FACTORS THAT HINDER WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN KENYA

BY

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university or for any other award.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all women of Africa who aspire to study and to practise theology, yet they have to break barriers to do so.
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<tr>
<td>AACC</td>
<td>All Africa Conference of Churches</td>
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<td>ABC</td>
<td>African Brotherhood Church</td>
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<td>ACK</td>
<td>Anglican Church in Kenya</td>
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<td>ACTEA</td>
<td>Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa</td>
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<td>AEA</td>
<td>Association of Evangelicals in Africa</td>
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<td>AGC</td>
<td>African Gospel Church</td>
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<td>BCK</td>
<td>Baptist Church in Kenya</td>
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<td>CCAWT</td>
<td>Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians</td>
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<td>DC</td>
<td>Deliverance Church</td>
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<td>EFK</td>
<td>Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya</td>
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<td>FGCK</td>
<td>Full Gospel Church of Kenya</td>
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<td>KAG</td>
<td>Kenya Assemblies of God</td>
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<td>MCK</td>
<td>Methodist Church in Kenya</td>
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<td>NC</td>
<td>Nairobi Chapel</td>
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<td>NCCK</td>
<td>National Council of Churches of Kenya</td>
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<td>NEGST</td>
<td>Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology</td>
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<td>NIST</td>
<td>Nairobi International School of Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PACC</td>
<td>Pan African Christian College</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAG</td>
<td>Pentecostal Assemblies of God</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCEA</td>
<td>Presbyterian Church of East Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>RCC</td>
<td>Roman Catholic Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>TEE</td>
<td>Theological Education by Extension</td>
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<td>WCC</td>
<td>World Council of Churches</td>
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<td>World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions</td>
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ABSTRACT

This study identifies and discusses factors that hinder women’s participation in theological education in Kenya. Reference is made to theological institutions that belong to two church traditions, namely, the mainline protestant and evangelical traditions. The study seeks to address the paradox of under representation of women in institutions that have openings for them.

The objectives of the study are; To analyze the status of women in the history of Christianity since its inception, to identify and assess the modalities applied in admitting women into theological institutions in Kenya, to identify and discuss factors that influence women’s experiences in theological institutions in Kenya, and, to identify and evaluate strategies that could enhance the participation of women in theological education in Kenya.

To achieve the above objectives, ten theological institutions have been selected on the basis of their church affiliations as well as the academic programs they offer. The study concentrates on institutions that offer diploma, bachelors and masters programs. The significance of these programmes is that the institutions that offer them are interdenominational and the fact that churches in the study only ordain persons that are trained at diploma level and above.

The main argument of this study is that women are under represented in theological education in Kenya. This has been authenticated by the examination of the actual numbers of women students and faculty in theological institutions. Their numbers are much lower than those of men, a factor that has been attributed to the attitude of churches toward theological education for women and the type of ministries open to women in the churches.
The entire study portrays women in a struggle to venture into theological education. The struggle begins with their access to theological institutions. Once enrolled, they struggle through college life with administrative and social structures that are unfavourable to them. After graduating from college, women struggle with job placement as well as acceptance by those they are to serve.

The study identifies three main factors that hinder women’s access to and their experiences in theological institutions. They are; The structures of theological institutions, policies of churches that sponsor theological institutions, and, African culture. It has been confirmed in this study that churches have a direct and powerful influence in the enrolment of students, appointment of teaching staff, as well as the formulation of the curricula taught. Consequently, a church’s view of the status and role of women in its ministry influences their enrolment in theological institutions.

This study employs the concepts of the ‘lenses of gender’ theory by Sandra Bem (1993). The lenses are; androcentrism, gender polarization and biological essentialism: The analysis establishes that the characteristics exhibited by the three lenses interact to reproduce male power in human institutions. In such setups, females and males are channeled into different and unequal life situations with the females being relegated to the subordinate sphere and the males to the super ordinate sphere.

Finally, the study offers suggestions in form of strategies that could enhance women’s participation in theological education. They are; Advocacy, transformation of the structures of theological institutions and churches, and, the revision of the curricula of theological institutions. Networking among women and between women and men in theological studies and in the church has also been advanced as a strategy.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Colliers Encyclopaedia defines theology as the study of, and the science of God, and His relation to humanity. In theology, God is central while human beings are His subjects. Mugambi (1989:69) and Muller, et al (1997:426) describe theological education as the institutionalised ministerial training for the church. It is an educational programme that prepares candidates for various forms of church ministries, both ordained and non-ordained. Such education could be offered in theological colleges, seminaries or Bible schools. As a rule, theological education takes place under church auspices.

Muller, et al (1997:426) make an observation that in the post-colonial period, theological faculties or departments of religious studies have been created in which Roman Catholic and Protestant theologies are taught along non-Christian traditions. The author goes on to explain that in the founding and expansion phases of educational institutions, the primary task of theological education was understood mainly as the training to prepare indigenous pastors and theologians to replace the large number of foreign workers in the higher offices of mission churches. This led to the expansion of educational centres.

Longkumer (2002:29) observes that in a broader sense, theological education is not confined to ministerial training alone. It involves continuous equipping and empowering a whole people of God for formation and transformation of the whole community. Its aim is to build a just and inclusive community. This study focuses on residential, institutionalised form of ministerial training offered in purely religious institutions, locally referred to as theological institutions.

The importance and concern for theological education is worldwide as demonstrated by activities of global church organisations and associations such
as, the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions (WOCATI). The WCC has a program on theological education initially known as Theological Education Fund, and later Program on Theological Education, then Education and Theological Formation, and now Ecumenical Theological Education. Since its inception in 1977, the programme has been committed to the work of theological education around the world as a means for renewal of the church in its mission (WCC, 1979:1). WOCATI is committed to providing an understanding of the purposes, roles and needs of theological education to the churches and society (WOCATI, 1995:12). Such organisations, among others, show the importance of theological education for the church and society at large, hence the need to have it promoted for both women and men.

Despite the indicated concerns and importance of theological education as a discipline, theological education continues to be largely male dominated. This practice leads to a limited participation of women in theological education. King (1994:5), observes that, since the beginning of the women's movement in the nineteenth century, women have struggled to gain access to theological education but with limited success. For instance, some theological institutions do not admit women for theological studies. Even in institutions where openings have occurred and women have availed themselves for the opportunities, they have in most cases encountered obstacles, as a minority group.

Ortega (1995), commenting on the situation of women in the church in Africa observes that a lot needs to be done with reference to women's theological education. This is because the current situation shows that more men than women continue to be enrolled in the African theological institutions and that women faculty are almost absent. There seems to be a discrepancy given the
minimal presence of women in theological education and their presence and active involvement in service areas of the church, such as, in choirs and ushering, amongst others. They also belong to women groups that often cater for the welfare of the less privileged members of the church.

It is worth noting that church ministry and theological education are interdependent. This is because theological institutions exist to serve the church by training the servants of the church, and the church sponsors such institutions. Therefore, the church's policies on ministerial formation will influence who should be trained and for which ministry (Hogarth, 1983:11). This view gives us the impression that a person's access to theological education could be influenced by the theological institution or the church he/she belongs to. It is against such a background that this study seeks to analyse factors that hinder the participation of women in theological education in Kenya.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Previous work by this researcher, (James, 1993) deals with an assessment of women in church ministry in Kenya. The findings of the study show women as supporters and sustainers of church life. However, majority of the women are concentrated at the low level chores of church ministry. One of the reasons for this position of women is lack of theological education. The current study establishes that although some theological institutions in Kenya do admit women to study theology, the number of such women is negligible. This points to the under-representation of women in theological education leading to male domination of the profession. This study seeks to establish the reasons behind women's seeming absence in a profession that is open for them. It seeks to address the following questions:
(a) Why are women under-represented in theological institutions yet theological education is an important component in the growth and development of the church?

(b) Why should women be limited in studying theology given that they form the majority in church congregations and offer enormous services in the church?

(c) Is there a correlation between women's participation in theological education and their participation in Church ministries?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

(a) To analyse the status of women in the history of Christianity since its inception.

(b) To identify and assess the modalities applied in admitting women into theological institutions in Kenya.

(c) To identify and discuss factors that influence women's experiences in theological institutions in Kenya.

(d) To identify and evaluate strategies that could enhance the participation of women in theological education in Kenya.

1.4 Research Premises

(a) Women have been discriminated against in the history of Christianity.

(b) The selection and admission process into theological institutions in Kenya is unfavourable to women.

(c) The structural organisation of theological institutions, church policies and African culture are amongst factors that contribute to the under-representation of women in theological education.
(d) There are strategies that could facilitate the participation of women in theological education, such as, advocacy and networking.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Gender studies form a relatively new field of study in Africa and Kenya in particular. By making an analysis of the status of women in theological education in Kenya, this study makes a contribution to literature on gender studies particularly in religious circles. This literature is relevant for teaching in theological institutions as well as in departments of religious studies in the universities.

Further, this study opens a new area of research based on women’s reflections on their experiences in the church and in theological institutions. Such information is of help to policy-makers in these institutions in addressing matters that affect women and men differently. This information is also helpful to society in general for it informs them on the need to get rid of gender biases that could be based on ignorance.

The current study is of great help to church policy-makers, for it informs them on the need to tap women's potential by training them in theology. With theological training, women can participate more effectively in church ministry. In addition, this study gives women and men a chance to reflect on their views concerning the presence and participation of women in theological education. It also gives them a chance to propose ways through which theological education for women could be improved.

It is hoped that this study will motivate those women who may be interested in pursuing theological education. It can also encourage men and women to be supportive of women willing to pursue theological education. The findings of
the study will be helpful to theological institutions in the evaluation of their structures and programmes, which may require constant review.

1.6 Literature Review

The available literature has been reviewed from four perspectives, namely, studies about the status of women in the history of the church, women's access to theological institutions, their experiences in theological institutions and the curricula of the institutions.

Several authors, amongst them Morris (1973), Fiorenza (1983) and Tucker (1992) concur that the role of women in early Christianity is scarce in history. This implies that very little of the contributions made by women is given prominence. Malone (2001), observes that the history of Christianity shows great contradictions towards women. Though women have been included, called, inspired and canonized by the church throughout the centuries, they have at times felt unappreciated and excluded within the Christian tradition. This apparent contradiction towards women characterizes the whole of Christian history. This contradiction is manifested in the contemporary church set up whereby women form the majority membership and contribute enormously to the growth and development of the church, yet get excluded from participation in pertinent ministries in the church such as the pastorate.

Mcgrath (1972), Cunningham (1976) and Evans (1983), observe that the institutionalisation of the church in the second century made it hierarchical and male dominated resulting to the exclusion of women. The theology of the church on women issues was mainly from readership based on Deutro-Pauline writings that demanded that women be submissive and obedient to men.
Torjesen (1993), contends that as the church began to spread out of Palestine into the wider Roman Empire in the third century A.D., it experienced a gradual process of transformation in the leadership and organization models. Due to influence from the city councils, the church’s concept of leadership began to shift from ministry to governance. The results of this shift included, a division between clergy and laity, as well as the exclusion of women from leadership such that women’s leadership became a controversial issue.

The sentiments concerning women’s participation in public life of the church could be summed up in the words of Tertullian in the 3rd century: “It is not permitted to a woman to speak in church. Neither is it permitted her to teach, nor to baptize, nor to offer, nor to claim for herself a lot in any manly functions, not to say sacerdotal office” (cited Malone, 2001:102).

Torjesen (1993:159), argues that Tertullian was representing the attitude of the conservative Roman aristocracy that the only proper roles for women lay within the private sphere. He viewed the church as a political body where only men could be leaders.

Kress (1966), Mclaunglin (1974), Clark (1987), Carmody & Carmody (1989), Tucker (1992) and Malone (2001, 2002) give an analysis of the status of women in the patristic and medieval Christianity (fourth-twelfth centuries). These periods were characterized by asceticism and monasticism. Although men and women lived ascetic lives in monasteries and cloisters, with time, only men were ordained to priesthood. The theology of the church then was male centred and chauvinistic, with influence from the writings of the Church Fathers who were biased against women. Such writings viewed the male sex as stronger, more rational and closer to the divine. Women were viewed as inherently weaker, more prone to heresy, and always sinful.
Examples of such writings are found in the works of Augustine and Jerome. On his conversion, Augustine renounced sexuality and confined himself to a totally male environment. As he struggled with his sexual life, Augustine sought remedies from prayer and asceticism. His association of sexuality with women as sinful, led him to assert that only men were created in the image of God, and that women were not. (cited Malone, 2001:154). His equation of sex with women and sin led him to promote a theology that was chauvinistic and anti-women. Such sentiments led women to be viewed as temptresses, even those living in convents. Jerome’s concept of a righteous woman was that of a virgin, who had to denounce all traces of femaleness, to forget her maternal instincts and to shun marriage. According to Jerome, women could only get closer to men in equality by being virgins and thus manly. He also viewed women as irritants (cited Malone, 2001:160).

The period between ninth to twelfth centuries experienced the clericalization of monastic life for men only. This move reduced monastic life for women to virtual invisibility. As the religious and political need for the clerical celibacy gained prominence and monks were increasingly ordained to the priesthood, the cleric role of women was reduced to one of temptress. There were restrictions in movement for women in convents. Their free mixing with monks was also prohibited. This led to separation between the clergymen and women. The whole concept of asceticism and monasticism led to the diminishing of married women from active Christian history (Malone, 2002:45-50).

The period of reformation and counter-reformation (sixteenth to eighteenth centuries) while seemingly promoting male leadership gave some recognition to women, compared to the preceding periods. Women played outstanding roles in the reformation exercise. Some were preachers while others wrote hymns and...
religious poetry. Some challenged religious authorities (see chapter 2 section 2.6.3). However, what the reformers seemed to promote most was the domesticating role of women as implied in the writings of Bainton (1971), Douglass (1974), Sherrin (1989), Weisner (1989) and Tucker (1992).

Strobel (1984), Parvey (1985), Wamahiu (1988), Nasimiyu (1989) and Okemwa (1993) concur that generally the introduction of Christianity in Kenya through the missionaries was as favourable to women in that the patriarchal structure of missions collaborated with that of some local cultures that promoted male leadership. The attitude of missionaries toward women is further shown by the way they handled formal education for women. They initially showed interest and emphasis on the education of males. In some cases, however, the arrival of missionaries tended to uplift the status and the role of women. For instance, among the Agikuyu, women were culturally forbidden to address men’s gathering. Christianity removed this cultural prohibition. Similarly, the Church of Scotland Mission in Thogoto, Kikuyu was led by a woman, Mrs Minnie Watson who promoted the establishment of a girls’ boarding school in 1909. The Gospel Missionary Society in Kambui promoted the education of girls together with boys. They further halted female circumcision in the 1920s in Kiambu and fought for equal rights for boys and girls (Macpherson, 1970:68).

Various works on women in theological education tend to concur that their exclusion from theological education is as a result of their exclusion from church ministry in the history of the church. Ruether and Laughlin (1979), Nasimiyu (1990) and Lotter (1991), give a historical analysis of the exclusion of women from theological education. These authors remark that the twentieth century showed a gradual change towards the inclusion of women in theological education and church ministry. Nevertheless, the authors argue that there is need to transform the institutions in order to incorporate women’s perspectives. Based
on this information, the present study did establish that the inclusion of women in Church ministry in Kenya does influence their inclusion in theological studies. Further, the study makes an analysis of the structures of theological institutions in Kenya and suggests how they could be made conducive to women.

Brubaker (1982) and Giltner (1985), observe that women aspiring to join theological institutions most often find that they have to face an all-male Admissions Body. Women candidates also find that they have to face all male interviewing boards that are at times not sensitive to their concerns.

King (1994) and Oduyoye (1994), point out that several countries in the third world possess well-established theological institutions. However, it is not easy for women to get access to theological education in these institutions. This is because in various denominations the management of theological education is still under the control of male-dominated church authorities that tend to favour theological education for men against that of women. King's observations have been appropriate to this study in assessing the modalities of admission and funding as they touch on women.

Howe (1982) and Kemdirim (1999), examine women's experiences in theological institutions. They raise two issues: that in the course of their training, women are often surrounded by an atmosphere of questioning and suspicion, and that the curriculum neglects areas that touch on women issues, such as feminist studies. This study found the views of these authors quite relevant. As students and faculty, women experience obstacles that could be attributed to their gender. They include biased remarks by their male colleagues and instructors. Similarly, the curricula lack gender sensitivity.
Briggs (1991) and Kanyoro (1996), argue that the socialisation women receive as young girls mainly prepares them for home-based roles. Socialisation serves to make women objects of cultural preservation. Both scholars suggest that society should educate and socialise children to expect leadership roles as women and from women as well as from men. These scholars' views are shared by several others (see Rosaldo, 1974; Ankrah, 1988; Bam, 1991; Mpulwana, 1991; Nzomo, 1991; Wamahiu, 1992; Bem, 1993; Peterson and Runyan, 1993). The cultural socialization of women could have adverse effects on their enrolment and participation in theological education. This study explored this concept of socialization and found out that the socialisation of girls and boys in the home is continued and reinforced in the teachings of the church in the Sunday school. The same applies to youth, as well as in adult programmes. Such socialization influences both women and men to view leadership as a preserve of the men. These teachings could influence church congregation’s perceptions on theological education for women, and thus fail to support them in this endeavour.

Tabu (1994), underlines the contribution of women clergy to the growth of the Episcopal Church of Rwanda. Her findings are that congregations served by ordained women benefit a lot in the area of women ministries especially when women minister to other women. However, Tabu underlines the glaring resistance towards the ordination of women particularly from male pastors. She laments that churches do not encourage women to receive theological education, which is a prerequisite for ordination in churches that ordain women. Other scholars share Tabu’s views on the ordination of women though the contexts and emphasis may differ (see Hardesty and Scanzoni, 1975; Gardiner, 1976; Tetlow, 1980; Howe, 1982; Maitland, 1983; Oduyoye, 1990; James, 1993; Njoroge, 1996). This study established that lack of theological education acts as a hindrance to ordination in churches that have opened ordination for women.
James (1993), examines the roles played by women in Church ministry and Church leadership in Kenya. Her findings indicate that women have limited participation in church ministry due to lack of theological training. This study is based on the last issue, that of women in theological education. It focuses on factors that limit women's access to theological education and the implications these (factors) have for women and the church.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

This study examines three theories namely, patriarchal ideology by Iglitzin & Ross (1976), gender role ideology by Peterson & Runyan (1993) and lenses of gender by Bem (1993).

Iglitzin & Ross (1976), developed a gender role theory based on patriarchal ideology. They maintain that within a patriarchal society, the roles of women and men are influenced by the patriarchal ideology. In such a setting, there is a distinction between the public and the private spheres of life. The public sphere refers to politics, economics, religion and anything that is done outside the home and is the domain of men. On the other hand, the private sphere refers to the home and is the domain of women. These authors further contend that socialization is the means by which men are prepared for the public and private roles respectively.

Kabira (1994), echoes Iglitzin & Ross’s ideas on patriarchal ideology. She sees this ideology as closely related to myth and finding great support from all kinds of art forms such as proverbs. These art forms command authority of tradition and other cultural forms such as belief systems and rituals. She argues that the cultural forms are inculcated in boys and girls during the process of socialization.
where women’s roles are prescribed as those of offering services to others especially men.

Although Iglitzin & Ross’s theory could explain why women continue to play subordinate roles within the public sphere, it is not exhaustive. In addition to socialization of women as they grow up, there could be other factors that contribute to women’s subordinate positions such as the structures of the institutions they may be in. This theory is therefore found relevant but inadequate for this study.

Peterson & Runyan (1993), explore gender role ideology as a means to explain why women occupy subordinate roles in various spheres of life. They contend that gender socialization, situational constraints and structural obstacles interact and contribute towards the discrimination of women as candidates for, and effective holders of any public office. In addition, these authors blame sets of power relations within social-cultural institutions, which determine what women and men should do. Although Peterson & Runyan’s perspective seems to come closer to the analysis of this study, it has some shortcomings. It seems to address itself more to leadership yet this is not the only concern of this study.

Though the two theories are found inadequate for this study, their ideas have been used to support those of the lenses of gender theory by Bem (1993) that has been adopted here. In her work, Bem developed three concepts that she refers to as lenses of gender. She defines them as:

- Hidden assumptions about sex and gender which are embedded in cultural discourses, social institutions and individual psyches in virtually all male dominated societies that invisibly and systematically reproduce male power in generation after generation.

These lenses are androcentrism, gender polarization and biological essentialism. These lenses reproduce male power in two ways. First, the discourses and social
institutions in which the lenses are embedded channel females and males into different and unequal life situations. Second, during enculturation, individuals progressively internalize the lenses and this encourages them to build an identity that conforms with them (ibid: 3).

Androcentrism is the perception that men are superior to women and their (men’s) experiences are treated as the reference points or the standard or norm in the community. This means that what is associated with being male is the norm and what is associated with being female is the exception. In its extremes, androcentrism envisions that man is the free, determining being who defines the meaning of existence in his own personal terms while woman is the ‘other’, the object, whose meaning is determined by men. Man is perceived to be the measure of everything human. Androcentric prejudice makes female life invisible and locates women on the margins of the human society (Bem, 1993:4; Clifford, 2001:20; Schroer & Straubl, 2001:18-19).

This view of androcentrism could be equated to patriarchy that thrives on dominance and submission dynamics and thus acting as a barrier to interdependence and mutuality of life in society. It creates a society that is male-dominated, one that empowers men and values their contributions while it devalues women and their contributions. One would expect institutions found within such societal setups to have structures that are male-dominated and thus favourable to men over women.

Within the history of the Christianity, androcentric characteristics gained roots in the patristic through the medieval period. This period saw the church organized on a patriarchal-clerical hierarchy that excluded women from liturgical functions and church leadership. The patriarchal-clerical model of the church continues to prevail in the churches today both in the Catholic and Protestant traditions (Carr, 1988:37).
Some feminist historians have tried to reconstruct the actual history of women in the third century of Christianity. They include Fiorenza (1983) and Ruether (1983). They argue that Christian women continued to create forms of Christian living that did not depend on family relationships of the household codes. The vision of co-equal discipleship in the gospels acted as an inspiration for women as martyrs, widows, prophets, deacons, teachers and liturgical leaders, at least to the end of the third century. The efforts of these women were directed at breaking through the restrictions of the patriarchal household. This hidden story contributes important information to the Christian history of women.

The feminist historians also point out that much that has been written about women by men does not reflect women’s historical reality. Whenever women’s emancipation and active participation in history became stronger, ideological polemics about women’s place, role and nature increased. Feminist historians therefore seek a theoretical framework that can maintain the dialectical tension of women’s historical existence as active participants in history as well as objects of patriarchal oppression.

When applied to social structures such as theological institutions, androcentric practices situate men and women in unequal positions. The implication of this is that men have more opportunities than women to acquire skills and advance in careers. The fact that some churches train both men and women but only ordain the men is an aspect of unequal opportunities for them. This unequal provision of opportunities gives an impression that some churches view the training of women with less value than that of men.
Within the Kenyan context, women are treated not only as newcomers in the male-dominated profession of theological education but also as intruders who are not welcome. This is portrayed in their struggle to access theological education, their experiences in the institution, and their placement after graduating (see chapter 3&4).

The lens of gender polarization assumes that women and men are fundamentally different and perform different roles in society on the basis of their gender. Girls and boys are socialized in ways that conform to the society's definition of masculinity and femininity. This kind of socialization is continued and reinforced in the church during its various programmes.

Tepidino (2001:40), Oduyoye (2001:30) and Raza (1989:19), concur that we are born male and female but become men and women according to cultural socialization. We incorporate masculine and feminine characteristics by learning behaviours, habits and ways of thinking according to societal definitions of what are man and woman. Once learned, gender identities are internalized and can be recognized in the notions and expectations of femininity and masculinity of a given community as well as the assumptions the community has about women and men and their societal roles. It is within the home, the family unit that roles, prejudices and conditioning begin. This could be done through observation, or direct guidance given by adults and peer groups that bring the young to conform to societal norms. From an early age, girls are trained to be housekeepers, to care for children and to do domestic work, while boys are trained to be good workers, professionals and to have public responsibilities.

The whole concept of gender polarization seems to promote division of labour along gender lines as per the structures, norms and values of a society. Socialization only acts as a means of transmitting what is determined by culture.
Within theological institutions, the concept of gender polarization not only makes distinctions between the roles of men and women but also tends to promote the men. This is exemplified by the numbers of female students and lecturers vis-à-vis the men in these institutions (see chapter 4 section 4.2.1). The tabulation of these numbers indicates that while theological education for men continues to gain prominence, that of women either remains constant or declinates.

Despite the socialization that women receive as they grow up, certain other factors may hinder their endeavour to sidestep gender stereotypes. In this study, we are arguing that even if the socialization of women were to change and even if women themselves changed their attitude towards leadership, so long as the structures and policies of institutions remain gender insensitive and patriarchal, there would not be much progress for women. This implies that the structures of theological institutions need to be transformed to become gender sensitive and thus accommodating to women. The argument of this study is in line with Peterson & Runyans's (1993) gender role theory that states that situational constraints and structural obstacles interact with one's socialization to determine their status.

The lens of biological essentialism assumes that there is something genetically inherent in men that makes them the naturally dominant sex and that this trait is lacking in women (Bem, 1993:3). This lens acts to justify women's relative lack of power in society and its institutions. This is because it asserts that what society terms as women's roles such as domestic work or 'home-making' are biologically determined, yet such roles are socially constructed.

Lehmann (1985:43-44) categorizes three dimensions through which the concept of biological essentialism could influence people in the church. They are: the
The sacramental dimension is portrayed in liturgical rituals such as, performing baptisms, preaching, administering the Eucharist, praying and conducting funerals. This dimension tends to be a male preserve. This study's findings confirm that there exists a discrepancy in the church in terms of duties performed by women and men clergy. Although ordained women are supposed to perform all the duties pertaining to ordained persons in their churches, this is not always practical. Some clergywomen find that only a few congregation members request them to baptize their children, to conduct weddings and burials. Clergywomen are mainly found performing the duties of preaching and counselling (see chapter 3 section 3.3.4).

Malinga (2002:4), speaking from a South African context cites the challenges women ministers encounter. She says, "While we have a number of women ministers, when it comes to being who you are, we struggle because who you are is usually not accepted. People want the type of minister they know, the male minister they are used to".

This is a clear indication that congregations have not yet accepted services from clergywomen. This attitude could be influenced by people's own perceptions concerning distinct roles for women and men in society, that of assigning authoritative roles to men and subordinate roles to women.
The organizational dimension deals with administrative roles such as, recruitment and coordination of church staff, as well as working out of church budgets. This is an area where power and decision-making are exercised, and is also a male preserve (Lehmann, op. cit., 44) At the local church levels, this dimension includes church committees that make influential decisions concerning church personnel, financial matters as well as development projects.

In the analysis of the role of women in church leadership (see chapter 2 section 2.8), it is noted that most churches have male-dominated hierarchical structures that tend to exclude women from influential decision-making committees such as those mentioned above. In chapter 4 section 4.2.1, it is also noted that the administrative structures of theological institutions surveyed are male-dominated. This is exemplified by the fact that all principals are men, and that the governing boards and councils of the institutions are male dominated.

The subordinate dimension includes activities of the various departments in the church. Regular departments in most churches include, Sunday school, Youth, Women, Music, and Education departments. This is an area where women are concentrated as members and leaders. In chapter two, we note that women are concentrated in the ministries that deal with children, youth, women and welfare matters. These departments are usually under the patronage of top church leadership and therefore do not make independent decisions.

Within theological institutions, the subordinate dimension is portrayed in the courses that women students take. This study’s findings are that majority of the women especially those training for lay ministry are registered in the fields of education, Sunday school, youth and women ministries. The courses tally with...
the duties women are expected to perform in their churches. Men tend to enrol in
the more influential courses such as, divinity courses that qualify them to high
positions of church ministry.

While giving elaborate analysis of how the three gender lenses impact on
society, Bem argues for the abolition of androcentrism and gender polarization.
She argues for a shift of the debate about sexual inequality away from its focus
on male/female difference onto how androcentric discourses and institutions and
much of religious life transform male/female difference into female
disadvantage. She calls for the eventual eradication of gender polarization by
creation of a society where biological sex would be considered of minimal
presence in human social life. This is because gender polarization prevents
women and men alike from developing their full potential as human beings, an
argument that this study concurs with.

Within church and theological institutions, the three lenses (concepts) could lead
to different treatment of women and men. It is within that context that the
concepts of androcentrism, gender polarization and biological essentialism have
been used to provide a framework to analyse factors that hinder the participation
of women in theological education in Kenya.

1.8 Research Methodology
1.8.1 Scope of the Study
The current study is based on two church traditions namely, the mainline
Protestant and the Evangelical. The mainline Protestant tradition refers to
churches that are otherwise referred to as mainstream churches. These are
churches whose origin is the sixteenth century Reformation as a protest against
Catholicism. Their common characteristics include the authority of scripture,
justification by faith as a means of attaining salvation and priesthood of all
believers. The presence of these churches in Kenya is as a result of missionary activities from the continents of Europe and North America. Examples of such churches are: The Anglican Church in Kenya (ACK), the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) and the Methodist Church of Kenya (MCK). The Evangelical tradition refers to (Protestant) revival churches that share an absolute belief in the unconditional acceptance of the Holy Scripture as the authoritative word of God, personal relationship with Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit, and evangelistic and missionary task of all believers. In Kenya, these churches are members of the Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya, a national body that is a member of the continental one, namely, the Association of Evangelicals of Africa (EFK, 1994). Examples of such churches in Kenya are: the Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG), the Africa Gospel Church (AGC), the Redeemed Gospel Church, Africa Inland Church (AIC), Full Gospel Church, Chrisco Fellowship Church and the Deliverance Church.

