

AN ASSESSMENT OF WOMEN LEADERSHIP SKILLS IN THE SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF KISII, KENYA

¹Florence B. Moywaywa, ²Fr. Dr. Charles Oduke, ³Dr. Hezekiah Obwoye

¹(Post Graduate Student), Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology,

²(Ph.D), School of Humanities and Social Sciences

³(Ph.D), Department of History, Religion and Philosophy, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology

Abstract: Despite various interventions that promote the importance of women in leadership, enactment of legislation to ensure inclusion of women in leadership, gender parity, and gender equity, it is still assumed that men have better leadership skills. Male chauvinism coupled with Gusii Traditional understanding of the status quo of women in society continues to subordinate women to male authority especially in the Catholic Church. While women are increasingly participating in the Small Christian Community, many have yet to fully acknowledge the exceptional leadership skills and the capabilities that women bring to leadership. The study was based on three objectives: to examine the leadership skills of women in the SCCs of the Catholic Diocese of Kisii; to analyse challenges women face in their leadership of the SCCs in the Catholic Diocese of Kisii; and to assess the contribution of women in leadership of the SCCs in the Catholic Diocese of Kisii. The literature review will be organized around these three objectives. Transformational leadership theory will be utilized in assessing the leadership skills of women leaders of SCC. Transformational leaders motivate their followers to fulfil their best and highest potential; they bring their forward-looking perspective to bear on the organization, they have excellent rhetorical skills, and have the ability to cultivate a strong bond and relationship with their members. Both primary and secondary data will be collected. The study included the geographical territory covering the Catholic Diocese of Kisii. The Population of the study was 6000 members. The sample size was 361 persons arrived at through Krejcie and Morgan Sampling Table. Further, archival will be obtained from the Catholic Diocese of Kisii and the Secretariat. The anticipated study findings might be of benefit to church administrators, Catholic theologians, and other stakeholders interested in the feminine genius in leadership in ecclesiastical setups.

Keywords: Women Leadership Skills, Small Christian Community, Catholic Church.

1. INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study:

Despite various interventions that promote the importance of women in leadership, enactment of legislation to ensure inclusion of women in leadership, gender parity, and gender equity, it is still assumed that men have better leadership skills (Frawley-O'Dea &Goldner, 2016). This assumption continues to inform criteria of selecting lay leaders who head various Catholic lay associations, such as, the Small Christian Communities (SCC). Such patriarchal assumptions are a challenge to women's leadership of Small Christian Community (Healey, 2012). Male chauvinism coupled with Gusii Traditional understanding of the status quo of women in society continues to subordinate women to male authority. The Catholic lay woman who is gifted in leadership and desires to bring this her talent to bear on the leadership of her SCC at times faces an uphill task, particularly in being affirmed and accepted as a leader (Frawley-O'Dea &Goldner, 2016).

According to Lok, Burke, Crowe and Woods (2017), more than 19 women have been elected as prime ministers and presidents in the recent past. Within the business world, 5.6 percent of Fortune 500 companies are led by women. Nonetheless, many have yet to fully acknowledge the exceptional leadership qualities and the capabilities that women bring to leadership. In the Catholic Church, very few studies have been undertaken focusing on the leadership skills of women (Healey, 2012). Studies in the business world argue that women are purpose-driven, strong-will, persevering, innovative, hardworking and transformational when compared to their male counterparts (Lok et al., 2017). They have intuitive intelligence and are able to understand their followers better. They have a circular vision and seek opportunities to see things through the lenses of other people. Thus, they are inclusive, collaborative and inspiring to their followers.

What is the connection between the leadership skills of women and the SCC? For sacramental and doctrinal reasons it is only ordained males who can be members of the clergy and can exercise leadership at the top of the hierarchy. The Catholic Church, which is the oldest, best organized, and largest Christian denomination has universal membership with a hierarchical leadership structure, headed by the Pope, followed by the Cardinals and Bishops, then Priests and Deacons, and the laity both male and female at the bottom of the structure. In the Catholic hierarchy women can exercise legitimate leadership within lay associations, the SCC is an instance of such an association where women can lead and that is why this study aims to examine the type of leadership and skills women bring to bear on the SCC.

SCCs started in Latin America where they are also referred to as Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs). They were later affirmed as the primary and fundamental cells of the Church in Latin America (Kieran, 2007). In contemporary times, SCCs have become a vital instrument of evangelization in the Catholic Church. In Africa and particularly within the East and Central African region, Leaders of the Church recognized and encouraged SCCs movement (Kieran, 2007). They are the milieu where a Catholic Christian grows and lives his or her faith and reaches out to others in solidarity and charitable deeds. In Kenya, the SCCs were started by Rev. Fritz Lobinger (Kieran, 2007). SCCs comprise of Catholic families living in the same village or close geographical proximity with each other and often are families with a similar socioeconomic background (Healey, 2012). SCCs were started in the Catholic Diocese of Kisii in the 1980s by Father Richard Quinn, a Maryknoll priest, while stationed at Viongozi Pastoral Centre at Kebirigo Parish. While the Small Christian Communities in Kisii are playing a vital role in the worship and evangelisation, the direct inclusion of women in its leadership structure has been a challenge.

