

**THE PHENOMENON OF OPPRESSION OF WOMEN AND THE CULTURAL,  
RELIGIOUS PRACTICES AND TEACHINGS: A CASE STUDY OF  
BUSHENYI DISTRICT**

**BY**

**ABAMWESIGA ARABELLA**

**REG.NO: 2010/U/HD/088/MARS**


**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE AWARD OF MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES OF  
KYAMBOGO UNIVERSITY**

**DECEMBER 2014**

**DECLARATION**

I, ABAMWESIGA ARABELLA, declare that this research is my original work; it has not been presented to any other University.

NAME ABAMWESIGA ARABELLA

Sign.  .....

Telephone: 0752864138


Date: 17<sup>TH</sup> DEC. 2014 .....

### SUPERVISOR'S APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "The phenomenon of oppression of women and the cultural, religious practices and teachings:" A case study of Bushenyi District has been written under my supervision and is now ready for examination

Principal supervisor

Name: Dr. Sulipicius Tumushabe

Sign:.....

Date:.....18/12/2014.....

Co-Supervisor

Name: Dr. John Baptist Matovu

Sign:.....

Date:.....18/12/2014.....

## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my father, Mr. Abiaz Mujinya and mother Rev, Can, Dr. Eddidah – Mary Mujinya, my first teachers for hard work, my sisters Reumah, Rahab, Racheal, my brothers Remi and Ridley. Lastly, in a special way I dedicate this work to my beloved husband Mr. Martin Kyeyamwa and our beloved daughter Alysha Nina Kyeyamwa.

This work is a result of your financial support, selfless sacrifice and prayers.

God bless you.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge with much gratitude all people God has used to contribute to this dissertation especially by giving professional guidance, financial and moral support. Special appreciation goes to my supervisors Dr. Sulpicius Tumushabe and Dr John Baptist Matovu for the professional guidance and commitment they exhibited in enabling me to come up with this work.

My sincere thanks go to my dear parents Mr Abiaz Mujinya and Rev.Can. Dr Eddidah Mujinya for the financial support they accorded to me during the course. They always gave me their wise counsel and offered their precious time to the tedious task of proofreading the early version of my work.

Special thanks go to my family who did put up everything together for my academic success.

I am particularly grateful to my husband and our daughter Alysha for their support, care, patience, loving Kindness while I was preparing this work.

I would like to thank Rev. Can Amos Turyahabwe the Head of Department (UCU) Foundation Studies working together with the course co-ordinators for adjusting my timetable at Uganda Christian University to enable me carry out the necessary research related to this study.

I thank Mrs. Kevin Lubulwa, Mrs. Lilian Mukibi and Ms. Faith Pacutho, Ochan Benard and Stella Y for professional work of editing and proofreading this dissertation. I say thank you very much.

Finally, I thank some of my friends like Natamba Shadrack, Lukaire Sam, Mbabazi Jennifer, Lugemwa Patrick and colleagues at Uganda Christian University especially in Foundation department who in one way or the other helped and advised me towards this work.

To all my informants and those who willingly responded to the questionnaires. I thank you

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the oppression of women in the case study area-Bushenyi District.

In chapter one, the dissertation identified the back ground of the study, the statement of the problem, hypothesis, objectives, scope and the significance of the study, review of related literature, methodology, constraints, solutions and the definition of the terms.

All over the world, women have been oppressed, abused physically, emotionally, socially, economically and in all aspects of life. Despite some laws put forward to protect the human rights and existence of formal education, the study revealed that still women experience oppression of various forms. For instance beatings harr The researcher therefore discovered this problem worldwide, on country level that is in (Uganda) and District level (Case study of Bushenyi District).

The population of the study comprised of women, men, church leaders, probation officer and Local councils. The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative approaches of data collection. The tools used in data collection were questionnaires, oral interviews, focus group discussion, observation and document review.

The researcher was guided by both main and specific objectives of the study as categorized in different chapters of the study. The first specific objective of the study was discussed in chapter two as it examined the existing oppressive cultural beliefs and practices among Banyankole in Bushenyi District. That is oppressive taboos, proverbs and sayings.

The second objective of the study in chapter three identified the effects of oppression of women in Bushenyi District, for example; loss of self-esteem, poverty, diseases, divorce and separation, hatred and death. The study showed the third specific objective in chapter four as; the paradoxical nature of religious teachings on oppression of women. These included; both New and Old Testament teachings in the bible, the Islamic teachings that encourage and discourage oppression of women.

Chapter five of the study found out the possible solutions to women oppression in Bushenyi District as stated as the fourth specific objective of the study.

The study discovered that there is oppression of women in Bushenyi District. It was also found out that the cause of oppression of women is mainly due to upbringing and oppressive cultural beliefs and practices. There were also other ways of oppression of women like some religious teachings and modern ways like due to technology, media, education, employment.

Finally the researcher gave the recommendation in chapter five that strict laws should be set by government that are against oppression of women, use of media to sensitize people the ways of oppression of women and how to solve them. The parents should ensure proper parenting and up-bringing of children by discouraging oppressive cultural beliefs and practices.

The researcher recommended that a campaign against oppression women in Bushenyi District and should be supported by sexes. This campaign should be aimed at inculcating courage, ability and support women socially, economically, emotionally and physically. This helps people especially women realize their God given purposes in life and they help one another on how to prevent oppression of women. Indeed God's initial purpose for creating man and woman was not to harass each other but to work in unity and help each other in creativity. God does not despise women or look at their weaknesses but their hearts, therefore they need to wake up and support each other in fighting for their rights and reduce oppression of women.

There should be encouragement of seminars and workshops to sensitize men and women particularly on their plights and rights. Through the acquisition of such knowledge on women's rights, negative attitudes towards women could be changed. The entire community should be sensitized about the dangers of oppression of women and be taught how they can avoid them. It is important that the citizens be educated and be sensitized about human rights. This will equip citizens to fight and defend these rights

## ABBREVIATION

1. CEDAW	: Convention on Elimination of Discrimination against Women
2. ACFODE	: Action for Development
3. UNIFEM	: United Nations Development Fund for Women
4. UNFPA	: United Nations Population Fund
5. UNDP	: United Nations Development Program.
6. UNSRVAV	: United Nations Special Reporters on Violence against Women.
7. MU	: Mothers Union
8. WEWE	: Women against Women exploitation
9. NGO	: Non-Governmental Organization
10. FGM	: Female Genital Mutilation.
11. UN	: United Nations
12. REV	: Reverend
13. UCU	: Uganda Christian University
14. Et.al	: Stands for at alia (and other)
15. Op. Cit	: Same work cited for book dictionary and encyclopedia
16. L.C1&3	: Local council 1&3
17. NAADS	: National Agricultural Advisory Services

## CHAPTER ONE

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The focus of the study is about the Phenomenon of oppression of Women in Bushenyi District in Western Uganda. Phenomenon refers to a fact or situation that is observed to exist or happen, especially one whose cause is in question. Phenomenon means unusual or remarkable event or incident that is observable. It is an unfair and cruel way of treating a person preventing him or her from having opportunities and giving them the same freedom, rights as other people. Throughout the world, women still suffer from oppression, exploitation and discrimination for no reason other than their gender. In essence, the plight and suffering of women is common in Bushenyi. Today, major issues such as peace, social and economic development and spread of democracy have become unavoidably entangled with the issues of women.<sup>1</sup>

Many women all over the world go through oppression in families, places of work, business, educational institutions, politics, medical institutions and many more. This happens in numerous forms which include forced labor, human trafficking, forced prostitution, forced marriage, and child sexual abuse among others.

Besides, lots of them are harassed sexually (rape, molest, assault), some women who are not attractive to men for marriage like the disabled and the insane and mad are made pregnant by anonymous men who later abandon them. In families, various men have gone an extra mile to oppress their wives; even those who are employed have to surrender all their earnings to the husbands.

Women are often in great danger in places where they should be safest. For example, with a regime of terror and violence, they often suffer at the hands of somebody close to them. They are unable to make their own decisions, voice their own opinions or protect themselves and their

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<sup>1</sup> sarvnaz chitsaz and soona samsami, "Iranian Women and girls-victims of exploitation and violence", <http://www.wfafi.org/laws.pdf> accessed on 8.8.2011

children for fear of further repercussions. Their human rights are stolen from them by the ever present threat of violence or exploitation<sup>2</sup>, and oppression.

Sexual abuse and rape in intimate relationships is not considered a crime in most countries and many societies do not consider forced sex as rape if they are married. The assumption is that once a woman enters a contract of marriage, the husband has the right to unlimited sexual intercourse.<sup>3</sup>

Mpagi Wasswa notes that “a Woman in Africa was given a special place of honor among different African societies; for she was regarded as mother of the society.”<sup>4</sup> Actually this was true in Ankole in the Western part of Uganda. However, one wonders whether really women were valued and honored since at the same time they were forbidden some types of nutritious foods like, chicken, eggs, goat’s meat, fish, and grasshoppers. Also they were always expected to be behind in the kitchen with their children and not with men discussing constructive ideas or enjoying leisure almost endlessly like some men do.

Today, in Bushenyi district, literacy levels have improved since both males and females have gone to school. Therefore due to formal education both girls and boys have attained education where consequently both have acquired knowledge and are employed. Even when some women have become the breadwinners, they are still exploited and oppressed. For instance, in a situation where the couple has a joint bank account, sometimes the husband withdraws money without her consent and spends it alone, or some men go ahead and spend it with other women or fellow men caring for them like buying them food and drinks. Even there are instances where the wife also receives salary through separate personal account and contributes much or more than the husband to the family income. In such case the man may be the one who spends the money most. In other incidences a wife receives salary through her personal separate account, then she is

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<sup>2</sup> Mehr Khan, “Domestic Violence Against women and Girls”, United Nations Children’s Fund, Innocent Research Centre, <http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/digest6.e.pdf>, Florence, Italy, 2000, Accessed on 1.8.2011

<sup>3</sup> Mehr Khan, UNICEF Innocent Research Centre, “Domestic Violence Against Women and girls”, <http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/digest6.e.pdf>, NO.6, June, 2000, Accessed on 1.8.2010

<sup>4</sup> Peter Wasswa Mpagi, [African Christian Theology In Contemporary Context](#), 2002 .p173

forced to go and withdraw the money and handover all of it to the husband. All this amounts to oppression.

Sometimes when a man is adulterous, you find that a wife is the breadwinner. She carries out investments here and there, nevertheless the man goes ahead and sells off what the woman has invested in and spends the money with concubines. Here both the man and fellow women have participated in the oppression of that particular woman who is a breadwinner.

### **1.1.1 Total population and population density**

According to Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2008, Bushenyi district has a population of 916,400 with about 80% of the total population rural. The district has 5 counties and 7 sub-counties. The population growth is 3.1% and the literacy rate is 54%. During the study, it was discovered that many criminal cases of abuse and violence in local councils, police posts and probation officers were mostly gender based.

### **1.1.2 The Social-Economic and Political Activities of Bushenyi**

Bushenyi District is fairly endowed with natural resources. The economy of the district depends mainly on agriculture. Agriculture is a source of food for the population, subsistence income for most families and provides direct employment to 86.7% of the district population, as well as supplying raw materials to industries. The majority of the people are involved in subsistence agriculture with some engaged in commercial production of crops including; coffee, tea, sweet bananas & matooke. Ranching for beef and dairy farming for milk production are widely practiced on both subsistence and commercial scales in Bushenyi District. Hybrid cattle are widely raised on farms in the district. The hybrids produce more milk per animal and yield more beef per carcass and therefore are more profitable than the local breeds. Soil degradation, poor marketing and processing systems and frequent outbreak of crop and livestock diseases are some of the challenges that the farmers in the district face.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Uganda National Health User's/ Consumer Organization (UNHCO), Establishing Incidence of Health Provider Absenteeism in Bushenyi, May 2010, p.14

Just like in some other parts of Uganda, one moving around the district of Bushenyi will come across many drunkards, who desert their families and indulge in alcoholism and its byproducts like child abuse, domestic violence, hooliganism and idleness all of which are likely causes of women oppression. The district is selected because despite it being considered relatively prosperous, it is believed to have high incidences that show oppression of women.

### 1.1.3 Religious Elements

Most of the people in Bushenyi are believers under the Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Pentecostals, and Seventh Day Adventists denominations. There are also some Moslems in different areas. People in Bushenyi believe that religion shapes a human being morally, spiritually, socially, physically and emotionally. Therefore there are many people who are committed to their religion in order to be healthy in all aspects of life. However, it is surprising to find that in a community where people seem committed to their religious faiths still one realizes high levels of human oppression especially towards women.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

In many countries of the world especially in Africa, women have been abused, denied their rights, exploited, oppressed and at times marginalized politically, socially, physically, economically, and emotionally. The presence of different women-oriented organizations such as Women against Women exploitation (WEWE), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Mothers Union to fight and advocate for the freedom and rights of women in Uganda attests to the women oppression in Uganda.

Despite the success registered by various religions and other organizations, these organizations, many women in developing countries like Uganda are still subjected to social- economic and other forms oppression. This is common especially in rural areas of the country partly due illiteracy and ignorance of women but also partly due to insufficient efforts of the government and other stakeholders to deal with this vice.



Although Uganda gained her independence since 1962, most women have continued to suffer abuses of oppressed under their male counterparts in different spheres of life. In circumstances where women have reached the same levels with men such as educational qualifications and women are economically well off, they have continued to suffer various insults from their employers, husbands, and the society in general. For instance, according to research conducted by Uganda Media Women's Association, over 40% of marriages in Uganda end up in separation. In addition to that, some women are denied the freedom of speech, expression, movement and worship by their husbands, employers, or even their parents in homes. Some women are unable to make their decisions, to give their own opinions which have affected their confidence and self-esteem. Therefore, it was upon this background that the researcher intended to carry out the study, investigating the extent to which women have been oppressed in Bushenyi district.

### **1.3 HYPOTHESIS**

The cause of oppression of Women is due to upbringing and oppressive cultural beliefs and practices.

### **1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

The study was guided by both general objective as well as specific objectives.

#### **1.4.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE:**

The aim of this Research is to assess the cultural, religious nature of women oppression and its effects on them in Bushenyi District.

#### **1.4.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

- I. To examine the existing oppressive cultural beliefs and practices among Banyankole in Bushenyi District.
- II. To identify the effects of oppression of women in Bushenyi District
- III. To show the paradoxical nature of religious teachings on oppression of women
- IV. To find out the possible solutions to women oppression in Bushenyi District.

## **1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

### **1.6.1 Geographical scope**

The study was carried out in Bushenyi District, sampled on 3 Sub counties in Igara County. (Kyabugimbi, Kyeizooba, and Bumbaire). Bushenyi District is located in South Western Uganda, 310 Km from Kampala. It boards with Rubirizi District in the North, Buhweju District in North East, Sheema District in the East and South, and Mitooma in the West.

The district is selected because it is believed to have high incidences that show oppression of women.

### **1.6.2 Content Scope**

The study focused particularly on investigating the causes, effects and religious teachings on women oppression in Bushenyi District.

### **1.6.3 Time Scope**

The period of the study was mainly from 1962 to 2014, a time when high oppression of women was observed. This period was manageable in terms of money, written literature, available eyewitnesses and observations.

## **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The research exposed some levels of Women oppression in Bushenyi District and to a great extent showed the oppressive cultural beliefs and practices that have led to the oppression of women. The findings enlightened the local authorities and policy makers about the value attached to gender equality and to help uplift the status of women in the society.

The study will add more information on the body of knowledge about the topic and it will further act as a spring board for various researchers and policy makers who are interested in the same subject.

## **1.7. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

The basis of this study was built on the foundation of different great scholars, researchers, theologians, philosophers, who already enlightened the people about women, and how they are oppressed in different societies socially, economically, physically, emotionally, and politically. The main element of this Research was attained through considering the supportive information, documentation in books, newspapers, journals related to the phenomenon of oppression of women in social, cultural, economic, political, religious, physical, and psychological aspects.

#### **1.7.1 Oppressive Cultural Beliefs and Practices.**

Customs and traditional practices often have a tighter hold on the community; this may not all be to the disadvantage of women but some directly threaten women's bodies, health, social status and freedom of movement. Forced and bonded labor is common in rural areas and isolation may be greater because of distance and poor roads.

The question of women's status and the issue of oppression of women are relevant to every culture and society on the globe. There is no doubt that there are many women in Africa who daily experience, suffer oppression of all kinds without complaining or harboring any kind of bitterness. Myles Munroe states that every culture and society is facing the dilemma of identity. Traditional views of what it means to be a woman and changing cultural and marital roles are causing women conflict in their relationship with men.<sup>6</sup> The Researcher agrees with Myles and realizes that there is a need to lay new groundwork for raising a woman's status, in every community by analyzing the oppressive cultural beliefs and practices especially in Bushenyi District.

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<sup>6</sup> Myles Munroe, Understanding the Purpose and Power of Woman, USA, Whitaker House, New Kensington, P.12

Many people undergo cultural oppressive beliefs and practices to the extent of affecting the physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing. For example traditionally, the Banyankole women and female children over 6 years were forbidden to eat eggs, chicken and pork and drink goat's milk. Fish was even a taboo for all members of a tribe. Eventually this would affect their physical health since such nutritious foods were being denied by them. There was a belief that if a man had a journey and met a woman as the first person early morning, it was considered a misfortune or an indication of bad luck ahead of him, hence a man was supposed to cancel the journey.

Also Women were not supposed to sit on a chair or stool, climb trees, whistle, scream, build a house. There were special burials for Banyankole spinsters and those who committed suicide. The body would be cut from a tree by a woman who had attained menopause (encurazara) such a woman was heavily fortified with charms. Traditionally, in Ankole a woman who is married but leaves her marital home in distress will be forced to return to her husband. Nothing is done, however, to a man who brings in extra women. The Banyankole girls were not allowed to choose their bridegrooms themselves. The parents' father found a good family for them.<sup>7</sup> All this proves to us that the oppression of women straight away stretches from cultural beliefs and practices. The researcher will seek to find out to what to what extent these cultural beliefs and practices still negatively affect women's lives in Bushenyi District.

There are different cultural setup structures, customs, beliefs and practices that have left women in tears because of their negative impact for instance female genital mutilation and wife seclusion. Despite the fact that there is evidence from the study conducted and released in June 2006 by World Health Organization showing harmful effects of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) for example psychological effects, death as a result of tetanus, this cultural practice and many others in the same line are still going on against women<sup>8</sup>. Thus the government of Uganda has set up laws that provide that anyone carrying out or facilitating FGM, parents or others is subjected to up to 5 years in prison.

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<sup>7</sup> Mbabazi Geoge, "Banyankole people of Uganda, Banyankole Culture", <http://www.uganda-visit and guide.com/Banyankole>, Accessed on 5.6.2011

<sup>8</sup> Rukia Nakadama, Let us work together to end Female Genital Mutilation, New Vision, 8<sup>th</sup> Thursday, March, 2012 page 12

### **1.7.2 Religion and oppression of Women:**

Paul Chalfant H, Robert Beckley, E & Eddie Palmer state that like other social institutions, the institution of religion has experienced the pressures of Women's movements upon its beliefs, traditions and practices. Medieval Church leaders debated whether or not Women had souls and far more females than males were accused of witchcraft and burned at the stake in Medieval England and hanged in the 17<sup>th</sup> C in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.<sup>9</sup>

Both the Old and the New Testaments support oppression against Women in religion, view that eventually became dominant in the Middle East as Judaic tradition replaced older religious ideologies. In the Old Testament Women are frequently defined as the property of males. One of the Ten Commandments, for example, forbids coveting the wife of a neighbor in the same sense like his other property which should not be the object of envy. The Christian Gospels do soften this harsh attitude toward women, portraying a Jesus who treated women and men as equals. To some extent this is carried over into the writings of Paul, who proclaimed that there should be neither male nor female in church. Yet in writing to Timothy, Paul admonished women to be quiet and submissive and not to hold any place of authority in church as Eve had been the cause of the fall of "mankind" from grace.<sup>10</sup> Thus the study enlightened readers about these oppressive beliefs and practices in religion so that they can interpret them well but not just basing on such teachings to oppress women.

According to Kashmir K. Besla research and preparation for the BCASPVACP conference, she noticed some trends. She informally interviewed several friends about their religious beliefs and practices, and how they may impact a woman when deciding to leave an abusive relationship. She spoke with women of various religious beliefs including Christian, Catholic, Moslem and Sikh and realized in speaking with them that practicing a faith does not mean that the decision to leave an abuser is made easier. In fact, the decision to leave can be made harder because of how the religion is interpreted.

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<sup>9</sup> Paul Chalfant H, Robert Beckley, E & Eddie Palmer, Religion Contemporary Society, Third Edition, USA: Peacock Publishers, 1994, p. 403

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 405

Most women would agree that their God is not a cruel or vengeful God and would not want them to suffer. However, the message many women receive is that they perhaps should suffer, because their suffering is the price they must pay to enter the afterlife. One friend said that her Christian religion teaches forgiveness of the abuser, and that she must be patient and tolerant towards him. She said the woman may be told that the abuse is “her cross to bear, just as Jesus suffered for the world.”<sup>11</sup> The researcher agrees with this information because some people have interpreted the religious teachings in the name of oppression of women or abusing them, hence the study will expose the exploitative religious teachings, beliefs, and practices that need to be understood properly in order not to be used to exploit women.

The women have suffered and been oppressed for long as Mpagi Peter states that it is important to note a few observations of church’s present concern for the liberation of women in Africa. The post-synod Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul II emphasized and denounced the oppression and discrimination of women existing in Africa. John Paul II clearly encourages Christians especially those in authority and would not feel quite at ease sharing their authority with women, to remember that right from the beginning God created man and woman in his image, male and female. Thus from such conviction, the church condemns all customs and practices which oppress women because God discourages them to.