These churches were selected on the basis of the fact that, first, they have established theological institutions and second, they allow women to study theology alongside men. The Roman Catholic Church has been left out because its theological education for ordained ministry is purely male.

The selection of institutions was based on their church affiliations as well as the academic programmes they offer. The study concentrated on institutions that offer diploma, bachelors and masters levels. The significance of these levels is that the institutions offering them tend to be interdenominational, and the fact that churches in the study ordain persons that are trained at diploma level and above. Below are the institutions that were sampled for the study. 
Protestant Institutions:
The PCEA has one theological institution that trains students at the diploma level, namely, PCEA Pastoral Institute, Kikuyu. This institution has been purposefully selected for the study. The ACK has four such institutions out of which two have been selected using the random stratified sampling. The four institutions are; St. Paul's Theological College, Kapsabet, Berea Theological College, Nakuru, St. Andrews Theological College, Kerugoya, and Bishop Hannington Theological College, Mombasa.

The following institutions have been sampled:
(i) Berea Theological College, Nakuru (ACK)
(ii) St. Andrew's Theological College, Kerugoya (ACK)
(iii) PCEA Pastoral Institute, Kikuyu (PCEA)
(iv) St. Paul's United Theological College, Limuru

NB. The first three institutions were selected on the basis of the fact that they offer training at the diploma level. St. Paul's United Theological College is an interdenominational institution serving several protestant churches. It offers bachelors and masters degrees.

Evangelical Institutions
The Evangelicals have common institutions offering diploma, bachelors and masters degree courses in theology. The selection of institutions has been done on the basis of the programmes they offer. Out of four for diploma, two have been selected, and out of four for bachelors, two have been selected. The selections have been done using the random stratified sampling. The four institutions that offer diploma are; Kapsabet Bible Institute, Kapsabet, Ukamba Bible Institute, Machakos, Moffat College of the Bible, Kijabe, and Pumwani Bible Institute, Mombasa. The four institutions that offer bachelors degrees are: Kenya Highlands Bible College, Kericho, Scott Theological College, Machakos,
East Africa School of Theology, Nairobi, and Pan Africa Christian College, Nairobi. The only two institutions that offer masters programmes were selected. They are, Nairobi International School of Theology and the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology.

The following institutions were sampled:

(a) Diploma
   (i) Moffat College of the Bible, Kijabe
   (ii) Kenya Highlands Bible College, Kericho

(b) Bachelors
   (i) Pan African Christian College, Nairobi
   (ii) Scott Theological College, Machakos

(c) Masters
   (i) Nairobi International School of Theology, Nairobi
   (ii) Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, Nairobi

In total ten institutions were sampled for the study. The geographical area of study consequently covered Nairobi, Nakuru, Machakos, Kijabe, Kerugoya and Kericho.

1.8.2 Acquisition of Data

Two research techniques were used to facilitate the acquisition of data that were required, namely, library and field research.

(a) Library Research

Part of this study was done in the library. The libraries that were used were at Kenyatta University, Hekima College, Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, Daystar University, and All Africa Conference of Churches.
(b) Field Research

Two methods were used to gather information for this work, namely, questionnaires and interviews.

Two types of questionnaires were administered, one for women students in theological institutions, and the other one for women faculty of theological institutions.

(i) Women students: In places where ten or less than ten were found, they were all sampled. In places where more than ten were found, selection was done using the simple random technique to get the ten spread to their levels of study.

(ii) Women faculty: The target for these was five and since most institutions had between three to five, all were selected.

Interviews and discussions were conducted with the three categories of women informants mentioned above. The students were interviewed in groups of five to six and were selected according to their responses in the questionnaires. Interviews were also conducted with women faculty and graduates of theological institutions. Those interviewed were selected on the basis of their availability. Other informants interviewed included the principals, and some deans of the theological institutions and some church ministers. The principals formed representatives of male informants as well. The following was the sample size.

(c) Sample Size

In the course of the inquiry, the researcher contacted 113 informants as shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Informants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women students</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women faculty</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24
Table 1: Categories of Informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Informants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women Students</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women Faculty</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women Graduates</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals/Deans</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Ministers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>113</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.8.3 Data Analysis

The data obtained from primary and secondary sources were interpreted, classified, and categorised according to the research objectives, and later keyed into the projected chapters. Through the use of description as a method of data analysis, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further study have been made.
CHAPTER TWO

THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH: AN ASSESSMENT

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores how women have fared throughout the history of the church. It gives an overview of the status of women in the history of the Christian church from the onset of Christianity in Palestine to the advent of Christianity in Kenya. This provides us with an insight on the status of women in the church in the contemporary setting. Such information further guides us in examining women’s participation in theological education. The issues assessed include:

(i) Women in Judaism
(ii) Women in the Ministry of Jesus
(iii) Women in the Early Church
(iv) Women in the Patristic Period
(v) Women in Medieval Christianity
(vi) Women in the Reformation Period
(vii) Women and Missionaries in Kenya
(viii) Women in the Contemporary Church in Kenya

2.2 Women in Judaism

The Israelite community was male-dominated in its religious, social, economic and political spheres. Women remained within the dependent state. Doyle (1974:48) and Tucker (1992:57), argue that in such a setup, it occurred—that at each stage of her life, a woman was under the civil authority of a specific man; first her father, then her husband, and if she was widowed, her son. On their
part, all males were permanent family members with rights, privileges, and a future power within the family. Further, a woman had status only as a wife and a mother and therefore her sphere was exclusively domestic.

An attempt was made to avoid the lustful glance by the greatest possible limitations of opportunities to meet with the opposite sex. Men were largely seen as innocents who could be seduced by wicked women. This made a woman’s role in any sort of public activity outside the home to be passive. She was required as much as possible, to keep out of the public eye (Evans, 1983:33).

The tenth commandment as found in Exodus 20:17 & Deuteronomy 5:21 forbids an Israelite male to covet his neighbour’s possessions that include wife, slaves, cattle, menservants and maidservants. Theologically, this commandment warns one from desiring another’s possessions for this could lead to sin. It also points to how human beings were required to treat each other with dignity and respect. Desire for a neighbour’s possessions could lead to breaking the law.

Given the secondary status of women in the Jewish society, this commandment would be interpreted to mean that a wife was part of her husband’s property and that coveting a neighbour’s wife a man would be disrespectful to her husband. Laws dealing with divorce, inheritance and sexual transgressions as shown below could express this further.

The notion of wife as property of her husband further provides the rationale for a divorce law that permits a man to release his wife from a marriage covenant (Deuteronomy 24:1). This is not reciprocal for the wife. She cannot divorce her husband. The logic here is that the husband, as her owner can dispense
with his property, but a wife as property, cannot dispense with her owner. Likewise, a minor daughter is regarded a property of her father. He owns her and has the right to arrange for her to marry a man of his choice without her consent.

According to the law, a man is owed a bride price from a man who marries his daughter. The bride price is owed even from a man who rapes her before marriage, and is commanded to marry her, with no option of divorce (Deuteronomy 22:28-29). This study would concur with Clifford (2001:72) in arguing that the law seems to ignore the pain of young women who have been violated and concerns itself with the father’s rights over his daughter’s sexuality and the bride price for which he is compensated the loss of her virginity. This means that a daughter’s virginity is her father’s economic asset.

The perspective of women is absent in these laws. The laws give no attention to the experience of women whose lives they govern, not even of a raped young woman marrying a rapist, or a divorced woman forced from her home by her husband’s writ of divorce.

The inferiority of women extended to the religious sphere. At the temple and in the synagogue, the general attitude was that the men did the preaching and the teaching while women listened passively. No wonder women had no official rights and duties but had to remain silent within a segregated place in the temple or synagogue. Women did not count for the quorum of the ten necessary for a synagogue service to be held, meaning that on their own, women could never hold an official service (Evans, 1983:34; Storkey, 1985:156).
A further demonstration to show that women's lives were in the control of men are the laws governing uncleanness and purification set by a male priesthood. Women were excluded from cultic activities after childbirth and during menstruation. These were viewed as states of impurity and uncleanness. In the Jewish tradition, menstruation makes a woman unclean (Leviticus 15:19-24). Discharge of blood after birth also makes a woman unclean. The law determining the period of impurity occasioned by childbirth is in itself discriminatory. It stipulated eighty days if she gave birth to a girl and forty days if she gave birth to a boy (Leviticus 12:1-7). A woman in such circumstances was definitely excluded from public functions. She had to offer a sin and burnt offering through a priest who would atone for her before being re-admitted back to public functions. This offering was associated with the loss of bodily fluids.

Okunola (2001:27) argues that probably women were declared unclean during these periods because of lack of sophisticated means to handle menstrual flow, menstrual pain and menstrual psychological trauma. She further likens the Jewish practice to the African traditional religion, whereby women of childbearing age are excluded from high priestly orders. This is because it is assumed that women become like "men" and therefore powerful after menopause, an age at which their cleanliness is assumed. It is believed that menses make one filthy and that they contain blood that could bring misfortune to a man, as well as neutralize any medicinal preparations.

The restrictions of women of childbearing age from performing priestly roles could also be explained by the fact that the human society desired to make women of childbearing focus on motherhood activities rather than engage in priestly duties, which are time-consuming. Moreover, most of the religious taboos attached to menstrual blood have sociological rather than theological
reasons. Otherwise as Okunola (2001: 30) argues, in the Old Testament, there is no evidence that Miriam, Deborah and Huldah, all prophetesses in Israel were menopausal women, yet they had contact with God and mediated on behalf of their people.

That males had a religious privilege over women could be exemplified by a prayer that a Jewish man could say three times a day thanking God for not creating him as a gentile, a slave, or a woman:

Blessed be God that he has not made me a gentile because all gentiles are nothing before him; blessed be God that he has not made me a woman because the woman is not obligated to fulfill the commandments; blessed be God that he has not made me a slave for a slave is not ashamed to sin (Fiorenza, 1983:217).

This prayer expresses a patriarchal cultural-religious attitude to male superiority and female inferiority. Furthermore, in rabbinic Judaism, rabbis were only men. They often referred to women as lazy, stupid, frivolous and un-teachable (Evans, 1983:33).

In the light of the foregoing, it could be concluded that Judaism promoted androcentric practices whereby the place of a woman was not equal to that of a man. Women were subordinate and inferior to men in religion, in the home and in society.

2.3. Women in the Ministry of Jesus

Although Jesus ministered in the Jewish society that had little regard for women, as noted above, his attitude towards women, compared to that of his contemporary society present a contrast. Jesus associated with women. He talked without restraint of women, to women, and with women. This is seen in his everyday teaching, in the parables, miracle stories, and in theological discussions as exemplified below. Jesus related to women primarily as human beings rather than as sexual beings. This means that he was interested in them
as persons seeing their sex as an integral part, but by no means a totality of their personality. Jesus’ attitude towards women, as portrayed in the gospels was new in the contemporary setting. He was able to mix freely and naturally with women and he allowed them to minister to him. His approach could be described as transformative (Evans, 1983: 44).

Jesus radically differed from contemporary Jewish rabbis. He went beyond their traditional interpretation of the Torah and proclaimed his teaching (Tetlow, 1980:46). Jesus’ strong condemnation of “even looking at a woman lustfully” (Matthew 5:28) and probably also the severity of his teaching on divorce (Mark 10:1-12, Luke 16:18), made it possible for women to mix freely with his disciples without fearing to be condemned as immoral persons. Similarly, in Matthew 5:31-32, in his teaching on divorce, Jesus implies that women are not objects to be dismissed at will as it used to happen in Judaism (Deuteronomy 24:1). He stresses that marriage is a God-ordained permanent partnership that both husband and wife should keep secure.

Jesus held conversations with women and had many women among his friends and followers. In John 4:7-12, Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman portrays him transcending racial and gender segregation as he engages in a theological conversation with a woman, who was not only a foreigner, but a sinner according to the Jewish religious regulations. She was a symbol of evil, particularly to a rabbi. On the contrary, Jesus saw the woman as an individual who was capable of spiritual discernment. He further revealed himself to her as the Messiah.

Luke 7:36-50 tells of the encounter of Jesus with a sinful woman while dining in the house of Simon the Pharisee. Those at table with Jesus were astonished and dumbfounded because they did not expect him to relate to the woman. On
the contrary, Jesus did not ignore that she was a sinner but openly acknowledged it; hence, he took the opportunity to deal with her sins. Jesus was interested in the woman as a person and not as a sinner. He therefore, drew her attention to her dignity and worth which had been defiled by her sins (Evans, 1983:51).

On a related note, Luke 10: 38-42 gives a picture of Jesus instructing a pupil. The extra-ordinary feature is that the pupil is a woman, Mary of Bethany. This episode shows that Jesus gave private teaching to a wider group than the twelve apostles and that this group included women. Further, Luke 8:1-3, shows that Jesus had close women friends who not only accompanied him in his teaching and preaching missions but who also rendered services from their material possessions. We could argue that this act of Jesus cut across his culture's stereotyping of women as seducers for he treated them with respect and dignity.

The Passion narratives (Luke 24: 1-12, Mark 16:1-8) present women primarily as witnesses, a practice that differs with the Jewish belief that evidence given by women was of no account (Evans, 1983:33). It is worth noting that a number of the factual details concerning the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus are known only through the testimony of women. Women were not only receivers of the resurrection message but were also called to pass on the message they had received (Ibid).

The foregoing examples of Jesus' dealings with women clearly show that he wished to uplift the status of women in a society where they were perceived as inferior to men. He further affirmed their dignity and worth to the extent of allowing them to join his ministry, to be witnesses of his death and resurrection, which is the basis of Christianity. From the ministry of Jesus, we
learn that he did not establish structural order or hierarchy, nor did he ordain any persons. The only title used to describe the ministry of his followers before the resurrection is discipleship. Jesus had both male and female followers, and had a ministry of service. They had to share in his work and suffering. He taught that the tasks of discipleship are preaching the gospel, healing, feeding the hungry, and serving others. Jesus assigned these tasks not only to the twelve, but also to the seventy-two (Luke 10:1-12) where women could have featured (Tetlow, 1980:55-58).

What does the status of women in this period teach us about women? Several observations could be made, namely, that women are capable of receiving religious instruction as in theological institutions as exemplified by Mary of Bethany, women are capable of studying theology as shown in the episode of Jesus with the Samaritan woman and Martha of Bethany. The Passion narratives empower women to pass on the message of the resurrection of Jesus. They could do this if equipped with relevant skills for ministry. Theological education could enhance a deeper understanding and performance in the ministry.

2.4. Women in the Early Church: (Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Church)
A mixture of attitudes towards women characterized the period following the death and resurrection of Jesus. These differing strands were often influenced by the social setting of the time (Torjesen 1993:12). On one hand, women played prominent roles including leadership in the church. On the other hand, they were made to feel that their place was in the home and that having leadership in the church was inappropriate for them. The Acts of Apostles point out some of the roles played by women. They included, forming the first congregation (Acts 17:4), being evangelists (Acts 18:2-3), leaders (Acts 16) and prophets (Acts 21:9).
To understand the role of women in the early church, it is necessary to understand the societal leadership models then. Social status was the most important factor in the make-up of potential leaders. For its part, the church took its cue from society’s leadership models. Thus, Christian communities looked to members with social status and wealth to be patrons. In the ancient world in which Christianity spread, both men and women were patrons and householders. Therefore, the social authority, economic power and political influence associated with these roles were not restricted by gender (Torjesen, 1993:13).

In the ancient Mediterranean society, women of social standing did not live subjected lives. Being householders, they directed the men and women who lived and worked under their authority. They also supervised the production and distribution of the wealth. Those that were businesswomen, travelled, bought and sold goods and negotiated contacts. Women with sufficient wealth and social status acted as patrons of individuals and groups of lower social standing by providing financial assistance, recommendations to officials and political protection (Torjesen, 1993:12).

Within religious authority, Greek and Roman worship was not limited by gender. Women as well as men functioned as prophets and priests. Each of these social positions in the Roman society, namely, patron, householder, prophet and priest, provided an individual with the kind of status, authority and experience that could be translated into similar leadership roles in the Christian community (Malone, 2001:69).

Christian communities continued to grow in numbers such that, they could not congregate in a single location. Consequently, a number of prosperous
Householders gathered congregations in their homes. These were women and men who were heads of households and who possessed adequate resources for use by the early Christian communities. They owned homes that were presumably large enough for the communal gatherings. During these gatherings, prayers, preaching and exhortation were carried out in the context of communal meal. This meal was provided out of the resources of the householder. The provisions of food and hospitality gave the host or hostess the status of a patron (Torjesen, 1993:78; Storkey, 1985:158).

The role of the household manager served as a significant model for the early Christian leadership. The position of head of household qualified an individual for leadership roles. This is because household management involved administration, financial and disciplinary responsibilities. It was therefore seen as preparing an individual to assume corresponding responsibilities in the community. Paul names several women who were leaders of house-churches. They include: Mary mother of John Mark in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12-17); Appiah in Colossae (Philemon 2); Nympha in Laodicia (Colossians 4:15) Chloë in Corinth (1 Corinthians 1:11); Lydia in Thyatira (Acts 16:14-15) and Phoebe in Rome (Romans 16:1). These women supervised congregations that met in their homes. They also hosted travelling missionaries from other communities (Storkey, 1985:156; Malone, 2001:69).

Torjesen (1993:78), and Malone (2001:70) give an analysis of Phoebe and Lydia. Phoebe was a woman of some wealth and social status. She travelled to Rome in connection with her business and social life as well as the affairs of the church. Paul identified her as his patron. Paul acknowledged her generosity and her support for him. Lydia founded the Church at Philippi and was a leader there. She was a business lady who imported purple, a very costly cloth.
only won by the rich. She also had many servants. The social standing of these
two women, amongst others could have influenced their roles as leaders in the
Early Church.

Among the leadership of the Roman Christian community were other women.
They were Prisca, Junia, Mary, Tryphaena, Tryphosa and Persis (Romans 16).
Paul addressed them as co-workers. Junia is referred to as an apostle. She, and
her husband, Andronicus travelled teaching and preaching from city to city.
Paul mentions three women leaders in the church at Philippi. They are Euodia,
Syntyche and Lydia (Philippians 4:1-3). Some of these women were prominent
leaders and missionaries before Paul and independent of Paul (Fiorenza,
1983:15).

In places where synagogues existed, women alongside men, played roles of
leadership. Synagogues functioned as community centres, schools, places of
worship and political lobbies. Leadership positions in the synagogue also
involved governance of the community. For instance, in Jerusalem, the council
of elders exercised legal and judicial functions for the Jewish community.
They were interpreters of the law and adjudicated civil disputes between
members of the community. Synagogue leaders also collected taxes and made
provisions for their distribution. Women are depicted as having been rulers of
synagogues as priests and elders. In places where Christian communities
adopted the Jewish model of governance by elders, women continued to be
chosen for this office (Torjesen, 1993:19).

The axis of synagogue worship was the reading of the Torah. During
synagogue worship, any member could read from the scrolls of the law and
teach the assembly by interpreting the passages read. Priscilla, a well-educated
woman had been a member of the synagogue in Rome. She was skilled in the
interpretation of the law, an acumen that provided the foundation for her leadership in the early Christian community. Priscilla was exercising her authority as an interpreter of the law when she went to Ephesus to instruct Appollos more fully in the Christian interpretations of the prophets (Acts 18:26; Malone, 2001:70-71). Educated Jewish women were members of a Jewish philosophical school in Alexandria. Both men and women would hold communal scholarship in which they studied, discussed and debated together. Priscilla could have belonged to this category (Torjesen, 1993:20).

So far there seems to be no doubt that women figured prominently in Jesus’ life and ministry, both during his lifetime and after his resurrection when the first communities were formed and his message began to spread. In the period between first century and second century, very little conflicts were generated between the social structures and the freedom women found in Christianity. This is because as Torjesen (1993:37) observes, the first two centuries saw Christianity as a religion of the private sphere, practised in the private space of the household, rather than the public space of the temple. Its concerns then, were viewed as the domestic life of the community rather than the political life of the city.

It is worth noting that women’s leadership in the early Christian communities was not universal. As noted above, most women who participated in the leadership role were wealthy women. Such women enjoyed some level of emancipation that led to the acquisition of economic rights, which meant that they were entitled to inheritance, property ownership, as well as having rights to divorce. They also became influential in the administration of provinces and could receive citizenship to other cities for the same services as men. Therefore, the emancipation of women that was taking place was largely
restricted to the wealthier classes. Otherwise, most women were considered inferior and remained under the dominance of their fathers and husbands (Evans, 1983:40-41).

Towards the end of the second century A.D., the concept of church ministry and leadership began to experience changes. The church became institutionalised with the offices of bishops, elders, overseers, presbyters and deacons. The other notable change was that Christianity began to evolve from a private to a public religion, particularly in the third century, as the church spread far and wide within the Roman Empire. Christians began to worship in public temples, known as basilicas. This period experienced frictions between the social conventions about women’s place and their actual long-standing roles as “house church” leaders, prophets and evangelists (Torjesen 1993:37). As Christianity entered the public sphere, male leaders began to demand the same subjugation of women in the churches as prevailed in the Greco-Roman society at large. The critics of women reproached women leaders for operating outside the domestic sphere and thus violating their nature and society’s vital moral codes. They argued that women could not remain virtuous while being active in public life (Torjesen, 1993:38-39; Weisner, 2000:30).

During this time, Christian communities had gradually begun to assimilate themselves into the Hellenistic culture. Jewish communities had done the same. In their increasing desire for credibility and legitimacy, the church leaders no longer resisted the tide of culture. They therefore gradually adopted the Greco-Roman conventions regarding women’s “proper” place and behaviour.

The ancient Roman gender code prescribed public roles (spheres) to men and the private sphere to women. The Greco-Roman systems also had different
virtues for men and women. Men were assigned the virtues of courage, justice and self-master. These were public virtues essential for the participation in the life of the community. On their part, women were assigned the virtues of chastity, silence and obedience, which could only be achieved within the household where she was secluded. Women were also restricted in public speech. The following statement could express the public versus private gender ideology:

A woman, then, should not be a busybody, meddling with matters outside her household concerns, but should seek a life of seclusion. She should not show herself off like a vagrant in the street before the eyes of other men, except when she was to go to the temple and even then, she should take pains to go not when the market is full, but when most people have gone home and so, like a freeborn lady worthy of the name, with everything quiet around her, make her oblations and offer her prayers to avert the evil and gain the good (cited, Torjesen, 1993:113).

Since the public versus the private gender ideology restricted women’s activities in public life, the new leaders in the church were not comfortable with women’s leadership. They were opposed to the participation of women in public teaching (Torjesen, 1993:160).

Torjesen (1993:156-157) asserts that the beginning of the 3rd century saw a gradual transformation in the leadership and organizational models of Christian churches. By then, Christianity was attracting members of the municipal ruling elites, who were trained for public life and experiences in city politics. Many Christian communities welcomed these aristocrats’ members and they moved quickly into leadership positions. These men were schooled in the institutions of public life and their notions of authority, order, organization and leadership came from the political life of the city. They thus brought into the churches new leadership models that had proved effective for governing large and diverse communities. These models influenced the clergy who shared the tasks of leadership. They began to model themselves after city councils.
Consequently, the concept of leadership began to shift from ministry to governance, a shift that brought about a division between the clergy and the laity. The early Christian basilicas began to be patterned after Rome’s great public basilicas which served as formal halls in which an emperor or governor received dignitaries or sat in judgment. With changes in Christian leadership as well as the role of basilicas, women’s leadership became more controversial.

Despite the foregoing sentiments concerning women’s leadership in early Christianity, there existed contradictions in the practice of public versus private ideology. This is because there were women who were public leaders and who played public roles where they actually held leadership roles. The society as a whole was faced with the dilemma of women holding public offices and a public versus private ideology that made public political life the exclusive domain of men. This paradox affected the Christian communities as well. Women who undertook leadership roles in their communities crossed the boundary into the male domain. In attending communal gatherings outside the household, they were encroaching in the male space.

When a woman spoke with public authority, or engaged in a debate, she was perceived to be exercising male prerogatives. It so happened that wherever a woman’s public roles were affirmed, her private virtues were also praised, so that although she held public roles, she excelled as a model of private virtues (Torjesen, 1993:143). This would be interpreted as away of the society wanting to maintain the values of gender polarity while in reality women are found playing roles that are perceived to be associated with maleness.
The theology prevailing in the church during this period laid the emphasis on marriage, with all its strictures about the headship of the husband and the obedience and submission of the wife. This was addressed as the normative Christian social relationship. The espousal of Eve in the pastoral letters as theological justification for the natural and necessary obedience of women led to the stigmatization of woman as the source of all evil. All these notions deprived women of public Christian activity. This theology had practical consequences for the seclusion and relegation of women to a kind of secondary class Christian membership (Malone, 2001:27-28). Such theology is mainly found in the pastoral letters, especially the Deutro-Pauline epistles, such as first and second Timothy and Hebrews. The teachings of such letters urge women to remain silent and be submissive to men and that they should have no teaching authority over men. They viewed women as sources of evil. At this point, Christianity found itself to be practically incapable of incorporating the prophetic dimension of the message of Jesus, which was liberating to women.

This period also experienced heretical sects such as Gnosticism and Montanism. These sects presented a challenge to the church in that they allowed women a large measure of participation in church leadership, such as, admitting them in all ministries, presiding over the Eucharist and exercising the functions of an ordained minister. Therefore, one way of showing distinction from these groups was for the church to diminish the role of women (Cunningham, 1976:9; Russel, 1993:61).

Early Christian writers amongst them Tertullian and Chrysostom contributed to the perpetuation of the public versus private ideology that placed women in subordinate status in the church. According to Tertullian, although by virtue of baptism the laity and the clergy possessed the right to baptize as well as the
rights to teach and offer the Eucharist, women were not to exercise these ministries. Tertullian labelled these functions as “manly” and therefore exclusive of women.

Women’s performance of public activities meant that they had abandoned the domestic sphere. Such women, according to Tertullian, were usurping the rights that did not belong to them because they were women. This was because legal rights could only belong to men. For Tertullian, femaleness was associated with submission, passivity and sexual exclusivity. This had to be shown by veiling of women that he emphasized. He saw in the practice of veiling a way for women to manifest their concern for shame while holding positions of authority (Witherington, 1988:185; Torjesen, 1993:166). On his part John Chrysostom, while supporting the public versus private ideology, emphasized marriage as the virtue for women. He wrote:

Our life is customarily organized into two spheres: public affairs and private matters... to woman is assigned the presidency of the household; to man, all the business of the state, the market place, the administration of justice, government, the military and all other enterprises .... A woman cannot express her opinion in a legislative assembly, but she can express it at home (cited, Torjesen, 1993:113).

When Tertullian and his theological colleagues barred women from teaching and baptizing, it was because their theology was influenced by the Greco-Roman social dogma, otherwise women held significant positions of leadership in the churches then (Malone, 2001:72-73).

2.5. Women in the Patristic Period - Third Century

The theology that was developed in the third century led to increased acknowledgement of the clergy. The clergy had to define their position and impose their authority on many fronts. On one hand, wealthy Christian benefactors, both male and female, were made to understand that their wealth and patronage gave them no power over the clergy. On the other hand all the
laiity were urged to learn to respect the clergy for the authority they had inherited at their ordination. These principles brought about a wide gap between the laity and the clergy.

As all the male clerical roles were solidified, the presence of women in the church presented a problem. The taint of blood pollution attached to menstruation and childbirth continued to haunt Christian teachers. This saw the forbidding of women’s participation in Eucharist after childbirth and when menstruating. It was thought that such activities excluded the Holy Spirit and rendered the person unworthy to approach. In addition to this, married women were presumed to be wholly taken up with household affairs (Malone, 2001:120-122).

From the second century, through the fourth century, women both in the West and the East occupied two ecclesial ministries of deaconess and widow with the deaconess being officially ordained. The service of the deaconess was directed to women in the community. A deaconess would instruct women catechumens and assist the bishop during their baptism. Deaconesses also took care of the sick and poor persons (Macgrath, 1972:46). However, by the fourth century, it was made clear that deaconesses would not baptize, teach in the church, approach the altar, or pronounce a blessing. In regard to baptism, The Apostolic constitution had this to say, “for if it were lawful to be baptized by a woman, our Lord and Teacher himself would have been baptized by Mary, his mother, whereas he was baptized by John” (cited, Malone, 2001:117).

Though still ordained, the role of the deaconesses was reduced to menial duties. For instance, she was to guard the doors and assist the elders in the administration of baptism. The ordination of deaconesses was ordered stopped entirely by the Council of Nicea in 325 AD. (Malone, 2001:125). This move could be partly explained by the growth of male clerical power and authority in
the church, and the rapid growth of the practice of child baptism in the West. The latter practice implied that the services of the deaconess would not be required at baptism of women as was the case before. This made deaconesses part of the laity. Witherington (1988:201), remarks that the command to stop ordaining women may have been aimed at preventing various women from being officially recognized, and in some cases, functioning in the capacity of deaconesses. This may have been a move to rid women of functions by deaconesses, such as baptism and teaching of new converts.

Bishop Epiphanius of Salamis, one of the great misogynists of the time explains the role of deaconesses as a non-ordained one in the following words:

...Let us invest ourselves with all the qualities of men and put to flight this feminine madness. These women repeat Eve’s weakness and take appearance for reality. Never anywhere has any woman acted as a priest for God, not even Eve...Never has a woman been appointed among bishops and priests. And it is true there is an order of deaconesses but, they are not permitted to act as priests, nor have anything to do with that office (cited, Malone, 2001:126).