In the Catholic Diocese of Kisii women congregants are the majority, yet there are still very few women in leadership positions in the SCCs (Kieran, 2007). The leadership skill-set of these few women needs to be examined alongside the challenges they encounter in their leadership. It aims to assess the leadership skills of women and how the skills bear on the leadership of Catholic lay organizations and in this particular instance the SCC.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Universally, despite the golden age of women that was ushered in by the 1995 Berlin Conference, women are still disadvantaged concerning public participation in various sectors of the society (Hunt, 2017). In the Catholic Church, even if women are exceptionally qualified and despite the many women in the public life, they have increasingly been discriminated in ascending to leadership and management positions in spheres where they can exercise legitimate leadership, such as, the SCC. Even if few women push through and occupy top leadership positions, they still face serious hurdles that affect their performance in such positions (Frawley-O'Dea & Goldner, 2016). These are serious issues that reinforce the conventional patriarchal ideologies arguing the women cannot offer leadership in the church. In the Catholic Diocese of Kisii the status and power of women in the Small Christian Communities have significantly improved. Nonetheless, the challenge of not breaking through the glass ceiling and gender-based concerns of few women occupying top leadership position remains a topical issue. Hence, they perpetuate a vicious cycle of disempowerment and marginalisation of the women in the Small Christian Community (Hunt, 2017). However, there are no extant studies on the leadership skills of women and how these bear on the leadership of Small Christian Communities. Moreover, the challenges women face in their leadership of SCCs in Kenya needs to be studied. Therefore, the main objective of the study is to assess leadership skills of women in their leadership of SCCs within the Diocese of Kisii.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study will use a descriptive survey design. Orodho (2003) argues that descriptive survey design is a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals. Cooper and Schindler (2003) contend that a descriptive design is concerned with why and how a variable produces a change in another variable and a cross section if it is done at only a point in time or over a shorter period. The process of collecting data pertaining to the variable in a population or sample is done at a time of the study. Descriptive research usually intends to cast light on

the current issue or challenge by collecting data that allows the research to describe the situation at hand in a comprehensive manner (Best & Kahn, 2016). Descriptive studies are commonly utilized to examine different aspects. For instance, the approach can be used in exploring the features. While descriptive studies are closely linked to observational researches, they can use surveys or case studies.

The descriptive research design is appropriate in this exploration, since it will allow the researcher to observe and question participants within a natural setting which is unchanged. Therefore, little interference occurs during the study. The approach can be a precursor for future studies since it is beneficial in determining variables that can be assessed (Lambert & Lambert, 2012). The findings will point the researcher to particular skills that women comprise of in the leadership of SCCs. Also, the descriptive design is advantageous since it enables data gathering in an in-depth manner (Lambert & Lambert, 2012). Nonetheless, subjects might not be truthful and confidentiality issues occur (Best & Kahn, 2016). This research design is appropriate as the questionnaire will be administered to several respondents of women leaders of the small Christian communities in the Catholic Diocese of Kisii. Kerlinger (1986) pointed out that descriptive studies are not only restricted to fact-finding, but may often result into the formation of the principles of knowledge and solutions to significant problems. The design is adopted because the information gathered from the sample is representative of the total target population of the study.

Study Area:

The study was done in 18 parishes in the geographical territory covered by the Catholic Diocese of Kisii. The Catholic Diocese of Kisii started in 1960 after splitting from Kisii-Homa Bay Diocese (Strategic Planning of Kisii Diocese, 2016). The headquarter of the diocese is in the environs of Kisii Town. Kisii County is located to the southeast of Lake Victoria. The county is boarded by six counties, namely, Homabay to the northeast, Nyamira to the east, Narok to the south, Kisumu to the north, Migori to the west and Bomet to the southeast. The headquarter of Kisii county is Kisii town which is located at latitude 0° 41'S and longitude 34° 46'E. The town is a driving distance of 309 km from Kenya's capital city Nairobi.

The Kisii County covers an area of 1317 Km² with a total population of 1,152,282 and a population density of 874.7 people per Km². By the year 2009 the county had an annual growth rate of 2.75% (census, 2009). The county is covered with natural resources which include arable land, wetlands, forest and soapstone. The arable land is overwhelmed with economic activities which include subsistence agriculture, vegetable farming, dairy farming, coffee and tea farming. Over 77% of the land is fertile and wet throughout the year. The figure underneath shows the map of the area covered by the Catholic Diocese of Kisii.



Figure 1: Area Covered by the Catholic Diocese of Kisii

Target Population:

The study was target a population of six thousand (6,000) (Kisii Diocese secretariat 2016). The population includes members of Small Christian Communities, catechists and priests of the Catholic Diocese of Kisii. The respondents were members of the Small Christian Communities, women leaders, catechists and priests who are considered to have an in-depth knowledge and beliefs of the Catholic Church.

Sampling Procedures and Sample Size:

The selection of SCCs within Kisii and Nyamira counties was based on the preliminary survey that will be carried out to locate SCCs within the study area Therefore, from the accessible population of 6,000; a sample size of 361 will be used for this study. This sample size was derived from the sample table of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) shown in table 1 underneath. Purposive sampling entails a non-probabilistic sampling approach that chooses the participants based on the features of the population as well as the objectives of the study. The method also called subjective, judgmental or selective sampling (Etikan et al., 2016). This approach was beneficial in situations when the researcher needed to research a given target population quickly and when sampling for proportionality was increasingly not of concern.

