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THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF  
EASTERN AFRICA

# TANGAZA COLLEGE

INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL MINISTRY

SOME FORMS OF OPPRESSION WOMEN ENCOUNTER AS  
WORKERS IN KENYA

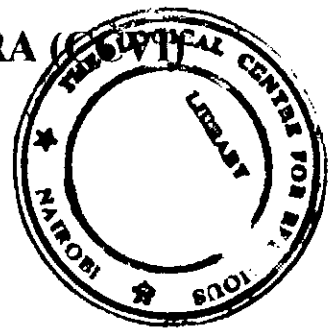
LONG ESSAY

BY

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1999  
KAM

NAIROBI, MARCH 1999

1999  
KAM



**STUDENT'S DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the material used here has not been submitted for academic credit to any other institution by anyone else. All sources have been cited in full.

Signed : SR. Kamara

Sr. Mary Wanjiru Kamara. CCVI

## DEDICATION

This long essay is dedicated to the directors of the institute of Social Ministry in Mission : Rev. Fr. Francesco Pierli, mccj and Sr. Margaret Aringo, Fsj ; who have always tried their level best to see that, the integral human development approach is applicable as far as evangelization is concerned. The paper has also been dedicated to all women in the society to whom the researcher believes should be respected and treated by the society as human persons.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

wish to acknowledge the generous help I got from all the staff members of the Chaminade Skills Training Centre. My special thanks goes to Mr. Fredrick Njoroge the coordinator, the social workers and field workers for their cooperation and sharing of their experiences which made my research successful. My foremost thanks goes to my tutor; Mr. Zacharia Samita, who has been very patient in guiding me, up to the end.

I also thank all staff of Tangaza College library and U.N. Centre for assisting me with books and useful materials. Overall, I appreciate very much all those who have assisted me in one way or another to make my work successful.

With thanks

Sr. Mary Wanjiru Kamara.

## PREFACE

This long essay is a reaseach on some forms of oppression that women encounter at work in Kenya. It has made me to examine aspects of women oppression in a global way as a social minister. However, the research is by no means exhaustive due to the wide range of literature on the subject. Attempt is made to use the Tangaza methodology of **See, Judge and Act** in analysing primary sources for the most part as well as secondary research. The essay focuses on women descrimination at work and in development dimensions in the country. The analysis starts with the geographical set up of women's status in Kenya with some of the constraints that hinder women's effective participation in the developmental processes, discriminatory and oppressive practices which women encounter in the society and in Gods creation.

The essay has brought to the fore different kinds of oppression against women, the effect and impact of discrimination and the root causes of oppression. It is also underlined that women rights need to be acknowledged like any other human rights in the society. Also stressed is the fact that without progress in women development, there can be no true of integral human development in our society. The struggle for women's equality is part of the struggle for a better world for all human beings and all societies. The essay points out that women are the primary providers in the household, and have struggled to find the means for family survival. The Bible provides evidence of women as well as men taking an active part in society. The essay also recommends women for their great work and readiness to support one another in their struggles to fight for equality.

At the end, there are proposals for action which social ministers need to take into consideration for effective ministry. It is my hope that this document will be useful to all who will read it.

Sr. Mary Wanjiru Kamara. CCVI

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

**AAWORD:** Association of Africa women Research and Development.

**AIDS:** Acquired Immunal Difficiency Syndrome.

**AOSK :** Association of Sisterhood in Kenya.

**FIDA (K):** The International Federation of Lawyers in Kenya.

**GDP :** Gross Domestic Product.

**HIV :** Human Immune Virus.

**ILO :** International Labour Organisation.

**KARI:** Kenya Agricultural Research Institute.

**KNCS :** Kenya National Catholic Secritariate.

**NCCK:** National Church' s Confrence of Kenya.

**NCSW :** National Commissio on the status of women.

**NGOs :** Non-Governmental Orgarnizations.

**P:** Page .

**UASU:** University Acadamic Staff Union.

**UN :** United Nation.

**UNICEF :** United Nations International Children Education Fund.

**RSCK:** Religious Superiors Congregations in Kenya.

**STD :** Sexual Transmitted Diseases.

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# **SOME FORMS OF OPPRESSION WOMEN ENCOUNTER**

## **AS WORKERS IN KENYA**

### **INTRODUCTION**

From my experience in Nairobi Mukuru Slums during my long holiday, it was apparent that the highest number of population in Mukuru slums are women compared to men. Although women are discriminated against and oppressed in our society, they still courageously participate in integral human development in our society today. Their contribution in this aspect calls for acknowledgment. There is great need to recognize men and women equally as workers in Kenya. This will help to create greater appreciation of the promotion of their experiences women have in various kinds of work in education, politic, health and the promotion of their socio-economic status.

Mobilization on education concientization to people in our society on human rights and more emphasis on women as workers is highly needed in order to improve the conditions of women as workers in Kenya Civic education among women will empower them in political, legal, economic health and social status. In this long essay, I will apply the **See- Judge- Act** methodology which is very important and the recommended approach for social ministries in mission.

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0. THE WOMEN'S STATUS IN KENYA

In history, women have generally been regarded to be inferior to men. Women have globally has been experienced by women in the whole world in every sphere in their lives. Today, there exist some African tradition cultural practices that have been carried on though undermines the dignity of women. For instance, a man is considered as the head and controller of the family and society as whole. Kenya is one of those African countries where many cultural practices have persisted through centuries, profoundly impacting on their status as women. Though cultures are dynamic, it has been observed that certain cultural practices endure, almost defying change, in spite of their discriminatory nature regarding the status and the role of women.

The Kenyan Government policy did not directly address the women's issue until 1979. This was followed by the positive policy pronouncements regarding its realization that women needed to be integrated into development. The government also did the same in matters pertaining to legislation and general public awareness<sup>1</sup>.

However, these have been constrained by the persistence of cultures which have negatively portrayed attitudes in regard to the feminine gender in the society. Sadly, women issues have not been looked into with sensitivity and gender equality. Women status compared to men is lower up to today. The Kenyan constitution is trying to work on statements that tend to imply a lower status of women the society. Since women are human beings as men, the application of the Laws of Kenya is often against the interests of women even when the law appears adequate.

"Some beliefs and traditional attitudes are given a higher consideration than the individual person

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<sup>1</sup>Omasa, Mary. "Persistent cultural practices: A Review of the status of women in Kenya"TN "Association of African Women in Research and Development, Nairobi: AAWORD, 1995, p.61.

wish.”<sup>2</sup> A good example is the case of Wambui Otieno in the burial saga of her husband. She could not be allowed by Mr. Otieno’s family to inherit the late’s property. This was despite being the legal wife. Thus, a good way to eradicate the gender inequality is through civic education of women in various spheres of their lives in social status, political, legal, economic, health and education sectors.

## 1.1 THE SOCIAL STATUS OF WOMEN

Women have little say in decision-making in the home. Parents take sons to school while girls are encouraged to prefer domestic activities. This contributed to the oppression of women and undermining of their positions of authority. Courts do not respect women’s rights by listening to their experiences and supporting women rights. Women complaints are not taken seriously. They simply ignored just as domestic affairs.

The Church while counseling often advises women to keep quiet about domestic oppression. Sometimes, the Church emphasizes prayer instead of action among women. The Genesis “rib story” of creation is often quoted out of context to authenticate suppression of women. Most of the men in our society today ignore their responsibilities when they make women pregnant. In some families, even when a woman is sick, she is expected to look after her husband and children. Women do everything in the home. There is great need for the government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to monitor women oppression and create legal awareness among Kenyan women. Although there has been much work done by the United Nations over some years, there has been a problem of identifying social indicators of the integration of women equality with men. Women’s accessibility to amenities or contributions in society need to be compared with that of men for more meaningful recognition of facts because benefits of developments have fallen differently on men and women. In most of the places,

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<sup>2</sup>League of Kenyan Women Voters, Women and Democracy: A Voters Handbook, Nairobi: Views

development efforts are directed to the inequalities between specific groups which reinforce existing inequalities between men and women. Women are seen to be concerned in efforts that will assess their status and reflect the relationship between men and women. This is expressed in terms of gaps between men and women rates, representation ratios and segregation indices. Women's participation in all areas have made distinctions between the utilization of social indicators for their determining equity, and their utilization for social accounting<sup>3</sup>, monitoring trends<sup>4</sup> and social reporting<sup>5</sup> Looking at the status of women is an equity oriented concept rather than development.

The Federation of Women Lawyer in Kenya (FIDA-KENYA) was founded in 1994 by a group of lawyers in Central America. Its work is to secure equal rights and opportunities for women in all countries. FIDA-Kenya shares its knowledge of the law with rural and urban women, networking with the government in order to change laws perceived to be discriminatory and contributing to oppression against women. The federation also supports new laws which would further women's rights. The aim is to have legal equipment and programmes in order to empower women to represent themselves in court; to document all the cases presented at FIDA-Kenya in order to use this as a formal document for law reform; to influence the law through taking test case to court and handling public interest cases; to provide free legal advice and representation to needy women through civic education all over Kenya. Social indicators are instruments for social analyses of wellbeing for women.

## 1.2.WOMEN OPPRESSION IN HEALTH

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Limited, 1992, p.6.

<sup>3</sup> Social accounting is data analyzing long-term patterns of men or women's lives over extended periods.

<sup>4</sup> Monitoring trends are changes and evaluation of social-economic transformations, impacts of development and implementations of women's development programmes.

<sup>5</sup> Social reporting is identifying areas or targets groups for policy action.

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<sup>5</sup> Social reporting is identifying areas or targets groups for policy action.

Health is a major concern for women. They provide health care in families apart from being responsible for family production and welfare. Health professions need to have more discussions on critical health issues with non-professional women. This can be facilitated by creating awareness and understanding of health issues that women face in their daily lives. "It is the responsibility of each woman to improve her health as well as the health of her family and community"<sup>6</sup>. Keeping women healthy, guarantees improved economic development in Kenya. Health facilities in hospitals, health centers and dispensaries are needed in our country in order to step-up especially, treatment of feminine-related diseases.

