

NIGERIAN WOMEN IN MINISTRY AND GENDER DISCRIMINATION:

THE CASE OF DEEPER LIFE BIBLE CHURCH IN NIGERIA

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project work was carried out by Okodike Hannah Ekpele with the Matriculation number ART1701765 in the Department of Religions, University of Benin, Benin City and has not been presented for a degree in any University.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research work to God Almighty whose breathe gives me life. I also dedicate this work to all our matriarchs who laboured tirelessly for the work of the ministry. I also dedicate this work to all the women in the ministry who look beyond their gender and do great things and to the girls(teens/youth) who will become women someday, keep your fire burning.

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ABSTRACT

There is a gender gap in many employment settings, including the Church, as a result of the underrepresentation of skilled women in leadership roles because women do not match the stereotype of good leaders, society in general and the church in particular continue to make it difficult for them to obtain leadership positions. Many reasons have been made in favour of male chauvinism, which is largely widespread in African civilization, despite the undeniable roles of women as homemakers and builders of nations. Many factors, including culture, church traditions, biblical evidence, the fundamental biological makeup of women, and religion itself, contribute to the prejudice against women in leadership positions in the church. The discrimination, unfairness, and injustice experienced by women appear to be ingrained. Even worse and more scandalous is the fact that religion has been and still used to justify the oppression and subjection of women in modern society. This study was carried out to examine Nigerian Women in ministry and gender discrimination, the case of Deeper Life Bible Church in Nigeria. Descriptive statistics was used to examine the objectives of the study. Out of the 71 respondents, the males are 38 (representing 53.5%), while the females are 33 (representing 46.5%). The findings of the study showed that the majority of the sampled respondents are males as it has the highest frequency score. In terms of district investigated, out of the 71 respondents, 23 (representing 32.4%) were from Church 1 (DLCF-BDPA), 27 (representing 38.0%) were from Church 2 (DLCF-OSASOGIE) and 21

(representing 29.6%) were from Church 3 (DLCF-EKOSODIN). The findings of the study also showed that majority of the sampled respondents were members of Church 3 (DLCF-EKOSODIN). Also, in terms of membership, out of the 71 respondents, 60 (representing 84.5%) were Lay Congregation, 4 (representing 5.6%) were pastors and 7 (representing 9.9%) were women leaders. The analysis showed that majority of the sampled respondents was the lay congregation of the church. Majority of the respondents submitted that women to be appointed for leadership positions in the church. Also, out of 60 respondents who responded to 70.0% which is majority that they know women that are spiritually gifted in your church and 45.0% majority also responded that women should participate in decision making forums like church boards. The study also showed that 46.7% majority responded that women in the church allowed to function in the leadership roles in church and 30.0% majority responded that women are not discriminated in the church and also, 85.7% majority responded that women in the church are allowed to function in the leadership roles in church and they want women to be church leaders in the church.

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OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Diakonos: This is a Greek lexicon that refers to one who executes the command of another especially of a master, a servant, attendant or minister.

Iyalode: A high ranking female chieftain in most of the Yoruba traditional states.

Deaconess: A woman chosen to assist in church ministry

Prostatis: This is a Greek lexicon that refers to a woman set over others. This is a female guardian, protectress, patroness, caring for the affairs of others and aiding them with her resources.

Benefactor: A person who gives money or other help to a person or cause

Diakoneo: This is a Greek lexicon that refers to one who ministers to persons.

Egalitarianism: The doctrine that all people are equal and deserve equal rights and opportunities.

Holy Spirit: The third person in trinity

Congregation: A group of people assembled for religious worship

Born again: This means to experience a new birth which identifies one as a child of God.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

NIV: New International Version

NASB: New American Standard Bible

ESV: English Standard Version

TNIV: Today's New International Version

NLT: New Living Translation

NRSV: New Revised Standard Version

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Gender discrimination results from persistent inequality between men and women in all areas of life. Discrimination against women manifests itself differently in different cultures, politics, races, regions, countries and economies. Gender discrimination, on the other hand, is regarded as a significant impediment to development. Gender discrimination, according to Jannatul Ferdaush (2019), is a contributing factor to violence against women. Gender equality has become a common goal for international communities as a result of prevalent gender issues. Gender issues and non-discrimination on the basis of sex were included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, as stated in the preamble to the United Nations Charter in 1945. In an effort to reduce gender discrimination, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1979. This was regarded as a significant victory in the global struggle for women. Gender mainstreaming was adopted as a tool to promote gender equality at all levels at the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. Gender mainstreaming is a policymaking approach that considers both men's and women's interests and concerns. It was adopted by 189 United Nations member countries at the fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. Some affirmative approaches of gender mainstreaming are:

- The human rights of women and of the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights.
- Women share common concerns that can be addressed only by working together and in partnership with men towards the common goal of gender equality around the world.
- Women are key contributors to the economy and to combating poverty through both remunerated and unremunerated work at home, in the community and in the workplace
- Women's full participation in decision-making, conflict prevention and resolution and all other peace initiatives is essential to the realization of lasting peace.
- Religion, spirituality and belief play a central role in the lives of millions of women and men, in the way they live and aspirations, they have for the future. In relation to this, any form of extremism may have a negative impact on women and can lead to violence and discrimination.
- The girl child of today is the woman of tomorrow. The skills, ideas and energy of the girl child are vital for full attainment of the goals of equality, development and peace. For the girl child to develop her full potential she needs to be nurtured in an enabling environment, where her spiritual, intellectual and material needs for survival, protection and development are met and her equal rights safeguarded.
- Policy makers must recognize the implications of these demographic factors. Special measures must be taken to ensure that young women have the life skills necessary for

active and effective participation in all levels of social, cultural, political and economic leadership.

Significant progress has been made in recent years in addressing these gender issues. Because of the gender gap in primary and secondary school enrolment, the literacy rate among women is gradually increasing. Despite the increase in female participation in various social environments, women in many church denominations continue to face structural barriers that prevent them from being fully involved or successful as they pursue or maintain leadership roles within the church (Silvoso, 2010). This is fuelled by religious groups' interpretations of the Holy Bible. Some religious teachings encourage women to take a stand, while others confine women to housework and inferior positions. There are texts in the Holy Bible that reinforce the gender idea that females are secondary to men as commonly interpreted. For example, in 1 Timothy 2:11-12 in the Holy Bible, the woman is ordered to learn in silence and full submission and not to teach or have authority over a man. This interpretation rejects Old Testament accounts of strong female involvement in many roles, such as Miriam, a prophet to Israel during the Exodus, who worked alongside her brothers Moses and Aaron (Exodus 15:20). Deborah, both a prophet and a judge, directed Barak to lead Israel's army to victory. Huldah, another prophetess, authenticated the scroll of the Law discovered in the temple and helped spark religious reform during Josiah's reign (2 Kings 22:14–20; 2 Chronicles 34:22–28).

Women played important ministry roles in the Early Church, according to the New Testament. Tabitha (Dorcas) established a successful benevolence ministry (Acts 9:36). Four of Philip's unmarried daughters were recognized prophetess (Acts 21:8,9). Euodia and Syntyche were

mentioned by Paul as "women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers" (Philippians 4:2,3). Another of Paul's exemplary "fellow workers in Christ Jesus" was Priscilla (Romans 16:3,4). In Romans 16, Paul greets numerous ministry colleagues, a large number of them women. In these greetings, the word Paul uses to speak of the work or labour of Mary, Tryphena, Tryphosa and Persis (Romans 16:6,12) is one he uses extensively for the labour of ministry (1 Corinthians 16:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; 1 Timothy 5:17).

Phoebe, a leader in the church at Cenchrea, was highly commended to the church at Rome by Paul (Romans 16:1-2). Unfortunately, translation biases have often obscured Phoebe's position of leadership, calling her a "servant" (NIV, NASB, ESV). Yet Phoebe was diakonos of the church at Cenchrea (Romans 16:1-2). Paul regularly used this term for a minister or leader of a congregation and applied it specifically to Jesus Christ, Tychicus, Epaphras, Timothy, and to his own ministry. Depending on the context, diakonos is usually translated "deacon" or "minister." Though some translators have chosen the word deaconess (e.g., RSV, because Phoebe was female), the Greek diakonos is a masculine noun. Therefore, it seems likely that diakonos was the designation for an official leadership position in the Early Church and the proper translation for Phoebe's role is "deacon" (TNIV, NLT, NRSV) or "minister."

Moreover, a number of translations reflect similar biases by referring to Phoebe as having been a "great help" (NIV) or "helper" (NASB) of many, including Paul himself (Romans 16:2). The Greek term here is prostatis, better translated by the NRSV as "benefactor" with

its overtones of equality and leadership. Junia, yet another woman was identified by Paul as an apostle (Romans 16:7).

These instances of women filling leadership roles in the Bible are yet to be taken as a divinely approved pattern by the church. Notwithstanding, a limited number of women with scripturally commended leadership roles affirm and has proven that God does indeed call women to spiritual leadership and involvement.

1.2 Statement of The Problem

In Nigeria, her constitution specifically promotes and protects the rights of women as established in

- i. Article 15(2) and Article 42(1) (a) and (b), (2) and (3) prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex and ensure that men and women have equal access to the courts in the matters of contracts, torts and civil matters.
- ii. Explicit recognition of women equal rights is contaminated in Article 17(1) and 2(a) which recognize equality of rights, obligations and opportunities before the law.
- iii. Article 1(b) states that women shall have equal rights as men with respect to employment opportunities, choice of professions, promotion and remuneration.

Nevertheless, customary and religious laws, values, beliefs and practices have taken precedent over these constitutional rights and formal laws thereby fuelling the prevalent gender inequality in religious bodies. The fact that women have played a critical supporting role in the establishment of the church since the birth of Christ, women is still been systematically treated in a subordinate manner.

This treatment of women has given rise to the growing interpersonal and church conflict amongst its members, thus also sparking identity conflicts within women about who they are in the eyes of God, and their value and contribution to the ministry work of the church.

1.3 Aim and Objectives.

The overall aim of the study is to analyse women in ministry and gender discrimination using Deeper Life Bible Church in Nigeria as a case study in the course of this study the following objectives will be examined:

- The hierarchical structure of Deeper Life Bible Church.
- The role of women in leadership.
- Role differentiation and inequality of power.
- The effect of gender discrimination in the Deeper Life Bible Church.

1.4 Methodology

The study is qualitative in its methodology. It would employ both primary and secondary data source in investigating and exploring the roles of women in Deeper Life Bible Church.

Since Participatory Research is a process in which the community participates in the analysis of their own reality to promote a social transformation for the benefit of the participants who are oppressed (Philpott, 1993), Participatory research framework would be used to highlight how the oppressed people gain awareness of their situation through collective investigation and analysis.

While the participatory research is an important framework in the study, person to person interviews have been significantly used. These interviews seek to gather as much information as possible from the interviewees who are men and women so as to achieve the set objectives. The questions are categorized as follows:

- Personal Identification: Age, marital status, educational attainment, occupation, location of the church and the position held in the church.
- The roles and position of women in the church.
- The experiences of women in the church.

Where it was not possible to have person to person interviews, open ended questionnaires would be used.

1.5 Significance of The Study

The research study attempts to evaluate the prevalent gender discrimination in Deeper Life Bible Church where women aren't given leadership roles over men; rather limiting their ministry to women - themselves and more importantly to their families.