Table 1: Krejcie and Morgan Sample Determination Table

<i>Table for Determining Sample Size of a Known Population</i>									
N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	346
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	354
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	191	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	170	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	180	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	190	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	200	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	370
65	56	210	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	220	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	230	144	550	226	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	240	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	250	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	260	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	254	2600	335	100000	384

Note: N is Population Size; S is Sample Size *Source: Krejcie & Morgan, 1970*

S=sample size, X=Z value, N=population size, P=population proportion

d=degree of accuracy expressed in (5%).

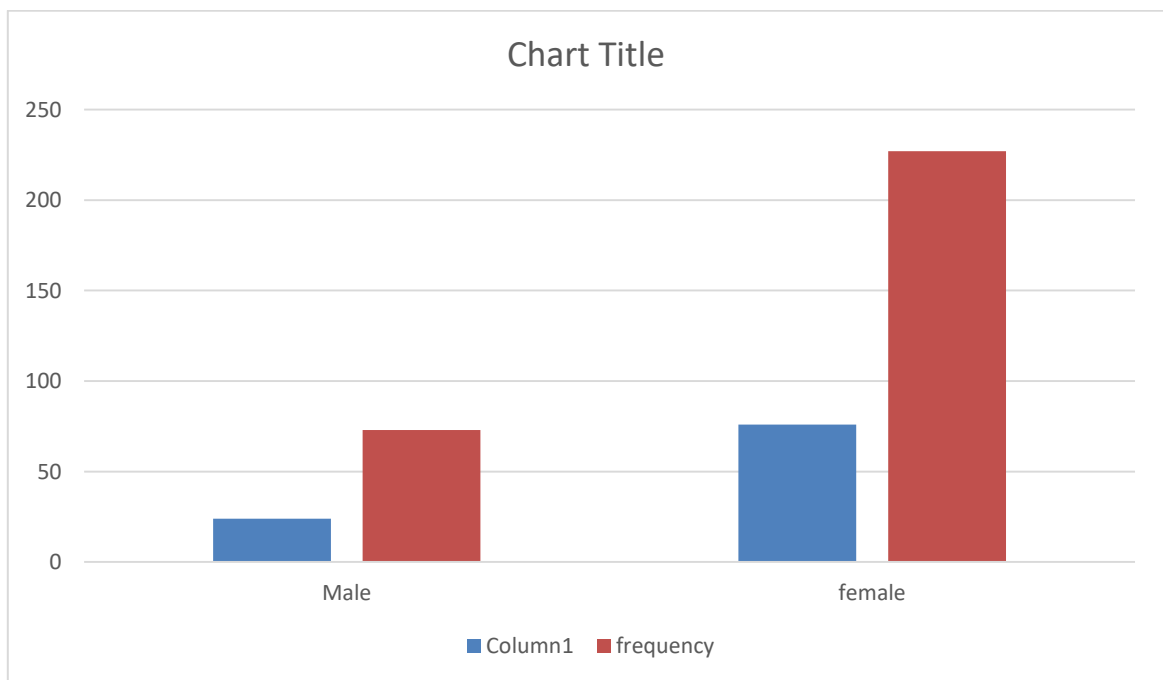
Demographic Data of Respondents:

From Table, it was depicted that the percentage of women which was 76% was greater than men in the SCCs indicating that women deserved leadership in every activity. From the information about age it was indicated that 38% of the respondents were at the age of 51-60 years and 30.5% at 41-50 years which was evident that the SCCs had greater population of adults who had adequate experience of leadership and long-term learning of the teachings of the church.

Table 1: Demographic Data of Respondents

	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	73	24
	Female	227	76
Age			

Source: Field Data (2017)



Source: Filed Data (2017)

