to the women at the Holy Saviour Parish. I also dedicate this work to all women who suffer silently in church and the world at large and also to those women who are suppressed because of their gender.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge Rev. Fr. John who made himself available for all the corrections and my moderator Rev. Fr. Kocholickal, George, S.D.B. and also my brother Osborn who helped me with materials on the Zambian environment. For this am grateful to them. Their corrections, criticism, and suggestions have been a great benefit to the production of this work. I also would wish to appreciate my community brothers at the Passionist Theology House in Kisima, Nairobi for their unending support to this work.

I would also mention that it is through writing that we stay for long in the minds of others as we transmit and preserve our ideas. Lastly I would also extend my thanks and appreciation to all my fellow classmates at Tangaza College for their help in shaping my ideas, may God bless and grant them their hearts' desire. Amen

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE STUDY**

|        |   |   |
|--------|---|---|
| AIDS   | - | Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome                     |
| AF     | - | African Bible   |
| Acts   | - | Acts  |
| RSV    | - | Revised Standard Version                                |
| CEDAW  | - | Convention on all forms of Discrimination Against Women |
| CV     | - | Caritas in Veritate                                     |
| Ex     | - | Exodus  |
| GDP    | - | Gross Domestic Product                                  |
| GIDD   | - | The Gender in Development Division                      |
| IMF    | - | International Monetary Fund                             |
| Jer    | - | Jeremiah  |
| Lk     | - | Luke  |
| NGO    | - | Non Governmental Organization                           |
| NGOCC  | - | Non Governmental Organization Coordinating Committee    |
| NGP    | - | National Gender Policy                                  |
| PAGE   | - | Programme from the Advancement of Girls' Education      |
| PP     | - | Populorum Progressio                                    |
| SADC   | - | Southern African Development Committee                  |
| SCCs   | - | Small Christian Communities                             |
| SAP    | - | Structural Adjustment Programme                         |
| UN     | - | United Nations  |
| UNDP   | - | United Nations Development Programme                    |
| WID    | - | Women in Development                                    |
| WILDAF | - | Women in Law and Development in Africa                  |

**GENERAL INTRODUCTION**  
**AIM/OBJECTIVES MOTIVATION**

This essay is intended to show the dignity of women in today's society by studying the impact of the service of women in the development of the Church and the society at large. This case study intends to show how women are actively involved in the process of development of the Kafue Parish in Zambia in the Archdiocese of Lusaka.

It has been my concern to find out how women have been contributing to the development of the Church in Zambia. In this particular instance, I have looked at a particular case that will give an overview of the role of women in the development of the Church in Zambia. A case study of my Parish, Kafue in Zambia was what I came out with to help investigate this scenario. For sometime, I would say 15 years; I have seen great improvement in the way women are trying to contribute to the development of the Parish. As the number of women joining various organizations that exists at the Parish has steadily increased, I have been asking myself why this is the case. Fifteen years ago it was not like that. This has been my experience and that is what the parishioners who have been attending the Parish are also asking. I AM interested to know

what cultural values were embraced at that particular time and if at all they were in conflict with values held by the parishioners and the teachings of the church. What then has changed that their development efforts are being recognized? I am motivated to find out what these channels are that women currently have employed in their contributions to the development in the Church. Have they overcome some stigmatizations or rather stereotypes that were there in the past years? We will also investigate what contributions women have made in the whole area of leadership in the church. We will further look at its theological and sociological implications.

It is my view that this paper will also help in further research concerning women in the church.

## **STRUCTURE AND PLAN OF THE PAPER**

The paper consists of five chapters. These chapters are not separate from each other but are interconnected. The idea of the impact of women development runs through all the chapters. It is only that the topic of discussion is looked upon from different perspectives as we shall see.

In chapter one, we shall do a case study on our topic, *Impact of women's development in the (church and in particular the case of) Kafue Parish in Zambia, the Archdiocese of Lusaka*. This chapter acts as a sample of the impact of women in development in the church. In this chapter we will look at the general environment at the parish and the surrounding area where the parish is located. The role of women and their contributions to the development are highlighted. We will also try to see the impact the development of women has brought to that Parish and the surrounding areas.

Chapter two, though continuing with the same theme, tries to broaden the horizon. Women are looked upon in the context of the Zambian situation - their impact in development and also other

developments that have helped incorporate women in the development of southern African situation. This chapter looks at the factors that have contributed to the underdevelopment of women including the general society's stereotyping and also how progress has been going on to overcome this. We also intend to show the impact this has brought as far as development is concerned. In this chapter we shall present the gender movements on the international scene and how this is being addressed.

Chapter three outlines the biblical teaching on the dignity and role of women in the Old and New Testament, church and society. We shall not exhaust all scriptural texts concerning women but shall cite some to support our case. This chapter looks at the background of women in the Jewish culture. It then look's at women in the gospels and their contribution to the growth of the kingdom and the church. This chapter will present some examples of women figures in the gospels as well as the Pauline letters and their contribution in development.

Chapter four looks at the church's perspective. In this chapter we shall see the letters of the Popes and church documents that promotes women's participation and dignity in the church. The specific writings we refer to are: *On the Dignity of Women (Mulieris Dignitatem)* and on the *Vocation and Mission of Christ's Faithful (Christifideles Laici)*.

Chapter five concludes our paper. We will give our own analysis on this case. We shall give recommendation and how this issue affects our society today.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In order to get to the core of the topic under study, we shall approach the question using the sociological and theological research methods. In the theological methods we shall use at the

scriptures and the teachings of the church. This will help get a view of our study at hand, on the impact of women's development in the Church. Through this research method, it will help us look at how women have impacted that development in Kafue Parish, Zambia in the Archdiocese of Lusaka.

In this research, we will use questionnaires in the sociological method. By using social analysis, we hope to see the social scenario of the happenings on the ground. In this regard, we will also employ the Pastoral cycle of See, Judge and Act mode to our study. By this we shall employ theological reflection or rather inductive method by starting from the experiences of the people in Kafue Parish, Zambian.

## CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

We wish to study the impact of women's development in the church, specifically at the Holy Saviour Parish in Kafue, Zambia. But what then is women's development? To answer that we can look at what we mean by development in the secular and the Christian world and what we mean by women's development in this paper.

Sue Ellen Charlton in *'The Women, Gender and Development Reader'* describes development as implying a notion of historical change coming from western European secular scientific thought. It is seen as an historical process.<sup>1</sup> As Beer puts it, "the concept of development takes into account time dimension."<sup>2</sup> This concept is said "to recognize the importance of human ability to

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. S.E. CHARTON, *"The Women, Gender and Development Reader,"* 6.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. S.E. CHARTON, *"The Women, Gender and Development Reader,"* 6.

influence and control the natural social environment.”<sup>3</sup> Most of the time development is associated with modernization. Haddad describes development as a “linear process in which a country moved from underdeveloped, which was characterized as backward-traditional-primitive. to full development, which was identified a modern rational industrialized.”<sup>4</sup>

Out of the definitions given on development, the most striking aspect is that is referred to as a “process” and happens in the course of time. Again we see that it is a forward movement and it involves taking a person or people from a low situation to the higher one; that is not going backwards for that will mean under-developing. It also has to do with the mindset, that is, as concerns ideologies and way of societies changing behaviour of going about their lives.

The study of development of women is beyond equating it to “modernization with development” in which women if considered were seen as being too traditional and indeed most ignorant and “backward”, who kind of resisted modernity.<sup>5</sup>

Pope Paul the VI in his encyclical letter, “On the Development of Peoples” or *Populorum Progressio* mentions that the term development cannot be limited to only economic growth. If this is the case, then that can only be termed as half development with no interest in humanity. In this view. to be true development and complete, it should be integral, that is, as the encyclical letter says, “has to promote the good of every human being and of the whole man.”<sup>6</sup> Mention is

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. S.E. CHARTON, “*The Women, Gender and Development Reader*”, 7.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. B. HADDAD, “*Gender, Development, and Faith*”, 430-431.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. B. HADDAD, “*Gender, Development, and Faith*”, 431.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, n. 14.

made in article 15 that a person is called upon to develop all respects and fulfill his vocation by the education attained through the help of the environment and personal efforts in attaining complete maturity. This maturity entails that a person knows his creator God. In this case the human person should integrate the spiritual and physical aspects. The encyclical letter mentions development in terms of complete humanism that is man centered. This should incorporate and be open to the absolute (God) and that man should be conscious of a vocation which gives human life its true meaning<sup>7</sup>.

In another view of development, the encyclical letter of Pope Benedict XVI, "*Charity in Truth*" (*Caritas in Veritate*) talks of the need of integral human development. The encyclical also mentions development as making meaning when it involves humanity in its entirety. This encyclical does not deviate from the teaching of the *Populorum Progressio*. In this encyclical, Benedict XVI views progress or development as a vocation as previously stated in *Populorum Progressio*. Benedict XVI points out that development should centre on the meaning of man's pilgrimage through history in the company with his fellow human being and also identifying the goal of that journey. So he points out that development should not only focus on the technical and economical aspect of growth but should be God designated, viewed as a vocation towards him.<sup>8</sup> All in all, the encyclical points out that development needs Christians with their arms raised towards God in prayer and that it requires "attention to the spiritual life, a serious

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, n. 42.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, n. 16.

consideration of the experiences of trust in God's providence and mercy, love and forgiveness, self-denial, acceptance of others. justice and peace."<sup>9</sup>

The term *Women Development* in this paper entail the roles, the activities that women have been involving themselves in the parish and in their participation and contribution in Christian evangelization. In this paper, the expression will be used interchangeably with women participation, role of women in the sense of contribution to the spread of Christian faith and the society at large. The expression further intends to show that in fact women are actively involved in the affairs of the church and society as it will highlight their achievements in various sectors. The question we may ask ourselves is to what extent have they done it? What is the impact of their development?

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<sup>9</sup> Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, n. 79.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **A CASE STUDY OF WOMEN IN KAFUE PARISH**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

The chapter looks at what the situation was some 15 years ago in Kafue parish and what it is today. We will also look at the real changes in Development that women have brought to the Parish and its wider impact on the community.<sup>10</sup>

#### **1.2 ANALYSIS /DESCRIPTION OF THE SITUATION**

Holy Saviour Parish is part of the Archdiocese of Lusaka. For many years it has been run by the Italian Missionaries, the Ambrosian Priests from Milan. Now the parish is under the local

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<sup>10</sup> In this case study, we will analyze the situation as concerns the impact of women development at Holy Saviour Parish at Kafue in Zambia. We mostly used questionnaires to get some of the information; we also depend on interviews from those who have lived in the locality for a minimum of 10 years and have been attending Church services at the Parish. We will give a description of the place, this will give us the picture and to get us into the experience of the situation. In this part, we will try to look at the structures involved such as the economical, political, social and cultural structures. We also interviewed the catechist and some women leaders in lay groups on the performance and impacts they have brought to the Parish. We also distributed questionnaires which pointed out the following; what activities women are engaged in at the Parish? How much have they contributed to the development and their participation in leadership and so on?

clergy. The Parish was founded in 1973 and opened by the then Archbishop of Lusaka Emmanuel Milingo and the Archbishop of Milan- Columbo Martin.

