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H492

HISTORY RESEARCH PROJECT

**TOPIC : THE IMPACT OF URBANISATION OF THE BEHAVIOUR OF WOMEN IN
LUSAKA AND THE COPPERBELT : 1935 - 1965**

BY

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DEDICATION

This work is specially dedicated to my late mother Ms Doreen M Mwango for the firm educational foundation she established for me, and to my dear husband, Chris Chanda, who has been tolerant all through my research.

I also wish to dedicate this work to my children.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The twentieth century has been said to be a period in history when there was an 'urban revolution' in Africa¹. The term 'revolution' is used to signify the wholesome change which villages or small towns underwent. In other words, Africa underwent the process of urbanisation in the twentieth century. Urbanisation refers to the changing of an area, a town or a village from the traditional way of life to the urban way of life. The urban way of life included the introduction of wage labour and light industries. Zambia was not left out from this process of urbanisation began in the 1930s, especially after 1935. With urbanisation came industries, road networks and commerce.

Lusaka and some Copperbelt towns such as Luanshya and Ndola are examples of towns in Zambia, which were urbanised in the 1930s. While Lusaka owes its rapid growth to trade and its Central position in the country, the Copperbelt owes its growth to the Copper mining industry.² The period of study begins at 1935, as this was when Lusaka was made the capital city of Zambia and also when mining on the Copperbelt reached its peak. During the 1930s, Zambia witnessed a great flow of African labour to the urban centres on the line of rail. Usually, men comprised this labour. They travelled from many parts of the Zambian nation including areas such as Eastern, Northern and western provinces.³ Others came from as far as Nyasaland. Most of these men went into labour migration as a way of meeting the head tax that had been imposed by the colonial government.

In all these migrations, the men left their wives in the village. The women were not expected to be in the urban centres especially by the colonial authorities. Nevertheless, some women were living in these areas even before urbanisation. Examples include the Lenje and the Soli women of Lusaka rural and the Lamba women of the Copperbelt. However, all women from, both within and those from other areas were faced with a challenge of adapting to the new way of life. Their problems began with the colonial forces in control at the time that denied women access to urban centres.

Women, however, attracted by the urban way of life coupled with their desire to join the men in the urban centres, found their way to these centres. This study focuses on how these women adapted to the urban way of life in Lusaka and on the Copperbelt. As mentioned earlier, the period of study is from 1935 to around 1965.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Copper mining in Zambia not only transformed the life of Zambians, but also the country's landscape.⁴ It attracted a lot of African labour into urban employment. Although Zambian mines did not develop fully until after 1930, statistics show that out of the 70,500 adult Zambian African males in urban employment, 30,000 of them worked on the Copperbelt by 1930.⁵ The country was at this time characterised by migrations where people moved from various areas. All provinces were drawn into this migration. For instance, people from Western Province went to Livingstone, Kabwe drew people from Central Province and Eastern province people went to Lusaka. The Copperbelt

received members from all provinces but the largest group was from Northern Province.⁶ With all these immigrations an urban population rose.

A good number of African men were employed at the Broken Hill Mine by 1930⁷. There was also an influx of Europeans especially from the Union of South Africa. Commerce and trade, naturally followed so as to supply the wants of the new urban population.⁸ The population in most Copperbelt towns included Europeans, Africans and Indians. Ndola and Luanshya thus thrived with the growth of Copper mining. On the other hand, Lusaka emerged as a recognisable centre in the 1930s and by 1935, it was declared the capital city. Its central location made it appropriate for trade to be conducted within its limits by those from all parts of the country. Administratively, Lusaka was suitable for easy control and communication in the territory. Soon, Lusaka saw the growth of light industries, which attracted rural labour. In all these developments, women were deliberately left out. Government policy was that in order to maximise their profits, wages for Africans were to be kept at a minimum.⁹ Therefore, it was too costly for the African men to bring their wives to town. In the same vein, government policy made it extremely difficult for women to join the men in towns.

As if not enough, labour laws made it impossible for women to work even when these women eventually got to the urban centres.¹⁰ In some districts such as Mumbwa, it was illegal for single women to migrate to towns without the permission of the Native Commissioner.¹¹ Lusaka, Luanshya and Ndola saw the situation applying to them. Women were barred from going to these urban centres. On the whole, all possible

measures were put in place to keep African men and women apart, especially during the 1930s and 1940s.