This study has established how religious teachings and practices teach about women oppression and has also established how religious teaching can help to fight oppression of women.

Have you ever wondered why many religions seem to have male gods and if there are female goddesses, they usually take a subordinate role as a wife or minor wife. Many religions in themselves are andocentric (man-centered). Imagine a religion that is biased and gives preference to men. In such a religion, all beliefs, goals and practices will naturally serve for the interest and benefit of men. Women will play a second fiddle in any religion that is andocentric.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Kashmir K.Besla, You Made Your Bed, Newsletter of the BCASVACP, Winter 2006, p.9

<sup>12</sup> Thesigan Nadaraja, “Articles Base,Cultural Exploitation of women”, [http:// www. Articles base.com/ culture\\_articles/cultural\\_exploitation of women](http://www.Articlesbase.com/culture_articles/cultural_exploitation_of_women).posted on Feb.12. 2011

Mpagi Peter, in his book also states that, the women are very much concerned about the church, but the church is not so much concerned about women. This is a blunt statement suggesting the church is not at all interested in the affairs of women and neither is she interested in their liberation wherever they experience oppression and exploitation. When dealing with discussions on women's involvement in church, especially in regard to ordination to sacramental ministry, Oduyoye remarks that views are often expressed in such a way as to end debate "women themselves don't like to be ordained" or women do not like women ministers"<sup>13</sup>

This research has exposed, disclosed more cases of oppression of women in religion in Bushenyi District.

As different religions have come up to address the issues of women in order to improve their status, still some religious leaders while addressing women's issues, use statements that under grade women and still oppress them, I read with concern the statement attributed to the Archbishop of church Uganda where he is quoted in an interview to have said, "I hope you are not going to marry a working woman because you will have a lot of problems"<sup>14</sup>, A Nandhego disagrees with Orombi since she finds this statement very unfortunate at a time when we are doing all efforts to promote girl child education and women empowerment.<sup>15</sup> Indeed it is unfortunate that such statements are still quoted in our contemporary societies hence the study has addressed such statements and other most pressing issues that still lead to oppression of women.

According to Christianity, the Bible states in the book of Genesis 2:18, that a woman is a man's companion. God said, "It is not good for man to be alone, I will make a helper suitable for him". Thus God drew out another self from him so that the man would have this other self to share with. God made the female so that the male would have someone to give or share with in his life. This indicates that women should be respected by men since their original purpose to be created was to be helpers of men but not to be oppressed by them or abandon all domestic work to them.

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<sup>13</sup> Peter Wasswa Mpagi, *African Christian Theology in contemporary Context*, Kisubi: Marianum publishing company Limited, 2010, p.180-183

<sup>14</sup> A. Nandhego, (FDWODE), "I disagree with Orombi", *New Vision*, 8<sup>th</sup>, Thursday, march, 2012.p.10

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*

This study found out that to a smaller extent this Biblical principle or teaching is practical by Christian married men in Bushenyi. Thus women are still oppressed but not considered as helpers to men.

Myles Munroe records that a female is very good for a male, but where purpose is not known, abuse is inevitable. A man needs to appreciate the woman's role of helper and the woman needs discernment when giving help. The woman is meant to bless, support, and honor the man and the man is meant to be a head, a covering and a protection for her. In this way they are helping each other to be all they were created to be<sup>16</sup>. Despite the initial purpose of a woman and man according to the Bible, the world is filled with women who are oppressed, living in tears because they are discriminated and treated poorly.

According to Good News Bible, proverbs 11:22, "the beauty in a woman without good judgment is like gold ring in a pig's snout". Thus the purpose of women and their contribution in families and society at large is numerous and indispensable but if not put into consideration as a sensible opinion by the stakeholders, their praise and appreciation are in vain. Therefore the ongoing oppression of women which has gone unnoticed in a society is a clear indicator that despite the importance of women in a community, there is little or insufficient efforts done to protect women from various oppressive vices.

### **1.7.3 Economic, Physical and Social impact of Oppression of women**

The Uganda participatory poverty Assessment Process (UPPA), Bushenyi District Report 2000 clarifies on Gender issues that Women in Bushenyi District work more than men, irrespective of whether they are in a progressive or poor community. Much work leaves women with no time for social interaction implying less access to information about development issues. At the same time men control most of the major cash crops and not allow their wives to sell especially when prices are favorable. Women and youth are particularly disadvantaged due to lack of skills and

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<sup>16</sup> Myles Munroe, Understand the Purpose and USA, Whitaker house, New Kensington, 2001, p.110\_121



limited access to land .The girl tends to drop out of school ,having started schooling late due to long walking distances, which exposes her to early marriages.<sup>17</sup>

This has shown that women in Bushenyi District are still oppressed, Gender inequalities do exist and they limit Women's participation in the household economy and national development in general.

Economically, there is separation in labor market. Women tend to work in different jobs or sectors that are less valued and offer lower pay than jobs normally dominated by men. The most common sectors where women work include; social work, cleaning jobs and care jobs. Women are underrepresented in managerial or senior positions. This segregation of women in jobs is linked with traditions and stereotypes. Women are always associated with child or caring professions and fewer women are found in the area of science and technology.<sup>18</sup> This is common too with women in Bushenyi District who are mainly associated with jobs of child caring, cleaning, food processing, trading and teaching. These jobs are associated with low pay, and yet they face difficulties in trying to balance work and family. This has led women to try to search for other ways of getting money, like resorting to adultery, prostitution where they are still oppressed and frustrated.

Rural women have poorer wages, more insecure employment and longer hours of work. The widest gaps are in Africa and Asia, where women on average work 12-13 more hours a week than men. Still in the rural setting, men clear the land at the outset of a cultivation cycle but otherwise women frequently do the planting, weeding, harvesting and processing of food crops with little or no male intervention.<sup>19</sup> This has always left women behind in the process development. Some women in Bushenyi have ended up divorcing due to much domestic responsibilities since they are not helped by their husbands, and when they comment or complain, the husbands say they are disrespectful. Also some are forced to turn their homes into a workplace or a place of work into a home so that they can attend to their homes and their small businesses. Hence this research aimed at addressing such oppressive issues of women that affect them in all aspects of life.

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<sup>17</sup> Bushenyi District, The Uganda participatory poverty Assessment Process (UPPA), Bushenyi District Report 2000,

<sup>18</sup> Mary Annet Zammit, "Do Women have Equal opportunities at work place?" Daily Monitor, 10<sup>th</sup>.Friday.2012.p.16

<sup>19</sup> United Nations, The world's Women: Trends and statistics 1970, United Nations, New York,1991, P.82

## **1.8 METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

This chapter highlights the methodology that the researcher used to conduct the study. It includes a research design, area of study and subject selection, sample size and data collection instruments.

### **1.8.1 Research Design**

In this study, I employed several methods like questionnaires, interviews, discussion groups, observations and the related literature. The researcher basically used both qualitative and quantitative methods of research.

### **1.8.2 Area of the study**

The Geographical area was Bushenyi District, Igara County in Three Sub Counties,(Kyabugimbi, kyeizooba and Bumaire).The main reason of this selection was that Bushenyi, is considered to be one of the most developed but with a lot of cases of women oppression with a dynamic competitive, ambitious development oriented population.<sup>20</sup>

### **1.8.3 Subject Selection**

The researcher's main target was to attain the information from different respondents from the three counties of Kyabugimbi, Bumaire and Kyeizooba: women, men, sub-county chiefs, probation officers, church leaders, L.C3 Chair persons. The researcher targeted all the above categories of people totaling to 104. A researcher used dis-proportionate stratified sampling method. This method was used because I could not work out the percentage represented by each subgroup in the target population. These individuals represented the larger group from which they are selected. Also some subgroups were fewer compared to others. Thus the researcher selected unequal number of subgroup.

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<sup>20</sup> Kisubi Muhammad,Mugaju,& Justus ,Rural Health Providers in Southwestern Uganda,1999 .p119

**Table 1: SAMPLE SIZE**

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>POPULATION</b>	<b>SAMPLE SIZE</b>
Married Women	10×3	30
Un Married Women	10×3	30
Married Men	5×3	15
Un Married Men	5×3	15
Religious Leaders	2×3	6
Probation Officer	1	1
Sub County Chiefs	1×3	3
L.C.3 Chairpersons	1×3	3
Police Officers	1×1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>104</b>

### **1.8.5 DATA Collection Instruments**

The study used different types of instruments namely self- constructed Questionnaires, interview guide, observations, group discussions and documentary analysis

#### **1.8.5.1 Questionnaires**

These were designed by the researcher to suit the research objectives and research questions. Questionnaires were used because they easily tap attitude, feelings, interest and opinion of respondent's hence simple language was used so as to elicit responses from the respondents.<sup>21</sup> They allowed collection of data in a short time and were filled at convenience of the respondent. The questionnaire contained questions that were open ended and those that required the respondents to choose from the given alternatives namely: strongly agree, Agree, Strongly

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<sup>21</sup> Amin, E, M, Social Science Research: Conception Methodology and Analysis, Kampala: Makerere University Press,2005

disagree, and Disagree, Not sure. The questionnaire was administered to local leaders, Elders, Women, men, church leaders. (Appendix 1 for a copy of the questionnaire)

#### **1.8.5.2 Interviews**

The researcher adequately prepared herself for interviews, thus prepared fully the Questions and addressed responsibly. The interviewer properly introduced herself before the respondent and explained the purpose why the respondent was selected in the researcher sample. This gave the respondent confidence in answering questions. The researcher clearly used simple language that enabled the respondent understands the questions. I conducted interviews among women, men, Elders, Religious leaders, teachers, Local leaders.

#### **1.8.5.3 Observation**

The research carefully carried out observations in order to collect Data on oppression of women. For instance observing the cases in homes, churches, women organizations, the researcher observed the cases of oppression of women on social, economic, physical and emotional life and their effects. The researcher was also informed about the oppressive cultural practices among Banyankole in Bushenyi District.

#### **1.8.5.4 Group Discussion**

The researcher organized group discussion in order to get the deeper meaning of what was observed. The researcher interviewed different groups of people. For instance in homes, men and women in trading centers, markets, small women groups or associations, church leaders, elders, local councils. Here different questions were asked these groups basing on what the researcher had observed.

#### **1.8.5.5 Documentary Analysis**

Different secondary sources were used too in collecting data. These sources are; books, magazines, Newspapers, Documents, Dictionaries, Journals.

## 1.9 RESEARCH CONSTRAINTS

Several weaknesses affected the general conduct of this study

1. The researcher faced the problem of poor transport because some villages considered in the study, had poor roads, and are far from where the researcher was stationed. This was solved by using motorcycles and bicycles.
2. The researcher experienced a problem of accessing some respondents especially employed people who were ever busy attending to their work, and some like business people were attending to their customers. The researcher solved this constraint by targeting them at a time when they had no customers and some were informed through telephone and fixed appointment with them at convenient and appropriate time.
3. Lack of cooperation and availability of subjects in the study, some people were not free to express themselves to respond to the questions and ended up giving shallow information. This shortcoming was solved by researcher's personal introduction and the university research introductory letter that convinced the respondents that the research was a purely an academic research and not a business/ profit –related study.
4. The researcher met a challenge of insufficient funds in execution of her research. The researcher improvised with the few available resources in terms of purchasing materials, printing, and transport.
5. The researcher faced the problem of lack of enough time for collecting data. This was because when some questionnaires were given to respondents to fill, some would not return them immediately, however this was solved by making follow ups in order to get all the questionnaires being issued out.

## **1.10 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

### **A Woman:**

This is a female human being. The term woman is usually reserved for an adult, with the term girl being the usual term for a female child or adolescent. However, the term woman is sometimes used to identify female human, regardless of age, as phrases such as “women’s rights”<sup>22</sup>

### **Phenomenon:**

It refers to a remarkable fact or event. It means any observable event or incident .It derives from a Greek word phenomenon which means observable. Thus it can be defined as any state or process known through the senses rather than by intuition or reasoning<sup>23</sup>

### **Oppression**

The term oppression is the act of treating someone in a cruel and unfair way and not giving them the same freedom and rights as other people.

### **Culture:**

Hillman defines culture as a complex of symbol systems, embodying, codifying and communicating a humanly constructed and historically transmitted pattern of meanings, values, perceptions, ideas, attitudes, myths, judgments, aspirations, beliefs, commitments and actions through which experience of reality is mediated, interpreted coherently and structured consistently of all component of culture.

### **Religion:**

According to Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, the term Religion is defined as the belief in the existence of a god or gods, and the activities that are connected with the worship of them Durkheim mile defines religion as a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred

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<sup>22</sup> Jimmy Wales, “A Personal appeal from Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales” <http://en.Wikipedia.org/women> ,accessed on 28<sup>th</sup> Nov.2010

<sup>23</sup> The Free Dictionary (By Farlex), “[www.thefreedictionary.com/phenomenon](http://www.thefreedictionary.com/phenomenon)”, Accessed on November. 2010

things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called church, all those who adhere to them.<sup>24</sup>

**Disability:**

This is defined as chronic physical, affective and or cognitive condition(s) that, to a significant extent, preclude normal activities of daily functioning. Disability can affect individuals of all ages. Blindness and decreased vision, brain injury, cardiac disease, deafness and hearing loss, depression, diabetes, eating disorders, emphysema, mental retardation and others.

**Taboos:**

A taboo is a vehement prohibition of an action based on the belief that such behavior is either too scared accused for ordinary individuals to undertake, under threat of supernatural punishment. Such prohibitions relating are present in virtually societies.<sup>25</sup> “Breaking a taboo” is usually considered objectionable by society in general, not merely a subset of culture.

**Totems:**

A totem is a stipulated ancestor of a group of people such as a family, clan, group, and lineage or tribe. Totems support larger groups than the individual person. In kinship and descent, If the apical ancestor of a clan is nonhuman, it is called a totem normally this belief is accompanied by totemic myth.

**Proverbs:**

A proverb refers to a simple and concrete saying popularly known and repeated, which expresses a truth based on a sense or the practical experience of humanity.

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<sup>24</sup> Emile Durkheim, *Les Formes élémentaires De la vie Religieuse*, p.37.

<sup>25</sup> The Wikipedia, “the Free Encyclopedia”, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/taboo> Encyclopedia Britannico onlic “taboo”2012, accessed On 21<sup>st</sup> march 2012

**Myths:**

A myth is a story with a purpose. It tries to explain with a way world is and try to explain the relationship between gods and humans. Even though the events in a myth are usually impossible, they try to send a message that has an important social or religious



## CHAPTER TWO

### OPPRESSIVE CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES AMONG BANYANKOLE.

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the oppressive cultural beliefs and practices among Banyankole as related to the first objective of the study. The oppressive taboos and practices, proverbs and sayings are discussed fully. The Kinyankole culture was wide and diverse because each group of people, family, or clan had its own peculiar way of life. The group of people had specific cultural beliefs and practices that held a strong basis on their social, physical, and emotional aspects of life. These beliefs and practices were supposed to be respected by every person that belonged to Ankole. Specific punishments were given by the clan elders to the wrong doers especially the people who did not respect the cultural beliefs and practices in a society. Eric Goode says: punishment of wrongdoing or social control is obviously necessary to keep the members of a society cooperating on a day today basis and to prevent them from endangering one another's lives<sup>26</sup>

The Banyankole were organized on clan basis. Each clan had its clan leader *Mukuru wekika* and each clan had its totem and the associated taboos<sup>27</sup>. Thus people were meant to respect their beliefs, practices, totems, taboos, and would always learn from the cultural proverbs and myths to maintain the discipline. However according to the findings it was proved that some of the cultural beliefs and practices were oppressive to women as it will be discussed thoroughly in this chapter.

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<sup>26</sup> Erich Goode: Study Guide and Workbook Sociology, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey. Prentice- Hall Inc 1984, p.23

<sup>27</sup> M.T .Mushanga; "The clansystem among the Banyankole" Uganda Journal.Vol.34' Kampala- Uganda, 1970, P.29-33

## 2.2 Oppressive Taboos and Cultural practices:

Customarily, it was a taboo among Banyankole for women and female children over 6 years to eat eggs, chicken, pork and to drink goat's milk and eat fish. Yet, these food stuffs, according to dietitians, are very nutritious and most recommendable for pregnant or breast feeding mothers and young children. This always left such women malnourished. However they would prepare such foods for their husbands and other men in the family but not even be allowed to taste whether salt was enough or not. This was oppression because women were not given a chance also to take the balanced diet like their partners. According to Moreen Nkwasiabwe, it was observed that even today some women also have observed that their husbands go to hotels, restaurants and take- aways in trading centers to eat dishes that they cannot share with their families or buy for them.<sup>28</sup>

Tumushabe S. notes in his book that it was a taboo for a woman to throw a stone at her husband, if she did and thereafter slept with the husband, the husband would suffer from skin disease similar to leprosy. The taboo served to deter a woman from fighting back with stones whenever the husband tried to beat her. Therefore, still this showed oppression of women such prohibition has increased oppression of women today since some husbands have continued to hurt, beat or fight their wives since they know that according to the customs and taboos, a wife is not supposed to fight back but to keep calm.<sup>29</sup> It has led to loss of many lives in many communities in Ankole (Bushenyi). Many people have oppressed women by beating them up especially when they refuse to be involved in their selfish acts like when a man wants to use a woman just for sex and dump her. Also one wonders why women were the only ones that caused the skin diseases to their husbands just after fighting back.

It was taboo for a woman to cross her legs when sitting, *okuteera karigobe*. Crossing legs for women was interpreted to mean claiming equality with men and to a husband's equality in

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<sup>28</sup> Moreen Nkwasiabwe, 42 years, Peasant, Kyabugimbi, Interviewed on 28<sup>th</sup>. 05. 2012

<sup>29</sup> Sulpicius Tumushabe, Justice Insuffocation seen from An African Perspective, Marianum press Kisubi, Uganda, p .48

particular. Such woman would either be sent back to her father's home,<sup>30</sup> or be punished in some way by the family heads. This too showed oppression of women in that they were treated in unfair way. In such case they were not meant to enjoy relaxation as Men. Men were the only ones meant to cross their legs when sitting since they had the authority over women. Despite the promotion of women emancipation in this era, still women in many aspects do not share equal privileges and opportunities. Women are supposed to respect men in every community in everything they do, but in most cases the men have failed to respect to the women, hence oppression.

In Ankole, important decisions such as a choice in marriage were made by elders without consulting the concerned children and their mothers. This was oppressive to women since they were not given a chance to participate in choosing the partners they wanted for their sons or daughters. According to Byaruhanga, different customs were observed in looking for partners for marriage. In some societies the choice was made by the parents and this could be done even before the child was born.<sup>31</sup> This shows that the whole idea was oppressive, since in such a case where the boys or girls rejected the choice made by their fathers and uncles were seen as social deviants. Therefore punishments like being excommunicated from the clan were given.

The norms, taboos and customs of the Banyankole culture were meant to establish and promote moral stability in a community. However the research findings showed that it was unfair that only a few people especially male elders usually were known for determining the cultural norms, values and punishments. This left out many community members especially the women who had nothing to do but just to abide to these suggested norms, customs and taboos as Amos Turyahabwe states: Although the Kinyankole culture had good morals on the other hand, it was oppressive especially to the young and the women. This kind of state made people especially the women to act hypocritically before their fathers and elders in order to win their favor.<sup>32</sup> This is still a common practice to date according to the findings. Most women openly informed the

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Christopher Byaruhanga" The impact of Christianity on African Marriage" The Anglican April A.D.1997, p.15

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p.33

researcher that when they were before their in-laws and elders, they tried as much as possible to act in a positive way, and be careful about what they said or did in order to be loved, respected and welcomed fully in a family. In this way, many women have continued to suffer the consequences of the suggested norms, taboos and customs silently because of their lack of involvement.

Traditionally, women were considered as a weaker sex in Ankole culture and therefore they were not given heavy work like hunting or grazing, fighting, making local beer, digging a latrine, slaughtering, lifting hard logs or trees, slashing, or splitting hard firewood. This was practiced for delicacy protection of a woman especially one who had just given birth. She was not allowed to do heavy work that could hurt her or weaken her physical health. A woman did all the domestic work like cooking, fetching water, cleaning the house, looking after children, washing clothes. This was fair enough.

However, the research findings proved that today, if anything, women are doing much of domestic work and more other activities outside which have brought about oppression of women. Some are not helped at all but instead left alone doing work that would be meant for men. Some respondents explained that even in this contemporary where both man and woman have got white collar jobs, there is still a lot of oppression especially where men fail to perform their duties and responsibilities and yet they expect women to perform theirs without fail. Respondents also continued to say that most men do not mind helping their wives especially with the work at home. For example helping in caring for the children like feeding them, counseling, and advising and washing for them. This has always left them behind, tired and not motivated at all. Yet culturally in Ankole, children are considered to belong to a father not a mother who raises them single handedly. Some respondents in Kyeizooba village like Ngoboka Sam explained that even when a woman is pregnant, some people leave all the washing, digging, fetching water and other activities for her alone.<sup>33</sup> Hence, oppression of women has increased the miscarriages of women or having complications when to giving birth.