The parish is located in the southern part of the Capital City of Lusaka and is a distance of 35 kilometers from the city. The town has a big river that runs through it known as the Kafue River. This parish, Holy Saviour, is one of the two in the district and is situated in a place called Kafue estate where mostly you find residential houses. In the parish women are the majority. They frequent and contribute greatly to the church services. The Catholic Church is not the only church in this area, there are a number of other denominations. We can say the Catholic Church has the largest congregation. People admire it for its contributions in uplifting the living conditions of the people. For instance, the Catholic Church through Holy Saviour Parish has helped in building a community school, looking after orphans and has had a hand in the construction of the District Hospital.

On the economical and social level, the town has commercial and peasant farmers who are based in the countryside. Also the fact that the town has a river passing through it has added other activities such as fishing. People consume fish, vegetables, meat, chicken and also maize meal for preparation of Nsima (Pulp). The farmers in this district mostly grow flowers and maize grains. The town has four industries; the Hydro-Power Production, the Nitrogen Chemicals of Zambia where farming inputs such as fertilizer is produced, the Kafue Textiles of Zambia and the steel industries among others.

The Industries mentioned above cause people from different parts of Zambia come and settle as they can find employment. Since people from different parts of the country came to settle in this

area, there is no one tribe that dominates and there are no ethnic tensions at least to my knowledge. At the moment, tranquility among these people reigns. We can also note that despite having these industries, employment rate remains very low. Most of these industries are not fully operational and are struggling. The few people who are employed are mostly men. Formal employment has mostly escaped the women of this community in Kafue. We can say that government policies after liberalizing the economy have caused a lot of unemployment among women. Women are either house wives, doing some small scale businesses, such as selling vegetables and second hand clothes at open markets or what is usually called 'black markets'.

### **1.2.1 TRADITIONAL ROLES OF WOMEN**

This community for a long time has been dominated by male figures. This male-dominance starts from the household; that is the family set-up. In these households women are associated with domestic tasks, such as looking after the house while the man is away looking for food. One still hears of attitudes when people say, "women's place is in the kitchen" such mentality still influences the majority of the people in the community and at the Parish. Their primary task is bringing up their offspring, and giving them initial formation. When there is no child forthcoming in a marriage, the blame always falls on the woman. The male figure has always been viewed as the most dominant one. For this reason whenever women are to be engaged in activities such as belonging to various social movements in the society and religious organizations, they are first to consult their husbands for permission. This exhibits the kind of patriarchal society which gives emphasis on the power of the word uttered by a male figure as the final one. Women are supposed to make sure the family has enough food and prepare it for

consumption. That is why women have to supplement the income of the family through gardening, and similar activities. They sometimes involve themselves in some small businesses that are reserved for them.

### **1.2.2 SOCIAL- ECONOMICAL IMPACT ON WOMEN**

Women form the majority in most of the churches in the district. This is the same with Holy Saviour Parish. We can also say that women form the poor majority because of the lack of employment and also lack of skills that most industries would require from them. For this reason they are seen to be at the periphery of the society. As said earlier, they engage themselves in small businesses that give them a little money for their survival and also supplement the family income. Most women are out of employment; this is due partly to the economic reforms that were introduced in the third republic in 1991 with the multiparty system of politics. This saw the liberalization of the economy. This brought in private ownership of companies. The industries mentioned in Kafue such as Kafue textiles and the nitrogen chemicals started under-performing. This has resulted in retrenchments especially affecting women. This lose of jobs has created poverty among women. The HIV/AIDS pandemic and retrenchments meant that many households lost the bread winner especially men. This burdened women who have extra workloads in order to make ends meet. This economic downturn has also affected most of the Christians in the district. The number of women attending activities at churches has reduced because most of them are engaged in supporting their families more especially widows.

### **1.2.3 REPORT AND ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEW**

Upon carrying out questionnaire and interview, the following feedback was provided. This helped to see the situation in which women contribute to the church.<sup>11</sup>

#### **How was women participation at the parish 15 years ago?**

Mrs Chabola a woman who has been a member of the parish for almost 20 years put it that 15 years ago, there was not much to show of the women participation in the parish. At this time women were overlooked at the parish and could not be entrusted with any responsibility. Women too were reluctant to involving themselves in parish activities. They were just at the receiving end. They looked at development as male oriented. The only thing they usually participated in was 'female tasks' such as sweeping the surrounding. They also used to clean the church and arrange the altar and prepare gifts.

#### **What were the main hindrances to women participation/development at the parish?**

Some of the hindrances to women participation were; they were not considered intelligent enough to hold any position in the parish which they passively accepted. Their rights were

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<sup>11</sup> What is being presented is from the information gathered through questionnaires that I sent to women groups at this Holy Saviour Parish, in the SCCs, women lay groups and interviewing individual people who are familiar with this parish. The intention was to get to know the roles women are involved in and their impact on development. We wanted to know what the situation was like 15 years ago and what is it like today.

denied, they were told to do this activity and not that one. They were basically restricted to certain roles. They did not have the freedom to participate in all the roles freely. The stereotype of considering men as superior in their households penetrated the church set-up. The stereotypes held the belief that males and females had distinct psychological traits and characteristics by virtue of their sex. For instance men were said to be leaders and women expected to submit. This sidelined women from participating in church activities. Men wanted to control and suppress women in all areas and in this regard overload women with a lot of household responsibilities. Some men did not want to see their women at church for they felt jealous.

Also it was mentioned that there was lack of self-esteem in women; they lacked confidence and had limited aspiration in the field of management. They also lacked ambition to climb up the ladder and somehow believed in the notion that they were incapable of holding positions in leadership.

#### **1.2.4 LEADERSHIP**

##### **Do women participate in leadership at the parish?**

Women engage themselves in the leadership circles at the Parish. They have formed the Women's Council that oversees their participation and exercise of their leadership skills. In the Women's Council they show their leadership qualities by organizing women's events, workshops, seminars and so on. These events are to impart some knowledge on awareness of the happenings at the Parish and their supposed duties. Although, in the main Parish Council, women holding positions is not very common. This is partly because women overlook themselves and most of the time they do not vote for each other in the Parish Pastoral Council.

Women have been taking up roles in leadership in the church council and giving selfless service. One position that is mostly left for women to fill in the church council is that of church treasurer. Those interviewed pointed out that the congregation feels secured if there is a woman managing finances. This is because of the attitudes people have formulated about women. They say women are patient and loyal to the authority. They will keep the finances and only use it for the intended purposes and in most instances will never indulge in activities contrary to what has been agreed upon by the church council.

### **1.2.5 WORKS OF EVANGELIZATION**

**To what extent do women involved in evangelization through teaching of catechism?**

The teaching of catechism is said to start from the households and then it is extended to the Parish. It is in the home, we are told, that the first catechesis is imparted to children by mothers. This is made possible by the women in the various homes. In this regard the mother gives her children the basic catechism through story telling that involves the fear of God, by using proverbs and teaching them how to be good people in future.

It is this blend of experience that women bring with them at the Parish while teaching Catechism. Women are better listened to by children and they pay a lot of attention. This is partly because children perceive a woman as their real mother. Women are also seen to be teaching from their hearts. That is they bring emotions to their catechizing of the children. In this, women do not only catechize but also give motherly love to their work.

## **1.2.6 WOMEN IN THE LAY GROUPS**

### **What impact does women have in lay groups at the parish?**

Women form the majority in the Parish lay groups at the church. Women are involved in lay groups where they take a leading role in the breaking of the Word of God through bible sharing. In those lay groups they know one another through sharing their everyday experiences of life such as their marital issues, financial matters and try to identify needy families to the Parish Executive for assistance. Women also act as mediators in the lay groups and the Parish Pastoral Council.

Some of them are widows and have problems to cater for their families back home. Bearing this, women have formed a lending organization at the Parish so as to help those in need. These are credit facilities through which women are helped to add on to their income or existing small business or sometimes to help them start some small scale business. This facilitates women to become self-reliant and somehow benefits the Parish also. When women have some income generating businesses opportunities, they also offer part of their proceeds to the running of the Parish.

Through these lay groups, women organize projects through which they are able to furnish the priest's house. They also buy utensils for the Parish through some fundraising events. Other methods of fundraising involve women going to wash vehicles at car parks with their respective organizations for a small donation. When this is collected, it is given to the Parish Pastoral Council to be used according to the needs of the Parish.

The Parish has several lay groups through which women play their role to develop the Parish. Just to mention some of these organizations; the Action Group, the Legion of Mary, Saint Ann group, the Catholic Women's League, Saint Francis Group and so on. In these organizations women give life to the Parish. They show their generosity through the groups by visiting the sick, cleaning the church, making sure that everything is in order before Mass, leading in singing during the weekday Masses, helping to undertake readings in the church. Women also visit the District Hospital, pray at the Hospital Chapel and also visit the sick in the wards. The visit is also extended to various sick homes. Various lay groups carry out this activity especially to those homes where practicing Catholics live. They encourage them to come to church whenever it is noticed that they have become lax. They also hold monthly meetings. In these meetings women air their grievances and try to find ways of getting help. Women share on the personal level. They share on matters that affect their families. These range from marital problems to finances and finding employment. However some women find it difficult to share their problems with the rest of the members. They fear to become the laughing stock of the community; so they remain with their issues unspoken. Women also organise monthly Masses that are for the Women's Council in the Parish. These Masses are at times meant to give thanks to the Lord through offering of gifts and show how they can sing together and basically share with each other. During Sunday Masses women also show their active participation in the liturgy. During these Masses women do help in bringing special gifts. They do these together with the SCC that are on duty on that particular day.

There is also a forum at the diocesan level in which women from this parish are invited to participate. The topics discussed during these meetings involve African traditions and culture.

In these discussions, matters concerning negative traditions are tabled to be discussed by women. These are highlighted and ways on how to go about them are further discussed. This mostly concerns those norms that hinder the development of women and the girl-child. They try to correct notions that see women as second class citizens. So the discussions are held in the interest of women and for uplifting their status in the communities and the church.

The majority of the women in the Small Christian Community and lay groups are illiterate. To help them to be literate, the women have initiated Literacy Classes. These classes are conducted by the Sisters of Charity who are based at the Parish, and also the retired Government teachers. This helps women increase their participation at the Parish for they in turn are able to read and write and start to participate in other roles at the Parish that are predominantly managed by the male.

Another aspect that women involve themselves and which brings the church close to the community is the issue of Inter-denominational and Community Based Programs. The Parish women meet together with other women from different churches whereby they hold prayers together. They also carry out community works together by discussing and planning how they should go about it. There is an ecumenical ministry.