However, the 1950s brought in a change in government policy more so in 1953 when government decided to stabilise the population between the urban and rural areas.¹²

Women were now allowed in the towns. By this time, an urban social system had already grown and behavioral expectations of town life had been formed.¹³ Once in the urban centres, women sought ways of adapting to the urban way of life. Most of them turned to small-scale trading in market places, while others turned to other means of survival including casual sex.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

With urbanisation, Lusaka and Ndola became more and more populated. As African men migrated to these urban centres, Women also set on the same migration for diverse reasons. The transition from rural to urban way of life had a major impact on the women. This study seeks to investigate what this impact was and what measures women took in order to sustain themselves economically. In the historiography of Zambia, there has not been a study done on the impact of urbanisation on the behaviour of women. Therefore, this study attempts to do so by using Lusaka and the Copperbelt towns of Luanshya and Ndola as examples.

OBJECTIVES

This study has two objectives. The first is to highlight the effect of urbanisation on the behaviour of women. The second is to investigate the measures taken by women to adapt to the urban way of life.

RATIONALE

Urbanisation of Lusaka, Luanshya and Ndola led to social and economical changes, as regards women. This study is intended to study women in the light of urbanisation because women were more impacted than the men. It is hoped that this paper shall enrich the historiography on urbanisation and its effect on women.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Urbanisation in Zambia has generally been documented but not so much has been written on how much women were affected by it. However, there is some information on the impact of urbanisation on the behaviour of women in those parts of Zambia which were urbanized after 1935. The literature that has been consulted in this study covers several aspects of the research project at hand as shall be demonstrated below.

In Urbanisation as a Social process, by Kenneth Little, it is explained what urbanisation is and how Zambia was urbanised. This study also demonstrates reasons for the massive labour migration that followed women arrived in urban centres.¹⁴ In Little's study, it is pointed out that laws were put in place in order to prevent single women from entering urban centres. This study is important as it enlightens us on the "dubious" means used by women to enter urban centres. It also gives vital information on the situation obtaining on the Copperbelt during the colonial period, especially the 1940s and 1950s.

Another study based on the Copperbelt that has been consulted is that by Hortense Powdermaker, *Copper Town*. This study is very comprehensive on the social and economic aspect on the Copperbelt. It covers the period when women began being employed outside their homes. However, this employment was restricted to certain professions. Powdermaker also points out how urbanisation affected marriages and the traditional laws governing marriage.¹⁵ This study is very important in that it sheds light on the impact of urbanisation on the socio-economic aspect of women. In the same vein J Clyde Mitchell provides figures to the above study. In Mitchell's study, 'Aspects of African Marriage on the Copperbelt on Northern Rhodesia', figures and indepth evidence is given when it comes to divorces and remarriages on the Copperbelt.¹⁶ It is a study on Luanshya in particular but is important in portraying the picture obtaining on the mine township.

Bonnie B Keller discusses the change in the socio-economic role of women. In her outside 'Marriage and Medicine', Keller demonstrates how women became more

dependent upon their husbands in towns than in villages. She also shows how some women used socially marginal economic activities such as prostitution, beer-brewing and small-scale trading to supplement their husbands' wages.¹⁷ The article also discusses how this economic dependency influenced the relationships between man and women where the latter felt passive, only to respond to situations which men created.

A History of Zambia by Andrew Roberts is a book which focuses, among other topics, on the colonial period in Zambia. The book discusses how mining led to the rise of towns in the colonial period in Zambia. It discusses how mining led to the growth of towns on the Copperbelt and the reasons for the boom in copper mining. It highlights the welfare of single mine workers before and after labour was stabilised by allowing women to live in the mine compounds.¹⁸ This book is very essential to our study because it covers the Copperbelt towns of interest, namely Ndola and Luanshya.

In *New Women of Lusaka*, I.M.G. Schuster shows how urbanisation affected women's behaviour in Lusaka. She points out that women's dressing and perception of certain traditional norms were affected by urbanisation, and western culture in particular.¹⁹ Further, Schuster brings out some of the gender insensitive policies that were put in place by the colonial government. Although this book covers the period from 1964 onwards, it refers to the pre-independence era and therefore is very useful. It even reveals the emergence of a new crop of women who were in a transition phase from traditional to the modern way of life.