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<sup>33</sup> Sam Ngoboka, 58 Years, Priest, Kyeizooba, Interviewed on 4<sup>th</sup>.June. 2012

The research findings reported that when one's wife dies, a large percentage of the husbands marry another wife to look after children and also bear more children. When a man marries another wife, the children most likely face challenges in growing up and working together hand in hand with their step mothers. The children suffer because their father could not look after them without a woman hence decided to marry another wife. However this is not the case with women. For example, a widow does not have a right to choose any other man she wants. Instead a widow is culturally expected to keep within the family and not necessarily re-married by in laws and take care of the children.<sup>34</sup>She suffers and struggles alone caring for her children but cannot get another husband and bring him in her former husband's home or their family

According to Karabezire Goerge of Kabura Kyabuhgimbi, another oppressive cultural practice is experienced during marriage arrangements. In Ankole culture, initially, bride price was a must to be cleared first before a girl was given away to a man for marriage. However, women did not have a say to decide on a number of cows to be paid for bride price. The two families would meet to discuss the matters concerning the bride price. The negotiations were only between men from both partners. This informant described this practice as unfair and therefore, oppressive to women since they were only left in kitchen preparing food for the in-laws to be. The final decisions would be made by men alone without consulting the women.<sup>35</sup>Thus, whether women's side was cheated in terms of the dowry by fixing a higher price or they did not have any say.

Again, culturally it is believed that some men practice polygamy or marry another wife especially when the first woman is aging, or losing attraction to the husband. John Mbiti states that polygamy helps to prevent or reduce unfaithfulness and prostitution, especially on the part of the husband.<sup>36</sup> However, according to Phoebe Bindeba, this is just a disguise by men intended to exploit and oppress women as they seek personal satisfaction at the expense of women. This nature of oppression of women tends to affect the entire family because there is shortage of support from the father/husband. For example, the wife faces the burden of educating, clothing,

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<sup>34</sup> Proscovia Magezi, 29 Years, Social Worker, Bumaire, interviewed on 10.7.2012

<sup>35</sup> Goerge Karabezire, 62 years, peasant, interviewed on 13.7.2012

<sup>36</sup> Christopher Byaruhanga, Op.,cit. p.33

feeding, and cultivating the land alone in order for the entire family to survive. It was also observed by Bindeba Pheobe that sometimes this practice of polygamy can lead to divorce, separation or death.<sup>37</sup>

The Daily Monitor Thursday, August 30, 2012, reported that cheating husband drove wife, daughter to suicide mission. The wife was Gonza Nanteza of Lwamunyo Island in Division B Entebbe Municipality who allegedly found her husband in their marital bed with another woman. "On finding her husband, she picked his shoes and threw them in the lake, which angered him and he started beating her up. The incident got to a climax with the woman drowning herself. Gonza Nanteza could not stomach the fact that her husband had the guts to raise his hand and hit her, even after she caught him in bed with another woman. On Monday, she went around collecting money from whoever owed her, saying she does not want to die and leave people with her money, Mr Sekanjako said.<sup>38</sup> This proved that in most communities in Uganda and Bushenyi District inclusive, women still suffer from their husband's abuses such as; beatings, marrying other wives, and cheating on them by sleeping with other women moreover in their homes.

Another oppressive practice among Banyankole was the idea of inheritance of land and other property in a home after the head of the family had died. The Banyankole society being of a patriarchal setting, it deprived women of the right to inherit the husband's property. In traditional society in Ankole culture, the family included parents, children, grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters and their children in most cases. Mbiti states that the number of family members may range from ten persons to even a hundred where several wives belonging to one husband may be involved.<sup>39</sup> However in this kind of set up the respondents reported that women never inherited the property of the husband. It was the eldest son or the brother of the late that inherited the property.

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<sup>37</sup> Pheobe Bindeba, 64 Years, Tailor, interviewed on 4.6.2012

<sup>38</sup> The Daily Monitor, Cheating husband drives wife, daughter to suicide mission, Thursday, August 30, 2012, P.3

<sup>39</sup> J. Mbiti, op.cit., p.106

Even today, it was reported by some respondents that some families and clans at large, deny women the right to inherit the land, and all other property. This was so, even when one bears in mind that a woman was the one behind doing donkey work to accumulate the property.

Traditionally, land was normally passed on through inheritance. This was done through male line from father to son. Women were regarded as being unable to own land / property of their own and are regarded as mere trustees for male kin. Because of this common perception, on death of a wife there was usually no property distributed as it was assured to belong to the widower<sup>40</sup>. Indeed all this showed oppression of women among Banyankole culture.

In conclusion, the women in Bushenyi District experience oppression as a consequence of the cultural beliefs and practices among the Banyankole. This has been perpetuated through taboos, proverbs and sayings. Although one would assume such folklore was only applicable to the traditional society, it is surprising that such is still relevant and influences the modern family life in Bushenyi. Some of these oppressive cultural beliefs and practices have left many families miserable, broken due to conflicts and violence, others jobless and some have lost their lives.

### **2.3 Oppressive Proverbs and Sayings**

A proverb is a simple and concrete saying and popularly known and repeated, which expresses a truth based on a sense or the practical experience of humanity.

Ankole culture has many proverbs that have different meanings or connotations that are believed by people that they shape society socially, physically, emotionally and in other aspects of life. The kinyankole translation of the word proverb is *Efumu* and it is believed in Kinyanyankole culture that proverbs hold much in a community especially how people conducted themselves. A proverb has to be studied in its context. This is true of proverbs because they teach almost anything. Look for the main truth the proverb teaches. This does not mean there are no secondary lessons, but these must be related to the main message of the proverb. Some of the proverbs are detailed, while others have very little detail. It is not necessary to make everything mean

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<sup>40</sup> A.M. Tripp & J.C. Kwesiga, The Women's movement in Uganda, History challenges, and prospects, 2002, p.

something unless the context warrants it. Proverbs should be best used by focusing on the responsibility of learning the truth and sharing the truth.<sup>41</sup>

Tumushabe Sulpicius notes that: these proverbs, stories, legends and wise sayings were repeatedly drilled in the mind of the young listeners. As a consequence the practice helped in the thorough grasping of the content or lessons there embedded and were an effective way of preserving them for future generations.<sup>42</sup>

However the research findings indicate that some proverbs have been used in a wrong way by oppressing women in many ways and others still directly oppress them. Some people were interviewed and they reported that some cultural proverbs have got teachings or meanings that oppress women in societies as discussed below. One of the model adults emotionally expressed that the cultural beliefs and practices have contributed much to the oppression of women; with concern she said that most of the proverbs in Ankole culture about women reflect oppression. For example the Banyankole have a proverb which says, *Empaya terya namwagazi* literally translated, a he goat does not graze or eat with a she goat or Animals of opposite sex do not graze together. Some people have used such sayings to oppress women, saying that girls are not supposed to work closely with boys and hence they have been oppressed economically, socially, physically, emotionally. For example some parents prefer to send their sons to schools saying that when their children especially girls are mixed with boys they will not concentrate on their studies but instead will be immoral or be oppressed sexually by boys. Two hands are meant to wash each other in communities, but when people ignore working with women just because of some proverbs that are oppressive to them; this always brings increase of women oppression in societies that limit some projects from developing since the few women who can be involved face oppression.

Also some girls are denied education in disguise of culture and more so if the nearby schools are mixed. For example the proverb (*enyena terya nenumi* literally translated as a cow does not graze

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<sup>41</sup> Warren W. Wierbe, *Windows on the parables*, USA, Victors Books-SP Publications, Inc, 1984, P.14-16

<sup>42</sup> Sulpicius Tumushabe, *OP.Cit.*, p.21



or eat with a bull. This is an ill cultural expression that has made wade some women to be oppressed. Some parents fear to send their daughters to mixed schools because they don't want them be mixed with boys and end up be harassed sexually. Therefore they stay at home and carry out other activities while their brothers are in schools studying. This shows oppression in that many times these girls are left at home grumbling in their hearts why they are denied the opportunity to go to school.

Women in Ankole are supposed to listen and fully obey their husbands. A responsible and humble wife should listen to her husband and do whatever he tells her. Therefore it is believed that one should be well behaved, and respect her husband in all aspects of life. Furthermore, when a wife is misbehaving, a man has a right to discipline her as a proverb goes that; *omukazi aba engata, kwezinguruka ozinga endijo*, literally meaning that a woman is like a head pad; such that whenever the husband feels he no longer has love for her, he throws her away . But on the other hand, in some instances this proverb is perceived that a role of a woman is a temporary instrument that is used to carry hard objects that is immediately shunned away after use. The research carried out shows that some men have used women as sexual objects in that afterwards they leave them to suffer. Others marry and when the wife becomes somehow sickly, a man ignores her and marries another wife and the first one suffers,<sup>43</sup> hence oppression.

In Ankole culture, barren women are also considered worthless. They are disrespected, looked at as disadvantageous and outcasts in communities. One respondent who has one child, narrated that usually fellow women remind her of a proverb that says *Nyina omwe niwe nyina busha*<sup>44</sup> literally translated that, a mother with one child is as good as childless, so they encourage her to be extra submissive in all she does since any time the husband can divorce her. The teaching of this proverb is that such a child may die, when he falls sick or he gets involved in a wrangle, parents get worried thinking he might die. However, this proverb is oppressive to women in that it does not reflect in the same vein that *ishe omwe niwe ishe busha* literally translated that, a

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<sup>43</sup> Sarah Muhirwe, 31 years, Teacher, Bweranyangi, Interviewed on 8. 8.2012

<sup>44</sup> James .Ndyanabo Rutaraka, The Teaching & philosophy Underlying Kinyankole Proverbs, 1884, p.86

father with one child is as good as childless<sup>45</sup>. Therefore such women in Bushenyi district are still being oppressed by people around them, for instance, expecting them to submit to the husband throughout without question plus working tirelessly.

There is another proverb that says *omukazi agirwa iba*<sup>46</sup> literally translated as it should always be the husband to offer sex whenever he feels for it and not a wife to demand. Consequently a wife just suffers silently. Or if a wife is too tired, still she has to satisfy the husband in need. Also the proverb can be interpreted that a woman is owned, being shaped, known and disciplined by her husband alone. However some men have taken an extra mile to oppress women by misusing this proverb by denying them sex since in Ankole tradition a woman is not supposed to demand for sex from the husband. According to the findings, some women in Bushenyi District have frankly explained that they are oppressed sexually in that some are denied sex especially the ones whose husbands come back home late at night from bars when they are drunk. Other women in a sorrowful tone narrated that they are denied sex by men especially husbands claiming that they are tired just from work and so women are ignored, and tortured psychologically.<sup>47</sup> Therefore some men have used such proverbs as a way of oppressing women arguing that it's an abomination for a woman to demand for sex from men.

Among the Banyankole, there is a proverb that says *omukazi tatera nduru*<sup>48</sup> literally translated that a woman is not supposed to make an alarm. Traditionally in Ankole, women were not meant to scream or to speak at high tone. This is assumed to make them respectable in society. A woman was also meant to speak once, then a man twice. Thus a woman is meant not to exchange with a man because it shows disrespect. However, the research carried out proved that some people use such proverbs to suppress and oppress women. For instance, some women are beaten, abused sexually (raped) and are not given chances to speak out for their rights simply because such sayings deny them such rights. Some women have even failed to make right choices and

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<sup>45</sup> Gorret. Twesigye, 25 years, peasant, Nyabubare, interviewed on 6.7.2012

<sup>46</sup> Mwene Mushanga, *Enfumu Z'abanyankore n'abakiga*, 2010, p.56

<sup>47</sup> Alvin Abimanya, 33 years, Farmer, Kacuncu, Bweranyangi, Interviewed on 11.9.2012

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p.57

decisions, share with friends, leaders or counselors when oppressed in their communities. When they take a step to open up to some friends, they remind them that women are meant to keep quiet. For instance, when one is raped, they advise them not to share it but to keep silent saying that it is a shame to them and would be embarrassed in a community.<sup>49</sup>

The findings showed that women do not have full say in family matters- even when they have the right solution to a problem, they must wait for a man (husband to give a final answer). In consultations, men go to fellow men for advice but not women. A certain respondent proudly said that as a man, he cannot waste time consulting a woman even when a matter directly concerns a wife. He continued to explain that culturally, in Ankole a man is not expected to engage a woman in any constructive or business discussion.<sup>50</sup>

Another proverb that limits or oppresses women from making decisions says that, *omukazi asa oburo tabuuza erabaagwe*<sup>51</sup>, literally translated as; a role of woman is only to prepare food but not to make decisions on the special sauce to be served, like selecting a domestic animal such as chicken, goat, bull, and sheep to be slaughtered. Culturally, it is a man (husband) to decide on what to be slaughtered in a family; even when it is most likely that one who has been fully caring for the animals is the wife. In any case a wife is not expected to own an animal in a home. All the property belongs to a husband including a wife's gifts from her relatives.

*Omukazi ayera amaino notari wawe*<sup>52</sup>, the woman (wife) with white teeth is not your own. This proverb is used to educate a person who never appreciates the beauty of his wife, or what his own people do.<sup>53</sup> This proverb expresses oppressive tendencies of men or husbands in that one's wife is never appreciated by her own husband. Instead the outside people who do not know her every detail do commend her and even appreciate her beauty. The research findings show that

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<sup>49</sup> Jenniffer Ayebare, 29 Years, Ruyonza, Accountant, interviewed on 11.6.2012

<sup>50</sup> James Turyamubugana, 47 years, Teacher, Interviewed on 13.7.2012

<sup>51</sup> Mwene Mushanga, opp.cit.p.56

<sup>52</sup> Ibid

<sup>53</sup> Sulpiciu Tumushabe, OP.Cit., p.32

some men in Ankole do not appreciate their wives and instead want to be appreciated, this is exploitative because marriage should be built on love and where there is love people should appreciate one another. Most people remember to appreciate their wives when they are already dead. They do this when giving speeches during funeral services or masses as Mayanja Joseph a Ugandan musician sung that *Basiima ogenze*, literally translated that people usually appreciate the one that has already left. Many respondents observed that some men do not appreciate their wives especially after doing some activity that benefits the entire family or their husbands. Some respondents explained that even after a wife has worked hard to prepare a meal for the family, after serving and eating, some husbands cannot mind to appreciate their wives for preparing the meal. They continued to say that this is very common especially when a husband has bought or provided the sauce especially meat. Another respondent with sad facial expression explains that she usually feels bad when she puts much effort to appear smart or dresses smartly but the husband ignores to complement. She explained that she does not like to be told by other men or people that she is smart when the husband had ignored to tell her so.<sup>54</sup>

Another oppression proverb is that: *Omukazi taba mugyenyi*,<sup>55</sup> literally translated as a woman cannot be a visitor. This means that even if a woman is visiting somewhere, she is not supposed to sit and be served comfortably when the people serving are not enough, instead, she should join them and work. For instance I have experienced this many times when I visit somewhere with my husband, I have to give a hand to the people who are preparing some meal for us while my husband comfortably sits to be served or entertained with other men from that home. This means that women help everywhere especially in the domestic work. In Ankole culture when a girl gets married, after some period of time like six or eight months she is supposed to go home for "*kwaruka*" literally meaning the girl's first visit home with the in-laws.

They officially welcome them again in that home after the giveaway and wedding functions. However the oppressive part is that when the woman reaches home, she cannot totally be treated as a visitor like the in-laws but instead also goes to the kitchen and cooks. The findings proved

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<sup>54</sup> Mukore Women Association, Kabura Kyabugimbi, Interviewed on 11.6.2012

<sup>55</sup> Mwene Mushanga, opp.cit.p.57

this as a way of oppression of women because people do not care that one should also be treated as any other visitor after all there is a saying that a woman's office is ever in a kitchen.

*Omukazi arwara yahiisa*<sup>56</sup>, literally translated as a woman falls sick only when she is through with cooking. Culturally this meant that a woman is not supposed to get tired before attending to all house chores. The research indicated that even today, this practice is highly experienced. For example, when a wife is physically weak, she has to prepare food for the husband, and attend to children. This shows oppression of women in that they are not given an opportunity to rest even when a husband is not busy. A woman attends to all the domestic work even when she is not physically strong.

*omukazi yakurusya omushwereho ondiyo*<sup>57</sup>, translated as, when a woman becomes disrespectful, a man should marry another wife. The research findings showed that in some families' women are oppressed by their husbands especially by marrying other women. When their wives are assumed to have become disrespectful, husbands decide to get others just for a change. If that is the case, one wonders as to what happens when a husband becomes irresponsible and does not care for his wife and children. How come a wife is not expected to look for other men, especially when a man decides to leave her husband and marry other wives?

Another proverb states that: *abakazi babiihwa nkabaana*.<sup>58</sup> This is literally translated as, Women are deceived like children. The respondents reported that many times women are treated like children. For instance, when a child is crying for breast milk and yet the mother realizes that it's not the right time to be breast fed, she persuades her by giving her/him some item like a sweet and she keeps quiet. Or when a mother is to go somewhere and the child insists to go with her, to the extent that she begins crying, the mother deceives her that she is going to buy her a sweet and come back, and then the child will immediately calm down even when the mother is going very far from home. This is also common with women in many communities today. When a wife

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<sup>56</sup> Miria Mbyesize 38 Years, Kyabugimbi, Peasant, Interviewed on 3.7.2012

<sup>57</sup> Vianne Ahumuza 35 Years, Mukono, Teacher, Interviewed on 5.7.2012

<sup>58</sup> Mwene Mushanga, op.cit.p.2

discovers that the husband commits adultery, and tries to confront him, most husbands try to act in a positive way by denying the act and can start giving their wives unique gifts to brush off everything especially the bad name.

Some men can begin compromising and try by all means to please their wives so that they do not ask those questions that they may fail to answer. This act is oppressive to women because men have taken them for granted arguing that after all they can be deceived or persuaded like children and they calm down. Due to this presumption many men practice, polygamy, adultery, and beat women when there is a misunderstanding. The respondents interviewed explained that today some men when they are to marry, they hide some information from the girls they are to marry. Or sometimes they deceive them to be having some items, property like land, a house, and vehicle just to win them.

In conclusion, it is still observed that the oppressive cultural proverbs and sayings have contributed much on oppression of women in Bushenyi District. This is because most of these proverbs are still used by many people and also from time to time used as a point of reference in wrong doing and condemnation of people in families and communities at large. This has hindered the end of oppression of Women in Ankole communities.

#### **2.4 Modern Forms of oppression in Bushenyi District.**

The modern forms mainly would refer to present times or recent times. Due too many changes in the present times like exponential increase in knowledge of technology/computers from 1960s, much has developed because of enlightenment compared to ancient days. For instance, the Human rights laws have been clearly stated for both men and women. In African traditional society most of the ideas, practices and beliefs were based on culture only.

However, during the research findings, the researcher observed that the culture has done much in affecting both men and women from grassroots. Although this is experienced, women are mostly the oppressed people in the community despite the campaign of women emancipation. With the advanced technology in the modern days for example through media, women's organizations

have been motivated to fight against oppression of women worldwide, For example by airing out the issues concerning women and fighting for their rights.

Today, women media workers and in particular, the Uganda media women's Association have actively sought to change the image of women in media. The women's movement has also contributed to the improvement of women's situation in the media.<sup>59</sup> Although this has been put in place, women oppression through media is still high. For instance some nude pictures of females are still used in media. They are portrayed poorly as for leisure, fashion and for beauty interests. This attracts and captures many newspaper buyers especially when advertising some market products.

Some people today have continued to oppress women by treating them in a cruel and unfair way and not according to them the same freedom and rights. For instance, in most homes you find that some women/girls are treated in unfair way. A boy child is usually given much freedom of movement as compared to the girls. During school holidays, some parents allow their boys to go outside home for coaching, computer studies or visit friends while girls in most cases they are denied such chances, which usually leave them oppressed in a home. The parents usually give an excuse that when girls are given such freedom, they become immoral. This has always left girls disgruntled in their hearts.<sup>60</sup>

Also today most domestic work is done by girls like cooking, washing, cleaning and helping their mothers to care for their young brothers and sisters. This has always left girls considered as servants even when they go to school. In modern days where most homes use house helpers or maids, still when girls in such homes come for holidays, they are the only ones who are expected to help the maids even when they go back to their homes.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> A.M .TRIPP & J.C. Kwesiga, The Women's Movement in Uganda, History, Challenges, and Prospects, 2002, p.147

<sup>60</sup> Asasira Racheal, 20 Years, University Student, Bushenyi, Bushenyi, Interviewed, on 5.1.2013

<sup>61</sup> Ibid

Some women or girls whose parents cannot afford school fees at certain levels, they are always oppressed. This is practiced by getting them husbands to marry them off in order for parents to be given some money or items to sell in terms of dowry or bride price. Some respondents reported that this act is usually experienced in rural areas where even some parents send their daughters to urban areas to work as house maids. Juliet Katuha was contacted during research and she reported that when she dropped out of school due to lack of school fees, her mother sent her to a friend in Mbarara town to work as a maid. As if that was not enough, the mother oppresses her by demanding for her money from her master at end of every month. She sadly expressed that her parents oppress her in that she cannot access the money she works for as a maid and spend it the way she wants.<sup>62</sup>

Today many women have been involved in leadership schemes and many women's organizations have been recognized as partners in development by government. Many are working very closely with the Ministry of Education and Sports at different levels. Women's associations have been involved in creations of the various interventions. ACFODE, FAWEU, WETSU, UAUW and others have participated in the development of national strategy on girls' education<sup>63</sup>

However, oppression of women still exists, down from primary schools where some parents cannot allow their daughters to join mixed schools because of the belief that they will be involved in immoral acts. Even when they are sent in some schools, they are denied some opportunities like studying from outside countries.