This passage shows that by virtue of ordination, the deaconesses could have made claims about priesthood and their inclusion in church ministry at the same level with the male clergy.

In 390 A.D., the minimum age for admission to the order of deaconess was put as sixty years. Women aspiring to become deaconesses were instructed to dispose of their property. In the fourth and fifth centuries, a move was made to the effect that deaconesses were to live celibate lives. In the fifth century, the deaconesses constituted an ecclesial order and were consecrated. Some of them lived in organized communities that later developed into nunneries and convents (Tucker, 1992:147). Malone (2001:128), observes that discussion on the inclusion of women in the official ministry of the Roman Catholic Church has not advanced too much beyond that stage, though modern arguments may be rooted in a more sophisticated biblical and theological base.
Unlike the deaconesses, widows were not ordained, but were instituted as an order. The church seemed not to have been certain on the roles that widows would play in it. For a time, they were considered as part of the clergy, but were advised to make their ministry a totally spiritual and inactive one. On their part, many widows wished to be active in the church, out of their own gratitude, given that most of them depended on the charitable contributions of the church. They therefore felt the need to offer voluntary service. Some wished to preach and to teach but the church kept relegating them to the role of prayer. They were exhorted to fast, visit the sick, pray for them and even lay hands on them. But the church denounced their wishes, as in the words of Origen, "for it is improper for a woman to speak in the assembly no matter what she says, even if she says admirable things, that is of little consequence, since they come from the mouth of a woman" (cited, Malone, 2001:130). The Synod of Epaon legally ended the order of Widows in 517 A.D.

The theology prevailing in the church during this period was that promoted by the male clergy. The increasing incidence of celibacy for men made them the majority of theologians in the church, thus making theology exclusively male. It is no wonder that some of the male theologians could wonder why God had created women at all! (Malone, 2001:131-132). The absence of active women theologians meant that no system of checks and balances was provided on male chauvinism (Kress, 1966:129). Examples of writings by male theologians also referred to as the Church Fathers depict women as impediments to male chastity. Writings of Tertullian, Chrysostom, Clement and Augustine are good examples.

Tertullian, in a treatise entitled 'on the dress of women' assumes that all women bore Eve’s guilt. He said this of women:
You are the devil’s gateway; you are the unsealer of that tree, you are that first foresaker of the divine law, you are the one who persuaded him whom the devil was not brave enough to approach, you so lightly crushed the image of God the man Adam because of your punishment, that is, death even the son of God had to die (quoted in Clark, 1987:38).

In this passage, Tertullian gives a sexist interpretation of Genesis 3, which puts all the blame of the fall on Eve (Ruether, 1974:156). John Chrysostom, in a negative view on marriage and woman says:

Woman is a foe to friendship, an inescapable punishment, and a necessary evil. Among all wild beasts, there is not one that is harmful than woman... a woman is an evil, a rich woman is a whitened sepulture, better is a man’s wickedness than a woman’s goodness (quoted in Kress, 1966:132; Tucker, 1992:149).

On a similar tone, Clement of Alexandria was equally negative in his reflections on women. He said:

Nothing disgraceful is proper for man who is endowed with reason, much less for woman to whom it brings shame even to reflect of what nature she is... by no means are women to be allowed to uncover and exhibit any part of their person, lest both fall, the men by being excited to look, they by drawing on themselves the eyes of men (quoted in Tucker, 1992:149).

These sayings point to women as being equated with evil, temptation, and harm. Women only gained redemption through virginity. These views further explain why men were being encouraged to live ascetic lives, away from the lust of women.

Augustine’s understanding was that even as men and women are equal in the image and likeness of God, physically, man is superior to woman because he is more powerful (Kress, 1966:140). For him, woman’s subjugation is natural. This is because, as opposed to man, a woman finds herself caught up in a squeeze between her soul that mirrors God, and her body that does not. A woman’s work and only purpose are to help men in the work of procreation. Concerning marriage and sexuality, Augustine says: “The union of male and
female should be for procreation. A woman’s role and only purpose are to help man in the work of procreation otherwise, in all other matters a male friend is more efficient helper than a woman” (quoted in Clark & Richardson, 1977:69). Augustine recommended ascetic life as best in ensuring the growth and spiritual liberation of women (Ruether, 1974:158).

The opinions expressed by the Church Fathers on the status of women had a lasting impact on the church. These Fathers were revered not only in their day but also through the centuries that followed. They set a pattern for the history of the church, which, certainly continued to be a pattern in the patriarchal structures of the medieval church. It was common practice for theologians through the ages to quote Church Fathers as authorities to establish a basis of orthodoxy before giving their opinions. Their works have been quoted with approval even in the twentieth century (Tucker, 1992:148).

The foregoing information shows how women’s efforts to continue the egalitarian gospel tradition led eventually to a radical sexual asceticism. This choice allowed some women a place to organize their own religious lives, but it ignored all other women to marriage, which was viewed as a second choice. From this time onwards, the only women for whom there is evidence are the virgins, those who renounced marriage (Witherington, 1988:202; Malone, 2001:133).

This subsection shows us how women, who were once leaders in the ministry of Jesus, and in the early church, became marginalized as Christianity became a public religion. Those that exercised ordained ministry as exemplified by the deaconesses had to struggle through their service to the church. They faced limitations in their roles in the church until such a time that their ordination was phased out, and a restriction of sixty years of age imposed on those
aspiring to join the order. This was a period that experienced domination of male clericalism, hence the ensuing marginalization of women. This historical background sheds light on this study as we make an analysis of the limitation of women’s access to theological institutions, as well as the ongoing debate on the ordination of women in some churches in Kenya.

2.6. Women in Medieval Christianity: Fourth – Fifteenth centuries

The medieval period was characterized by monasticism. It is a period in which new religious orders were founded, and the numbers of males and females joining monasteries and convents increased greatly (Tucker, 1992:150).

When Christianity became the legitimate religion within the Roman Empire in the early fourth century – with the reign of Emperor Constantine – there were negative as well as positive effects. As Christianity became a universal religion and the threat of persecution ceased, laxity, corruption, power and wealth began to penetrate the lives of Christians. Peace brought leisure for study, prayer, and the deepening of the Christian commitment. One of the major results of this period was monasticism (Malone, 2001:133).

From the late third century onwards, women and men flocked to the desert in large numbers in an unprecedented retreat from the world. Both men and women lived as hermits in the Palestinian, Egyptian and Syrian deserts where they became part of community groups. This was an alternative form of life, offering freedom and entirely new social relationships out of the secular life. At the same time, a new Christian elite was growing with a new theology, which was to have enormous influence on the future of Christianity.

The enthusiasm and unanimous numbers of women ascetics created fear for the church, that is, fear of free and independent women. This fear led to the
development of the doctrine of virginity, with its emphasis on the shift from freedom to obedience and submission. It was said that in men, the virtue of virginity elevates nature, whereas in women it extinguishes nature. This implied that women were in need of double redemption. First, to be raised to the level of men, and second, to attain the transformation offered to the perfect. To all the writers of the time, especially the Church Fathers, the male sex was viewed as stronger, more rational and closer to the divine. Women were depicted as inherently weaker, more prone to heresy and always sinful. Consequently, virgins had to be secluded from the world. Silence, obedience, modesty and penance were recommended as the essential guardians of their virginal life. Fasting was especially recommended as a tamer of lust. These demands were viewed as God-given cure to the carnality of women (Malone, 2001:149-150).

Although both men and women lived ascetic lives, women were denied ordination to Holy orders. With the religious and political need for clerical celibacy gaining prominence and the ordination of monks as clerics, the public role of women was diminished. The clericalization of monastic life had several disadvantages for women. At the Council of Paris in 829 A.D., women were ordered not to touch sacred vessels. They were also forbidden to light candles or ring bells. The argument was that their hands would pollute these items. The abbesses were excluded completely from synods and assemblies even where the affairs of women were discussed. Finally all religious women were ordered to live in enclosed surroundings, with restrictions of movement and with no free mixing with monks (Malone, 2001:219-220).

During the medieval period, the church was equated with the clergy and the clergy were seen to constitute the church. This created a gap between the clergy and the laity. With the imposition of celibacy, all women, including nuns, were demonized and seen as enemies of the clergy. Only penitence and
exclusion from society were required from women, both for their own good and especially for the good of men’s souls. Monks began to condemn women as the greatest danger to their lives. They refused to work with women and resented bitterly any time they had to spend in ministry with women. The following statement by some monks could exemplify these sentiments,

We and our whole community of canons, recognizing that the wickedness of women is greater than all the other wickedness of the world, and there is no danger like that of women, and that the poison of asps and dragons is more curable and less dangerous to men than the familiarity of women, have unanimously decreed for the safety of our souls, no less than for that of our bodies and goods, that we will on no account receive any more sisters to the increase of our perdition, but will avoid them like poisonous animals (cited, Malone, 2002:54).

During the eleventh century, due to the prevailing emphasis on male clergy, and the attitude of the monks toward women, the numbers of convents decreased rapidly. Nuns lost the right to elect their own leaders. The intimacy of all female community was disrupted by the presence of male priests who came to celebrate mass and to listen to confessions. On their part, male monasteries continued to flourish with the advent of university education and the study of theology. The ideas of Aristotle concerning women began to infiltrate the theology and philosophy of the time. Aristotle’s writings provided the concepts and reasoning for the justification of the hierarchy of sexes, the need for the custody of women and the exclusion of women from all public arenas and activities. This influence is evident in the writings of theologians of the time, for example, Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventura.

Thomas Aquinas, the greatest medieval theologian was influenced by the writings of Aristotle and Augustine. He wrote on a broad range of topics including issues relating to women and gender differences. In his view, women are inferior, dependent and are controlled by their sexual appetites, and thus are unfit for any important role in the church or society. Aquinas also maintained that women’s lives and concerns are trivial and are wholly
dependent on men, while men need women only for procreation. Further, Thomas uses the Genesis account 2:24-25 to justify male supremacy. He argues that Adam, being made first, mirrors God’s role as Lord of the universe, and that, just as God rules over all creation, so Adam heads the whole human race, including Eve. He uses women’s weakness and subjection as reasons for their exclusion from priesthood (cited Clark & Richardson, 1977:81).

The problem for Thomas is not merely that the church has forbidden the ordination of women. He rather argues that, “Ordination does not “take” if it is performed to a woman. Even if she were to undergo an ordination ceremony, it would be to no avail. Her subjection to the male prevents her from receiving the holy orders, for she lacks the eminence of degree necessary for ordination”.

Though conceding that some women exhibit spiritual gifts to a greater degree than men, Thomas maintains that these endowments do not make them fit candidates for clerical office, which entails care of minds and souls (cited Clark & Richardson, 1996:71).

To show that women by their sex are inferior and utterly incapable of fulfilling important roles either in society or in the church, Thomas wrote:

The woman is subject to the man on account of the weakness of her nature, both of mind and of body... Man is the beginning of woman and her end just as God is the beginning and end of every creature ...woman is in subjection according to the law of nature but a slave is not...children ought to love their father more than their mother (cited, Tucker, 1992:156).

Clark & Richardson (1996:82) and Tucker (1992:157) observe that Thomas’ views have heavily influenced the Roman Catholic’s exclusion of women from priesthood and that, his writings are taken with great seriousness by many contemporary Catholic intellectuals and writers.
Bonaventura, in sharing the sentiments of Thomas Aquinas wrote:

Woman is an embarrassment to man, a beast in his quarters a continual worry, a never ending trouble, a daily annoyance, the destruction of the household, a hindrance to solitude, the undoing of the virtuous man, an oppressive burden, a man’s property and possession (cited, Tucker, 1992:156).

Although medieval women could be holy nuns, wives, or mothers, they continued to be second-class citizens in both the East and the West. Women were denied access to ordination and leadership in the church. Probably the majority of medieval Christian women were illiterate and so their schooling in faith came from attending the liturgy, listening to the reading of the Gospels and Chronicles about lives of saints (Carmody & Carmody, 1989:56).

Two Medieval women stand out for their positive attitude toward creation, suggesting that many women did not accept the pessimism passed down by Tertullian and Augustine. The two women are, Hildegarde of Bingen and Mechtild of Magdeburg. The two, in their writings argued that everything that existed was to be seen as a gift and presence of God. Therefore, the earth and the human body were not things to be ashamed of. This is because God had made the entities, and even after the Fall they continued to be filled with God’s blessing. Both women also advanced the concept of the motherhood of God. They saw God not only as a fatherly maker and lawgiver but also as the mother who gives birth to all things and nurses them, taking care and keeping watch like a loving parent. Such a view of God stimulated the women to think of creation as open to their own maternal love and care (Carmody & Carmody, 1989:56-57; Clifford, 2001:205-206; Malone, 2002:110-112, 163-165).

The foregoing information shows that women in the convents faced certain limitations. For instance, they were not allowed to leave the convent and thus share what they had learned with other women in the world, an opportunity that was accorded to men (Cunningham, 1976:10). However, as noted above
women did not just remain silent but some voiced their concerns pertaining to their status in the church and the society in general. Probably this explains why women played significant roles during the Protestant Reformation as shown in the following section.

The information given above presents a case of discrimination against women, in that both women and men lived ascetic lives, but only men were ordained to holy orders. This gives a pointer to androcentric practices in which men have privileges of ordination over women yet both chose to live ascetic lives. The growth and expansion of convents seemed to be a threat to the church leading to the minimization of the independence and freedom of the nuns. In addition, nuns were denied opportunities to education. The attitude of the church towards women in that period throws some light to the church in the contemporary society. Women's limitation to access theological education could be aimed at limiting them from ordination and church leadership. This study makes an analysis of factors (in contemporary times) behind such limitation, and interrogates the rationale for training men and women in theological institutions, but ordaining men only.

2.7. Women in the Reformation Period (Sixteenth–Eighteenth centuries)

The age of Reformation and Counter-Reformation which encompassed the sixteenth and most of the seventeenth centuries was a time of monumental change in institutional religion. Religious leaders called for a reformation of existing practices in Christianity. These religious reformers were excommunicated from the church in Rome. By the second half of the seventeenth century, Catholic responses to the challenges were also underway. They resulted in such institutional outcomes as the establishment of new religious orders, and in a reaffirmation of the church’s basic tenets of faith.
The leaders of these great movements, namely, Protestant and Catholic alike were men almost without exception (Sherrin, 1989:1).

In the sixteenth century, there was a wide consensus that the monastic system, which had formed a basic structural element of medieval society, had become corrupt. This corruption was brought about by the wealth that the monasteries enjoyed leading to elegant lives of the Abbots. Similarly, bishops and monks enjoined in wealth that also made them powerful. Such lives drew sharp criticism from reformers who wished to have monasteries disbanded (Torjesen, 1993:233; Ruether, 1996:144).

Out of the widespread disillusionment with monastic life, there evolved a new theology of sexuality. Luther began to formulate this new theology by interpreting the book of Genesis 1:27 which teaches that both male and female bodies are equal and good for they were created in the image of God. Luther argued that if the body is good, then sexuality is good. He further asserted that since marriage was an institution that had been ordained by God, the marriage of a priest and his wife could not be annulled. Luther’s teaching provided theological interpretation for the sexuality of men and women within marriage. He saw marriage as a new form of monastic life. He explained this by indicating that giving birth was a noble deed and a service to God. He further argued that parents were clergy themselves for they became like apostles and bishops to their children, an argument that was meant to justify marriage for priests. These new ideas of sexuality and marriage spread rapidly throughout Europe (Torjesen, 1993: 236-237).

The reformers’ teachings on sexuality were both radical and liberating for women. This is because the evil of their sexuality perceived as dangerous from the standpoint of clerical celibacy and male monasticism was transformed into
a God-ordained good. In the period of reformation then, women's nature was redeemed by a re-evaluation of sexuality and marriage. Marriage and motherhood, instead of virginity was a woman's highest calling and the only way for women to fulfil their God-given function (Torjesen, 1993:238; Weisner, 1996:125)

2.7.1 Teachings of Luther and Calvin on Women.
The Protestant reformers did not break away sharply from tradition in their ideals about women. Church leaders and theologians instructed women to be chaste, silent, and obedient. For both Luther and Calvin, women were created by God and could be saved through faith. Spiritually, women and men were equal, but in every other respect women were to be subordinate to men. They further contended that women's subjection was inherent in their very being and was present from creation. In this, the reformers seemed to agree with patristic tradition and with their scholastic and humanistic predecessors (Sherrin, 1989:12). Luther while commenting on Genesis 2:17 says:

> Although Eve was a most extraordinary creature - similar to Adam, so far as the image of God is concerned, that is, in justice, wisdom and happiness - she was nevertheless a woman. For the sun is more excellent than the moon, so the woman, although she was a most beautiful work of God, nevertheless was not the equal of the male in glory and prestige (cited, Torjesen, 1993:240).

Luther's interpretation of the fall of humanity from God's grace is such that the woman bears the blunt of the curse whereas man's share is reduced to the burden of leadership over the woman (Tavard, 1973:174). On his part, Calvin valued his close associations with women especially those who wielded political power. For him, women were vital to the Protestant cause as its supporters, but that did not mean they are fitted for leadership in the church. Calvin further argues that woman was created to complete man. In emphasizing this he says: "...She had been given to him only to sleep with him.
and not to be the inseparable companion of his life. Her purpose is to help him live more comfortably” (cited, Tavard, 1973:175).

It therefore appears that these reformers were not fully convinced that women are equal to men as portrayed in the Epistle of 1 Peter, of “priesthood of all believers”. Whether women could hold clerical office was not seriously considered. As for the role of women in public ministry, Luther opened up the possibility for this by suggesting that if no men were available, it might be necessary for the women to preach. This meant women’s preaching was viewed as a last resort (Tucker, 1992:175). However, these reformers’ sentiments did not bar women from being active in the reform movement as elaborated below.

2.7.2. The Effect of the Reformation on Women

Given that the leaders of the Reformation process were men, that in itself raises some questions. Did Reformation open or close doors for women in ministry? What effect did the Reformation have on the status of women in church and society? Carmody & Carmody (1989:75) and Bainton (1971:13), have argued that women were liberated as well as enslaved during the age of Reformation and Counter Reformation as shown below.

The Protestant tradition advanced a new understanding of marriage and the church. The Protestants did not see why clergy should be bound to practise celibacy and therefore, priests were allowed to marry. The new Protestant understanding of the church was one of “priesthood of all believers” (1 Peter, 2:5,9). With this understanding, all Christians, men and women, were equal, co-brothers, co-heirs, and co-priests, through faith in Christ and through baptism. All received the same gifts of the Holy Spirit 1 Corinthians, 12:13; Colossians, 3:9-11). This meant an establishment of a theological basis for
equality of responsibility between the clergy and the laity, male and female. Further, the Protestant doctrines of Christian vocation and the priesthood of all believers, with a new view of marriage tended to change the image and role of women. The change seemed to be in the direction of greater personal freedom and responsibility. Women played a significant role in shaping their own religious identity and destiny (Douglass, 1974:296; Sherrin, 1989:2).

The Protestant Reformation brought a large portion of the church back to its New Testament beginnings. The reformers insisted that scripture be the norm of Christian life. For women, this was a mixed blessing. On the one hand, reading the scriptures afresh facilitated a critique of the institutions that had been established in the church to interfere with the freedom of conscience, hence subjugate women and the laity to the control of a male clerical elite. On the other hand, both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament assumed much from the patriarchal culture in their day and so presented female nature as less than the image of God, that is, when compared with the male. The reformers upgraded the status of marriage in contrast to the monastic life. Though directed to both sexes, the exhortation to marry was more for women for whom marriage and motherhood were viewed as a vocation as well as a living arrangement (Carmody & Carmody, 1989:74 ; Sherrin, 1989:13).

Torjesen (1993:238) and Ruether (1996:133) have argued that although the reformers affirmed the spiritual value of marriage and goodness of woman as sexual partner, they did so without modifying the hierarchical structure of the institution of patriarchal marriage. Marriage was discussed from the male point of view, as an institution that benefited man greatly through the aid and assistance of a woman. The service that a woman provided for her husband was expanded from that of sexual partnership to include emotional companionship in which a man could find comfort and solace. This concept
was in line with the interpretation of Genesis 2:18, in which the role of woman as a man’s helper in a marriage relationship, assigned her a subordinate role.

Women in the convents, and lay sisters were the first to encounter the Protestant revolution. Protestant reformers encouraged nuns and sisters to leave their houses and to marry. Some convents accepted the Protestant message and willingly gave up their houses and land to city and territorial authorities. The nuns renounced their vows and those that found husbands were married while the others returned to their families or found ways to support themselves on their own. While former priests and monks became pastors in their new Protestant churches, the former nuns had no place in the new church structure (Weisner, 1989:9).

Clark & Richardson (1996:146), and Douglass (1974:306), make an observation that in the shift from nun to wife, many women lost status. Those who got married relinquished roles as leaders of spiritual life, as well as lost the experience of sisterhood found in the monastic communities. Their roles now revolved around the household. Women were not ordained to ministry for centuries, neither were they elected as lay leaders to the official boards that governed the churches. According to Machaffie (1986:65), this denial was based on the belief that the Bible commands the subordination of women to men. Women were only allowed to preach as temporal substitutes when men were not available.

The Reformation promoted a link between women, the family, and the religious changing process. It had the model of domesticity. With this concept, the role of housewife and mother, with the clergyman’s wife as a model, became an all-important role for women in the Protestant churches (Sherrin,
1989:3). There appears to have been an extension of the domestic aspect of women’s role in society at large, as caregivers in the household and beyond. Further, the Reformation transformed marriage and education in a manner that brought visible changes in the status of women. In marriage law, all marriages were to be publicly recognized and parental consent was emphasized. Concerning education, the law required all Christians be capable of reading the Bible and other religious literature. A new form of education was needed to prepare women and laity for their new roles (Douglas, 1974:303-304). Luther called upon the civil authorities in Germany to establish schools for young girls and boys. Similarly, in Geneva, both boys and girls were sent to school to learn reading, arithmetic and catechism. Women benefited a great deal by being literate. For instance, those who could read German read Luther’s work such as his treatises and manuals on marriage as well as the translation of scriptures into vernaculars and their dissemination through printing stimulated literacy and the desire to read. Even the comparatively uneducated woman had something to say to judges in heresy trials (Sherrin, 1989:12; Bainton, 1971:14).

2.7.3 The Role of Women in the Reformation

Women’s role in the Reformation varied mainly as a result of various factors. These were; a woman’s status as a nun or a laywoman, her marital status, her social and economic class, and her occupation (Weisner, 1989:8, 25). Women were not simply recipients of the reformation with the ideas and the changes it brought, but they indeed responded to them actively. Taking Luther’s idea, women as well as uneducated men began to preach and to challenge religious authorities. Women’s public witnessing was more in form of prophesying and preaching. They were also involved in publishing religious works. Some wrote hymns, religious poetry, and polemics. They included Katherine Von Bora
Many married women also responded to the Protestant call to make the home the ‘seminary’. Here, they carried out domestic missionary activity that is, praying and reciting the catechism with their children and servants. This role of women as domestic missionaries extended to their neighbours and friends (Weisner, 1989:18,25). The replacement of celibate priests with married pastors caused a new concept of pastors’ wives and families. During this period, the pastors’ wives opened their homes to students and refugees, providing them with food, shelter, and medical care. They also assisted in running city hospitals, orphanages and infirmaries (Weisner, 1989:20).

Further, the period of reform produced some strong women bent both on ‘cleansing the church and easing the birth pangs’ of the new era that was dawning. Some made public criticisms on the conduct of the church; some were martyred; some renounced religious vows; while others opened their homes for those fleeing religious persecution. Examples of such women are shown below.

Catherine of Sienna is famous for her frank criticism of the corruption of the Pope and other clergy. She said, “...they are stinking the world with their luxurious living the world can tolerate no more. Where is the generosity and care of souls, the distribution of alms to the poor?” (cited, Carmody & Carmody 1989:74). Here, Catherine is seen joining the other reformers in pointing out the ills of the church that needed to be reformed.
Examples of other women who contributed to the reform movement in different countries are:

**Germany:** Katherine von Bora, Widbrandis Rosenblatt, Katherine Zell, Argula von Grumbach, Ursula of Munsterberg

**Italy:** Giulia Gonzaga, Caterina Cibo, Isabella Bresegna.

**France:** Marguerite of Navarre, Jeanne D’Albert, Charlotte de Bourbon.

**England:** Catherine of Aragon; Ann Boleyn; Mary I. (Bainton, 1971:165; 1973:56).

Katherine Von Bora was a former nun who married Martin Luther, the reformer. She was eager to help Luther experience the goodness of marriage of which he was writing. She managed an enormous household that included the Luther family with their children, visiting relatives, theological students, and religious refugees (Weisner, 1974:306).

Wibrandis Rosenblatt was a widow of a humanist Ludwig Keller and was remarried three times after the deaths of each successive husband. She had children in all the unions. She shared the life in exile with her last husband, Bucer, and was left to care for a large family after his death. Wilbrandis shared the anxieties of the early years when the Reformation had not been established officially and when persecution, exile and death for the new faith were close at hand. She was in exile in England with Bucer (Bainton, 1971:79-95; Weisner, 1974:306).

Katherine Zell was a wife of a Strasbourg reformer who was a priest. She began her public career after her marriage when the bishop ex-communicated her husband for marrying. She published a strong defense of her husband and attacked the old-age practice of celibacy. She accused the bishop of being
concerned with ‘his own pocket’ since he could no longer tax married priests.

Turning to the Bible for support of her writing she wrote:

> You remind me that the Apostle Paul told women to be silent in church. I would remind you of the word of this same Apostle that in Christ there is no longer male or female and of the prophecy of Joel: ‘I will pour forth my spirit upon all flesh and your sons and your daughters will prophesy’. I do not pretend to be John the Baptist rebuking the Pharisees. I do not claim to be Nathan upbraiding David. I aspire only to be Balaam’s ass, castigating his master (cited, Bainton, 1971:55).

Katherine followed this with a letter of protest to the bishop and a tract about which the bishop protested to the council. She further made a public address at her husband’s death arousing criticism for her action. In reply to her critics, she said: “I am not usurping the office of preacher or apostle. I am like the dear Mary Magdalene, who with no thought of being an apostle came to tell the disciples that she had encountered the risen Lord’, (cited, Bainton, 1971:55). Katherine’s outspokenness caused her to be called: ‘a disturber of the peace of the church’ by a pastor whose sermon she had criticized (Bainton, 1971:55-67; Weisner, 1974:306). Clark & Richardson (1996:69) assert that in addition to her defense of clerical marriage, Katherine wrote a preface and published a collection of hymns to enhance congregational participation in the new churches. She also devoted herself to caring for the sick and the imprisoned in Strasburg as well as the multitudes of refugees who flocked to the city to escape religious warfare.

Argula Von Grumbach was a Bavarian noble woman. She wrote to the University of Inglostadt, protesting the dismissal of a young faculty member because of his Lutheran sympathies. She defended her action by saying that she was driven to speak out because no man was willing to do so. She wrote, “I send you not a woman’s rantings but the word of God. I write as a member of the church of Christ against which the gates of hell shall not prevail, as they will against the Church of Rome”. She was imprisoned twice for her support of Luther and particularly arousing the hostility of the church authorities by
circulating non-Catholic books, by conducting reformed worship services in her home and conducting funerals without authorization. She exhibited a strong sense of herself as a woman in her writings (Machaffie, 1986:69). These women were courageous. Some of them were martyred such as, Joan Waste in England, Elizabeth Dirks and Ann Eschew in Holland for refusing to denounce their faith (Bainton, 1971:165).

Despite their lack of public office in the church, these, and many other spirited and courageous women did have theological justification in their involvement in the protestant doctrine of the “priesthood of all believers”. This understanding of the nature of the Christian community gave a powerful impetus to the teaching of the laity so that they could carry out their responsibilities.

The foregoing information gives the impression that the Protestant Reformation recognized women and their role in the church in a commendable way compared to the preceding periods, particularly the medieval one. Though to some extent, the reformers seemed to promote the domesticating role of women, it was evident that some women – as shown above - went beyond the domestic sphere to the public sphere where they exhibited their capabilities in leadership in the reformation process. While the domesticating role of women could be interpreted as noble, a combination of it with public role was desirable as exemplified by the women reformers mentioned above.

The involvement of women in the reformation process seemed to give hope to women’s participation in the ministry of the church. The Protestant tradition, which came to being with the reformation, seemingly maintains a relative involvement of women in ministry. Our study picks on from the Protestant
The ethic of ‘priesthood of all believers’ in making an analysis of women’s involvement in theological education, and subsequently in church ministry.

The picture created so far is that of Protestantism in Europe, the continent from which most of the missionaries to Africa came in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The task of the next section is to analyze the role of women in the missionary era both as missionaries, from Europe and America, and as converts in Kenya. The latter information will give us the background of the status of women in the church in Kenya with specific reference to the Protestant churches.

2.8. The Status of Women During the Advent of Missionaries in Kenya.
This section explores the status and role of women both as Christian missionaries and converts. The section is divided into three subsections with the first subsection outlining the challenges women missionaries from Europe and America faced. The second subsection examines the influence of missionary work on the social and religious lives of African women. The last subsection explores the role of missionaries in the promotion of female education in Kenya. The entire section acts as a background to the contemporary status of women in church ministry in Kenya.