Women are major food producers in comparison to their children, husbands or other members of the family. Their education in sharing information on critical nutrition needs, for example balanced diet for women, is crucial in maintaining good health.

Family planning is another challenge which involves lack of equality within traditional set-ups especially where the "law" demands that the man is the head of the family. Family laws do not regulate the rights and responsibilities of men and women in relation to children. Women and men should have the right to freely decide and be responsible for the number and spacing of children they want. Civic education for women in this regard would be most helpful rather than entirely leaving it to the husbands. At the same time, women should have equal say in their husband's use of family methods too. Traditional beliefs and practices which give men more rights in marriage than women expose the latter to more serious risks. Personal rights of women in Kenya are highly needed especially in context of polygamous marriages, extramarital affairs which sometimes lead to another newly married, or inherited wife. Labor migration, compels husbands to leave behind to their family. This contributes to high risks of contracting Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) and AIDS/HIV as they seek for sexual

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<sup>6</sup> Wanjiku M. Kabira et. al, Democratic Change in Africa: Women's Perspective , Nairobi: Acts Press

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satisfaction while away from their families. Husbands should be responsible for their failure and unfaithfulness in marriage. Health care fees often prohibit women from seeking medical treatment.

The state of health of women and safe motherhood is challenges that call for more attention in our society today. These issues cannot be ignored because women generally form the largest percentage of the human population and because the health of children and the nation mostly depends on that of women. If women are educated on health issues, chances of survival for the entire society are likely to be improved. Women education is a vital part of the well being of the entire society. Healthy women could mean healthy children, healthy husbands and a healthy nation.

### 1.3. WOMEN OPPRESSION IN EDUCATION

Kenya is among the African countries with a female illiteracy level of 80 per cent. The education status of girls is poor. It is worsened by the high wastage in both primary and secondary schools. Some years ago, girls in school only preferred arts and commercial subjects instead to science subjects believed to be boys' priority. Education is a major factor that influences the recruitment and upward mobility of women to top-level positions, development and decision-making. The estimated number of women found in these positions is far lower compared to the number of men. Historically, women's education was always geared towards domestic and reproductive roles.

Education empowerment on women in educational institutions of learning is needed more than ever before in our society today (See the diagram I in the next page). Most of the top-level jobs are tied in with higher levels of education and training. Women with high level qualifications are needed therefore in the first place. Due to low female literacy rate in Kenya and many other countries in Africa, few women gain access to these positions. Although formal and adult of education has been less than

successful. Education for girls and women has not been very successful especially in interior parts of the countries where cultures are of more value of education than for jobs. Most of the African cultures have been neglecting girls education, concentrating more on boys. Parents only prepare their daughters for marriage so that they can receive bridal wealth in return. Thus, only in the last twenty years have girls and women education started to experience some progress in Kenya and other countries in Africa.

Women educational empowerment can upset existing gender imbalances in the educational institutions of learning of our society today. Illiterate parents should be encouraged to attend adult education. This may help to emphasize that a girl child is as important as the boy child. Oppression in cultural practices towards a girl child among Kenyan communities should be practically addressed. Counseling is most important for girls, especially for those who have carried on cultural beliefs about women. Teachers' attitudes towards female education are another area of focus. They should be the role models, convincing the girls about their capability of taking all subjects and to completing all levels of education like boys.

**PRE-PRIMARY ENROLLMENT BY SEX 1988-1994**

Year	Boys	Girls	Total	% Girls
1988	342,371	315,317	657,688	47.9
1989	409,749	391,619	801,368	48.9
1990	430,964	413,832	844,796	49.0
1991	349,964	423,563	908,966	46.0
1992	437,575	421,078	937,486	44.9
1993	492,542	431,552	924,094	46.2
1994	486,470	465,527	951,997	48.97

Source; Ministry of Education

\*The low enrollment reflected can be attributed to lack of adequate data.

**PRIMARY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT BY STANDARD 1991- 1994.**

Class	1991		1992		1993		1994 ('000')		
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
1	476.2	447.8	479.6	453.1	472.5	446.1	491.0	463.4	
2	409.3	384.9	423.8	399.4	409.9	384.2	424.5	399.8	
3	390.0	363.3	393.0	374.0	387.8	369.0	387.7	378.7	
4	360.0	353.6	376.4	366.8	369.6	364.1	379.3	374.9	
5	322.5	317.8	330.0	329.4	324.4	326.5	330.0	337.0	
6	302.6	303.2	299.1	299.2	288.8	292.5	294.3	296.9	
7	327.4	309.7	309.9	302.7	298.1	299.8	295.5	301.2	
8	207.3	173.7	195.0	198.8	210.4	185.3	212.5	190.3	
-----									
Total	2797.1	2659.0	2806.8	2723.4	2761.1	2667.5	2814.8	2742.0	
-----									
Grand Total	5,456.1		5,530.2		5428.6		5,556.8		
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**Diagram I**

**1.4. WOMEN OPPRESSION IN ECONOMIC CONTEXTS**

Women's contribution to the development of our society economy has been widely acknowledged in development literature. Women are active in economic production both in urban and rural areas by either being self-employed or engaged in the wage earning sector. Economic activities vary widely depending on socio-economic status, level of education and geographical location. In the rural areas of Kenya, most of the participants in agriculture are 100% those between ages 15-64 years. (See diagram II).

ENROLLMENT IN SCIENCE COURSES BY GENDER, UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN

1989/90 - 1992/93

Courses	1989-1990		1990-1991		1991-1992		1992-1993	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Agriculture	600	1101	259	862	179	635	152	321
Wood Science	13	74	3	47	3	21	1	22
Architecture	3	30	8	5	6	60	5	50
Building								
Economics	9	215	7	212	3	28	3	33
Design	40	60	38	39	9	21	10	19
Anthropology	82	248	72	191	55	137	67	151
BED								
(Science).	295	1019	248	753	84	430	116	447
B.Ed								
(Technology)	1	71	127	101	106	3	3	36
Science	318	1822	260	1813	117	1064	273	969
Electrical								
Comm&Tech	6	92	1	67	1	30	2	26
Engineering	46	1080	57	780	22	390	33	380
Medicine	306	1203	171	443	74	241	52	259

Source: Ministry of Education.

**Diagram II**

Some women are engaged in livestock keeping among other income -generating activities. A persistent obstacle to women's earnings in Africa as elsewhere, is the myth of the male breadwinner. People's beliefs with regard to family support clouded with deep-rooted traditions. Practically, women are more than men. Among the African families, one third of all households are women who are essentially the main breadwinners. Women have been trying here and there in economic growth. Democratization process has brought to the fore some of the empowerment strategy in economic stability in our society. There are few options for either women or men who can increase their incomes. Some women find seasonal labor in agriculture, while others enter the informal sector in small business

and trade. Women in the informal sector have less education hence they earn far less than men. Thus, economic empowerment should not just increase labor productivity or earning money. Rather it should target but controlling the products and income from that labor. The status of women and well being of their families should earn them increase more respect from their husbands when they use their income for the benefit of their family. There is great need for empowering women economically. This is possible through international trade and exchange of experiences of supportive policies for agriculture, industrial and other micro-enterprises. Enhancing women access to other work-related resources such as credit, technologies, marketing and management advice would also be a big boost. The basic cause of poverty for households which are carried out by women has been attributed, with other things, to their underprivileged positions in the labor market due to employment discrimination procedure. Educational disadvantages deny women increased income credit. And technical support men are still regarded as households heads for they have full authority to organize all household whether urban, rural, monogamous or polygamous. They generally direct control of valuable property such as land, livestock, business premises and cash crops. Thus, the modern Kenyan women educated or not are very far from being economically independent. Women have to rely on their husbands for economic support. In such cases, divorce and separation in marriage are major financial disasters to women. Many divorced women end up joining poor rural and urban sites. I experienced this in my interviews to some of the women during my long project in Mukuru slums.

In Kenya, there is hope for the government and NGOs making efforts to improve these conditions. This is by supporting policies that may increase women's access to education, credit and decision-making process. (See the diagram III below).

WAGE EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY AND GENDER, 1994 ('000's)

INDUSTRY	Males		Females		Total	
	1993	1994	1993	1994	1993	1994
			64.6	65.3	274.3	280.7
Agriculture & Forestry	209.7	215.4	64.6	65.3	274.3	280.7
Mining & Quarrying	3.5	3.4	1.0	1.2	4.5	
Manufacturing	170.2	173.5	23.3	24.1	108.5	197.6
Electricity & water	19.0	19.0	3.1	3.0	22.1	22.0
Building & Construction	68.2	69.6	3.0	3.7	72.7	73.3
Trade, Restaurant & hotels	99.7	104.3	21.4	22.3	121.1	126.6
Transport & Communication	66.4	66.7	10.9	11.2	77.3	77.0
Finance Insurance Real Estate, Business services	56.2	57.6	16.4	17.4	72.6	75.0
Community, Social & Personal services	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public Administration	140.6	154.1	40.4	39.6	181.0	193.7
Education Services	165.7	163.7	92.1	94.4	257.8	258.1
Domestic Services	56.1	40.3	21.1	21.8	77.2	62.1
Other Services	78.0	80.2	42.8	43.6	120.8	132.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,133.9</b>	<b>1,156.8</b>	<b>341.0</b>	<b>347.6</b>	<b>1,474.9</b>	<b>1,504.4</b>
<b>Of which: Regular</b>	<b>990.4</b>	<b>1,029.9</b>	<b>304.3</b>	<b>311.9</b>	<b>1,303.7</b>	<b>1,332.8</b>
<b>: Casual</b>	<b>134.5</b>	<b>35.9</b>	<b>36.7</b>	<b>35.7</b>	<b>171.2</b>	<b>171.6</b>

Source: Kenya Economic Survey 1995.

**Diagram III**

Attitude is an important factor in our society. Men's attitude towards women in economic position has tremendous effect. In all societies, there is division of labor between women and men. This division varies between groups and social classes in each culture and country. Economic changes in any country affect and have different impact on women and men too. Third World women need to contribute more to the economic development of their countries. People's attitude towards a nation, to development of total humanity and to personality should be for the development of the whole person, the society and the country. Some men spend much money on beer and girlfriends, among other leisures when their own children are starving and have no money for schools fees. This overload women work in finding ways of getting school fees for their children. In most areas, they lose jobs when they become pregnant.