The *Northern Rhodesia Handbook* is very handy in so far as information on the making of Lusaka as capital city is concerned. Not only does it focus its attention on Lusaka but also on Ndola in the 1920s and 1950s. The *Handbook* reveals the type of industries Lusaka developed by the 1950s which included a milling firm, clothing factories, a creamery, a brickworks, a mineral water factory and a lime factory.²⁰ Again it shows that Ndola had, by 1951, secondary industries such as sawmills, joinery and furniture factories, oil and soap industry, an oxygen and acetylene company, a sweet factory and a mineral water factory.²¹ This information is useful in supporting claims that Lusaka and Ndola were urbanised by the 1950s.

Similarly, *LUSAKA: The New Capital of Northern Rhodesia* is a study which offers the reader information on how the capital city of Lusaka came to be. It explains how the city was divided into areas for the whites and those for Africans. It even sheds light on the 'second-class trading area where fresh and dried fish from Kafue, goats, chickens, sweet potatoes and other farm products were sold and bought.'²² Coupled with this, John Gardiner's article 'Some Aspects of the Establishment of Towns in Zambia during the Nineteen Twenties and Thirties', in *Zambia Urban Studies* by D. Hywel Davies (ed) highlights the planning undertaken by the colonial authorities in building up Lusaka as capital city and Ndola as an administrative boma.²³ The literature above is vital in establishing how Ndola and Lusaka became urbanised.

METHODOLOGY

During the entire period of data collection, the University of Zambia library was used as a reference point. However, the National Archives of Zambia (NAZ) provided useful information on the study at hand. The intended study at Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines (ZCCM) could not materialise due to unforeseen circumstances. However, the NAZ provided sufficient information on both Lusaka and the Copperbelt. Personal interviews also proved fruitful.

ENDNOTES

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- ²² Jonathan Cape, *LUSAKA: The New Capital of Northern Rhodesia*, (London: Alden Press, 1935), p.52.

²³ John Gardiner, 'Some Aspects of the Establishment of Towns in Zambia during the Nineteen Twenties and Thirties', in D Hywel Davies (ed), *Zambia Urban Studies*, Institute for Social Research, UNZA, 1970. p.5.

CHAPTER TWO: THE IMPACT OF URBANISATION ON WOMEN IN LUSAKA

In 1935, the capital city on Northern Rhodesia, now Zambia, was moved from Livingstone to Lusaka. This was so due to a number of pertinent reasons. Among these reasons included the remoteness of Livingstone from the rest of the country. It was argued that Livingstone was tucked away too far in the south to administer the country effectively¹. This compelled the Colonial Government to seek a more central position for a new capital. The Government saw it fit to have the capital moved to a central position to enhance easy communication and control of the whole country. Therefore, after careful consideration, through Professor S.D. Ashead of the University of London's report, the ridge lying east of Lusaka was chosen as the test site for the new capital². The colonial Government preferred building a capital from an existing centre to building one from nothing³. Hence, the choice of Lusaka.

In addition, Lusaka's climate was an advantage in that unlike Livingstone, Lusaka had cold winds at certain times of the year, cool breezes and fresh nights, even in October⁴. This type of climate was conducive for the habitation of the Colonial authorities and their families. Further, Lusaka was within easy reach of the Copperbelt, which was the hive of activity during the Colonial period. However, Lusaka had one drawback of not having a perfect supply of natural water. Boreholes provided water initially, but water was later tapped from a nearby town of Kafue, south of Lusaka, which had a big river running past it⁵.

Initially, Lusaka was a village under Chief Lusaka of the Soli people. It was surrounded by farmlands therefore, it was turned into a trading centre⁶. Farmers bought their produce for sale or in exchange for items such as iron and hoes. Among the local people were the Soli found east and south east of Lusaka. The Soli were known for their growing of sorghum, sweet potatoes, groundnuts and later, maize. They also kept cattle, pigs, goats and chickens⁷. Another group living near Lusaka was the Lenje people. These grew Sorghum, which was their staple food. The Lenje not only traded with the Soli in iron and hoes but also with the other peoples far and wide⁸. Women in both groups did the planting, weeding, scarving off of birds, harvesting and storing. Since women were dominant in traditional agriculture, they had the right to dispose of their produce as they wished. It is for this reason that women, especially from Soli land got involved in trading at Lusaka.