2.8.1. Women Missionaries From Europe and America
In the beginning of the missionary era, in the nineteenth century, only men were sent out as missionaries to foreign lands. If accompanied by their wives, the ladies were expected to take care of the responsibilities at home and the children. Sometimes the missionary wives would assist mission work by visiting women at their homes and running small mission schools, but they were not regarded as missionaries, particularly by their mother churches. A missionary wife was not given any official status by the mission boards and
societies. She had no vote in the running of everyday affairs of the mission station (Tucker, 1992:178; Pui-Lan, 1996:250). Similarly, at first, there was some hesitation about sending single women to the mission field for fear that they could not take care of themselves in foreign lands without the protection of their families.

The denial of representation of women in missionary boards, and their recognition as missionaries by the missionary boards led to the formation of women's missionary boards in the 1860s. Women began to establish societies, both denominational and non-denominational, with the aim of supporting women as missionaries. The first to be formed was the interdenominational Women's Union Missionary Society, followed by a board formed by congregational women. By 1900, there were over forty such bodies in the United States. Some of the boards were totally independent, with complete control over money and policy. Others were independent but worked in close cooperation with the men, while others were subsidiaries of the original male boards. These boards made women a major force in world missions. Throughout the history of the women's mission boards, some men continued to oppose them fearing that such boards represented the movement for women's rights and suffrage in disguise (Machaffie, 1986:105).

The cultural and theological attitude of the women's missionary movement was characterized by its motto "women's work for women". They emphasized that it took women to reach other women and their children with the gospel. Their motto gained them significant financial support from ordinary churchwomen who felt the desire to have women missionaries reach women outside Europe and America. Consequently, the number of single women sent out as missionaries continued to increase in the latter half of the nineteenth century (Tucker, 1992:180; Pui-Lan, 1996:252; Robert, 2002:5-6).
Machaffie (1986:105) observes that the women's boards elevated the status of women in the mission field. Unlike before, women won full 'missionary' status for the missionary wives as well as an equal vote in everyday affairs of the mission. They also made mission work oversees an option for large numbers of single women. By the early part of the twentieth century, women represented two thirds of the churches' mission force. These women taught, managed schools, published literature, spearheaded evangelization campaigns, and engaged in preaching. They found themselves involved in activities that were not open to them in the American churches. Machaffie gives examples of such activities as follows, Murilla Inglass carried on her husband's work in China after his death. This included, training men in theology, biblical studies, and preaching. Similarly, Isabella Nassau, in a West African mission, taught young men theology and church history as she prepared them for church ministry. Her home was referred to as a 'theological seminary'.

Further, as noted by Tucker (1992:181) and Robert (2002:6-7), missions provided an opportunity for women with professional medical training to use their skills. The women's boards consciously recruited female doctors to care for the health needs of women, who in most cases, could only be treated by other women. Their services often extended beyond treatment to the teaching of medicine. Machaffie (1986:106), remarks that in their religious and medical activities, women not only acquired new roles but also experienced feelings of worth and self-confidence.

Pui-Lan (1996:253-254) remarks that although sent and supported by the women boards, in some cases, the male missionaries in charge of particular missions supervised female missionaries. In some denominations, missionary women could not perform leadership roles similar to those of men.
Consequently, tension existed in some missions with missionary women not content with their subordinate position. They demanded more control of their own work. They also criticized male missionaries for overlooking the importance of the distinct component of “women’s work” in Christian mission. For instance, missionary women harboured ambivalent feelings in seeing their male African students being ordained and preaching from the pulpit, and exercising ecclesiastical duties that they, as women were barred from performing. Mission work was thus divided along gender lines.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, denominational boards began to accept single women as missionaries. This led to the merging of women’s societies with the missionary boards. Consequently, the initial opposition to women’s serving alongside men in mission faded. Virtually, all mission boards began to accept single women as candidates. Women could now serve in missions with full support of the mission boards that also allowed them to preach and teach (Tucker, 1992:180-181).

Robert (2002:21-22), makes an observation that, despite the achievements made by women in the mission, both Catholic and Protestant women missionaries experienced similar challenges in the field. This is because they had to prove themselves missionaries in their own right. While Protestant wives were labelled “assistant missionaries” to their husbands, Catholic sisters were equally considered “auxiliaries” to the missionary priests. In both church traditions, the ideology of “women’s work for women” was the very rationale that justified women’s involvement in foreign missions. The Roman Catholic Church to date continues to lay emphasis on home and family as women’s central duty, while some Protestant churches limit women’s participation in church ministry by emphasizing on domesticating roles for them.
The methods that women adopted to ensure their participation in mission work are commendable. This is because, after realizing that the male-dominated missionary boards did not recognize their position as missionaries, they resulted to the formation of their own boards. These boards gained support from both women and men and therefore were able to field their own women missionaries. It was only after the male boards realized how efficient and successful the women boards were, that they agreed to work together, hence they promoted women missionaries. However, as noted above, women’s efforts did not go without opposition and criticisms from men in the church. This seeming fear for women’s organized efforts continues to feature in the church in the contemporary setting. For instance, women often face stiff opposition from some congregations when they agitate for their inclusion in church leadership.

2.8.2. The arrival of Missionaries in Kenya and their Influence on the Social life of Women

The arrival of missionaries in Africa in the last quarter of the nineteenth century consisted of both men and women. As already noted, some of the women were wives of missionaries while others were single women. Married women missionaries initially tended to concentrate on home-based roles such as managing the missionary houses and gardening in addition to being team workers with their husbands. With time some of them joined the single women in their roles as teachers, evangelists and medical practitioners (Kulp, 1987:4-5).

In Kenya, as with the rest of East Africa, Christian missionaries preceded the establishment of European colonial rule from about 1895. Initially, the missionaries confined themselves to the East African Coast until after 1900 with the completion of the Kenya-Uganda Railway. In 1910, the Coast,
Central and Western regions had been occupied by missionaries of various Christian leanings. Whenever they settled, the missionaries established mission stations (Bogonko, 1992:18-19).

European colonial educators and missionaries in Africa were not accustomed to women’s political and economic leadership in their countries. Therefore, they overlooked women leaders in traditional institutions in Africa. Prior to the colonial era, property in most African communities was allocated at clan level. For instance, land could not be transferred without the approval of clan elders who were almost always men. Women’s access to property was through male relatives such as fathers, husbands, sons, and brothers. Once married, a woman was absorbed into her husband’s clan and she worked on the clan land. Women were responsible for most aspects of production. Although their rights were limited, social structures protected them against exclusion from land. They were thus guaranteed land use rights (Human Rights Watch, 2002:9).

After the British colonized Kenya in the late 1890s, communal, clan-based property eroded as colonial authorities introduced the titling system. The land titling system recognized men’s right to allocation of land for agricultural use. The titles were in men’s names. Men could now sell land without clan approval. Women’s right to use land did not receive legal recognition. Similarly, when the Europeans encouraged cash crops, women’s traditional subsistence gardens or gathering grounds were shoved to the margins. Consequently, when the colonial government and the missions offered business loans, women were often bypassed (Adeney, 2002:212; Human Rights Watch, 2002:9).

Missionary approach to religious matters affected the whole indigenous religious process and social setup. Women were most affected by this
disruption. These changes introduced a church that was ministerially and structurally male-dominated. The missionaries failed to recognize the significant roles played by women in African religious tradition, where women were found in all categories of religious leadership roles such as, being mediums, seers, ritual elders, rainmakers, and priests as shown below (Nasimiyu, 1989:61; Akiiki, 1992:35).

Women as Mediums
Women mediums were attached to medicine men or women, and diviners. They were trained by priests and, or diviners. They would learn how to communicate with the living dead and spirits. They would also tell the cause, nature, and treatment of disease, or any other misfortune (Mbiti, 1975:156; Akiiki, 1994:37). Mbiti (1969:170-175), observes that women mediums are found in most African societies mainly in Western Africa, such as, among the Yoruba of Nigeria, Asante and Ewe of Ghana, the Fon of Dahomey as well as the Baganda of Uganda. In Kenya, mediums would be found among the Akamba. Okunola (2001:29), observes that kings pay due respect and regard for women mediums, and that women could be mediums for gods.

Women as Seers
Women seers were said to have supernatural power by means of which they would “see” certain things not easily seen by other people. Some of them would receive revelations through visions and dreams. They would advise warriors when to go to war, or when to have cattle raids. Women seers could be found among the Nuer of Sudan, and the Meru of Kenya. Certain women are said to have predicted the coming of Europeans, such as Mekatilili (Mbiti, 1975:157).
Women as Ritual Elders

Women ritual elders took charge of the performing of rituals in the community. These women required specialized training. They were well-versed in the procedures, prayers, words, actions and times of the rituals they conducted. They were found at the family and village levels. They would lead their families and communities in making offerings, libations, and prayers. They took charge of communal rites, ceremonies, weddings, settlement of disputes, cleansing rituals, and the upkeep of shrines, sacred objects and sacred places. Mbiti (1969:170), refers to the duties performed by ritual elders as ‘priestly’ even though the persons are not priests. Mbiti asserts that ritual elders existed in every African community, both male and female.

Women as Rainmakers

Women rainmakers were consulted to lead the community in prayer for rain in times of drought. They would instruct the people to perform various rituals while they prepared for worship. Most of the rainmakers were deeply religious people who spent a lot of their time praying God to give rain to the people. Their duty was to ask for rain from God and also to stop the rain when too much came in a short time in a manner to cause floods, or when it was not particularly welcome at a given moment (Mbiti, 1975:158; Musopole, 1991:143). Mbiti (1969:179-181), gives examples of African societies that had rainmakers as, the Zulu of Southern Africa, the Koma of Ethiopia, the Katab of Nigeria, and the Akamba and Luo of Kenya.

Women as Priests

Women priests had a duty of looking after shrines and sacred gloves, and other religious places. They also had to pray, lead in public worship as well as receive presents on behalf of God and other spiritual beings and intercede with God and other divinities on behalf of the people. They were well-versed in
religious knowledge and religious practices of their people. Traditional priests are currently found among the Baganda and Basoga of Uganda, the Yoruba and Igbo of Nigeria, the Akan of Ghana and some other parts of West Africa where people have shrines and cults associated with major divinities. (Mbiti, 1975:160; Akiiki, 1992:38; Iwachukwu, 1997:43). Mbiti (1969:189) asserts that women priests are expected to be of respectable character, that is, be trustworthy, devout, friendly, kind and obedient to the traditions of the office, god, and the divinities that they serve.

The misconception that missionaries had about women’s role in religion of the indigenous communities in Africa such as those cited above, led them to refer to such women as demons. Such women were called to repent and to denounce their vocations in order to become Christians. Thus, African women who converted to Christianity lost their religious and spiritual services because Western Christianity barred women from priesthood and public teaching (Musopole, 1991:144; Wamue, 1999:60).

The African Christian women inherited the biases of Western Christian culture that was against women. They adopted the roles prescribed to them by the church, those of being nurturers, servers and helpers. Women could take care of priests and bishops. They would also help the white women missionaries in housekeeping, cooking, laundering and gardening. These domesticating roles were expanded into the church as cleaning and other service care such as decorating the church, cooking and ushering, that women keep performing to date (Wamahiu, 1988:210; Nasimiyu, 1989:62; Okemwa, 1993:100; James, 1993:108).

The resulting experiences with peripheral roles on the part of African Christian women and to some extent men became an important stimulus to the

2.8.3. Missionaries and Female Education

Missionaries attempted to raise the status of women through education. The education they offered however, single-handedly, and later in conjunction with the colonial government did not go beyond preparing women for the domestic life, nor did it differ significantly from pre-colonial education for women. In pre-colonial period, boys and girls were socialized and instructed differently. Boys were prepared for future roles in the public sphere while girls were trained for their future roles as wives and mothers. The main differences between missionary education and traditional education was the fact that missionary education was taught by foreigners with foreign tools of instruction, including the technology of writing and in a classroom environment whereas traditional education was contextual and thus relevant to a given community. It was taught informally and through apprenticeship (Musisi, 1992:172).

Missions were principally concerned with spreading the gospel and winning Africans for Christ. The missionaries realized that there was need to create a literate African community who could read the Bible, teach other members of the community, and act as interpreters for the missionaries in their endeavour to preach the gospel. Additionally, there was need to develop African tutors
and therefore, the more need for the establishment of formal schools. Otherwise education was never a priority in mission schools until the Africans demanded it (Nthamburi, 1982:98; Bogonko, 1992:20).

In Kenya, mission schools date as early as 1880’s. For instance, the school within the freed slave settlement at Freretown had 300 pupils by 1884 (Sifuna, 1990:114). By the turn of the century, more schools were established with competition between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants. This competition was caused by the desire of the Africans to receive education. The missionaries used this desire by Africans to induce them to their Christian way of life. For instance, to ensure that pupils left their traditional way of life, the missionaries established boarding schools to remove children from their ‘heathen’ backgrounds. It was also a way of shielding the pupils from hostility of those opposed to Western education (Sifuna, 1990:116).

In the beginning, female education was neglected since girls were never going to be evangelists or tutors. Girls were only prepared to be good wives to the male elites particularly the evangelists. They therefore were taught how to read and write besides religious doctrines in preparation for baptism (Okemwa, 1993:80).

The education provided by the missionaries included catechism, simple reading and writing, music and elementary arithmetic. This education had distinct curricula for males and females. While all were taught catechism as a condition for baptism, the curricula for boys included: commerce, dispensing medicine, carpentry, mechanics and clerical work in addition to reading and writing. This kind of education was geared towards developing men who could assist in missionary activities. The curricula of girls included: home management, nursing, nutrition and childcare. Women were also taught and
encouraged to take care of the sick (Nthamburi, 1982:99; Wamue, 1999:60). This kind of education shows that the missionaries trained women to remain where they had always been, domestic workers.

The missionaries emphasized boarding schools for girls. For instance, the Church of Scotland Mission (CSM) started the first girls’ boarding school at Thogoto in 1907, at Tumutumu in 1908, and at Chogoria in 1915. This was meant to take them away from home – from the ‘heathen’ environment – and away from the boys’ schools. This move had a negative impact on girls. Some indigenous parents felt that boarding schools would alienate their daughters from their culture and society. These sentiments were in line with the indigenous cultural belief that girls needed to always be under the control of their parents. In such cases, girls could only attend the village schools that were not well-equipped like the boarding ones (Wamahiu, 1988:210).

The implication of such a setup was such that girls attending village schools got low quality education since such schools offered very little academic education. Some of the girls who matured while in school could easily be married off due to the proximity to their families. The colonialists further perpetuated the attitude of the missionaries towards female education when they took over the control of education. Women were excluded from the first colonial schools. Education for girls became a supplementary and complementary activity to the education for boys (Obura, 1992:10).

Between the two world wars, the colonial governors became more interested in “native education” and more funds were availed to expand education. The colonial system needed to have a literate labour force. The promotion made, however, was on male education. This period also experienced an international discontent with colonial education. This led to the formation of the Phelps-
Stokes Commission between 1922 and 1924. This Commission made progressive contribution to African education in British colonies. With regard to women, the Commission represented a concerted effort to maintain the ideology of domesticity. For instance, it encouraged the formation of boarding schools and advocated a different curriculum for boys and girls. The commission strongly emphasized that domesticity symbolized the true roles of African women. Consequently, women's education only enabled them to enter a limited number of professions such as primary school teaching and nursing which enhanced domestic roles (Musisi, 1992:180-182).

The foregoing analysis seems to point out that Christianity, as introduced by the missionaries in Kenya, was based on gender lines. The missionaries themselves did not have a favourable attitude toward women as shown by the way they handled formal education for them. This is exemplified by the fact that schools for girls were built after those for boys, and that the curricula taught to girls aimed at domestication.

This study argues that the colonial system condemned aspects of African culture and religion. The Western education system that was introduced here did not enhance women's opportunities of leadership. Their opportunities to play any administrative or commercial roles were limited. Such teachings only increased women's social and economic dependence, which they continue to experience even today. Given the type of church that the missionaries established in Africa, the next task of this study is to trace how the Christian church, after the missionary era, has handled women's issues in church ministry.
2.9. Women in the Contemporary Church in Kenya.

The status of women in the church in Kenya could be analyzed by examining two issues, namely, the roles of women in the church and their participation in church leadership. Examples are drawn from two studies, one by James (1993) and the other by Mutambuki and Omondi (1998).

Roles of Women in the Church

The most common duties that women are found performing in their churches include: cleaning the church and decorating; ushering, singing in the church choir, leading in praise and worship, preparing the priest’s table, cooking and serving food when there are church functions like weddings or conferences, conducting catechist classes, counselling the youth and preaching (James, 1993:108-110; Mutambuki & Omondi, 1998:25,40).

When critically analyzed, these roles seem to indicate that women work is confined to the marginal levels of the church. They lay foundations of various works, which are taken up by the ministers, majority of whom are men. Our argument here is that there is really nothing wrong with the duties women perform. However, what is objectionable are the views of some Christians that these duties are all that women should really be performing. The domestication of women’s duties in the church seems to have developed from traditional indigenous African societies and the missionary times. This position was not improved during the missionary period. It is worth pointing out that women have not accepted the roles discussed above without questioning. There exist on-going debates in various churches on the need to allocate women and men duties according to their potential, ability, and talents (James, 1993:183).
Women’s Participation in Church Leadership

Within the hierarchically organized churches, leadership is in the hands of the clergy. Considering that men form the majority of clergy, it follows that they hold most leadership positions. Examples of such churches include, the PCEA, the ACK and the MCK (Mutambuki & Omondi, 1998:7,24,64).

Since men dominate in the top decision-making positions, they also form majority membership in most decision-making committees at the higher levels of the church hierarchy. On their part, only a few women participate in influential decision-making committees. In most cases, such women represent women’s organizations in their churches. Women are found in many local church level committees where they are more of members than leaders. Their leadership could be found in specific category of committees at the local church level. These include committees that deal with issues of children, youth and women or those that have to do with social matters such as welfare (James, 1996:73). Women’s presence in leadership becomes visible where there is a women’s ministry programme, headed and staffed entirely by women. Office bearers are also women. This picture runs from the local level to the top levels of the church (Mutambuki & Omondi, 1998:64,66).

Several reasons could be given for the limited participation of women in church leadership. Some have to do with church constitutions that spell out membership in certain committees, some of which require its members to be clergy or elders, while others have to do with the influence of societies whose cultures expect women to be submissive to men and thus not hold influential position in the church. Poor conscientization among women and men to the effect that women could be effective leaders makes them not support women
aspiring for leadership in the church. Some of this has to do with stereotyping of women that they are incapable of being leaders (Mutambuki & Omondi, 1998:10-11).

Misinterpretation of scripture plays a great role in influencing women’s leadership in the church. For instance, Paul’s injunction in 1 Timothy 2:11-12 that women should not speak publicly in the church is often cited in the support of this discriminatory issue. Another injunction cited is that in 1 Peter 3:7 that urges husbands to live considerably with their wives because they are the weaker vessels. This concept of “weakness” is interpreted to mean that women are physically weak and therefore cannot become leaders. They could incapacitate the church. (James, 1993:122; Mutambuki & Omondi, 1998:10).

Limiting women’s participation in church leadership impacts on the growth and development of the church. This is because women’s skills and talents remain untapped. Similarly, decisions made in committees where women are not represented may not adequately include or address women’s needs and interests.

In this chapter we have given a historical analysis of women in the church since the inception of Christianity to date. The Judaism traditions relegated women to subordination, while the ministry of Jesus uplifted their status and social standing. However, as the church began to expand beyond Palestine, it got institutionalised. With the influence of Greco-Roman culture, the church became highly patriarchal and had structures that were oppressive to women. This trend is seen through the patristic, and medieval periods. These were periods characterized by monasticism and asceticism. The onset of Reformation in the sixteenth century saw a change of church structures that allowed women some participation in the church ministry, though at low
levels. The exploration of women's participation in missionary work shows that they underwent various frustrations in the field that were characterized by male domination in leadership.

In this chapter, it has been observed that the issue of women's inclusion into mainstream church ministry has been a struggle over the two centuries of Christianity. The church in Kenya inherited concepts and attitudes concerning the roles and place of women from missionary times. Some of these attitudes are experienced in the contemporary church and they continue to influence the status of women in the church. Given this scenario, the task in the next chapter is to make an analysis of women's access to theological education. One of the prerequisites to ordination as well as other forms of services in the church ministry involves being equipped with theological education.
CHAPTER THREE
THE ACCESS OF WOMEN TO THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN KENYA

3.1 Introduction
As already noted, the purpose of theological training is to equip people for the work of church ministry. Mbogo (2002:12), cites three faculties of theological training. They are, development of one’s intellect, character and skills. Some women who feel called to ordained and non-ordained ministry prepare themselves through theological training. In this chapter, an analysis is made of women’s access to theological education in Kenya. The chapter begins by giving a brief history of theological education in Kenya. This background information provides the environment in which theological education for women is being undertaken. It then assesses factors that hinder women’s access to theological education. These factors include: culture, modes of admission to theological institutions and the prospects of job opportunities.

3.2 The History of Theological Education in Kenya
Before the attainment of independence for African countries, theological education was patterned along the lines of the missionaries who introduced Christianity (Dickson, 1984:39; Mombo, 2000:39). At the initial times, theological education was offered to two groups of people; men who were going to serve in the church as ordained ministers and the men who would work in secular educational institutions as teachers. The content taught in theological schools was developed in the contexts from which the missionaries came (Mombo, 2000:39).

With the attainment of independence for most African countries, theological education began to take on a new shape. Discussions concerning the relevance
of theology inherited from Europe and the need to have a theology that was appropriate to its locus and concern became a bigger issue. Such discussions began to take place in organizations such as the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC). Issues discussed included: recruitment, training, conditions of service for ministers, effective use of Christian ministry and the availability of theological education (Mombo, 2000:40).

Theological education in Kenya is carried out through a various tertiary institutions. They include: Bible colleges, theological institutions, and ecclesiastical and state universities. Bible schools and theological institutions are primarily centres for training people for ordination and other forms of church ministry. Most of these institutions are denominational in structure and character. Examples of these include, Ukamba Bible College, for the AIC, and the PCEA Pastoral Institute.

Although some of the institutions admit a few students from other denominations, their primary function is to prepare members of their own denominations for professional ministry within the context of that denomination. For a long time, these institutions only admitted men as students who were prepared for church ministry. In some cases, their wives moved with them and studied subjects related to homemaking. Later, some of these institutions admitted women to study theology (Dickson, 1984:42; Mombo, 2000:40). Denominational institutions are under control of their church affiliation. Both their curricular and teaching methodology are centred on denominational policy and theological interpretation. The hierarchy of the denomination has to approve what is taught, how it is taught and who shall teach (Mombo, 2000:41).
Some theological institutions are inter-denominational. For such institutions, several denominations pull their resources together to create one united college. A board of representatives from the participating member churches govern such united colleges. The lecturers are chosen from the respective member churches. Students are expected to take courses under the same lecturers with the exception of denominational polity courses that are taught by lecturers of the particular denomination.

Theological education offered in faculties of theology or religious studies in public and ecclesiastical universities may not necessarily prepare its students for church ministry, though it could enable them to work in church-related organizations. Those students who desire to serve in the church are, after graduating, given ministerial formation courses by their churches before they start their ministry. The ecclesiastical universities are founded by a particular denomination or several denominations of one theological tradition. The students admitted to study in these institutions have to meet admission requirements set by the governing board of the institution. The teachers are appointed on academic grounds and other relevant merits such as their theological conviction (Mombo, 2000:42).

There is yet another type of theological education found in Kenya. This is Theological Education by Extension (TEE). It is theological training conducted through Distance Education Programme. The modern TEE movement began with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Guatemala in 1963. The missionaries in this church realized that the existing residential colleges were not able to cope with the demand for trained clergy. These colleges had limited space, funds and staff. The other problem was that potential students were already in charge of parishes and this raised the issue of their replacement while they joined Bible schools and colleges. Similarly,
these men and women had job and family commitments that were not easy to abandon and go to a residential college. Therefore, the pioneers of TEE realized that theological education needs of these groups and the church could easily be met by teaching them a curriculum and materials tailored for each category. The students then would study as they continued with their routine activities. TEE combined three methods to deliver theological education, namely: self-instructional materials, weekly seminars and an element of practical work. The Guatemala experience was a success and has been adopted by many countries (Kithome & Gatimu, 2001:6).

TEE decentralized and democratized theological education by allowing students to study in their own environments by tailoring courses according to the students’ needs. This way theological education became more accessible to different categories of people and in large numbers. It was open to people of different age groups and professions. This was in contrast to the traditional residential training where only the young educated could join the colleges. (Kirk, 1983:51; Kithome & Gatimu, 2001:6).

TEE first came to Africa in the early 1970s. It was an initiative by the missionaries in conjunction with the Theological Educational Fund (TEF), the predecessor of the Program on Theological Education (PTE) and the current Ecumenical Theological Education (ETE) of WCC. TEF facilitated the publishing of materials for use by TEE programmes. Most churches in Africa only use TEE for training lay leaders with a purpose of equipping them in their roles in church ministry, such as leadership and evangelism. It gives them a deeper understanding of scripture and its application. Through individual’s crusades, TEE mode of delivery became operational in ecumenical and evangelical churches in Africa (Mombo, 2000:41; Kithome & Gatimu, 2001:7)
The organization of African Instituted Churches stood to benefit from TEE because most of their clergy were not theologically literate. Their TEE programme offered theological studies as well as secular subjects. The secular subjects included issues of health and education. These subjects were meant to bring improvement on the general life of members of the church especially those who lived in rural settings. Some of the learning materials were written in vernacular. This enabled the non-English speakers to understand the concepts being taught (Kithome, & Gatimu, 2001:7).

In Kenya, some of the lecturers in Bible colleges and theological institutions have been introduced to the principles of distance learning. Consequently, some of them are involved in the development of TEE self-instructional materials while others run the weekly seminars. Similarly, some theological institutions have begun to incorporate TEE in residential curricula. Such colleges teach theological education on both residential and distance basis. Some of these institutions are: PCEA Pastoral Institute, Daystar University, Kenya Methodist University, St. Paul’s United Theological College and Church Army (Kithome & Gatimu, 2001:8).

TEE programme has three main components. They are, studying lectures and doing the set exercises, attending tutorial meetings, and, field practice (Holland, 1975:9). The TEE program at the PCEA Pastoral Institute was began in 1983. It is part of the curricula in the college in that the college faculty members prepare learning materials, facilitate student’s tutorial sessions, and mark examinations. Since 1983, the programme has graduated over 16,000 students at the certificate level. Presently, the college holds four graduations on a weekly basis countrywide. From 2000, the college began to train students at the diploma level. Some of the graduates of TEE at the certificate level do join residential theological colleges to study at the diploma level. Though
initially planned for the PCEA church, the programme is interdenominational. It attracts students from a wide range of churches that include, pentecostals, evangelicals, The African Instituted Churches, and the Roman Catholic Church (Gathanju, O.I. 26/5/03, TEE Coordinator).

TEE has been credited for opening theological education to women. Previously, most women only went to Bible school when accompanying their husbands. With TEE, such women, are able to study theology as they carry on with their daily duties. Gathanju, (O.I. 26/5/03) remarks that ¼ of the TEE students of the PCEA Pastoral Institute are women.

Given that distance education is a global trend in the twenty first century, there is need for churches and theological institutions to incorporate TEE in residential theological institutions. This way, TEE courses would be accredited by academically recognized institutions, a status that lacks in TEE as it stands today. According to Kithome & Gatimu (2001:11), TEE certificates are usually localized within the denominational level making it appear junior to residential theological education. Graduates of TEE could also be considered for ordination to full-time church ministry. This aspect lacks in TEE currently. Despite its flexibility, TEE is not widely used in Kenya. Emphasis on residential theological training still prevails.

For the purpose of this study, we have concentrated on theological education offered in residence. These are institutions that are denominational and inter-denominational. In structure they belong to two church traditions, namely, main line protestant and evangelical traditions. These are colleges that offer academic certificates ranging from diploma, bachelors and masters. They also admit women alongside men as students.
We shall examine five institutions out of the ten in which the research was carried out. For each of the institutions, their history and policies are explored.

**Scott Theological College**

This institution was established in 1962 as the national theological college of the Africa Inland Church (AIC), Kenya. Its purpose was to provide training for church ministries at a more advanced academic level than what was available through the Bible schools of the AIC (Scott Theological College Prospectus, 1997-1999). Initially, Scott offered a diploma programme and in 1962 had a total of 79 students. An average of 6 students graduated every year between 1962 and 1977. 110 students graduated between 1978 and 1985, an average of 19 students every year. By 1999, the total student body was 110 students with 94 males and 16 females. The total number of teachers was 20 with 14 men and 6 women of which 5 were on part-time and only 1 on full time employment (O.I, Principal, 2/11/98).

In addition to numerical growth, Scott has progressively upgraded the academic standards of its courses. Bachelor of Theology degree was introduced in 1982. This development was made possible through an arrangement with Ontario Bible College, an accredited degree granting college in Toronto, Canada. The college now offers both, Diploma in Theology and Bachelor of Theology degrees.

The aim of Scott Theological College is to prepare its students, both men and women, for effective ministry, that is, to serve the church through the preaching and administering sacraments, teaching, evangelism, mission and other forms of Christian ministry. Candidates are considered on the basis of meeting required academic standards as well as proven high moral and ethical Christian standards. Although AIC sponsored, the college admits students
from other Protestant denominations. The college also admits students from other countries such as Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Malawi (Scott Theological College Prospectus, 1997-1999).