They do not get promotion in spite of the quality of their work. Liberation from forms of oppression involves all aspects of economic, spiritual, political, psychological domination and exploitation. There is great need to advocate for employment policies that could enhance gender balance in every job. To overcome women oppression at work in Kenya, means should be sought to challenge the injustices and cultural beliefs that leave women economically dependent on men. Women need economic alternatives to salvage them from oppressive relationships. They also need help in order to have access to trading licenses, travel documents, credit facilities, land and property. Need arises of eliminating law procedures and practices that create oppression and discrimination against women in all work places. These areas of development touch in all areas of woman as a human person.

#### 1.5. WOMEN OPPRESSION IN AGRICULTURE

Women play an important economic role in society. They are integrated into most professions, including those viewed as of lowest levels. Women by far largely contribute in agricultural development. They are responsible for 80% of food production in agricultural development. Women are considered strong; they are the true breadwinners in many rural homes and real producers in the economies. In spite of hard work and repression in their daily work, they reap little benefit from their labour. This is to a great extent due to social and cultural factors.

In traditional African societies, women played a major role in food production. Before the introduction of the money economy, men and women worked together to provide food for their families. Women had their land in which they could grow crops such as vegetables, bananas, sweet potatoes to complement other sources of family food supply. The more a woman worked hard, the more she brought fame to herself and to her family. Indeed, in communities, these crops were referred to “female crops”, meaning, the woman had control over her produce hence she could distribute it

either through barter in exchange with other commodities or as gifts for the needy relatives in the society.

Women's roles in development have shown that women have knowledge of specific aspects of development in our society. About 35% of the Gross Domestic product (GDP) emanates from the agricultural sector while 60% of the values of exports comprises raw or processed agricultural products. The majority of the country's population lives in the rural areas, dependant on agriculture. About 70% of Kenya's labor force is employed in agriculture and most of them are women<sup>7</sup>. Therefore, exploitation of women labor and frustration in our society results into the problems of food shortages in Africa. In part, this is due to lack of incentives and assistance in food production and overall development in our society today.

They account for 60-80 per cent of food production in the rural areas of Africa. Yet as said already, they reap little benefit from their labor. Some people see women as weak and consider men to be the true breadwinner in many rural homes. But my general observation and research experiences indicate that women are more patient and hard working. Through these, they form the backbone of or are real producers in the rural economics.

The aforementioned problem calls for more attention to seeking for solutions, which will uplift the status of women in our society. In most of the countries, women have been campaigning for the recognition of equality for men and women in labor matters. Today, women's increased participation in all development is a subject of great concern in policy making, among others.

Men have also contributed in discrimination of women's efforts by creating an image of non-working, home-based and child-rearing group of people. In our society today, ownership of food production, control of labor and control over distribution of wealth is largely in the hands of men. In

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#### 1.6. OPPRESSION OF WOMEN IN AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

In recent years, rural urban migrations have posed serious challenges to women in their daily life. Husbands leave them alone in rural areas in search for economic opportunities in cities. Often, some of such husbands never return for a whole year. The women take charge of providing for the needs of the families through subsistence farming and petty trade. In some families, women's input is far much higher compared to that of men. On the other hand, women involve their children particularly the girls, in carrying this burden. Since they share the myth that women are for domestic and agricultural activities, boys go to school leaving girls at home to work on the farms. The result is that not as many girls as boys enroll informal education. (See table IV in the next page)

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National	1991/92			1992/93				1993/94					
	Verseties	Women	Men	Tol	Women %	Women	Men	Tol	Women %	Women	Men	Tl	Women %
Nairobi	3368	11467	4835	4835	22.7	2963	10092	13055	22.7	2877	9743	12620	22.8
Moi	1522	4980	6502	6502	23.4	1828	4747	6575	27.8	1324	3929	5258	25.2
Kenyatta	2467	6671	9138	9138	27.0	3686	6839	9525	28.2	3042	6013	9055	38.6
JKUAT	271	1512	1783	1783	15.2	431	1477	1908	22.6	236	1867	2103	11.2
Egerton	1217	6170	7389	7389	16.5	1976	6023	7999	24.5	1808	5855	7663	23.6
Maseno	564	1463	2027	2027	29.8	678	1752	2430	27.9	1036	1841	2877	36.0
Total	9411	32263	41674	41674	22.6	10562	30930	41492	25.5	10323	29248	39571	26.1

Source; Ministry of Education

#### Diagram IV

As already said, women play a major role in food production. Their burden is in intensive farming in order to sustain family food requirements. There is more work in planting, transporting, weeding and harvesting. Also they are involved in selling the produce in the village markets and beyond. In towns, for example, the selling of agricultural goods such as fruits and vegetables are handled by women. These tasks involve great risks and extensively drain them psycho- emotionally, not to mention physically.

Most of the women spend more than eight hours in a day working in the fields in order to provide their families with the basic needs. Women provide about 75% of the labor of smallholdings. And close to 96% of the rural women are on the family farm, compared with 80% of men. Thus, in rural areas, women constitute the majority of the workers in large farms. It is sad that for cash crops the unions such as Kenya Planters Cooperative Union delays payment of the workers. Obviously in

cases of this kind, the farmers wait for long duration to even get their meagre amount of money as earnings for their sweat, long hours of toiling under strenuous and poor weather conditions, especially during the wet harvest seasons. In most agricultural societies and unions, finances are in total mess. It would take years to streamline the mess. In the event of a society's debts, the obligation to service the debt would require deductions.

Consequently, the farmers receive a more than miserable of the aforementioned meagre earning. The following case in point serves as a useful illustration. "After debt obligations are deducted, coffee farmers receive a small portion of the amount of money they have earned through their sweat-long hours of toiling under bleak weather conditions, especially during the harvest seasons"<sup>8</sup>. Women's burden is compounded by rampant drought strikes and water scarcity. Despite the economic developments that the society has realised, effective use of modern machinery in farming is lacking. In Kenya, oppression of women, specifically in agricultural sector needs to be addressed because the sector is a very important one in the country's economy. However, agricultural programmes aimed at improving women can best succeed if women are represented at all crucial stages, for instance at decision-making and marketing levels.

### 1.7. WOMEN OPPRESSION IN TRANSPORTATION

Poor infrastructure such as roads and communication facilities is the main cause of poor transportation of goods from rural areas. Goods get spoilt because of lack of transport to the market. In most of the rural areas, women are means of transport as they carry loads of goods on their back to and from the market. Whether vegetables, fruits or cash crops, women carry goods on their backs to the market, while men walk majestically.

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<sup>8</sup> Source Jomo Kenyatta: 1988, p.86.

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There is great need for improvement of local amenities such as water and energy in order to reduce the workload of goods fetching water and firewood. Women should also be helped to overcome the bottlenecks they face in having means of transport. This is in terms of, for instance, owning or hiring transport vehicles.

#### 1.8. WOMEN OPPRESSION IN BUSINESS

Women are trying hard in entering the formal self-employment sector of the economy through various types of small business enterprises such as that of horticultural export. As a result of their size women are not considered as micro-enterprise or petty sectors. Most of the women have suffered due to lack of market for their products. In many instances their products, end up flooding the market. Low market prices naturally result from such competition. Perishable products get spoiled due to poor storage facilities. Alternatively, they have to sell cheaply. There is a disincentive to women as workers in farms, business and trade in both rural and urban contexts.

One of the problems challenging the operations and existence of women work is the inadequacy of capital to maintain their business or farm. Women entrepreneurs' exchanges are most necessary for women obtaining information related to markets, resources and skills for labour. Women should be sensitised about the methods and sources of acquiring skills (See the table V below).

PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS BY SECTOR AND GENDER IN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS, SELF EMPLOYED AND UNPAID FAMILY WORKERS 1970-1983

Year	Private		Public		Self empl. & Unpaid workers	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Female
1970	85.8	14.2	85.5	14.5	82.3	17.7
1971	85.0	15.0	86.0	14.3	82.3	17.7
1972	84.5	15.5	84.2	13.8	82.0	18
1973	85.0	15.0	85.1	14.9	82.7	17.3
1974	83.7	16.3	80.2	19.8	73.2	26.4
1975	85.3	14.7	82.5	19.5	76.8	23.2
1976	85.0	15.1	82.2	17.8	73.6	26.4
1977	84.1	15.9	81.1	18.9	71.5	28.5
1978	83.4	16.6	81.5	18.5	73.3	26.7
1979	83.4	16.5	82.4	19.6	73.0	27.0
1980	83.9	17.0	81.8	18.2	71.0	29.0
1981	82.5	17.5	80.7	19.3	70.0	30.0
1982	82.0	18.0	80.8	19.2	68.0	32.0
1983	82.7	17.3	81.5	18.5	70.6	30.0

Source: ILO (1986) women's Employment patterns discrimination & promotion of quality in Africa, the case of Kenya.

### Diagram V

They need assistance on financial resources and in the co-operative movement although their access to and control of resources is often not fully appreciated because of some myths or beliefs. Tradition and bottlenecks in modern co-operative and savings associations further stifle their economic potential. Market for small-scale rural industries, availability of credit for design, management and marketing will improve profit margins for women in business.

Today there is an increased number in the size of African families. One-third of all households on average has women as the sole breadwinners. They supplement family income through micro enterprise at home by selling vegetables, fruits, sewing clothes and selling second-hand clothes.

In order to improve the poor situation of women in business, women need to be economically empowered. An international trade should become a woman's concern. These will move women away from the informal sector to large production and marketing. They need to be involved in private business, consulting firms, legal firms, and import and export construction, among others. Women

should as well be involved in electronics and engineering. There is great need for the government, NGOs, other financial institutions and all good wishers to support women by providing necessary assistance and credit facilities. They need to be strengthened by marketing departments of their products not only for the local markets but also for international markets for export.

Women oppression at business should be overcome by the government through intensification and mobilisation of local resources and more exportation of homemade goods. In business, women can make it.