Although the role and plight of women in the agricultural sector today is widely reorganized, this awareness has not translated adequately into gender responsive planning of development interventions<sup>64</sup>. At grassroots women are well known as active agricultural participants especially in farming, yet when it comes to selling products they are highly oppressed by men. For instance, a woman motivates her children to go to the farm and work or plant crops, weed

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<sup>62</sup> Kansiime Rose, 24 Years, Cateress, Kyabugimbi, Interviewed on 3.1.2012

<sup>63</sup> A.M Tripp & J.C Kwesiga, The women's Movement in Uganda History, Challenges & Prospects; Fountain Publishers Ltd, 2002, Kampala. P.50

<sup>64</sup> A.M Tripp & J.C Kwesiga, Op.cit., p.94



and harvest. But when it comes to the time of selling the harvests or products, the husband that had refused to participate in farming, stubbornly sells off all the harvest and enjoys the profits alone.<sup>65</sup> This is also a case of oppression of women especially in rural areas.

Today, new agricultural extension services like through the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) have been put in place as a new approach by government to the delivery of agricultural extension services. They emphasize that agricultural extension services be farmer-led demand driven as noted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries in 2000.<sup>66</sup> However, in the process women usually face oppression. Women tend to face lower returns to their labor compared to men. This is because of their other domestic roles like caring for children and attending to all other house work. As men spend much time caring for their agricultural projects and get more yields. Also some men/ husbands have ignored to share the profits with their wives/women.

Both women and men today have access to education and leadership. However some times, the women in Uganda lag behind men in terms of education and income. Forty three percent of rural women are functionally illiterate compared with twenty eight percent of rural men.<sup>67</sup> This in most cases has kept women in the vicious cycle of poverty. Even when there are seminars advising people on how to involve themselves in some projects to eradicate poverty, women lag behind because they are usually very busy attending to domestic work. So men get the first priority to attend such trainings. Some men even when they attend such trainings, they selfishly ignore to share with the women at home because they always want to beat them in terms of income.

In modern days, women are still oppressed sexually by some men in the community. For instance by being raped, the married women sometimes are denied sex by their husbands instead the men leave them and go to other women for sex. This has always left them tortured

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<sup>65</sup> Frank Turyatamba, 48 Years, Farmer, Interviewed on 19.9.2012

<sup>66</sup> Ibid

<sup>67</sup> Ibid

psychologically in their lives. Some women who have failed to give birth in their marriages, they are usually denied the marital rights especially when men their husbands marry other wives. Such wives are always considered as useless by their husbands and even cannot care for them but instead leave them to suffer.<sup>68</sup>

In leadership, some women still face oppression by being denied some jobs even when they are professionally qualified as men. This is usually common in some companies where they prefer employing men than women. They consider females to be physically weak and even cannot work full time like both day and night. Atuhabwe L stated that she experienced that when she was working with a certain big company (not mentioned) .Even when women have assured the employers that they can make it, some companies still leave them behind and the opportunities are only given to men.<sup>69</sup>

It has also been reported by some respondents that sometimes, women are denied job opportunities especially when they refuse to sleep with their bosses at work places. This shows oppression in that women are left harassed sexually which has always affected their future and even making the right decisions. Some women have ended up getting married to wrong men just because of oppression. Other women when employed as part timers, they are denied maternity leaves.

Oppression of women is still high especially in homes and families that have always led to divorce and separation. Even in modern days, some women still face beatings by their husbands and are denied chances of setting up the projects of their own choices. Women usually have to support the projects of their husbands but are not allowed to begin up theirs. Some men tend to marry other women and abandon the first ones. They are oppressed to the extent that they are stopped from getting in touch with their children or going back home with them. Some children

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<sup>68</sup> Lilian Atuhabwe, 28 Years, Nyakabirizi, Social worker, interviewed on 12.9.2012

<sup>69</sup> Ibid

can be punished by their parents especially when discovered that they got in touch with their mother.<sup>70</sup>

Similarly, the respondents observed that oppression of women is highly experienced and practiced in churches today. Some respondents sadly stated that they doubt whether some Christian leaders or church leaders are being sent by God since they cannot preach against oppression of women in church. In this era, women have been involved in church or ministry but it was reported that much has to be done to eliminate oppression of women. There is poor treatment of women today even among Christian leaders. For instance there is a bias in appointment and promotion of women in higher religious leadership positions today. The promotions can include canons, vicars, archdeacons, dean of diocese, Bishops. In most cases men are given the first priority. And women who have held positions like the above mentioned are still very few. An anonymous respondent reported that one time she wanted to contest as a Bishop candidate for a certain diocese in Uganda, but was so much challenged and discouraged by the few people she shared the idea with. Most men and some women, and even her fellow reverends would challenge her saying that Uganda as a nation is not yet on a level of having a woman Bishop. "Ooh!" they exclaimed, "If a diocese is headed by a woman Bishop, all projects can collapse", her friends shouted. The people who were arguing in this way were also claiming to be Christians who believe that leadership comes from God. All this indicates that oppression of women is still common in the leadership in church of Uganda because they are not allowed to exploit their potential.

As earlier discussed in chapter one that the women are very much concerned about the church, but the church is not so much concerned about women<sup>71</sup>. Indeed it was proved in research findings that most women like to be available in church and are committed to serve God faithfully. However, they are oppressed in terms of leadership positions, for example it was reported that right from a sub parish church to a diocese, women are denied some of the posts in church as mentioned above but instead, they commonly work as ushers, wardens, secretaries, choir leaders, cashiers and accountants. It was also found out that there are still few women in

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<sup>70</sup> Tusiime Hope , 27 years, Teacher, Kyeizooba, Interviewed on 12.12.2012

<sup>71</sup> Peter Wasswa Mpagi, African Christian Theology in contemporary context, Kisubi, Marianum publishing co.ltd, p.180-183

full time ordained ministry because the majority of them are not even so much interested. Women argue that the big posts like Archbishop, Bishop, and Dean, Diocesan secretary, treasurer and archdeacon are mainly for the men and there are just few canons who are women. This shows oppression because generally women are considered to be weak especially when it comes to handling tough issues and making decisions. This practice is wrong before God because both man and woman are created in God's image, so they are all blessed to serve God faithfully.

Generally speaking the same women who do much work in offices for long hours, when they reach home; they are not helped by men/ husbands to do domestic work. Instead some Christian husbands keep on reminding that it's a good thing to have a wife since she is a helper. They forget that when one is a helper, he or she joins someone who is carrying out an activity and they work together. The Bible says that God said; "it is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him. But in most homes the women work and yet are supposed to be helped. Some men do misinterpret such scriptures and end up oppressing the women in the homes especially carrying out the domestic work without their husbands.

Most respondents observed that even if a man marries a wife in church and they wed each other, he abandons most of the domestic work he has been doing before getting married. Some Bachelors can say that they are tired with such a life style where they cook, wash, and iron, clean the house, therefore when they marry, and they proudly inform their friends that they got a helper to do all that. This shows that they do not understand such a scripture in Genesis 2: 18, about a wife being a suitable helper since they leave all the domestic work to a wife.<sup>72</sup>

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, according to the research carried out, it was found out that oppressive cultural beliefs and practices among Banyankole still contribute a lot to oppression of women in Bushenyi District. For instance, the taboos and practices, oppressive proverbs and sayings are

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<sup>72</sup> Modern Agaba, 28 Years, Social Worker, Kabwohe, Interviewed on 20.12.2012

still referred to which highly affect the status of women as whole or in all the aspects of life. It was also observed that women still experience oppression in modern days even when some economical, religious, political, and social changes or developments have come up. Women activists have increased in order to continue fighting for the rights of women. Although some people think that in this era they can do away with culture, tradition especially where we find beliefs and practices. But still other forms of oppression in modern era have contributed much to the suffering of woman in Uganda and the world at large.

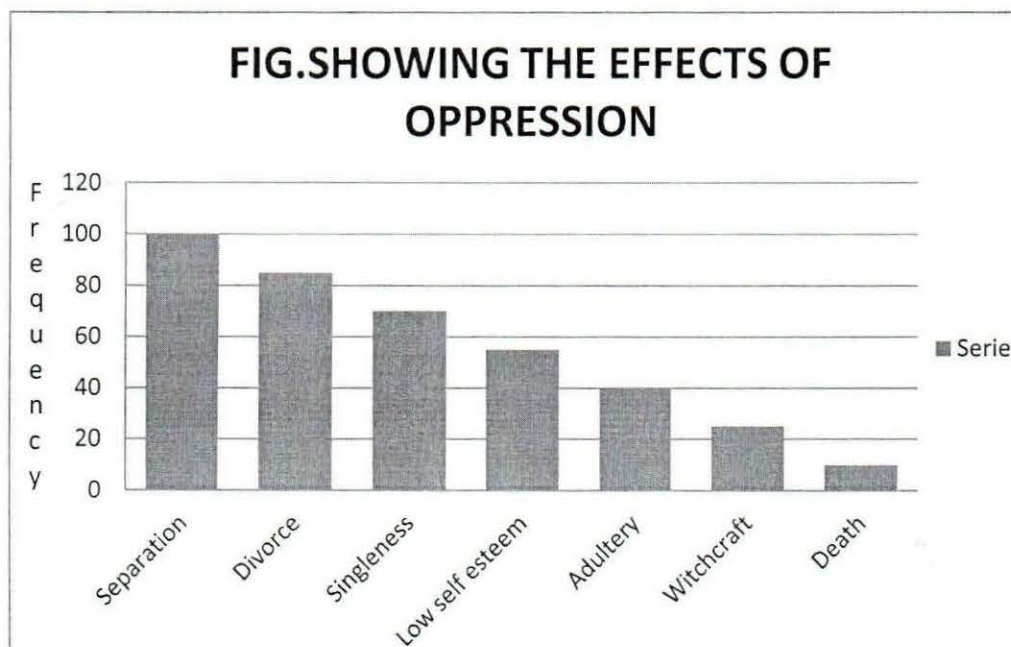
## CHAPTER THREE

### THE EFFECTS OF OPPRESSION OF WOMEN

#### 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the effects of oppression of women are discussed based on the second objective of the study. The objective was to identify the effects of oppression of women in Bushenyi District. It was pointed out by the majority of respondents that oppression of women in Bushenyi has led to social, physical, emotional and economic effects. The oppression of women indeed has brought very many changes in the life of a woman. Many respondents informed the researcher that oppression of women has led to many negative effects to women's lives. These effects can be summarized in the figure below.

Graph 1: EFFECTS OF OPPRESSION OF WOMEN



The graph above indicates that oppression of women has increased divorce and separation in communities. When comparing with other effects of oppression of women like singleness, low

self-esteem, adultery, witchcraft, that is on (social, physical, psychological and economical), it was found out that death is not so common but comes as a last resort. That's why on the figure above it is shown as low. Women experiencing oppression usually first think of fleeing for their lives as a solution and when it's too much to face, they think of suicide.

### **3.2 The physical effects of oppression of women**

Women who are abused or oppressed may experience more than one type of aggression. Typically, abusive partners attempt to dominate and control by engaging in actions that threaten or harm a woman's physical and emotional well-being, sexuality, social life, parenting ability, financial situation, possessions or spiritual life. Indeed it was discovered during research findings that some women may experience a single episode of oppression, or she may endure a pattern of oppression over many years in her life.

It was reported that some people have lost their lives as a result of oppression of women. For instance the women who are abused sexually, when they refuse to have sex with the strangers, some men go ahead to fight women in order to rape them, and when they fail, they end up killing them. Others are left with injuries, bruises and wounds because of being beaten up. This type of oppression has left many children as orphans, since some of their parents who are involved end up dying.<sup>73</sup> When these children are left behind, they suffer so much due to lack of parental guidance and counseling.

Also oppression of women leads to physical health effects which include; broken bones, bruises, burns, cuts, stabs and firearm wounds, abrasions, bites, lacerations, sprains, concussions, skull fractures, scarring, perforated eardrums, detached retina, injuries to the voice box, chipped or lost teeth, hair loss, chronic gastro-intestinal pain, irritable bowel syndrome, chronic neck, back or

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<sup>73</sup> Sabath A. Ahabyoona, 30Years, Teacher, Bweranyangi, Interviewed on 6.7.2012

other musculoskeletal pain, chronic headache, hypertension, palpitations, hyperventilation, and substance abuse problems.<sup>74</sup>

In some families where women have experienced oppression by their husbands, like beatings, working for long hours and doing the entire domestic work alone, has made some pregnant women have miscarriage, or give birth to deformed children, and also some mothers themselves have become lame and other have died, or experiencing complications while giving birth. Some women have also had early and unwanted pregnancy.<sup>75</sup>

Some women have become mentally disabled and cannot do any constructive work instead much money has been spent on them trying to treat them. Also due to physical oppression like beatings, hitting, burning, slapping and cutting, some women have become depressed and ended up committing suicide. This too has physically affected the children in such a home because after the death of their mothers, they fear that they be mistreated or oppressed. Therefore they resort to committing suicide too as the New vision 19<sup>th</sup> September 1998 indicated that children may be neglected because the mother is upset due to oppression and may not take such good care of them. Here a young man in Lusaka hanged himself because he was tired of seeing his mother being battered or oppressed every time.<sup>76</sup>

Most respondents agreed that oppression of women has affected families leading to increased divorce and separation which has deprived children of parental care, guidance and counseling. Divorced women further suffer from this effect leading to hatred which may be transferred to other men once they get married. The scar is created in their hearts which creates behavioral changes once married again<sup>77</sup> and some can cause a physical harm to their husbands or children.

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<sup>74</sup> Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, "Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile", (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, Cat. No. 85-224-XPE, 2000): 15., Canada, <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ncfv-cnivf/publications/femuiof-eng.php>, accessed on 2.2.2012

<sup>75</sup> Naome Nabaasa, 36 Years, Teacher, Rwentuha, Interviewed on 18.7.2012

<sup>76</sup> New Vision 19<sup>th</sup> September 1998

<sup>77</sup> David Kyamanywa, The causes and effects of Domestic Violence on Families: A case Study of Bwanswa Sub county, (Bachelor's Dissertation), Mukono, Uganda Christian University, April, 2005, p.35.



Also some children have dropped out from school as a result of oppression of their mothers. For example it was discovered during the study that some parents deny a girl child formal education. This has made some girls getting married at an early age where they may give birth to too many children and fail to look after them. It was also observed that sexual oppression of women has led to sexual health effects which include; sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV, chronic pelvic, genital or uterine pain, chronic vaginal or urinary infection, bruising or tearing of the vagina or anus, frequent pregnancy (when unwanted or contraindicated), infertility or early hysterectomy, and sexually addictive behavior.<sup>78</sup>

It was revealed during the study that oppression of women has led to sexual starvation. When men practice polygamy, some women are denied marital rights by their husbands. This happens when some women are not attended to when they are on routine or turns to be visited. Some women are always attended to by their husbands serving them sexually while others are ignored especially the first ones to be married in a specific home. This has left many women in polygamous families being denied sex by their husbands, hence sexually starved.

### 3.3 Sociological effects of women oppression

**Table 2: Sociological effects of women oppression**

Effects	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Social Stigma	92	88.4
Anger and Denial	75	72.1
Broken Relationship	71	68.2
Early and Un wanted Pregnancy	30	28.8
Witchcraft	23	22.1
<b>Total</b>	291	100.0

<sup>78</sup> Holly Johnson, *Dangerous Domains: Violence Against Women in Canada* (Toronto: Nelson, 1996): 184, <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ncfv-cnivf/publications/femuiof-eng.php>, accessed on 2.2.2012

The results in Table 2 above indicate that 88.4% of women are oppressed and experience social stigma. Rape survivors suffer from social stigma and are often ostracized by their families and communities. In patriarchal societies, a raped woman is considered defiled and represents a disgrace to her family and community. Moreover, being publically identified as a rape victim is equivalent to being labeled as dishonored which not only damages the survivor's status within the community, but also greatly limits her life choices and economic opportunities.<sup>79</sup> The researcher interviewed one of the rape victims and this anonymous lady narrated her sad story that she had never forgotten the day she was raped. This occurred when she was 13 years in the vacation of primary seven, now she is 29 years old but she has never been healed from the pain. She was introduced to different counselors who tried to do their part but still her life is not like before she was raped. She explained sadly that this had totally affected her life style especially socially and emotionally.<sup>80</sup> This has always left some women in Bushenyi denied some opportunities in life.

Anger and denial are also experienced by oppressed women in Bushenyi District as table 1 above indicates that 72.1% are the affected women. The Professionals note that men who oppress or abuse their partners may experience anger, denial, social and emotional problems, rejection and isolation. Factors such as abuse during childhood, witnessing abuse as children, the use of drugs or alcohol, involvement in the criminal justice system or other negative experiences, compound the abuse. Abusers are responsible for their behavior, and for the devastating effects it has on their partners and children. Abusers/ oppressors are also responsible for the harm they do to themselves. Some abusive partners eventually kill their partners and children and commit suicide.<sup>81</sup> All this is due to oppression that can lead to anger which also results into death of the oppressed and the oppressor.

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<sup>79</sup> Greta Joanikaite, op.cit.p.35

<sup>80</sup> Anonymous rape victim, 29 years, Tailor, Kyabugimbi, interviewed on 4.1.2013

<sup>81</sup> Public Health Agency of Canada, "Woman Abuse- Overview Paper", <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ncfv-ncivf/publications/femuiof-eng.php>, accessed on 2.2.2012

In areas where oppression has forced women and girls to leave their homes and go to stay with relatives, still sometimes they face other challenges. For instance being considered as intruders, denied food, where some can end up running to prostitution to have a survival or others end up committing suicide. All this affects the women negatively in their lives and the entire community they live in.

As reflected in table 1 above, 68.2% of women reported that oppression of women can lead to broken relationships in homes and entire community. Socially, due to oppression of women in families, the relationships have been affected for example the relationship between husbands and wives, children, parents and relatives. This happens when women decide to live in fear and end up not interacting with their husbands fully or their old sons who in some cases oppress them too by denying them rights to decision making in a home. This can sometimes affect the women in the entire community because of the suffering of oppression in that they cannot be socially healthy.

Also the fellowship with God and one another is affected because people who are oppressed fear to share their problems with friends or share such testimonies in prayer meetings. Their spiritual walk with God is affected because of suffering. For example lack of physical health especially will inevitably affect one's self-esteem and social life. This can result from physical oppression like being raped or beaten up. This eventually affects one's relationship with God. Such a person prefers to be a lone instead of socializing with others like attending prayer meetings, or the bible studies that can help his/her spiritual and healthy status.

Table 2 above also shows that 28.8% of women face early and unwanted pregnancies that can affect one's academic performance. Oppression of women leads to poor academic performance in schools especially to a girl or woman who has been sexually harassed or raped. One may get unwanted pregnancy which will force her to leave school. The future of such a victim will be ruined because she may not even get married. This leads to long term psychological effects like seclusion and hatred to fellow human beings.

Oppression of women often drives their victims to witchcraft as indicated in the table 2 above, 22.1% of women end up practicing it as a solution. They imagine that this will bring peace; however, to the contrary, their community life will be completely destroyed. This is because people lose trust in those who engage in witchcraft. Moreover, there have been cases of mob justice against such people often resulting in death.

### 3.4 Psychological effects of women oppression

**Table 3 showing psychological effects of oppression of women**

<b>Effects</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Low self-esteem and Confidence	94	90
Un controlled anger responses	87	83.6
Loss of concentration and Productivity	73	70.1
Chronic Stress	61	58.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Oppression of women leads to Psychological problems which include low self-esteem, self-degradation, self-abuse, difficulty with relationships, acute anxiety, frequent crying, unusual or pronounced fear responses, uncontrolled or rapid anger responses, chronic stress, phobias, flashbacks, insomnia, sleep disturbances, nightmares, lack of appropriate boundaries, arrested development, passivity, memory loss, loss of concentration and productivity.<sup>82</sup>

The research proved that most women in Bushenyi who experience oppression, suffer from psychological torture that can result into bigger problems especially about their health.

<sup>82</sup> Public Health Agency of Canada, Woman Abuse- Overview Paper, <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ncfv-cnivf/publications/femuiof-eng.php>, accessed on 2.2.2012

Low self-esteem was reported as one of the effects of oppression of women as shown on table 3 above. The data collected indicated that 94% of women experience low self-esteem as an effect of oppression. Oppression of women has traumatized them; they are so psychologically affected that they lose the self-esteem and confidence. This occurs when women no longer respect themselves, they doubt their abilities, as Ethan Musolini notes. Self-esteem is also affected by self-confidence. If you believe in your abilities, your self-esteem goes up. If you doubt your abilities your self-esteem goes down.<sup>83</sup> Some women have not contributed to family affairs or in decision making because they believe that even if they are consulted by their husbands on some family matters, still their decisions, choices cannot be considered. This has continued to affect women especially their daughters who grow up with a poor attitude about the men like mistreatment by husbands.<sup>84</sup>

In many cases women are regarded as being emotional and therefore incapable of taking rational decisions. Such attitudes from society hamper women's progress and deny them a right to participate in decision making. The love, emotions and caring qualities make a difference in people's lives and such qualities are needed in people who hold high positions of responsibility in service to the people.<sup>85</sup> However women are degraded and dehumanized and forgotten especially when they are oppressed and end up losing their self-esteem.

Also some women have been left by their husbands especially after discovering that their wives are infected with HIV/AIDS which has affected them psychologically. This occurs in cases where some men have not come out to discuss with their wives that they were the first people to be infected and others have failed to go for checkup (AIDS test) with their wives. And as a result the affected women have weakened mentally and at times died earlier than the expected life span due to loneliness created by their absent spouses.