### **1.2.7 HOME BASED CARE UNITS (HBC)**

#### **What impact do women have on the home based care units?**

Home Based Care Units is an organization meant for the terminally ill, that is for those suffering from HIV/AIDS. Women mostly reach out to these individuals; they do this by providing spiritual and material support for the sick. The community is not exempt from the HIV/AIDS

pandemic that has been a major concern in most parts of the country. In this kind of situation when these women suffer from HIV/AIDS, they are left alone without anybody to care for them. The women through the HBC group come in with material and spiritual support. The care is done in the respective homes of the sick. The necessary therapy is given. Through this organization women provide food and other necessary materials to ensure good care of the patient. The organization has also some links with the Archdiocese of Lusaka which somehow subsidizes it. Though these, women are able to maintain links with those who are suffering; they also strive to find others who have so far not been helped.

### **1.2.8 CHILDREN'S HOME VILLAGE**

**How involved are the women at this parish in caring for the underprivileged children?**

Children's Home Village is one of the project women as lay people of the parish have involved themselves in. This "home village" is part of the parish project with the aim of helping orphans in the community. The orphans and underprivileged children come from different backgrounds in the surrounding communities. These children stay at the home village that has between 5 to 10 houses. In each house there is a mother figure that looks after these children. During its construction the women belonging to various lay groups take part in providing some material help towards its completion. Now various women help in the day to day running of this village through donating food stuffs, by sponsoring some of the children in the community schools, buying them clothing and helping run some fundraising ventures for the village home.

## **1.2.9 IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY**

### **What impact on development women have made on the community?**

From the information gathered through questionnaires and interviews one notices that, over the last 15years there has been steady improvement in the way women are regarded in the parish and the surrounding community. Mr. Msimko, the catechist at this parish whom I interviewed earlier, and had lived at this parish for at least 30years had this to say: "The parish has indeed improved in recognizing the role of women and their impact in development." He pointed out that the creativity of women has been felt in the community as a whole. For instance women have been able to take up roles that have previously been perceived to be reserved for men. In this regard women have taken up productive enterprises at the parish which has been a source of admiration to whole community. In these enterprises they get credit facilities and start up some small business with other women so as to compete well on the market.

## **1.4.7 CONCLUSION**

The chapter gives us an insight into how women participate in the affairs of the parish. They are involved in spiritual and physical development of the parish as seen from this case. This case also shows us that this participation of women need's to be recognized and encouraged.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **ZAMBIAN ENVIRONMENT AND STATUS OF WOMEN**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter we will analyze the Zambian environment, how women are discriminated against and the concept of gender. We will also look at the traditions and customs that affect women participation in development, the impact of HIV/AIDS on women and the way women impact on development.

#### **2.2 BACKGROUNDS**

##### **2.2.1 POPULATION**

According to the data of 2000, the population stood at 10.5 million with males standing at 5.2 while females at 5.3. It is estimated that there has been an increase in the population of Zambia in 2010 with males estimated at 6.6 while females at 6.64.<sup>12</sup> The recently released census

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<sup>12</sup> United Nations. *World Population Prospects*, 502.

population puts the Zambian population at 13million. It puts the male population standing at 49% while the female population stands at 51%. According to the sources, out of the total population, 61% of the Zambian population is in the rural areas while 39% are in urban areas and this shows that Zambian population is mostly urban. Lusaka, the capital city is the most populous followed by the main mining towns on the copper belt region. The country can be considered to be made up of a youthful generation with an average life span of about 45years. Women's life expectancy is higher than that of men.

We are also able to see from this data that there is a slight change in demography that there is little urbanization of late. This change can be attributed to the shift of economical zones with some rural areas becoming mining towns.<sup>13</sup>

In the past times people left rural areas to urban areas looking for employment. The rural urban migration affected rural development and family set-up. Able bodied men left these areas as a result they became depopulated. This resulted in leaving women to support their families by themselves. Women started doing male related jobs such as spending most of their time cultivating the fields and doing some small businesses.

The rural urban migration led to squatter settlements in the urban areas leading to a rise in unplanned settlements. This has caused infectious diseases and also water-borne diseases for the authorities fail to meet the unplanned rising population in the urban settlements.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. Times Reporter, (2011) "Zambia's Population now 13m", *Times of Zambia* (28 January) 1-2.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. A. Touwen., *Socio-Economic Development of Women in Zambia*, 7-8.

## 2.2.2 ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

There are income inequalities; the gap between the rich and the poor is wide in Zambia. This has also seen inequalities in gender where income distribution is concerned. The women are said to form the poor majority in the country. They are less in formal employment as seen from the data collected. They usually are involved in informal works, such as small business, cultivating vegetables and generally doing farming. Women are said to add a great deal to the countries GDP in terms of food security.<sup>15</sup>

At independence in 1964, the country was viewed as having immense resources to steer it to economical prosperity. Several factors slowed the economic activities of the country. In 1980 there was an economic crisis caused by a drop in copper prices in the world market, as the country mostly depends on copper production for its economic activities. The country also faced imbalances in resources such as the internal and external ones. The domestic production went down as compared to what it consumed coming from the outside. This the foreign exchange was scarce, weakening the local currency and worsening the situation. Government had also increased the expenditure through employment benefits as a result of full civil service. The other reason was that the economic prices for products for the parastatal companies were not actively implemented.<sup>16</sup>

Towards the 1990 there was a change of economic policies of the country in view of its recovery. The government ushered in the liberal economic policies that saw the diversification of the

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. A. Touwen., *Socio-Economic Development of Women in Zambia*, 9-10.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. A. TOUWEN, *Socio-Economic Development of Women in Zambia*, 11-12.

economy into private hands. The state owned companies started being privatized; they emphasized developing the agricultural sector. By 1988 in view of economic recovery the government partnered with international organization such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. One measure that the government took was to auction foreign currency to reduce the deficit. Minimum economic gains were posted in the increase of the GDP in 1987 standing at 2.2% and in 1988 to 2.7%.<sup>17</sup>

There was also the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) to reduce the external debt by the government and the campaigns for debt cancellation. The government promoted the free market economy and removed subsidies from the farmers. These economic policies are currently in use with some adjustments. The SAP had a huge impact on women development in the country as the following observation will tell. More women have been looking for some work to supplement at home and are involved in income generating. This is because companies streamlined their workforce to cope with the economic environment. More women remained unemployed during this time at every societal level. This has contributed to the determination of the working conditions of women during these economic adjustments. Moreover, companies and employers violated labour laws. Most of these violated labour laws deal with women welfare so as to make maximum profits. Among laws violated deal with maternity leave, day care and sometimes these companies hire underage girls who are paid below minimum wage. Also noticeable is the large differential between men and women in wages as

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. A. TOUWEN, *Socio-Economic Development of Women in Zambia*, 13-14.

men get more than women. Under these circumstances women have resorted to entering in the informal sector for they lack skills to compete with few available jobs.<sup>18</sup>

The economical downfall that brought in the SAP policies caused some domestic violence in some homes. The SAP had changed the roles of women for they too had started to supplement at homes for the children and husband who lost his job. Women who have lost their husbands are fully involved in maintaining of the household and bearing the financial costs of bringing up their children. Due to some cultural strings in case were men are unable to support their families, they always expect to be served good meals by their women. When this is lacking they subject their wives to some discipline. This has been a source of quarrels in many homes. One man is reported to have murdered his wife because she did not prepare the expected relish called *kapenta* (small fishes).<sup>19</sup> To make ends meet, some women carry out demeaning activities on their dignity such as being beggars along the streets, being prostitutes and offering casual sex and also being used by political parties as cadres, singing for money and in exchange voting for the said parties.<sup>20</sup>

### 2.2.3 EDUCATION

There has been a steady increase in people attaining higher education. The gender gap has also been narrowing. There has also been an increase in the women getting basic education and plans

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. D. ELEMU, *Women, Gender and Development*, 24-26.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. CHRISTOPHER, C. (2010) "Mbala Man Kills Wife because of Kapenta" *The Past Online* (October) 2-6.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. G.T. EMEAGWALI, *Women Pay the Price, Structural Adjustment in Africa*, 59

are said to be underway to ensure greater adult literacy. The educational structure consists of primary, high school and third level.

In the 1980s education was hampered because of the economic crisis. The free education that people had enjoyed was done away with and cooperation in meeting education expenses has been required from the parents and the government. Because of huge expenses in supporting a child at school, many families prefer educating the boy child leaving the girls at home. The girls were to learn how to keep the house and care for their husbands in future. Today this trend is being reversed and schools have seen an increase of girl child enrolment. From the recently released results at primary level 92% of boys qualified to Form One as compared to 90% girls. The gap is narrowing between girl child and the boys; as a result the future remains promising for girls.

In the rural areas, the majority of women are lagging behind in education. This can be partly because of oral or rather traditional education that people still emphasize. The rural areas also face challenges such as inadequate learning tools, scarcity of teachers who prefer remaining in cities and also congested classrooms.

The education statistics show that boy child has surpassed the girl child in the passing rate. In the 1984-85 data, of the 45.54 enrolment of university education only 17.6% were women. Also of the 1.1million illiterate adults  $\frac{3}{4}$  have been women (*according to the 1980 data*). This affects women on the job market for they lack adequate skills intended for modern jobs. This illiteracy levels hinders development of women for they cannot give adequately to the demands of the modern society, and leaves them unqualified to access formal labour market. Again this lack of

education among women reinforces the subordination of women to men. The women become ill-informed and are unable to access vital information for their progress. Other challenges are alluded to, such as early pregnancies, which are attributed to early marriages. Girls are also needed especially in rural areas.

#### **2.2.4 EMPLOYMENT**

Employment mostly is provided in the formal sector and the informal sector. Statistics show that women are excluded in the technical and industrial field that is the formal sector employment. This is because the majority of women lack the necessary skills needed in these industries and thus males dominate this formal sector employment. The informal sector which is characterized by self-employment has a low capital labour ratio and also has a high level of competition. This is because of the restricted access to credit facilities. Women find themselves doing jobs such as dress-making, hair plaiting, poultry ranching and join the informal sector through SIDO and forming corporative societies so as to enter as a group.

#### **2.3 ZAMBIAN EFFORTS ON GENDER BALANCE**

In its effort to recognize women development and lifting the status of women, the Government of Zambia has made efforts in ensuring that women get the status deserved which is their right. Great strides have been made towards gender equality and fighting discrimination towards women in the Zambian society. In this regard it has tried to adhere to efforts by the United Nations in recognizing the vice of discrimination and thus decided to be a member of United Nations-Gender Reduction Programs. This is to have women involvement in development in all sectors of the society.