**Pan Africa Christian College**

This institution was established in 1978 by the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC). As a mission-minded organization, the PAOC began sending missionaries to numerous African countries in the 1920’s. As a result of their efforts, a strong national church emerged in Kenya and the surrounding countries, in the name of Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG). Pan Africa Christian College (PACC) was born out of a vision to serve the PAG fellowships and colleges by preparing men and women for ministry to their particular needs. The college trains church workers from a broad range of African countries for a various ministerial roles within the church of Christ, such as, pastors, evangelists, theology teachers, Sunday school teachers, indigenous missionaries, and Bible translators (PACC Prospectus, 1997-99; 2001-2003).

PACC offers students a Bachelor of Arts degree in Bible and Theology and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Bible and Translation Studies. The college began to offer BA degree in Bible and Theology in 1985, and a BA in Bible and Translation Studies in 1989. PACC was registered as a proposed private university in 1989. Presently, the college is working with the Commission for Higher Education towards government accreditation and issuance of a charter to a full university status.

PACC had grown from 6 students in 1978 to 90 in 1999, with 72 males, and 18 females. The total number of teachers in 1999 was 15, 8 males, and 7
females out of which 1 was a national and 6 were missionaries (O.I. Principal, 23/9/99). The total number of students in 2003 was 131 with 95 males, and 36 females. In 2003, the total number of teachers was 14, 8 males and 6 females out of which 1 was a national, and 5 missionaries (O.I. Academic Dean, 26/5/03). There seems to be a considerable increase in the enrolment of women over the years, though their number still lags behind that of men. Students of PACC come from a variety of nationalities and denominations (PACC, Prospectus, 1997-99; 2001-2003).

**Moffat College of the Bible**

The Africa Inland Church established this institution in 1929. The college is a member of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA), a theological forum for the Evangelical churches in Africa. Moffat trains African men and women for full Christian service as pastors, evangelists, Christian educators, missionaries and women and children’s workers. Although Moffat is an AIC institution, it admits students from other Protestant churches that are recognized by the AEA (Moffat College of the Bible brochure, 1999).

Moffat is a corresponding member of the Accrediting Council for Theological Education in Africa (ACTEA), and is a candidate for ACTEA accreditation at the diploma level. By 1999, the college had a student body of 69, with 60 men and 9 women. The total number of teachers was 12, with 8 males and 4 females. Of the 4 females, 1 was a national while 3 were missionaries (O.I. Principal, 9/3/99).

**St. Paul’s United Theological College**

This is an inter-denominational institution that was originally established in 1903 by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) at Freretown, in Mombasa as a settlement for freed slaves. In 1930, it was moved to Limuru as St. Paul’s
Divinity School. It changed its name to St. Paul's United Theological College in 1955 when three churches namely, the Anglican Church in Kenya, the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, and the Methodist Church in Kenya decided to form partnership in church ministerial training. The Reformed Church of East Africa joined the partnership in 1973 and the National Council of Churches of Kenya in 1995 (St. Paul's United Theological College Prospectus, 2003).

St. Paul's United Theological College began to offer a Bachelor of Divinity degree in 1988. The college also offers a Master of Theology (M.TH) degree of Aberdeen University, Scotland. St. Paul's is currently in discussion with the Commission for Higher Education towards its accreditation as a University.

In 1962, the college had 32 students, all men, 29 Kenyans and 3 Tanzanians. In 1996 and 1998, the college had 12 and 14 female students respectively. In 2003, the total number of students was 120 with 97 males, and 23 females (O.I. Principal, 12/6/96; 22/9/98). The total number of teachers in 1998 was 10 with 8 males, and 2 females, 1 national, and 1 expatriate. In 2003, the total number of teachers was 12 with 8 males and 4 females, out of which 3 were nationals and 1 expatriate (Dean of Theology, O.I. 30/5/03). Though there seems to be an improvement in the enrolment of female students, over the recent years their number still lags behind that of the males. The same case applies to the female teachers as well.

Nairobi International School of Theology
This is a post-graduate level institution. The roots of Nairobi International School of Theology (NIST) are entwined in the philosophy and history of Campus Crusade for Christ International or LIFE Ministry. The work of LIFE Ministry began in East Africa in the early 1970's. It became apparent that there
was a need for an evangelical post-graduate level theological institution. The institution began operating in 1981 with an intake of 5 students who graduated in 1983. The college is committed to evangelical theology (NIST Prospectus, 1997-1999)

NIST is officially registered with the Government of Kenya and is currently pursuing accreditation with the Commission for Higher Education in Kenya. In 1993, NIST was granted accreditation by ACTEA. NIST considers each applicant’s qualifications in four primary areas. These are: academic ability; personal, social and spiritual maturity; leadership ability and ministry experience. The applicant should have a first degree recognized by the national government or by an internationally recognized accrediting agency. The college offers four academic programmes, Master of Divinity, Master of Arts, the Post-Graduate Diploma in Theological Studies and the Diploma Programme in Christian Ministry. A certificate programme in Christian Ministry is offered on a semester basis. The diploma and certificate programmes are offered to women only. NIST is a non-denominational college. It admits students from other Protestant denominations particularly those of evangelical conviction (NIST Prospectus, 2001-2003).

In 1998, the master's level students at NIST were 124 with 25 females and 99 males. In 1999, there were 220 students, with 58 females, against 162 males. In 2003, the number of students was 80 with 25 females and 55 males. The diploma and certificate programmes only had female students (O.I. Principal, 30/9/98; O.I. Academic Registrar, 4/6/03). The Women’s Certificate in Christian Ministry Programme trains the wives of the male masters level students. The training is aimed at equipping the women with skills in ministry and theology. It enables them to develop personal skills in Christian ministry as well as increase their biblical understanding. These are meant to enable
them to efficiently assist their husbands in church ministry. Their husbands are required to indicate in writing, their willingness to support them in the training (NIST Prospectus, 1997-1999; 2001-2003).

The total number of faculty at Masters level as at 2003 was 19 with 15 males and 4 females, of which 2 were nationals and 2 expatriates. At the diploma and certificate level, the number of faculty was 11 with 3 males, and 8 females, out of which 6 were nationals and 2 expatriates (O.I. Academic Registrar, 4/6/03). These figures show a concentration of women faculty at the diploma and certificate programmes, which are pursued by women only.

The foregoing information from some of the theological institutions sampled for this study shows that male students and faculty outnumber the female ones with a significant margin. However, in some institutions, such as St. Paul’s United Theological College, and PACC, there seems to be a steady but slow improvement while in some others, the trend remains the same. These observations lead us to explore the issues pertaining to the minimal number of women joining theological institutions as students and faculty.

3.3 Issues Pertaining to Women’s Access to Theological Education

Several factors combine to hinder women’s access to theological education in Kenya. These factors are notable in the church and society. The factors explored in this section include; cultural influences, obstacles at admission, modalities of admission and job opportunities.

3.3.1 Cultural Influence

Women’s experiences in Africa are influenced by culture. Such influence is found in the linguistic and ethnic dimensions of the African cultural setup.
Each of these aspects has had tremendous impact on the status of women in the African society. (Kemdirim, 1999:45; Martey, 1998:39).

Language plays a role in influencing a woman’s status in the African society. It does this through oral literature, that is, proverbs, poetry, speech, art and craft, among others. Language is primarily a vehicle of communicating cultural values and is therefore powerful. The power of language can either sustain or break the human relationships. It can liberate or oppress. Oral literature demonstrates how given people speak, think, and what they believe.

Gender dimensions influence the status of women by restraining them from attaining equal status with men. They are expressed through cultural restrictions and rites of passage. Cultural restrictions begin at birth with preference for male children, especially first-borns. A woman may be divorced for not giving birth to male children. Being female means facing discrimination throughout one’s life as compared to the male counterpart. Further, culture is transmitted through ceremonies and rituals. During rituals and ceremonial enactments, emotions are heightened and learning is intensified or speeded up. The seasonal rituals and ceremonial gatherings are principal means for cultural persistency. Ceremonies are a preservative of culture. During these events, one learns what it means to be a man or a woman in that culture. For both women and men, this is exemplified at puberty rites, and, marriage rituals and ceremonies (Martey, 1998: 39).

The components discussed here, language and ethnic aspects are instilled to both men and women through the process of socialization. Culture is transmitted in both visible and invisible forms. This could be through the
silent language’, that is, the language of actions and relationships that in early years spells out specific instructions to boys and girls indicating how they must act out their social roles.

In many cultures, women are socialized at two levels: The verbal-rational public level, that is, what parents, teachers and clergy say, and the invisible, that is, what parents, teachers and clergy do. For instance, a girl may be encouraged verbally by her parents to do well in school, but have signals at home such as being burdened with domestic chores, or being betrothed, indicating that she need not advance much in learning, since she is destined for the domestic front and marriage. She may also be required to give up her career for a husband in order to become a mother. Therefore, early learning takes place within a family unit. It is in this group that the individual finds his or her identity and receives the set of cultural instructions that enable a child to become an adult among a people (Neville, 1974:80).

The same values and beliefs about women and men as described above are enacted in most churches including those of the two traditions in this study. For instance, the general absence of women in church boards teaches the little girl effectively that the business of the church is a men’s business. Women’s business is to teach in Sunday school, thus playing the role of mother. In addition to this, the young girl learns from the language used by the religious community. This is a language in which all references to the deity are couched in male pronouns and most hymns, prayers, and scriptural passages consistently refer to Christians as ‘brothers, soldiers, or men of God’. This throws her out of active participation (Neville, 1974:84; Carr, 1988:14)

In the light of the foregoing, culture stands out as a factor that militates against the access of women to theological education in several ways. There is a
tendency to attach theological education to church leadership. Such interpretation creates a barrier to women aspiring to venture into theological education. Women, on their part, have been socialized to be passive, docile, and 'followers', and that leadership and decision-making are male domains. This concept discourages the would-be candidates for theological education. Some women have been called by God but have been prevented from responding to the call by their own socialization that reminds them that such a venture is impossible. However, some manage to overcome such influences, hence venture into theological education (Mwihia, O.I. 1/10/98; Mutuma, O.I. 1/10/98; Njagi, O.I. 1/10/98). This concept is coupled with cultural influence that dictates a woman’s place as the domestic sphere.

There is a strong tendency among cultures to emphasize the centrality of the mother in transmitting the cultural heritage. This makes people feel and argue that mothers should always be at home, or working near home. Such people criticize women who take up demanding careers outside the home. Such attitudes discourage women aspiring to join theological institutions. They create uncertainties about their employment after training.

The cultural influence in women’s access to theological education and later to church ministry could be exemplified by responses from some of our informants. “Culture could be a major problem since most African communities put women in one category with children. For instance, when fathers rebuke their children for doing wrong, they liken them to their mothers. This makes men look down upon women as incapable of learning” (Cheruiyot, O.I. 5/6/00).

“Being a Kamba lady, I feel our culture does not value women as it does men. This has made the ACK dioceses of Kitui and Machakos fail to encourage
women to join theological institutions. A woman’s ministry is less valued compared to that of a man” (Mutuku, O.I. 16/3/99). “Most of our ethnic groups maintain that women should not be leaders. This prevents them from accepting services rendered by women. This perception hinders churches from supporting the training of women in theology. Such churches fear that once trained, women may not be accepted as church ministers” (Nyaga, O.I. 16/3/99).

“Our African cultures do not attach much importance to women in areas of church ministry apart from hosting visitors, and taking care of children at home” (Mutua, O.I. 2/11/98). “Many cultures undermine women and restrict them in the home. Even in this college, I have experienced such, with our brothers from the Kalenjin community saying that women are children and should not speak before men” (Muthama, O.I. 17/3/99).

“Culture has played a great role in decreasing the number of women admitted in theological colleges. This is because, in most of them, women are socialized to be passive, docile, and followers, not leaders. They are taught that the work of leadership is for men. This kind of teaching deters some from aspiring for positions of leadership” (Njagi, O.I. 1/10/98).

The foregoing examples show the extent to which cultural beliefs and practices militate against women’s access to theological education and their subsequent services to the church. The churches are influenced by societal concept of gender polarity of assigning domestic roles of women, a concept that determines their lack of support for women to study theology. Similarly, some women, influenced by cultural socialization tend to be uncertain of their roles in the church though trained in theology. The influence is found among women candidates, their families and peers, the church leaders, and
congregations. Given such sentiments, we could make an observation that the Christian community in Kenya tends to reinforce societal emphasis on the subordination of women.

3.3.2 Obstacles Prior to Admission to Theological Institutions

Women interested in pursuing theological education often get resistance from families, peers, friends, church ministers and congregations. For some, resistance is experienced from all the categories of persons mentioned here.

Some families, especially parents, show their opposition by arguing that there is little monetary gain in studying theology and working for the church. There is also a general fear that the girls may miss marriage partners or may be married to fellow church ministers who may not expect, or may be reluctant, to pay bride-price. Some would rather have their daughters or sisters join teacher-training colleges.

These sentiments could be exemplified by responses from several informants to the obstacles they encountered prior to joining theological colleges as follows, “A certain family friend of ours, who is also a lay-leader in our church advised my parents not to let me join theological training. He argued that once trained, I would be confined to a parish where congregations may not cooperate with me. His suggestion was that I join a teacher-training college” (Murage, O.I. 16/3/99).

“At first, my father did not want me to join a theological college. He really wanted me to go to a teacher’s college” (Dwigah, O.I. 16/3/99). “I encountered a lot of discouragement from my friends, and relatives. Some of my brothers and sisters told me that four years of theological training is a long duration and that I would be late in getting married” (Muatine, O.I. 17/3/99).
The seeming attitude of parents and peers against women's theological training could be directly linked with monetary expectations. Ironically, the alternative offered, that is, teacher training could also be interpreted as a culturally accepted profession for women. A woman's own choice does not seem to prevail here.

"I faced opposition from family members and friends. They felt that it was a waste of time to train for any Christian ministry, because I could get very little pay" (Wambua, O.I. 17/3/99). "My family looked at it as a low paying profession. They wanted me to join another college to be able to make good money. My brothers argued that I might be married to a pastor who is also poor and therefore, not able to pay bride-price for me" (Muthama, O.I. 17/3/99).

Another category that poses an obstacle to women aspiring to study theology is the male church ministers whose influence is very high since they are opinion leaders. These ministers are usually strategically placed in various networks of social relationships in the churches within which policy is formulated and implemented. For instance, church ministers occupy leadership positions in most segments of the denominational structure where policy is formulated and implemented. They are, therefore, directly involved in matters of policy (Lehman, 1985:62).

The views church ministers have on theological education are very important. For persons aspiring to join theological institutions, the pastors' perceptions are a determining factor. What pastors say or do may be a major source of inspiration to consider the possibility of religious vocations. This is for the young people who may be experiencing a call to ministry and who require role models. Consequently, for women who face opposition from families and
friends, the responses they get from the minister they consult can be decisive. If pastors are opposed to women’s venture into theological education and church ministry, the number of women will be very low. This is because ministry will not appear as a viable option for them (Lehman, 1985:59).

Some informants cited cases where pastors hide application forms, others decline to sign the female applicants’ forms, while some others deliberately delay with the forms so that the applicants may get late in applying. Views from several informants could attest to this. “The local church pastor, and the District Church Council did not want to fill my forms” (Kaumo, O.I. 9/3/99) “It was hard for the church leaders to comprehend how a single graduate lady would desire to join the ministry” (Njeri, O.I. 8/10/98).

Women often face all-male interviewing boards. At times, there could be a token woman who may not be influential. The males dominate the interviewing and recommending processes (Ngethe, O.I. 1/10/98; Mutuma, O.I. 1/10/98). Women find that they have to prove beyond reasonable doubt that they are ‘called by God’ to ministry. They are often asked discriminatory questions during the interviews such as, those about boyfriends, and prospects for marriage (Group interview at St. Paul’s United Theological College, 1/10/98). Women also face derogatory remarks such as: “remember you are a woman even if you train in theology” (Awino, O.I. 16/3/99).

Further, the control of theology and theological education in the church has been in male hands and therefore selection for ministry tends to be on a male model. For instance, there are cases where married women applicants are required to have the consent of their husbands yet this is not done to the married men applicants. Nkonge (O.I. 16/3/99) and Mutua (O.I. 2/11/98) said that they were asked for the consent of their husbands, (in writing), before being interviewed. The two assert that this practice is unfair to women, since the married men
applicants are not asked for the consent of their wives. This practice does lead to the dropping out of married women candidates. This is because some face opposition from their husbands.

The implication here is that a woman is under the authority of her husband and unless he consents, the church could object to her application. This aspect could be looked at from two viewpoints, cultural and Christian teachings. Most African cultures maintain that a married woman’s decision must be endorsed by her husband yet, as the head of the family, a man could make such decisions without consulting his wife. The church teaches that a husband is the head of the family, and that his wife and children are to be submissive and obedient to him. Therefore given her status in the family, a woman’s decision may not be accepted without her husband’s approval. A man’s status in the family allows him to make independent decisions that his wife is expected to comply with.

This shows a clear support of androcentric values by both the church and society. Both institutions concur in maintaining the necessity of a man’s approval of his wife’s decision yet the reverse is not the case. Such practices go along to sustain inequality between men and women as they access theological education.

Lack of support for women applicants from pastors and male church elders is supported by several arguments. Some argue that a trained woman will be married elsewhere and therefore will not benefit her sponsoring church (Nasika, O.I. 5/6/00; Soy, O.I. 5/6/00; Kilonzo, O.I. 2/11/98). This argument is normally targeted on the young unmarried women. This kind of argument could be interpreted as selfish since the trained woman would still offer service in the church that she would serve after marriage. If church ministry were viewed as a collective endeavor by all churches and denominations, such an argument would not arise.
Women applicants also lack support from church members, particularly fellow women who seem to be influenced by cultural stereotypes about women. Some of them argue that theology is a male domain, and that women should take full responsibility over families. Such women seem to have internalized the view that women should not venture into male dominated fields such as theological education. Their desire is to maintain the status quo. They even criticize female aspirants as wanting to be like men (Cheruiyot, O.I. 15/6/99; Muigai, O.I. 15/6/99; Nyaga, O.I. 16/3/99; Murage, O.I. 16/3/99; Ndwigah, O.I. 16/3/99; Nkonge, O.I. 16/3/99; Soma, O.I. 23/9/98; Gakenia, O.I. 11/9/98).

Nkonge (O.I. 16/3/99) had this to say “Some women may feel weak to study theology due to the discouragement they face from other women”. Murage (O.I. 16/3/99) said, “Women do not support one another. Some of them argue that theological education is for men and that those aspiring to join theological institutions lack support from women in the church”. On her part, Ndwigah (O.I. 16/3/99) had this to say, “Some of the women in the church prefer to support men for theological training against women, arguing that, this is a male domain. These women draw their perceptions from their socialization and upbringing that taught them that women are inferior”.

After facing most of the obstacles described above, some women applicants find that they also wrestle with themselves over the issue of joining a theological institution. Some have self-un-certainties about leaving well paying jobs to study theology. This is brought about by the uncertainty of job opportunities after theological studies. They feel discouraged because they have witnessed that some churches train women in theology but do not offer
them employment (Chepkorir, O.I. 5/6/00; Kilonzo, O.I. 2/11/98; Sang, O.I. 2/11/98; Njeri, O.I. 8/10/98; Ngethe, O.I. 1/10/98). A sample of these informants had the following responses,

“Some churches do not treat ordained women well. This acts as a discouragement for other women who have a call to join church ministry, and therefore desire to join theological institutions” (Nyagah, O.I. 16/3/99); “The church does not give opportunities to women to minister especially in the local churches. This practice discourages women from joining theological institutions only to go back to the local church and serve as members of the congregation” (Ngethe, O.I. 8/10/98). “Since women are not appreciated in the church, some feel that there is no need of studying theology, since they will not be recognized” (Kilonzo, O.I. 2/11/98).

Yet another factor contributing to women’s inadequate ability to pursue theological education is funding. Women aspiring to study theology are limited by the economic marginalization they experience. The financial constraints affect both the single and married women. This is because most women are not financially stable and independent as to be able to sponsor theological studies. Most female informants cited lack of funding as an obstacle to women’s venture into theological education, and further argued that even when funds are available in the church, priority is given to male applicants (Muiruri, O.I. 5/6/00; Nasika, O.I. 5/6/00; Soy, O.I. 5/6/00; Ngethe, O.I. 1/10/98; Njagi, O.I. 1/10/98; Njeri, O.I. 8/10/98; Mwihia, O.I. 1/10/98; Nwagwu, 1998:93). This could be a confirmation that theological education is still a male prerogative. It could also be explained by the fact that some churches, particularly those that do not ordain women are uncertain about the ministries in which women would serve while being sure that men would serve in ordained ministry.
3.3.3 Modalities of Admission to Theological Institutions

It has been noted in this study that the admission processes are similar in the main line Protestant church-sponsored institutions, but different from the evangelical church sponsored ones. The Protestant ones require filling of forms by the applicant for formal application in addition to both oral and written interviews at various levels of the church hierarchy. The church chooses colleges for the successful candidates. The evangelical ones require formal application by the candidates, to the selected theological institution. A recommendation by the local church, mainly the local church minister is required. This procedure varies from church to church, and also the programme of study the applicant is interested in, such as Diploma, Bachelors, or Masters.

For the mainline Christian churches such as the ACK, PCEA and the MCK, information concerning application for theological studies is supposed to be announced at the local church level, and application forms availed for the interested candidates. However, in some places, such announcements are never made, such that the interested candidates have to find out for themselves. Some get information from former students of theology, or by visiting the institutions to enquire (Group Discussion, female students, St. Andrews Kabare, 16/3/98). Furthermore, theological education for women alongside men is not very well publicized, particularly in churches. This in turn militates against the number of women who apply to join theological institutions. Women applicants are obviously disadvantaged compared to their male counterparts, and therefore, fewer women than men apply to join theological institutions (Musyoki, O.I. 9/3/99; Mwangi, O.I. 9/3/99; Mutua, O.I. 16/10/98; Sang, O.I. 2/11/98). This is because in most churches theological training for men is open and obvious, such that those aspiring to join theological
institutions begin to prepare themselves in advance, while that of women is not obvious. For instance, some ACK dioceses may or may not train women at any one given time. This may lead to lack of publicity for women’s admission to theological institutions.

Some informants noted that there is an improvement towards the admission of more women over the years. For the ACK, only women from dioceses that support women’s ministry are admitted to theological institutions, such as Kirinyaga and Maseno South dioceses. There are no such restrictions for men. At times women aspirants to theological education who belong to dioceses that do not ordain women find that they have to move to the dioceses that ordain women to seek recommendations in order to join theological institutions. Such women promise to serve in the dioceses that recommend them after their theological training (Ndwigah, O.I. 16/3/99; Kanyari, O.I. 16/3/99; Murage, O.I. 16/3/99).

Kanyari (O.I. 16/3/99), had this to say, “My diocese was not ready to ordain women, and therefore, my application was turned down. I had to find a way out to another diocese that was ordaining women so as to get a recommendation to join this institution”. Commenting on the ACK stand on theological training for women, Dwigah (O.I. 16/3/99), said, “Many dioceses have not sent women for theological studies. The greatest number of women comes from Embu, Kirinyaga, Meru, and Mbeere. Other dioceses should be encouraged to send women to this college”.

The general view is that the modalities of admission to theological institutions are not the same for men and women. Men tend to be advantaged over women. This is shown by the discrimination women face in the provision of information and lack of support by the recommending and interviewing
boards. This disparity is more notable in the main line Protestant churches than the evangelical ones. Here, interested candidates make independent applications to theological institutions. They only seek recommendations from their local church ministers. Thus, the evangelical churches do not have a direct influence to one's admission to theological institutions, as is the case in main line protestant tradition.

3.3.4 Job Opportunities

The reservations concerning women's access to theological education are extended into the job conditions. Some churches fail to allow women to train in theology because they do not know what to do with them once they are qualified. This is especially so in the evangelical churches that do not ordain women neither do they have clear openings for employment of women trained in theology. However, even in Protestant churches where women are ordained, there still exist reservations as to the jobs that are offered to women. Some of them train women in theology but do not specify their job opportunities.

Consequently, certain leadership positions in the ministry that are closely associated with, and given to those with theological qualifications are not readily within reach for women theologians. Examples of these positions are; administrative appointments in the churches' committees, leading functions at liturgical ceremonies and occupation of magisterial seats in theological faculties (Nwagwu, 1998:90). The inability of trained women theologians to perform in all aspects of pastoral ministerial duties and liturgical functions, definitely constitute a deterrent factor in the undertaking of theological training by women. Equal opportunities in theological studies call for equal opportunities in the exercise of the knowledge gained. Otherwise theological
engagement of women would only be confined to academics with minimal influence in pastoral life and practice (Nwagwu, 1998:92; Njagi, O.I. 1/10/98; Mwenga, O.I. 23/9/98; Nyagah, O.I. 16/3/99).

Further, women experience discrimination in theological institutions and churches through inequality in rank, salaries and promotion. This makes women hesitate to recommend one another when there are vacancies in theological institutions and the church. Some informants pointed out that women are paid less than men in equivalent jobs. Cases such as that by Mutua (O.I, 16/10/98) were cited in which a male church minister works with his wife, also a trained minister, but earn a salary of one, the husband. This practice is common in the AIC. Other cases of inequality cited included men having more privileges than women. These include provision of housing, transport, leave allowance and medical allowance (Mutua, O.I. 16/10/98; Sang, O.I. 2/11/98). Mutua made an observation that “Most of our churches pay women less than men even when the women work harder than men in the same jobs. Women’s talents and abilities remain unrecognised and unrewarded”.

The following table represents information on the ministries open to women within the two church traditions covered in this study, namely mainline Protestant and Evangelical. The information is based on responses of students in the selected theological institutions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>Ministries by Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK)</td>
<td>Mothers Union, Bible study, Sunday school, preaching, lay leadership, deaconess, choir ministry, evangelism, counselling, Theological Education by Extension, baptizing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa Inland Church (AIC)</td>
<td>Christian education, Sunday school, women's ministry, youth ministry, Bible study, counselling, evangelism, choir ministry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Brotherhood Church (ABC)</td>
<td>Preaching, women's ministry, baptism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist Church in Kenya (BCK)</td>
<td>Preaching, Sunday school, deaconess, youth ministry, Christian education, counselling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deliverance Church (DC)</td>
<td>Sunday school, women's ministry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Gospel Church of Kenya (FGCK)</td>
<td>Bible study, Sunday school, women's ministry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya Assemblies of God (KAG)</td>
<td>Sunday school, Deaconess.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist Church in Kenya (MCK)</td>
<td>Preaching, baptizing, marrying, burying, women's ministry, evangelism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nairobi Chapel (NC)</td>
<td>Preaching, Sunday school, youth ministry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG)</td>
<td>Preaching, Sunday school, women's ministry, evangelism, teaching, counselling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA)</td>
<td>Preaching, baptizing, marrying, women's ministry, deaconess, Sunday school, burying.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quaker Church</td>
<td>Counselling, evangelism, Sunday school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Field Survey
The presentation of the ministries open to women in the various churches in the table above shows the extent to which women are mostly concentrated on service duties. In some churches, persons that are not theologically trained equally perform some of the ministries performed by theologically trained women. These include Women and Youth ministries. In so doing, such churches fail to utilize theologically trained women appropriately.

Teaching in theological institutions by women is very limited, as shown earlier in this chapter, yet this occupation could help them in advancing their careers in academics. Most of the graduates of theological institutions who work for their churches are either concentrated in parishes or at church offices where they are in charge of Education, Women, Youth, Cadet or Sunday School ministries (James, 1997:60). This applies to both ordained and non-ordained women. This study contends that women tutors could act as role models for the female students, hence help boost theological education for women.

The foregoing section shows that there are multiple factors that combine to hinder women's smooth access to theological education in Kenya. The history of theological education in Kenya shows that at its inception in the 1960s, theological education was only for men. This trend seems to have changed in the 1970s with some churches opening ordained ministry for women and therefore allowing them to study theology. The subsequent enrolment by female students has been exemplified in five theological institutions.

Despite their desire for admission and enthusiasm to study theology, women often encounter obstacles that impede their access to theological education. Some of the obstacles have been outlined and analysed in this chapter. They have to do with cultural beliefs and practices, modalities of admission and prospects for job opportunities. Responses from our informants indicate that cultural sentiments instilled through socialization, and later through reference
by peers and church congregations, all work against women's access to theological education. Some argue that theological education is inappropriate for women since it interferes with their domestic roles as wives and mothers, while some others argue that church ministry has little monetary gain.

Modalities of admission tend to be biased against women. This has been exemplified by lack of publicity for women’s admission into theological institutions and lack of support by the interviewing boards. Upon completion of theological training, job prospects for women tend to be uncertain, particularly for those belonging to the evangelical churches that do not ordain women. This uncertainty in itself works as a deterrent factor to women aspiring to study theology.

All the obstacles women experience in their endeavour to access and pursue theological education are an indication that the churches they belong to and serve are not fair to women. If churches fully supported women’s theological training, all other hindrances such as those from family members and peers would be non-effective. Such support would include, fair distribution of information, flexible interviews and provision of jobs. All these could be put into consideration without compromising merit. Despite the hindrances, women still manage to study theology though in small numbers compared to men. The next chapter will endeavour to make a more detailed analysis of women's experiences in theological institutions and the factors that influence their stay there.
CHAPTER FOUR
WOMEN’S EXPERIENCES IN THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTIONS IN KENYA

1 Introduction
Despite the obstacles women encounter as they access theological education, a few manage to get enrolled in theological institutions. While in college, women encounter hurdles that impact on their lives. This chapter analyses women’s experiences in theological institutions and the factors that facilitate such experiences. The factors discussed are: the structures of theological institutions and church policies. Within the structures of theological institutions, the chapter examines the numbers of female students and faculty and the implications of these numbers on theological training for women. It then explores relations between female and male students in the institutions. Finally, an assessment of the curricula of the institutions is made.