Figure 2: Indicating Gender of the Respondents

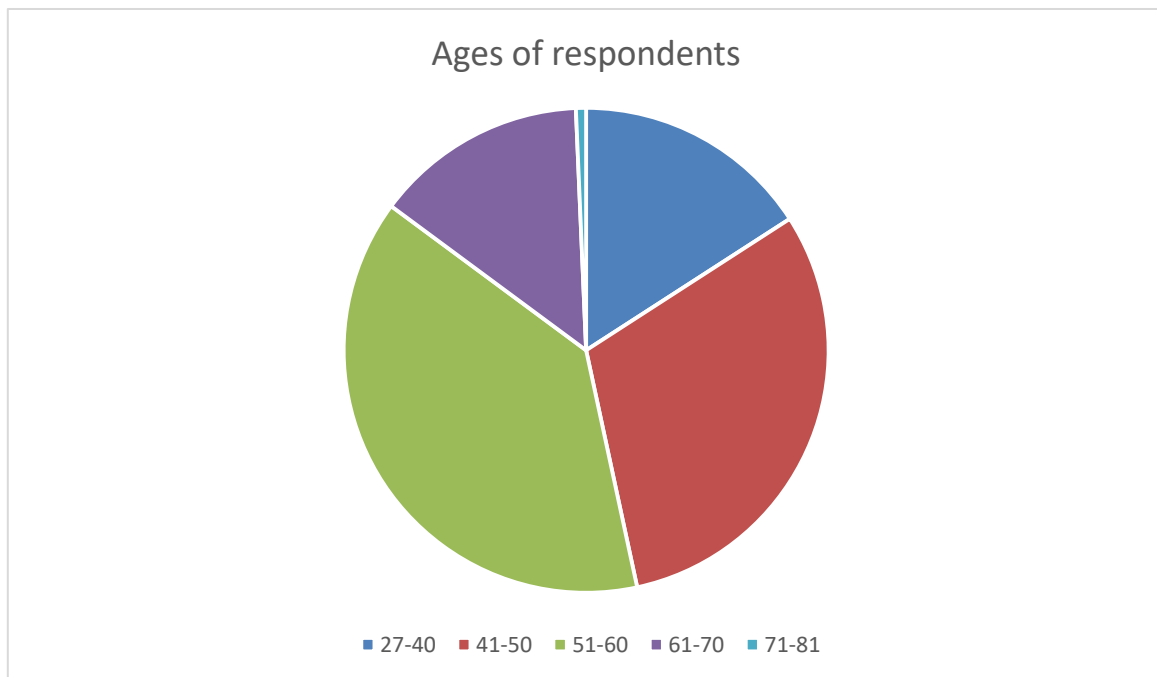
From the above graph it is evident that a majority of the respondents were female represented by 227(76%) and males were 73(26%) of the total small Christian community members. This results confirms an argument that was put forward by Rono (2009), who outlined the intelligent of women to taking an active role in the formation and patience to hold on to social network. Rono (2009) in a study on Christian women social networks, further said that women are capable of starting small groups and making them thrive. He gave an example of Koitogos prayer band which was started in 2009 with 15 members. In just over two years, it successfully grew the membership to 350 faithful and this happened in a community that typically shuns female leadership (Rono, 2009).

Fr. Matoke wholly agrees with Rono. He asserts that in all his life of priesthood. He had great hope in starting small Christian communities with the help of women. He had this to say:

The call to action is clear: leaders may recognize the value of women in the formation of small groups within the parishes. This formation is to advance the course of Christianity. The clergy could work together with women to ensure that increasing women's participation remains a primary objective, and one that is met with successful outcomes. As the church works to retain and attract new believers, gender-balance approach in parishes will prove to be essential for remaining relevant and ensuring future success therein (Matoke 01/02/10/15).

Age of the Respondents:

Age	Frequency	Percentage
27-40	47	15.5
41-50	91	30.5
51-60	114	38
61-70	42	14
71-81	6	2



Source: Filed Data (2016)

Therefore, from the findings it came out clearly that people in the age bracket of 51-60 formed a majority of members in SCCs. This study then implied that women could partly be explained by the fact that youths at the time of interview were at school and that they are not particularly “Crazy” about attending to the SCCs (Fr. Ong’au, OI/04/10/14).

Leadership Role of Women in SCCs

Women leadership in the Catholic Church has sometimes been dismissed. Women’s authority in the parish went only so far, of course, limited to the power of persuasion and occasional damage control. It’s a limit still faced by women who work in parishes and dioceses, though some have taken on more of the heavy lifting in pastoral ministry and more so in SCCs (wenga, OI/04/10/14).

Even Pope Francis, acknowledged in his September interview in the Jesuit magazine America that: our challenge today is “to think about the specific place of women also in those places where the authority of the church is exercised, that women were “more important” than bishops and priests, just as Mary was more important than the disciples—but he left it at that (The Jesuit,09/13).

From the FGDs that were conducted with the women leaders in SCCS, it came out clearly that the local church could not do much to empower women in SCCs for the simple reason that it could only take the intervention of the pope to change the attitude. The participants identified membership of SCCs as key element to being part and parcel of the leadership of SCCs in Catholic Church. They could perform various activities such as prayers – rosary, singing, visiting the sick, Bible discussion, buying domestic items for the parish priests to use in their houses and contributions to Diocesan funds. Prayers to the rosary were prepared by the members in rotation being led by the leader. What underlies this pattern was the ordinary practice of SCCs moving from home to home, with the host or hostess to offer prayers. Prayers unified and strengthened the community’s bond to the Catholic heritage. Members’ prayers focused on their lives, families, neighbors and the world of faith (Rosaria. OI/02/10/14)