This research will also augment research literature for future researchers interested in transformation of ideologies around utilizing women in church

1.6 Scope and Limitations of The Study

The study only concentrated on the ministry of women in Deeper Life Bible Church. Other areas such as the church theology, spiritual healing methods and even their doctrine of salvation, were not included in this study. The study was limited to some districts in Benin,

Nigeria even though the church has members gathering in various centres all over the country and even spread across the Nigerian border, this delimitation was due to the financial implications of travelling to numerous locations. Time was also major issue since the time for person-to-person interviews, distributing questionnaires and getting back the questionnaire was quite short.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Concept of women in Nigeria

The position and function of women in Nigeria have consistently changed from pre-colonial times to the early twenty-first century. The perception of Nigerian women as a helpless, downtrodden, and disadvantaged population, has however hampered their thorough study and received little credit for the numerous crucial roles they have played throughout history (Falola, 2007).

Women were heavily involved in social and economic activities in the pre-colonial era. Women dominated industries like food processing, mat weaving, pottery manufacturing, and cooking due to the gendered division of labour. In addition, land was a community possession that women may access through their husbands or parents. In a patrilineal system, older women held power over the labour of younger family members even though a male was the head of the household (Falola, 2007). Women were essential to trade as well. They dominated long-distance trade among the Yoruba, providing a variety of opportunities for earning titles and wealth. The most accomplished of them attained the coveted chieftaincy title of Iyalode, a position of great privilege and power. Women in politics were not as submissive or helpless as they are frequently portrayed in modern fiction. The family served as the fundamental building block of political organization, and in the prevalent matrilineal system, which gave women significant control over their progeny, a woman and her children might constitute a sizable bloc inside the home. Senior women were given a voice on many

topics because age and gender were also factors that determined power and privileges in a household. The ability of a woman to manage the resources and people in a family was also an exercise in public authority because the private and public spheres were interwoven (Falola, 2007).

She had the ability to call upon the gods or the spirits to act in her favour. She might also choose to remain quiet and utilize the kitchen as her own space for interactions with her co-workers, friends, and kids (Falola, 2007).

Beyond the family level, men often held the majority of power, but in certain fields, women were given specific titles. The Edo and Yoruba gave the great title of “queen mother” to either the king’s mother or a prominent free woman. The queen mother presided over sessions in her own palace, supported by lower-level titleholders. Legends in the Yoruba and Hausa languages speak of times when women were either the real monarchs or the heroes. Powerful queens from the histories of Ondo and Daura are prominent legendary figures, such are ladies like Moremi of Ile-Ife and Amina of Zaria. When patriarchy and colonial developments combined to modify gender relations in the 20th century, women’s rights and advantages faced their greatest challenge. The role of female chiefs waned as male chiefs worked with the British colonial government to collect taxes and run the country. The distribution of rubber, cocoa, groundnuts (peanuts), and palm oil was dominated by Nigerian men and European businesses as the economy shifted more and more toward the development of cash commodities for export. Women were forced to work in the production of food crops after being pushed to the side. Land commercialization, which benefited individuals with access to money made from the sale of cash crops, replaced an earlier system

of land tenure that had prohibited land alienation. Western schooling likewise favoured boys over girls, excluding many women from the new jobs that colonialism brought about (Falola, 2007).

Nigeria's formal education system, from which many elite women have come, has been the most effective force for change for the modern woman. They can be found in all eminent professions and are intelligent, educated, and self-assured. They are now challenging many patriarchal practices and are gradually organizing to make sure that the political sphere is sufficiently expanded to include them (Falola, 2007).

The colonization of Africa by European powers such as Britain, France, Italy, Germany, Belgium, and Portugal introduced Africa as a major target for exploitation into the global economic system. Africa not only provided raw materials to Europeans, but it also provided them with what they saw as raw, uncivilized people on whom they could impose their views and exploit at the same time exploited the land. With the incorporation of Nigeria into the international economy as a supplier of raw materials, for example, new patriarchal conceptions of the appropriate social role for women imposed by colonial administrators and missionaries altered women's position in economic and thus social endeavours (Rojas, 1994)

Males began to dominate the cultivation of cash crops for the international market, relegating women to the cultivation of food crops with lower returns. By focusing on men, the cash crop farmers, bureaucratic efforts to improve agriculture encouraged the separation of economic roles that had previously complemented each other. The decline of the craft industry, except for a limited range of luxury goods, was caused by the import of cheap manufactured goods from Europe, and later from Japan, which affected a significant proportion of women

engaged in such manufacture in some regions. As a result, the establishment of the colonial economy tended to marginalize the majority of women's position (Rojas, 1994).

Colonial administrators and Christian missionaries introduced European patriarchal assumptions into Nigerian society. Their conceptions of what constitutes an appropriate social role for women differed significantly from the traditional role of women in indigenous Nigerian societies. The colonizers' ideas were similar to the patriarchal European assumption that women belonged at home, engaged in child rearing—a solely female responsibility—and other domestic chores. The colonizers expected African societies to regard women as subordinate to men in the same way that Europeans did. They feared that if a woman achieved financial independence, she would fail to respect her husband and his family. However, in pre-colonial indigenous Nigerian societies, a woman's role included providing financial support for her family; thus, her traditional responsibility required her financial independence. Furthermore, many members of the extended family, not just the mother, assisted in raising the children (Rojas, 1994).

Women's positions in indigenous societies were altered by the restrictions imposed by colonial governments. In Nigeria, the colonial state passed legislation restricting women, preventing them from performing their responsibilities to their families. The magnitude of the changes inspired many Nigerian women to stage a series of protests against specific colonial policies as well as colonialism itself throughout the colonial period. Colonialism disrupted indigenous Nigerian societies' traditional systems of production, reinforcing existing systems of social inequality and introducing oppressive forms of social stratification throughout the state (Rojas, 1994).

Middle-class Nigerian women's lives are very different from those of most Western women. Women have had economic opportunities within the social system since pre-colonial times. Indeed, prior to the mid-twentieth century, Nigerian women were more influential in society than western women. Women were expected to be significant wage earners in Nigerian traditional or tribal society. They worked alongside Nigerian men in farming, fishing, herding, and commerce (including pottery, cloth-making, and craft work). In fact, women have traditionally had the right to profit from their labour, though the money was typically used to supplement the family's income. This economic freedom was in stark contrast to many Western societies, where women had to fight for the right to work. These customs are still practiced in modern Nigeria (Rojas, 1994).

Nigerian men, on the other hand, do not value their wives' economic contributions. They do not consider the woman's job and household duties to be particularly taxing. Nigerian men, on the whole, take their wives for granted. Furthermore, even with economic opportunities, Nigerian women lack certain rights. Men as a whole have no legal responsibility for their children and they frequently abandon women, expecting them to bear the financial burden of the family (Rojas, 1994).

2.2 The Concept of women in Ministry

For centuries, Christian scholars and theologians, mostly men, have struggled with the role of women in church ministry, despite the fact that the biblical text expressly states it. The term "ministry" refers to all levels of service in the ecclesia community, not just ordained ministry (1Corinthians 12). Overall, women's participation in church life varies according to ideology.

While some accept the gospels' egalitarianism, others insist on women remaining in the shadows of church life, always objects rather than subjects of ongoing history. Although the 2015 Global Gender Gap Report celebrated significant progress in closing the gender gap in many fields of human endeavour (World Economic Forum, 2015), some areas such as church life, remain impervious; there are significant gender gaps in the area of church ministry, despite gender scholars, mostly women, continuing to investigate the disparity. Clearly, one cannot discuss women's roles in our contemporary church without considering women's activities in the Bible. According to Marcus J. Borg, "the Bible provided the language of the sacred imagination for the writers of the New Testament, that place within the psyche in which images of God, the God-world relationship, and the God-human relationship reside" (Borg, 2001).

2.2.1 Women in the New Testament.

Together, the Gospel of Luke and its second volume, the Acts of the Apostles, form an intricately integrated thematic construction. The author of Luke-Acts demonstrates the universality of his narrative by fusing Jesus' disciples and audiences, men and women alike, from Galilee to Jerusalem and Rome at the same time, featuring women in diverse ministries along the way. Women play important roles in redemption history throughout the Gospel of Luke, from beginning to end (Luke 1:26-38; Luke 24: 1-10). Luke begins his chapter with the story of Mary, a lowly maiden from the unimportant town of Nazareth, where nothing good is expected (John 1:46). Luke concludes his gospel with women, the first witnesses to the resurrection, in a classical art of inclusion (Luke 24:1-10). Thus, from the beginning of his writing until the end, Luke depicts women as bearers of the good news of God's reign; in

between, he depicts a variety of women of various statuses and backgrounds: single, married, pregnant, mothers, wives, widows, philanthropists (Luke 8:1-3), property owners (Luke 10:38-42), prophets, sinners, feisty, penitents, disciples, and others. The Galilean women disciples followed Jesus from the beginning of his public ministry in Galilee to the end of his earthly mission in Jerusalem, just like their male counterparts.

The author of Acts leaves no doubt about the role of women in the reign of the Holy Spirit from the beginning of the Church. Indeed, Paul's letters, which predate the other documents of the New Testament, include a list of women ministers in the early church. In the final chapter of the Letter to the Romans, for example, Paul provides a list of his female ministry co-workers. Others include Chloe (1 Corinthians 1:11), Euodia and Syntyche (Philippians 4:2), and Apphia (Philemon 2). However, women's ministry did not end in the first few centuries of Christianity; it continued throughout the centuries, but women's ministerial role diminished as Christianity began to imbibe the Greco-Roman culture, which values patriarchy over charisma (Schüssler, 2009).

2.2.2 Women in Ministry in Early Christianity.

Although the influence of Greco-Roman culture appears to pervade Christianity in the early period, history shows a diverse range of women involved in one form or another of Church ministry. However, two examples demonstrate women's involvement in core ministry in church life. One example is the ascetic movement, which flourished in the fourth century Greco-Roman world under the leadership of Emperor Constantine following the Edict of Milan in 313; this period saw a welcome operational or political development for Christianity.

While many people agree that the Edict served as a springboard for Church advancement, Theresa Okure and other scholars are not convinced. According to Okure, the Edict was not liberating for women because the newly found ‘freedom’ to worship instituted Roman colonization of the church, unfortunately marking the departure from Christ to the state with its patriarchy and Lordship hierarchy rather than diakonia (Okure, 2013). The Edict’s newfound freedom, on the other hand, gave rise to new forms of Christian faith expression, such as the Ascetic Movement.

During the fourth and fifth centuries, the ascetic movement flourished in North Africa’s desert. During this time, women ascetics flourished alongside the men. Asceticism is a way of life, a belief that by practicing rigorous self-denial, self-mortification, and other extreme abstinence for religious reasons, a person can achieve a high spiritual and moral state. Women transitioned from mainstream society’s home-cantered subordinate lifestyle into a new arena of freedom found in the ascetic lifestyle known as Desert Mothers. Women ascetics did not allow cultural norms and expectations for women to thwart or limit their pursuit of God (Swan, 2001). As a result, these women sought the desert’s solitude, which provided them with a greater sense of physical and spiritual autonomy. Even at that time, the Desert Mothers made male leaders uncomfortable in their public roles by playing a significant role in the ministry and leadership of ascetic Christianity. Melanie the Elder, widowed at the age of 22, for example, became an ascetic and eventually established monasteries for both men and women. This young widow became an ascetic and invested her family’s wealth in furthering the ascetic way of life elevating asceticism to a highly cultivated form of ministry at the time (Steele, 2019). However, asceticism was not an end in itself;

women ascetics served as sages, gave spiritual guidance, and had disciples who followed their way of life. In addition, early Christian writings show women serving as deacons in churches.