In 1975, the United Nations' Decade for Women was held in Zambia at the Mindolo Conference Center on the issue of women's rights in Zambia. It made efforts on formulation of legislations as seen by the efforts to having Zambia Association for Research and Development. Issues such as land which were male dominated are discussed to look for an amicable solution to accommodate women to own land. They also tried to reshape the customs that denied women land. Among things to be reduced were class differences, increased women participation in important decision making levels. Women were also introduced to projects especially through the body known "Women in Development" (WID) by involving them in food production, food processing, in the animal husbandry etc.<sup>21</sup>

Zambia signed the Convention for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. This is part of the United Nations initiative. It was in 1980 and ratified on 21<sup>st</sup> June 1985. This entailed protecting women's equal access to work, land, credit, income and social security. It ensures women's enjoyment of the right to food and shelter.<sup>22</sup>

There was also an installation of a *Desk for Women* at the Ministry of Finance and National Planning, under the National Commission in 1985. In 1996 it was placed under the Office of the President and was known as Gender in Development Division. It was towards mainstreaming gender issues in all programmes and policies. In 2000, the government went a step further by adopting the National Gender Policy. It contains measures to address gender issues that cover poverty, culture, family and socialization, educating and training of women. It promotes the

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. WILDAF, *"Elimination of Discrimination Against Women in Zambia"*, 15.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. UNDP., *Working towards Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women*, 10.

health of women, including them in decision-making and also to safeguard them against gender violence.<sup>23</sup> This is made possible through cooperation with United Nations Development Programme in ZAMBIA that has been working towards gender equality empowerment of women. The United Nations Development Programme tried to formulate projects such as to give self sustenance to women by engaging them in projects such as baking, weaving and sewing. All with a view of promoting and helping them to be self reliant. The United Nations Development Programme ZAMBIA also helps fund organizations such as the Non Governmental Organization Coordinating Committee, the body that oversees all the Non Governmental Organizations in Zambia. The Programme for the Advancement of Girl's Education was introduced by the government to allow more girls in school.

In 1997, the Zambian government signed the Southern African Development Community declaration on gender and development and its addendum on violence against women and children. It calls for involving women in political and decision making structures and helps women's full access to land and other productive resources. It also calls about correcting social practices that demean women and to minimize gender violence. There has been the Gender Forum through which the government, the civil society, donor community, civil society and the academia has membership. It is instrumental in matters concerning gender equality and it mostly concerns elevation of women in development desk to the GIDD.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. WILDAF, *Elimination of Discrimination Against Women in Zambia*, 15.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. UNDP, *Working towards Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women*, 2-7.

## 2.4 TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS

The Zambian society which is mostly Bantu speaking people gets their lineage from the mother's side. This is what is called the matrilineal family whereby the inheritance goes to the woman. Not all tribes practice this family type. We can also find a few tribes among the 72 ethnic groups in the country that are patrilineal. Tribes such as the Lozi of western Zambia are regarded as bilateral. Both parents are regarded as equal. In times of separation everything is shared equally. In this case emphasis is on the equal importance of both genders.<sup>25</sup> But male domination has found itself in families, workplaces and political systems. Some of the following customs contribute to this male dominance:

There are some cultural stereotypes that encourage male domination. Most of these are attributed to fixed sex roles that dictates most of the lives in the society. There are certain type of behaviour and attitudes and also works that society expects and determines from each gender. For example men are said to be decision makers; this makes women in the society to take a back stage. In most things they have to undertake, they have to have the last word from the man while they are said to be listeners. In the families, boys are said and expected to be achievers, strong, fighters, while girls are expected to be gentle, submissive and so on.

Also during customary marriage, there is an issue of dowry, traditionally called *lobola*. This is the amount paid to the family of the woman for marriage. It can be something like a bride price in the Zambian situation. The dowry has been viewed by most men as freedom to suppress the woman or rather wife. They view this as a kind of purchasing a lady distorting the reason behind

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. WILDAF., *Elimination of Discrimination against Women in Zambia*, 7.

this practice. In the long run some men convince themselves that they have bought this woman and that she has to be totally submissive to them. This also is interpreted as entitling a husband to override the rights on his wife, children and the property.<sup>26</sup>

## **2.5 HIV/AIDS AND ITS IMPACT ON WOMEN DEVELOPMENT**

There has been a rising mortality rate from HIV/AIDS. The HIV/AIDS pandemic was on the increase in the years 1986 and 2000 before the intervention of life prolonging medication ARVs. The HIV/AIDS increasing deaths had significantly affected efforts in poverty reduction in Zambia and the Sub-Saharan Africa very costly. This has called for more efforts by the government to partner with other interested parties to curb the spread of this virus. There has been a challenge in this fight. The scale of human loss has disturbed the economical and social organization of many communities. There has emerged in many household a matrilineal kind of a family which is a phenomenon of single parenthood. This has been on rise among women especially those in multitasking. The women are now taking up the roles that were mainly dominated by men in order that they raise funds to support their families. The UNDP together with civil societies has partnered the government in providing support to the HIV/AIDS victims in Zambia some kind of care programmes since 1991.<sup>27</sup>

The deaths caused by HIV/AIDS has deprived the country then of much needed skilled labour especially among men. Most women do not possess professional skills, so are unable to fulfill some of these vacancies. In this instance HIV/AIDS was considered a public health problem.

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. I. BERGER – E.F. WHITE, *“Women in Sub-Saharan Africa”* 44-45.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. UNDP, *UNDPs Responds to HIV/AIDS in Zambia*, 5-6.

Mention is made by the UNAIDS report on the Global HIV/AIDS of 2000 that HIV/AIDS in the country steadied at 19.95% by the end of 1999 and that it mostly affected age groups of between 15-49 years.<sup>28</sup>

## 2.6 WOMEN AS THEY CURRENTLY STAND IN ZAMBIA

In the face of our multi-party system of government, the government has embraced the liberal economic environment. This environment has influenced the status of women, their roles and participation in the society. This can be compared to pre-1991, that is before the liberalization of the economy, when the country was under one party rule with only one branch of the women's league. Now due to multiparty politics, many political parties have women's programme. So women are able to influence the manifestos of these parties; they try to sensitize gender balance whereby once these parties gain political power they are able to be represented in all sectors of the society.

The government also has assumed responsibility for the advancement of women by establishing a *Women's Affairs Desk* in all government ministries and a *Women-in-Development Unit* in the department of planning and development. This helps to bring issues concerning women close to the government. All the complaints of violence against women such as domestic violence, discrimination at work places are addressed using these channels.

The Radio stations help promote women rights, status and standing. They try to create awareness campaigns on women's participation in the society. This is helped by the community radio stations and also the national station known as the *Zambian National Broadcasting Service*.

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. UNDP, *UNDPS Responds to HIV/AIDS in Zambia*, 5.

The concerns of women NGOs are aired such as civic education promoted by the *Women for Change* and others.

## **2.7 CONCLUSION**

We have tried to show that despite Zambian society being matrilineal, the male continues to rule. We have also seen that there have been economical changes that have influenced the status of women. However, not only economical but also the position of the country had a role to play on the status of women. This chapter has noted tremendous improvement on the status of women. However, that there is more to be done to improve and raise the status of women in the Zambian environment.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **WOMEN IN THE SCRIPTURES**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, we will be looking at the status of women in the ancient world. How they were viewed and the role they played. The chapter also looks at the role and status of women in the Old and New Testaments. In both Old and New Testaments women figures who participated in redemptive and evangelization of the kingdom of God are sighted.

#### **3.2 BACKGROUND**

##### **3.2.1. DESCRIPTION OF WOMEN IN THE ANCIENT TIMES AS A WHOLE**

It was said to be difficult for women to participate in various tasks in the ancient Israel and the Greco-roman environment. Women were not permitted to play an active role in the political and

the religious life of the chosen people. She was bound by a lot of legal impurities. They were denied entrance to priesthood and was not allowed ministry involving the sanctuary.<sup>29</sup>

The woman regardless of her social class in the ancient Israel was distinguished between “public” and “private” space. This involves places where women were not allowed by the society and were they expected to be. Only men had access to public or open spaces, they moved freely in the market places, the law courts, they were said to openly attend public banquets, theatres and lectures, while women were consigned to domestic or private sphere and were expected to manage the affairs of the household. This differentiation was also practiced in the Greco-Roman period.<sup>30</sup> This brought in the conflict from the traditional sphere of women reserved in private. When Christian leadership stopped meeting in private homes and resorted to public places such as the Basilicas, the model shifted. For Christians who now met in public, leadership was onward characterized by public offices. These lead women to be further sidelined in leadership and also when the private roles of household when Christians gather in homes were replaced by public roles of civil nature.<sup>31</sup>

The private and public distinctions also helped to identify virtuous and non virtuous woman in the society. The private woman was most respected and virtuous. This woman was known through her domesticity and love for her husband, she was to be willing to procreate or rather bear children, stay at home and do some weaving. This kind of woman was not to go brazenly in

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<sup>29</sup>Cf. K.E. Corley, *Women and Early Christian Communal Meals*, 14-15.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. K.E. CORLEY, *Women and Early Christian Communal Meals*, 15.

<sup>31</sup>Cf. K.E. Corley, *Women and Early Christian Communal Meals*, 15-16.

public but when she does that she was to cover herself with a veil.<sup>32</sup> Meanwhile a woman was said to be non-virtuous was characterized by prostitution, slave woman under the watchfulness of their masters etc.

In the early Eucharistic meals, women took a subordinate position during this time. These banquets like in the Greco-Roman were meant for free association by the secular and religious people. In this set-up most probably Christians that is followers of Jesus, those of Pauline group gathered and shared ideas, story telling and ritual practice. In these gatherings Jesus found time to give his discourse.<sup>33</sup> The attributes to table fellowship which is said to have facilitated growth of early Christian groups.

Women made their presence in Roman meals (Eucharistic meals) as their roles shifting to public. Some Greco-Roman writers oversee such women as over stepping womanly roles and accused them of improper behaviour. In many circumstances, especially in ancient Greece women rarely ate with men. In most cases they remained apart in some sort of women quarters in the household, here meals took place and that's were they dinned.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Cf. K.E. Corley, *Women and Early Christian Communal Meals*, 17.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. K.E. CORLEY, *Women and Early Christian Communal Meals*, 17-21.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. K.E. CORLEY, *Women and Early Christian Communal Meals*, 24-52.

### 3.3 WOMEN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

#### 3.3.1 Women in Genesis 1-2,

In these scriptural texts we are introduced to God's creative initiative. By looking at how God in the texts created sexual beings, that is man and woman. We can deduce that he meant them to be equal. The woman should be accorded the same dignity given to her male counterpart. This is evidenced in the following biblical quotations in Genesis 1:26-28 and 1:27.<sup>35</sup> In these texts God is said to have created humankind (ha-adam). In His image He created them, equally, loved and respected by the creator himself. He gives both the mandate to take care of the earth and the rest of Gods creation. Both were blessed and mandated to fill the world by bearing offspring's.<sup>36</sup>

By looking at Genesis 2 especially in verses 21-24, we are able to tell that this passage shows the creation of woman as Gods objective and intended purpose being fulfilled. This is because he has accomplished his work. There is a judgment that God utters by appreciating his work of creating a woman. In this process of creation depicted it shows how man and woman belong together and are intended to be so by God. This also explains who man really is and that he is equal to the woman. In verse 23, when God leads the woman to the man, it implied how intimate

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<sup>35</sup> Genesis 1:26-28, then God said: "let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the cattle, and over all the wild animals and all the creatures that crawl on the ground." 1:27, god created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them. Verse 28, god blessed them, saying to them: "be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth."