### 1.9. WOMEN OPPRESSION IN POLITICS

The continuous marginalisation of women in Africa has not, however, stopped the emerging of exceptional women achievement in various domains of life. In the pre-colonial Africa, there were outstanding achievers in the spheres of traditional medical practice, divination, warfare and political governance. Some of these traditional leaders and several spiritual leaders were women. The colonial government also recognised some exceptional abilities in women. Indeed, some of them were appointed to senior positions of leadership. In Kenya, some of the first African women to be nominated to the Legislative Council were Mrs Priscilla Abwavo. Also in Independent Kenya, Miss Margaret Kenyatta was recognised as the first women mayor of the city of Nairobi. During the third Women's Decade Conference in Nairobi in 1985, Mrs Margaret Githinji was the first woman Permanent Secretary in Kenya; Mrs Nyiva Mwedwa became the first woman cabinet minister. Other women achievers are Prof. Wangari Mathaai, an environmentalist; Dr. Eddah Gachukia, an educationalist; Mrs Grace Ogot, one time an assistant minister. This should, however, create the impression that only in public limelight are women participation in politics evident. In fact, generally speaking, women from

the greatest majority in voting. Thus, women have made major progress in politics and in many other sectors of development.

Although some of the women in Kenya are participating in politics, more are expected to participate in the near future. There are more learned women in Kenya and the high numbers of population are in middle class. In spite of patriarchy and cultural subordination of women a few of them have started offering themselves as candidates for more influential offices. For example, Mrs. Charity Ngilu a member of parliament of Kitui Central and Prof. Wangari Maathai vied for presidential seats in the last General Elections of Kenya. This is a good start and they, together with many others, need to be encouraged to participate in higher positions. Some women may form grassroots or national organisations. What is required today is more unity among women and people as a whole. Women are also free to present political parties which are sensitive to their issues. Policies and programmes must be made more sensitive to women's rights. This can only be done by mobilisation of women organisations and recognition of their ballot power. In Kenya, more women are willing to participate in public decision-making and constitution reform positions. Civic education on political parties among women is very important in this regard. But it requires co-ordination and unity amongst women, political parties and the society as a whole.

#### 1. 10. OPPRESSION OF WOMEN IN DOMESTIC CONTEXT

Domestic responsibilities among women are obstacles to the smooth running of their professional activities which are usually traditional or cultural. Although women are usually more competent while doing the same work as men, they are still disadvantaged especially with regard to high level posts. There are some major factors blocking women's full progresses in their work. Let us briefly outline some of these factors.

First, there is still the problem of balancing their career and their domestic responsibilities. This is due to lack of division of labour within the family. There is a woman's role in the society and the generally men's reluctant attitude in terms of sharing of household chores. Second, women are subjected to many pressures. Sometimes because of high level posts, they prefer lower ranking posts rather than sacrificing family responsibilities and children. Most of the women between 30-50 years old age leave promising jobs owing to family responsibilities or they are prohibited from working at night by their husbands. Third, women are discouraged from accepting top positions because of deep beliefs of traditional and cultural factors of the society. The fourth factor revolves around cultural values that often go against social progress in Kenya, tending to highlight the perception of women as basically housewives and child bearers. Fifth, traditional and cultural factors may discourage and demoralise women deeply. Finally, equal rights for women need to go beyond the quota system and positive discrimination. At the policy level, this will enable women to move from fate or oppression to freedom, from status of passive fatalism, fettering their human rights and basic needs to a status of freedom that enables full freedom from exploitation of their potential. This would immensely contribute to the harmony and long lasting development of the Kenyan society.

**WAGE EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY AND GENDER, 1994 ('000's)**

INDUSTRY	Males		Females		Total	
	1993	1994	64.6	65.3	274.3	280.7
Agriculture & Forestry	209.7	215.4	64.6	65.3	274.3	280.7
Mining & Quarrying	3.5	3.4	1.0	1.2	4.5	
Manufacturing	170.2	173.5	23.3	24.1	108.5	197.6
Electricity & water	19.0	19.0	3.1	3.0	22.1	22.0
Building & Construction	68.2	69.6	3.0	3.7	72.7	73.3
Trade, Restaurant & hotels	99.7	104.3	21.4	22.3	121.1	126.6
Transport & Communication	66.4	66.7	10.9	11.2	77.3	77.0
Finance Insurance Real Estate, Business services	56.2	57.6	16.4	17.4	72.6	75.0
Community, Social & Personal services	-	-	-	-	-	-
Public Administration	140.6	154.1	40.4	39.6	181.0	193.7
Education Services	165.7	163.7	92.1	94.4	257.8	258.1
Domestic Services	56.1	40.3	21.1	21.8	77.2	62.1
Other Services	78.0	80.2	42.8	43.6	120.8	132.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,133.9</b>	<b>1,156.8</b>	<b>341.0</b>	<b>347.6</b>	<b>1,474.9</b>	<b>1,504.4</b>
Of which: Regular	990.4	1,029.9	304.3	311.9	1,303.7	1,332.8
: Casual	134.5	35.9	36.7	35.7	171.2	171.6

Source: Kenya Economic Survey 1995.

## CHAPTER TWO

### ROOT CAUSES OF OPPRESSION

#### 2.1 WOMEN OPPRESSION IN THE CONTEXT OF CULTURE.

We have already observed that no level of modernization, scientific or technological advancement can uplift the status of women in the society as long as cultural attitudes continue contributing to oppression of women. And women oppression will also persist as long as men and the whole society in general perpetuate and reinforce the existing status of stereotyping inferiority complex on most of the women in Kenya. Due to the generally low status of women in Kenya, the negative attitudes towards them still prevail. Indeed, some members in the country still feel that the time for women to boldly and assertively talk about women's issues is not yet ripe. Some men uncritically believe that women are jealous of each other hence spend much of their precious time on gossip. It is surprising that gossip is normally considered women's domain even when evidence abounds that this is a common social problem not based on gender. Today, there is a common belief that the woman's place of work is at the farm and in the kitchen. This kind of limiting ideology has to stop in order to overcome women's oppression for the better development of posterity. To be sure, there is nobility in the farm and the home. But to confine the woman here is the issue. Women are looking forward to the total development as well as emancipation rather than remaining or lapsing in to the era of our forefathers and foremothers. To these foreparents myths, taboos and ideologies were accepted unchallengeably, taken as part and parcel of the culture in the traditional society. In our African culture, there exist many myths and taboos which explain what a man and woman could do or not do. Myths and taboos have been used many times to explain the status of men and women in the society. For instance, the kitchen is considered out of bounds to boys and men. Accordingly, if one of them is seen cooking, he is rebuked and laughed at by the members of the society. Thus, the women's natural place

is in the kitchen. Also, women have been made to believe that they are physiologically weak and inferior. Women are also portrayed as “loving and good babies caring, holding, naturally gentle, being not ambitious and kind<sup>9</sup>. Most of the women oppression is the philosophy of an extension of the cultural environment which traditionally accord women a low status, some of the changes necessary must be revolutionary and not evolutionary.<sup>10</sup>

It is necessary to know the root causes of women exclusion and oppression in society .We cannot seriously confront women issues if we are unfamiliar with root causes. Patriarchy is an analysis of existing unequal power relations in the society globally. Gender in equalities is amongst the most prevalent of such relations today. Sometimes I am puzzled as to why gender inequalities exist. Gender stereotyping is a psychological process that results from societal norms about men’s and women’s proper roles. The early socialization process of children, involving practices and experiences, reinforces these norms. Some four sources may be cited as contributing to gender inequality in development. First, is the company or organizational policies and culture. Second, are men’s behaviour and expectations. The third source regards women’s behaviour towards other women and finally are, women’s own behaviour.

The foregoing four sources are derived basically from cultural values and expectations of what a man or a woman is and should be. Men have an unfair advantage over women in this regard. This is manifested in economic, political, social or cultural terms. Global economic and religious structures contribute to unequal power and oppressive relations between and within nations. Women are excluded and have limited participation in various areas of life. Distorted power relations give rise to

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<sup>9</sup>Wanjiku Kabira M. et al, Democratic Change in Africa : Women’s Perspective, Nairobi: African Centre for Technology Studies, Acts Press, 1993.

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violence and they are sexually exploited even by their images projected by media communication. The fact remains that in all societies, women are comparatively the poorest of the poor and the most economically marginalized. Any crisis in the economical structure affects women first through their labor which is exploited. Generally, women are unfairly burdened and oppressed by current global economic crisis.

## 2.2. WOMEN IN BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

From the Biblical creation story, we read in past that “God said, it is not good that man should be alone, I will make him a helper fit for him” (Genesis 2: 18). The woman was thus created by God as a helper for a man. This could mean every woman is created with a certain dignity that makes her “fit” into this male-dominated world. It is evident in the Bible that Adam exclaimed at the wonder and beauty of the first woman, giving her a classic identity, “This is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh, she shall be called a woman because she was taken out man”(Genesis 2:23). Women have special talents and potentialities to contribute to the goodness of this world. It is, therefore, worthwhile in our context for every woman to accept herself as unique African or even Kenyan female. Men should accordingly play a great role in contributing to the dignity of women. In God’s plan as revealed in the Biblical scriptures, women have basic equality in dignity with men.

The Bible as a whole is male centered in its subject matter, authorship and perspective. Women are excluded in the Bible. From Genesis 1:1-2, it can be inferred that man and woman were created simultaneously. Both of them have the same source of life and purpose. Looking at the Biblical literature which greatly reflect Jewish world-view it is evident that the public and communal life of people was male dominated; laws and values were made and translated in a patriarchal way. Girls belonged to their fathers just as married women belonged to their husbands Scriptural portions such as

Genesis 1:31 show that God looked at everything he had created and he was very pleased with it. The woman crowned this creation process. But the Jewish traditional culture places a woman in second position in comparison with man. She is a helper to man; yet she is not in this sense supposed to be subordinate to or a servant of a man. Instead, she is meant to be a colleague, a counterpart to him Genesis 2:18-27. God assigned man and woman a partnership mission as stewards of the earth<sup>11</sup>. God elected both of them to be stewards of the earth under His own authority and guidance. God created us all as His loved creation. Women and men are, therefore, free to live and to utilize their talents freely given to them for the common good. Despite the humiliation, discrimination and all forms of oppression that women experience, God continues His work of creation and nurturing of life through them. Woman's duty is misinterpreted as being securing man's happiness and serving him. In the Jewish society, a woman called her husband "master" or "lord" 1 Peter 3:6. Through such beliefs of Jewish culture, we see how women were socialized to be subservient hence were readily discriminated against, dominated and oppressed Genesis 3:16.