During the early period of Christianity, women were not excluded from the diaconate. In the letter to the Romans, Paul commends a woman deacon, Phoebe, to the Christians in Rome: “I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchrea, for she has been a benefactor of many and of me as well” (Romans 16:1-2). It is worth noting that the word diakonos is in its neutral form, as opposed to diakoneo, which simply means service or assistance. Paul found in Phoebe a sister, Adelph, implying a familial closeness rooted in the baptismal bond; a diakonos, an official teacher and missionary in the church of Cenchreae as well as a benefactor (prostates), a designation suggestive of financial sponsorship, which could also mean that Phoebe was wealthy and of good social standing (Castelli, 1999 & Fitzmyer, 2008). Furthermore, in the New Testament, the term deacon (Greek-diakonos) refers to a servant or helper. Diakonos is mentioned 29 times in the New Testament. In 16:1-2, Paul specifically mentions a diakanos, Phoebe. The word diakoneo, which means to serve or support, appears thirty-six times in the New Testament. However, several centuries after Paul, the diaconate was not open to all women; it was restricted to monastic women and bishops’ wives. In the early and middle Byzantine periods, two types of monastic women were typically ordained to the diaconate: abbesses and nuns with liturgical functions, as well as the wives of men being raised to the episcopacy (Vagaggini, 2013). Beginning in the late fourth or early fifth century in the East, and continuing into the medieval period in both the Latin

and Byzantine Churches, there was a strong association of women deacons, particularly abbesses (Herrin, 2006).

Women deacons were mostly found in the eastern Roman Empire, where the office of deaconess was most commonly found. Women diakonos, like men deacons, provided pastoral care to church members, particularly women. Women deacons served both liturgical and pastoral functions in the Byzantine church. They taught catechumens and assisted those undergoing baptism, which required candidates to strip and be anointed with oil (Irvin & Sunquist, 2005). According to Irvin and Sunquist, among the Franks, some women deacons “not only heard confessions from women and men alike, but also gave absolution to persons of both genders.”

Evidence that women held diaconate offices modifies the generalization that the ordained ministry has been a male preserve since the beginning of Christianity. Christianity has always been a charismatic movement. The gift of the Holy Spirit is not gender bound, according to authentic Pauline letters. People were gifted for the ecclesia community’s edification. Women’s visibility in church ministry began to dwindle as the church adopted more of the characteristics of the dominant Roman culture, which largely confined women to the private sphere. Deaconesses’ roles became less favourable in the western Roman Empire during the fifth and sixth centuries. The Councils of Orange in 441 and Orléans in 533 both explicitly prohibited deaconesses from being ordained (Irvin & Sunquist, 2005). The prohibition on women being ordained to the diaconate did little to discourage them from ministering in other areas of church life, as women religious Orders and Congregations grew in popularity in subsequent centuries. The presence and activities of the vowed women religious Religious

Sisters) in the Roman Catholic tradition, for example, strongly suggest that the office of diakonos servant and helper, remains alive and active among Christian women regardless.

2.2.3 Women in ministry in the Roman Catholic

Women are marginalized in the Catholic Church by their exclusion from ordained ministries such as diaconate and priesthood. This church is rooted in a patriarchal (male-dominated) and androcentric (male-centered) culture that is prevalent throughout the world. The church, like Scripture, has a divine and a human face as a result of this culture. In its human face, the church is distinguished by its treatment of women (Okure, 2013). Women, in particular, face serious identity issues in the Catholic Church, particularly during liturgical celebrations. They may play important roles as teachers (in seminaries, catholic universities, and higher theological institutions), but when it comes to the liturgy and para-liturgical celebrations, they are non-persons (Okure, 2013).

Many women are active in the Catholic Church, but few have official titles. Even becoming a nun does not grant you the blessing of Holy Orders only men can be ordained. The prohibition on women becoming priests stems from the establishment of the sacrament of Holy Orders. No pope, council, or bishop can alter the sacrament because Christ instituted it. For the same reason, Eastern Orthodox Catholics do not ordain women. It has nothing to do with who is more deserving or suitable for Holy Orders, just as the prohibition on non-Catholics receiving Holy Communion has nothing to do with any moral or spiritual assessment of the individuals involved. It has to do with Sacred Tradition, which is considered divinely inspired in the same way that Sacred Scripture is. Women, on the other

hand, can serve their parishes in a variety of other ways: Women have equal sponsorship rights at Baptism and Confirmation. They are treated and regarded as full, equal partners with their husbands in Matrimony. Women are welcome to serve on the parish council and the finance committee. They can serve as readers at Mass, extraordinary ministers (laypeople who assist the priest at Mass in distributing Holy Communion, also known as Eucharistic ministers) if necessary, and ushers. They, like their male counterparts, can work in the parish office, teach religious education, and so on. In addition, many parishes have female pastoral associates, who are usually nuns or religious sisters who assist the pastor with a variety of spiritual and pastoral duties. Across the country, women serve as canon lawyers, judges, and chancellors in the Church. The Church has given local bishops and pastors the option of allowing female altar servers at Mass. Many parishes now have both altar girls and altar boys.

2.2.4 Women in ministry in the Anglican

The Anglican Church in Nigeria was born through the evangelical work of the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) which was founded in 1799 in England by a group of evangelical Christians (Adudu, 2015). The Church of Nigeria has had an eventful history as an autonomous Province within the Anglican Communion worldwide. Augustinian and Capuchin monks from Portugal brought Christianity to Nigeria in the 15th century. However, it wasn't until 1842, when Henry Townsend of the Church Missionary Society arrived in Badagry from Freetown, Sierra Leone, that the seed of Anglicanism was properly sown. The C.M.S. was founded by a group of sixteen clergy and nine laymen (Omoyajowo, 1994).

From that time, women serve as lay readers in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), but are not permitted to perform certain special duties such as Holy Communion distribution or funeral services. Women can serve as lay readers but not as pastor's wardens. Women, in her opinion, cannot be pastors because they will not have time to care for their families and the Church (Okolone, 2017). It's only the wives of priests are automatically in charge of women and girls ministry in the Anglican Communion, particularly in Nigeria and other parts of the world, and they have held in high regard and used to transform many lives and homes to the glory of God.

The Clergy wife is defined as the wife of a clergyman or pastor (Ezeabii, 2014). She is customarily and religiously married to a clergyman. A clergy wife is a clergywoman without a collar. This definition of a clergy wife as a clergywoman without a collar may not apply to other denominations, such as the Methodist Church, where women are ordained priests and wear the full regalia of their male counterparts. The clergy wife's position requires her to model her life after that of God's holy men. The clergy wife is a woman, but she is not like other women in terms of functions and qualities. She is the spiritual mother of everyone, including her children and the congregation that is why she is known as Mummy, "Nwunye nna anyi" (our father's wife), "Nne anyi" (our mother), "Ochiora" (great leader), and so on (Ewim, 2017). These names reflect the important role that clergy wives play in the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion). Members of the Church regard the clergy wife as a leader and expect her to know more than others. She must know the Bible and be able to teach it effectively. According to Ezeabii, 2014, a clergy wife is a pattern to be observed. Her way of life has a big influence on others. Her house is a "home for all". She cheerfully receives

people at all times. The clergy wife serves as a spiritual mother to all. Members of the church, who have problems and require counsel, confide in the clergy wife, particularly females who may find it difficult to reveal their secrets to the priest. The clergy wife plays an important role in her husband's ministry. She attends church programs such as morning and evening services on time in order to encourage the members. It is her responsibility to lead the women's meeting.

The clergy wives hold preparatory classes for those interested in joining the Girls Guild, Women Guild, or Mothers Union. She prepares future mothers among the members of the Girls Guild. The clergy wife organizes the women to clean the church one at a time. She is in charge of the church's cooking utensils and cutlery. Through her prayers, a clergy wife has a significant impact on her husband's ministry. She provides solace to her husband. He can be enraged when he returns from a Church committee meeting. She is always by her husband's side, providing emotional and spiritual support. A fortress is a large fort, a place strengthened against attack (Ezeabii, 2014). The clergy wife is a fortress for her husband and family members. Priests' children serve as role models. Others are expected to imitate their good behaviour, and as such, the clergy wife is responsible for instilling in her children a fear and knowledge of God. It is her responsibility to pray for them and ensure that they are clean and properly dressed.

Other women who are not Priests' wives have contributed to the Kingdom's work as Lay Readers, Children Ministry Teachers, Bible Study Teachers, Prayer Group Members and Leaders, Home Cell Coordinators, Marriage Counselors, and so on. They also have the ability to serve as Guest Preachers as needed. Women's ordination in the Anglican Communion has

become more common in some provinces since the 1970s, but not in Nigeria. The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) has maintained its position on female ordination. There has been no case of female ordination, though there has been some discussion about it. Women are the ones who prevent themselves from actively participating in leadership positions, they disparage their female counterparts and discourage them from pursuing positions of leadership (Ezenweke, 2014),

2.2.5 Women in ministry in the Aladura Churches

The Aladura Churches are African-founded churches that serve Africans (Adewale, 1988). They are often referred to as indigenous because their Christianity is not imported from Europe or another continent. It has been successful in contextualizing Christianity in a way that makes it appealing and relevant to African needs and worldviews. They are spiritual churches that emphasize the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit, as the name implies (Adewale, 1988). As a result, they reflect African culture to a large extent. Celestial Church of Christ (CCC), Christ Apostolic Church (CAC), Cherubim and Seraphim Church, the Church of the Lord, and others are among the churches in Nigeria (Aladura).

The elevated position accorded to women is one of the Aladura Churches' distinguishing features. Despite the fact that the Mainline Churches preach the principle of gender equality, men typically hold the majority of positions of authority. Archbishops, Reverend Ministers, and priests are typically men. However, in the Aladura Churches, women are encouraged to participate in Church ministry. Some of these churches were founded or are being founded by

women. Positions such as Reverend-Mother, Lady Evangelist, and Lady Leader are available for women in the Aladura movement. These are required to aid their spiritual development.

2.3 Feminists concept on gender discrimination.

Historically, men and women have been treated unequally. Women have historically been denied or given unequal access to economic opportunities, power, status, and privileges in society. In most countries, women have unequal access to resources and decision-making processes, as well as limited mobility. Women are under-represented in almost every aspect of social life, including politics, business, agriculture, industry, the military, religious institutions, and educational institutions. They were not granted equal voting rights in politics until recently, when there has been global recognition and concern about gender discrimination (Amadi, 1982, Alemika & Agugua, 2001). Despite the several women's rights outlined in the 1999 constitution, many women in Nigeria do not have the same freedom as men, particularly in the areas of education, economic empowerment, and political participation.

Feminism is a concept that refers to the process of reducing gender discrimination, ensuring women's rights, and lifting women out of poverty by breaking the cycle of early marriage and childbirth and empowering them to be full members of society. It is a socioeconomic change process that includes: changing the roles of men and women in society, changes in various aspects of women's lives such as reproduction; allowing women control over pregnancy, reducing motherhood and infant mortality, keeping girls in school for longer periods of time, and ensuring that well-paying jobs are available for them when they finish school.

The feminist movement is a group of progressives who lead the fight for gender equality, economic security, religious tolerance, and political freedom (Banks, 1986). Feminism emerged as an approach in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, from 1960 to 1980, with the goal of ending gender discrimination and violence against women.