<sup>36</sup> Cf. R.M. DAVIDSON, *Flame of Yahweh*, 22.

they have become. It shows that all barriers between them are removed and have to share together the days of their lives as a community.<sup>37</sup>

From these texts we are able to see that one gender cannot claim to have absolute power over the other. They are placed on equal basis by being created in the image and likeness of God. They all share in the dignity of the creator God.

### **3.3.2 Laws that promotes women in the Pentateuch**

We can first refer to Deuteronomy 29:9-12.<sup>38</sup> In this text the observance of the law is required for all people it has no discrimination and this is supported in Deuteronomy 31:12; *“Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones, and the sojourner within your, that they may bear and learn to fear the lord your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law.”* As regards this legislation both men and women are called upon to hear the law so as to proclaim the faith and culture of the said legislation. Another piece of legislation concerns both men and women engaging in the occult were to receive the same penalty as we can see in Leviticus 20:7 *“Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy; for I am the lord your God.”* Another text is from Deuteronomy 23:18 *“You shall not bring the hire of a harlot, or the wages of a dog, into the house of the lord your God in payment for any vow; for both of these are an abomination to*

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<sup>37</sup> Cf. C. WESTERMANN, *Genesis 1-11; A Commentary*, 230-231.

<sup>38</sup> In the Revised Standard Version the text reads, ‘therefore be careful to do the words of this covenant that you may prosper in all that you do. You stand this day all of you before the lord your God; the heads of your elders, and your officers, all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives and the sojourner who is in your camp, both he who hews your wood and he who draws your water, that you may enter into the sworn covenant of the lord your God, which the lord your God makes with you this day; that he may establish you this day as his people, and that he may be your God, as he promised you, and as he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.’

*the lord your God.*" In this regard both genders is punished for apostasy. There is also the legislation on the illicit sexual intercourse as seen in Leviticus 18:6-18; 20:10-21; Deuteronomy, 23:1; 22:30.

### **3.3.3 Texts that subordinate Women in the Old Testament**

There has been a notion that leadership of the husband takes precedence in the household. We can see this in the story of Abraham and his wife Sarah in Genesis 18:12.<sup>39</sup> In this text Sarah is referring to her husband as "my master" ('adoni' in Hebrew). In this case he expects the man to lead the way so she can follow. In support of the husband's leadership in the house, it is indicated by the use of the term "ba'al" ("Lord"- used both as a verb and a noun). We may look at the text of Genesis 3:16<sup>40</sup> whereby there is a description of husband as "Lord". In this regard the husband is seen as the one who rules the wife and being first among equals. We are also able to see from Numbers 5:19-20<sup>41</sup> from the unfaithful wives. The wife is seen in this passage as being under the 'authority' of the husband. In Hebrew 'tahat' that is being under the control, authority of (a husband). We can also refer to the texts in Ezekiel 23:5, it emphasizes the woman being under the authority of the man. Yahweh also refers to Israel as an adulteress wife of his. In this instance Yahweh sees Israel as being his that is under his control and we can see this in

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<sup>39</sup> So Sarah laughed to herself and said, "now that I am so withered and my husband is so old, am I still to have sexual pleasure?"

<sup>40</sup> To the woman he said, "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

<sup>41</sup> Then the priest shall make her take an oath, saying, 'if no man has lain with you, and if you have not turned aside to uncleanness, while you were under your husband's authority, be free from this water of bitterness that brings the curse. But if you have gone astray, though you are under your husband's authority, and if you have defiled yourself, and some man other than your husband has lain with you,

Ezekiel 23:5.<sup>42</sup> At this instance God is seen to be in control of his people and giving commands to them.<sup>43</sup>

### **3.3.4 Some legislation that presents women inferior status in the Old Testament texts**

In order to have a look at the laws that further presents women inferior status in the Old Testament, we will look at the following legislations in the texts.

The book of Numbers 5, talks about the legislation concerning the adultery. In this piece of legislation, the wife is unable to bring her husband before the priest when she suspects him of sexual unfaithfulness. In verse 31 the text reads, "*The man shall be free from iniquity but the woman shall bear her iniquity. So the husband has an upper hand in these laws. The woman occupied a low status and had no privilege of the law as seen from this piece of legislation*" (RSV). We can also see the inferiority of women in the household by looking at Numbers 30:4-17. In these texts, the husbands or fathers had the right to terminate or rather revoke legal commitment (vows) of his wife or daughter. This also alludes to the fact that men were leaders in the family.

In Leviticus 12:1-8, we can see how preference was given male babies over female. In the laws of purification, it is mentioned that women who gave birth to female children were to purify twice while those who gave birth to male children did it once. In this scenario some biblical commentators point out that males were regarded more than females and that the laws favoured

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<sup>42</sup> In the Revised Standard Version the texts reads, 'Oho'lah played the harlot while she was mine; and she doted on her lovers the Assyrians.'

<sup>43</sup> Cf. R.M. DAVIDSON, Flame of Yahweh, 24.

them.<sup>44</sup> We can also refer to Leviticus 27:1-8 whereby there are differences in the valuation prices of male and female. In this instance the males are more valued than females. This is partly said to be attributed to their duties in the tabernacle whereby males did a lot.<sup>45</sup> There was also all-male priesthood as we can see in Leviticus 8-9. This text shows us that Israel priesthood was confined to only to men. Some see this as barring women from having a leadership role over men in the covenant community.

Deuteronomy 25:11-12 physical mutilation of a woman who attempts to rescue her husband. In this legislation a woman acts out of mercy for her husband but the law judges her harshly. This law prevented women from doing the right thing for fear of persecution thereby leaving them hopeless and inactive.

### **3.3.5 Some Women figures and their roles in the Old Testament**

**Sarah** with her husband Abraham is viewed as equal partners. This can be seen in Genesis 12:13.<sup>46</sup> In this text we are told that Abraham begged her to conform as she is a sister to him. In this instance we can say that Abraham respected her dignity for he did not force her. She is seen to have participated in God's divine covenant. We can also see that Sarah's seed was fulfilled the covenant promise on the expense of Hagar the slave girl. In Genesis 17:18-19; this text, Sarah's seed Isaac was born out of the promise from Yahweh as a result she is seen to be participation in God's plan for humanity. In this instance we can see that the covenant promise

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<sup>44</sup> Cf. R.M. DAVIDSON, *Flame of Yahweh*, 26.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. R.M. DAVIDSON, *Flame of Yahweh*, 30.

<sup>46</sup> Also taken from the Revised Standard Version, 'say you my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that my life may be spared on your account.'

is applied to both male and female. Abraham and Sarah are also seen preparing meals together, as a result suggesting that there are no gender hindrances.

**Hagar**, a slave girl is said to have been elevated by God from being a slave woman to become a matriarch of the twelve clans of Israel. We see that God offers her dignity and she is also promised descendants just like Abraham. She is also seen to have given a name to God, a privilege that was reserved to men.

**Rachel and Leah** are said to have been women endowed with independent initiative and strength. We can see this in Genesis 29-30, these women are said also to have named their children, and they also had to determine who and when to have intercourse with their husbands. This was a rare phenomenon in the Old Testament. We can refer to Genesis 31:16<sup>47</sup> and they also arranged Jacob to follow Gods way. We are also able to see **Miriam**, the Egyptian name that means 'beloved'. She was a daughter to Jochebed; we refer to Genesis 2:1-10. She is identified as prophet or messenger of God. She suggested a nurse for a baby in the basket as such she is said to have played a part in the salvation history that is said to have begun and ends with her. Through her song she is said to celebrate Gods victory over slavery and death. In this song **Miriam** acts as a leader in the wilderness community of the Israelites. The lead song goes on to say, "Sing to the lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea" (Ex 15:21, RSV). In the wilderness, Miriam is said to have challenged the leadership of Moses. She presents to the people that God speaks to all and not Moses alone and this did not go well her for she was punished for that challenge. The challenge is mostly

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<sup>47</sup> Cf. 'All the property which God has taken away from our father belongs to us and to our children; now then, whatever God has said to you, do.'

attributed to the choice of the wife made by Moses. In this challenge Miriam opens the door that God's prophecy can be given to all, male and female alike. God does not discriminate and that all are invited in his salvific plan. This is seen in (Numbers 12:6-8). Also we can see Deborah performing leadership roles by appearing as prophet and judge (Judg 4:4). Deborah is seen to have performed this role through scheming to attack the enemies and also appointing the army officer Barak. She fulfills her duties in religious leaders by also acting as an arbiter (Judg 4:5).<sup>48</sup>

### **3.3.6 Findings and Conclusions**

From the analysis of women in the Old Testament, we can tell that there are scriptural passages that promote women and are to be emphasized in order to view women as equal to man.

We have seen that from the beginning in the book of Genesis especially from chapters 1, 2 and 3. There, we have encountered the creation stories especially the creation of a woman. From it we are able to deduce that women had an impact in the course of history of mankind. They both (man and woman) were placed in the Garden of Eden to be God's caretaker. There were not discriminated at all but both were to work side by side to realize God's plan. These chapters also show that in creating both of them, especially in creating woman, this chapter shows that there is an intimate relationship between man and woman especially that in chapter 2 the woman is created from the rib of the man. This should show us that man and woman are equal and have an intimate relationship between them. This should not mean that they are helpmates only to a man but are said to form a community.

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<sup>48</sup> Cf. IRENE, N. (1990) "Roles of Women in the Old Testament", *The Bible Today* 364-365.

As concerns texts that promotes and subordinates women, the Old Testament gives us an insight on the texts that the lifts the status of women especially in the form of legislation. In this instance men and women are called to observe these laws. The punishment of not observing them is also given to both man and woman. Through this, we are able to tell that God intends that both man and woman should participate in his salvific plan through these laws. They are to bear witness to the world through obeying the laws given by God.

These texts depicting women in the Old Testament can also be viewed that there indeed some laws that sideline women. These laws contained in these texts should not be too much be emphasized on the expense to those that promotes women. The texts also tells us that women have played a role in the salvific plan of God since the beginning as seen from the role women figures sighted have played. The women have shown that despite the Jewish society having laws that seem to disadvantage them, they have still played a role through their witness to the world. They also played the role of leadership in the society as seen from Miriam and Deborah through being prophetess and Judges. This puts them in the position of equality with God and so with their male counterpart though certain scriptural passages sidelined them from fully involvement in the cultic duties.<sup>49</sup>

### **3.4 GOSPELS**

In the Gospels, we will look at the women figures and their participation in the salvific mission of God. We will not look at all the women but the few who will provide us with an insight of the roles women did in the plan of God. The Gospels will also provide us with the way Jesus treated

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<sup>49</sup> Cf. M.J. EVANS., *Woman in the Bible*, 29-30.

women. We will see how he regarded them in contradiction to peoples views and then give some findings and conclusion.