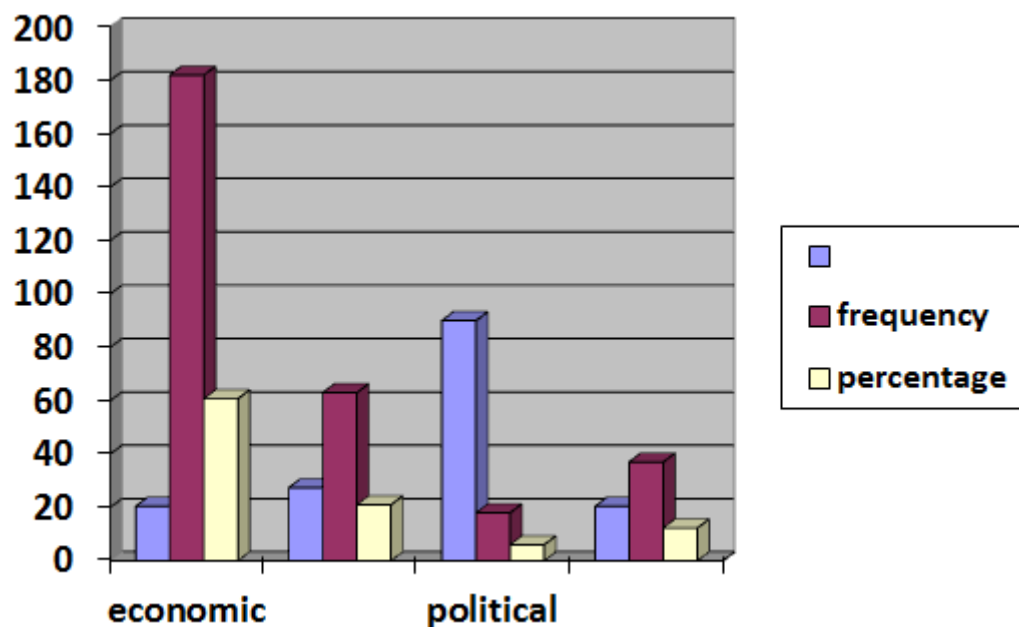
The participants had been singing together the different songs of praise. These could establish solid connections between faith and everyday life. The participants could prepare various songs to present in church on every Sunday. The activity of visiting of the sick people caused transformation in believers in the community. Those felt the joy of being members in the SCCs and this enabled them to develop a strong bond and trust amongst the members. The Bible discussions offered the ordinary lens through which the members of the SCCs looked at their lives and the world. The members exhibited a strong desire to deal with the scriptures more deeply. This strengthened the faith and in so doing strengthened the life and mission of the whole parish. Buying domestic items for the parish priests could support the priests and improve the bonding between them and the other members of SCCs. The contributions of Diocesan funds facilitated the development of various projects in the Catholic Church.

Challenges faced by women and leadership in SCCs of Diocese of Kisii:

From the study, these challenges include limited literacy and numeracy skills, discomfort with public speaking, time constraints due to family obligations, and the general perception in many agricultural communities that leadership roles are for men. Despite the fact that women largely predominate in membership and meeting attendance, because of these obstacles, leaders tend to be men. A death of women’s leadership persists domestically, where men weigh on them, that women work at home. On the other hand, Fr. L. Mandere observed that men have rigidity of perception that women cannot lead people: Women get emotional to manage others, especially other women. Successive women are aggressive and butch. Some women are poor communicators, especially, when handling conflicts or crisis amongst them. It was also noted that quite a huge number of women are short-tempered. Therefore, with the above information in mind the Table 4.2 below indicates that there are notable challenges women face; in ascending into leadership role in SCCs. Some of these challenges were: economic, social, political and emotional.

Table 2: Challenges Faced by women in ascending Leadership Role in SCCs

Type of challenge	Respondents	Percentage
Economic	182	60.7
Social	63	21.0
Political	18	6.0
Emotional	37	12.3



Source: Filed Data (2017)

Economic Challenges:

In the table above, we observe that 182 respondents claimed that the level of poverty in the community was wanting. The respondents then observe that roughly about 60.7 percent of economical challenges were mostly faced by women. If this affirmation is true, then it follows that women ascending into leadership role in SCCs in Diocese of Kisii was not without some significant difficult.

Some members of SCCs had financial constraints and were not able to pay the contributions, e.g. Diocesan funds and other contributions. This lack of ability, it is worth noting that a large number of women tended to shy off and were absent from such activities. On the other hand, a large number of women were house-wives (home keepers). This home keeping means that time consumption in home activities was higher than time spent in the activities of the women and leadership in SCCs. The level of the education of women was very significant in SCCs. There is diverse education level in women in the region. Illiteracy in women has many economic implications. It goes without say in most cases illiteracy attracts poverty. If the vast majority of women are financially low then it follows that economic challenge could hinder the leadership progress.

Similarly, instructions in SCCs were given from written programs. In most cases then, printed handouts were sometimes (note in all cases) distributed in SCCs, but these written instructions were not useful for not many people knew to read and write. Since only a small number knew to read and write, often read materials were not systematically afforded, and in fact, were ineffectively put into use. That notwithstanding, this illiteracy could first create discomfort with the learned few vis-a-vis the illiterate majority. Furthermore, sometimes SCCs were very slow in using printed materials in a way. Many SCCs lacked facilitators or coordinators to give guidance on these handouts during their discussions. Therefore, it appears then that the ones who attend basic formation still need guidance from experts. The differences in economic status could split the members into different groups. This made some members to avoid financial contributions due to fear of being rejected by those who were able. In the urban areas, the poor people showed greater vigor and interest in SCCs than the rich.