In the New Testament, Jesus had honest appraisal attitudes toward women despite his tradition. He outgrew his cultural shackles. This is clear proof of his own liberating presence in the face of the impositions his tradition on feminism. Despite the explicit hard stance of Jewish laws on women, Jesus treated women as full equals to men. Jesus even taught them, though the Jews denied women the right to study or discuss the Torah. He spoke to women in public but no Jewish man would even address his wife or mother or sister outside the home (cf. John 4:27).

Jesus restored the women of His time to their full dignity as human persons before God and men. This is demonstrated partly during his meetings with Martha and Mary (Luke 10:38-42), the

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<sup>11</sup>Kanyoro, Musimbi R.A & Nyambura J. Njiroge, eds., Groaning in Faith: Africa Women in the Household of God, Nairobi: Acton Publisher, 1996, p.25.

Samaritan woman (John 4) and, the woman caught in the act of adultery (John 8:1-11) .In all these incidents, contrary to the Jewish traditional view of women at that time, Jesus demonstrated the worth of women, leaving them better people and more highly esteemed and self-respected in the society. Jesus also raised women's dignity through the highest peak of incarnation, in the womb of Mary mother of Jesus (Luke 1: 26-42). Jesus lived under the care of his mother as a woman for thirty years. In this way, he is enriching and uplifting the status of women as wives and as mothers. Therefore, God intends women to be happy and be dignified. Jesus Christ insists and makes it very clear in his teachings and even through parables that women are important. He honored them and placed them on equal footing with men. He makes the same demands of them and offers them the same salvation. This is a good example of women liberation from oppression and discrimination.

### 2.3.WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

It is not fore-fetched idea to argue that the Church in Kenya has often been reported to be in the forefront in the experienced by women, amongst others. In this fight, the Church is against oppression and inequality based on Jesus examples in the Bible. In St. Luke's Gospel, for example Jesus is portrayed as the one who continues to empower and enable women to discover their true identity of being made in the image and likeness of God. We have already seen how he stood against the prevailing oppression which violated women's status, dignity, and roles. For example, his standpoint on divorcing women (Luke 16:18) as an injustice is clear. In fact, Jesus linked it to adultery, blaming men for such selfish injustice which is against God's will. Also during Jesus time, rabbis and other honorable men often failed to foster healthy and open interpersonal dialogue and relationships with women. On contrary willingly and openly associated with women such as Martha and Mary and accepted their mutual hospitality with humility (Luke 10:38-42). This was a live example of resisting

should as well be involved in electronics and engineering. There is great need for the government, NGOs, other financial institutions and all good wishers to support women by providing necessary assistance and credit facilities. They need to be strengthened by marketing departments of their products not only for the local markets but also for international markets for export.

Women oppression at business should be overcome by the government through intensification and mobilisation of local resources and more exportation of homemade goods. In business, women can make it.

### 1.9. WOMEN OPPRESSION IN POLITICS

The continuous marginalisation of women in Africa has not, however, stopped the emerging of exceptional women achievement in various domains of life. In the pre-colonial Africa, there were outstanding achievers in the spheres of traditional medical practice, divination, warfare and political governance. Some of these traditional leaders and several spiritual leaders were women. The colonial government also recognised some exceptional abilities in women. Indeed, some of them were appointed to senior positions of leadership. In Kenya, some of the first African women to be nominated to the Legislative Council were Mrs Priscilla Abwavo. Also in Independent Kenya, Miss Margaret Kenyatta was recognised as the first women mayor of the city of Nairobi. During the third Women's Decade Conference in Nairobi in 1985, Mrs Margaret Githinji was the first woman Permanent Secretary in Kenya; Mrs Nyiva Mwedwa became the first woman cabinet minister. Other women achievers are Prof. Wangari Mathai, an environmentalist; Dr. Eddah Gachukia, an educationalist; Mrs Grace Ogot, one time an assistant minister. This should, however, create the impression that only in public limelight are women participation in politics evident. In fact, generally speaking, women from

the cultural constraints of his time. Despite men's discrimination against women, Jesus related with the women in honest and friendship, intimacy, and familiarity coupled with dignity.

The history of the Church, particularly salvation, is traceable to a woman, mother Mary of Nazareth. The story of Mary shows some qualities that a woman has, similar to those of the Spirit of God. These are "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self control" (Galatian 5 22:23). Whether they profess the Gospel or not both women and mothers need these attribute characters. They are generally believed to be more persevering in religious faith than men.

To a very considerable degree, the history of Christianity, has been spread profoundly though quietly and sometimes through open participation of women. They are considered very prayerful. This is in part seen through their high participation and attendance to prayer services in church liturgies. Although the hierarchical structure of some of the roles are a preserved domain for men. For example in the Catholic Church, priesthood is only for men; and they are the only ones that can perform certain duties such as the ministry of offering mass. We can not emphasize strongly enough the indispensable role of the Catholic Church religious women congregations, which are more than men congregations.

Augustine of Hippo the great Church philosopher and theologian, acclaimed to be the greatest of the Church patriarchs left with us over 100 books, 500 sermons and 200 letters. This was due to Monica his mother, a committed Christian who zealously prayed for his conversion.<sup>12</sup> John Chrysostom, a great preacher in the East, had a mother, widowed at twenty, who refused to remarry in order that she might devote all her time to her son's education.<sup>13</sup> The William Broth family of the Salvation Army left a great legacy to religious children due to Catherine, the wife of William<sup>14</sup>. One cannot forget the

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<sup>12</sup>Earle E. Cairus, Christianity through the Centuries: A History of the Christian Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Academic Books, Vondervan Publishing House, 1981, pp. 146-149

<sup>13</sup>Ibid. p.141.

<sup>14</sup>Anthusa, Williston Walker, A History of the Christian Church, Edingburg: T & T Clark, 1959, p.129.

religious radical brothers Charles Wesley and John Wesley who drew their inspiration from their mother Sussana.<sup>15</sup>Space does not allow us to continue the endless list.

Most of us joined Christianity through the examples of our mothers as spiritual models. Today, the Church in Africa and especially Kenya is well supported by women both in prayer and in community participation. For religious women, convents are powerhouses of prayers. In family life, many women suffer continuously for the survival and welfare of their families and yet still find time for prayers. Most men would prefer to go for a drink with their colleagues, spend more time there. When they return home, sometimes it is war; they do not have time for prayers with their family.

Women should be able to participate fully in Church, life in the society because in many households they work like a donkey. Women should be treated equally in the Church and in the society in order to live in a world that has no threats of life in any form and have a world that has hope for all humankind.<sup>16</sup> Women should be examples of mothering the Kenyan Nation with dignity, love and sacrifices. This will be more effective if every man will really support and encourage gender equality and acknowledge the role of women in the Church. Each woman has a right and a unique part to play in the Church and in the society in the spiritual motherhood of the immediate and future global family. Oppression of women in the hierarchical structure in the Catholic Church should really be critically examined with a view to suggesting new and effective ways of involving women more fully participation in the hierarchical level of the Catholic Church and other religious. "Woman has a genius all her own, which is vitally essential to both society and the Church"<sup>17</sup>. The religious role of the Church involves service to the people in society. The Synod of Bishops made a statement about the Church's work of promoting justice through preaching the Gospel which involves action for justice. In part it

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<sup>15</sup>Glen Williamson, Sons of Susanna, Wheaton, Illinois:Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1991.

<sup>16</sup> Sunday Nation on "Women Today: Women and Religion,"Nairobi: July 1998,p.16.

<sup>17</sup> Pope John Paul II,The Pope Speaks to Women, Letter, Nairobi: Paulines Publishers, 1996, p.34.

underlines that

Action on behalf of Justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or in other words of the church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation<sup>18</sup>

In many countries, a charter for women would target putting an end to actual discrimination and establishing relationships of equality in rights and of respect for their dignity, the object of study and at times of life demands. We do not have in mind that superficial equality which would deny the distinctions laid down by the creator Himself and which would be in contradiction with women's proper roles which are of such prime importance, and central to the family as well as within society. The human dignity is to be respected by the employers and protected by the state.

Developments in legislation should on the other hand be directed towards protecting women's proper vocations, at the same time recognizing their independence as human beings and their equal rights to participate in cultural, economic, social and political life<sup>19</sup>. The purpose of *Rerum Novarum* is to promote social justice by giving true solutions to oppression and exploitation of the workers by the employers and condemning the socialist instigation to gender or class struggle. The Church carries out various activities which are directed to the progress of the people at large. "Missionary evangelization is the primary service which the Church can render to every individual and to all humanity"<sup>20</sup>. Missionaries have been recognized as agents or promoters of integral development. They offer special technical solutions to the problems through their integral evangelization which sets people free from injustices, facilitating, their overall development. This is seen through NGOs and other religious projects in Kenya and in the whole world. In Kenya, the Catholic Church has immensely contributed

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<sup>18</sup> The Bishops Synod, Justice in the World. 1971, p.391.

<sup>19</sup>Pope Leo XIII, Rerum Novarum, 15 May 1891.

<sup>20</sup>Bellagamba Anthony, The Mission of the Church, Nairobi: St. Paul Publications, 1993, p.15.

towards integral development of total humanity in all areas through empowering men and women with tools for their development through education. People are equipped through skills training centers, pastoral works, counseling, and hospitals. Majorities of the trainees are women because they are the most needy yet marginalised people in Kenya. (See the diagram below)

In the judiciary system is supposed to play emancipatory role to humanity. Let us briefly examine to what extent this is a reality in our context with regard to women. This is the focus of the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3.0. SOME REALITIES OF WOMEN AS WORKERS IN KENYA**

During my interviews at Chaminade Skill Training Centre, most of the women students commented on the differential wage structure in both private and public sectors that exists. There are few women both in policy making and in managerial positions. Therefore, overall, women earn less than men despite the fact that they are at the same level of employment.