### 3.4.1 MARY AND ELIZABETH

These women are said to have played a very significant role in the spread of the faith and Gods salvific plan. Mary showed her obedience in her participation in Gods plan. Mary who was from Nazareth (Lk 1:26-56) did not hesitate and accepted to be the mother of Jesus. In her we are told that by the virtue of accepting Gods plan of salvation for humanity, she brings in a new creation. It is in this Lukan Gospel that that this humble virgin is favoured by God through angel Gabriel. So Mary plays the role of an evangelizer and agent of salvation.<sup>50</sup> She gives a picture that women are equally recognized by God and called to be bearers of the message of Christ. In this, Mary is also seen see to give a picture of Christian piety and brings great virtues to be contemplated by the contemporary women. Through her life and giving herself to God, she can be said to encourage feminist movements in the church to believe in themselves and participating fully.<sup>51</sup> Reflecting on the person of Mary sheds light on the specific qualities of a woman. These qualities includes Mary's special sense of gratitude and helpfulness; the woman's sense for contemplation; her grasp of the importance of beauty in human life; her capacity for love; support, compassion, warmth, and togetherness.<sup>52</sup> Again, we are able to tell that without a woman redemptive history is nothing, for it was through Mary that the church gave its assent to incarnation. The incarnation carried out by Mary in her womb. So, too the women Christian

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<sup>50</sup> Cf. R. BAUCKHAM, *Gospel Wamen*, 67- 68.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. D.L. CARMODY, *Biblical Waman*, 86-87.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. H. Moll., *The Church and Wamen*, 108-109.

faithful carries that as they go on with their duties.<sup>53</sup> God has revealed the dignity of women in Mary's motherhood. Her maternity, further, underlines the recognition and honour which womanhood can rightly claim. "She cooperated in the work of salvation. She received and transmits God's grace. She shared the spirit of dedication towards God and towards others."<sup>54</sup>

We see Elizabeth in the Gospel of Luke; she visited Mary in her pregnancy and proclaimed to Mary that she is highly favoured for she will be the mother of the Lord. She too can be said to be a witness and participant in God's messianic plan. She also gave birth to John the Baptist with Zachariah at an advanced age (Lk 1:5-80). John turns out to pave the way for the promised Messiah, so she too participated in the salvific plan of God.

### **3.4.2 MARTHA AND MARY**

In these two women we see how each played her part in the ministry of Christ as depicted in (Lk 10:38-42); they are said to have lived with their brother Lazarus in Bethany. We are told that Jesus loved this family and is seen to have visited them three times. We are told that Martha was cooking while her sister Mary was more contemplative by staying and listening to Jesus. We can further say that these virtues of women being practical, contemplative and having a deep listening have helped in being witness to the ministry of Jesus in word and deed. These can be said to form a mission partnership with Jesus and their roles are said to invite women into discipleship.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Cf. M. Hauke., *Women In The Priesthood?* 118-120.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. H. Moll., *The Church and Women*, 108-109.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. R.S. KRAEMER – M.R. D'ANGELO, *Women and Christian Origins*, 180-181.

### 3.4.3 MARY MAGDALENE

Mary Magdalene is said to have been a Galilean woman (Lk 8:1-3, 23:49, 55-56, 24:1-11). She carries the image of a prostitute converted to spiritual devotion to Jesus. She does some penitential practices and became a witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. So we can say that Mary became faithful disciple of Jesus and also as an apostle. Mary as an apostle we can refer to the text of John 20:18, "Mary Magdalene went and said to the disciples, "I have seen the lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her. In this instance Mary offers us an explanation on the life of Jesus especially being a witness to the resurrection. She gives fellow women an encouragement and a revelation of Christ.<sup>56</sup>

### 3.4.4 JESUS'S TEACHING ON WOMEN

Some women whom Jesus raised from their suffering and consequently are witnesses to him are the following: Peter's mother-in-law (Lk 4:38-39) whom Jesus cured miraculously. She later proclaimed his gospel together with his disciples. Jairus daughter (Lk 8:40-42) was the only daughter as mentioned. Jesus raised her from the dead as he commanded "*Talitha kum!*" Meaning, "*little girl, get up.*" A woman with the flow of blood (Lk 8:43-48). She suffered an incurable flow of blood for 12 years. She was healed when she touched Jesus garment as he was on his way to attend to Jairus daughter. This shows how women can show faith and other people can draw that from them. Another poor widow was raised by Jesus because of her support to his ministry (Lk 21:1-17). She was praised for her large contribution to the church despite her being

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<sup>55</sup> Cf. R.S. KRAEMER – M.R. D'ANGELO, *Women and Christian Origins*, 109-110.

poor. Another crippled woman (Lk 13:10-17), she had a condition that left her bent over and unable to stand for 18 year. Jesus healed her on the Sabbath, publicly and in the synagogue.<sup>57</sup>

The parable of the leaven in Matthew 13:33 talks of the irresistible growth of the reign of the kingdom. This is also found in Luke 13:20-21. It talks about of the reign of God coming from small beginnings. It shows women as participating in that kingdom and it is set in the domestic world of women's culinary activities.

In the parable of the lost coin in Luke 15:8-10, the principle figure in this parable is a common woman from among the people. It shows the effort of a woman in search of her lost coin and the hearty joy she exudes at finding it. It is parallel to the joy in heaven over the return of the of the repentance sinner.

The parable of the persistence widow in Luke 18:1-8 narrates a sorry story of a poor widow who presents a case against an adversary before an unjust judge. This persistent widow can be said to depict the type and representative of those in need of compassion and practical help. The woman is seen as an example of persistence prayer and that the widow can also entail those people in the society that alienated, discriminated against, meaning that, all who suffer injustice and are kept poor thereby. It further demonstrates qualities embodied by women such as determination and persistence, steadfastness and confidence and so on. God's disposition to listen to the cry of the poor with unwearied patience is also seen.

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<sup>57</sup> Cf. JOANNA, D. "Women in the Synoptic Gospels" Vol.27 *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, 54-57.

The ten virgins in Matthew 25:1-13 is a parable that describes how to live wisely and self-responsively in the world. The wedding banquet brings joy to those women who endured to the end and shows how to be prepared and have a focus on God.

### **3.4.5 CONCLUSION AND FINDINGS**

In the Gospels, we see that women played a great role in the work of evangelization, they supported the mission of Jesus and they are said to have played a great deal in God's salvific mission. This, as we have seen is depicted on the impact Mary the mother of Jesus and Elizabeth played in this plan of salvation. Jesus too, tried to uplift the status of women in the society. Women were mostly considered second class citizens, so Jesus went against such notions and respected the women he met, women as deserving respect; as equal to men in the society. We can recall that women held a low place in the society as observed in the Lukan Gospel and some women participated in Jesus ministry.

Jesus breaks barriers regarding woman and showed how they contributed to his ministry and that they too are part of God's kingdom. In his use of metaphorical language or rather parables he tries to teach people to accept the status of women in the society and that they are to be accorded their rightful place. His parables try to do away with the popular notion that women be considered second class citizens and contributed nothing to the growth of the community and his mission.

### **3.5 ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE PAULINE LETTERS**

We will start by reference to Galatians 3:28 where he pointed out, "there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus," in the sense that neither of the sexes should pretend

to have a closer proximity to God; both sexes are equal before God.<sup>58</sup> This forms as a basis that forms the equality of both men and women in the Pauline letters. Women played a role in the ministry of Paul in the areas of resource support, in leadership of household prayers to foster his ministry.

### 3.5.1 STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE PAULINE LETTERS

Aspects that promoted the submissive of women to the structures of society was that women were bound to remain quite and submissive in meetings. Paul in 1Corinthians 14:34-35 also mentions the need for women to keep silent in the meetings. It can also be mentioned as seen in 1Corinthians 11 that he did not deny women from praying or prophesying aloud in the Christian assembly but every time this is done they had to cover themselves with a veil. However the passage by Paul denying women from speaking in public is said to imply that wherever women need clarity from the Christian assembly they were to ask their husbands at home. They were not to indulge in whispering or interrupting the speaker during these assemblies. Some scholars view this as to further push toward the subordination of women. Paul is said to have taken this view point from the Jewish-Christian mentality and its reference to the law, points to Judaism.<sup>59</sup> Also in first Timothy 3:11, this is implied. It points out that women were further denied to teach for they were excluded in this Pastoral Epistles especially in being a presbyter.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Cf. R. GRAYSON, *The Ministry of Women in the Early Church*, 1-5.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. R. GRAYSON, *The Ministry of Women in the Early Church*, 6-7.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. R. GRAYSON, *The Ministry of Women in the Early Church*, 7-8.

### 3.5.2 ROLES OF WOMEN

First we will see that Paul did not discriminate any gender especially when he calls Christians at Corinth as (adelphoi), that is a Greek word meaning brothers and sisters especially when addressing them (1Cor. 1:10, 11, 26; 2:1). This entails that Paul's community was an inclusive one. It also shows that both man and woman were equally addressed by Paul.

In 1corinthians 1:11 shows that Chloe's house informs Paul of the ongoing friction in the Christian community. Chloe is said to have been a leader of the household church. Leadership in the household church belonged mostly to women. In these houses the Eucharist was celebrated meaning that women presided by taking a leading role. Again in 1 Corinthians 16:19; 2timothy 4:19 we are also told of the couple Prisca and Aquila by which Paul uses the term "fellow workers" but it is the woman Prisca or rather Priscilla whom we are interested in. She is said to have had an influence over her husband and some support it seeing that she is mentioned first. Mention is made that she and her husband exercised as a team and we are told of their perfection of the Christian instruction of Apollo's, an Alexandrian Jew, and a prominent figure in the Corinthian church that was grounded in scripture. It is to this fact that John Chrysostom attributes to her the whole merit of having instructed the Christian doctrine by Apollo's.<sup>61</sup> in the Philippians 4:2-3 there is a mention of Euodia and Syntyche. They struggled with Paul in the work of the gospel. This gives us a view that they helped in the proclamation and witness together with Paul and that they were too missionaries and leaders. The Romans 16:1-3, we encounter a woman called phoebe. Phoebe, a woman who is referred to as a (minister of the

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<sup>61</sup> Cf. R. GRYSON, *The ministry of Women in the Early Church*, 4-5.

church at Cenchreae) where she gains the word deacon because of the works she did in support of the early Christian community the Pauline community. Phoebe did help through giving material and moral support to the mission of Paul. Paul points out that this woman helped many and him too. Phoebe showed hospitality to many who passed through this city, she is also said to have allowed her home for Christian gathering. She can be said to have participated in one way or other promoting the church that is body of Christ.<sup>62</sup>

### **3.6 WOMEN IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES**

In the early Christian Church, a woman at Joppa known as Tabitha (Acts 9.36, 39), who is said to been full of good works and involved in the acts of charity, she made tunics and other garments which she gave away as charity. She can be said to have been evangelizing through her works of charity. Mention is made that Mary the mother of John-Mark played a role by allowing her house to be used for the Christian assemblies in Jerusalem. Jerusalem is said to have been the centre of the Jerusalem Church and this can be seen by Lydia. Lydia was a Gentile. She is said to have been attending to Jewish services and accepted the teachings of the one true God. She and her household were baptized after Paul spoke to them. The church in Philippi was established and maintained through their influence, support and leadership. This support was partly necessitated by her selling purple goods in the city of Thyatira and is said too to have accorded accommodation to Paul and his companion (Acts 16:11-15).<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Cf. S.E. SMITH, *Women in Mission*, 13-17.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. R. GRAYSON, *the ministry of women in early church*, 3-5.