Social Challenges:

From the study, it was revealed that the members encountered various social challenges. Some of the challenges are: gossip, inferiority complex, divorce and separation, widow or single motherhood, traditional and cultural vis-a-vis doctrines of the Church and the stereotyping. There was still a lot of shyness in sharing the Word of God during the weekly SCCs gatherings, especially on the part of women and young people. Fr. L. Mandere observed:

Death poses many serious challenges on women. For example, if the husband dies, a widow in the Abagusii culture will not be allowed to take another man for her new husband. She must remain in her home (matrimonial home). On the contrary, if a woman dies and a man remains a widower, this man can take up another woman for his wife. It should be noted that the challenges of being a widow are many. When the bottom drops out of the widows' world with the loss of a spouse, it's not easy to pick up the pieces. As the days pass after the death, there is so much to do by the widow, and so many challenges to face alone. However, after the departure of a spouse, in some cases, it is a time when widows show amazing strength, as women that they never knew and do things that seemed not possible. Widows as women practicalities have always been a strong point for their life, and the mountains of things to do can easily be overcome with a little organization in women as leaders in the SCCs. These possibilities come into different categories; because the loss of a husband will mean that life changes totally and that a widow will have to learn to do things that she depended upon her husband to do. Here it is important to note that a team of two is now gone, and the widow is challenged by everyday events of her own life, in that of that of others take for granted as being normal. For the widow, the loss is hard, but as the days go by, if a widow in question is a participant in SCCs, it becomes easier for her to cope with any situation (Fr. L. Mandere, OI/03/10/14)

These variations in a way of handling issue in the Abagusii context pose challenges on women. While men are always free on that which binds a woman. In many cases, there is suspicion when a husband dies, in some cases, wives are held responsible to be the cause of death. But men, many occasions, are never suspected on a similar issue of death. For example, Fr. L. Mandere had this say on land Title Deeds in connection to women:

When a husband dies having lived with his wife for so many years even with a large number of children; it is not strange to find brother-in-laws trying to push the sister-in-laws out of her marital home, snatch her of land Title Deeds; just because the husband has died. This could happen even when the woman is married officially in church. This kind of situations are many a time witnessed and experienced by women victims (OI/04/11/15).

This variant notion, of suspicion indicates that men look at women negatively. At burial ceremonies, women who are devout in SCCs would wish their husbands to be buried in a Christian burial rite, but sometimes these women could be overpowered by men who never go to SCCs, which leads otherwise. The men dominance challenges women in SCCs. Property inheritance is a big challenge on women.

Political Challenges:

In some cases, though it is not big issue, some SCCs had a little of tribal feeling of negative ethnicity among the members. This feeling was revealed during discussion where most participants could communicate in their own mother tongue making other tribes to fail getting the message. On the other hand, during elections, if one belonged to a political party of which perhaps the majority feel uncomfortable with, this could in most cases bring animosity feelings among the members. The political systems sometimes could create situations of corruption which poses a challenge among the members of SCCs. For example, politicians could take advantage of SCCs seeing them as possible groups of voters. The politicians then begin to lure them with rewards or favors and make friends in the leaders (women) of SCCs. Such favors, be it money or in kind, given to them could confuse and even cause a challenge in women and leadership in SCCs in Diocese of Kisii. Some women were not honest in SCCs especially in terms contributions made for any cause. This means that not all members pay an equal amount that is required towards any suggested program. Some women may, with or without knowing begin different groups (self-support) within SCCs; this could challenge the primary end of SCCs into another foreign end.

Emotional Challenges:

The emotional challenges observed in women included: lack of confidence, lack of self-esteem, lack of self-motivation, assertiveness, divorce and separation. Where husband and wife relationships were not good in the family, it became very difficult to build real SCCs in the neighborhood. In some areas, drinking alcohol was the major problem for SCCs. Single parenthood households also resulted from wives who separated from their irresponsible husbands because of drinking; anger resulting in wife abuse and financial mismanagement. Rose, a member of the SCC and a sociologist confessed that she always had challenges in the course of her work and Christian life. She had this to say:

I believe women have damaged emotion, a marred area in the personality. Yes, these women are daughters of Abraham. And the same is true, often, in children of God. Satan has taken a damaged spirit and used it to frustrate and defeat the Christian women by placing men to demean them. The very structure of the human mind makes this possible. Like an iceberg which lies largely below the surface of the water with only a small part showing above, the conscious mind is only a tiny segment of the whole person. With the conscious mind we accept forgiveness from our sins; we ask the Holy Spirit to take control of our life. But what happens to that greater part of us, our subconscious mind? Here are stored the long-forgotten memories and experiences of childhood. Add to this our physical inheritance, our temperaments and it complicates matters even worse (Rose, OI/02/11/14).

When people came for the scripture readings, reflections and sharing in the evening, some of the members could come to SCCs meetings while drunk or with hangovers. In these areas, mostly the rural poor or Chokoras (street children) of towns (Nyamira and Kisii), drinking alcohol hindered family progress and the entire community or neighborhood. Some Christians in Diocese of Kisii, instances, were afraid to start something new by venturing in a direction that would bring about a negative doctrinal result in their existence and in their SCCs. According to Moraa, a devout catholic for fifty years, emotional strain is ever present in women in SCCs. She had this to say:

The Christian woman may severely repress her inner problems; crush them the moment they show themselves—both inwardly and outwardly. Far from facing them and trying to resolve these problems, she may deny that these do not even exist. So they are driven deep within herself, but not to lie dormant; rather, to reappear in disguised form. Countless health problems plague her life, or a terribly unhappy marriage situation develops. She becomes a defeated Christian and may even break under the severe strain as the years go by and the problems multiply (Moraa OI/03/10/14).