By the time Lusaka was made the capital city, there were some light industries and a few business houses. These were built between 1930 and 1935 when the initial construction of the city was carried out. However, construction did not end in 1935, it continued as the need for industries and residences ensued. Among the early industries were the Government Printers' Worked and the Lusaka Hotel. There was also a hospital for whites, while the Gymkhana Club was opened in 1935. In the same year, the Lusaka Airport, much smaller than it is now, was opened by Lady Young, the wife of the then Governor, Sir Herbert Young. In addition, a clinic for Africans was opened⁹.

As Lusaka grew, more and more Africans from far and wide migrated to Lusaka in search of employment. The imposition of tax on all African male adults compelled many African men to seek wage labour in urban centres such as Lusaka. From the wages, they hoped to pay their taxes as well as provide for their families¹⁰. However, it should be noted that in the early labour migration, men left their wives and children back home. The migrant labourers who wound up in Lusaka got employed as domestic servants, artisans, clerks or even as "capitaos". Naturally, they got employed according to their ability and educational attainment. For instance, those who could read and write got jobs as clerks. Others got jobs in the industries doing the manual or odd jobs. All these African workers except for a few domestic servants, were allocated some locations to live in. The houses were big enough for only single men sometimes with a common kitchen to prepare meals from. These locations were meant or designed only to house single men and this was a way of discouraging men from migrating with their wives and children. It should be noted here that those men who could not get employed led to the growth of unplanned shanty townships which eventually were a hive of crime. Only those in recognised employment were housed in gazetted locations¹¹.

The migration of women followed as an inevitable process. They migrated for diverse reasons among which included invitation by husbands. Some African men longed for their wives and so sent for them to come to Lusaka. Such women were to carry a pass accompanied by a marriage certificate to be produced on demand. The pass system was a way of hindering the influx of both men and women from the rural areas to the urban areas. For instance, in Mumbwa District, a few kilometers from Lusaka, it was declared illegal for single women to migrate to town without the permission of the Native

Commissioner¹². Nevertheless, women with no documentation found their way into the urban centres. Some paid the transport operators to help them get into the centres. It is said that some of such women would get off the bus at a place before reaching the check point¹³. Others came as traders bringing fish and other items for sale.

THE IMPACT OF DRESSING

Upon arrival in Lusaka, women were greeted by a new socio-economic configuration, which was entirely different from their traditional ways of life. It was to this new system that women had to adjust and fit in. In the case of Lusaka, women were affected in terms of dressing, morals, childbirth and their role in the economic configuration. There may be other areas in which women were affected but for this chapter, the ones mentioned shall be discussed. In order to understand the impact of urbanisation on women, this chapter shall also take a look at the traditional way of life of these women in general.

As Lusaka grew, not only did industries develop but western trends infiltrated the city. For instance, women began to wear trousers, mini-dresses and high shoes with thick heels. Women were to be clad in a piece of cotton cloth called 'chitenge' which was wrapped around the waist and ran down to the ankles¹⁴. To be dressed in a 'chitenge' was a sign of respect to the elders and to oneself and also signified that one had become mature. Even before the chitenge material was introduced as we know it today, there was another type of material commonly referred to as 'chilundu' in the Bemba tradition society.

Further, neither men nor women wore any type of footwear and women were more often than not seen with headdresses¹⁵.

Although some women continued to put on headdresses even in Lusaka, others resorted to leaving their hair free of any dress. This marked a very significant change in the dressing of women as they were becoming more and more mobilised. Some women, especially the single ones went further to put on trousers which, in the traditional society were seen as a threat to the married ones. However, not all women changed their dressing to the western style. Rather, they mixed the western style with the traditional style of dressing. For example, one would wear a chitente over a western-type dress or over a pair of trousers. Coupled with this western dressing, some women began tweezing, that is removing eyebrows, and painting their tips. Traditionally, painting the body by women existed in several parts of Zambia. The only difference was in the materials used by women to decorate themselves. In the traditional society, fine clay called 'impemba' in the Bemba tradition was used, sometimes mixed in juice from roots and berries to add colour as the clay was white. In Lusaka, women used manufactured lipsticks and powders. Different designs were made on the bodies of women, in the traditional set up to signify beauty, maturity and fertility. However, tweezing was never part of the traditional society.