It can be also be shown by delivering the dignity of a female slave at Philippi, Paul tries to demonstrate how he is against the abuse of women (Acts 16: 16-24). In this passage the slave woman had power to predict the future and she earned a lot of money from her masters in Philippi. She was made well by Paul who ignited tension by her masters from the loss of her ability.

In Acts 16:1-3 we find Lois and Eunice, Lois is said to have been the grand mother of Timothy and Paul's associate. We are told that they were faithful and transmitted this faith to their offspring.

### **3.7 CONCLUSION**

In these scriptural passages we can see that women have been active since the time of creation in fulfilling Gods salvific mission. There efforts are to be recognized and appreciated in this sense. They are too to be seen as being equal partners in the plan of God. Gods plan as seen is inclusive and treats women and men as having equal status despite society's perception in the biblical world.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **PERSPECTIVE FROM THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH**

In order to explore the church's stand on women development, we shall look at what the following church documents say about them. These are; the Conciliar Document of the second Vatican council, the African synods documents, the code of canon law of 1983, the catechism of the roman catholic church, the apostolic exhortation of john Paul II and the apostolic letter on the vocation and dignity of women. We shall also look at the impact women have had in development in the church as portrayed by the documents. In the documents we shall also try to see the status given to women and how this challenges the modern society which is too patriarchal.

#### **4.1 The Documents of Vatican Council II**

The Council puts man and woman on the same level, meaning that they are considered they are equal and both deserving of respect. On the dignity of human person Vatican II *Gaudium et spes*, the Pastoral Constitution on *The Church in the Modern World* reiterates that there is a

common agreement that all things on earth should be ordained to man and woman as to their centre and summit. All are equal and enjoy God's favour over all creation. This portends to show how man and woman enjoy the divine calling and destiny; they have the same calling from God and that there should never be discrimination, for both genders are equal. The basic equality should be given to all humankind and it be given greater recognition.<sup>64</sup>

#### **4.1.2 The Laity in the Church according to Vatican Council II**

The lay faithful are said to be part of the people of God. They do not exclude any gender. Women and men participate fully in the mission of the church. They are said to form a vital element of the life of the church and fulfill this mission in their different works. *The laity are said to be the faithful who by baptism are incorporated into Christ, are placed in the people of God, and in their own way share the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Jesus by carrying out the salvific mission of the church.*<sup>65</sup>

The laity is given the mandate to fulfill the mission of Christ. They are said to be partakers in the work of redemption and salvation and to establish the right relationship of the entire world to Christ. This is fulfilled in the various works or rather apostolate in which the laity play part in the church. In the church there is diversity of ministries but unity of mission. That is despite ones role, the overall objective of the church is to fulfill the mission of Christ in the church. The laity that is men and women participate in the mission of God by bearing witness and

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<sup>64</sup> Cf. Vatican Council II, Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, No. 12.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, No. 31.

evangelization to the whole world. They also spread the Gospel spirit in a way that bears clear witness to Christ especially in the secular world in which they are found.<sup>66</sup>

In the apostolate of evangelization, women as part of the lay faithful are invited to announce to the world by word and action the message of Christ and communicating to it the grace of Christ. Through the lay faithful's participation in the ministry of the church such as the reader and the acolyte, they do bring this evangelization through the word of God and also through sacraments. They evangelize by their witness of a Christian life in their families and in performing charitable works.<sup>67</sup> This prompts the Council in exhorting the laity to take a more active part, each one of them according to his talents and knowledge, and in fidelity to the mind of the church, in the explanation and defense of Christian principles and in the correct application of them to the problems of our times.<sup>68</sup>

In the church communities, the lay faithful, women in particular are said to supply the needs of their brothers and are a source of consolation both to the pastors and the fellow faithful in the liturgical life of their community. They do much through their apostolic work and are also involved in the re-evangelization especially drawing fellow men and women who had been perhaps very far away from the church. They spread the word through catechetical instruction. They care for souls, for instance the sick through rendering their expertise to the church in the communities and also helps in the administration of the church property. This active participation is made possible through taking part in the roles of the local church at the parish

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<sup>66</sup> Cf. Vatican Council II, Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, No.2.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Vatican Council II, Decree *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, n. 6.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Vatican Council II, Decree *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, n. 6.

level. The lay faithful become part of the universal church through their active participation in all the apostolic and missionary enterprises.<sup>69</sup>

**Their participation in the family.** The family is viewed as the basic human society and also as an image of the church for this is where initial formation begins. So couples especially women are seen in caring for their children, relatives, cooperators of grace and being witness to the faith. It is in the family that the lay faithful conducts their apostolate or sometimes called family apostolate. They are first to pass on the faith to their children and to educate them. They do this through the word and being witness to the Christian virtues and also guiding their children in nourishing their various vocations. As parents in their families, they also make sure that their children are accorded a Christian up- bringing and also to defend the dignity and independent of the family. Another apostolate for the family concerns, adopting abandoned children, showing loving and welcome to strangers, helping with the running of schools, supporting adolescents with advice and help, assisting engaged couples to make a better preparation for marriage, taking a share in catechism, teaching, supporting married people and families in a material or moral crisis and also procuring for the old, the benefits of the economy.<sup>70</sup>

#### **4.2 The Lay Faithful in the Code of Canon Law**

In the New Code of Canon law there is also an emphasis on the equality and dignity of all the Christian faithful. This is portrayed in the various apostolate that the Christian faithful are

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<sup>69</sup> Cf. Vatican Council II, *Decree Apostolicom Actuositatem*, n. 10.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Vatican Council II, *Decree on the Apostolate of lay People Apostolicum Actuositatem*, n.11.

engaged in by their pursuit in the salvific mission of Christ.<sup>71</sup> The New Code of Canon Law also points out that the lay faithful are called to participate in the diocesan synods and local councils. These enable the lay faithful especially women to feel part of the local and universal church.<sup>72</sup> In this view the church through canon law is seen to give room for women to participate in the affairs of the church. It bases its emphasis on the knowledge that men and women have equal dignity, that they are all human and the need to accommodate them in the wider church.

#### **4.3 Men and Women in the Catechism of the Catholic Church**

The Catechism of the Catholic Church also puts emphasis on the need of equality to both sexes. It mentions that, there should not be any discrimination between men and women for all are equal in the eyes of God. This is because they were both created in the image and likeness of God and are endowed with rational souls. Again it points out that the equality of men and women rests essentially on their dignity as persons and the rights that flow from it. It advocates for eliminating anything that sidelines other people on the basis of colour, race, sex/gender and so on. In this instance man and woman are viewed as being equal and both capable of participating equally in the church. This is enabled through their baptism and confirmation and helps perform their ministry in their own state.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Cf. *The Code of Canon Law*, No. 208.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. *The New Code of Canon Law*, Nos. 443, para. 4; 463, para. 1, 2.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Nos. 1934; 1935.

#### 4.4 The Synods of African Bishops

The Second African Synod also points out the importance of women in the development of the African church and the universal church at large. The synod pointed out that the women form the drive of the African church. It is viewed that 70% of people who flock to local parishes on Sundays are women. It also gave recognition to women organizations which is a platform through which women exercise their apostolate in various dioceses. In these organizations women are exposed to the society and are able to exercise their leadership too.<sup>74</sup>

The synod also gave emphasis on the education of lay women. This is meant to prepare them for the challenging tasks in the church. This is in line with so many changes going on in the church and also the society at large. It advocated for the freeing of women by affording them to engage themselves in the social environment, as a result moving them away from enshrining them only to domestic chores. The synod called on the local churches to create real structures that will enable women to participate without any hindrances. In these ways, by what we can call shifting the paradigm by breaking these stringent structures that are obstacle to women development, they are accorded chances to participate in various programmes even at the level of the nation. This should, as the synod points out, not to be lost in the world but should be guided by Mary mother of God and the church. They have to have eyes of faith wide open and guard from poisonous ideologies such as same sex marriage, dehumanizing of bodily exposition in the form of being free by also legalizing prostitution as a right for women.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Cf. *The second African Synod, the Message of the Pope*, n. 25.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. *The Second African Synod, the Message of the Pope*, n. 25.

In the first African women were recognized as part of the church and its mission. This should enable women to participate fully in the church. This synod appreciated the vocation of women as mothers and appreciated their role in this aspect. As mothers they are seen to be the custodians of the church for they bring in children through giving birth.<sup>76</sup>

The document on ecclesia in Africa emphasizes the fact that man and woman are equal and that they be granted equal opportunities of life. It bases its observation from the scriptural point of view that during creation all are equal in God's image. So the synod holds that the humanity of both man and woman is equal though realized differently. The document calls on the elimination of all customs and practices that disadvantage women and deprive them of their humanity.<sup>77</sup>

#### **4.5 Women's dignity and her stand in the church**

The church finds itself in the secular society in which it has to fight the divergent views that are not compatible with its teachings. The society today has become freer whereby views are discussed openly even those that were deemed bad for children's ears. The welfare of women in this free society is discussed. For instance in the mass media, the magazines and other media related papers. Women are a source of advertisement for some products. The woman's body is exposed and treated as a commodity. A thing to be consumed by the public. This results in the humiliation of a woman especially in an African environment. By this consumerist mentality, the independent of a woman as a human being is disregarded.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Cf. First African Synod, *Message of the Pope*, n. 66-67.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation on the Church in Africa, *Ecclesia in Africa*, n. 82.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. H. Moll., *The Church and Women*, 103-104.