Christian feminists argue that women's contributions and recognition of women's value are required for a complete understanding of Christianity (Harrison, 2007). They believe that God does not discriminate based on biologically determined characteristics such as sex and race, but rather created all humans to exist in harmony and equality, regardless of race or gender. Christian feminists generally advocate for anti-essentialism as part of their belief system, acknowledging that gender identities do not require a specific set of personality traits. They address the ordination of women, biblical equality in marriage, the recognition of equal spiritual and moral abilities, abortion rights, the incorporation of gender-neutral pronouns into Bible readings, and the search for a feminine or gender-transcendent divine.

In addition to biblical evidence and other Christian-based texts that advocate for women's rights, Christian feminists frequently draw on the teachings of other religions and ideologies (Hassey, 1989). Some Christian feminists believe that the principle of egalitarianism was present in Jesus' teachings and early Christian movements such as Marianismo, but this is a hotly debated point among feminist scholars who believe that Christianity itself is heavily reliant on gender roles (Gallagher, 2004). Some Christian feminists believe that achieving gender equality within the church requires reconsidering God's portrayal and understanding as a masculine being. (Kim, 2001).

Theological concepts such as Sophia, which is often seen as replacing or synonymous with the Holy Spirit in the Trinity, are frequently used to satisfy this desire for symbols that reflect women's religious experiences (McCoy, 2015). For some Christian feminists, the Sophia concept can be found in a search for women in both the Old and New Testaments who reflect contemporary feminist ideals. The Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene, Eve, and Esther are some of the figures used for this purpose (Fuchs, 2008). Others regard God as completely gender-transcendent, or they emphasize the feminine aspects of God and Jesus. Christa, a female depiction of the Christ figure, recently emerged in an attempt to allow the power of the Christ figure to be applied to both the masculine and the feminine (Nove, 1990). Gender-neutral or feminine language and imagery are used and promoted by some Christian feminists to describe God or Christ. Christian feminists advocate for a gender neutral reading of the Bible because male pronouns are more prevalent than female pronouns throughout the text (Kurian, 2011).

CHAPTER THREE

THE ROLE OF WOMEN ON DEEPER LIFE BIBLE CHURCH

3.1 History of Deeper life Bible Church

The Deeper Life Bible Church was founded in 1973 by William Folorunsho Kumuyi, who started a Bible Study Group in his official residence known as ‘Flat 2 at the University of Lagos (Gaiya, 2001). He led the Bible Study Group, which had 15 members at the start. Kumuyi was a mathematics lecturer at the University of Lagos at the time. He was born on June 6, 1941, in Orunwa, Ijebu Area, Ogun State, Nigeria, and completed his primary education before enrolling in the Mayflower School, Ikenne for secondary education. He earned his bachelor’s degree in mathematics from the University of Ibadan in 1967. Kumuyi went on to teach at the Mayflower School from 1967 to 1971. He earned a Postgraduate Diploma in Education from the University of Lagos in 1971 and later worked as a Lecturer there until his retirement in 1983. His Anglican Christian upbringing, his strict Christian

father, and later the Apostolic Faith Church to which he had initially belonged all influenced his decision to start the Bible Study Group. “It was a very strict Christian home,” Kumuyi told Alan Isaacson. We would get up in the morning, read the Bible, sing hymns, and go to church on a regular basis to “May His Will Be Done” (Isaacson, 1990). These forerunners existed prior to the formal establishment of the Deeper Life Bible Church in 1973.

Deeper Life Bible Church is one of Nigeria’s oldest Pentecostal churches, remaining conservative, non-innovative, and anti-modernist (Gaiya, 2001). Deeper Life can be classified as Pentecostal based on the teachings of the general superintendent, Pastor W.F. Kumuyi. It is a Pentecostal organization with roots in the holiness tradition. The teachings or religious ideals held by Kumuyi and propagated through the Deeper life church are holiness and the exhortation of all members to live holy lives take precedence over all other church teachings. The Deeper Life Bible Church could also be viewed as a neo-Pentecostal church (Gaiya, 2001). This is because the Church portrays itself as a holy church. Because of its geographical spread throughout the country, the Deeper Life Bible Church could be described as a grassroots evangelism church. The Church, which began with only fifteen (15) members in 1973, now has over one million members worldwide. According to independent statistics, Deeper Life Bible Church is now one of the world’s largest churches (Gaiya, 2001). Originally limited to the fellowship in Akoka, the Church now has a presence in 40 African countries and 20 countries in Europe, Asia, and the Americas. Some writers have referred to Deeper Life Bible Church’s growth as extraordinary because of the massive increase in membership seen in such a short period of time (Isaacson, 1990).

The Deeper Life Bible Church, for example, has over 1,340 churches in Ghana alone. The church is expanding throughout the world, particularly in Europe and America. Deeper Life Bible Church has multiple locations in Russia, Ukraine, Hong Kong, India, Jamaica, the Irish Republic, the United States of America, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Austria, and Century. In the coming years, the Church's General Superintendent hopes to establish the Deeper Life Bible Church in every community and stratum of society.

This is confirmed by Kumuyi's words: "I want to reach the people who no one else is reaching right now... it is my passion that the truth we have will reach them" (Ankomah, 2006). When the premises of "Flat 2" could no longer accommodate their growing numbers, the Bible Study Group relocated to Akoka near the University, where it drew more non-denominational people, totalling over 1500. Pastor W.F. Kumuyi was saved in the Apostolic Faith Church and was born again in April 1964 (Gaiya, 2001), but later disagreed with Church leadership. In his own words, he explained the reasons for his disagreement with the Apostolic Faith: "The primary reason is that the Apostolic Faith did not believe in every member going out to witness to others in order to win souls. They believed that if everyone did this, they would not be able to teach the right thing in a consistent manner because they were young and untrained. I told them no, they were not going out to teach others, they were simply saying, this is what Christ can do for you..." (Ankomah, 2006).

Kumuyi was forced to leave the Apostolic Faith Church due to his disagreeable stance. This fuelled the establishment of the Deeper Life Bible Church. Other factors included mounting pressure from within his own group for him to establish a church. This decision was made on

Sunday, November 7, 1982 (Ankomah, 2006), and the Deeper Life Bible Church grew in numerical strength year after year until the 1990s, with its headquarters in Gbagada, Lagos.

During its first five Sunday services, 70,000 people attended. People who believed that the church's extraordinary growth and progress was due to some 'juju' power were harshly critical of the new church. The Deeper Life church not only has 120,000 attendees every Sunday, but it has also planted over 500 churches in Lagos and 5000 in the rest of Nigeria with an independent estimate of more than 800,000 members in Nigeria alone. He also mentioned that the church may have 3,000 members elsewhere with missionaries to 40 countries of Africa.

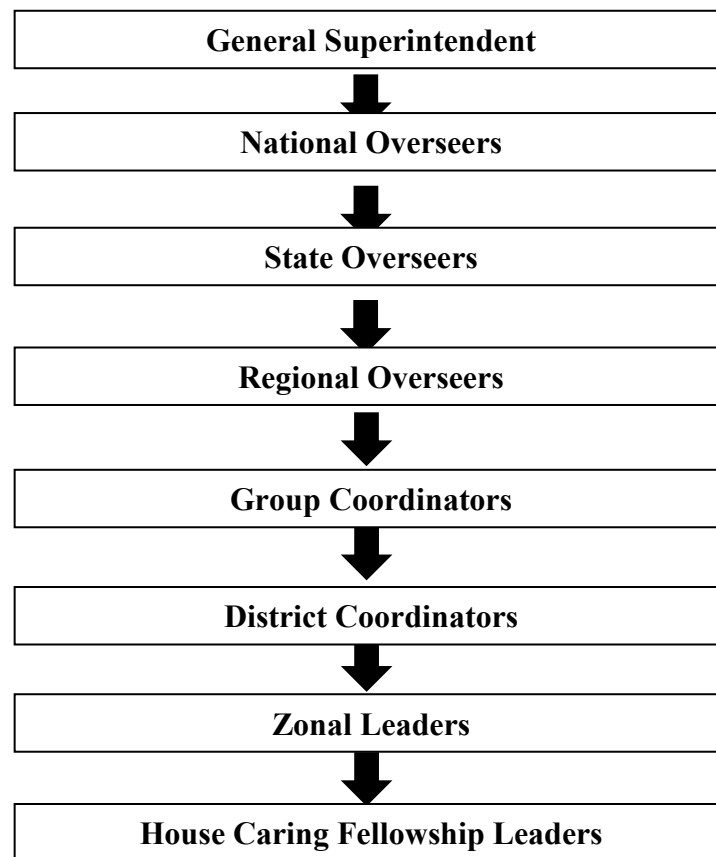
The religious ideas of Kumuyi and other charismatic groups that arose in the 1970s have continued to pique people's interest because they are presented with vigour and vitality that makes them appealing. They are also presented with freshness and frequently appear new (Ojo, 1992). However, it should be noted that Deeper Life Bible Church is still expanding in terms of membership and branch count. Furthermore, the church has had a significant impact on Nigerian Christianity through extensive evangelistic activities, with a focus on miracles and healings.

3.2 The Hierarchical Structure of Deeper Life Bible Church

Deeper Life Bible Church is structured in such a way that William Folorunsho Kumuyi, the Church's sole founder and leader, is known as the General Superintendent. Next to him are the National Overseers of Deeper Life Churches around the world, including Nigeria. The State Overseers are the next level in the Church's hierarchy. These are the pastors of the churches in each state of Nigeria. In Nigeria, each state is divided into regions, which are led

by Regional Overseers who report to the State Overseers. Within regions, there are Districts, which are then grouped, and each Group is led by a Group Coordinator. Each District is led by a Coordinator. House caring fellowships are led by house leaders in each district. These fellowships are intended to provide companionship for members of the community who might otherwise be lonely. This corresponds to African communal life. Members in the zones who are experiencing financial difficulties are given assistance.

The Church's hierarchy is summarized below, beginning with the highest office:



The various ministries in church, such as Children, Youth, and Women, have their own hierarchies of leadership, all tailored to the above organization, beginning at the House level and progressing to the National level.

3.3 The Role of Women in Deeper Life Bible Church (Individual)

Individually, a Deeper Life Bible Church woman is expected to be a total woman. The total woman depicts the original identity and place of every woman created by God. i.e. a woman who fears God, who is truthful in speech and motives; she is a woman who is hardworking, gentle, humble, trustworthy, prayerful, prudent in financial matter. In an interview granted Alan Isaacson by Kumuyi, he says, in the church that women only have an important ministry to women. So, the whole church seems to believe that the women have a role to play in evangelistic and missionary work, talking to those who have not known the lord. He further explained that since women have a lot of things to do at home, it would be better for them to take care of their family and the children. To him, it would not be a good thing for their ministry in the church to conflict with the training of their children at home (Alan, 1990) Further, he says, in the early days, single women usually led Bible studies, but now that they have been getting married, they have slightly changed so that they can fulfil their roles at homes, and work with their husbands in fulfilling his ministry, rather than working alone.