Contributions of Women in Leadership in SCCs:

How people become leaders and how they take up the leader role are fundamentally questions about identity. A leader identity is not simply the counterpart to a formally held leadership position but rather evolves as one engages in two core, interrelated tasks: internalizing a leader identity and developing an elevated sense of purpose (e.g., Quinn, 2004). Internalizing a leader identity entails a set of relational and social processes through which one comes to see oneself, as seen by others as a leader. A woman takes action aimed at asserting leadership. Others affirm or disaffirm those actions, encouraging or discouraging further assertions in women. Through this back and forth, the would-be women leaders accumulate experiences that inform her sense of self as a leader, as well as feedback about her fit for taking up the leader role (De Rue & Ashford, 2010). Women had ability to persuade people to join SCCs. This ability in women enabled them to encourage participation, desiring that people feel a sense of belonging to the organization. Women created mechanisms

to involve people, regardless of social status in discussions. They also encouraged and involved others in team work. A woman leader's identity is tied up to her sense of purpose. Leaders are most effective when they pursue purposes that are aligned with their personal values and oriented toward advancing the collective good

Women then have a shared power and information in SCCs. This sharing enhanced their focus to the goal of reading the Scriptures together. This goal was eventually to transform women and leadership in SCCs, rather than preserving territorial rights. Indeed, the goal of sharing activity in the SCCs becomes an easier task that benefits all the members. Sharing power allows members to know that they trust and that their ideas are respected. At the same time, provided important data for all members involved reaching conclusions and solving problems in SCCs. Women and leadership role enables them to make decisions and empower others to do so. This decision making enhances the self-worth of others, women in general, within the SCCs. This process shows that the right of women to leadership role is just a symbol of a general human empowerment. This leadership has a positive influence on the side of women; thus this view discourages injustice against women and looks at them as peacemakers. Similarly, women are known to be role models by hard working in SCCs. They are also able to manage conflicts or crisis, in which they sense and neutralize the signs of danger before it invades into the family. This ability enables most families to be well-organize, full of love, spiritually aligned and well-balance.

Distinctive Leadership Qualities Unique To Women Leaders in SCCs in Diocese of Kisii:

Women leaders were observed to have virtue of patience. It was noted that they were able to examine several sides of an issue before acting. They have the capacity to communicate information exclusively. Woman leader have a virtue of humility. The observation claimed that a woman was flexible and adapts quickly to new changes. Such a leadership was trustworthy. Moreover, women are endowed with strong code of ethics, based on their nature of decision making and lifestyle in society. This women leadership style is also clear that women leaders in most cases were generous among and with their needy members of SCCs. Thus, women are known to be more sensitive to the needs of others. Their leadership skills portray a character of the virtue of obedience. They are often submission to authority among them; which means, it seems, women could have a greater influence on people in SCCs.

Women leaders were always rooted in justice. In fact, women are effective in distributive justice in their families; this virtue extends to the SCCs and is deeply felt. They are bold and courageous to raise their voices in the face of injustice against fellow-human in community, especially to children and disabled. Women are empathetic in approach to issues and felt the pain experienced by others as their own pain. Indeed, the sensitivity to experience the pain and failures of others as their own; it was in itself a rich gift from God their creator. A woman leader did not seek self-praise in the process of struggling with people for justice. Leadership is not a moment of exercising power over another. Neither is it an opportunity to prove one's self-righteousness at the cost of the institution or of SCCs to which one belongs. A woman leader did not seek self-praise at the cost of a community. Rather, in humility, she regards leadership as a God-given responsibility to enable everyone in the community to mutually influence another people to experience the richness of love and fellowship in community.

A woman leader cannot be defined in terms of her talents alone but as person with others. She did not lie in the individual capability of persons to carry out tasks. The whole situation depends on the support and co-operation of people in the community. Therefore, a woman leader in SCCs is a "certificate" that people are to give to a leader, based on the way they experienced her leadership. They have, in their leadership a readiness to suffer ridicule, rejection or punishment and other insult for the sake of justice in SCCs. At times, criticism and rejection come from unexpected members of community. Rather than withdrawing from the scene of chaos and difficulties, a woman leader bounces back with enthusiasm that sustains the spirit and resistance of the people. Hence, a woman leader does not hesitate to open up for criticisms. So then, good leadership does not mean that there could be no opposition.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions were made based on the findings from the field. The researcher proved the research questions to be true and that there is disparity between the way widows in S.D.A-N and other church members are treated and the way they should be treated. The conclusions are made as per the findings of the study and they include the following. During these meetings, the male members of the organization dominate the discussions. For example, they do most of the talking and make most of the decisions, while the women do not dare to speak up because of custom and tradition. Furthermore the men make most of the suggestions about the movement, such as how the organization should

work, names of members to be appointed for the forthcoming conferences, how much should be paid as membership fees, etc. Thus, the men do most of the talking and make most of the decisions, while the women do not speak up or make any contribution. Because of the constant male dominance in these mixed meetings, the women have lost their former traditional freedom of being able to express their own voices, as they used to do in traditional society. As a result of this loss; the traditional prerogative of male dominance in mixed companies seems to be kept alive in this organization.