MORALITY

In terms of morality, urbanisation changed most women's way of life and values of self-conduct. A woman was a custodian of good behaviour, hard work, discipline and culture

which were to be passed on to their offspring. It is in this light what women in rural areas were greatly respected and were careful with their conduct. In Lusaka, this scenario changed due to the presence of diverse cultures including that which arose right within Lusaka. Here, women who had been accustomed to the agricultural economy of the village, were suddenly introduced to a cash economy where wage labour was the most important factor in the survival of all migrants. Women were initially never liked in any kind of employment even in the domestic service. Therefore they had to devise other ways of earning a living. Some women went into beer brewing and the running of shebeens or beer houses¹⁶. This was not strange because even in the rural areas, women brewed beer to either pay for assistance rendered in their fields or simply to supplement their agricultural efforts. However, beer brewing was never the mainstay of women in rural areas. It was done alongside tending the fields which was the source of food. However, in Lusaka, these "shebeen queens" brewed beer as the only way to earn income. Where the revenue realised was not enough, the shebeen owners hired female assistants not only to serve their male clients with beer but sometimes with their bodies, too. Most men with wives in rural areas indulged themselves in both and of course paid for both services. This greatly reduced the worth and self-respect of the women involved.

Other women were not so explicit in their immorality. They came in the disguise of everyday activities such as selling at the market. Some women sold foodstuffs in markets such as the Kamwala Market. They sold dry fish, kapenta, sweet potatoes, fresh and dry vegetables¹⁷, among other things. Most women did not have initial capital and had to reach agreements with other marketeers or labour migrants, mostly men, in order to

acquire the much needed capital. Such agreements ranged from offering domestic services to having loose relationships worth these male 'shylocks'. Hence, the desperate women were compelled to swallow their pride and set aside their traditional values of good behaviour and self-respect. In fact, women marketeers were perceived as loose women but not all of them were engaged in such acts. And when viewed from a different perspective, these women were simply using their bodies so as to earn a living. Therefore, immorality from this angle does not come in. It is, however, a question of the erosion of traditional values.

There was yet another group of mostly single women, which chose to have loose marriages with migrant workers. Most of such workers were married with wives in rural areas. These women needed to only worry about their shelter and food. They did domestic chores and lived and slept with these men as though they were married. Such unions of convenience were prevalent as more and more women began posing as wives. This was not tolerated in the traditional society where marriages were held sacred even when a man had more than one wife. There were procedures to be followed in marriages but this was not the case in Lusaka where marriages were free for all. More often than not, such manners did not continue when the migrant worker's contract ended and the men decided to go back to his native area. This goes to show that these women were non-committed in these unions, a behaviour that was not in the traditional society. Traditional beliefs such as in childbirth and missing of children were also affected by urbanisation. Women slowly had begun disregarding beliefs such as native medicines for an infant's soft spot on the head. Equally, most women stopped taking traditional

medicines which were said to reduce the labour pains and to 'open' the birth canal¹⁸.

Gradually, such beliefs were dispelled by the western education that the women came into contact with especially after the 1940s. This education was however, nothing but literacy classes and home economics with some religious overtones. Naturally, this education discouraged most of the traditional practices rendering them as savage and backward. it is important to state here that some women still hold on to their traditional beliefs, even to date.

Lastly, the role of women changed in urban centres such as Lusaka. Traditionally, women provided much of the family's needs such as feed. They were the main contributors in the agricultural economy as they were the ones in charge of preparing the fields, weeding and harvesting. Women did not depend much on men to survive except for clearing land in readiness for a field, and for game meat. In Lusaka, women became more and more dependent on men since the urban centres offered very small portions of land cultivate. As it has been alluded to earlier, wage labour was only for men and the women had to depend on the men for money at the end of the month or week. This was unheard of in the traditional society where women did not depend so much on the men. Coupled with this, women's daily duties were reduced a great deal by what mobilisation provided for them. For instance, women were accustomed to drawing water from rivers and streams which were outside the village boundaries. In Lusaka, water was drawn from taps either just outside their homes or within their homes. Therefore, they had enough time to even sit idly and gossip with friends. This was unlike in the traditional society where women got together to discuss issues while performing such duties as

pounding maize. There was no idle time for women in the rural areas. Hence, the socio-economic role of women was affected by urbanisation.