4.2.1 Numbers of Female Students and Faculty
The ten theological institutions visited had the following tabulation of female and male students (see Table 3).

Table 3. Number of Students by Sex in Selected Theological Institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Berea Theological College</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Nairobi International School of Theology</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. St. Andrews Kabare</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Scott Theological College</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Moffat College of the Bible</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. PCEA Pastoral Institute</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. St. Paul’s United Theological College</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Pan African Christian College</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Kenya Highlands Bible College</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Survey
The table shows that female students are fewer than the male students in all the institutions visited. The reasons could be that most churches support male candidates than the female ones and so the churches recommend more men than women for theological training. Another reason could be limited accommodation facilities for women. This is because in the past, only males were admitted to theological institutions and so the facilities were made according to their needs. Women’s admission to theological institutions is a new development. Oral response from the principals of theological institutions implied that due to lack of space, only a few women could be accommodated. Women with families need spacious accommodation, which may not be readily available in some institutions.

Regarding their numbers, female informants pointed out at times they feel overshadowed by male students. This is experienced during classroom discussions where the male students tend to dominate. Those in the first year of study are the ones who mainly get this experience, when they are still new to college life and probably naive about their expectations (Mwihia, O.I. 1/10/98; Maithya, O.I. 2/11/98; Akello, O.I. 5/6/00; Chepkorir, O.I. 5/6/00). Akello (O.I. 5/6/00) is a graduate of Kenya Highlands Bible College, currently a Christian Education coordinator. She shared her experiences as a student in a class of two women against twenty-six men, “Being in a class dominated by men made it hard for me to contribute in class. This is because the men outnumbered us in every discussion and they tried to intimidate us all the time”. The reaction by such female students may have more to do with naivety and their socialization that may influence their participation in discussions in the presence of men. This would explain why they feel intimidated by the large number of men.
The principals of the ten theological colleges surveyed agreed that the number of female students in their institutions were quite few compared to the male students. They however pointed out that the ministries they would serve in after completing their studies determine the number of students enrolled in theological institutions.

On the other hand, female teachers observed that the number of female students was minimal owing to the fact that theological education is still considered a male domain. The teachers talked in favour of having more female students in theological institutions. This would bring in women’s perspectives in theological matters, especially in classroom discussions (Wambugu, O.I. 23/9/98; Gakenia, O.I. 1/10/98; Mason, O.I. 1/10/98; Mutua, O.I. 2/11/98; Onyango, O.I. 16/3/99; Turtley, O.I. 17/3/99; Wanjema, O.I. 17/3/99; Ouma, O.I. 15/6/99). While giving her opinion about the number of female students in her institution, Gakenia had this to say, “Women are definitely fewer than men. This is because theology is still considered a man’s field”. Ouma asserted, “The number of female students needs to be improved substantially. There is need for churches to encourage more female students to join this college and other theological colleges as well”.

The move to increase the number of female students in theological institutions is a task for both the churches and theological institutions. The role of the churches in that process is quite significant given that these churches select students to join theological institutions, especially the mainline churches. An analysis has been made of the number of female teachers in theological institutions. Table 4 below, shows the number of teachers by sex in the institutions surveyed, in two phases.
Table 4: Number of Teachers by Sex in Selected Theological Institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Berea Theological Institute</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. St. Andrews, Kabare</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Scott Theological College</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Moffat College of the Bible</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. St. Paul’s Un. Theol. College</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Pan African Christian College</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Kenya Highlands Bible College</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Nairobi Int. School of Theology</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. PCEA Pastoral Institute</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Field Survey

*The statistics in these institutions were not available at the time of data collection. However, the absence of such data does not seem to adversely affect the pattern as shown on the table.

It was noted that majority of the female teachers were wives of male missionaries who were teachers as well. Though qualified, most of these women worked on voluntary basis. The institutions that portrayed this aspect included: Pan African Christian College, Moffat College of the Bible, Berea Theological College and Scott Theological College. We also noted that a bigger percentage of female teachers work on part time basis. For instance, at Berea Theological College, out of the 4 female teachers, 2 were on part-time. At Scott Theological College, out of the 6 female teachers, 5 were on part-time. At NIST, in the Masters program out of 4 women teachers, 2 were on part-time. At Moffat College of the Bible, out of 4 women teachers, 3 were on part-time. Unlike full time employment, part-time employment often keeps one uncertain of a job since it could be withdrawn any time. Therefore, women teachers are in a disadvantaged position.
The female teachers expressed desire to have more women employed as teachers. They emphasized employment of women nationals on full-time basis. Those working on part-time basis do not participate fully in decision-making for the college affairs. They also miss out on certain incentives such as scholarships and study leave that could help boost their academic lives (Kibor, O.I. 2/11/98; Ouma, O.I. 15/6/99; Wanjema, O.I. 17/3/99; Savala, O.I. 5/6/00). Concerning the numbers of female students, Savala had this to say, “Apart from the missionary couples, the ratio of female to male in this institution is 1:7 for nationals. The college should consider employing more nationals. On her part, Kibor had this to say, “Until recently, only men taught in this institution, apart from expatriate wives. There is need for more female nationals to be employed on full time basis”

It was further established that all the ten theological institutions surveyed had male principals. Similarly, male teachers headed most of the departments. For instance, at NIST, out of 8 departments, 7 were headed by men, and only 1 by a woman. At St. Andrews Theological College, out of 4 departments, 3 were headed by men and only one by a woman. At St. Paul’s United Theological College, out of 5 departments, 4 were headed by men and only 1 by a woman. At Scott theological College and Pan Africa Christian College (PACC), each had 2 departments all headed by men. This trend was similar in other institutions. This shows that the administration of theological institutions is in the control of men. This echoes the earlier observation that the hierarchies of most churches are male-dominated. The absence of women in the administration of theological institutions is very clear. This scenario fits in with this study’s argument that androcentric values are entrenched in theological institutions, giving men more opportunities in leadership than women.
4.2.1 Gender Relations in Theological Institutions

The attitudes toward women in theological institutions find expressions on both theoretical and practical levels. The obstacles female students and teachers encounter are categorized into four areas, namely, theological issues, classroom situations, socio-cultural issues and institutional policies.

Concerning theological issues, some female students cited incidents when their male colleagues constantly quoted for them biblical phrases, especially those that emphasize women’s “uncleanness”. Some of those opposed to women’s preaching and teaching do not consider their relevance in theological training. Another common argument is based on women being the weaker sex and therefore being required to be submissive. This argument presupposes that by studying theology, women disobey biblical teachings on the role and status of a woman in the church, that of being submissive (Deifelt, 1992:10; Onyango, O.I. 23/9/98; Gakenia, O.I. 1/10/98; Ireri, O.I. 16/3/99; Murage, O.I. 16/3/99; Nyaga, O.I. 16/3/99; Onyango, O.I. 16/3/99; Musyoki, O.I. 17/3/99; Akello, O.I. 5/6/00).

Chepkorir (O.I. 5/6/00), pointed out that male students kept questioning her exceptional performance in academics. This made her feel intimidated. She began to feel that the classroom environment was hostile and this affected her contributions in classroom discussions. She slowed down in her contributions. She said, “Male students complained about my performance. This created an environment in which I was not free to ask or answer questions in class”. The reaction by Chepkorir is absurd. Instead of her performance helping her to excel, it seems to inhibit her potential. The feeling of intimidation by the comments from her male classmates may not be as a result of the male numbers, but her own perception of her presence in their midst. This is a reaction that could have some socio-cultural implications.
Cases were cited where men used derogatory language when addressing women students. For instance, Njagi, (O.I. 1/10/98) said, “It hurts when language which is derogatory and degrading to women is used constantly by the male students who are the majority in our class”. Use of derogatory language whether against males or females is quite intimidating. It is worse when those intimidated are fewer than their counterparts.

All the above cases are meant to show the women that they are not suited for theological education, and that it is a male domain. However, the cited informants, among others, said that such incidents in the long run made them confident and determined to excel in their studies. They wanted to prove to their male colleagues that they were actually in the right place, studying theology.

Several issues were cited about relations between male and female students that are influenced by the socio-cultural setup. The prominent issue touches on the expectations placed on the female students especially the younger ones by the older male students who seem to arrive in college with a strong bias against women. Quite often, the elderly male students expect services from women such as running errands for them. The young, single women are asked if they have intentions of marrying church ministers, and if not, how they would expect to serve in the church effectively without the support of a husband (Kamau, O.I. 8/10/98; Njeri, O.I. 1/10/98; Ndwigah, O.I 16/3/99; Watoro, O.I. 17/3/99).

These issues could be exemplified by responses from two of the above informants as follows, “Some men fail to recognize women training for church ministry. They underrate such women comparing them with their own wives who they argue are submissive” (Kamau, O.I. 8/10/98). “Due to the small number of women students,
some of the male students, both married and single, think it is the first time for us to meet men. They thus keep on insisting on relationships, a practice that is very irritating" (Njeri, O.I. 1/10/98).

The foregoing sentiments from male students are aimed at reminding their female counterparts that even if they study theology, they still regard them as women who culturally are not expected to hold influential and independent positions in society and in the church. Such sentiments are based on gender polarity that is culturally and socially maintained to ascribe different roles for men and women.

Female lecturers often face obstacles of theological nature. Some female teachers pointed out that some male students tend to degrade them. Such students argue that since the female teachers are not ordained, they should not teach certain subjects such as biblical doctrine, homiletics, and pastoral care. Some of the male students are themselves ordained but the teachers are not (Mason, O.I. 1/10/98; Sim, O.I. 16/10/98; Muasya, O.I. 2/11/98; Turley, O.I. 17/3/99).

Responses from two female teachers from different institutions could attest to this, “One class, all pastors, seem to resent a woman teacher” (Sim, O.I. 16/10/98, NEGST). “Sometimes, male students of theology think women cannot teach well, especially in Biblical doctrine” (Muasya, O.I. 2/11/98, Scott Theological College).

This practice is mainly found in churches that do not ordain women but train them in theology. Women graduates of theology teaching in theological institutions affiliated to their denominations are bound to face such barriers. The fact that the male students are themselves ordained and belong to churches that do not ordain women explains why they look down upon women teachers who are not ordained.

Female lecturers also face biases from institutional policies. These include among others, male dominance in governing councils and boards of the institutions. This
male dominance extends to the staffing of the institutions. Female lecturers registered a desire to have a gender representative structure that could be balanced in addressing male and female issues (Gakenia, O.I. 1/10/98; Muasya, O.I. 2/11/98; Turley, O.I. 17/3/99; Onyango, O.I. 16/3/99; Wanjema, O.I. 17/3/99; Fulton, O.I. 15/6/99; Ouma, O.I. 15/6/99).

Commenting on the structural organizations of their institutions and the influence the structures have on them, some of the female lecturers made the following remarks, “The structure of this institution is uneven as far as gender representation is concerned. As a result of this, I sometimes take a back seat. Other times, I try to make contributions but this makes me feel like I am a fighter” (Gakenia, O.I. 1/10/98). “The structure of this institution favours men. It does not give me enough room to exercise my gifts and talents. This makes me feel inferior” (Muasya, O.I. 2/11/98). “Due to the male dominance in the structures of this institution, it becomes very difficult to convince all members of the board and other church leaders on issues concerning women” (Onyango, O.I. 16/3/99). “This institution is run by a board that is male-dominated. Almost all its members are male pastors. I would like to see women represented in the board to encourage female students” (Wanjema, O.I. 17/3/99).

The administration of certain theological institutions were said to be gender insensitive. Kibor (O.I. 2/11/98) cited two cases. First, that the administration communicates official matters to her through her husband who is also a lecturer in the institution. This is done in spite of the fact that the letters are addressed to her and she has her own pigeonhole. Second, she cited a time that both her husband and herself went for further studies abroad. Her husband received a study leave but she did not. On enquiring, she was told that they are expected to work as a team and therefore, her husband’s study leave was enough for both of them. The two incidents cited here point to a tendency of female teachers to be ignored. Communicating to a
staff member through her husband staff member is a sign of lack of recognition of the woman as independent worker. The case of study leave is quite discriminating. If both persons are members of staff in an institution, it would be logical that their cases be considered independently and thus given study leave individually. Their contribution to the institution is not a shared job. The practice of viewing a couple’s work as a team work is in line with some church’s treatment of couples in church ministry discussed earlier. That is, both husband and wife serving in the church and being paid a salary of one. It is a clear case of injustice.

The experiences of Kibor are not unique to theological institutions. For instance, the Kenya government only revised the policy of house allowances for female civil servants a few years back. Previously, married women were not paid house allowances with the argument that their husbands were paid. All institutions, whether public or private need to recognize women as bona fide employees hence handle their matters with justice. This requires revision of institutional policies that may be biased against women employees. Viewing a wife and husband’s work as ‘teamwork’ whereas each one of them performs duties independently is unfair.

The female lecturers pointed out several issues that they would like improved for their effectiveness in their work. They included the following. First, there is need for meaningful gender representation in the institutional structures. This would help incorporate women’s views in the decision-making process of the institutions. We have just noted that women do not hold authoritative offices. Second, is the discrepancy in salaries paid to male and female teachers with similar qualifications. This is an issue that can be quite demoralizing for the female teachers. It is a sign of discrimination. Third, they cited the need to lift restrictions for women. One such restriction is of women not being allowed to preach in the chapel (Gakenia, O.I. 1/10/98; Leonard, O.I. 2/11/98; Muasya, O.I. 2/11/98; Onyango, O.I. 16/3/99).
Muasya (O.I. 2/11/98) pointed out that as a woman, she is neither allowed to preach in the chapel, nor to hold a leadership position in the administration of the college. For Leonard (O.I. 2/11/98) lack of representation of women in the decision-making structures of the institutions makes women’s issues to be overlooked or not considered with the seriousness they require. Female teachers of AIC-sponsored institutions expressed the above issues. AIC does not ordain women and therefore does not allow them to preach. This restriction is practised in their institutions as a way of confirming to the female students that preaching will not be part of their roles in the church, even after graduating from theological institutions.

The foregoing information seems to point out that the environment of theological institutions is not favourable to women. This could be partly explained by the fact that most colleges never had women students and teachers from their inception. Therefore, women are newcomers and are viewed and treated as such by their colleagues as well as the structures of the institutions. Nevertheless, this does not justify the institutions to treat women unjustly. The presence of women requires the revision of structures and policies so that they can be accommodated. Women feel that their presence is visible and should be recognized.

4.2.2 Curriculum

Theological institutions in Kenya continue to concentrate on theological curriculum based on traditional subject areas associated with theology. Such courses include: Biblical Studies, Church History, Liturgy, Christian Ethics, Systematic Theology, Moral Theology, and Pastoral Theology. In such a scenario, gender studies and women’s concerns neither form a subject of reflection nor find a place in the curriculum (Howe, 1982:162; Kemdirim, 1999:46-47).

An examination of the curricula of two theological institutions, namely, PACC and NIST could strengthen our argument. At PACC, the B.A in Bible and Theology, and
the B.A in Bible and Translation studies curricula have four main divisions and examples of courses as follows:


**Division of Theology** – Bibliology, Pneumatology, Christology, and Systematic Theology.

**Division of Church Ministries** – Spiritual Formation, Evangelism, Missiology, Homiletics and Church history.

**Division of General Education** – Research and Writing, Health and Social Sciences, World Religions in Africa, Public Speaking, and Introduction to Philosophy.

The B.A in Bible and Translation has an extra division on Linguistics.

The curriculum of PACC does not have any courses on women studies or gender issues. When we enquired from the principal in 1998, when we began field research, the reason as to why such courses were not included in the curriculum, he had this to say, “Lecturers are expected to be gender sensitive”. A further interview with the academic dean in 2003 showed that the curriculum is as it was in 1998. The dean noted that in the contemporary setting, the inclusion of gender studies in theological studies is essential. He pointed out that there are several areas of study such as those involving pastoral ministries where traditional gender biases could be encountered, and that the presence of women and men in such courses would require that biases and assumptions be addressed. He thus contended that gender studies are relevant in theological institutions for they promote inclusiveness of both men and women.

NIST has both Masters and Diploma programs. The Masters programme includes Master of Divinity, and Master of Arts. The two share common divisions of courses as follows:

Division of Theological studies – Theology I, II &II, Theological Research and Writing, Christianity and Society, and Theological Systems.

Division of Missions, Evangelism and Historical Theology – Personal Evangelism, Disciple Building, Theology and Missions, and Introduction to Church History.

Division of Pastoral Leadership – Personal Leadership Development, and Principles of Preaching I, II.


Division of Field Ministry – Field Ministry I, & II, and Vocational Leadership

An assessment of the diploma and certificate programmes for women at NIST showed that their curriculum did not differ much from the Masters one. Courses under Biblical Counselling Leadership, and Ministry, as well as Theological Studies carried similar course descriptions as those of the Masters programmes. Some notable differences could be found among elective courses such as, Youth Ministry, Sunday school Ministry, Role of Pastor’s Wife, Music and Worship in the Church, and Social Ethics. The examples given of the curricula at PACC and NIST reflect the findings in most of the institutions visited.

A visit to St. Paul’s United Theological College in 1998 showed that the institution’s curriculum was similar to those of PACC and NIST. In response to the absence of gender studies in the curriculum, the then principal had this to say, “This college has not reached the level of introducing gender studies”. A visit to the same institution in
2003 showed that there had been an inclusion of a course on ‘African Women Theology’. The inclusion of this course is owed to the presence of one female lecturer since 2000 who is also the Dean of Theology (Mombo, O.I. 30/5/03). According to Mombo, the introduction of the course was not easy. Those who supported the idea faced opposition from the Board of Governors, Church leaders, as well as some male lecturers. The initial names proposed for the course were rejected. They were, African Women Studies, African Feminist Studies, and African Women Theologies. The accepted name was African Women Theology. This course is currently taught as an elective. Though its proponents would wish to have it as a core course (Mombo).

In order to create objectivity in the teaching of the course on African Women Theology, the dean ensures that the course is always taught by two lecturers a male and a female at most. At St. Paul’s United Theological College, lecturers have been sensitized to bring out women’s perspectives in other subjects such as, Biblical Theology, Liberation Theologies, Systematic Theology, Christology and Ecclesiology. There is also the intentional move to have course bibliographies that are inclusive of writings by women. The dean has made deliberate efforts to source for gender sensitive books for the institution’s library.

Generally, there seems to be an element of unwillingness to appreciate the value of women and gender studies in theological institutions. With this, most of the trained clergy come out of theological colleges unaware of gender issues. It is no wonder then that the male clergy are sometimes in the forefront in opposing the inclusion of women in theological education and church leadership. Laywomen in the church, who have not been exposed to gender issues become stumbling blocks to the inclusion of women in church leadership positions. Majority of the female and some male lecturers interviewed were of the opinion that courses on gender issues are
necessary. They would go a long way to reflect on the importance of women and men in theological education and church ministry (Kibor, O.I. 2/11/98; Leonard, O.I. 2/11/98; Onyango, O.I. 16/3/99; Ouma, O.I. 15/6/99).

The inclusion of gender in the curricula of theological institutions could further help in alleviating biases and prejudices that female students face from their male colleagues. Courses on gender would enlighten the male students that throughout the history of the church, women and men have been involved in church ministry and have contributed towards its growth. An appropriate theological curriculum would enable women to achieve recognition and the right to compete on equal terms with the men in the field of theological education.

The foregoing section shows that the structures of theological institutions have a part to play in the experiences of women therein. The environment in the institutions is not always favourable for female students and lecturers. For theological education to be inclusive of women in a significant way, these structures need to be transformed. Areas to be transformed include; increase in the numbers of female students and faculty, and the latter’s inclusion in decision-making organs of the institutions; the transformation of institutional policies concerning gender relations with a view to having an inclusive community; and the transformation of the curricula to be inclusive of women’s studies. Such transformations would make the place, role and contribution of women acceptable and valued.

4.3. The Influence of the Church in Theological Education

In chapter three, it was noted that all the theological institutions in this study are church-related. This means that they are sponsored and managed by churches. Some are purely denominational while others are inter-denominational. The sponsoring
churches participate in the management of the institutions in several ways. These include: the formation of governing boards and councils, appointment of staff, admission of students and the approval of the curriculum.

Concerning the formation of Boards of Governors (BOG) the study established the following: At St. Paul’s United Theological College, the board is made up of persons from the institution’s member churches. These happen to be church leaders who are all male, and most of them clergy. As at June 2003, the board only had one woman (Dean of theology, O.I. 30/5/03). At the PCEA Pastoral institute, the board draws its membership from four PCEA regions, a member from each region. Most of the nominees are male clergy (The Principal, O.I. 26/5/03). This appears to be a general trend in other institutions.

Concerning the appointment of staff, the study established the following: The staff appointment committees at NIST and the PCEA Pastoral Institute are constituted of the members of the BOG and leaders of the sponsoring churches. Responding to the issue on the appointment of staff, three female teachers made remarks as follows; “The institution belongs to the AIC church. Therefore, no appointments can be done without consultation between the college and the church leadership (Mutua, O.I. 2/11/98). “The church makes faculty recommendations to the college” (Turley, O.I. 17/3/99). “One needs to be recommended by his/her church to be considered for interview” (Gakenia, O.I. 1/10/98).

Since most theological institutions receive their students from churches, it follows that churches will only recommend candidates whose contributions they require for their ministry. The influence of churches in the enrolment and maintenance of students in theological institutions takes various dimensions. To begin with, the policies and attitudes of churches towards the ministry of women are very important. It seems as if most of the churches in question do not fully accept women in certain
ministries. These churches tend to hold the view that the "real" work of the church such as preaching, baptizing, burying, marrying and administering sacraments must be done by men. Women are to take the "lesser" tasks of ushering, catechism and teaching Sunday school. Though assumed 'lesser tasks' these are valuable undertakings in that they lay the foundations of ministries in the church. What is required for them is to be recognized and valued. These views influence churches when making selections and recommendations for the candidates to join theological institutions. Quite often, preference is given to men as per the ministries they are expected to serve in (Doely, 1970:63; Mutua, O.I. 2/11/98; Kanyari, O.I. 16/3/99; Zande, O.I. 16/3/99; Kiilu, O.I. 15/6/99; Wanjema, O.I. 17/3/99; Fulton, O.I. 15/6/99; Savala, O.I. 5/6/00).

While commenting on the role of the church on women’s access to theological institutions, some of the above cited respondents made the following observations:

The church contributes to the low percentage of women in theological institutions. This is because leaders opposed to the participation of women in church ministry discourage women applicants. Others refuse to recommend women for admission to theological institutions. Similarly, some church members openly refuse to be served by women ministers. Such practices act as deterrents to would-be women candidates for theological institutions (Kiilu, O.I. 15/6/99).

"Some churches do not allocate the theologically trained women the responsibilities for which they qualified. They also fail to sensitize women on the opportunities they have to join theological institutions" (Kanyari, O.I.16/3/99). "In most cases, churches recommend more men than women to join theological institutions. The priority is always given to men" (Zande, O.I. 16/3/99). "The church has failed in many instances to recognize the importance of women in ministry and have at times ignored them. Such churches do not encourage women to go for theological training. Some churches argue that the ministries women are involved in, such as Sunday school, women’s fellowship and youth ministries do not require theological training" (Mutua, O.I. 2/11/98).
Furthermore, some churches fail to explain and articulate their policies on ministerial formation for women. Such churches remain silent on the issues such as those pertaining to the ordination of women and the role of women in church leadership. These characteristics are associated with evangelical churches such as AIC and the Deliverance Church. In some churches, there is lack of uniformity concerning the role of women, such that women could be found preaching in an AIC in one part of the country, but not in another one. Cases were cited whereby women trained in theology are allowed to preach in some AIC churches in the Rift Valley but are not allowed to preach in some AIC churches in Eastern Province, yet they belong to the same denomination (Kilonzo, O.I. 2/11/98; Sang, O.I. 2/11/98; Muthama, O.I. 17/3/99; Soy, O.I. 5/6/00).

On her part, Kilonzo (O.I. 2/11/98) remarked that she did not understand the operations of her church, the AIC concerning the role of theologically trained women. She said:

Some of the church leaders say a woman cannot be a pastor and that is why women do not preach in the churches. However, it happens that women are found preaching in the rural settings but prohibited in the urban churches. This discrepancy causes confusion. For instance, while at Kitale, I am not allowed to preach, but while at Lodwar, I am allowed to preach. Such double standards leave theologically trained women confused and frustrated such that some of them get engaged in ministries that are not consumerate with their training.

The churches’ responses toward women as mentioned above shows that churches do not have the will to empower women to fully participate in their ministries. Churches seem to have institutionalized sexism that denies women power and freedom. These churches have over long periods of time established, maintained and implemented policies that are designed to limit the participation, opportunities, power and functions of women. This contributes to lack of support for the involvement of women in theological education (Sindab, 1992:31; Vanderhoof, O.I. 5/6/00; Fulton, O.I. 15/6/99; Gakenia, O.I. 1/10/98).
The above discussion shows that churches have a direct and powerful influence in the management of theological institutions. Such influence touches on the administrative structures of the institutions, enrolment of students, appointment of staff, as well as the curricula taught. Therefore, any transformation of theological institutions to be inclusive of women who are seemingly ‘late comers’ requires the will of the sponsoring churches the women belong to, as well as churches that manage the institutions. Responses from both female students and faculty show a need for churches to re-examine their policies on ministerial formation for women, and their contribution to the church.

4.3.1 Ordination of Women

In most Christian traditions, ordination is understood as the setting apart of certain individuals to hold special authority within the congregation. This involves authority to preach, administer sacraments, and to supervise the affairs of the congregation. In the early church, the concept of ordination rite and clericalism took several dimensions. Augusburger (1998:77-80), observes that in the apostolic period, all members of the Christian community were greatly involved in worship service. Baptism, rather than ordination was a license for work in the church. The lay people, both men and women, participated in liturgy, brought gifts to the altar and had a part to play in the teaching of the orthodox doctrine. The issue of ordination emerged during the post-apostolic period in the process of choosing persons to succeed the apostles.

Russel (1993:52), makes an observation that ordination was originally for the purpose of preaching and teaching, while the offering of the Eucharist by a man or a woman who was the host in the local ‘house church’ did not seem to present a problem. Surprisingly, it is the offering of Eucharist and other sacraments that has come to signify the privilege of ordination in the RCC and the Protestant churches. Tucker (1992), makes an observation that the ordination of women is not a new
phenomenon. This is because historical records show that women have been ordained since the early centuries. Women were formally ordained as deacons, though with resistance from male clergy and laity.

In the course of time, ordination of women as deacons was discontinued. As we noted in chapter two, immediately following the post-apostolic period, the church became highly institutionalized and clerical. These two concepts relegate women to subordinate positions in the church. Women began to get excluded from leading in the liturgy as well. The patristic writings of the third and fourth century symbolized women with evil, sexuality and sin. These writings greatly influenced the church’s view on women.

Carr (1988:47) and Augusburger (1998:95), concur that the emphasis on male clericalism in the fourth century left the laity as spectators. The gap between the clergy and laity was further widened after the conversion of Emperor Constantine in the fourth century and thus the legitimization of Christianity as a state religion. This move saw bishops enjoying immense prestige. Bishops took over power to preach and to judge Christians. Ordination was then viewed as a symbol of power. By the mid-fourth century, the clergy could be identified publicly by use of distinctive vestments. Staples (1998:141-142), while commenting on ordination during the medieval period, points out that the ordained got empowered to celebrate the sacraments. The rite of ordination was also elevated to the status of a sacrament.

During the Reformation, Christian reformers rejected the medieval views of ordination and priesthood and instead affirmed the priesthood of all believers. They taught that every person has direct access to God through Jesus Christ, the one mediator between God and humans. This concept led to the reduction of the gap between the clergy and laity (Staples, 1998:144-146).
The Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox churches maintain ordination to priesthood as a sacrament that can be traced historically to Jesus Christ and his apostles. They therefore see ordination and priesthood as a form of apostolic succession. On their part, Protestant churches, influenced by the teachings of Martin Luther do not have a sacramental priesthood but have public rituals for conferring the office of minister on baptized persons who meet the criteria determined by church leaders (Staples, 1998:147). Clifford (2001:139-140) advances Staples' observation by pointing out that, in most protestant churches, ordination is an extension or specification of baptism that requires public recognition of the special gifts or charismas of the person being ordained. In most ordination rituals, laying-on of hands by those already ordained is perceived as a symbolic sign of consecration.

Clark & Richardson (1996:263), assert that women in main line Protestant denominations have had a much harder struggle towards their ordination. The first cited ordination of a woman was that of Antoinette Brown in 1853 as a congregationist minister in America. Many denominations refused to ordain women well into the twentieth century. It was not until after 1950, that two branches of the Presbyterian Church, the Methodist, and some branches of the Lutherans, and the Episcopalians granted women the right to be ordained.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, discussions regarding the ordination of women were intensified in the RCC, Protestant and Anglican Communion churches. Increasing numbers of women voiced their desires to be ordained because they felt a call from God to serve their communities as priests. At the time when the Protestant women were seeking ordination in their churches, Roman Catholic women were also beginning to ask for active participation in the Church, including ministries that used to be preserved for priests (Clifford, 2001:141).
Many Christian denominations have wrestled with the issue of ordination. Some of them have attempted to find support for their positions from scriptures. Dudley (1998:400), observes that the ordination of women is not mentioned in scripture. While the qualifications for ministry are listed in the New Testament, a discussion of ordination is generally absent. Confronted by lack of direct scriptural evidence on the subject, both proponents and opponents revert to use of texts that deal with the service and functions of ministry. The issue of women’s ordination lacks scriptural support due to the fact that the whole debate is more of a product of church tradition than of biblical precedent, as Tucker (1992:206) observes.