Apart from this, some of the members regard themselves as holier than their priest. They believe they can pray longer than some of the priests, and faster, and preach the scripture. Because of this, some challenge the authority of their priest in the church.

According to my impressions during my fieldwork, some of the members of this movement are very proud. They see themselves as superior to other members in the Catholic Church because of their claim to have received the gift of the Holy Spirit and ability to speak in tongues.

Further, most of the members of this organization emphasize experience more than doctrine. They try to incorporate experiences, which are seen to be Pentecostal, into the liturgical, doctrinal, and ecclesiastical structures of the historic denominations. For instance, instead of focusing on Virgin Mary or the sacred heart of Jesus, they focus on the Holy Spirit, which is more Pentecostal than Catholic. Another special aspect of this organization is the challenge it poses to the Catholic orthodoxy and to the heritage of the Church. For instance, some of the members of the organization challenge the validity of the sacraments, especially the sacraments of penance, and the infant baptism in the Church. Others have ridiculed the Eucharist and scriptural basis for the ministerial priesthood in the Catholic Church. Some of these challenges have affected the faith of some of their own members and other members of the Catholic Church. Thus, we have seen some of the activities of the Charismatic Renewal. The organization has contributed in the field of evangelization in all Catholic churches. It has led many Christians, especially Catholics, to the study of the scriptures, it has taught many people how to pray, and it has also helped its members to establish a mature relationship with other Christian sects, without jeopardizing their faith.

But, on the other hand, some of the members regard themselves as holier than the priests. As a result of this, they challenge the authority of the priest in the church. Some of them emphasize experience more than doctrine, and they try to incorporate experiences that are Pentecostal into the liturgical, doctrinal and ecclesiastical structures of the Catholic Church.

Socially, the traditional Kisii community calls for the collaboration of neighbors. This neighbor may collaborate in house-building, farm clearing, weeding, harvesting and threshing, as well as in collective pursuits such as dancing and sculpturing. There are also well established neighborhood institutions such as informal neighborhood courts to adjudicate between the rights and claims of individuals, and to impose fines, sanctions or other forms of compensation. Therefore, there are sound theological and sociological reasons why small Christian communities are built on the phenomenon of neighborhood, or extended families among the Kisii people. The Kisii people have many important aspects of the SCCs which need to be reviewed in this conclusion. Among them are the SCCs meetings in the homes of the members at least once a week, while the Sunday Mass is conducted in a parish church. Hence they do not meet on Sundays, but pray together with other communities in the parish. Therefore, the parish community becomes a community of communities. The Bible reading and sharing event takes place throughout the year during their community meetings. It then becomes a source of meditation, reflection and prayers all of which are spontaneous; in a spiritual sense.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

A parish pastoral plan should be elaborate on women and leadership at the SCCs level. There is a need to promote new leadership strategies in SCCs to respond to new challenges in new contexts as found in Catholic Diocese of Kisii. The universal Church in this century needs a deeper reflection on women in leadership role, in connection with different human problems, in the light of the Gospel message and in particular, in the SCCs as the cornerstone of faith. The leaders in the Diocese of Kisii need to emphasize the mission outreach of SCCs, with the help of women leadership skills in order to improve life and activities of SCCs which may radiate into the larger community. There is a need to root women leadership in believers, in pastoral work of the Catholic Diocese of Kisii, particularly, in the SCCs. The Dioceses therefore need to encourage the training of women as agents of evangelization of SCCs. In training, there is need to promote courses on SCCs in the institutions of learning. For example, in the training of women leaders such as: workshops, seminars and university curriculum and symposium. To be more specific, women in leadership programs,

especially: studies in ecclesiology, pastoral theology, practical theology and contextual theology. This efficacy in training will also ensure that the new models of forming women as pastoral agents of Evangelization are consistent with SCCs as a new way of being local Church. This is not only a recommendation for the Catholic Diocese of Kisii, but rather, for the whole Universal Church; Dioceses ought to promote the active involvement of Women leadership in the life and activities of SCCs. The diocesan leader needs to make SCCs the center of the catechesis in the Catholic Church. Therefore, it is important to contextualize women leadership in SCCs in the rapid growing rural and urban setups within the Catholic Diocese of Kisii's outreach developing of SCCs.

There is also bridge-gap created by tribal negative ethnicity and socio-economic and political differences within the SCCs. Therefore, this effort encourages SCCs women leadership to link the clerical leadership of Dioceses of Kisii. This link will allow socio-economic stability, hence the spirit of self reliance. As a result, the Diocese of Kisii will be stable in her faith. These recommendations may not be realized as quick as people would want to think, but their gradual process ought to be a value in matters of faith. This process could be implied in the willingness to advance to sources which aid in giving answer to the challenging women leadership in SCCs in the Catholic Diocese of Kisii.

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