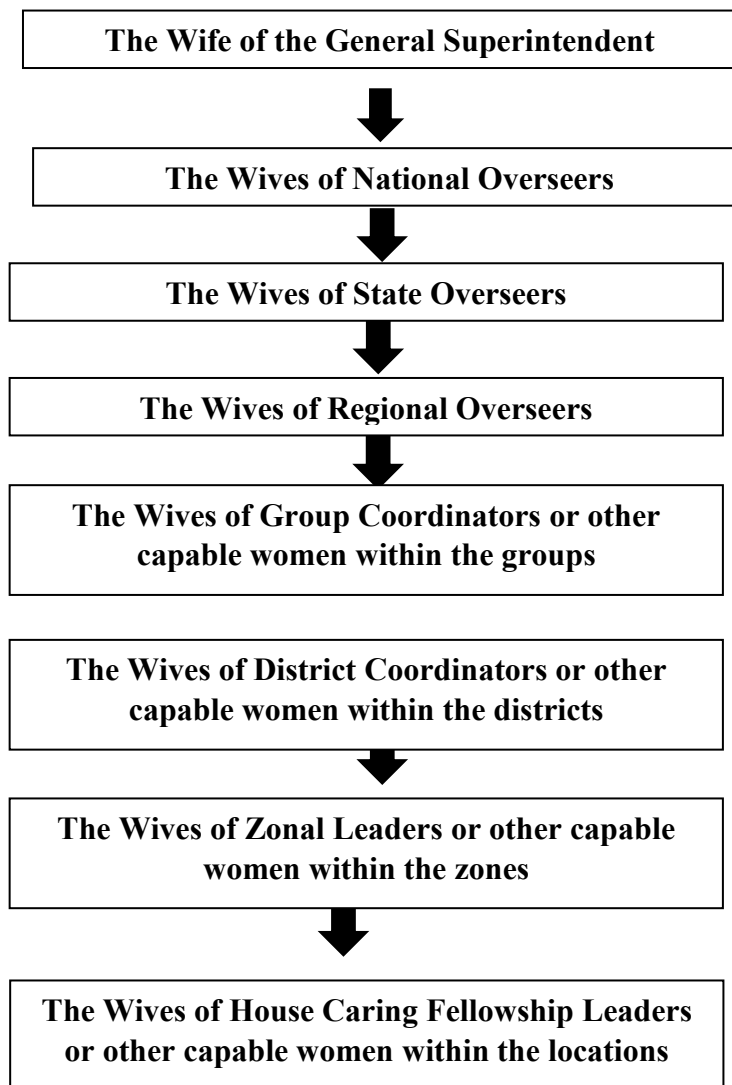
In various districts, groups, regions, states and nations, women serve in various sections as ushers, choristers, prayer team and are also involve in the decoration of the church. They are encouraged to be actively involved in winning souls for Christ through personal evangelism, school evangelism, market evangelism and hospital evangelism.

3.4 The Deeper Life Bible Church women role as an organised body (The Women Fellowship)

Since its inception, the Deeper Life Women Ministry has played an important and supportive role within the Deeper Christian Life Ministry. It focuses on meeting the specific, spiritual, and family needs of women worldwide, both within and outside the church. Thousands of women have been saved, restored, sanctified, and filled with the Holy Spirit as a result of this ministry. Through God's intervention, many separated families have been reunited and family problems have been resolved. After the marriage of Abiodun Olowu and Pastor

William Folorunsho Kumuyi on September 13, 1980, she was saddled with enormous responsibilities. As the wife of the pastor of one of the world's fastest growing churches, she had a wide field in which to promote and practice the church's teachings of holiness and evangelization (Ogunewu, 2012). Mrs. Abiodun Kumuyi founded and was actively involved in the church's women's ministry. She rose to lead the women's fellowship (Ogunewu, 2012). The women's fellowship marked a watershed moment in a life of fruitful, successful, and ever-expanding ministry (Ogunewu, 2012). Following her death on April 11, 2009, Sister Esther Kumuyi (popularly known as Mummy Esther), the General Superintendent's current wife, now leads the Women Ministry. She has expanded the scope of the Women Ministry, building on the legacies of Late Sister Abiodun Kumuyi (The Guardian, 2018). The ministry organizes regular and special programs aimed at spiritually and otherwise enlightening and uplifting women (The Guardian, 2018).

Just like the organised hierarchy of the church, the woman fellowship has its hierarchical structure which consists of the wives of the various coordinators.



The Various Women's Ministry categories include:

- i. Christian women leaders
- ii. Married women
- iii. Widows
- iv. Younger women
- v. Older single women,

- vi. Expectant mothers
- vii. Needy mothers.

Although the women's fellowship's primary focus/aim/goal is the development of the whole woman as affirmed by various personal communications, the collective roles of the Women Fellowship include:

- i. Alleviation of women suffering
- ii. The women's fellowship works to strengthen families, not just women, by exposing them to biblical principles of a godly home.
- iii. The women's fellowship encourages women to be born again.
- iv. The women's fellowship encourages women to live righteously.
- v. The women's fellowship is involved in evangelizing unreached women.
- vi. The women's fellowship encourages women to participate in their children's education.
- vii. The women's fellowship encourages women to do housework.
- viii. The women's fellowship encourages women to be close to their husbands and children.
- ix. The women's fellowship provides training in important areas such as time management and multitasking.
- x. The women's fellowship encourages women to practice consistent prayer and Bible study.

- xi. The women fellowship trains women in small-scale business so that they can be gainfully employed; contribute to their family's income, and the economy of their society.
- xii. The women's fellowship organizes and implements educational programs and health seminars for women.
- xiii. Seminars, workshops, and forums are also used by the women's fellowship to expose women to the gospel truth, understand the gospel, respond to the gospel, and apply it to every aspect of their lives.
- xiv. The women's fellowship conducts village outreach. Using medical personnel who attended to the villagers' health needs, as well as medicine and relief materials, to reach out to villages with the gospel of Christ.
- xv. The women fellowship distributes her message through the monthly women mirror magazine, which teaches women everything they need to know in order to be successful wives and mothers, accomplished and exemplary Christians, and models of excellence.
- xvi. The women fellowship assists women who are genuinely struggling with financial problems by establishing many women in small scale businesses through an interest-free loan scheme, ensuring that no woman falls away from the faith due to financial or material lack.
- xvii. The women's fellowship helps many widows and fatherless children by paying their school fees.

- xviii. The women's fellowship provides pastoral care and counselling in which the deep truth of God's word is applied to difficult life situations such as marriage, child rearing, family, work, and career.
- xix. The women's fellowship plant churches, strengthen churches, and serve as the church's powerhouse.

Women fellowship activities:

- The women fellowship organises a monthly fellowship of the church which addresses the physical and the spiritual well-being of women.
- The women fellowship organises regular and special programmes aimed at enlightening and uplifting women spiritually and otherwise.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is chiefly concerned with the interpretation of data. Analysis of data and pertinent information collected for this research will be grouped as follows:

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

This section concentrates on the information relating to the demographic (personal) characteristics of individual respondents.

Frequency Table

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	MALE	38	53.5	53.5	53.5
	FEMALE	33	46.5	46.5	100.0
	Total	71	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 1: SEX OF RESPONDENTS

Source: Author's computation

Table 1 above indicates that out of the 71 respondents, the males are 38 (representing 53.5%),

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Civil Servant	9	12.7	12.7	12.7
Creative Freelancer	1	1.4	1.4	14.1
Educationist	3	4.2	4.2	18.3
Engineer	2	2.8	2.8	21.1
Factory worker	2	2.8	2.8	23.9
Lecturer	3	4.2	4.2	28.2
Quality Assurance Officer	1	1.4	1.4	29.6
Sales Executive	5	7.0	7.0	36.6
Student	26	36.6	36.6	73.2
Teacher	6	8.5	8.5	81.7
Technician	3	4.2	4.2	85.9
Trader	10	14.1	14.1	100.0
Total	71	100.0	100.0	

while the females are 33 (representing 46.5%). The analysis presented above shows that majority of the sampled respondents are females as it has the highest frequency score.

TABLE 2: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY THEIR OCCUPATION

Source: Author's computation

Table 2 above indicate that out of the 71 respondents, 9 (representing 12.7%) are Civil Servants, 1 (representing 1.4%) is a Creative Freelancer, 3 (representing 4.2%) are

Educationist, 2 (representing 2.8%) are Engineers, 2 (representing 2.8%) are Factory workers, 3 (representing 4.2%) are Lecturers, 1 (representing 1.4%) is a Quality assurance Officer, 5 (representing 7.0%) are Sales Executives, 26 (representing 36.6%) are Students, 6 (representing 8.5%) are Teachers, 3 (representing 4.2%) are Technicians and 10 (representing 14.1%) are Traders. The analysis indicates that majority of the respondents are Students.

TABLE 3: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY THEIR HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Diploma	10	14.1	14.1	14.1
Doctorate	3	4.2	4.2	18.3
First Degree	31	43.7	43.7	62.0
Second Degree	7	9.9	9.9	71.8
Secondary School	20	28.2	28.2	100.0
Total	71	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's computation

Table 3 above indicates that out of the 71 respondents, 10 (representing 14.1%) had Diploma, 3 (representing 4.2%) had doctorate, 31 (representing 43.7%) had First Degree, 7 (representing 9.9%) had Second Degree and 20 (representing 28.2%) had Secondary School as their highest level of education.

TABLE 4: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY THEIR DISTRICT

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
CHURCH 1 (BDPA)	23	32.4	32.4	32.4
CHURCH 2 (EKOSODIN)	27	38.0	38.0	70.4
CHURCH 3 (OSASOGIE)	21	29.6	29.6	100.0
Total	71	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's computation

Table 4 above indicates that out of the 71 respondents, 23 (representing 32.4%) were from Church 1 (DLCF-BDPA), 27 (representing 38.0%) were from Church 2 (DLCF-OSASOGIE) and 21 (representing 29.6%) were from Church 3 (DLCF-EKOSODIN). The analysis presented above shows that majority of the sampled respondents were members of Church 3 (DLCF-EKOSODIN).

TABLE 5: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY THEIR CHURCH

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
CONGREGATION	60	84.5	84.5	84.5
PASTOR	4	5.6	5.6	90.1
WOMEN LEADER	7	9.9	9.9	100.0
Total	71	100.0	100.0	

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY

Source: Author's computation

Table 5 above indicates that out of the 71 respondents, 60 (representing 84.5%) were Lay Congregation, 4 (representing 5.6%) were Pastors and 7 (representing 9.9%) were Women leaders. The analysis presented above shows that majority of the sampled respondents were Lay Congregation of the church.

4.3 Data analysis on women in ministry and gender discrimination: A case study of the Deeper Life Bible Church, Ugbowo, Benin City, Edo State.

FREQUENCY TABLES FOR LAY CONGREGATION

TABLE 6: Do you think that the scripture supports women serving in church to the level of being ordained as pastors?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Maybe	13	21.7	21.7	21.7
No	15	25.0	25.0	46.7
Yes	32	53.3	53.3	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's computation

Table 6 showed that out of 60 respondents who responded to “**Do you think that the scripture supports women serving in church to the level of being ordained as pastors?**”, 21.7% affirmed “Maybe, 25.0 % affirmed “No”, while 53.3% affirmed “Yes”.

TABLE 7: Would you like women to be appointed for leadership positions in your in

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Maybe	11	18.3	18.3	18.3
No	28	46.7	46.7	65.0
Yes	21	35.0	35.0	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

church?

Source: Author's computation

Table 7 above showed that out of 60 respondents who responded to “**Would you like women to be appointed for leadership positions in your in church?**”, 18.3% affirmed “Maybe, 46.7 % affirmed “No”, while 35.0% affirmed “Yes”.