From the above discussion, it can be argued that indeed women were the most affected people by urbanisation. For the scope of this study, the areas discussed above are sufficient to demonstrate the impact urbanisation had on women and the measures these women were compelled to take in order to adapt to the new order of the day. Not only were women affected in Lusaka but also on the Copperbelt as shall be discussed in Chapter Three.

ENDNOTES

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CHAPTER THREE: THE IMPACT OF URBANISATION ON THE COPPERBELT

Ndola and Luanshya, like other Copperbelt towns, owe their growth to the expansion in the mining industry. After the discovery of vast copper deposits in the 1920s, there was an influx of investors especially European immigrants from the Union of South Africa¹. With this influx of investors and African labourers, commerce followed, inevitable, and trade flourished. Whereas Luanshya was a purely mining town, Ndola was more of a commercial town. Luanshya had sulphide deposits as well as copper deposits and by 1930, 30,000 African men were employed in the mines². Although Ndola was more of a commercial and administrative centre, it still had the oldest mine at Bwana Mkubwa, discovered in 1904 by William Collier³. By 1935, Ndola, which had originated as an African trading and Arab slave centre, had an aerodrome, branches for the Barclays and Standard Chartered Banks, a hospital, a Post Office and some Government Buildings. Ndola grew even further due to its position as a centre of the Copperbelt road system and the then Rhodesia Railways⁴. Owing to its steady growth, Ndola by 1951 had secondary industries such as the sawmills, joinery and furniture factories, oil and soap industry, an oxygen and acetylene company near Bwana Mkubwa, a sweet factory and a mineral water factory.

On the other hand, Luanshya, which remained, predominantly, a mining town, had a few shop-owners, traders, builders and other industrial and commercial enterprises⁵. Like Ndola, Luanshya's African population was housed in two main localities. One township

was for mine workers and the other was referred to as a public township where non-mine workers were housed. By 1951, the African population in Luanshya was approximately 43,000⁶.

This population growth concided with the rapid expansion of the Copperbelt after the Second World War. Most of the African labour that came to Luanshya was employed as mine workers, houseboys, cobblers, carpenters and shop attendants. In Ndola, most of the Africans were employed as messengers, domestic servants and in the various industries that were there⁷. As for the local peoples of the Copperbelt, the Lamba, they were displaced with the coming of industries and moved to new lands as early as 1930. The Lamba people were agruculturalists and grew crops such as beans, monkeynuts and sorghum⁸. Here, as seen in the previous chapter women were the main cultivators. Most of the farm produce was traded in at the commercial centre of Copperbelt which was Ndola. Goods traded in came from within the Copperbelt and other areas such as Luapula Province, Central and Southern Province.

THE IMPACT OF URBANISATION

Like other mining areas in Africa, the Copperbelt received labour migrants from several regions far and wide. This labour was, ofcourse, made up of men while women and children remained in the rural areas. These African male workers received meagre wages which were insufficient to support their families. The employers assumed that Africans needed wages enough to pay taxes and but a few clothes only. As mentioned in the first chapter, was a way of discouraging women from coming to the mining centres. Africans

were not supposed to remain the urban centres for a long time. Hence, the men only worked for short contract periods and then went on recess to their home areas. This made labour on the Copperbelt very unstable which compelled mine owners to embark on stabilisation of labour by allowing women and their families to live with them on the Copperbelt. However, it is true to say that even before the policy of stabilisation was put in place, women still found their way into the mining centres. Upon arrival in the Copperbelt towns, the women were greeted by a new social order which was alien to their traditional values, norms and culture. This new order and environment had diverse effects on the women and their attitude in general. These effects can be seen in such areas of life as marriage, morality and the only ones and those discussed in Chapter Two may apply to the Copperbelt and vice versa.

MARRIAGE

Traditionally, marriage was a sacred institution and was the basis for the perpetual existence of mankind. There were rules governing marriage. Such rules included the payment of dowry and other requirements by the bridegroom to the bridegroom to the bride's family. However, on the Copperbelt, such rules tended to be skipped or simply bent to suit whoever wanted to marry or be married. For instance, traditionally, a woman was supposed to remain at her family home while negotiations were being deliberated. On the Copperbelt, like in the other urban centres, unmarried women would move in with the African men. In some cases, these women stayed with the men for a long time before deciding to inform who or even take the step of commitment. Here, women entered many kinds of unions such as concubinages where there was no payment of bride price⁹.