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<sup>83</sup> Ethan Musolini, Confidence and Self-esteem, Secrets Exposed, published by success worldwide publications, Kampala, Uganda, 2008, P.17

<sup>84</sup> Naome Nabaasa, 36 Years, Teacher, Rwentuha, Interviewed on 18.7.2012

<sup>85</sup> Miria Matembe, Woman in the eyes of God, Reclaiming a lost identity, New Life Publishers, Kampala, Uganda, 2009, p.89

Uncontrolled anger responses, was also reported as one of the effects of oppression of women. 87% of women face this effect according to the table above. This usually happens to women especially when they have been affected by oppression physically, like experiencing beatings and rape that can lead them to hate themselves and other people around them. Thus they end up lacking self-control, instead become rude to people.

Joyce Meyer notes that communication is more important than talk or uncontrolled anger responses. We can say one thing but communicate something quite contrary to what we are saying depending on our facial expressions, body language and actions.

Due to oppression, some couples are not sensitive to what they communicate to each other through their actions.<sup>86</sup> Hasty words spoken without giving any thought to them often cause tremendous trouble, Ecclesiastes 5:2 says: “Be not rash with your mouth, and let not your heart be hasty to utter a word before God.”<sup>87</sup> Thus due to oppression many people are not careful with their words to people, but are usually rude and do not control their anger responses.

The oppressed women suffer from loss of concentration and productivity. The Table 3 above indicates that 73% of women face this challenge when oppressed. They are affected at work places, while attending to their jobs. They are on and off, lose concentration and end up not being productive at all or producing many profits. This can be dangerous for an organization or their small projects because these women are not committed at all since they are usually taken up by injuries of oppression.

Some women in Bushenyi district have continued to live a stressful life because of being oppressed. 61% of women strongly face chronic stress as the table 3 above indicates. As Moreen Nimurungi narrated her sad story that it was not until her husband gave his life to Christ (got saved) that she got peace at their home. However he lived shortly just two weeks and died. She further narrated that her husband before getting saved would oppress her in different ways. For instance, he used to beat her up especially every evening on returning from the bar. He would

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<sup>86</sup> Joyce Meyer, Making Marriage Work, The Advice you need for a lifetime of Happiness, Warner Books Edition New York Boston Nashville, 2000, p.135

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, p 161

insult and abuse her in public while drunk. She narrated with a sad face that her husband could not help her to work (dig) in order to provide children with food. But many times he came from a bar “barking” at her, slapping children, stepping in food and pouring sauce at her. She said that such oppression made her live a stressful life and lacked self-esteem – the fact that as a couple, they would not settle their differences away from the presence of their children.<sup>88</sup>

### **3.5 Economical effects of women oppression**

Oppression of women has led to poverty in most homes because only women and girls do most of the work. For example in most families in Bushenyi, farming and harvesting are mainly done by women and their daughters. Therefore this has led to less income from the harvests since there is no cooperation in work and development in a home.<sup>89</sup> Also Sam and Paul noted that at the basis of women’s oppression lies the economic unit of the family. The family and women’s role of privatized labor within it is necessary and essential for capitalism which leaves the maintenance and reproduction of workforce in women’s hands and also uses women as a reserve of army labor.<sup>90</sup>

Oppression of women has limited some women from accessing some opportunities like jobs. Noeleen Heyzer states that, this reduces the range of choices open to women and girls and narrows their options in almost every sphere of life, public and private at home, in school, in workplace and in the most community spaces. It limits women’s choices directly or by destroying their health, disrupting their lives, and constructing the scope of their activity, indirectly. It erodes their self-confidence and self-esteem. This hinders women’s fully participation in a society.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Moreen Nimurungi, 41 years, Peasant, Kibare, Bweranyangi, interviewed on 8.7.2012.

<sup>89</sup> Frank, Ahabwe 36, Years, Farmer, Kabura Kyabugimbi, Interviewed on 21.6.202

<sup>90</sup> Sam Richards & Paul Saba, The Oppression of Women- Criticism of Old Lines, Encyclopedia of Anti-Revisionism on-line, 1982, accessed on 12. Jan.2013

<sup>91</sup> Greta Jonikaite, “Addressing Violence Against Women in Uganda: Approaches and strategies of Civil Society organization”, The Florida state University College of social science, 2006, <http://etd.lib.fsu.edu/theses/available>, p.35-36 accessed on 12.1.2012

Economically some women have lost their jobs due to oppression. For instance when she is harassed sexually by the boss, some resort to quitting the job which has left some unemployed in many communities. Other women are demoted especially when they refuse to sleep with their bosses at work places. This kind of oppression has left many people in poverty. When a woman is denied land, money by her husband; she is left with nothing to feed on instead some move to look for men to sleep with in them in order to be given money. Also some of these children whose mothers are oppressed, they end up lacking food, become malnourished, lack school fees and end up dropping out from schools. This too has brought much theft in many societies since some women resort to stealing. For example they go to peoples' gardens to get food stuffs for their starving children at home.<sup>92</sup>

The increase of oppression of women in the communities has hindered them from full participating in the economic development. The social-economic position of women in general and their inability to access the economy has hindered women's owning.<sup>93</sup> Some women in families don't access land titles thus they cannot invest on such lands fully since they are not sure of the details of land. Therefore they prefer short term projects as they invest the land. It was reported that most men hide the land titles from their wives. An anonymous woman in Bushenyi District narrates with a sad face that for a long time her husband had hidden the land titles from her just for security purposes as she would explain to her. The wife also decided to play it cool to keep peace in their home. However, when the husband was serious ill, the father in-law kept on demanding for land titles from the wife claiming that he wanted to keep them safe. This also indicates oppression in that it has brought conflicts in the families and economically women have been left behind since they are not free to participate in big projects.

Also poverty data shows that female-headed households, which are on the increase, are poorer than male-headed households. This is as a result of oppression in community like the many

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<sup>92</sup> Simon Peter Musiime, 45 years, Farmer, Kyeizooba, interviewed on 19<sup>th</sup>.August. 2012

<sup>93</sup> A.M Trip & J.C. Kwesiga, The Women's Movement in Uganda, History Challenges, and Prospects, Fountain publishers Ltd, Kampala, 2002, p.122



social-cultural practices that oppress women, discouraging them from owning land or sanctioning them from it.<sup>94</sup> Due to oppression most women have been unable to exploit or develop their talents fully that can help on dealing with poverty in their homes.

Oppression of women has led to reduction in production because of the limited time. Business needs commitment and determination which can finally lead to success. However, much time is spent on solving cases in courts of law and attending to patients in hospitals especially the ones that have been affected due to oppression. For example when there are fights, beatings, or one being cut with any sharp objects.<sup>95</sup>

Also if the woman is a leader in a community like a political leader she may fail to deliver effectively and develop her community. This is because some of the effects of oppression will affect her delivery in leadership like depression, lack of confidence. Thus she may fail to deliver properly in her society because of confusion she will be having at home. This indeed can affect the economic status of an area due to poor leadership.<sup>96</sup>

## **Conclusion**

From the findings of the study, it can be concluded that oppression has affected women in all aspects of life. For instance physically, socially, and emotionally they are negatively affected. However it was discovered that oppression of women did not only affect women but even their children, relatives, husbands and the entire community at large because when one woman is oppressed, the entire family faces the consequences. Some children are left motherless especially in a case where their mother is oppressed/ affected up to death. The relatives like aunts, uncles, and grandparents and others are affected since they have to care for the orphans. This mainly occurs when the potential guardians to the children of the deceased is arrested and imprisoned.

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid

<sup>95</sup> Asasira Racheal, 21 years, Kyabugimbi, student, Interviewed on 1.3.2013

<sup>96</sup> Ronald Tumuramy, 33 years, Teacher Bumbaire, Interviewed on 17.7.2012

It was also found out that that oppression of women is not only contributed or carried out by men but also by the fellow women. For instance when a woman discovers that a fellow woman is sleeping with her husband and tries to confront her, in most cases the culprit fights, abuses and embarrasses her. Often, some women go an extra mile to insult them that they are not sexually attractive to their husbands, so that's why they will always leave them and go to attractive women. This has always left such wives affected psychologically, socially and physically by experiencing the beatings from fellow women. Therefore this too can affect the men and children of the oppressed especially psychologically when they get to know that their wives or mothers go or went through such oppression.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE PARADOXICAL NATURE OF THE RELIGIOUS TEACHING ON OPPRESSION OF WOMEN**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter we closely look at some of the religious teachings on oppression of women as the respondents observed and especially basing on some of sacred or holy books like the bible, the Koran. There are different religions in Bushenyi District, but the major ones are, Christianity and Islam. Under the umbrella of Christianity, there are different denominations like Anglican, Catholics, Pentecostals and seventh day Adventists. The district also has some Moslems. This chapter discusses the paradoxical nature of religious beliefs, practices and teachings on oppression of women; which can be exploited by men to the advantage of women.

#### **4.2. Christian Teaching that encourage oppression of women**

##### **Introduction**

Christianity as a religious faith considers God as ultimate reality that is eternal, all powerful and all knowing. He is a righteous and loving God and He is the only true God, the creator above any other God. He loves men and women since we are all created in his image .On the other hand, according to some scriptures in the Bible, it is indicated that women were highly oppressed because they were never treated as men and even their benefits were totally different from those of men as it will be discussed in this chapter.

##### **4.2.1 The Old Testament teaching that support oppression**

Distinctions are always made between men and women in the Old Testament period. The women are not required to attend the annual festivals only men are; (Exod. 23:17; Lev.23-- three times a year men attend the feasts Deut.16:16). Women are permitted to attend if they chose to do so (1 Sam. 1:9, 21-22). The Laver for ministry in the court of the tabernacle is made of brass from the

mirrors of the women only. In the Old Testament the office of priest is limited to men of the priestly line (Ex. 28:1; Num. 18:1-7). No women among the Levites are involved in the priesthood.

In Genesis chapter 2:18, 21-22, the lord says: “it is not good for the man to be alone, I will make a helper suitable for him”. So God causes the man to fall into a deep sleep and while he is sleeping, he takes one of the man’s ribs and then closes up the place with flesh. Then the lord God makes a woman from the rib he had taken out of a man, and the man says, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh, she shall be called a woman for she was taken out of a man”.<sup>97</sup> Thus this teaching has made many people believe that indeed a woman is a weaker sex since she was formed out of a man’s ribs. Today, many people have oppressed women arguing that they are weak therefore they cannot handle big offices; instead they leave them behind suffering. Some women have been denied opportunities on some jobs like building because of being considered physically weak, so men are given the first priority in such jobs.

Also the teaching about the fall of man in Genesis 3 has also contributed and supported oppression of women. This teaching says that a woman is a root cause of sinning against God. This is so because the woman is tempted by the serpent to eat the forbidden fruit that God had commanded both man (Adam) and woman (Eve) not to take. The woman first agrees to eat the fruit and later takes to the husband to eat too. Therefore the issue of man ruling over man and end up oppressing her is never intended by God. It comes as a result of fall. So does the whole question of women depending on men<sup>98</sup> and being oppressed in many ways.

According to Genesis 19:1-8, “the two angels arrive at Sodom in the evening, and Lot is sitting in the gate way of the city. When he sees them, he gets up to meet them and bows down with his face to the ground. “My lords,” he says, “please turn aside to your servant’s house. You can wash your feet and spend the night and then go on your way early in the morning.” “No” they answer, “we will spend the night in the square.” But he insists so strongly that they have to go with him and enter his house. He prepares a meal for them, baking bread without yeast, and they

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<sup>97</sup> Holy Bible, International Version, NIV, Copyright, International Bible society, 2011, p.3

<sup>98</sup> Maria Matembe, Woman in the Eyes of God, Reclaiming a lost Identity, New Life Publishers, Kampala, Uganda, 2009, p.48

eat. Before they have gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom-both young and old- surrounded the house. They call Lot, “where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them.”

Lot goes outside to meet them and shut the door behind him and says, “No, my friends. Don’t do this wicked thing. Look, I have two daughters who never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But don’t do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof.”<sup>99</sup> Therefore this incident too shows oppression of women, in that Lot ordered the men to rape the women (his virgin daughters) instead of the angels. “Yes”, Lot was trying to spare the angels of the lord but decided to surrender the daughters to the wicked men. However God was so faithful in that he spared Lot’s family for ,/respecting the angels and spared both his two daughters and the wife that were about to be raped by the wicked men of Sodom.

Exodus 20:17, “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey or anything that belongs to the neighbor.”<sup>100</sup> According to this commandment women are treated unfairly in that they too are considered as property. Also, “In the older code in [Deuteronomy], women are generally viewed as...a property of their fathers and then of their husbands. This property-character of a woman is spelled out specifically in terms of her sexual qualities... In the [Deuteronomy Sex Texts] women are rarely referred to as persons or agents in their own right.”<sup>101</sup>

This teaching has made some people to treat women as a property in different communities in Bushenyi District.

Similarly, there is oppression of women in the Jewish society in the Bible. For example most priests or high priests, political leaders or kingdom leaders are mainly men. Priests like Eli, Moses, Zechariah, Samuel, Melchizedek (Hebrew7:1), Ananias (Acts 23:2), Elieazar (Numbers 27:2) and all the kings are men from the first king (Saul) to the last king in Israel. Therefore this

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<sup>99</sup> Holy Bible, New International Version, International Bible Society-Africa, Kenya, 1984, p.14

<sup>100</sup> Ibid P.55-56

<sup>101</sup> ACharya S/D.M.Murdock, Christian Clergy: Women, shut up and obey your husbands, freethoughtnation.com, Saturday 13<sup>th</sup>. 2010, accessed on 24.4.2013

has encouraged oppression of women even in religious leadership today in that women are still denied high leadership opportunities in some religious sects. Yet there are some examples of women in the Bible who excelled in leadership roles far better than men. Such include: Deborah a prophetess, wife of Lapidoth who successfully judged Israel and commanded the Israelite army and defeated their enemies. It is stated that during her period of leadership, "Israel had peace for forty years." Judges Chapters 4-5.

According to Jewish society, inheritance of the property is preferably passed on to sons only. Even when the daughters are still alive or where they are the firstborns they can deny them freedom of inheriting land and property. In some families where there are only the daughters, still inheritance will be passed on either to immediate or distant male relatives than being given to the girls in such families. It was not until the death of Zelophehad that his daughters (Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah (Numbers 27:1-8), approached the entrance to the tent of meeting and stood before Moses, Eleazer the priest, the leaders, and the whole assembly and said to Moses that their father had died in the desert and so they needed permission to inherit their fathers property since they did not have any Brother. Moses understood them and brought their case before the lord and the lord said to him that what Zelophehad's daughters had said was right and were to be given their inheritance. Thus since then, the daughters in Israel would be given property if they had no brother. This shows oppression because inheritance is only given to women only if they have no brothers.

Restrictions on both men and women go far beyond the Scripture, but for the women it is far worse. "An unmarried man must not be a teacher of children, nor may a woman be a teacher of children "Women are not allowed to be taught the Torah publicly despite that it is allowed in the Old Testament period (Josh. 8:35; Neh. 8:2-3). Restrictions applied to any public reading of Scripture in the Synagogue and they are unable to pronounce the benediction after a meal in the home. Women are restricted from orally communicating the Torah to others, even to children. From the tractate Sota, 10a: "May the words of Torah be burned, than that they should be handed over to women." In Sota 21b it is written, "Rabbi Eliezer says: Whoever teaches his daughter Torah teaches her obscenity." Women are not allowed to be educated in the same schools as

men. They cannot learn the Torah by themselves or along with the men.<sup>102</sup> Some people up to date, are basing on such practices of Old Testament to deny their daughter formal education. Instead, more opportunities are open for boys and less for girls.

Another oppressive practice in the Bible is that during offerings women are not given a chance to bring the blood and sprinkle it against the altar on the sides at the entrance of the tent of meeting as indicated in the book of Leviticus. This is only done by the priests and sons. For instance Aaron's sons many times worked with their father at altar during sacrifices and offerings. This means that girls/ women are never valued. Among the rules for priests, there is a rule that if a priest's daughter defiles herself by becoming a prostitute, she disgraces her father, so it is a must to be burnt in the fire (Leviticus 21). Also since priests are meant to be holy, they are not supposed to marry a widow, a divorced woman or a woman defiled by prostitution. But only marry a virgin from his own people. This shows oppression because the men who involve themselves in prostitution are not mentioned at all and the sons of priests who involve in unholy acts are not burnt like their sisters. The "daughters of music" (Eccl.12:4) are singing women, but they are not included in the temple choir.

Another biblical practice that supports oppression of women is that during census the women are never counted or considered (Numbers 1:1ff). The lord speaks to Moses in the tent of meeting in the desert of Sinai on the first day of 2<sup>nd</sup> month of year after the Israelites camp out of Egypt. He says take census of the whole Israelite community by their divisions all the men in Israel twenty years old or more. One man is to be got from each tribe and of course the heads of clans and tribes are only men. Even the 12 tribes of Israel originated from Jacob's sons not daughters. The sons are Reuben, Judah, Simeon, Issachar, Zebulum, Joseph, Empraim, Manasseh, Bnjamin, Dan, Asher, Gad, Naphtali. The women are never considered at all. This has also led to some families today not choosing a woman to lead a clan, tribe even among Christian families, clans, tribes are headed by men not women and the men still are the heirs in homes.

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<sup>102</sup> Let's Reason Ministries, "Women in the Old Testament and church", [www.letsreason.org/support.htm](http://www.letsreason.org/support.htm), 2009 Accessed on 24<sup>th</sup>. Sept. 2012

#### 4.2.2 The Old Testament teaching that condemn oppression of women

The God of Israel is depicted as God of salvation history. He intervenes and saves his people. He exists for his people and seeks their happiness and their total development. He manifests himself as a God who comes to liberate Israel from oppression of Egypt.<sup>103</sup> God is interested in rescuing all his people both men and women (Israelites) who are being oppressed under the reign of king Pharaoh that makes God's people suffer so much. God chooses Moses who himself is born in slavery and raised in royalty to go and save the Israelites who are being oppressed. God by saving women too shows that he loves both females and males since he created them in his image, so he does not want them to face any kind of oppression.

Genesis 2:21-22, "Lord God caused the man to fall asleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of man, and he brought her to the man." Thus God created a suitable helper for man (Adam). This helper was found in order to work together with a man but not to leave all the work to the woman or oppress them in any way. Maria Matembe argues on this theory of the rib that God did not create a woman from the toe to be kicked around, or come from the buttocks to be sat on nor from the head to boss over men but was made from a man's rib/side so as to exit side by side to fill him up and give him a purpose to live.<sup>104</sup>

God created both man and woman in his image. Genesis 1: 27; so God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. This verse shows clearly that in God's eyes a woman is so important that she had to be mentioned right away in the first chapter of the Bible. A closer scrutiny of verse 26 reveals that God meant for both male and female to rule the earth." Let them rule over the livestock, overall earth and all the creatures that move along ground." It is important to note that it is the man and woman who are mandated in verse 26 to rule. "Let them rule". It is therefore clear from these verses that women are equally

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<sup>103</sup> Sulpicius Tumushabe, Justice in suffocation seen from an African perspective, A case study on Justice Among the Bakiga of South Western Uganda, Marianum Press Kisubi, Uganda, 2004, p .104

<sup>104</sup> Miria Matembe, Op.cit, P.36,37



entitled to rule just like men are. That was the original purpose of God at creation, but not to oppress women as if God had no plan and purpose for them.

Miria Matembe continues to note that, therefore any attempt by anybody to marginalize and minimize or oppress women is not in line with God's purpose. God had to create a woman before he could entrust the affairs of the earth to man. If God the almighty considered it extremely important for man and woman to rule the earth and all that is in it together, who is it that has the power to say that women should not rule?<sup>105</sup> Or be oppressed at work places in different ways.

It is after God had created the woman that he blessed them, told them to be fruitful and increase in numbers, to fill the earth and subdue it (Genesis 1:26-27). These words were never given to man before creation of woman. So as far God is concerned, man and woman are to be fruitful together, increasing and ruling the earth<sup>106</sup>. Thus oppression is to be condemned according to God's initial purpose of creating both man and woman. The purpose was to work together in love and harmony.

The King James Version describes the first woman as a helper for the man. More modern translations render Eve as a helper (Genesis 2:18). Some assume that to be a "helper" or a "help mate" is necessarily an inferior or even a pejorative term. But what is the Hebrew really conveying here? The Hebrew word rendered "helper" or "help mate" in Genesis 2:18 is 'ezer, and 'ezer is often used to describe God helping people or nations. In Deuteronomy 33:29 'ezer portrays the Eternal overcoming Israel's enemies. He is "the shield of your help" and "the sword of your majesty." Likewise, 'ezer is used in Psalm 70:5 where God is called upon to be a powerful "deliverer." In these passages and others, the "helper" ('ezer) is the Eternal God! The fact is that the Hebrew languages in Genesis 2:18 indicates a difference in role, but does not necessarily indicate inferiority in any way. Thus a woman was created as a suitable helper, who needs to be respected but not oppressed.<sup>107</sup> A helper comes to assist one therefore that does not

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<sup>105</sup> Maria Matembe, Op.cit, p.26

<sup>106</sup> Ibid p.26, 37

<sup>107</sup> Wyatt Ciesielka , Living Church News, The Cherished Christian Woman: Duty and destiny, www.cogwriter.com, COG writer 2011.March-April 2011, pp. 14-17

mean that one has to leave his work fully to the helper. Therefore co-operation is important but not oppressing this helper (woman).