TABLE 8: Do you know of any leader in the Bible who is a woman?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Maybe	2	3.3	3.3	3.3
No	13	21.7	21.7	25.0
Yes	45	75.0	75.0	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's computation

Table 8 above showed that out of 60 respondents who responded to “**Do you know of any leader in the Bible who is a woman?**”, 3.3% affirmed “Maybe, 21.7 % affirmed “No”, while 75.0% affirmed “Yes”.

TABLE 9: Do you know any woman who is spiritually gifted in your church?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	18	30.0	30.0	30.0
Yes	42	70.0	70.0	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's computation

Table 9 above showed that out of 60 respondents who responded to “**Do you know any woman who is spiritually gifted in your church?**” 30.0% affirmed “No”, while 70.0% affirmed “Yes”.

TABLE 10: Do you think that women should participate in decision making forums like church boards?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Maybe	7	11.7	11.7	11.7
No	26	43.3	43.3	55.0
Yes	27	45.0	45.0	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's computation

Table 10 above showed that out of 60 respondents who responded to “**Do you think that women should participate in decision making forums like church boards?**”, 11.7% affirmed “Maybe, 43.3% affirmed “No”, while 45.0% affirmed “Yes”.

TABLE 11: Are the women in your church allowed to function in the roles you suggested above?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Maybe	11	18.3	18.3	18.3
No	21	35.0	35.0	53.3
Yes	28	46.7	46.7	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's computation

Table 11 above showed that out of 60 respondents who responded to “**Are the women in your church allowed to function in the roles you suggested above?**”, 18.3% affirmed “Maybe, 35.0% affirmed “No”, while 46.7% affirmed “Yes”.

TABLE 12: Do you think that the culture in your church locality has influenced the roles for women in your church?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Maybe	7	11.7	11.7	11.7
No	42	70.0	70.0	100.0
Yes	11	18.3	18.3	30.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's computation

Table 12 above showed that out of 60 respondents who responded to “**Do you think that the culture in your church locality has influenced the roles for women in your church?**”, 11.7% affirmed “Maybe, 70.0% affirmed “No”, while 18.3% affirmed “Yes”.

TABLE 13: Are women discriminated in your church?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Maybe	11	18.3	18.3	18.3
No	30	50.0	50.0	68.3
Yes	19	31.7	31.7	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's computation

Table 13 above showed that out of 60 respondents who responded to “**Are women discriminated in your church?**”, 18.3% affirmed “Maybe, 30.0% affirmed “No”, while 19.0% affirmed “Yes”.

TABLE 14: Do you think that women should be facilitated to take up roles of leadership in your church?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Maybe	6	10.0	10.0	10.0
	7	11.7	11.7	21.7
Yes	47	78.3	78.3	100.0
Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's computation

Table 14 above showed that out of 60 respondents who responded to “**Do you think that women should be facilitated to take up roles of leadership in your church?**”, 10.0% affirmed “Maybe, 11.7% affirmed “No”, while 78.3% affirmed “Yes”.

FREQUENCY TABLES FOR PASTORS

TABLE 15: Do you have women in your church leadership?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	4	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Author's computation

Table 15 above showed that all 4 respondents who responded to “**Do you have women in your church leadership?**” affirmed “Yes”.

TABLE 16: Do you allow women to participate in church boards and other

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	4	100.0	100.0	100.0

management roles?

Source: Author's computation

Table 16 above showed that all 4 respondents who responded to “**Do you allow women to participate in church boards and other management roles?**” affirmed “Yes”.

TABLE 17: Do you consult women in your church while making important church decisions?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Maybe	2	50.0	50.0	50.0
Yes	2	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	4	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's computation

Table 17 above showed that out of 4 respondents who responded to “**Do you consult women in your church while making important church decisions?**”, 50.0% affirmed “Maybe, while 50.0% affirmed “Yes”.

TABLE 18: Do you think that the culture in your church locality has influenced the roles for women in your church?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Maybe	1	25.0	25.0	25.0
No	2	50.0	50.0	75.0
Yes	1	25.0	25.0	100.0
Total	4	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's computation

Table 18 above showed that out of 4 respondents who responded to “**Do you think that the culture in your church locality has influenced the roles for women in your church?**”, 25.0% affirmed “Maybe, 50.0% affirmed “No”, while 50.0% affirmed “Yes”.

TABLE 19: Are you personally comfortable with women leadership in church?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Maybe	1	25.0	25.0	25.0
No	1	25.0	25.0	50.0
Yes	2	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	4	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's computation

Table 19 above showed that out of 4 respondents who responded to “**Are you personally comfortable with women leadership in church?**”, 25.0% affirmed “Maybe, 25.0% affirmed “No”, while 50.0% affirmed “Yes”.

TABLE 20: Have you received theological training?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Somewhat	1	25.0	25.0	25.0
Yes	3	75.0	75.0	100.0
Total	4	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's computation

Table 20 above showed that out of 4 respondents who responded to “**Have you received theological training?**”, 25.0% affirmed “Somewhat”, while 75.0% affirmed “Yes”.

TABLE 21: Do you think women are significant to the growth of the church?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Maybe	1	25.0	25.0	25.0
Yes	3	75.0	75.0	100.0
Total	4	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's computation

Table 21 above showed that out of 4 respondents who responded to “**Do you think women are significant to the growth of the church?**”, 25.0% affirmed “Maybe”, while 75.0% affirmed “Yes”.

TABLE 22: Do you think women are discriminated even for positions that they deserve?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	4	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Author's computation

Table 22 above showed that all 4 respondents who responded to “**Do you think women are discriminated even for positions that they deserve?**” affirmed “No”.

TABLE 23: Do you think that women should be more involved within the church

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	1	25.0	25.0	25.0
Yes	3	75.0	75.0	100.0
Total	4	100.0	100.0	

system?

Source: Author's computation

Table 23 above showed that out of 4 respondents who responded to “**Do you think that women should be more involved within the church system?**”, 25.0% affirmed “No”, while 75.0% affirmed “Yes”.

FREQUENCY TABLES FOR WOMEN LEADERS

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	2	28.6	28.6	28.6
Yes	5	71.4	71.4	100.0
Total	7	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 24: Do you have any administrative role in your church management?

Source: Author's computation

Table 24 above showed that out of 7 respondents who responded to “**Do you have any administrative role in your church management?**”, 28.6% affirmed “No”, while 71.4% affirmed “Yes”.

TABLE 25: Do you sit on the church board in your district?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	5	71.4	71.4	71.4
Yes	2	28.6	28.6	100.0
Total	7	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's computation

Table 25 above showed that out of 7 respondents who responded to “**Do you sit on the church board in your district?**”, 74.1.0% affirmed “No”, while 28.6.0% affirmed “Yes”.

TABLE 26: Are you consulted when the administration of your church is making church decisions?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	2	28.6	28.6	28.6
Sometimes	2	28.6	28.6	57.1
Yes	3	42.9	42.9	100.0
Total	7	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's computation

Table 26 above showed that out of 7 respondents who responded to “**Are you consulted when the administration of your church is making church decisions**”, 28.6% affirmed “No”, 28.6% affirmed “Sometimes”, while 42.9% affirmed “Yes”.

TABLE 27: Do you feel that your church has denied you rightful church positions such

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	3	42.9	42.9	42.9
Yes	4	57.1	57.1	100.0
Total	7	100.0	100.0	
No	3	42.9	42.9	42.9

as administrative leadership roles?

Source: Author's computation

Table 27 above showed that out of 7 respondents who responded to “**Do you feel that your church has denied you rightful church positions such as administrative leadership roles**”, 42.9% affirmed “No”, while 57.1% affirmed “Yes”.

TABLE 28: Do you personally like women to be church leaders in your church?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
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Maybe	1	14.3	14.3	14.3
Yes	6	85.7	85.7	100.0
Total	7	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's computation

Table 28 above showed that out of 7 respondents who responded to “**Do you personally like women to be church leaders in your church**”, 14.3% affirmed “Maybe”, while 85.7% affirmed “Yes”.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	4	57.1	57.1	57.1
Yes	3	42.9	42.9	100.0
Total	7	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 29: In your district, are women collectively seen as weak?

Source: Author's computation

Table 29 above showed that out of 7 respondents who responded to “**In your district, are women collectively seen as weak?**” 57.1% affirmed “No”, while 42.9% affirmed “Yes”.

TABLE 30: Do you ever feel unimportant/insignificant?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Maybe	1	14.3	14.3	14.3
No	2	28.6	28.6	42.9
Yes	4	57.1	57.1	100.0
Total	7	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's computation

Table 30 above showed that out of 7 respondents who responded to “**Do you ever feel unimportant/insignificant?**”, 14.3% affirmed “Maybe”, 28.6% affirmed “No”, while 57.1% affirmed “Yes”.

TABLE 31: Do you think that women are treated differently in respect to position given, decision making, role, because of their gender?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	1	14.3	14.3	14.3
Yes	6	85.7	85.7	100.0
Total	7	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's computation

Table 31 above showed that out of 7 respondents who responded to “**Do you think that women are treated differently in respect to position given, decision making, role, because of their gender?**”, 14.3% affirmed “No”, while 85.7 % affirmed “Yes”.

TABLE 32: Do you think that women roles in your district are influenced by the Benin traditional culture in your locality?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	7	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Author's computation

Table 32 above showed that all 7 respondents who responded to “**Do you think that women are treated differently in respect to position given, decision making, role, because of their gender?**”, affirmed “No”.

TABLE 33: What is the effect of gender discrimination on the women fellowship?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Absence of Self-esteem among women	1	14.3	14.3	14.3
Complaints and envy towards male leaders in the fellowship	1	14.3	14.3	28.6
Disobedience to Male Leaders by the women	1	14.3	14.3	42.9
Disunity between the men and the women in the fellowship				
Less support of women to the men in fellowship duties	1	14.3	14.3	57.1

No observation yet	1	14.3	14.3	71.4
Total	2	28.6	28.6	100.0
	7	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's computation

Table 33 above showed that out of 7 respondents who responded to “**What is the effect of gender discrimination on the women fellowship?**”, 1 respondent revealed that gender discrimination brought about “Absence of Self-esteem among women” in the women fellowship of the church, 1 respondent revealed that gender discrimination brought about “Complaints and envy by women towards male leaders in the fellowship”, 1 respondent revealed that gender discrimination brought about “Disobedience to Male Leaders by the women”, 1 respondent revealed that gender discrimination brought about “Disunity between the men and the women in the fellowship”, 1 respondent revealed that gender discrimination brought about “Less support of women to the men in fellowship duties” and 2 respondents revealed that there are “No observed effect of gender discrimination in the fellowship yet”

TABLE 34: CHURCH PARTICIPANT'S OBSERVATION SCHEDULE (BDPA)**District: BDPA District****Date of Observation: 20/11/2022 (Sunday)****Length of Observation: 3hours 22minutes**

Features	Observations
Observed roles for men.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Led the Pre-meeting Prayers. ii. Preached the Search the scripture. iii. Moderating the service. iv. Technicians v. Pastoring the district.
Observed roles for women.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Counselling of some women after the service. ii. Questioning the welfare of some women. iii. Cleaning and arranging the church after service.
Shared roles between men and women.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ushering the members into the district and also coordinating the seating arrangement of the congregation. ii. Singing in the Choir. iii. Coordinating the Children Church. iv. Coordinating the Youth Church.
Sitting arrangements and position.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The men and women sat together at the pew facing the pulpit. ii. The Moderator, The Search the Scripture Minister and Pastor sat on the Platform facing the congregation
Service Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Pre-meeting Prayer. ii. Singing the first Gospel Hymns and Songs led by the Pastor and Choir iii. Search the Scriptures taken by a minister. iv. Search the Scriptures Summary taken by the pastor. v. Singing the second and third Gospel Hymns and Songs led by the Pastor and Choir vi. Prayers, announcements, collecting of

	<p>offerings and tithes, welcoming of new comers, Bible reading taken by the moderator.</p> <p>vii. Choir Ministration.</p> <p>viii. Sermon preached by the Pastor.</p> <p>ix. Closing Prayers and announcement taken by the moderator.</p>
The general impression of gender.	The Men took a larger percentage of the roles during the service. Although, there wasn't any tension or women feeling left out during the service.