On its stand against the ordination of women, the RCC argument is rooted in three issues. First, is the long held church tradition that provides no basis for women’s ordination. The argument here is that there is no evidence that the RCC ever ordained women during its long history. Second, is the witness of sacred scripture. The church argues that the New Testament provides no evidence that Jesus considered any women for the priesthood. The apostles were all men. The third argument has to do with the religious symbol in the person of Christ. The church argues that the priest acts in the role of Christ to the point of being his very image. It is therefore required that the priest be male (Clifford, 2001:142-143). The assumption is that Christ is male.

It is worth noting that the current Pope John Paul II, following Pope Paul VI’s argument, has emphasized that the RCC has no authority to ordain women. In an apostolic letter “on ordination of women” in May 1994, he stated that the teaching of the RCC concerning the ordination of women is definite and that it is not open to further debate. He argues that a male priesthood is a tradition of the church and as such, is part of God’s plan (Clifford, 2001:145; Clark & Richardson, 1996:264).
Among Protestant churches in Kenya are some that ordain women for pastoral ministry while others do not. Most of the churches that have allowed for the ordination of women began to do so after long struggles of women and long debates by churches’ authorities. Examples of such churches include the PCEA, the ACK and the MCK. These churches argue that there are no biblical and theological barriers to the ordination of women. They also observe that there are certain pastoral ministries such as counselling which could need the services of both women and men. They echo the New Testament teaching on “priesthood of all believers” (MCK, 1975; PCEA Constitution, 1985:49). The MCK and the PCEA churches in Kenya allowed for the ordination of women in 1975 and 1973 respectively.

Some of the Protestant churches that do not allow for the ordination of women actually train them in theology. Majority of such churches belong to the Evangelical Church tradition. Examples of these are: the Deliverance Church, the AIC and the Kenya Assemblies of God (KAG). These are churches that lay emphasis on authority of scripture. They argue that there is no provision for ordination of women in the Bible (Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya, 1994:53-54).

Women who belong to churches that allow female ordination often face obstacles in their work. This is perpetuated by the existence of discrepancy between the theology of the churches and theological practices. This refers to a church whose policy allows women to be ordained, yet the same church does not ensure that ordained women have equal opportunity for ministry. As a result of this, some ordained women face resistance. Machaffie (1986:142) asserts that some of this resistance could be attributed to traditional views regarding the biblical commands that Christian women be silent and exercise no authority over men.

Opposition from male clergy could emerge from their view of women as competitors in the ministry. Others view the presence of women clergy as upsetting
to the harmony and stability of the church organization. Given such sentiments, the acceptance of a woman minister may become a point of controversy. Following are views of ordained women engaged in church ministry. Dingili (O.I. 5/6/00), an assistant pastor in the Free Methodist Church said, “The church only responds well to ordained women who show exceptional abilities and talents compared to men”. Muiruri (O.I. 10/6/00), a diocesan youth organizer in the Anglican Church in Kenya said, “The church is at times uncomfortable with ordained women and will not utilize them as required. Some churches prefer the services of laywomen for which payment is not given”.

Malinga (2002:3), the first woman bishop of the Methodist church in South Africa says this about her experience in the ordained ministry:

It was only when I was already in the ministry that I realized how sexist most Christian men were, especially the ministers. I naively thought that the Methodist church’s acceptance of women leadership meant that all the leaders of the Methodist church were committed to the leadership of women. To my surprise, very few even accepted it. It has been a decision of principle but in reality it meant I had to struggle to come to terms with what kind of ministry I wanted to offer.

The foregoing sentiments seem to indicate that the issue of women’s ordination is still contentious. There exists a discrepancy between the ordained men and women when it comes to recognition and acceptance. A Baptist minister illustrates this with a statement against the ordination of women. He says:

If a man stands in the pulpit, the average woman is not unduly affected by his acceptance. But if a woman stands there, men being men will often find their thoughts are less on the word spoken than on the speaker.... Not all men are pure. For the majority of them the battle with impure thoughts is a lot more severe than the average woman realizes. The pulpit, which is to be of help towards holiness, should not provide an additional snake, which of course it will not do if the occupant is man (Cited, Jewett, 1980:10).

This argument regards a woman as a sex object rather than a human person. This is also an expression of sexism in a church that seems to have made ministry an exclusive calling of men.
A similar statement from a report by an Archbishop’s Commission on women and the ministry in 1936 said:

We maintain that the ministration of women will tend to produce the lowering of the spiritual tone of Christian worship, such as is not produced by the ministrations of men before congregations largely or exclusively female.... It would appear to be simple matter of fact that in the thoughts and desires of that sex the natural is more easily made subordinate to the supernatural, the carnal to the spiritual, than is the case with men and that the ministrations of a male priesthood do not normally arouse that side of female nature which should be quiescent during the times of adoration of Almighty God... (Cited, Furlong, 1984:2)

This illustration is a further insult on women. It depicts a woman as a temptress, the one who disturbs man and leads him away from his spiritual pre-occupations. Furlong (1984:1-2), argues that this attitude could be seen as an example of projection on the part of the men, who, uncomfortable with the disturbing aspects of sexual desires put blame on the women. It explains how and why women continue to be excluded from positions of status and decision-making in the church. The above observations bring to the realization of this study that the subject of women’s ordination remains contentious even in churches that ordain women. Lack of utilization and recognition of ordained women in the church may act as a deterrent factor for women aspiring to join theological institutions. Similarly, lack of ordination for theologically trained women could act as a discouragement for women aspiring to join theological institutions. Our contention is that the subject of women’s ordination requires constant revision by all Christian churches.

In this chapter the experiences of women in theological institutions have been explored and found not to be pleasant. Women struggle through their college lives as they battle with both structural and social obstacles in their day-to-day living. The chapter has also made an analysis of the factors that contribute to these experiences. The structures of theological institutions and the policies of the concerned churches have come out as major contributing factors. Such structures are male-centred and male dominated, aspects that lead to limited opportunities for women to study theology.
So far, it has been established that there is a need for both the churches and theological institutions to transform their structures and policies to be accommodating to women. Given this scenario, the task of the next chapter is to explore strategies that could make theological education more inclusive of women.
CHAPTER FIVE

STRATEGIES THAT COULD ENHANCE THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN KENYA

5.1 Introduction

In chapters three and four, it has been established that women face hindrances as they access theological education, face challenges while in theological institutions and encounter obstacles in placement. Further factors that lead to such hindrances have been identified. They include: the structures and policies from both theological institutions and their sponsoring churches. In the light of such information, this chapter endeavours to explore strategies that could enhance, and, or improve women’s participation in theological education. Strategies that have been identified include the following:

(i) Advocacy at the local church level and in theological institutions
(ii) Transformation of the curricula in theological institutions
(iii) Provision of a conducive environment, both in the church and in theological institutions for both men and women
(iv) Networking among women theologians, lay churchwomen, and men in the church.

5.2 Advocacy

To counter women’s exclusion from theological education, an intentional process of change needs to be initiated. This could include; the conscientization of women, the church and theological institutions about the importance of theological education for women; a move to open up theological education to women; the intentional distribution of resources to women for further study and research; the intentional recruitment of women as faculty members; the
intentional employment of women graduates of theology in their areas of training and finally, support for the ordination of women.

The underlying factor in the promotion of women's participation in theological education is the conscientization of women, the church and theological institutions about the need for women to be encouraged to study theology. There is need for social mobilization with the aim of creating awareness among church policy-makers and church members to promote theological education for women. Njagi (O.I. 1/10/98) contends that such sensitization would be aimed at church leaders since they have an important output in making decisions on those to join theological institutions.

According to informants, there is need for motivation and support for campaigns to inform women and girls about the possibility for theological education. This could be done through several means such as: the media, distribution of prospectus and brochures of theological institutions, conferences and workshops (Sitienci, O.I. 2/11.98; Mbugua, O.I. 2/11/98; Musyoki, O.I. 17/3/99). Through such means, women could be made aware that they could train in theology and other non-ordained church ministries such as, teaching in Bible schools, working in counselling centres and para-church organizations (Mutua, O.I. 2/11/98).

Theologically trained women and those in theological institutions as students and faculty could organize ways of meeting women and men to sensitise them about the importance of theological education for women. While responding to this issue, some female students and graduates of theology contended that they could participate in symposia and workshops in churches, high schools and youth camps to sensitise the youth especially girls, about the need for training women in theology. Such workshops would be organized by the theological institutions in conjunction with the institutions to be visited. They would use such forums to
encourage women who aspire to study theology (Wambugu, O.I. 23/9/98; Muhia, O.I. 23/9/98; Mwijia, O.I. 1/10/98; Njagi, O.I. 1/10/98; Manthi, O.I. 2/11/98; Nzuki, O.I. 2/11/98). Watoro, (O.I. 17/3/99) and Muasya (O.I. 2/11/98) are of the opinion that the administration of the various institutions could send female teachers to visit churches and youth camps to give talks about the involvement of women in theological education.

Some other respondents held the opinion that theological institutions could organize missions for female students to visit churches that do not have women clergy. Through their presence and discussions, the students would act as role models for girls aspiring to study theology (Ndwiga, O.I. 16/3/99; Kaumo, O.I. 17/3/99; Ndungili, O.I. 5/6/00). Others felt that theological institutions could make a deliberate move of sending female students for practicals in all parts of the country and especially in churches that train women in theology but do not ordain them. This way, they could also act as role models for girls aspiring to study theology.

Similarly, churches could make arrangements for women engaged in church work to visit theological institutions in order to familiarize themselves with theological education and what it entails (Mbwambo, O.I. 2/11/98; Maithya, O.I. 2/11/98; Murage, O.I. 16/3/99). Murage, an Anglican woman trainee, was of the opinion that sending students for practicals in ACK dioceses that do not ordain women would serve as a sensitization to the churches to open up ordained ministry for women.

The church has a role to play in creating awareness to their congregations about the implications and importance of training women in theological education. This refers to all women engaged in full-time church ministry whether ordained or not. In addition, the churches’ leadership could engage clergywomen in routine work
in all the ministerial roles in which they qualify. This would enable the congregations to have contact with them, hence have an experience of having women perform. The assumption is that having such experiences with clergywomen would transform the resistance of the congregations, who would then be open to accept the women. This would further help change the attitudes and perceptions that congregations have which makes some of them perceive female ministers in stereotyped terms. This change of attitude and perceptions could in turn act as an encouragement for more women to venture into theological education with the purpose of serving the church and the community (Lehman, 1985:144; Carr, 1988:18; Onyango, O.I. 23/9/98; Muhia, O.I. 23/9/98; Mutuma, O.I. 1/10/98; Mwihia, O.I. 1/10/98; Njagi, O.I. 1/10/98; Mutuma, O.I. 1/10/98; Mwihia, O.I. 1/10/98; Njagi, O.I. 1/10/98).

Various means of advocacy could be used to enable women access theological institutions. Quite often, women applicants to theological institutions have been subjected to facing all male interview boards, an aspect that impacts on their performance in the interviews as was noted in chapters one and three. It would therefore be necessary to have women representatives in the interview and admission boards of churches and theological institutions. These could be women who are interested in women issues and are more aware of the need for structural change in theological education. They would be expected to address important issues with regard to the inclusion of women and their perspectives in theological education. Such presence and participation would bring women’s voices to the decision-making level. Their presence would also act as a source of encouragement for women applicants to theological institutions (Giltner, 1985:142; Adeoti, 1998:115; Gakenia, O.I. 1/10/98; Mbugua, O.I. 2/11/98; Leonard, O.I. 2/11/98; Morrison, O.I. 1/7/3/99; Vanderhoof, O.I. 5/6/00).

Notably, theological institutions could reserve quotas for women students. This could be a way of motivating churches to send more women to theological
institutions. The boards of governors of theological institutions could advocate for a certain percentage of vacancies to be reserved for (qualified) women. If there is a priority for women to receive theological education, they would get motivated hence enrol in large numbers (Giltner, 1985:143; Engel & Trott, 1996:40). While supporting the use of quotas for recruitment, Muchemi (O.I. 8/10/98) argued for an even distribution of vacancies to men and women who qualify to be enrolled in theological institutions.

Concerning recruitment of students in theological institutions, some informants, both students and teachers were of the opinion that they would be utilized in the exercise. Those who supported the involvement of female lecturers and students, argued that given their experiences and knowledge of theological education, they would be in a position to identify and encourage women aspiring to join theological institutions at all levels (Kamau, O.I. 23/9/98; Soma, O.I. 23/9/98; Muchemi, O.I. 2/11/98; Mbuguah, O.I. 2/11/98).

Once admitted to theological institutions, funding for women’s education is yet another gesture that could be enabling for them. This would require churches, theological institutions and any other church-related organizations to set up scholarship funds for women. Such funds could serve as a source of motivation to women, given that churches seem to have concentrated more on sponsoring men as opposed to women (Oduyoye, O.I. 1997:64). This gesture could also be extended to women who qualify for further education after graduating from theological institutions. It could also be of use to female teachers who aspire to further their theological studies. Both students and faculty shared these sentiments (Mutua, O.I. 23/9/98; Njeri, O.I. 1/10/98; York, O.I. 17/3/99; Wanjema, O.I. 17/3/99; Towett, O.I. 5/6/00; Maina, O.I. 5/6/00).
Churches and theological institutions could deliberately set up special scholarships for women in form of endowment funds. An example of such a fund is that established by the WCC, department of Ecumenical Theological Education. This is the Sarah Chakko Theological Educational Fund. This fund was launched during the celebration of the end of WCC “Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women 1988-1998”. The fund is named after Sarah Chakko, the first woman president of the WCC. She was an Indian woman of the Orthodox Syrian Church who had a vocation to teach women. The fund seeks to restore hope for those women who strive for theological education but do not have the resources or time to be away from their families for long periods. The income from the fund is to be used to offer scholarships for both lay and ordained women to study theology, ranging from the short-term ecumenical seminars to the Doctor of Ministry degree (Haworth, 2000:50-51).

In chapter four, it was noted that some churches under-utilize theologically trained women. This means that such women are not enabled to fully exercise their skills in the work of the church. This study advocates for churches’ commitment in the employment of women trained in theology in all areas of ministry. This includes their involvement in leadership in all and including the highest administrative organs of the church if they qualify. This move could act as a motivation for women who could be interested in pursuing theological studies. Seeing trained women engaged in the ministry and leadership of the church would motivate those who aspire to join full-time church ministry, to pursue theological training.

The other issue that this study advocates is the ordination of women. Ordination for women could be a strategy that could promote women’s theological education. This goes for churches that train women in theology but do not ordain them such as those in the evangelical tradition. The ordination of women is a progressive
factor in the struggles of women to participate fully in the life and leadership of the church and of its councils (Omari, 1997:156; Gakenia, O.I. 1/10/98; Onyango, O.I. 10/3/99; Wanjema, O.I. 17/3/99).

The contention of this study is that if churches and theological institutions were to promote theological education for women through advocacy campaigns, this would lead to great improvement in the participation of women in theological education. Issues of support in admission and funding would act as an encouragement for women candidates of theological institutions. In addition to this, the assurance of placement after training would boost such women’s motivation to pursue theological training. Such moves would help in the elevation of women trained in theology in their ministries in the church. It would also sensitize church congregations on the need to appreciate, recognize, and support women theologians both ordained and non-ordained, as they offer services to the church.

5.3 Transformation of the Curriculum

The analysis in chapter four established that most theological institutions have curricula that lack gender inclusiveness and gender sensitivity. This study advocates for an intentional revision of such curricula with the interests, concerns and insights of women taken into consideration. While undertaking the revision exercise, theological institutions could carry out studies to identify the specific cultural, religious and any other issues that constrain theological education for women. On the basis of their findings, the reviewers could then design programmes that could accommodate the needs, concerns, and perspectives of women (Lehman, 1985:15; Kemdirim, 199:46; Kibor, O.I. 2/11/98; Mutua, O.I. 2/11/98; York, O.I. 17/3/99).
While undertaking review, the new curricula would have to take into consideration; the introduction of feminist studies in theology, the facilitation of research on issues that are of concern to women, and the provision of books about, and by women in church ministry. Feminist studies could help recover the lost history of women in Christianity, such as, their roles as leaders, scholars and founders in patristic and medieval times, their role as religious and social reformers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Such recovery would act as a motivating factor to women to become theological scholars as well as leaders in the church circles.

Feminist theology would challenge the way women are portrayed in scriptures, church fathers and theology in general, hence seek a more holistic approach in order to include many perspectives in the developing of theology. Feminist scholarship has an assumption that the inequality between women and men is a cultural construct that is socially transmitted. Feminist theorists such as Ruether (1975, 1983), Fiorenza (1983, 1996) and Russel (1993), point out that the discrimination women experience is rooted in the interpretation of humanity in dualistic perspectives such as, women being equated with passion, body, nature and silence, while men are equated with rationality, mind, culture and discourse. All these categories establish a hierarchy in which the concepts equated with men are superior to those equated with women. These concepts have a lot of influence in most patriarchal cultural set-ups, such that challenging them is equated with challenging authority. Feminist studies would seek to redress them.

This study contends that the inclusion of feminist studies in the curricula of theological institutions would open new areas of research based on women’s experiences. Such research would provide learners with new forms of theological reflection such as women’s perceptions of leadership, scripture, and spirituality. This information would enable women and men to reflect on women’s
experiences using new terminologies. Women would reflect on their experiences of sexuality, mothering, reproductive health, domestic violence, human rights and poverty among others, and men would learn women’s experiences and perspectives on such issues of life. Such reflection would be helpful not only to women but also to men, especially the clergy who would be sensitized about how such issues affect women differently from men. Such information would help them when dealing with affected women and men in their churches.

St. Paul’s United Theological College seems to be moving towards this direction. As noted earlier in chapter 4, the college has a course on African Women Theology. The introduction of this course has promoted research in women’s studies by both women and men students and faculty (Mombo, O.I. 30/5/03). The researches have been facilitated by the presence of a well-stocked library with books and other related literature on feminist theology and other women studies in sociology, and psychology amongst other subjects. Mombo asserts that students who take the course are required to read and review texts written by women theologians, particularly those by African women.

Studies in gender would help theological institutions to avoid producing ministers, both women and men, who are ignorant to gender issues. When women’s experiences are taken into account in theological articulation, their concerns will make up a priority item on the agenda of the church.

Longchar (2001:8), identifies the methodology used in teaching in theological institutions as an area worth of consideration. He points out that learning should be both theoretical and practical. The implication of this is that courses taught would aim at transforming concepts and also leading to changes in attitudes for teachers as well as for students. There would be need to link coursework with real life experiences. This could be done through the introduction of field
research in the churches and the larger society. For instance, students would visit various churches and make observations on the roles played by women and men. They would also visit clinics to observe the role of women and men in healthcare. This would bring students to real life experiences of women in all spheres of life. Such insights would help them relate to other expressions of gender studies.

The informants in the study were of the view that alternative methods of theological studies could be adopted. Currently, the theological institutions covered in this study offer only full-time programmes of study. The informants argued that the provision of part-time programmes and TEE could provide an opportunity for mothers with multiple roles to pursue theological studies. These sentiments were shared by among others (Onyango, O.I. 16/3/99, Muatine, O.I. 17/3/99, Chepkorir, O.I. 5/6/00, and Muiruri, O.I. 10/6/00).

The contention of the study is that the inclusion of gender studies in the curricula of theological institutions is overdue. Gender issues cut across all aspects of life, political, economic, social and religious spheres. Gender studies are an aspect that cannot be ignored in any academic field in the present age. Researches in gender issues help policy-makers in addressing matters that affect women and men differently. Such researches also help in the eradication of gender biases, in the church and society at large that could be based on ignorance. Given that theological institutions prepare persons who deal with humanity and their day-to-day challenges, it would be of importance that such studies are encouraged.

5.4. Conducive Environment

In addition to advocacy and transformation of the curricula for theological institutions, it is imperative that the environment in which such changes are implemented be conducive for women. The structures, as well as human relations would need to be transformed so that they can be accommodating and supporting
to women. A conducive environment would enable women to effectively pursue theological studies and later make contributions to the churches.

The argument of this study is that mere increase of women in structures that are not accommodating to them is not meaningful. A new model of power and new structures would be ideal for both men and women to achieve mutual human relations. Such models would involve the sharing of leadership by both students and staff. For female students, their participation in leadership would be in two fronts, in the students’ governing councils, which are elective, and in class representations which are appointments.

All theological institutions visited had students’ governing councils. In almost all the institutions membership was found to be all male, with some women as deputy chairpersons. The absence of women in the students’ governing councils could be attributed to lack of support by fellow students. It could also be attributed to the minimal number of female students. Atieno, Maina, Mwayuuli, and Soy (O.I.5/6/00) concurred that there seems to be a general preference for male students to comprise the students’ governing councils. Similar sentiments were shared by Ireri and Murage (16/3/99). Some students are interested and willing to stand for elections but the environment is not always conducive as shown in the case of St. Paul’s United Theological College below.

St. Paul’s United Theological College had a woman Chairperson of the students’ governing council in 2002. According to Mombo (O.I. 30/5/03), the student encountered a tough campaign process. This included being referred to in derogatory terms such as, ‘madam sir’, and ‘feminist’. At one time, the student almost pulled out of the race, but she got encouragement from the female
teachers and students. The absence of female students in governing councils would imply that their problems and perspectives are not taken into consideration when issues of students’ welfare are discussed.

In chapter 4 section 4.2.1, it was noted that leadership in all the institutions visited was in the hands of men. This leadership ranged from heading the institutions as well as heading departments. The actual numbers of female lecturers was found to be very minimal. The contention of this study is that such leadership needs to be transformed in a way that qualified female lecturers could have a share of it. There should be no exclusive positions for males or females within the administrative structures of the institutions. Apart from St. Paul’s United Theological College, no other institution was found to have, or to have had, a woman at the position of a dean. Most of the female lecturers interviewed asserted that women’s absence from leadership positions is a result of the male dominated structures of the administration as well as the institutions’ governing councils, rather than lack of qualifications.

Mason (O.I. 1/10/98) and York (O.I. 17/3/99) advocated for the increase of female faculty as a starting point of their inclusion in theological institutions. Once employed, such women would need to be given equal terms and conditions as the men with similar qualifications. Kibor (O.I. 2/11/98) and Wanjema (O.I. 17/3/99) argued that women lecturers who qualify for leadership roles needed to be appointed and accorded support so as to freely exercise their skills and potentials. The environment would be one that could allow women to be recognized as leaders by merit, their gender notwithstanding.

Churches need to transform their structures to enable theologically trained women to exercise their skills. Without this, their training would be in vain. Churches could open similar opportunities to competent and trained women and

Malinga (2002:5), cites four ways through which women in leadership would bring about transformation in the church. First, they need to study theology. Second, they need to insist on women’s representation in decision-making organs of the church. Third, they need to speak out on issues affecting women irrespective of their numbers in the decision-making committees. Fourth, they need to teach children and young people on the need to respect each other irrespective of their gender.

This study concurs with Malinga that women in church leadership, though meager, have an important role to play in paving way for change. The study of theology would enable such women to understand the theologies of their churches, critique them where necessary, hence have an opportunity to offer alternative approaches. On a related note, women in leadership have an opportunity to argue for increase of women representatives in decision-making committees. This is because those in leadership experience the impact of being few and know the strength of being more.

Women need not sit back for men to transform structures that have always been favourable to them. Instead, women, particularly the ordained ones and those in leadership need to be assertive. There are men in the churches who could be willing to support women in ministry, but who wait for the women to speak out. Similar strategies could be applied to theological institutions to enable the few women students and faculty begin to assert themselves and to speak out on matters that are discriminating and offensive to them. Rather than seeming to be
in support of androcentric practices in the institutions as well as gender polarity that are perpetuated by church structures. Once those in administrative structures are made aware of any shortcomings of their policies and practices, they may get sensitized and work towards change. Women in positions of leadership could spearhead such moves.

Another area that requires attention is the provision of adequate facilities for female students. The increase of their numbers would require appropriate accommodation as well as other facilities they would require as women. For instance, Mombo (O.I. 30/5/03) had to organize for the provision of sanitary disposal bins in her college. Conducive living conditions do influence one's performance and productivity.

5.5 Networking
Networking is an important component in the enhancement of women's participation in theological education. The kind of networking advocated here is the one between women themselves at various levels and between women and men. There would be need for solidarity among women and partnership between women and men. This study advocates for networking among women theologians, between women theologians and the academia and between women theologians and grassroots church women at all levels: locally, nationally and globally.

In the churches in Kenya, women's networking is seen through the activities of women's organizations such as: Women's Guild in PCEA, Mother's Union in ACK and Women's Fellowship in MCK. These organizations are mainly concerned with works of charity and have their services confined to the church where they are under the control of church leadership. Within these organizations, quite a number of women seem to be satisfied with the traditional
image of themselves as only mothers, wives and homemakers. Thus, their interaction with one another is confined to their scope (James, 1993:117-118).

Women need to form research-based organizations through which they could challenge ideological, economic, political and social structures that limit women’s potential. They could use song, dance, poetry and narratives to express their disagreement with social norms that insubordinate them while they promote men (Strobel, 1995:118). In Africa, these efforts are being realized by The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (CCAWT), popularly known as “The Circle”. This organization was inaugurated in 1989 in Ghana, and twenty-five countries were represented at the initial meeting. The task of the Circle was then focused on identifying African women who were interested in researching and writing on issues of faith and culture in Africa (Kanyoro, 2001:170).

As an organization, the Circle is mainly concerned with research and publication of theological writing by women especially those dealing with the relationship between theology and African culture and religion. The Circle’s vision is to encourage African women to write and publish their works, while its goal is to promote the well-being of African women through theological analysis and the study of the Bible (Kanyoro, 2001:172). The Circle brings together women who study or teach theology at the departments of theology or religious studies at the public and private universities and those who teach, study or are graduates of theological institutions as well as grassroots women. All these categories constitute membership of the organization. The Circle becomes a forum in which women students of theological institutions advance their theological scholarships through research and sharing of experiences with other women theologians.

Kanyoro (2001:172) and Phiri (2000:19), highlight the importance of the Circle’s theology. They see it as a way of women contributing something new in theology
by bringing in their voices and views. Through their writings, African women theologians reveal the different approaches that exist among them. This is because women from different denominations and religions bring to the Circle their different experiences of God. Their writings reflect the existence in Africa of three main religions: Indigenous African Religion, Islam and Christianity and how these religions impact on the lives of women within the same continent. The women also bring to the Circle experiences of women in the academia in the church and in society.

Phiri (2000:19-21) and Oduyoye (1997:52-54), underline the role of the church in advocating for the inclusion of studies on women in religion and culture in departments of theology and religious studies in public and private universities and in theological institutions. This way, the Circle aims at ensuring that the area of African women in religion and culture becomes an academic area of study. This objective has been achieved in two public universities and two theological institutions. Circle members at Kenyatta University, Kenya, and the University of Ghana, Ghana facilitated for the inclusion of a course on women in religion and culture in Africa in the year 1996 and 1999 respectively. Similarly, as already noted, a course on African Women Theology was introduced at St. Paul’s United Theological College, Kenya in 2000.

In addition to these, the Circle’s objective in promoting women’s studies in theological institutions saw in 1999 the establishment of a project at the Trinity Theological College, Ghana. This project concentrates on women-centered studies in religion and culture. It reaches out to students and faculty of departments of religion, seminars and theological colleges in Ghana. The objective of introducing courses on women’s studies in the above named institutions is to promote gender sensitivity and gender justice in religion and culture. They also aim at promoting research and publication on critical areas.
related to religion and culture and to seek action for transformation of attitudes and practices. Oduyoye (1997:62), points out that the move to introduce women studies as well as the introduction of gender desks is an ongoing exercise in the activities of the Circle.

On a related note, the Circle advocates for the access of women to theological institutions and freedom of expression for women in theological issues (Oduyoye, 1997:61). Today, the Circle has a membership spread all over the continent. It holds conferences at the national, regional and continental levels where members read papers that are published as books or journals. These publications are found in libraries of universities as well as in theological institutions in countries across the continent and beyond. The institutions that teach courses on African women find them useful.

Constant networking and collaboration with men could be promoted in the church. Women fellowships, youth groups and men’s fellowships, pastors and bishops’ meetings and church council members can discuss these issues. This could be done through workshops and consultations at the local, national and international levels so that everyone becomes aware of the various situations in which women find themselves. People at all levels need to hear recommendations by women and men so that such issues are not merely retained by the church authorities some of which may not take appropriate action. This would enable women to get support from organizations within and outside the church.

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to offer suggestions in form of strategies that could contribute to the enhancement of women’s participation in theological education in Kenya. The overriding strategy is that of advocacy. Advocacy touches all levels of life, from the individual, family, church, theological institutions and the society at large. The chapter has also shown that
an intentional process of change needs to be initiated. The areas identified which require attention are: the sensitization of women; churches and theological institutions on the need for women to study theology; the access of women to theological institutions; the distribution of resources to enable women to study and carry out research; the posting of women graduates of theology to appropriate positions and places and the recruitment of women faculty.

The revision of the curricula of theological institutions is yet another strategy. This inclusion and revision ought to be done with the interests, concerns and insights of women. It was found imperative that theological institutions provide a conducive environment for women students and faculty in terms of their administrative and social structures as well as in the provision of physical facilities. Another institution that ought to provide a conducive environment for women is the church. This is because, unless the churches open the space for women’s involvement in ministry, receiving theological studies would be ineffective. This means that there would be no partnership of men and women in ministry.