#### **3.1 WOMEN AT WORK IN KENYA.**

One of the employers whom I interviewed at Mukuru Centre outlined the following factors as hampering women's mobility to equality at work or any senior positions. Women have frequent interruptions by maternity leave, ill health of child and husband. Most of the women interviewed agreed that these factors hinder women's mobility to work. Career women should take maternity leave every three or four years, rather than annually. Suitable day care centre should be provided in appropriate areas. This would allow working mothers to increase their output because it will eliminate absence due to problems with child-care arrangements. Working women should change their attitude towards their careers by being more committed and being responsible in their behaviour.

One of the employers whom I interviewed at Mukuru Centre outlined the following factors as hampering women's mobility to equality at work or any senior positions.

1. Women have frequent interruptions by maternity leave.
2. Frequent ill health of child or husband.
3. Too many excuses for short leave for example for family matters.
4. Too much time spent on the telephone conversing and gossiping with their friends.

Most of the women interviewed agreed that these factors hinder women's mobility to work.

Career women should take maternity leave every three or four years, rather than annually. Suitable day care centre should be provided in appropriate areas. This would allow working mothers to increase their output because it will eliminate absence due to problems with child-care arrangements. Working women should change their attitude towards their careers by being more committed and being responsible in their behaviour.

### 3.2 PROMOTION AND SENIORITY FOR WOMEN AT WORK IN KENYA

Employers have negative attitudes towards promoting women to senior positions due to the factors in the above page. They have negative attitudes and lack of self-confidence among women themselves. In these cases, women have really contributed to their oppression situation. Most of the women do not seem to have progressive ambitions and at times they give up quickly and change their employment because of this they lose seniority and take sometime again to qualify for promotion at work. Also other women lack commitment to their jobs. Some like to take easy job that they don't want to be tired, and when transfer comes for a harder Job they give up very quickly and change their employment.

There is great need for more progress in job creation offices in Kenya. Chaminade skill training centre has the programme for women who graduate from their Skill training programme. The job creation programme concentrates on the most difficult aspect of helping people to self-employment and in finding jobs.

### 3.3. THE UNITED NATIONS PARTICIPATION IN OVERCOMING WOMEN'S

#### OPPRESSION

The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) was established in 1976. This was with a clear mandate to act as a source of financial and technical support for activities designed to ensure the fullest participation of women in the development process. UNIFEM strives to facilitate access to resources which make women's participation most effective. The establishment of UNIFEM underscores the fact that enabling women to move into the mainstream of society is urgently needed in order to accelerate the development process of Kenya and other countries in Africa. Specialized efforts are needed to assist Kenyan women in general, especially young professionals besides the rural and urban poor to fulfil their roles in society and also develop them in their families. The basic needs for women are noted in terms of education, social status, Economics, the spiritual and the political. Full participation of women in the societies depends on the creation of a just social order which can achieve development and equality in gender issues at work. Through education, women will participate fully in all areas in our society. Women's political participation will really change other aspects of their status. This is cause they would in that way become more involved in national policy- making in accordance with prevailing social and cultural conditions of the societies. Through their participation, they would be able to create and expand appropriate structural mechanisms for the full participation of all women. This should be in the political system by mobilizing group organizations and formation of associations for demand articulations. The above-mentioned positions, education, training and the enhancement of political conscience will play a pivotal role in the time emancipation of women. Through education and political training, horizons will broaden. This will also develop skills which will serve as an incentive for the total development of women potentials. This can also be enhanced through intergenerational education and training in which women can play the most significant role. There are three components

are national citizenship, having a universalistic legal order and having achievement norm. (United Nations 1991, p.86).

### 3.3.1 WOMEN MEETING IN BEIJING

On the April 1995, the Commission on the Status of Women had a Fourth World Conference on women which ended its work on the draft platform for action to be adopted in Beijing. The final meeting of the four annual preparatory sessions of the commission drafted a platform that identified twelve priority areas concerning women poverty, education, health, violence, armed conflict, economic structures, power-sharing and decision making. These are areas of promoting the advancement of women human rights in the media, the environment and the situation of girls. Agreement was made on the promotion of women's economic opportunities and their equitable access to resources and illiteracy among women by the year 2000. Underlined as well as the elimination of inequalities in access to health care and those which promote violence against women. Making women's advancement and the protection of their human rights as well as protecting of girls children, prioritizing issues in governments formulation of policy also received due affections. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly is described as an International Bill of Rights for Women. There are 30 articles that define what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination. According to the convection, discrimination against women is perpetuated on the basis of gender has the effect or purpose of equality of men and women, of human right and fundamental freedoms in political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. The convention urges states to commit themselves to carry on a series of measure to end discrimination and oppression against women in all its forms. The objectives of this UN all its facts is to incorporate the principle of equality of men and

women in the legal system, abolish all oppression and discriminatory laws and adopt appropriate one prohibiting oppression against women. To establish tribunals and other public institutions to ensure the effective protection of women against discrimination and to ensure elimination of all acts of oppression and discrimination against women by persons, organizations or enterprises is duly underscored in UN fora. The convention entered into force on 3 September 1981 and as at in May 1996 was ratified by 152 UN member states (see Appendix Pp. 3-14).

### 3.4. THE STATE AND THE WORKER IN KENYA

The situation of the worker in Kenya is far from satisfactory. This is because laws regulating labor matters do not conform to a number of universally accepted rights such as the freedom to associate or assemble freely and to freely express views relating to workers union. In performing its obligation, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has adopted a number of conventions on matters including forced labor (1930) and the rights of workers and employers to establish organizations. In 1948 there was collective bargaining and in 1949, equal remuneration for work of equal value without discrimination between female and male.<sup>21</sup>

Kenya has not fully responded to ILO conventions and two violations. One of the violations is the Chief's Authority Act which sanctions forced communal labor. Through it women are the majority affected. Another violation is the proscription of the civil servants' union of the right of workers in the government. The government needs to revitalize their organization in order to improve their condition through bargaining peaceful demonstrations, creative and healthy disagreements. This can also be through dialogue and other measures such as strikes for example, the nurses strike of 1998. And the teachers strike of last year is still pending. More unions should be registered under the Trade Union

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<sup>21</sup> Mulei, Christopher, Rights of Workers, Nairobi: Foundation Press, 1997.

Act. In Kenya, we have seen some of trade union denied registration under Trade Union Act. An example is the University Academic Staff Union (UASU). Kenya needs a solid constitutional basis to the rights of workers and trade unions in order to improve the workers situation today.<sup>22</sup>

If the workers conditions were improved, Women would benefit more either directly as workers or indirectly through those they depend on.

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<sup>22</sup> Mulei, Christopher, Economical Oppression of Worker in Democracy, Political Nairobi: Foundation Publisher, 1997.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

#### **4.0 INTRODUCTION**

Having looked at the generally disadvantaged positions in the society, we recommend the following measures to improve their situation.

1. Provision of equal access to education opportunities to all female students right from nursery to higher education.
2. Flexible policies in institutions should be encouraged to respect female students in areas of enrollment, admission standards continuing education, and education for post-poverty, Muslim girls among others.
3. Addressing cultural factors that instill a feeling of inferiority in women or work to their disadvantage or cause them to drop out from school. For example, some practices including withdrawing of girls from school at puberty, forcing girls into early marriage and being house girls or baby seaters.
4. Encouragement of women in more medium level training programmes to meet employment opportunities at middle level.
5. Increasing educational opportunities in the field of agriculture must be increased so that women farmers, who are the majority of African agricultural workers can have access to modern information and technologies.
6. Teaching female students on how to promote their own developmental role by increasing the numbers of female mentors within the educational system.
7. Assisting women academics should be assisted to participate in activities which lead to career advancement and promotion, research, travel to conferences, advanced study and attendance in short courses.

8. Improvement of training and development for women. This will enhance the effective demand for women by recognizing their useful and sometimes unique roles other than the traditional gender roles.
9. Utilizing these skills to the maximum in order to motivate and work to retain female as employees.
10. Offering technical skills needed for employment and maximum women participation in these institutions.
11. Training women to speak the corporate language and become inculcated by encouraging women to talk, interact and debate with those personnel within the institute that do not have their views, so as to help mold and modify the organization into a more gender-sensitive body of people
12. Efforts should be made towards changing institutional ideologies which are prejudicial to women's advancement. To ensure that the country has no discriminatory laws for women employees. For example, in the allocation of housing, access to travel and promotions.
13. Institutional policies and their impact on women should be analyzed with the long-term objective of placing women in decision-making positions. Most of the women need to be brought into the corporate environment at the workers level.
14. In order to increase the participation of women employees in the development of our country and policy-making activities, some strategies should be used such as mentoring within the institutions and the country at large. Besides, there should be lobbying for selection of qualified women employees to occupy development positions at work. This calls for practical and context-related training within the Kenyan cultural environment.
15. The gender issues within each policy should be identified and women's position within the development triangle assessed as the central institutions affecting women's welfare and development.
16. A proactive approach on policy issues should be adopted where women themselves should raise the policy issues that affect them and not merely react to them.

#### 4.1. BIBLE INTERPRETATION ON LIBERATION FROM OPPRESSION

Liberation for Kenyan women at work should start from their traditional heritage. This includes integral liberation from social-economic oppression and their status. They need freedom and justice in political issues. On this issue, Jesus is seen as a good example of one who liberates, The Bible provides his example. It is also possible for liberation of Kenyan women and in the whole world to overcome oppression. Jesus is seen as one who is so close to the poor, the depersonalized, the harassed, marginalised, and in our case the women, and indeed to all. In the Bible we have established that man and woman were created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). This means that man and woman deserve to be treated in fairness. A more comprehensive and realistic approach to liberation for women should be applied by looking at the total cultural and in the social setting where the problems exist. For true and lasting liberation, the oppressor and the oppressed should have conversion for liberation. Love of oneself and of the neighbour is the basic element for women liberation at work.