TABLE 35: CHURCH PARTICIPANT'S OBSERVATION SCHEDULE(OSASOGIE)

District: Osasogie District

Date of Observation: 4/12/2022 (Sunday)

Length of Observation: 3hours 10minutes

Features	Observations
Observed roles for men.	<p>i. Led The Pre-meeting Prayers.</p> <p>ii. Moderating the service.</p> <p>iii. Technicians</p> <p>iv. Pastoring the district.</p>
Observed roles for women.	<p>i. Preached the Search the scripture.</p> <p>ii. Counselling of some women after the service.</p> <p>iii. Questioning the welfare of some women.</p> <p>iv. Cleaning and arranging the church after service.</p>
Shared roles between men and women.	<p>i. Ushering the members into the district and also coordinating the seating arrangement of the congregation.</p> <p>ii. Singing in the Choir.</p> <p>iii. Coordinating the Children Church.</p> <p>iv. Coordinating the Youth Church.</p>

Sitting arrangements and position.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The men and women sat together at the pew facing the pulpit. ii. The Moderator and Pastor sat on the Platform facing the congregation
Service Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Pre-meeting Prayer. ii. Singing the first Gospel Hymns and Songs led by the Pastor and Choir iii. Search the Scriptures taken by a minister. iv. Search the Scriptures Summary taken by the pastor. v. Singing the second and third Gospel Hymns and Songs led by the Pastor and Choir vi. Prayers, announcements, Collecting of offerings and tithes, welcoming of new comers, Bible reading taken by the moderator. vii. Choir Ministration. viii. Sermon preached by the Pastor. ix. Closing Prayers and announcement taken by the moderator.
The general impression of gender.	The Men took a larger percentage of the roles during the service. Unlike the first district, a women ministered the search the scriptures message.

TABLE 36: CHURCH PARTICIPANT'S OBSERVATION SCHEDULE (EKOSODIN)**District: Ekosodin District****Date of Observation: 18/12/2022(Sunday)****Length of Observation: 2hours 48minutes for the service and 35minutes for the women meeting.**

Features	Observations
Observed roles for men.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Led The Pre-meeting Prayers. ii. Moderating the service. iii. Technicians iv. Preached the Search the scripture. v. Pastoring the district.
Observed roles for women.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Preached the Search the scripture. ii. Counselling of some women after the service. iii. The Woman leader held a meeting with the women. iv. Cleaning and arranging the church after service.
Shared roles between men and women.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Ushering the members into the district and also coordinating the seating arrangement of the congregation. ii. Singing in the Choir. iii. Coordinating the Children Church. iv. Coordinating the Youth Church.
Sitting arrangements and position.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The men and women sat together at the pew facing the pulpit. ii. The Moderator and Pastor sat on the Platform facing the congregation
Service Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Pre-meeting Prayer. ii. Singing the first Gospel Hymns and Songs led by the Pastor and Choir iii. Search the Scriptures taken by a minister. iv. Search the Scriptures Summary taken by the pastor. v. Singing the second and third Gospel Hymns and Songs led by the Pastor and Choir vi. Prayers, announcements, Collecting of

	<p>offerings and tithes, welcoming of new comers, Bible reading taken by the moderator.</p> <p>vii. Choir Ministration.</p> <p>viii. Sermon preached by the Pastor.</p> <p>ix. Closing Prayers and announcement taken by the moderator.</p> <p>x. Meeting with women by the woman leader.</p>
The general impression of gender.	<p>i. The Search the scripture session was categorized into two groups of men and women only. A female ministered to the women group and a male ministered to the men group.</p> <p>ii. After the service, the women held a meeting led by the woman leader of the district. There was a very cordial relationship between the woman leader and the attendees the meeting. They seemed like a family.</p>

4.4 Discussion and Findings

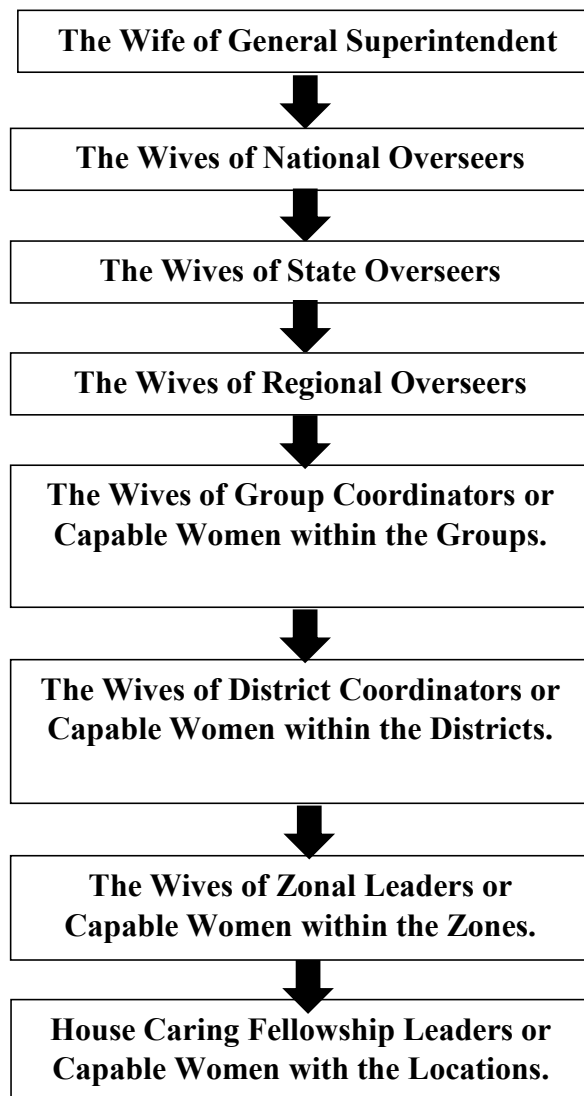
4.4.1 The Hierarchical Structure of Deeper Life Bible Church

The information used to address this objective was a secondary data extracted from ministry's website page. Deeper Life Bible Church is structured in such a way that William Folorunsho Kumuyi, the Church's sole founder and leader, is known as the General Superintendent. Next to him are the National Overseers of Deeper Life Churches around the world, including Nigeria. The State Overseers are the next level in the Church's hierarchy. These are the pastors of the churches in each state of Nigeria. In Nigeria, each state is divided into regions, which are led by Regional Overseers who report to the State Overseers. Within regions, there are Districts, which are then grouped, and each Group is led by a Group

Coordinator. Each District is led by a Coordinator. House caring fellowships are led by house leaders in each district. These fellowships are intended to provide companionship for members of the community who might otherwise be lonely. This corresponds to African communal life. Members in the zones who are experiencing financial difficulties are given assistance.

The Church's hierarchy is summarized below, beginning with the highest office:

Just like the organised hierarchy of the church, the woman fellowship has its hierarchical structure which consists of the wives of the various coordinators.



The various ministries in church, such as Children, Youth, and Women, have their own hierarchies of leadership, all tailored to the above organization, beginning at the House level and progressing to the National level.

4.4.2 Role of Women in Leadership

Table 15 revealed that there are women in the church leadership of the church, while majority of the respondents from table 16 believe that women should be facilitated to take up roles of leadership in the church. From table 9, respondents affirmed that there are spiritually gifted women in the church.

First of all, there are statistically more women than men in the church, making it almost inevitably impossible for church leadership to properly make decisions when they fail to include someone who represents more than half the congregation. Given women the privilege of being in the church leadership board allows for better representing of the women during plans and decision making by the church leadership. Throughout the Bible, women have played a key role in fulfilling God's plan. They have also held positions of leadership and responsibilities in spreading the Gospel. In the new testaments there are many examples of women in leadership positions exercising diverse spiritual gifts. They prophesied (Luke 2:36; Acts 2:17; 21:9), Pastored (cared for) the congregation (Romans 16:1,6, 13; 1 Timothy 5:16), Preached and taught (Priscilla in Acts 18:2; Romans 16:3) and were actively involved in service in the church.

Secondly, women tend to be more sympathetic and sensitive to the needs and general status of the congregation. It is of importance having leaders who actually understood

what the flocks (members) were going through. Lastly, having women in the church leadership can help checkmate vulnerable encounters that open the door to sexual abuse when women go to male leaders for counsels and assistance

It will be unfair that women can serve as lawyers, doctors, politicians, CEOs, etc., but yet they're not allowed to serve as leaders in the church. Women are just as, if not more, gifted than their male counterparts. Therefore, to prevent women from having such crucial roles in the church seems to come at the detriment of the church.

4.4.3 Role Differentiation and Inequality of Power

Table 35, 36 and 37 above indicated that there was role differentiation between the men and the women in the fellowship. Men were given the roles of pastoring the district, moderating the services, taking the search the scriptures, leading pre-service prayers and handling the technical departments like electrical/media unit while the women were given roles of counselling the women, questioning and attending to the welfare of the women and also cleaning and arranging the church after service. Despite the role differentiation, they were also shared roles between men and women which are; ushering the members into the district, coordinating the seating arrangement of the congregation, singing in the choir, coordinating the children and youth department.

It was observed that women were not given the privilege to take up some roles like pastoring or teaching the congregation during services as they believed it is Biblical according to 1Timothy 2:11-14 where Paul writes, *“Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. I do not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain*

quiet. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived but the woman being deceived was in the transgression". Paul also repeats the command in 1Corinthians 14:33-34 where he writes *"women should keep silent in the churches"*. Some members and leaders of the church had a strong ideology that women tend to be less submissive to men when they are given the opportunity to lead members of the church (men including), and they assumed this must be Apostle Paul's reason for disallowing women from teaching or the leading the congregation. The inequality is further justified by some that Jesus only called 12 men to be His disciples during His earthly ministry. All these justifies the reason behind the inequality of power between men and women in the Deeper Life Bible Church. The Men took a larger percentage of the roles during the services but in Church 2(OSASOGIE), women were allowed to teach Search the Scriptures.

4.4.4 The Effect of Gender Discrimination in the Deeper Life Bible Church

From table 27, majority of the respondent believed they have been denied rightful church administrative positions. From table 30, majority of the women affirmed they feel unimportant or insignificant in the fellowship. From table 31, majority of the women affirmed that they are treated differently in respect to position given, decision making, role, because of their gender.

From table 33, gender discrimination had brought about several negative effects on the church fellowship which are as follows; Absence of Self-esteem among women, Complaints and envy towards male leaders in the fellowship, Disobedience to Male Leaders the women,

Disunity between the men and the women in the fellowship and less support of women to the men in fellowship duties.