The Mosaic Law recognizes women's responsibility at home as wives and mothers to the family. Moreover this does not exclude women from religious service. We see women serving at the door of the Tabernacle (Exod. 38:8). Both men and women contribute their valuables for use in the building of the Tabernacle (Exod.35:22, 25, and 26). The Laver for ministry in the court of the tabernacle is made of brass from the mirrors of the women only. Scripture teaches that men are always to be the spiritual leaders of the family but women are able to share in this role alongside their husband. Women are able to consecrate themselves with the vow of a Nazarite (Num. 6:2), just like men. Women share in the sacred meals and great annual feasts (Deut. 16:11, 14); in wedding festivities (John 2:1-3); in the fellowship of the family meal (12:3). They share in offering sacrifices, as Manoah's wife did (Judges 13:13-14); the women are graced by theophanies just as men are, For example, Manoah's wife (Judges 13:3-5, 9); Hagar (Gen. 16:7; 21:17), Sarah (18:9-10). Thus this teaching shows that oppression of women is to some extent condemned in the Old Testament by giving women the platform to serve like men.<sup>108</sup>

Moreover the office of prophet in the Old Testament is not limited to men, there are a few women that are called to be "prophetesses," God's spokesperson, as are the prophets. Miriam (ca. 1400 B.C. Exodus 15:20) is the first prophetess to the nation Israel, then Deborah (Judges 4:4-7); Isaiah's wife is also a prophetess (725 B.C.) (Isaiah 8:3). The women are present in services to hear the Word of God (Neh. 8:2-3), and engage in music ministry (Ex. 15:20-21; 1 Chron. 25:5), women sing and dance in worship and often celebrate before the LORD with singing, dancing, and tambourines (e.g., 1 Samuel 18:6; Psalm 68:25), and prophesy often includes instruments 1 Chron.25:1-3, prophecy is also often sung as the Psalms are inspired words put to song. In Exod.15:19-21 Israel's first prophetess (Mariam) leads the women in tambrels, dancing, and singing the same song of Moses which is the most ancient praise song that we know of. The Hebrew indicates Moses probably leads the men and Miriam the women- the two groups responding alternately, singing the first verse as a chorus the song of Mariam. We

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<sup>108</sup> Let's Reason Ministries, op.cit, [www.letsreason.org/support.htm](http://www.letsreason.org/support.htm)

can understand the modern customs of the East, where the dance is accompanied with singing and the sound of the timbrel, is still led by the chief female of the company, the rest imitating her movements and repeating the words of the song. Miriam and Deborah composed the two oldest pieces of literature preserved in the Bible, which are regarded as literary masterpieces (Exodus 15 and Judges 5).<sup>109</sup> This is not only an indicator of equality but also a display of value attached to women in Old Testament and also a discouragement of women oppression in the community at large. This can be cited as another example where Old Testament really discourages underrating and oppression of women.

Deborah is a prophetess who ruled Israel. Judges 4:4: "And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time." Because men will not assume their responsibilities, God raises up and uses a woman. God will put a woman in charge when men are lazy and cowardly. Anytime the leadership of men is dispensed with and women rule over men, it is a judgment. Isa.3:12 "As for My people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O My people! Those who lead you cause you to err, and destroy the way of your paths." Deborah brought shame to the Israelite men as they had fear so that none dared to assume leadership. Deborah shamed Barak, the military commander of Israel's army, for his failure to assume the leadership God had given him, he refused to advance against Sisera without her presence and commanding influence (Judges 4:8). After she mediated God's command to him to join battle with Sisera, commander of the Canaanite army, Barak replies: "If you go with me, I will go; but if you don't go with me, I won't go." Deborah responded, "Very well...I will go with you. But because of the way you are going about this (full of fear) the honor will not be yours, the LORD will hand Sisera over to a woman." The LORD raises up this woman, who is full of faith, to disgrace the men of Israel for their lack of faith, because it is not appropriate for unfaithful men to take the leadership of the nation.

A woman has the right to make vows to the LORD independently of her husband, as in the case of Hannah, but the husband, in the case of a married woman, and the father, in the case of a young daughter living in her father's house (Numbers 30:16), has the right to overrule it: "But if

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid

her husband overrules her on the day that he hears it, he shall make void her vow which she took ..., and the LORD will release her" (30:8). A wife or daughter cannot overrule the husband's or father's authority in the home by claiming she made a vow to the Lord, a higher authority than her male attachment, which she must obey. The Lord stands behind the authority of a husband or father. This is not because woman is inferior but to protect the government of the home. The vow of a widow or a divorcee is as binding on these unattached women as a vow is upon the man (Numbers 30:9).

According to Old Testament, mothers stand on equal footing with fathers in teaching children: "She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue" (Proverbs 31:26). Israel's sages are also cultural revolutionaries with regard to the role of women teaching in the home. The father's command to the son, "do not forsake your mother's teaching" (Proverb 1:8), seems unexceptional to the modern reader. Moreover, nowhere else in the wisdom literature of the ancient Near East, from the Euphrates to the Nile, is the mother mentioned as a teacher. In order for the mother to teach Israel's inherited wisdom, she herself has first to be taught, suggesting that "son" in the Book of Proverbs is inclusivity, not gender specific.<sup>110</sup> This implies that women too, like men are of substance in the community and can be consulted for wisdom which stages them as important character in a home as mentioned in the book of the proverbs warning never to forsake mothers' teachings. Thus discouraging under looking women roles as well as women exploitation in the family and community at large. This is an implication that a mother in a home is source of wisdom. Therefore, deserves respect rather than oppression and suppression.

Women in the Old Testament offer sacrifices and gifts along with men (cf. Leviticus 12:6). The laws for ceremonial cleansing in connection with bodily emissions are essentially the same for both sexes (Leviticus 15). Women as well as men consecrate themselves to God as Nazarites (Numbers 6:2).

Women and men are also equal in prayer. Covenant women pray directly to God without the priestly mediation of their husbands. For example, when carnal Jacob defaults in his

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid

responsibility to pray for his barren wife (Gen 30:1-2), in contrast to his godly forefathers who pray for their children and wives (cf. 24:7, 12-15; 25:21), Rachel petitions God directly, and he listens to her and opens her womb (30:22-24). Barren Hannah also seeks dignity and worth through child-bearing. She too goes directly to God in prayer, independently from her husband, Elkanah, and the high priest, Eli, both of whom are insensitive to her need. In fact, when challenged by Eli, she speaks up and defends her right (1 Samuel 1:15-16). She names her boy, "Asked of God," and dedicates him to the LORD with the prayer that he will introduce kingship into Israel (1 Samuel 2:10B). Hannah's prayer turns Israel around from the nadir of its spiritual history and political misfortune and starts it on its upward ascent to its glory under David. A mother's prayer saves Israel and rules it.<sup>111</sup> This shows that it has never been God's plan to oppress women, he welcomes both men and women in prayers and he answers them all.

#### **4.2.3 The New Testament teaching that support oppression of Women**

Throughout the history of Christ's Church, numerous fathers, saints and Bishops have made the most obnoxious and hateful remarks about women, including that they are the "devil's gateway," a slander so vicious that it led to hundreds of thousands of women to be systematically murdered by the Catholic Church. This calumny and bigotry continue to this day, and women are regularly attacked merely for questioning Church dogma and doctrine, such as the historicity of patently mythical biblical characters.<sup>112</sup>

Christianity also has it that the husband is the head of a wife as Christ is the head of the church, which is his body (Ephesians 5:23). In our contemporary society, men are known as the heads of the families, and in leadership at large. While women are referred to as the men's subordinates thus they cannot head any group of people in a society where there are men. Most men find it hard to fully submit to the women who are in leadership in this era but instead they keep on despising them. Among the Catholics, women are highly treated as mothers. Mary being the

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<sup>111</sup> Bruce Waltke, Op.cit,<http://www.Idolpphin.org/waltke.html>

<sup>112</sup> ACharya S/D.M.Murdock, "Christian Clergy: Women, shut up and obey your husbands", [freethoughtnation.com](http://freethoughtnation.com), Saturday 13<sup>th</sup>. 2010, accessed on 24.4.2013

mother of Jesus is known as blessed mother since the son is the savior of the world. Mary is a simple Jewish peasant girl who becomes the mother of Jesus. She is a willing servant who trusts God and obeys his call. God knows that Mary is a woman of rare strength and obedience. She gives birth to Jesus as her baby and watches him die as her savior. Mary also knows the scriptures. When the angel appears and tells her the baby will be God's son, Mary replies "I am the lord's servant... may it be to me as you have said" Luke 1:38<sup>113</sup>. Despite the dignity that is given to Mary the mother of Jesus, still women experience oppression among the Catholics and other Christian churches concerning religious issues. Women are treated as mothers therefore they cannot be the heads of the church, families but they can just be assistants. Women cannot be ordained as priests like men but they can just can be sisters or serve God in any other way but they are not supposed to bless the Eucharist. As they serve as sisters they can be promoted to different ranks but still they cannot even become deacons in Catholic Church.

According to 1 Timothy 2:11-14; "A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner". Here Paul is giving instructions on worship, however the teachings indicate some unfair treatment of women and oppression in that women are not given opportunity to participate in leadership but instead they are meant to be silent. This New Testament teaching by Paul has in most cases been used to deny competent women in church roles in worship and leadership.

However, John Oakes adds that the biblical role of women in the church is equal to in importance, but at least in certain situations, men are described as leaders, and the women are in a more submissive role, at least in the public realm. Remember that Paul has women who are powerful leaders in his inner circle. The same applies to Jesus. Nevertheless, when it comes to appointing elders and evangelists, the Bible implies that these roles should be taken by men. By the way, it should be noted that Paul appoints deaconesses. The early churches have a significant role for women in almost every aspect of church life. It is the influence of the male-dominated

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<sup>113</sup> Mary Fairchil, "Religion and Christianity, About. Com Christianity", <http://Christianity.about.com/od/newtestament>, New York Times Company, 2012, accessed on 24<sup>th</sup>.August. 2012

society, especially in Rome, which leads to the exclusion of women from their God-given active role in the church. It is well known that the Roman church eventually lifted up celibacy and a male-only priesthood, but this is not supported by the Bible. It is also worth noting that the more submissive role for women in the Bible is reserved for marriage and in public leadership roles.

There is no general submission of all women to all men anticipated in the Bible. The Bible does not teach in any way the subjugation or inferiority of women. It does recognize some inherent differences and advice roles he charge that the Bible is oppressive to women is certainly not a new one. In the Greek world women are virtually slaves in their own homes. They are not allowed out of the homes. They do not own property; they do not have political or economic power. The Jews treat their women hardly better than the Greeks. A famous Jewish proverb (I am paraphrasing) is for a Jewish man to pray, "Thank God that I was not born a Gentile or a woman."<sup>114</sup>

According to ancient Greece, a respectable woman is not allowed to leave the house unless she is accompanied by a trustworthy male escort. A wife is not permitted to eat or interact with male guests in her husband's home; she has to retire to her woman's quarters. Men keep their wives under lock and key, and women have the social status of a slave. Girls are not allowed to go to school, and when they grow up they are not allowed to speak in public. Women are considered inferior to men. The Greek poets equate women with evil. Woman is responsible for unleashing evil on the world. The status of Roman women is also very low. Roman law places a wife under the absolute control of her husband, who has ownership of her and all her possessions. He can divorce her if she goes out in public without a veil. A husband has the power of life and death over his wife, just as he does his children. As with the Greeks, women are not allowed to speak in public. Jewish women, as well, are barred from public speaking. The oral law prohibits women from reading the Torah out loud. Synagogue worship is segregated, with women never allowed to be heard.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> John Oakes, "Does the New Testament Support Oppression of Women", [www.evidenceforchristianity.org](http://www.evidenceforchristianity.org), accessed on 21.4.2013

<sup>115</sup> Sue Bohlin, Christianity: "The Best thing that Ever Happened to Women", [www.probe.org/site](http://www.probe.org/site), Probe Ministries, 2005, accessed on 24.4.2013

#### 4.2.4 The New Testament teaching that condemn Oppression of women

It is clearly revealed to us in Isaiah 61:1-3 that Jesus' mission on earth is to liberate the oppressed, the exploited and marginalized. Jesus makes his intention in New Testament to liberate women clear right from beginning by being born of a woman without the participation of man. Indeed the bible reveals many stories of women liberated by Jesus from many conditions that are oppressing them. Such women always become his disciples. In fact many of them are the ones financing his ministry. (Luke 8:1-3). Right from the beginning Jesus makes it clear that just like men; women have a place in his ministry. Their role is not only limited to the welfare needs of Jesus but it is also Evangelistic.<sup>116</sup>

On the day of Pentecost when the promised gift of Holy Spirit first comes to Jesus' disciples, women are also present and the holy spirit as their male counterparts. They too are empowered to spread the gospel of Christ. Subsequently in Acts 18:1, 18-20, 24-26, we read about a woman called Priscilla who travelled and served God alongside her husband Aquila and at one time with Paul and Apollos in Corinth and Ephesus. Priscilla is both an apostle and a pastor. This shows that women are considered too in church leadership.

Women like Eunice, Timothy's mother (Acts 16:1), and a number of other women ministers (Romans 16) are recognized by Paul. Women like Eudia and Syntyche (Philippians 4), Lydia a business woman in Philippi (Acts 16:11-15) Tabitha, who is always helping the poor (acts 9:36-41) are all disciples of Jesus who do a great job for the ministry. Jesus loves and respects the band of devoted women. He values them and obviously appreciates their generous and selfless giving. His actions towards women repeatedly express appreciation for their God given abilities. He always sympathizes with them and frees them from oppression. See the woman with a bent back (Luke: 13:11-13), the woman with the issue of blood (Mark 5:25-34), the woman caught in adultery (John 8:3-3). Jesus teaches the women just as he teaches the men. Jesus wants women to

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<sup>116</sup> Maria Matembe, op.cit, p.83



be involved in God's work and ministry. He lays a concrete foundation on which women have faithfully built on the past two millennia.<sup>117</sup>

Jesus is a man of His own time and yet, ahead and beyond His time culturally and spiritually. He rejects all negative attitudes toward women and embraces their practical assistance. He defines His true family as "those who hear the word of God and obey it" In comparison with other Jewish religious leaders of His day, Jesus is remarkably open to the participation of women in His movement. He is clearly bold in giving place and prominence to women in His life and work. During Christ's earthly ministry, Mary remains in the background, and except for the terse reply recorded in John 2:4 and Jesus' stress upon the will of God as the condition for familial ties, it is to be assumed that Jesus maintains a close relationship with His mother. Thus, it is understandable why He makes special preparations for her while still on the cross. In a somewhat similar relationship, Elizabeth the mother of John the Baptist is also portrayed as an agent of God's power (Luke 1).<sup>118</sup>

From the very beginning, Luke writes things no one would write if a key interest were to suppress women. Consider that the first person in the New Testament to be "filled with the Holy Spirit" is a woman (Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, Luke. 1:41). Further, as Jesus begins His ministry, Luke records that it is women who help to support Him and the apostles (Luke. 8:1-3).<sup>119</sup> This shows that Jesus had compassion for women and did not support their oppression in the community as it was initially.

There is another striking example in the Bible according to Luke's gospel about the concern for women. For example of all the evangelists, Luke records the women in Jesus' life with the greatest sensitivity (Luke 1:39-56). Jesus associates with women in order to assure them that they are also loved by God since they are created in God's image too. Jesus raises a widow's son

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<sup>117</sup> *Ibid* p.92

<sup>118</sup> Rev Lady, "The status of women in Old Testament and New Testament", [revlady.hubpage.com](http://revlady.hubpage.com), last updated on 8<sup>th</sup>.september 2010, accessed on 22.4.2013

<sup>119</sup> Rusty Miller, "Does the Bible oppress Women?", Westside Church of Christ", [www.justchristians.com](http://www.justchristians.com), Irving, Texas 2009, Accessed on 22.4.2013

in the town of Nain who had lost her only son (Luke 7:11-17). This incident demonstrates Jesus' concern for the poor, slaves, and powerless, oppressed especially the women who are excluded from power and status in Jewish society. They are effectively barred from education and are reckoned sufficiently reliable to give testimony in court. A Jewish daily prayer says by men! "Thanks God heartily for not making them women". These circumstances, among others, tend to be noted by modern feminists.<sup>120</sup> Jesus breaks down barriers by associating with all plus the outcasts in the Jewish community. By contrast Jesus treats women frankly and impartially as human beings. He includes women in his ministry that is his disciples, his students in Galilee and Judah. He takes time to instruct Mary of Bethany in the way of God. Therefore this indicates that Jesus discourages the oppression of women.

There were female prophets in the early New Testament time; we see this with Philip, "Now this man had four virgin daughters who were prophetesses" (Acts 21:9). It was never God's intention to exclude women from being servants, ministering in His kingdom. Jesus never spoke of women as being inferior to men. They were always honored in His teaching and were not often used as negative examples. Instead He used the men who were to be leaders for His examples in correction. At least twice in His sermons Jesus used the example of a woman to rebuke the faithless men of His generation: the widow of Zarephath to the men of Nazareth, Luke 4:25-26, and the Queen of Sheba to the Pharisees, Luke 11:31. More than twice in His parables Jesus used an illustration with a woman to illustrate the faith and resolve they were to have: The persistent widow who troubled the judge in Luke 18:2-8 and the woman searching for the lost coin in Luke 15:8-10. In another parable a woman was used negatively as the church, hiding three measures of meal.

The Rabbis (tradition of the elders) taught that women were intellectually inferior and incapable of studying the Torah. When Jesus was in the house of Mary and Martha, (Luke 10:38-42), as Martha went about her daily chores he instructed her that Mary had actually "chosen that good part" by sitting and learning (Luke 10:42). Jesus did not condemn Martha for going about her household duties, but commended Mary for a better ministry, her desire to learn the Word.

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<sup>120</sup> Leslie Fairfield and Lynn Fairfield, Understanding New Testament, Uganda Christian University, Foundation course Study Guide, Revised Version, 2009, P. 28

Women in Jesus' time on earth were using their own resources to support his ministry. They were totally committed and single-minded in following Him. Unlike the male disciples who deserted Jesus when he was troubled, the women followed him to the end. They walked with him on the journey to Golgotha, they saw him crucified as they mourned and wailed for him (Luke 23:27-37). During all this time the male disciples were hiding fearing for their lives. Judas had betrayed his master, and Peter had disowned him. We see tremendous courage demonstrated by women who believed and followed Jesus faithfully because they loved him. Even after his burial some of these women followed Jesus to his grave to anoint his body.<sup>121</sup> Therefore all this shows how compassionate Jesus was to them and condemned any kind of women oppression. The women were so much committed to Jesus.

Jesus gave the women, who were often neglected by the teachers, a place of assurance and hope. We see this in the example of the immoral woman who was able to repent without fear of ridicule with tears of thankfulness by shading tears on Jesus' feet and drying them with her hair. It was a woman who anointed the head of Jesus as he sat at supper in the house of Simon the leper, something no man would do. He rebuked Simon for not doing so (Matthew 26:7; Mark 14:3; Luke 7:37). Mary had no apprehension to anoint His feet with costly perfume, risking the rebuke by others. It was because Jesus accepted them all, not some. Because of his acceptance they were moved to repentance and followed him.

The New Testament teaches that Jesus usually taught both men and women which was unusual according to the Jewish law. John 11:25-26, says that when Lazarus died, Jesus comforted Martha. To teach a woman was bad enough, but Jesus did more than that. He even demanded for response from Martha, which she did publically and yet this was against the Jewish culture. He associated with prostitutes and all other people of low status. He gave women status and respect equal to men.

Jesus had several women in his inner circle of friends. He freely associated with them in public, despite Jewish prejudices. His treatment of the Samaritan woman at the well in John chapter 4

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<sup>121</sup> Miria Matembe, Op.cit, P.90

sets a standard which no culture up to that time could even come close to meeting. Jesus was a revolutionary in his treatment of and respect for women. Anyone who thinks of Jesus as an enemy of women and their rights is surely ignorant of his actions.

Paul followed the example of Jesus. In his travels, he frequently befriended women and let them into his inner circle of friends, using their leadership liberally. Lydia is pointed out from all the converts in Philippi. "She and the members of her household were baptized." (Acts 16:15). It is hard for us to appreciate the significance of this statement, and of Paul's relationship with Lydia.

Apparently both Priscilla and Aquila were powerful leaders in the church under Paul's leadership. It is not an accident that Luke lists Priscilla first. Apparently, of the two, Priscilla stood out. She and Aquila taught Apollos more adequately. Remember that Paul approved of the appointment of deaconesses in the churches under his care as well (Romans 16:1). In his list of greetings to the churches in Rome, well over half of the close friends and associates he mentions are women. The Bible teaches that all are one in Christ. "There is neither... male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3: 26).

The Bible describes an equal but not identical role in marriage. The husband is to be the leader and the wife is to be in submission. Taking our cue from the way Jesus treated women, we can assume that in a Christian home, the wife's desires and opinions should carry equal weight to the husband. The wife definitely should not be treated with disrespect, but should be held up in the highest honor (1 Peter 3: 7, 8) and treated with an unrivaled love. The husband is charged to meet the needs of his wife. Both should be in submission to each other (Ephesians 5: 24), but the husband in a somewhat different way than the husband to the wife.<sup>122</sup>

Paul makes the following statement: "For all of you who are baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise" (Gal. 3:27-29). While some have

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<sup>122</sup> John Oakes, op.cit, [www.evidenceforchristianity.org](http://www.evidenceforchristianity.org)

tried to make too much of this passage, this much is clear: in Jewish tradition, the three classes of people who could not receive an inheritance are Gentiles, slaves and women. Paul makes a point of including all of these among the descendants of Abraham and heirs of Christ.<sup>123</sup> This teaches the Jewish officials that oppression of Gentiles, women and slaves are condemned. They need to be associated with too in the community and not being denied the inheritance.