#### 4.2. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND ITS FIGHT AGAINST WOMEN OPPRESSION IN KENYA

The Catholic Church has tried its best to overcome women oppression at work. There are many projects in the Diocese of Nairobi that target integral human development. Most of the members of the group projects are women. One of the projects we visited is Chaminade Skill Training Centre in Archdiocese of Nairobi. It is run by Marianist religious brothers. Chaminade project moves people out of a situation of dependence and desperation into a situation of less dependency and hope. It is providing skill training which equip men and women to more fully participate equally as workers in Kenya. Skill training focus on tailoring, dressmaking, hair dressing, carpentry, welding, electrical trade,

knitting and catering. These are means and practical ways for improving the poor and confronting oppressive situations women experience as workers. Attempt is made to help them to understand their rights through civic education. To promote a sense of self -identity and equality at work for men and women and; to promote justice and human rights on women in society.

#### 4.2.1 PARTNERSHIP IN THE CHURCH

When we read the creation story in the Bible (Genesis 1:27; 2:24), we realize that God willed the union between him and human persons. He created man and woman and ordered them to care for the rest of creation by participating fully in his plan as co-creators. Partnership and equality between man and woman are necessary for a successful participation in and fulfillment of God's plan. Gender distinction in terms of superiority and inferiority emerged due to sin and it has been strengthened by the patriarchal system. Men could not see themselves as equal to women any more and women had to take a back seat in almost all aspects of life. Christ came in to restore the order. By words and actions, he insisted on mutual love and respect among all human persons. The purpose of this teaching is about God's plan regarding the relationship among human persons, especially the relationship between man and woman. The Church has taken the stand of Jesus, theoretically at least, by working hard to promote justice.<sup>23</sup> The aim is to promote total integral development and equality among all people. The equality is rooted in love and mutual respect. Gender issues are among the major obstacles towards the restoration of the order for which Christ came into this world.

Nevertheless, all believers have hope in the message of Jesus and the teaching of the Church. The Church is seen as a liberator, a pointer to the truth and the defender of the weak. The Church in Kenya has tried to work for justice and peace especially during the time of the tribal clashes in Rift

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<sup>23</sup> AMECEA Pastoral Department, The African Synod Comes Home-A Simplified Text, Nairobi: Pauline

Valley besides many others parts of Kenya especially from the years 1992 to 1998. The Church has a good collaboration between members of different religions who work under the umbrella of National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) and Kenya National Catholic Secretariat (KNCS) in Kenya. The Church has often fought for human rights and the equality of everyone but at the same time it argued strongly against the ordination of women, although its justification can hardly convince the majority of the faithful today particularly those committed to women liberation. There are some questions which most people ask concerning the Church's stand on the ordination of women. These questions include the following: "Why should women be refused ordination to ministerial priesthood? Why define this vitally inevitable ministry in gender terms? Is this not sacramental oppression of women?"<sup>24</sup> While it may take time for the Church's authority to review the issue and change its stand, a meaningful involvement of women in church activities at other levels can be made. Here are some suggestions for consideration in the improvement of gender equality. Clear policies and rules can be laid down by the church on how every commission and committee has to be formed on the basis of gender equality. Capable and qualified lay and religious women should be put in charge of projects, even if among staff members are religious men. Women should not be denied such offices, simply because they are women. Dioceses, parishes and all religious projects should be examples of implementing these suggestions. The number of office-holders in all Church offices at all levels should reflect both merit and gender sensitivity. The Church hierarchy should also consider possibilities of involving women among key holders of different high offices in the Vatican. Consultation of women should be thoroughly done on various issues before final decisions are taken and made public.

These suggestions are not easy to implement unless people in charge from the top in Vatican to

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Publishers Africa, 1995, Pp.34-35.

<sup>24</sup> Wachege, P. N, African Women Liberation, A Man's Perspective, Nairobi: Industrial Printing Works Ltd, 1992.

the bottom in parishes and religious projects are convinced of the equality of women and men for the need of mutual collaboration between them. They have to be liberated from fear of losing their power. Training programmes are needed for future priests and religious in order to address this need and take the issue more seriously if we want to implement the directives of Vatican Council II regarding the involvement of the Church in the modern world. Such subjects should be made compulsory for all priestly and religious students.

## CONCLUSION

Empowerment of women is not one person's task but everyone's responsibility in the society. Civic education is highly needed in our society today in order to empower women for their full participation in development of our country and other parts of the world. There is great need for women education right from primary school through university, besides other post- secondary school learning. This is the main key that would act as a springboard for women towards attainment of opportunities for professional participation in all spheres of life. Tradition influences some communities in such a way that even high achieving students end up abandoning their future plans so as not to neglect their traditionally prescribed roles in home. For example, in roles, socio-cultural constraints, which prevent the full participation of women, should be overcome in societies.

Some traditional Muslim societies, for instance, exclude women from decision- making positions and posts in the judiciary. In some cultures, girls are withdrawn from schooling at the age of puberty, for example, among the Maasai of Kenya. Some communities consider a highly educated woman as a status symbol in marriage for her family to receive more bridal wealth. This fact, unfortunately, encourages putting commercial tags on women. But the high cost of education has led to further restriction of female participation in education. More efforts are needed to create awareness in encouraging and promoting female education, including civic education through magazines, newsletters, radio programmes, television, holding seminars and special networks. To end oppression and discrimination against women in all its forms, people need to take some bold measures immediately. This will require incorporating the principle of equality of men and women in their legal system through abolishing all discriminatory laws and adopting appropriate ones that prohibit discrimination against women. Tribunals and other public institutions should be established to ensure the effective protection of women against oppression. This will ensure elimination of all acts of

discrimination and oppression against women by individuals, organizations or enterprises in Kenya and all other parts of the world. Equality of men and women should be based on human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural and civil fields, among others. Consequently, as human persons, we are called to create solidarity among ourselves, starting with individual but then proceeding as the whole society in practicing human rights. I call upon the Catholic Church, other religious groups and the Government of Kenya to enhance the empowerment of women in Kenya and in the whole world.

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## **APPENDICES**

# **APPENDICES**

**Convention**  
*on the*  
**Elimination**  
*of all forms of*  
**Discrimination**  
*against*  
**Women**



United Nations

# ***Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women***

## **The States Parties to the present Convention,**

*Noting* that the Charter of the United Nations reaffirms faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women,

*Noting* that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms the principle of the inadmissibility of discrimination and proclaims that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, including distinction based on sex,

*Noting* that the States Parties to the International Covenants on Human Rights have the obligation to ensure the equal right of men and women to enjoy all economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights,

*Considering* the international conventions concluded under the auspices of the United Nations and the specialized agencies promoting equality of rights of men and women,

*Noting also* the resolutions, declarations and recommendations adopted by the United Nations and the specialized agencies promoting equality of rights of men and women,

*Concerned*, however, that despite these various instruments extensive discrimination against women continues to exist,

*Recalling* that discrimination against women violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity, is an obstacle to the participation of women, on equal terms with men, in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries, hampers the growth of the prosperity of society and the family and makes more difficult the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their countries and of humanity,

*Concerned* that in situations of poverty women have the least access to food, health, education, training and opportunities for employment and other needs,

*Convinced* that the establishment of the new international economic order based on equity and justice will contribute significantly towards the promotion of equality between men and women,

*Emphasizing* that the eradication of apartheid, of all forms of racism, racial discrimination, colonialism, neo-colonialism, aggression, foreign occupation and domination and interference in the internal affairs of States is essential to the full enjoyment of the rights of men and women,

*Affirming* that the strengthening of international peace and security, relaxation of international tension, mutual cooperation among all States irrespective of their social and economic systems, general and complete disar-

mament, and in particular nuclear disarmament under strict and effective international control, the affirmation of the principles of justice, equality and mutual benefit in relations among countries and the realization of the right of peoples under alien and colonial domination and foreign occupation to self-determination and independence, as well as respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity, will promote social progress and development and as a consequence will contribute to the attainment of full equality between men and women,

*Convinced* that the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields,

*Bearing in mind* the great contribution of women to the welfare of the family and to the development of society, so far not fully recognized, the social significance of maternity and the role of both parents in the family and in the upbringing of children, and aware that the role of women in procreation should not be a basis for discrimination but that the upbringing of children requires a sharing of responsibility between men and women and society as a whole,

*Aware* that a change in the traditional role of men as well as the role of women in society and in the family is needed to achieve full equality between men and women,

*Determined* to implement the principles set forth in the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and, for that purpose, to adopt the measures required for the elimination of such discrimination in all its forms and manifestations,

*Have agreed* on the following:

## **Part I**

### **Article 1**

For the purposes of the present Convention, the term "discrimination against women" shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

### **Article 2**

States Parties condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women and, to this end, undertake:

(a) To embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their

national constitutions or other appropriate legislation if not yet incorporated therein and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of this principle;

(b) To adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women;

(c) To establish legal protection of the rights of women on an equal basis with men and to ensure through competent national tribunals and other public institutions the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination;

(d) To refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and to ensure that public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity with this obligation;

(e) To take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise;

(f) To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women;

(g) To repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women.

### ***Article 3***

States Parties shall take in all fields, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men.

### ***Article 4***

1. Adoption by States Parties of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women shall not be considered discrimination as defined in the present Convention, but shall in no way entail as a consequence the maintenance of unequal or separate standards; these measures shall be discontinued when the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved.

2. Adoption by States Parties of special measures, including those measures contained in the present Convention, aimed at protecting maternity shall not be considered discriminatory.

### ***Article 5***

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures:

(a) To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferi

ority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women;

(b) To ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children, it being understood that the interest of the children is the primordial consideration in all cases.

### ***Article 6***

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women.

## ***Part II***

### ***Article 7***

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right:

(a) To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;

(b) To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government;

(c) To participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.

### ***Article 8***

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations.

### ***Article 9***

1. States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality. They shall ensure in particular that neither marriage to an alien nor change of nationality by the husband during marriage shall automatically change the nationality of the wife, render her stateless or force upon her the nationality of the husband.