Women, as multiply marginalized persons have encountered heterosexism, racism and classism in their work lives and the church is no exception. This has led to women becoming more defensive, disobedience and unsupportive in the fellowship. For instance, Pastor Patricia of the New Bethel Baptist Church in an urban city in the northeast rejects Biblical text that undermines her authority as a religious leader. Referencing the book of Ephesians she states, “I don’t believe in male-headship! I don’t care what Paul said.... And more specifically, I don’t believe in female submission.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study was carried out to examine Nigerian Women in ministry and gender discrimination, the case of Deeper Life Bible Church in Nigeria. Descriptive statistics was used to examine the objectives of the study. Out of the 71 respondents, the males are 38 (representing 53.5%), while the females are 33 (representing 46.5%). The analysis presented shows that the majority of the sampled respondents are females as it has the highest frequency score. In terms of district investigated, out of the 71 respondents, 23 (representing 32.4%) were from Church 1 (DLCF-BDPA), 27 (representing 38.0%) were from Church 2 (DLCF-OSASOGIE) and 21 (representing 29.6%) were from Church 3 (DLCF-EKOSODIN). The analyses showed that majority of the respondents were members of Church 3 (DLCF-EKOSODIN). Also, in terms of membership, out of the 71 respondents, 60 (representing 84.5%) were Lay Congregation, 4 (representing 5.6%) were Pastors and 7 (representing 9.9%) were Women leaders. The analyses showed that majority of the sampled respondents were Lay Congregation of the church. Out of 60 respondents who responded to “Would you like women to be appointed for leadership positions in your in church?”, 18.3% affirmed “Maybe, 46.7 % affirmed “No”, while 35.0% affirmed “Yes”. Also, out of 60 respondents who responded to “Do you know any woman who is spiritually gifted in your church?” 30.0% affirmed “No”, while 70.0% affirmed “Yes” which is majority. Also, the study showed that out of 60 respondents who responded to “Do you think that women should participate in

decision making forums like church boards?”, 11.7% affirmed “Maybe, 43.3% affirmed “No”, while 45.0% affirmed “Yes” which is majority. The study also showed that out of 60 respondents who responded to “Are the women in your church allowed to function in the roles you suggested above?”, 18.3% affirmed “Maybe, 35.0% affirmed “No”, while 46.7% affirmed “Yes”. Also, the study showed that out of 60 respondents who responded to “Are women discriminated in your church?”, 18.3% affirmed “Maybe, 30.0% affirmed “No”, while 19.0% affirmed “Yes”. Also, the study showed that showed that out of 7 respondents who responded to “Do you personally like women to be church leaders in your church”, 14.3% affirmed “Maybe”, while 85.7% affirmed “Yes”.

5.2 Conclusions

Several scholars have devoted years to conducting in-depth research on the subject of women in church leadership, with an emphasis on the issue of women being ordained as elders and the associated issue of women serving as church pastors. Along the way, feedback from our members, pastors, pastoral supervisors, our doctrinal review committee, and other church employees has been solicited, accepted, and carefully examined. Our research was based on the Bible, not on popular culture or personal experience. According to Scripture, it is acceptable for women to hold positions of leadership in the church and in society that do not raise questions about gender. We are all equal heirs to salvation and are said to be created in God's likeness, according to church doctrine. Although it is lamentable, the church cannot eliminate the gender confusion in today's society by imposing rules that are not based on the Bible.

In conclusion, giving women the chance to use their God-given talents will improve their quality of life and enable them to make positive contributions to the church and society. Rediscovering the potential of women through increased levels of involvement is one way to achieve church growth and sustainability. Men who reject female leadership or refuse to accept such a position due to cultural upbringing and an incorrect understanding of the Bible need to modify their perspective. Such guys need to be educated on the advantages that can come from their friendship and cooperation with their female leaders or companions. The problem is that everyone male or female must be able to make use of the spiritual gifts that God has given them. The all-male tradition precludes women from serving God in accordance with their spiritual abilities, which is directly at odds with God himself.

5.3 Recommendations

The study advises that Deeper Life Bible Church be encouraged to modify their attitude about women by utilizing them in light of the study's findings. For instance, the majority of people in Nigerian society and even overseas continue to read the General Superintendent Wife's legacy (Women Mirror). What kind of an impact would she have made on people's lives if she had not been given this kind of chance? Numerous disagreements and spiritual issues in Nigeria and overseas were resolved by the women's mirror. Additionally, it has had a wonderful impact on a great deal of ladies in their homes. On that note, I draw the conclusion that the church should act decisively to employ women in ministerial positions. When it comes to promoting the cause and the rights of women, the church should always be at the forefront. Their anxiousness over wanting to play a leadership position should not be regarded as a sign of subordination; rather, it reflects their passion for the Lord's work.

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APPENDIX I

(STUDY TOOLS)

A. CHURCH PARTICIPANT'S OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

District:

Date of Observation:

Length of Observation:

Features	Observations
Observed roles for men.	
Observed roles for women.	
Shared roles between men and women.	
Sitting arrangements and position.	
Service Organisation	
The general impression of gender.	.

B. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LAY CONGREGATION

Hi, I am Hannah Ekpele Okodike, a student of the department of Religions at the University of Benin. Benin City. I am carrying out a study aimed at investigating Nigerian women in ministry and gender discrimination with a case study of Deeper Life Bible Church. This study is being carried out as a partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts (Religions).

Please, answer the questions with ultimate honesty. All the information herein will be treated with confidentiality. Thank you for accepting to take part in it.

SECTION 1

BIODATA

State _____

Local Government Area _____

Occupation _____

Educational Level

Primary School

Secondary School

Diploma

First Degree

Second Degree

Doctorate

SECTION 2

MAIN QUESTIONS

1. Do you think that that the scripture supports women serving in church as being ordained as pastors?

a) Yes. b) No

2. Would you like women to be appointed for leadership positions in your in church?

a) Yes b) No

Why: _____

3. Do you know of any leader in the Bible who is a woman?

a) Yes b) No

4. Do you know of women who are spiritually gifted in your church?

a) Yes b) No

5. Do you think that women should participate in decision making forums like church boards?

A) Yes b) No

Why _____

6. Which of the following role(s) do you think are fit for women in the church?

Tick where is appropriate(As many as you think)

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| <i>Cleaning the church</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Decorating the pulpit and church</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Cooking during programs</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Take care of the pastor</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Ushering in guests</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Singing songs</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Teaching the congregation</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Teaching the children</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Church administration</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Pastoring</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Controlling the finances</i> | | <i>Following up new comers</i> | |
| <i>Coordination and organisation of programs</i> | | | |

Your thought: _____

7. Are the women in your church allowed to function in the roles you suggested above?

- a) Yes. b) No

8. Do you think that the Benin traditional culture has influenced the roles for women in your church? a) Yes b) No

Why _____

8. Do you observe women who are discriminated in your church?

- a) Yes. b) No

Why _____

9. Do you think that women should be facilitated to take up roles of leadership in your church?

- a) Yes b) No

Why _____

C. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PASTORS

Hi, I am Hannah Ekpele Okodike, a student of the department of Religions at the University of Benin, Benin City. I am carrying out a study aimed at investigating Nigerian women in ministry and gender discrimination with a case study of Deeper Life Bible Church. This study is being carried out as a partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts (Religions).

Please, answer the questions with ultimate honesty. All the information herein will be treated with confidentiality. Thank you for accepting to take part in it.

SECTION 1

BIODATA

State _____

Local Government Area _____

Occupation _____

Educational Level

Primary School

Secondary School

Diploma

First Degree

Second Degree

Doctorate

SECTION 2

MAIN QUESTIONS

1) When do you start pastoring this district? YY MM DD

2) Do you have women in your church leadership?

A) Yes, I do. B) No, I don't

3) What qualifications are needed for church leadership in your church?

4) Which of the following role(s) do you think are fit for women in the church?

Tick where is appropriate(As many as you think)

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| <i>Cleaning the church</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Decorating the pulpit and church</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Cooking during programs</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Take care of the pastor</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Ushering in guests</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Singing songs</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Teaching the congregation</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Teaching the <input type="checkbox"/>ldren</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Church administration</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Pastoring</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Controlling the finances</i> | | <i>Following up new comers</i> | |
| <i>Coordination and organisation of programs</i> | | | |

Your thought _____

5) Do you allow women to participate in church boards and other management roles?

- A) Yes, I do. B) No, I don't

6) Do you consult women in your church while making important church decisions?

- A) Yes, I do. B) No, I don't

7) Do you think that women roles in your church district are influenced by the traditional culture of Benin?

- A) Yes, I do. B) No, I don't

8) Are you personally comfortable with women leadership in church?

- A) Yes, I am B) No, I am not C) I am quite comfortable but it's not the pattern of the church.

9) How do you determine women positions in church?

10) Have you received theological training?

A) Yes, I have B) No, I haven't

11) Which roles are dedicated to women?

12) Do you think women are significant to the growth of the church?

A) Yes, I do. B) No, I don't

Why?

13) Do you think women are discriminated even for positions that they deserve?

14) Do you think that women should be empowered to become more within the church system?

If yes how can this be done?

D. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CHURCH WOMEN LEADER

Hi, I am Hannah Ekpele Okodike, a student of the department of Religions at the University of Benin, Benin City. I am carrying out a study aimed at investigating Nigerian women in ministry and gender discrimination with a case study of Deeper Life Bible Church. This study is being carried out as a partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts (Religions).

Please, answer the questions with ultimate honesty. All the information herein will be treated with confidentiality. Thank you for accepting to take part in it.

SECTION 1

BIODATA

State _____

Local Government Area _____

Occupation _____

Educational Level

<i>Primary School</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Secondary School</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Diploma</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>First Degree</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Second Degree</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Doctorate</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION 2

MAIN QUESTIONS

1. Do you have any administrative role in your church management?
A) Yes, I do. B) No, I don't
2. Do you sit in the church board in your district/region/state?

A) Yes, I am. B) No, I am not

3. Are you consulted when the administration of your church is making church decisions?

A) Yes, I am. B) No, I am not

4. Do you feel that your church has denied you rightful church positions such as administrative leadership roles?

A) Yes, they have B) No, they haven't

5. Which are the following roles do you think are fit for women in the church?

Tick where is appropriate

<i>Cleaning the church</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Decorating the pulpit and church</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Cooking during programs</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Take care of the pastor</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Ushering in guests</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Singing songs</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Teaching the congregation</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Teaching the children</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Church administration</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Pastoring</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Controlling the finances</i>		<i>Following up new comers</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Coordination and organisation of programs</i>			

Your thought _____

6. What's the name of the women fellowship in the Deeper Life Bible Church?

7. What are the roles of the women fellowship?

8. What has been the history of the achievements of the women fellowship?

9. Do you personally like women to be church leaders in your church?

- A) Yes, I do. B) No, I don't

10. What leadership roles do women attain?

11. How do women utilize their spiritual gifts in your church?

12. In your district, are women collectively seen as weak?

- A) Yes, they are B) No, they aren't

13. Do you ever feel unimportant / insignificant?

- A) Yes, I do B) No, I don't

Why?

14. Do you think that women are treated differently in respect to position given, decision making, role, because of their gender?

- A) Yes, I do. B) No, I don't

15. Do you think that women roles in your district are influenced by the traditional Benin culture?

- A) Yes, I do. B) No, I don't

How?

16. Do you think that women are being discriminated?

- A) Yes, I do B) No, I don't

17. What is the effect of gender discrimination on you?

18. What is the effect of gender discrimination on the women fellowship?

19. What is the effect of gender discrimination on your district?

20. What do you think will be in the effect of gender discrimination on the church in the future?

21. Can you recommend a solution to end this issue?