Finally, the chapter has advocated for networking among between women themselves and between women and men at various levels. Networking is seen as source of sharing, solidarity and bonding. All these are necessary if change has to be realized in the participation of women in theological education.
6.1 Summary and Conclusions
This study sought to identify and discuss factors that hinder the participation of women in theological education in Kenya. Reference has been made to theological institutions that belong to two churches traditions, namely, mainline Protestant and Evangelical traditions.

The entire study portrays women in a struggle to venture into theological education. The struggle begins with their access to theological institutions. Once enrolled, they struggle through college life with administrative and social structures that are unfavourable to them. After graduating from college, women struggle with job placement as well as acceptance by those they are to serve. This struggle has a historical bearing as presented in the study.

Broadly speaking, a number of issues have been raised in the study. First, the status of women in the church has been traced from the Judeo-Christian traditions through the history of Christianity into the contemporary church in Kenya. The Judeo-Christian traditions relegated women to an inferior position both in the religious and societal life. The ministry of Jesus, however, presented a complete opposite of the societal attitude towards women. He uplifted the status of women, both in his teachings and association with them. His relationship with women showed that he had a liberating attitude towards them, an aspect that could be echoed by the church today.

After the first century A.D, the church grew and spread outside Palestine into the larger Roman Empire. This growth and expansion transformed the church from a ‘private’ to a ‘public’ religion that was greatly influenced by the Greco-Roman
culture. This period also experienced the institutionalization of the church, a set-up that was male dominated and thus exclusive of women in church leadership. The set up was further aggravated by the writings of the church fathers such as Tertullian and Augustine in the third to the fifth century. Their teachings formulated the theology of the early church, which continues to influence the Christian churches today, particularly the RCC. They laid emphasis on the sinful nature of women, a nature that justified their inferiority and subjection in the functions of the church. Their teachings also influenced the status of women in the church in liturgy and leadership. This influence could be traced in most Christian churches today. In some of these churches, the inclusion of women in leadership remains a contentious issue.

The medieval period was characterized by asceticism and monasticism for both women and men. The period also experienced the growth of male clericalism and the imposition of celibacy on the clergy. Although women lived ascetic lives, they were excluded from priestly functions of the clergy.

The Reformation Period saw the theological understanding of the church as the “priesthood of all believers”. This was meant to bridge the gap between the clergy and the laity, which had been created by the clerical celibacy of the medieval church. Women participated in the Reformation process and their contributions were recognized in the church in a commendable way compared to the preceding periods. However, the promotion of marriage for the clergy relegated women to the domestic role of being pastors’ wives, whose ministries were mainly in the home. In so doing, a woman still continued to experience limitations in as far as her participation in the ministry of the church was concerned.

The domestic ministry was elevated to the status of a ‘vocation’. This was because the reformers insisted that jobs performed by (baptized) Christians were
vocations. Women were involved in duties that included teaching the Bible and catechism to the children as well as housing people escaping from persecution. Households became ‘schools of faith’ headed by women. Women offered hospitality to theologians and gave advice to the clergy. This could be exemplified in the words of Katherine Zell, a pastor’s wife, “I honoured, cherished, and sheltered many great learned men with care, work and expense...I listened to their conversation and preaching, I read their books and their letters and they were glad to receive mine”. The Protestant home became an important centre for teaching the gospel and passing on the Christian faith.

Though in more limited ways, women’s ministry went beyond the home. This is exemplified by their role in preaching, translating and printing reformation materials, and convincing people to join the movement. In chapter two, we gave examples of women who played outstanding roles in the reformation process. Though challenging, women’s role and position in the reformation was regarded with some value, a sign of gratitude that could be extended to women in the church today.

An examination of the status of women in the missionary period in Kenya shows that European missionaries, ignorant of the role women played in the indigenous African societies in the political, economic, social and religious spheres relegated them to subordinate positions in the church. Missionaries gave priority of education to boys over girls. The education offered to women was aimed at relegating them to domestic roles. This domestication was moved into the church where women did and still play service roles. The contemporary church’s view on the status of women largely echoes the missionary era particularly in the missionary founded churches. It is worth noting that some of them are making slow but steady improvements particularly in the area of the ordination of women and women’s inclusion in theological education.
The history of theological education in Kenya shows that at the initial stages such education was patterned along missionary lines and was exclusively a male domain. Theological education was offered to men who would serve the church as ministers and teachers in secular educational institutions. The period following independence saw the expansion of theological institutions. Theological institutions were managed and sponsored by various church denominations. At this period, theological education was only offered to men, with women beginning to study theology in the 1970s. In making an analysis of the access of women to theological education in Kenya, this study has established that women often face obstacles prior to their admission to theological institutions that impact on them as women.

Cultural influences, modalities of admission, women’s experiences in theological institutions and prospects for job opportunities all combine together to obscure women’s access to theological institutions. It has been observed that the modalities of admission to theological institutions tend to disadvantage women. They range from the communication of information concerning theological education for women to candidates’ admission.

The cultural factor comes out very strongly and seems to overshadow all the others. This is because of the cultural beliefs and teachings that a woman’s place is in the domestic sphere. Therefore, aspiring to study theology and consequently to work in the church is viewed as a way of exercising authority over men an aspect that contradicts some cultural ethos. This cultural stance is reinforced by the traditional views regarding the biblical commands that require women to be silent and not to exercise any authority over men.
While in theological institutions, women encounter hurdles that impact on their lives as women. These hurdles are imbedded in the structures of theological institutions, and churches' influence in the institutions. The main argument of this study that women are under represented in theological education in Kenya has been authenticated by the actual numbers of women as students and faculty in theological institutions. Their numbers are much lower than those of the men, a factor that has been attributed to the attitude of churches concerning theological education for women and the types of ministries open to women.

The main premise that the structural organization of theological institutions, church policies and culture are among the factors that influence women's participation in theological education was tested. An assessment of the structures of theological institutions confirmed that they have male-dominated administrative and advisory boards. All the theological institutions surveyed had male principals and male lecturers as heads of most departments. This means that women lecturers who are also few, are excluded from the mainstream decision-making echelons of the institutions.

An assessment of the experiences of women in theological institutions confirmed the above premise in that a church's view of women's participation in its ministry does influence their enrollment in theological institutions. Churches have a direct and powerful influence in the enrolment and maintenance of students, the appointment of the teaching staff as well as the curricula taught. An assessment of gender relations between students showed the influence of cultural beliefs and practices on women. There is a tendency of male students to feel that theological education is a male domain and that women are intruders. These sentiments find expressions in classroom situations, jokes and theological discourses, all of which are meant to remind women that their socio-cultural position is the domestic domain.
The premise was further tested using the lenses of gender theory advocated by Sandra Bem (1993) (See chapter 1 section 1.7). This theory describes how biology, culture and the individual psyche interact in historical contexts to systematically produce male power. The three lenses are androcentrism, gender polarization and biological essentialism.

Androcentric practices are found in theological institutions in the structural organizations as well as in relations among students. We have established that the structures are male-dominated in terms of administration and the faculty. The under-representation of women in theological institutions takes place in various ways, one of them being the minimal inclusion of women from theological institutions, which have been the prerogative of men (see tables 3 & 4 in chapter four). Even where theological institutions admit women, the obstacles that women face while in these institutions continue to inhibit their participation (see chapter four).

Further, this under-representation manifests itself in the curricula that lack gender sensitivity as they exclude feminist studies. It was noted that most theological institutions visited did not, and seemed not to have intentions to include such studies in their curricula. In places where such attempts have been made, opposition has been experienced from the college administration, faculty, and students. The study established that there is a tendency by churches to give preference for scholarships for theological education for men. This gives men more opportunities to advance in careers. On their part, women students find that they face financial obstacles.

Within theological institutions, the concept of gender polarization is found in the distinctions between roles of women and men therein. This study established that
there are distinctions between the departments headed by female and male faculty. Women tend to head departments such as those dealing with counselling and student’s affairs, while men head those dealing with administrative and academic matters.

The polarization of women’s presence in theological institutions is further implicated in the courses mostly advanced by female students compared to those advanced by the males. Female students were found to be concentrated on courses that deal with Christian Education, Sunday school Ministry and women’s Ministry, while male students concentrated on courses that deal with divinity, hermeneutics and pastoral ministry, among others. These courses give the impression that the students are actually prepared for distinctive roles in the church. Their choice of courses is determined by the ministries open to them as men and women in the church.

The courses offered to students’ wives, mainly found in Evangelical institutions are only limited to training women for their role as ministers’ wives. Besides, taking these certificate and diploma courses is a requirement for women whose husbands are students in these institutions. The courses are specifically tailored to the roles that such women are expected to play in the church. In our perspective, this seems to be a way of confining women into subordinate roles.

Biological essentialism or determinism manifests itself among conservatives who argue that gender differences are biologically determined, with male being naturally dominant and female naturally subordinate. They ignore that one’s sense of gender is socially learnt. In theological institutions, this concept is manifested in situations where women are meant to feel that they do not have the same opportunities as men to study theology. The study established that men have
priority in terms of social facilities such as accommodation compared to women. Lack of adequate accommodation for women is a factor to the low number of women’s enrollment.

An exploration on the role of culture in hindering women’s participation in theological education showed that African culture is a major factor. For many African churches that are against the ordination of women and their access to theological education, the argument seems to be more cultural than theological. Many African women and men argue that African culture does not allow women to have power and authority over men because the African culture is patriarchal. From such arguments, it becomes clear that the expression of African Christianity in relation to women’s issues is controlled by African culture. Those aspects of culture that ensure male control of power and authority are upheld by society at the expense of women. These cultural cum sexist attitudes have been reinforced by clericalization in the church, which together with patriarchy have contributed to the exclusion of women from meaningful participation.

Given that some traditional African religion and culture did not deny women religious power, one wonders why the negative attitude towards women developed in Christianity. Speaking of the church’s ignorance of the religious roles that women played in traditional society, we could echo the words of Edet (1989:96) that:

The leadership of the ordained in our African mainline churches is constructed in a hierarchical order as a lid to the membership of the church, of which the majority are women. This structure supports and reinforces the traditional gender based roles ignoring the religious leadership of African women in the same traditional culture. Thus, the church selects from African culture those elements that confirm its exclusion of women from authority where men are present.

We would like to make an analysis of the theological institutions studied using a mode by Hardesty & Scanzoni that show three stages that theological institutions pass in the process of being inclusive of women and their perspectives. Though
written from the American context, these stages could assist us in assessing theological education for women in Kenya. The authors observe that of the three stages, only a few theological institutions are beginning to move to the last one.

The first stage experiences a handful of women entering theological college to prepare for full-time work in a church. Men students are friendly and male faculty members are considerate. The second stage sees a growing number of women in the institutions begin to sense their marginality both in college and in the churches they are preparing to enter. They form a 'caucus' to discuss their experiences and express their anger with their situations. This results in hostility and resistance from the male students, faculty members, and the administration. In the third stage, women become a significant part of the student body and are added to the faculty. Courses on the history of women in the church and feminist theology are added to the curriculum. The administration and faculty members make an effort to avoid language that excludes or degrades women. At this stage, women's experiences and participation in theological education are affirmed (Hardesty & Scanzoni, 1975:145).

The assessment of theological institutions in Kenya shows that they fall partly in the first stage, in terms of numbers, and stage two in terms of hostilities and resistance from male students, faculty members, and the administration. Attempts by women to come together to discuss their experiences are minimal. This study therefore, advocates for the increase in numbers of women students and faculty members as in the second stage, minus hostilities, and a move toward the third stage in which the numbers of women could become significant in terms of their participation. It also requires the inclusion of courses on women's and feminist studies in the curriculum.
Having assessed the status of women in theological education and the factors that hinder their participation, this study came up with strategies that could facilitate their inclusion and performance in this profession. They include advocacy, transformation of the curricula and the provision of conducive environment in theological institutions and in the churches. The underlying factor in the implementation of these concepts is the initiation of an intentional process of change in the whole institution of theological education. This process requires commitment by theological institutions as well as the churches involved.

Advocacy comes out strongly as a motivating factor for women as well as a means of promoting theological education for them. The setting up of quotas for (qualified) women students to join theological institutions and the prioritization of scholarships for women would be major incentives towards the increase of their numbers as students. The provision of a conducive learning environment in theological institutions and a conducive working environment in the churches would go a long way to enable women to realize and exploit their skills and potential. It would be futile to increase the number of female students in theological institutions if the environment is not favourable for them. Similarly, it would be futile to increase the number of theologically trained women in the ministry of the church if the environment of their placement is hostile to them.

Networking amongst women has been advanced as a means of their sharing of experiences, creation of awareness as well as breaking of their silence and challenging their status in theological education. Women theologians, historians, biblical scholars and lay-women in the church are doing this. The silence is being broken so that women may be enabled to express their views within the context of the Christian faith. The objectives and the activities of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians have been presented as an example of such networking. Finally, it could be said that this study has been an attempt to
contribute to the universal concern over the participation of women in theological education and in the ministry of the church.

As earlier noted, this study selected two church traditions namely, the mainline Protestant and the Evangelical traditions to make an analysis of factors that influence women’s participation in theological education in Kenya. In order to achieve its objectives, theological institutions from both church traditions were selected. A total of ten institutions, four from the mainline protestant and six from evangelical churches were used for the collection of data for the study. Based on the objectives of the study, our findings show that there is not much distinction between the two church traditions as far as theological education for women is concerned. An assessment of issues that were found common in all the institutions pointed out the variations and differences that were found.

The representation of women as students and faculty members is very minimal while the admission processes are different. Within the mainline protestant institutions, the churches do the selection of students. These churches were found to have preference for male candidates over female candidates. The interviewing processes are biased against women, thus resulting in their minimal numbers. Churches were found to be responsible for the financing of education as well as job placement for their students, factors that could influence them in the selection of women candidates to join theological institutions.

Though the evangelical institutions receive applications from individual candidates, the churches these candidates belong to make recommendations for them. This factor presents an obstacle to female applicants. Some of them reported that some pastors and church elders decline to recommend women for admission, leading to some of them dropping out the idea of joining theological institutions. Some others cited financial difficulties as reasons for fewer women
getting admitted into theological institutions. Female students were found to be more in evangelical institutions that offer masters programmes, such as NIST and NEGST. Most of these students happen to be professional women who do not need to work in the church. Most were enrolled in counselling, a course which is not in mainstream ministry.

While main line protestant churches’ institutions train women for full time ministry, the evangelical institutions train them for a variety of tasks. Some go into church related ministries while others may be part-time workers in the church, and others do private work such as counselling. Those graduating from evangelical institutions were found to experience problems in job placement in their churches especially the unmarried ones.

Restrictions for women’s preaching (both students and faculty), pursuing or teaching certain courses are more pronounced in evangelical institutions than the main line protestant ones. Such institutions also lay emphasis on marriage for female faculty. It was established that though the evangelical institutions have higher numbers of female faculty members, majority of them are expatriates, or wives of missionaries who are lecturers themselves, while most nationals work on part-time basis. Such positions deny women participation in decision-making in the institutions.

Male dominance in the administration, governing boards, faculty, and students governing councils, was found to be a common factor in the institutions of both categories. The impact of such a set up is that women and their perspectives are left out in the decision-making processes. Similarly the environment in theological institutions was found to be unfavourable for women. This included, accommodation amongst others.
The inclusion of feminist studies in the curricula of theological institutions was found lacking, except for St. Paul's United Theological College that has a course on African Women's Theology. Though this observation was made on theological institutions in both categories, the evangelical ones seemed to be more resistant to the inclusion of such courses in their curricula.

Generally, the factors the study has highlighted as hindering the participation of women in theological education, viz. culture, structures of theological institutions, and church influence were found to be applicable to all the institutions, though with few variations as noted above. Therefore, our conclusion is that despite the variations in doctrine of the two church traditions, they share certain issues with regard to theological education for women. They all need revision of theological education for women to make it meaningful for them, for the church, and the society at large. The strategies outlined in chapter five apply to churches and institutions of both church traditions.

Finally, it was noted that some of the institutions visited for this study are moving towards being full-fledged universities. They include, NEGST, NIST, PACC, Scott Theological College, St. Paul's United Theological College, and the PCEA Pastoral Institute. Such changes could influence women's participation in theological education in Kenya an issue that requires research.

6.2 Recommendations
The following recommendations are aimed at contributing to the improvement of the access of women to theological education as well as their inclusion in church leadership. They target two institutions, theological institutions and churches.
Theological Institutions

(i) There is need for theological institutions to expand their facilities and in so doing take into account the needs of female students. They include provision of adequate accommodation and day care centres for those with young children. The provision of such facilities would attract more female students into the institutions.

(ii) Theological institutions need to transform their structures to make them gender inclusive. Numbers alone are not an answer to women’s representation. Equality in decision-making is essential to the empowerment of women otherwise, changing the number of women in structures that do not value them and their contribution is not adequate. A new model of power and new structures are needed for both women and men to achieve a just and free community. This would require the institutions to incorporate women’s perspectives in their administration, teaching and governing spheres. They could make a conscious effort to give equal opportunity to women’s issues as is done for men’s issues.

(iii) There is need for theological institutions to reserve scholarships for women. Special scholarships could be created for women. Criteria for awarding scholarships could be based on one’s financial needs and performance. Such opportunities would encourage and promote women in theological education.

(iv) Theological institutions ought to transform their curricula. The curricula should be designed in such a way that it fully integrates women’s perspectives. The need to integrate women’s perspectives in theological education is not only for pedagogical principle but also as a way of balancing the theological curriculum. Courses on gender studies should be a requirement for all theological students. The integration of the perspectives of women in theological education
will create awareness of discriminatory gender realities and help the learners to be sensitive in handling issues that impact on men and women differently.

(v) Courses that are offered to students’ wives need to be improved. Their content should include courses on women’s perspectives. Where possible, the students’ wives should be integrated into theological training at the same level as their husbands, and open other areas beyond ‘homemaking’.

(vi) Theological institutions in collaboration with churches should consider promoting theological education by extension. This way, more women could be helped to study theology. This is because the TEE programme is flexible such that one can study theology and still continue with their routine work.

The Church

(i) The inclusion of women in theological institutions and in church ministry calls for a change in the structures of the church. The present patriarchal structures of church ministry need to be transformed if the partnership of men and women is to be realized. Women and men’s participation need to be approached from the point of view of giftedness, ability and interest rather than on inferiority/superiority complex.

(ii) Churches should have clear policies concerning theological education for women. This would enable women venturing into theological education aware of the expectations their churches have of them in terms of placement. It is quite demoralizing for women to receive theological training only to go back to join the congregations without a forum to exercise their skills.

(iii) There is need for churches to create a conducive and enabling environment for theologically trained women both the ordained and non-ordained ministries
alike. This would involve churches educating their congregations on the implications of training women in theology. The congregations would thus be prepared to accept women who are posted to their churches. It would also involve removing obstacles in their way as they execute duties in the church. An enabling environment of work in the church would serve as an inspiration to other women aspiring to study theology.

(iv) The process of selecting candidates to join theological institutions needs to be transformed. This would involve having gender sensitive and gender inclusive interviewing and selecting boards. This calls for the inclusion of women in these boards, women who have concerns and interests of women. Both women and men candidates should be subjected to balanced and objective interviews. Stereotyped and biased questions should be avoided.

**Ordination**

(i) There is need for churches that do not ordain women to rethink their positions and open ordination for women. This is because the ordination of women to priestly ministry represents an important symbol of their presence in the leadership of the church. It also involves their inclusion in significant decision-making and policy formation.

(ii) Some of the Protestant churches that ordain women do not seem to have thought of the need to change their ecclesiastical organizations to accommodate women. The presence of women in the ordained ministry calls for substantial change in the male defined hierarchical structure as well as the male defined ministerial priorities in the church. Such changes would aim at bringing about an extensive collaboration between men and women in the church ministry. Consequently, more women would aspire to study theology for ordained ministry.
Networking
(i) There is need for churches and theological institutions to encourage networking at the national level where trained women theologians can meet and discuss issues pertaining to their profession. Such meetings would help them share experiences. They would also come up with proposals on the improvement of their status as women theologians, as well as the improvement of theological education for women.

6.3 Suggestions for Further Study.
(i) This study has limited itself to theological institutions that belong to two church traditions, mainline Protestant and Evangelical traditions. It would be necessary to have studies carried out in institutions of other church traditions such as African Instituted churches to broaden the picture of women in theological education in Kenya.

(ii) There is need for a comprehensive study on Theological Education by Extension (TEE) programme in Kenya. Such study would advice the churches and theological institutions on how to integrate the TEE programme into their theological education hence reach out to more people especially women.

(iii) The impact of ordained women in Kenya needs to be assessed. Such assessment would include: their role, the images that the public has of them, their family lives and the factors that hinder or promote their effectiveness. Findings from such an assessment would be of help to churches in their move to improve women's experiences in the ordained ministry.
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## APPENDICES

(A) LIST OF ORAL INFORMANTS, THEIR INSTITUTIONS, DESIGNATION, YEAR OF STUDY AND DATE OF INTERVIEW

### (i) Pan African Christian College

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<thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dean</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wilf Hidebrandt</td>
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<td>Njeri Kamau</td>
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<td>Birhan Iwnetu</td>
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<td>Monny Wambugu</td>
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(iii) PCEA Pastoral Institute

(iv) Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology

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<td>Judy Nduati</td>
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(v) Scott Theological College

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<td>26/10/98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esther Kibor</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td></td>
<td>2/11/98</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joyce Mwasa</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Claudia Leonard</td>
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<td>B.Theology (Christian Education) 4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alice Mutua</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eva Manthi</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>B.Theology (Christian Education) 4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rose Mutua</td>
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<td>&quot;</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eunice Mbugua</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christine Mbwambo</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beatrice Sang</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>B.Theology (Christian Education) 3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phyllis Kilonzo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gladys Phiri</td>
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<td>Sarah Sitienei</td>
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<td>B. Theology (Christian Education) 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Juliana Nzuki</td>
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<tr>
<td>Julia Kebenei</td>
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<td>B.Theology (Christian Education) 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Year</td>
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(vi) Moffat College of the Bible

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Course of Study &amp; Academic Year</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Kahiga</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td></td>
<td>2/3/99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eunice Wanjema</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td></td>
<td>9/3/99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janice Morrison</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phyllis Turtley</td>
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<td>Esther Kaumo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Esther Musyoki</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christian Kanini</td>
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<td>Diploma 4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ruth Kamau</td>
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<td>Mary Mwangi</td>
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(vii) St. Andrews College of Theology & Development, Kabare

<table>
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<th>Course of Study &amp; Academic Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emily Onyango</td>
<td>Lecturer, Academic Dean</td>
<td></td>
<td>10/3/99</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anna Doughty</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td></td>
<td>16/3/99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorcus Karanja</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Diploma 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Year</td>
<td>16/3/99</td>
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<tr>
<td>Judith Zande</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joyce Kanyari</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tabitha Mutuku</td>
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<td>Niceria Nkonge</td>
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<td>Annet Ireri</td>
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<td>Fedis Nyaga</td>
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<td>Purity Ndwigah</td>
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(viii) Berea Theological College

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<tr>
<td>Michael Lolworikoi</td>
<td>Principal</td>
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<td>24/5/99</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karen Fulton</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
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<td>15/6/99</td>
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<tr>
<td>Margaret Ouma</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joyce Githae</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Cheruiyot</td>
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<td>Susan Muigai</td>
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<td>Sarah Waiharo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dorcas</td>
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<td>Scholar Kiilu</td>
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(ix) Kenya Highlands Bible College

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alice Vanderhoof</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Angeline Savalla</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phoebe Atieno</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Diploma 1st Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gloria Maina</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Marcianne</td>
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<td>Mary Mwayuuli</td>
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<td>Lydia Soy</td>
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Women Graduates of Theological Institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Academic Level</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Naomi Gakenia</td>
<td>Lecturer</td>
<td>Masters in Theology</td>
<td>1/10/98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily Onyango</td>
<td>Vice Principal</td>
<td>Masters in Theology</td>
<td>16/3/99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan Akello</td>
<td>Christian Education Coordinator</td>
<td>Bachelor of Theology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neddy Dingili</td>
<td>Assistant Pastor</td>
<td>Diploma in Theology</td>
<td>5/6/00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine Chepkorir</td>
<td>Office Secretary</td>
<td>Diploma in Theology</td>
<td>10/6/00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace Muiruri</td>
<td>Diocesan Youth Organizer</td>
<td>Diploma in Theology</td>
<td>10/6/00</td>
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Church Ministers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zablon Nthamburi</td>
<td>Methodist Church in Kenya</td>
<td>6/7/00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moses Mutwiri</td>
<td>PCEA</td>
<td>10/9/00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(B) QUESTIONNAIRE/INTERVIEW GUIDE

(i) Women Students in Theological Institutions

1. Name  
2. Age  
3. Denomination  
4. Marital Status  
5. Highest academic level before joining this institution  
6. Name of theological institution  
7. Profession prior to theological training (if any)  
8. At what level are you training? (a) Diploma (b) Bachelors (c) Masters (Tick one)  
9. What other level of theological training have you pursued before? (a) Certificate (b) Diploma (c) Bachelors (d) Any other (specify)  
10. What motivated you to pursue theological education?  
11. How did you get your admission? (Tick those applicable) (a) Through Church recommendation (b) Application (c) Any other, specify  
12. What obstacles (if any) did you encounter before entering theological training?  
13. Comment on the modalities of admission of women/ men in this institution  
14 a) Who funds your training? (a) Self (b) Church (c) Any other (specify) (Tick those applicable).  
   b) Do you experience difficulties in sourcing funds? (a) yes (b) no  
15. What is your opinion concerning the numbers of female students in this institution?  
16. Have you encountered any specific problems/ obstacles in this institution, which attribute to the fact that you are a woman? (a) Theological issues (b) Classroom situation (c) Accommodation (d) Any other, (specify)  
17. Suggest any ways in which this institution could more effectively recruit,
train, and deploy women for ministry.

18. In your own opinion, in what ways do women contribute towards their under-representation in theological institutions?

19. To what extent would you say African culture(s) influence(s) women's admission to theological institutions?

20. What ministries are open to women in your Church?

21. In your opinion, to what extent would you say the church contributes towards the low percentage of women in theological institutions?

(ii) Women Teachers in Theological Institutions

1. Name

2. Age

3. Marital Status

4. Denomination

5. Highest academic level

6. Name of theological institution

7. For how long have you worked in this institution?

8. What other appointment have you had prior to this one? or do you hold other than teaching?

9. How did you acquire your present position?
   (a) Through an interview
   (b) Through secondment
   (c) Through Church recommendation
   (d) Any other (specify)

10. What is your opinion concerning the number of women teachers in this institution?

11. To what extent would you say African culture(s) influence(s) women's participation in theological institutions?

12. What is your opinion about the structural organization of this institution?

13. How does (12 above) affect your participation as a woman?
14. Have you encountered any specific problems/obstacles in your institution which you attribute to the fact that you are a woman, such as,
(a) Theological issues
(b) Administrative issues
(c) Any other (specify)

15. Are there policies in this institution that you feel are discriminative to women?

16. Comment on the modalities of appointment of women versus men teachers in this institution.

17. Comment on the methods used in promoting teaching staff, and assigning responsibilities in this institution.

18. To what extent would you say the Church influences the appointment and promotion of teachers in this institution?

19. What courses are offered on women's issues in this institution?

20. What is your opinion concerning these courses? (a) Adequate (b) Average (c) Inadequate. Give reasons for your answer.

21. In your opinion, in what ways could theological education be made more gender sensitive?

22. Suggest strategies that could enhance the presence and participation of women in theological institutions (a) as teachers (b) as students

(iii) Principals of Theological Institutions
1. Name
2. Age
3. Sex
4. Denomination
5. Highest Education level
6. Title
7. Name of institution
8. For how long have you served in this position?
9. How did you acquire this position?
10. What other positions have you held in this institution?
11. What are the objectives of this institution?
12. How do these objectives apply to women?
13. How many departments are there in the institution?
14. How many and which of these departments are headed by women? And how are the appointments made?
15. What is the approximate number of women (i) teachers (ii) students, in this institution?
16. What is your opinion about these numbers?
17. How do these numbers of women relate to those of men?
18. What has the trend been?
19. (a) How are students funded to study in this institution? (b) How does it affect women?
20. To what extent do churches influence the admission of students in this institution?
21. To what extent do churches influence the appointment and promotion of staff in this institution?
22. What career opportunities does your institution offer to women students and teachers?
23. To what extent is your curriculum gender-sensitive?

(iv) Women Graduates of Theological Institutions

1. Name
2. Age
3. Marital status
4. Denomination
5. Highest academic level
6. Title
7. Present appointment
8. Theological college(s) attended
9. Which years were you in theological training?
10. What motivated you to study theology?
11. What ministry/ministries did you train for?
12. How many female students were you in your class/college?
13. How many female teachers did you have? How did their number affect your studies?

14. Did you encounter any specific problems in your training related to theological issues, classroom situations, and accommodation that you attribute to the fact that you are a woman? If so, describe them.

15. Did you at any time encounter problems in obtaining employment on account of the fact that you are a woman?

16. How has your theological training helped you as a woman, and in your Church work?

17. What do you think hinders women from pursuing theological education?
18. How can these hindrances be eradicated?
19. Comment on the structural organization of theological institutions and how they affect women therein?

20. Comment on your church's policies on theological training for women.
21. To what extent do churches influence the access of women to theological institutions?

22. Suggest strategies that could enhance the participation of women in theological education.

23. What is the response of your Church towards theological education for women?

24. What leadership positions do you hold in your Church?
25. Which is the highest rank that a woman theologian can attain in your Church?