2. States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children.

## ***Part III***

### ***Article 10***

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

- (a) The same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas; this equality shall be ensured in preschool, general, technical, professional and higher technical education, as well as in all types of vocational training;
- (b) Access to the same curricula, the same examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard and school premises and equipment of the same quality;
- (c) The elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods;
- (d) The same opportunities to benefit from scholarships and other study grants;
- (e) The same opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programmes, particularly those aimed at reducing, at the earliest possible time, any gap in education existing between men and women;
- (f) The reduction of female student drop-out rates and the organization of programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely;
- (g) The same opportunities to participate actively in sports and physical education;
- (h) Access to specific educational information to help to ensure the health and well-being of families, including information and advice on family planning.

### ***Article 11***

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

- (a) The right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings;
- (b) The right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment;
- (c) The right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and conditions of service and the

right to receive vocational training and retraining, including apprenticeships, advanced vocational training and recurrent training;

(d) The right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work;

(e) The right to social security, particularly in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age and other incapacity to work, as well as the right to paid leave;

(f) The right to protection of health and to safety in working conditions, including the safeguarding of the function of reproduction.

2. In order to prevent discrimination against women on the grounds of marriage or maternity and to ensure their effective right to work, States Parties shall take appropriate measures:

(a) To prohibit, subject to the imposition of sanctions, dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or of maternity leave and discrimination in dismissals on the basis of marital status;

(b) To introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances;

(c) To encourage the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of a network of child-care facilities;

(d) To provide special protection to women during pregnancy in types of work proved to be harmful to them.

3. Protective legislation relating to matters covered in this article shall be reviewed periodically in the light of scientific and technological knowledge and shall be revised, repealed or extended as necessary.

### ***Article 12***

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, access to health care services, including those related to family planning.

2. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 1 of this article, States Parties shall ensure to women appropriate services in connection with pregnancy, confinement and the post-natal period, granting free services where necessary, as well as adequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation.

### ***Article 13***

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in other areas of economic and social life in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

- (a) The right to family benefits;
- (b) The right to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit;
- (c) The right to participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life.

### **Article 14**

1. States Parties shall take into account the particular problems faced by rural women and the significant roles which rural women play in the economic survival of their families, including their work in the non-monetized sectors of the economy, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the application of the provisions of this Convention to women in rural areas.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development and, in particular, shall ensure to such women the right:

- (a) To participate in the elaboration and implementation of development planning at all levels;
- (b) To have access to adequate health care facilities, including information, counselling and services in family planning;
- (c) To benefit directly from social security programmes;
- (d) To obtain all types of training and education, formal and non-formal, including that relating to functional literacy, as well as, *inter alia*, the benefit of all community and extension services, in order to increase their technical proficiency;
- (e) To organize self-help groups and cooperatives in order to obtain equal access to economic opportunities through employment or self-employment;
- (f) To participate in all community activities;
- (g) To have access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform as well as in land resettlement schemes;
- (h) To enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, transport and communications.

## ***Part IV***

### ***Article 15***

1. States Parties shall accord to women equality with men before the law.
2. States Parties shall accord to women, in civil matters, a legal capacity identical to that of men and the same opportunities to exercise that capacity. In particular, they shall give women equal rights to conclude contracts and to administer property and shall treat them equally in all stages of procedure in courts and tribunals.
3. States Parties agree that all contracts and all other private instruments of any kind with a legal effect which is directed at restricting the legal capacity of women shall be deemed null and void.
4. States Parties shall accord to men and women the same rights with regard to the law relating to the movement of persons and the freedom to choose their residence and domicile.

### ***Article 16***

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:
  - (a) The same right to enter into marriage;
  - (b) The same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent;
  - (c) The same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution;
  - (d) The same rights and responsibilities as parents, irrespective of their marital status, in matters relating to their children; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;
  - (e) The same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights;
  - (f) The same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption of children, or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;
  - (g) The same personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation;
  - (h) The same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property, whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration.
2. The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a

minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory.

## ***Part V***

### ***Article 17***

1. For the purpose of considering the progress made in the implementation of the present Convention, there shall be established a Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (hereinafter referred to as the Committee) consisting, at the time of entry into force of the Convention, of eighteen and, after ratification of or accession to the Convention by the thirty-fifth State Party, of twenty-three experts of high moral standing and competence in the field covered by the Convention. The experts shall be elected by States Parties from among their nationals and shall serve in their personal capacity, consideration being given to equitable geographical distribution and to the representation of the different forms of civilization as well as the principal legal systems.

2. The members of the Committee shall be elected by secret ballot from a list of persons nominated by States Parties. Each State Party may nominate one person from among its own nationals.

3. The initial election shall be held six months after the date of the entry into force of the present Convention. At least three months before the date of each election the Secretary-General of the United Nations shall address a letter to the States Parties inviting them to submit their nominations within two months. The Secretary-General shall prepare a list in alphabetical order of all persons thus nominated, indicating the States Parties which have nominated them, and shall submit it to the States Parties.

4. Elections of the members of the Committee shall be held at a meeting of States Parties convened by the Secretary-General at United Nations Headquarters. At that meeting, for which two thirds of the States Parties shall constitute a quorum, the persons elected to the Committee shall be those nominees who obtain the largest number of votes and an absolute majority of the votes of the representatives of States Parties present and voting.

5. The members of the Committee shall be elected for a term of four years. However, the terms of nine of the members elected at the first election shall expire at the end of two years; immediately after the first election the names of these nine members shall be chosen by lot by the Chairman of the Committee.

6. The election of the five additional members of the Committee shall be held in accordance with the provisions of paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of this article, following the thirty-fifth ratification or accession. The terms of two of the additional members elected on this occasion shall expire at the end of two

years, the names of these two members having been chosen by lot by the Chairman of the Committee.

7. For the filling of casual vacancies, the State Party whose expert has ceased to function as a member of the Committee shall appoint another expert from among its nationals, subject to the approval of the Committee.

8. The members of the Committee shall, with the approval of the General Assembly, receive emoluments from United Nations resources on such terms and conditions as the Assembly may decide, having regard to the importance of the Committee's responsibilities.

9. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall provide the necessary staff and facilities for the effective performance of the functions of the Committee under the present Convention.

### ***Article 18***

1. States Parties undertake to submit to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for consideration by the Committee, a report on the legislative, judicial, administrative or other measures which they have adopted to give effect to the provisions of the present Convention and on the progress made in this respect:

- (a) Within one year after the entry into force for the State concerned; and
- (b) Thereafter at least every four years and further whenever the Committee so requests.

2. Reports may indicate factors and difficulties affecting the degree of fulfilment of obligations under the present Convention.

### ***Article 19***

1. The Committee shall adopt its own rules of procedure.
2. The Committee shall elect its officers for a term of two years.

### ***Article 20***

1. The Committee shall normally meet for a period of not more than two weeks annually in order to consider the reports submitted in accordance with article 18 of the present Convention.

2. The meetings of the Committee shall normally be held at United Nations Headquarters or at any other convenient place as determined by the Committee.

### ***Article 21***

1. The Committee shall, through the Economic and Social Council, report annually to the General Assembly of the United Nations on its activities and may make suggestions and general recommendations based on the examination of reports and information received from the States Parties. Such suggestions and general recommendations shall be included in the report of the Committee together with comments, if any, from States Parties.

2. The Secretary-General shall transmit the reports of the Committee to the Commission on the Status of Women for its information.

### ***Article 22***

The specialized agencies shall be entitled to be represented at the consideration of the implementation of such provisions of the present Convention as fall within the scope of their activities. The Committee may invite the specialized agencies to submit reports on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their activities.

## ***Part VI***

### ***Article 23***

Nothing in this Convention shall affect any provisions that are more conducive to the achievement of equality between men and women which may be contained:

- (a) In the legislation of a State Party; or
- (b) In any other international convention, treaty or agreement in force for that State.

### ***Article 24***

States Parties undertake to adopt all necessary measures at the national level aimed at achieving the full realization of the rights recognized in the present Convention.

### ***Article 25***

1. The present Convention shall be open for signature by all States.
2. The Secretary-General of the United Nations is designated as the depositary of the present Convention.
3. The present Convention is subject to ratification. Instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.
4. The present Convention shall be open to accession by all States. Accession shall be effected by the deposit of an instrument of accession with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

### ***Article 26***

1. A request for the revision of the present Convention may be made at any time by any State Party by means of a notification in writing addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.
2. The General Assembly of the United Nations shall decide upon the steps, if any, to be taken in respect of such a request.

### ***Article 27***

1. The present Convention shall enter into force on the thirtieth day after

the date of deposit with the Secretary-General of the United Nations of the twentieth instrument of ratification or accession.

2. For each State ratifying the present Convention or acceding to it after the deposit of the twentieth instrument of ratification or accession, the Convention shall enter into force on the thirtieth day after the date of the deposit of its own instrument of ratification or accession.

### ***Article 28***

1. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall receive and circulate to all States the text of reservations made by States at the time of ratification or accession.

2. A reservation incompatible with the object and purpose of the present Convention shall not be permitted.

3. Reservations may be withdrawn at any time by notification to this effect addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who shall then inform all States thereof. Such notification shall take effect on the date on which it is received.

### ***Article 29***

1. Any dispute between two or more States Parties concerning the interpretation or application of the present Convention which is not settled by negotiation shall, at the request of one of them, be submitted to arbitration. If within six months from the date of the request for arbitration the parties are unable to agree on the organization of the arbitration, any one of those parties may refer the dispute to the International Court of Justice by request in conformity with the Statute of the Court.

2. Each State Party may at the time of signature or ratification of this Convention or accession thereto declare that it does not consider itself bound by paragraph 1 of this article. The other States Parties shall not be bound by that paragraph with respect to any State Party which has made such a reservation.

3. Any State Party which has made a reservation in accordance with paragraph 2 of this article may at any time withdraw that reservation by notification to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

### ***Article 30***

The present Convention, the Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish texts of which are equally authentic, shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

# **APPENDICES**