Our Lord Jesus was a revolutionary in his age with regard to the role of women in worship. He amazes his disciples by conversing with a woman because He violated the prejudice of both the Jews and the Romans against women (John 4:27). The Son of God bestows dignity upon this Samaritan adulteress, "unclean" by Jewish standards, by revealing to her for the first time that worship is to be directed toward the Father in heaven, not toward "mecca-like" Jerusalem on earth (John 4:21-25). Moreover, our Lord entrusts women to be the original witnesses to his resurrection, the cornerstone of the Christian faith, though their testimony would have been discounted in a Roman court (Luke 24:1-4). He rewards the devotion of Mary Magdalena, out of whom cast seven demons, by allowing her to be the first person to meet him after his resurrection (Mark 16:9-10; John 20:14-18). His disciples refuse to believe Mary's report of the risen Lord. In fact, they dismiss it as an 'idle tale' (Mark 16:11; Luke 24:11).

Later, Jesus rebukes them for their unwillingness to believe her (Mark 16:14) Yet He implicitly confirmed the Old Testament patriarchy by not appointing a woman as an apostle, though women follow him, minister to him, and are his close friends. It is nonsense to argue that the counter-cultural Jesus appoints only male apostles because he is culturally conditioned. Is it not plausible to think that had he intended to empower women to have equality with men in leadership he would have called a woman to be an apostle, either before or after the resurrection?<sup>124</sup> All this shows that Jesus loves women and fully condemns their oppression, discrimination and exploitation. He bestows their dignity in the community.

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<sup>123</sup> Rusty Miller, op.cit, [www.justchristians.com](http://www.justchristians.com), Irving, Texas

<sup>124</sup> Bruce Waltke, Op.cit, <http://www.idolphin.org/waltke.html>

### 4.3 Islamic Teaching on Oppression of women

#### 4.3.1 Qur'an teachings that support oppression women

Despite the fact that Islam has teachings on equality of Human kind, still there are teachings and practices that oppress women in Different communities over the world. The Quran instructs believers that they should not treat women as a commodity which can be inherited and used as liked. The context is that in pre Islamic era, the wives of a person could be transferred to his heirs like his wealth and animals. Also in many Islamic societies, there is division of roles creating a woman's space in the private sphere of home and a man's in the public spheres.

A woman's primary responsibility is usually interpreted as fulfilling her role as a wife and mother, whereas a man's role is to work and be able to financially support his wife and family. However neither the Quran nor Hadith specifically mention gender roles for women. The Quran gives a man the right of 'guardianship' or 'superiority' over the family structure in order to prevent dissension and friction between the spouses.<sup>125</sup>

Afzalur R (et al) noted that Islam teaches that all human beings have same parents; Adam and Eve. Men and women sprung from the same father and mother. There should be no social prejudice or social injustices or special privileges for any person because of their common parentage and because they are creatures of one Supreme Being. The same origin of humankind provides no basis for distinction or discrimination<sup>126</sup>.

The Koran says that; "Men have authority over women because God has made the one superior to the other... Good women are obedient. As for those from whom you fear disobedience,

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<sup>125</sup> Wikipedia, "The Free Encyclopedia, Gender Roles in Islam", <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender-roles-in-Islam>, Modified on 27. June 2012, accessed on 28.08.2012

<sup>126</sup> Afzalur, R (et al), Encyclopedia of Search, vol 2, London, The Muslim Scholl Trust, 1982, p.11

admonish them, forsake them in beds apart; and beat them" Qu'ran 4:34<sup>127</sup>, this clearly shows oppression of women and yet both male and females were created in God's image.

The Moslem women's lives and the choices they face are influenced by patriarchal social arrangements as they are influenced by religious ideology. This confirms Shirley Ardener's observation that we need to be wary in cross- cultural comparisons of women's status since giving a weighting to the value of each variable for each society is impossibly complex. Muslim women tend to be divided over the definition of their gender interests, over the nature of social arrangements which best serve them and over their visions of a better society.<sup>128</sup>

Another oppressive practice among Muslim women is about the dress code. There are three rules for women dress code in Islam according to Quran in the following verses of surah AL-Ahzab: These include: the best garment (7:26), cover your Bosoms (24:31) and lengthen your garment (33:59). The best garment however is the garment of righteousness. In 24:31, God is asking the women to use their cover (Khimar) (being a dress, a coat, a shawl, a shirt, a blouse, a tie, a scarf...etc) to cover their heads or their hair. God deliberately, said, tell them, to lengthen their garments, and never said how long. God could have said tell them, to lengthen their garments, and never said how long is long. God could have said tell them to lengthen their garments to their ankles or to their mid-calf or to their knees, but God did not. He did not, Out of his mercy, not because He forgot as God does not forget.<sup>129</sup> Thus Muslim women should not be forced to cover their hair, head and dress in long clothes in order not to safe –guard them from men by looking at them lustful but instead they should emphasize on being faithful to Allah and teach them to have self-control over their bodies or sexual desires.

"If any of your women are guilty of lewdness, take the evidence of four (reliable) witnesses amongst you against them; and if they testify, confine them to houses until deaths do claim them, or Allah ordain for them some other way." If two men among you are guilty of lewdness, punish them both. If they repent and amend, leave them alone; for Allah is oft- returning, most merciful.

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<sup>127</sup> Acharya S/D.M.Murdock, opp.cit, freethoughtnation.com

<sup>128</sup> Camillia Fawziel- sloth and Judy Mabro, Muslim Women's Choices, Book Craffers, USA, 1995, P.1

<sup>129</sup> "Women Dress code in Islam", <http://islamw3d.freehosting.net/>, accessed on 30<sup>th</sup>, August, 2012.

(Quran 4:15-16). This teaching is unfair and oppressive to women in that their punishment is more brutal than to men. Men are given an opportunity of repent but women are not.

Quran 5: 6 “And if ye are unclean, purify yourselves. And if ye are sick or on a journey, or one of you cometh from the closest, or ye have had contact with women, and ye find not water, then go to clean high ground and rub faces and your hands with some of it”, Men are to rub dirt on their hands if there is no water to purify them following the casual contact with a woman (such as shaking hands).<sup>130</sup> This teaching shows oppression of women because it talks about men alone purifying themselves after being in contact with women but does not instruct women to purify themselves when they have contacted men as well.

The above teaching is related with what is indicated in Surah 4:43 “Muslims, draw not near un to prayer..... (If) Ye have touched women..... then go to high clean soil and rub your face and hands.”(Muslim women are pariahs and dirty). In the laws of Allah, a woman is worth half a man. Women are dirty, vile, evil creatures that must be kept hidden.<sup>131</sup>

Quran (4:24) and Quran (33:50) - A Man is permitted to take women as sex slaves outside marriage. Islamic scriptures further inform us that most Muslim women will go to hell and that there are fewer seats for women in Allah’s paradise. The Quran, Surah (37:22-23) “Those who did wrong will go to hell, and their wives will go to hell with them (no matter how they behaved).

In Islam, a married woman is the property of her husband. He is permitted to use violence to control his wife. Wife beating is divinely sanctioned by Allah in the Koran and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad. Quran 4:34 Men (Muslims) are in charge of women (Muslimah), therefore Allah has made the Muslim (men) to excel the Muslim (women), and because Muslim (men) spend of their property, so good women (Muslimah) are the obedient, guarding in secret that

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<sup>130</sup> Guide to Understand Islam, “A Woman’s worth Relative to a man’s”, 2006-2011, <http://www.thereligionofPeace.com>, Accessed on 28.4.2013

<sup>131</sup> Reason, Islam Watch, “Telling the Truth about Islam, In Islam’s own writings: Allah and his Messengers Extreme Hatred of Women”, <http://www.islam-watch.org>, 18.6.2008, Accessed on 28. 4.2013



which Allah has guarded. As for those women (Muslimah/wives) from whom you fear rebellion, admonish them and banish them to beds apart, and beat them. Then if they obey you, seek not a way against them...<sup>132</sup>

#### **4.3.2 The Quran teachings that condemn oppression of women**

Tumushabe Sulpicius noted that the Qur'an clearly points out that O mankind, fear your lord, who created you of a single soul, and of the same created his mate, and from that pair spread countless men and women over the earth: fear all in whose name you demand your rights from one another and abstain from violating relations between people. Note that Allah is watching you very closely. Islam goes on to teach that if there is any bias of superiority for man over another man or a man over a woman, or a woman over a man, it is in their fear of Allah, their piety, goodness and virtue. Anyone who exceeds others in the virtue in the sight of Allah,<sup>133</sup> this indicates that Allah loves all people and wants all Muslims, men and women not to exploit each other but to treat each other equally. As the prophet of Islam said "All Muslims are equal like the teeth of a comb. In relation to one another, the Muslims are like a building: every unit reinforces and is reinforced by all others."<sup>134</sup> This teaching indicates that oppression of women is condemned.

Qur'an Surah 4:11 encourages inheritance for both males and females, it says; "Allah (thus) directs your children's (inheritance): to the male, a portion equal to that of two females: if only daughters, two or more, their share is two-thirds of inheritance: If only one, her share is half. For parents, a sixth share of inheritance to each, if the deceased left children; if no children, the parents are the only heirs, the mother has a third; if the deceased left brothers or sisters the

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<sup>132</sup> Islam Evil In the Name of God, "Equality for Muslim women will be the death knell of Islam", [www.islamreform.net/new-page213.htm](http://www.islamreform.net/new-page213.htm) Accessed on 4.4.2012

<sup>133</sup> Sulpicius Tumushabe, Justice in Suffocation seen from an African Perspective. A case study on justice among the Bekiba of south western Uganda, Marianum press kisubi, Uganda, 2004, p.132

<sup>134</sup> Ibid

mother has a sixth”.<sup>135</sup> Therefore this teaching shows that both men and women should be considered to inherit land and any other property as Allah teaches but not to oppress them.

Qur’an Surah 4:19-20 says; “O you who believe! You are forbidden to inherit women against their will. Nor should you treat them with harshness, that you may take away part of dower you have given them- except where they have been guilty. If you take a dislike to them it may be that you dislike a thing, and Allah brings about through a great deal of good”. But if you decide to take one wife in place of another, even if you had given the latter a whole treasure for dower, take not the least bit of it back: would you take slander and manifest wrong.<sup>136</sup> This teaches that women should not be oppressed and denied inheritance even when a husband decides to take one wife in place of another; it does not qualify him to oppress the latter by taking a whole treasure given for dower.

In the above verse, Allah tells the Muslims that they cannot treat women like slaves, but must act justly with them. The verse enjoins Muslims to treat women kindly and warns them that they may hate a woman when Allah has “placed abundant good”, in her. Muslims are to be just kind to women and they must be careful not to underestimate the worth of women because of imperfections that are made up for by their much greater good traits. Muslims are not to oppress, exploit women, be cruel to them nor take them for granted. These are the commands of Allah to “you who believe.”<sup>137</sup>

According to Quran 2:29, “divorce is only permitted twice: after that, the party should either hold together on acquit able terms, or separate in kindness. It’s not lawful for you, (men), to take back any your gifts from your wives, except when both parties fear that they would be unable to keep the limits ordained by Allah. If you (judges) do indeed fear that they would unable to keep the limits ordained by Allah, there is no blame on either of them if she gives something for her

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<sup>135</sup> Abdullah Yusuf Ali, The holy Qur’an, Good word Books Pvt. Ltd, www.goodwordbooks.com, India, 1934, p.52

<sup>136</sup> Ibid p.53

<sup>137</sup> Mohammad Sadiq, “Treatment of women in Islam, Unveiling Islam”, www.unveilingislam.org, Accessed on 26.4.2013

freedom. These are the limits ordained by Allah; so do not transgress them if any do transgress the limits ordained by Allah, such persons (themselves as well as others).”<sup>138</sup>

The Qur’an condemns oppression of women in marriage especially when a husband resorts to divorce his wife. Qur’an 2:231 says; “when you divorce women, and they are about to fulfill the term of their (iddah), either retain them on equitable terms or set them free on equitable terms; but do not retain them to injure them, or to take undue advantage; if any one treat does that, he wrongs his own soul. Do not treat Allah’s signs as a jest, but solemnly rehearse Allah’s favors on you, and the fact that he sent down to you the book and wisdom, for your instruction. And fear Allah and know that Allah is well acquainted.”<sup>139</sup>

Qur’an 24:30-31; “Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their chastity: that will make for greater purity for them: And Allah is well acquainted with all that they do.” And say to the believing women that they should lower gaze and guard their chastity; that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof; that they should draw their veils over bosoms and not display to their husbands’ their fathers, their husbands’ fathers, their sons, their husbands’ sons, their brothers or their brothers’ sons, or their sisters’ sons, or their womenfolk, or those whom their right hands possess or male servants free of carnal desires, or small children who have no carnal knowledge of women; and that they should not strike their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments. And O you believers! Turn you all together towards Allah, that you may achieve success.”<sup>140</sup> Therefore this teaching calls the Muslim men and women to believe in Allah as well as to have respect for one another.

Allah says: “Men are protectors and maintainers of women because of what Allah preferred one with over the other and because of what they spend to support them from wealth (Surah 34).

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid p.23

<sup>139</sup> Abdullah Yusuf Ali, op.cit p.23

<sup>140</sup> Ibid

Allah has indeed heard and accepted the statement of the woman who pleads with you concerning her husband and carries her complaint in prayer to Allah (always) hears the arguments between both sides among you: for Allah hears and sees all things. Quran Surah 58:1

The wife can be granted divorce if her husband is cruel, impotent, or whom she hates or abhors. Incompatibly of temperament, habits or social way of life can be good grounds for divorce according shariah. God/Allah permits divorce in order that an end is put to hopelessly troubled marriages. A woman, in addition has absolute freedom in the choice of her husband and she cannot be married against her will.

To give Muslim women equal rights would be to deny the validity that Quran 4:34 and thus imply that Q.4:34 and other teachings are not from Allah but were fabricated by Muhammad. The imprisonment of Muslim women – their subjugation and oppression and denial of their humanity and equality – is based on the evil lie of the “divinity” of the Quran.<sup>141</sup>

#### **4.3.3 Hadith teachings that support oppression of women**

The hadith are the reports of Mohammads words and actions outside of Quran.<sup>142</sup>

It is claimed that Muhammad preferred women to pray at home rather than at a mosque, although this is disputed. According to one hadith, a supposed recounting of an encounter with Muhammad, he said: I know that you women love to pray with me, but praying in your inner rooms is better for you than praying in your house, and praying in your house is better for you than praying in a courtyard, and praying in your courtyard is better for you than praying in a local mosque, and praying in a local mosque is better for you than praying in my mosque.<sup>143</sup> It has always been women’s wish to be considered too in the mosque. For example, it is their

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<sup>141</sup> Islam Evil in the Name of God, op.cit

<sup>142</sup> James M. Arlandson, “Top Ten reasons why Sharia is bad for all societies”, americanthinker.com, www.answeering-islam.org, Accessed on 24.4.2013

<sup>143</sup> Wikipedia, “The Free Encyclopedia, Gender Segregation and Islam”, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sex-segregation-and-Islam>, Modified on 26 .August .2012, accessed on 28.08.2012

yearning to participate in preaching, or reading the word to the congregation. They cannot even see the person sharing the word but they just listen from the loud speakers because many mosques today put women behind a barrier or partition or in another room. Other women confessed that they don't have much interest in serving God because at any day, time they cannot be given a chance to preach in the mosque before men and women. Instead they are ever grambling in their hearts why they cannot be given an opportunity to teach, serve God.

Bukhari (62:58), a woman presents herself in marriage to Muhammad but he does not find her attractive, so he 'donates' her on the spot to another man. Bukhari (62:81), "Prophet said: "The stipulations most entitled to be abided by are those which you are given the right to enjoy the (women's) private parts (that is to say, stipulations of the marriage contact)". In other words, the most important thing that a woman brings to a marriage is between her legs.<sup>144</sup>

Muslim (4:1039), "Aisha said [to Muhammad]: you have made us equal to the dogs and the asses". These are the words of Muhammad's favorite wife, complaining of the role assigned to women under Islam.

Ishaq 593, "As for Ali, he said that women are plentiful and you can easily change one for another". Ali was raised as a son by Muhammad. He was also the 4<sup>th</sup> caliph. This comment was made in Muhammad's presence without a word of rebuke from him.<sup>145</sup>

"Treat women well, for they are [like] domestic animals with you and do not possess anything themselves" From Muhammad's Farewell sermon. (Tabari VOL.9, Number.1754) This shows that still Muslim women are considered as property or domestic animal like goats, cows, chicken, rabbits, dog's cats etc., but not like any other human being. Therefore women can be treated like any other domestic animal in a home. Indeed this is oppressive to women in Islam for being considered as domestic animal.

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<sup>144</sup> The Religion of peace, A woman's worth Relative to a man's, "Guide to Understand Islam", <http://www.thereligionofpeace.com>, Accessed on 29.4.2013

<sup>145</sup> Ibid

Prophet Muhammad gave four reasons that sanction men beating their wives: If she refuses to beautify herself for him, if she refuses sex when he asks for it, if she refuses to pray or perform ritual ablutions and if she goes out of the house without a valid reason. Also, Muhammad's example is normative for Muslims, since he is an "excellent example of conduct" (Quran 33:21) – and Aisha reports that Muhammad struck her. Once he went out at night after he thought she was asleep, and she followed him surreptitiously. Muhammad saw her, and, as Aisha recounts: "He struck me on the chest which caused me pain, and then said: Did you think that Allah and His Apostle would deal unjustly with you?" (Sahih Muslim 2127). Aisha herself said it: "I have not seen any woman suffering as much [from beatings] as the believing women." (Sahih Bukhari 7.72.715)<sup>146</sup>

#### **4.3.4 Hadith teachings that condemn oppression of women**

Prophet Mohammed said that "The world and all things in the world are precious, but the most precious thing in the world is a virtuous woman. This meant that women were supposed to be treated in a fair way since they are precious.

Wife beating "[A husband] may hit her, but not in a way that injures her, meaning he may not break bones, wound her, or cause blood to flow." (Reliance of the Traveler, Section m10.12)<sup>147</sup>

Thus women in Islam are not meant to be oppressed by husbands or men by beating them up to breaking their bones, wounding them, or anything that can lead them to death. But still that is oppression any way!

#### **Conclusion**

In conclusion to objective two, it was observed that to a greater extent there are many religious teachings on oppression of women. The teachings are both for and against oppression of women. The religious institutions have also contributed much to oppression of women, but they are also

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<sup>146</sup> The Religion of peace, Op.cit, <http://www.thereligionofpeace.com>

<sup>147</sup> Ibid

called upon to continue sensitizing people on how to minimize oppression through preaching against it. The religious leaders have to lead exemplary lives in their service by not oppressing women and they should let people be aware of the gender roles in the community. And be aware of the oppressive religious teachings that so that they can revise them and inform people how they can handle them well without oppressing the women in religious sectors.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### **Introduction:**

This chapter comprises of summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations that have been guided by the themes that were designed out of the four objectives of the study. These themes include; the existing oppressive cultural beliefs and practices among the Banyankole, the extent to which oppressive cultural beliefs and practices contribute to the oppression of women; the effects on women and finding out possible solution to the oppression of women in Bushenyi District.

#### **5.1 Summary of Findings**

The findings of the study indicated that indeed oppression of women exist in Bushenyi District. This was proved or found out by majority of the respondents. It was reported that specific cultural beliefs and practices held a strong basis on the social, physical and emotional wellbeing of the people. These oppressive beliefs and practices included Taboos and practices, proverbs and saying.

The researcher has exposed some levels of women oppression in Bushenyi District and to a great extent has showed the oppressive cultural beliefs and practices that have led to exploitation and oppression of women.

According to the study, the researcher found out that the major cause of women oppression is due to poor child upbringing and oppressive cultural beliefs and practices. This conclusion came after the researcher had fully investigated the reasons as to why women are oppressed in Bushenyi District. Nevertheless other factors have contributed too, but the oppressive cultural beliefs outweigh the rest because culture has done much from grassroots.



It was also found out that there are modern forms of oppression in Bushenyi District. The researcher found that despite the complaints for women emancipation, the advanced technology in modern days through the media like airing out the issues concerning women and fighting their rights, women still face oppression by denying them their rights and freedom like education. It was reported that in modern days, women still face oppression by being denied some jobs even when they are professionally qualified as men. This sometimes occurs due to different reasons as discussed in Chapter Two 2:5ff.

Research findings revealed that oppression of women had a number of effects on people in Bushenyi District, these include: physical, social, psychological and economical. The physical effects like broken bones, bruises, burns, cuts, stabs and firearms wounds, abrasion, bites, sprains, skull fractures, injuries to different body parts, that sometimes can lead to death.

It was also revealed that sociological effects of women oppression can lead to social stigma, Anger and Denial as revealed by 84% of the respondents, 72.1% of the respondents also agree that Broken Relationship is another sociological effect brought about by women oppression especially in homes.

The examples of psychological effects of oppression of women that were also discovered according to the study are; low self-esteem 90%, uncontrolled anger responses, loss of concentration and productivity 70.1% and chronic stress 58.6%. Therefore, it was vastly discovered that women oppression did not affect only women, but even other members of the home like children, relatives, husbands and the entire community at large.

The findings of the study revealed that there are number of religious teaching on the oppression of women. For instance, some Christian teaching that encourages the oppression of women that is (the Old and New Testament teaching that support and condemn oppression of women), the Islamic teaching on the oppression of women for example the Quran teaching that support and on the other hand condemn oppression of women.

The researcher discovered that the assessment made was that these religious teachings have contributed much to the oppression of women by reflecting the teaching that support oppression of women. The study also revealed that religious teachings which condemn women oppression. These teachings that condemn oppression of women should be used to fight oppression of women in Bushenyi and society.