It is in the above background that the church tries to promote the dignity of the woman. In Christian and catholic circles, man and woman are all seen to be equal. Neither of them is more equal than the other. Of course as it is put in the '*Church and Women*' that despite man and woman being equal, in being of equal dignity in their essence, it is mentioned that their essence is realized differently. In this way the woman realizes self in her own way and performs duties in the church that are due to her. The woman's vocation and function are different from that of man. God has given her the call to be at mans side as companion and helpmate. They complement each other in their endeavors in the world. Their differences are portrayed in various cultures showing thus that woman completes man. In other words they are one in essence as the church views it.<sup>79</sup>

The woman is entrusted with the birth, nurture and care of life that is the concrete life of this unique individual person with his countless needs. Every human being starts out as a helpless child and would feel quite lost in this world without the woman, as mother, guide and companion. The specific vocation of the woman becomes evident in this; she is entrusted with the task of imitating God's special care and with showing how God is at every moment concerned with the individual.<sup>80</sup>

#### **4.6 John Paul II's Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici***

The Vocation and mission of the Lay Faithful *christifideles laici* elaborates how women as part of the Christ's faithful participate in the development of the church. It gives the different areas

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<sup>79</sup> Cf. H. Moll., *The Church and Women*, 105.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. H. Moll., *The Church and Wamen*, 106-107.

of work by which impact development in the church. So, women as members of the Christ's faithful are likened to the labourer in the vineyard as mention in the gospel of Matthew (20:1-2).<sup>81</sup> In the exhortation, the pope tries to show what it means to be a lay woman and man in the context of an understanding of the church as a communion. John Paul II calls upon the pastors to foster the mission and vocation of the lay faithful by acknowledging the ministries, offices, and roles which have there foundation in the sacraments of baptism and confirmation.<sup>82</sup>

As women participate in the three fold ministry of Christ that is mention earlier priestly, prophetic and kingly offices the apostolic exhortation tries to show that all works that are attached to these offices are shared among all the lay faithful. In order to participate fully women as members of Christ's faithful join the lay groups in the church to foster and help in fulfilling the salvific mission of Christ. Participation in Gods house is for both men and women. There should not be any kind of segregation on account of gender on account of one being a woman in all the structures of the church. The exhortation points out that the mandate by the lay faithful is to transform the world and so these lay groups act as channels through which women fulfill their mission.<sup>83</sup>

The exhortation calls on the lay faithful to participate in the Lord's vineyard in evangelization by proclaiming of the word of God and catechesis. This is what women as members of the lay faithful involve themselves. There participation is felt in the local churches. For these local churches are constituted after the model of the universal church. So when the lay faithful do

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<sup>81</sup>Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, No. 1, 2.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, No. 12.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, No. 5.

their mission in the local church, they consequently participate in the universal church. They are also invited to participate not only in parish projects but also on the diocesan level by engaging themselves fully.<sup>84</sup>

#### **4.7 John Paul II's Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem* (1988)**

This apostolic letter talks of a woman as being part of the whole humanity. Therefore it describes both man and woman as, "*The only creature on earth which God willed for its own sake, and at the same time this unique and unrepeatable creature, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of self.*"<sup>85</sup> It also looks at the true meaning of womanhood, motherhood, consecrated virginity that is part of the vocation of women, and also elaborates on the role of women in the church and in society.<sup>86</sup>

In its quest to equate man and woman, we can refer to Genesis 3.16 saying, "*To the woman he said: 'I will intensify the pangs of your childbearing; in pain shall you bring forth children. Yet your urge shall be for your husband, and he shall be your master.'*"<sup>87</sup> In this regard some might read it to contradict the equality of the two and also the opposing image and likeness of God in both of them. The apostolic letter through this text portrays a sense that man and woman's

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<sup>84</sup> Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici*, No. 49.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem*, No. 7.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem*, No. 17.

<sup>87</sup> The African Bible, in this text some taken it in such a way that, woman is subordinate to the husband and the man will be the woman's happiness.

equality results from their dignity as persons. In their relationship especially as spouses they are able to give to their mutual relationship a character of an authentic communion of persons.<sup>88</sup>

The apostolic letter also mentions that the personal resources of femininity are certainly no less than the resources of masculinity: they are merely different. Hence a woman, as well as man must understand her “fulfillment” as a person, her dignity and vocation, on the basis of these resources. *“The revealed truth concerning the creation of the human being as male and female constitutes objectively injurious and unjust situations which contain and express the inheritance of the sin which all human beings bear within themselves.”*<sup>89</sup> In this instance the apostolic letter points out that sin does not discriminate gender. Both man and woman as being equal are capable of falling short of that. They both need purification to guard their dignity. Man and woman in this encyclical are further called to understand that they both are equal in the Gods image and need to fulfill their vocations and dignity according to the resources availed to them.<sup>90</sup>

#### **4.8 Vocations of Women**

These vocations are lived in virginity and motherhood. They fulfill the female’s humanity/personality. Virginity and motherhood co-exist in Mary and that there is no exclusion on each other. These two paths in the vocation of women as persons explain and complete each other.

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<sup>88</sup> Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem*, No.10.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem*, No. 10.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem*, No. 7

Vatican Council II repeatedly points out that, the human being both male and female is the only being in the world which God willed for its own sake. Motherhood is the fruit of the marriage union of a man and woman (Gn 2.24), that is the union of the two in one flesh. Motherhood entails beginning a special openness to the new person that is woman's part in giving birth to a child. She discovers a sincere gift of self. Motherhood is linked to personal structure of the woman and to the personal dimension of the gift and that is the gift of the child. "I have brought a man into being with the help of the Lord" (Gn 4:1). This is deemed as "a sincere gift of self and also viewed as eternal gift of general woman's motherhood by sharing also parenthood with husband."<sup>91</sup>

#### **4.9 Conclusion and findings on the documents**

The church documents give us an insight that women and man are viewed as one and that they should equally be accorded the chance to play a role in the development of the church. The documents recognizes the fact that women have a role to play in the church and classify them as being part of the lay faithful that includes both genders of male and female. They also highlights that there is a limit to how each gender especially women can participate in the church. In this regard it points out that each and every task in the church is important regardless of who undertakes it. Women are called to do that work that pertains to their status and this applies to all the lay faithful. they are to be content to what the church provides them to do and also what their gender calls them to do. This as seen in documents does not mean women are sidelined but the church calls on them to realized their vocation of motherhood. While being involved in the

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<sup>91</sup>Cf. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem*, No. 45-46.

development of the church and the society at large women are called to guard against their humanity that God calls them for. They are to do away with a tendency of being what they are not created to be. This can be seen in trying to do things proper to man and losing their humanity in the long run.

## **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

### **5.1 Summary of the main points**

This paper has attempted to show that women, in one way or another, have had an impact in the development of the church. In the essay we have highlighted that women have been participating in the whole salvific mission of God. This is seen in the Old and New Testaments of the bible. The case study of the women development at Kafue parish has provided us with some glimpses of the wider scope and the impact of women development in the church. From this paper we are able to draw that development of women has been both external and internal one. By external we mean that development as highlighted concerns the wellbeing of women. This entails having laws and customs that discriminate against women in the church and society screened and done away with. By internal we mean changing the mentality towards women in the church, through looking at how women have and are still participating in the church. This paper gives us a challenge to recognize women's participation and the impact they have had in development of the church. Once society and church in particular has recognized that they are to view women as collaborators in the mission of the church entrusted by Christ the mind set should

move to another level. This is true with women also, once they start realizing their rights and capabilities endowed in them by God they too change their mind set.

In the paper, obstacles are identified that hinders full participation of women in the church and the society at large. These are created by society and consist of customs and beliefs of the community, stereotypes that do not favour women advancement. The other obstacle is enshrined in the religion and this is especially in the interpretation of biblical texts. We saw from the scriptural point of view in this paper that there are texts that discriminate and favour men. These are sometimes manipulated in the church in order to sideline women in impacting development in the church. So the paper highlights the importance of women in the scriptural perspective by looking at the way other texts have emphasized the positive aspect of women. It has challenged us that the Jewish society was not outright patriarchal but women too contributed in the salvific mission of God both in the Old and New Testament scriptures.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

The questions we are asking are what should be done in order to further reduce and uplift women in the church and society at large? What should be done to appreciate and recognize women development in the church?

We need to challenge certain scriptural texts and resist those that have biases towards women. We then are able to show that in the “pedagogy of God” certain practices which were either and time bound God allowed “for time – being” to be purified and perfected in the fullness of time. “Another argument is in the order of creation that relegates women to secondary and dependent status because eve was said to have been created from Adams rib. This is based on

the second creation story.”<sup>92</sup> In these texts, there is a need to have right interpretation to avoid distorting the sacred scriptures towards the wrongs towards women in our church today. There is also the need to point out that issues in the bible are a matter of social convention pertaining to a certain time and context and sometimes to a particular ethnic group. In this instance the church should emphasize on friendly biblical texts that promotes both men and women. They should also allow women to participate in leadership in various structures of the church without hindrances or discrimination.

There is also a need of a paradigm shift. Society should embrace new methods of looking at women. It should not just cling to stereotypical kind of living towards women in order to avoid challenge from them. There should be a change of thinking by doing away with prejudices that are a danger to women’s participation in the society. This should be done at family level and also in the tribal areas by inculcating gender friendly teachings to the people. At family levels children more especially girls, should be taught to believe in themselves that they can do anything in life for God has given them what it takes to be human. In tribal areas emphasis should be placed on customs and norms that are bias towards women. Some propositions in these customs and norms that hold that women are different must not be held to disadvantage them. Fear by men contained in these sets of laws should be done away with and promote and also leave those that uplift the women standing in the society.

The paper pointed out the challenge women face in literacy levels. So there should be a change in education system whereby certain numbers of places are reserved for females in primary

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<sup>92</sup> Cf. D.L. Robert., *Gospel Barriers*, 171-172.

schools, high schools and tertiary level. This will enable a good number of women to participate in fully in the church by competing for those posts that needs some academic qualifications, it will also help women to be free to participating fully in the civil world and getting to know their rights both in the church and the community.

The church should also embark on the uplifting of women activities starting at the local church. There should be particular laws and activities friendly to women participation in the dioceses. Such laws and regulations should emphasize gender balance in positions of authority in dioceses. This should be reflected in the pastoral council`s of parishes that they are to be gender sensitive. So there should an effort to promote necessary conditions in society and the church in which women can fulfill their being and their vocation in the best possible way.

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Appendix

Questionnaires A

1) How was women participation at the parish 15years ago?

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2) What were the main hindrances to women participation/development at the parish?

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3) Did any kind of discrimination exist at the parish?

- a. Yes      b. No

4) What kind of stereotypes did women face as a form of discrimination?

.....  
.....  
.....

5) Do women participate in leadership at the parish?

- a. Yes      b. No

6) How do they participate in leadership?

.....  
.....  
.....

7) Are women fully involved in leadership at the parish?

- a. Yes      b. No

Appendix

Questionnaire B

8) What kind of position do women take in leadership and why?

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.....  
.....

9) Do women involve themselves in the teaching of catechism at the parish?

- a. Yes
- b. No

10) To what extent do they use the teaching catechism as a form of evangelization?

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.....  
.....

11) Do women participate in lay groups at the parish?

- a. Yes
- b. No

12) What impact on development have women brought through their participation in these lay groups at the parish?

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13) In what way do women participate in liturgy?

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.....  
.....

a. Do they participate in diocese activities and in what ways?

- b. Yes
- b. No

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.....

Appendix

Questionnaire C

14) How is the literacy level of women at the parish?

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15) Do they involve themselves in other aspects of the community apart from the parish?  
a. Yes      b. No

16) What role do women play on the home base care units?

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17) How involved are the women in caring for the underprivileged children at the parish?

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18) Does the community recognize women participation at the parish?  
a. Yes      b. No

19) What visible changes have women shown in their participation at parish at compared to 15 years ago.

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