From the findings of the study it can also be concluded that there are several religious teachings on oppression of women. Some of these teachings support oppression of women indirectly while others condemn it as discussed in chapter four of the study. Both Christians and Islamic religious teachings have a hand in the instigation of women oppression. The researcher therefore concluded that the religious sectors have a big role to play in sensitizing and condemning women oppression through preaching against it of any kind in communities thereby lessening it or even eradicating it completely.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The study tested the Hypothesis and it was revealed that the major cause of oppression of women is due to upbringing and oppressive cultural beliefs and practices among Banyankole in Bushenyi District. These were found to be greatly and highly affecting the wellbeing of women in the area. The researcher discovered that however much the culture contributed to the oppression of women, to some extent there are other factors in the modern era that too have contributed to oppression of women in Bushenyi District. The results further indicated that there were a number of effects of oppression of women to the people in the area of the study. The effects showed that people are affected greatly in physical, social, psychological, economical and spiritual aspects of life.

### 5.3 Recommendations

Oppression of women is a common practice among cultures, nationalities, religions and societies. At national level, effective measures against oppression of women should be aimed at dealing with casual factors which bring about this practice. The government should also retract laws and policies that discriminate and oppress women. Establishment of strict laws, penalties and punishments related to oppression of women will help in reduction of the act. These laws enable women to have rights that they have been denied to them through oppression of different kinds.<sup>148</sup> For example, those who engage in the practice should be arrested, prosecuted and charged. This would serve as an example to those who may also think of oppressing the women. The police together with other stakeholders should also work hand in hand in dealing with rough treatment of women.

The public lectures and programs on both radios and television should be organized and encouraged further by the government. The public can be taught using the mass media for instance the radio, television, Newspapers and be sensitized about causes and the harmful consequences of the practice of oppression of women, to the women, children, men, and the entire community at large. When people understand the causes of oppression of women, they can try as much as possible to avoid them.

The couples before getting married should be counseled and cautioned about the practice of oppression of women, its cause, consequences and how to avoid it. This could take place in institution offices and counseling centers in which there are professional counselors.<sup>149</sup> This would help to decrease the incidence of the act, like wife beating and many other ways of oppressing women since some women enter marriage with the preconceived notion of men oppressing them.

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<sup>148</sup> Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, <http://www.etu.org.za>, accessed on 26.7.2013

<sup>149</sup> Ssembajja N.Grace, Practices and attitudes towards wife Abuse in Namirembe Bakuli Palish, July 2001, p.45

The church has a role of encouraging men and women to join fathers and mothers unions among Christians in order to be advised how to treat each other especially in the marriage institutions without oppressing one another. The religious sectors should preach against oppression of women and emphasize unity, love as the bible says that we are all created in God's image, thus male and female should respect each other and avoid women oppressive practices. The churches should also organize prayer days and put themes like "solving oppression of women in societies", so that people can be encouraged to dedicate that Challenge to God in prayer and try to live an exemplary life.

Miria Matembe calls upon women to rise up to God's challenge and embrace their God-designed destiny for them as wonderful creation, restorers of fallen man and co-workers with God. Women oppression needs to provoke all women in order to have a second look at every one of them, their lives and discover God's purpose when he created them.<sup>150</sup> The women should also share God's purpose with both fellow women and men and show them how God expects them to work together in harmony but not in conflict. The study should remind men and women especially those who are married of the initial purpose of woman by the creator God.

There should be encouragement of seminars and workshops to sensitize men and women particularly on their plights and rights. Through the acquisition of such knowledge on women's rights, negative attitudes towards women could be changed. The entire community should be sensitized about the dangers of oppression of women and be taught how they can avoid them. It is important that the citizens be educated and be sensitized about human rights. This will equip citizens to fight and defend these rights.<sup>151</sup> This too can help in solving oppression of women as well as fight for human rights at large particularly to those who are unaware about their rights.

Women have a big role to play in order to solve the problem of oppression of women. They themselves hold the key to their solution. They need to unite and work together to fight for their rights in the society because when united they will stand but divided they will fall and be

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<sup>150</sup> Miria Matembe, Op.cit, p.93

<sup>151</sup> Sulpicius Tumushabe, Op.cit, p.152

oppressed the more. They need to free their mind as a step to achieve independence. They must unite against oppressive society. Only they can make things better for themselves by uniting. This unity must cut across region, religion, caste, creed or any other.

Parents in the process of parenting are challenged and called upon to shape both boys and girls in a way that does not oppress each other. Parents should instead teach their children to respect each other in all aspects of life in that they grow in mind knowing that oppression of women is a bad practice that can lead to negative effects to people in a given community. Also parenting should be a responsibility of both men and women (husbands and wives), so that these children can grow respecting each other's rights for both men and women. Young boys and girls should be guided and counseled about the dangers of oppression of women. This can begin in homes, schools so that they are brought up in a way that discourages oppression of both men and women.

The researcher recommends a campaign against oppression women in Bushenyi District and should be supported by sexes. This campaign should be aimed at inculcating courage, ability and support women socially, economically, emotionally and physically. This helps people especially women realize their God given purposes in life and they help one another on how to prevent oppression of women. Indeed God's initial purpose for creating man and woman was not to harass each other but to work in unity and help each other in creativity. God does not despise women or look at their weaknesses but their hearts, therefore they need to wake up and support each other in fighting for their rights and reduce oppression of women.

The researcher also recommends women to always focus on their responsibilities in homes, play their part in the communities and be exemplary as well and by so doing, it will aid in the fight against women oppression in the society. Once women are given equal opportunities to compete in the positions of leadership, decision making process, be it at local level or national level, they must use the opportunity to perform in order to make a difference to the people they are meant to

serve.<sup>152</sup> This too can help to solve oppression of women since there is enough evidence that they too are capable of leading and serving people well.

In a fight to stamp out women oppression in communities, institutions and organizations should as well be considerate while recruiting/appointing people in higher positions and women should be given equal chance as men. There should also be striving for gender balance on different projects, assignments as well as programs employed in different institutions and organizations. Men in higher positions and authority need to delegate some work to women who are their deputies, so that they too are given opportunities to exploit and develop their skills and talents. Indeed this too can minimize oppression of women since majority of the women are oppressed because they are taken for granted when it comes to issues concerning administration and development whereby they are not consulted at all for advice and guidance.

The government and nongovernmental organizations should also support and encourage women to start up income generating projects in order to become financially stable and independent. This can help them not be oppressed by both fellow women and men since they too can support and contribute financially to family and other projects hence are reorganized and realized.

Seminars and workshops on oppressive cultural beliefs and practices should be organized for both parents and youth. This will enlighten the parties involved about the significances and values of various cultural rituals, activities, like marriage ceremonies, funerals, and family gatherings as well as other cultural beliefs and practices involved. This too will enable them acquire some information about their culture especially knowing the oppressive cultural beliefs and practices that can affect them physically, socially and psychologically. This information got also can be of help in their well-being by condemning the beliefs, practices that oppress each other in their day today life.

The school going girls should be supported and encouraged to stay in school up to the completion of education cycle. This will prevent them from early marriages and child labor which causes oppression inevitable. This will make some youth to delay in schools thus reduce

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<sup>152</sup> Miri Matembe, Op.cit, p.88-89

on the age of early marriage where oppression of women is high. Young girls and boys should be guided and counseled about the dangers of early marriages. When ready for marriage, monogamy should be the ideal. This is because many women who are in polygamous face more oppression than those in monogamous marriages. When resources are not enough to be shared equally among all women and children in polygamous families, some end up being oppressed highly by different members in such a family.

Local council (LCs) leaders or officials should come out with by laws. This will be very effective if well set because they are close to the people. The local councils know well the challenges women go through by reporting their cases to them especially how they are mistreated by men in their homes. For example beating them up, denying them many of their rights. Thus the LCs officials need constant direction and ongoing education if they have to improve on their services. They need elementary knowledge of laws and sound knowledge on human rights. This will help them to avoid criminal offences like rape defilement and murder which are reserved for legal specialists.<sup>153</sup> Therefore when laws are set up on village levels and punishments given to oppressors, people can learn from their mistakes and those who were planning to oppress women can think positively. This is important because Punishments are one of the greatest remedies in human development and the truth of the matter is that in real life we learn through mistakes.

Both men and women should avoid the peer pressure as oppression of women is concerned. This is common especially through the conversations had in gatherings when spending their leisure time like in clubs, places of work and others. Some people when they are too drunk, they begin talking about their wives or husbands especially how they are treated or how they treat each other. Some men begin boasting how they cannot be driven by their wives or any woman and cannot involve them in decision making on their projects since they know nothing. They continue to narrate how they cannot allow to be led by any woman anywhere. This influences the friends who have not been mistreating, exploiting and oppressing women / their wives to begin so.

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<sup>153</sup> Sulpicius Tumushabe, Op.cit, p.152

All people should avoid acquiring the ill advice from the people they associate with in their communities. This is especially related to the friends that encourage oppression of women. Instead they should keep teaching against it where ever they are in that people live together in peace and harmony. For example in all public places like work places, clubs and others men should stop boasting around telling friends how they cannot be driven by their wives or any woman and cannot involve them in decision making on their projects since they know nothing. They should stop to narrate to friends how they cannot allow to be led by any woman anywhere. This too can help to reduce on oppression of women in Bushenyi District and Uganda as a nation at large.

Poverty has enslaved many homes in African communities and Uganda in particular which has led men to oppress women out of disappointment and frustration in pursuit for food and other home necessities. Some women have been abused sexually and socially due to their despair for money, food, employments and even promotions in some organizations in order to overcome poverty. Therefore, the government together with other stakeholders should sensitize people on how to overcome poverty. For example through agricultural schemes, soft loans, SACCOS, and many other income-generating activities that can boost financial status of women in homes and communities at large. Women need to be advised to work hard, save for tomorrow and not immediately relying on 'free items' with strings attached which later result into oppression in one way or the other.

Many women lack self-esteem and therefore cannot speak out and fight for their rights where necessary particularly in their homes, which has given birth to more oppression in communities. Women organizations in Uganda together with other stakeholders therefore need to hold up as well as boost women's self-esteem in homes and communities at large. And this can be made possible, through campaigns, seminars and conferences to help women be confident and compete without fear with men in income generating activities and opportunities. Women should also come out and actively participate in community activities and leadership where necessary instead of cowardly exhibit signs of low self-esteem like complaining, blaming each other, depression and whining.



The religious sectors need to be aware of all the causes of oppression of women so that they can go on with the sensitization and campaign against this vice through teaching, preaching, organizing seminars, workshops and conferences. There is also a need to educate other stakeholders and those with influence in homes and communities concerning the religious teachings that discourage oppression of women. For instance both Christian and Islamic teachings have to be well known by people. The religious leaders should make sure that the teachings are understood and interpreted well by all people so as to avoid further oppression as a result of these very teachings.

The Bible and Quran both have teachings that encourage oppression of women as discussed in chapter four. Therefore, I recommend that concerned religious leaders reject and abandon these teachings but rather follow the good example of the Old Testament prophets, Christ and Mohammad, in condemning oppression of women in our communities. Prophets acted as the voice of the voiceless and the oppressed.<sup>154</sup>

Christian religious leaders need to put emphasis on the love of Jesus Christ and preach to people to love one another as Christ did. Where there is love people cannot think of oppressing each other because unity and harmony exist so people live together in peace. Christians are called upon to practice love and unity because division openly scandalizes the world and contradicts the prayer and will of Christ; “Father, I pray that all may be one” (John 17:21).<sup>155</sup> When men and women are united, they stand and develop together and thus oppression of women is solved.

Men / husbands should support women/ wives directly or indirectly in activities that generate income for the welfare of a home or family. On the other hand, men/husbands who are not employed, should strive to be active and creative in order to overcome financial constraints that bring about frustration and yield women oppression in homes/families

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<sup>154</sup> Sulpicius Tumushabe, Op.cit, p.150

<sup>155</sup> J.N.K. Mugambi, “ The Ecumenical Movement and the Future of the Church in Africa,” in L. Magesa etal ( eds), The Church in African Christianity, 1990, p.7

#### **5.4 Suggested area for further research**

The following area is suggested by the researcher for further research

The oppression of men in Bushenyi District

**LIST OF KEY INFORMANTS**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>SEX</b>	<b>AGE</b>	<b>OCCUPATION /PLACE</b>	<b>DATE</b>
Abaho Remi	Male	25	Engineer, Bushenyi	10.7.2012
Abimanya Alvin	Male	32	Farmer, Kacuncu, Bweranyangi,	11.9.2012
Abimanya Ridley	Male	26	Accountant, Bushenyi	10.8.2012
Agaba Modern	Male	28	Social Worker, Mukono	20.12.2012
Ahabyona Sabath	Female	33	Teacher, Bushenyi	6.7.2012
Amutuhair Moreen (Dr)	Female	26	Medical Doctor, Nsyambya	7.1.2013
Anonymous rape victim	Female	29	Tailor, Kyabugimbi Bushenyi	4.1.2013
Asasira Racheal	Female	22	Student, Kampala	5.1.2013
Atuhabwe Lilian	Female	28	Social worker, Nyakabirizi. Bushenyi	12.9.2012
Ayebare Jennifer	Female	29	Ruyonza School Accountant, Bushenyi	11.6.2012
Ayebare Rahab	Female	28	Surveyor, Kampala	14.8.2012
Barokore Women Association	Female		Kabura, Kyabugimbi village	11.6.2012
Bindeba, Pheobe	Female	64	Tailor, kyabugimbi village, Bushenyi	4.6.2012
Eryeza Alex	Female	38	Business woman, Kampala	10.5.2014
Ibale Hope	Female	31	Lecturer, UCU	6.1.2013
Kansiime Elly (Rev)	Male	65	Clergy/Lecturer	5.1.2013
Kansiime Jackiline	Female	57	Social worker, Mukono	14.8.2012
Kansiime Rose	Female	24	Cateress, Kyabugimbi	3.1.2012
Kanyesigye Eddidah Mary (Rev.Can.Dr)	Female	55	Clergy/ Teacher, Bushenyi	8.7.2012
Karabezire Goerge	Male	62	Peasant, Kabura Kyabugimbi	13.7.2012

Katungye Harriet	Female	48	Business woman, Kampala	7.1.2013
Kembabazi Rita	Female	23	Teacher, Ibanda	13.12.2012
Kemigisha Evas	Female	31	Social Worker, Mukono	8. 1.2013
Kobusingye Robinnah (Rev)	Female	45	Clegry/ Teacher, Mukono	5.1.2013
Kwikiriza Peace (Rev)	Female	43	Clergy/ Teacher	18.12.2012
Kyeyamwa Musa	Male	34	Business Man, Jinja	10.2.2013
Kyeyamwa Sarah	Female	28	Social Work, Kampala	10.2.2013
Lyavala Lilian	Female	36	Lecturer, Mukono	20.12.2012
Mbabazi Jennifer	Female	27	Administrator.UCU	14.12.2013
Mbabazi Ronah	Female	28	Business woman, Bushenyi	18.6.2013
Mbyesize Miria	Female	38	Peasant, Kyabugimbi	5.7.2012
Mujinya Abbiaz	Male	59	Teacher, Masheruka Girls	8.7.2012
Mulawa Faith	Femals	25	Adiministrator, UCU	14.12.2013
Mwogyera Allen		38	Accountant, Mukono	8.7.2012
Nabaasa Shallon	Female	36	Techear, Rwentuha	12. 12.2012
Namanya Agnes	Fema	30	Teacher, Entebbe	10.8.2012
Natumanya Eddie	Male	36	Teacher, Bushenyi	6.6.2012
Proscovia Magezi	Female	29	Social Worker, Bushenyi	10.7.2012
Rwabutondo John	Male	48	Farmer, Bushenyi	14.7.2012
Shafic Mohammad	Male Male	22	Peasant, Kyeizooba Village	11.12.2012
Tumuramy Ronald	Male	33	Teacher, Bumbaire	17.7.2013
Turyahabwe Amos (Rev)	Male	52	Clergy/Lecturer	5.1.2013
Turyamubugana James	Male	47	Peasant, Bushenyi	13.7.2012
Turyatamba Frank	Male	48	Farmer, Kabura Kyabugimbi	19.9.2012

Tushabe Zahara	Female	20	Student, UCU	14.12.2012
Tusiime Sarah	Female	43	Peasant, Kyeizooba	6.6.2012
Tusiimwe Hope	Female	27	Teacher, Kyeizooba GSSS	12.12.2012
Twimikiriza Shallon (Rev)	Female	27	Clergy, Teacher, Bushenyi	6.6.2012
Twinomujuni Claire		34	Probation officer, Kabwohe	14.9.2012

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**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX 1: SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR QUESTIONNAIRES**

Dear Respondent, I am very grateful to have you as my respondent. The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information about the phenomenon of oppression of Women. Please, you are requested to participate in the study by providing precise and honest information for presentation Data which will be used only for academic purpose and will be treated confidential. Therefore, you are requested to be free and sincere in answering the questions. Thank you for your co-operation (Tick where possible or write in the space provided).

**Key: SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, SD= Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, NS= Not Sure**

Name..... (Optional)

Sex: Male  Female

Age.....

Marital Status: Single  Married  Divorced/Separated

Widow/ Widower

Highest level of Education .....

Occupation .....

1. Is there oppression of Women in Uganda?

Yes  No

2. How are women oppressed in your home area/ village?

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

3. Women oppression in Bushenyi District is high.

SA  A  SD  D  NS

4. Tick the appropriate describing percentage you would choose to describe the number of women in your District being oppressed

a) 100-75%  b) 74-50%  c) 49-25%  d) 24-1%

5. What are some of the cultural beliefs and practices among Banyankole that encourage women oppression?

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

6. In Ankole culture, women who produce only girls are not respected and are considered worthless.

SA  A  SD  D  NS

7. What are some of the causes of oppression of women in Bushenyi district?

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

8. Most domestic work is left to women in Bushenyi District?

SA  A  SD  D  NS

9. Is there a bias in appointment and promotion of women in higher religious leadership positions in Uganda?

Yes  No

10. What are some of the causes of bias in appointment and promotion of women in higher religious leadership positions in Uganda?

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

11. Are Women considered as a weaker sex among religions in Uganda?

Yes  No

12. Why do you think women are considered a weaker sex among religions?

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

13. The women are very much concerned about the church, but the church is not so much concerned about their challenges.

SA  A  SD  D  NS

12. What are the effects of oppression of women in families?

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

13. What are the effects of oppression on employment of women?

.....  
.....

.....  
.....

14. What are the effects of oppression on the education of a girl-child?

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

15. In your opinion, has oppression of women in Families increased divorce and separation in homes? IF yes, how?

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

16. What measures can be put forward to minimize or eliminate the oppression of women in your District?

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

17. How has religion helped in fighting against women oppression today?

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

18. Considering both church and state, which of the two has been more outstanding in discouraging oppression of women? (Give reasons)

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

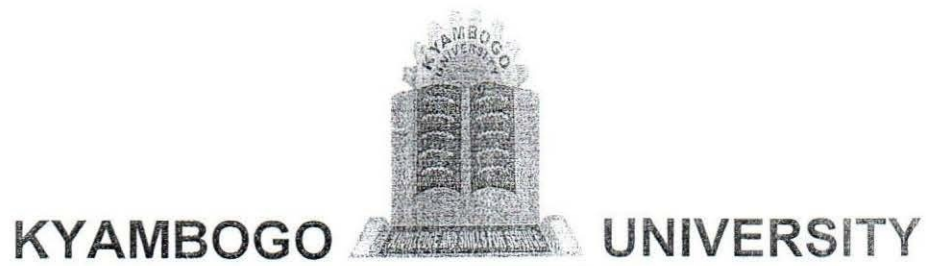
19. Setting up laws to protect women against oppressive cultural beliefs and practices can reduce on women oppression.

SA  A  SD  D  NS



## **APPENDIX 11: SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW**

1. Is there women oppression in Bushenyi District?
2. Mention three ways how women are oppressed in families in Bushenyi District?
3. Do some cultural beliefs and practices among Banyankole lead to oppression of women?
4. Mention 3 proverbs among Banyankole culture and their relevant meaning that are oppressive to women?
5. Which practices among Banyankole are oppressive to women?
6. Why do you think women are considered to be a weaker sex in some cultures?
7. Mention the taboos among Banyankole that encourage oppression of women?
8. What are some of Christian Religious Teachings that lead to oppression of women?
9. How can the practice of polygamy in Islamic religion encourage oppression of women in Families?
10. According to your own opinion, how do you think Islamic women suffer from oppression
11. What are some of Islamic teachings that encourage oppression of women?
12. In your own point of view, do you think cultural beliefs and practices have contributed much to oppression of women?
13. What are the effects of oppression on the Education of a girl child?



P.O. BOX 1 KYAMBOGO  
KAMPALA-UGANDA  
Tel: 041 - 288896/285001  
Fax: 041 - 220464,222643  
Mail: [rs@kyu.ac.ug](mailto:rs@kyu.ac.ug).

**DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

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2 May 2012

Dear Sir / Madam,


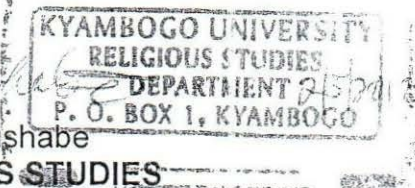
**RE: EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH**

The bearer of this letter **ABAMWESIGA ARABELLA** is a student of Kyambogo University pursuing master's degree.

She is conducting a research which is part of the requirements for the fulfillment of the award.

You are therefore requested to assist her with data collection.

Yours sincerely,

  
  
Dr. Sulpicius Tumushabe  
**H.O.D. RELIGIOUS STUDIES**