Traditionally this was unacceptable because the bride-price placed value on a woman to a certain extent. Therefore, marriage without the payment of the bride-price seemed to remove a woman's worth. Most women entered such unions for financial support because only men were employed, especially before 1950.

According to Powdermaker, a group of women openly took the step to having extramarital relations¹⁰. Traditionally, this was not the case because whoever was caught in adultery was dealt with severely. This was not taken seriously on the Copperbelt. Hence, more and more women, married or single, got involved in extra-marital relations. This was furthered by the system of shifts where men worked at different times. Therefore, when a woman's husband or regular manfriend was at work, the woman would have time to entertain other men. Caution should be taken by noting that not all women were of this group. In other instances, women entered loose alliances in which they drifted from one man to another in search of shelter and food. This again was caused by the dependency of women on men. However, other women entered such alliances for material gain. In one case in Ndola, some women even pretended to be single but a few days later, a husband came along and claimed damages from any man who might have been living with the woman¹¹. By doing this, both the women and the men claiming damages would gain some wealth from the unsuspecting men. This goes to show the length to which some women were prepared to go in order to survive on the Copperbelt.

Some of the women who openly had extra-marital affairs with married and single African men were interested in freedom of choice and in the money and material things gained

from their sexual relationships. They would have sex with men who could satisfy them sexually and their liaisons often lasted a number of months¹². Usually, these were well-dressed in western style, tidy and reputedly, experts in sex. Not all of these women had been single all their lives. Some were married but now divorced or even widowed. It is this group of women whose attitudes towards self-respect and marriage were greatly affected by the new social order. In the rural areas, such women may have been there but were not as explicit about their deeds as in towns. Widows were usually taken under the care of a chosen kinsman and had no need to go out and use her body to earn a living. However, this was not so in the urban centres, thus sending women into unscrupulous activities.

Owing different reasons, the divorce rate on the Copperbelt is said to have risen. According to a survey conducted by Mitchell in 1951 in Luanshya, 'African marriage on the Copperbelt is frequently considered to be highly unstable'¹³. This assumption was reached upon in line with the information that was available to the surveyor. About a third out of a sample of 177 marriages were between spouses who had never been in the marital union. A good 37.9 percent were between spouses who were both marrying for the second time while twenty percent were marriages in which the bridegroom was marrying for the first time with his bride marrying for the second time. Eleven percent of the marriages were between a bridegroom who was marrying for the second time and the bride for the third. There was even one marriage where the bridegroom was marrying for the fourth time while the bride, for the sixth¹⁴. The above information goes to show the frequency of divorces in Luanshya's mine township. In the traditional society, divorce

existed but was not as rampant as in towns. Whenever a husband did not get along with his wife for various reasons, he simply married an additional wife. It was acceptable for a man to have more than one wife so long as he was able to feed and care for them which was not a problem for a village man. In towns, polygamy was a risk in the face of the economic hardships coupled with meagre wages. Usually, this brought more problems as the two women had to share the meagre wages the man earned. The most dominant reason for divorce was a woman's unfaithfulness. Traditionally, a man's unfaithfulness is considered as normal and is not even referred to as unfaithfulness. A man is allowed by society to have as many wives or concubines as he could manage. This was extended even to the Copperbelt where men could have as many intimate relationships as possible. This was, however, not the case with the women. Therefore, if a woman was caught in adultery, as many of them were, the husband would claim damage and divorce his wife. Unfaithfulness in women went up mainly due to economic reasons, as discussed earlier. The change was also due to the absence of limiting factors in towns, such as the presence of in-laws and kindred who could act as controls for any social deviance.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC ROLE

Urbanisation also affected women in terms of their socio-economic role. In their home areas, women had no time or little time for idleness. They drew water from either the well or river, tended the fields, cooked for their families and took care of the entire household. Therefore, with all these duties, the woman had little time for questionable activities. Even chatting with friends was the last to retire to bed at night. All this changed in the urban areas where some of the duties of women were reduced. For

instance, women no longer had to walk long distances to fetch water but drew water from taps either within their houses or just outside. They also did not have to pound maize to make mealie meal but bought milled maize from shops. Thus women had a lot of time with nothing to do but sit chatting with neighbours. This even brought women more and more into contact with men especially those that opted to pass some time at the beer halls. It was during this idle time that women engaged themselves in questionable activities. From the economic view point, women on the Copperbelt like in Lusaka, became dependent on men because there was not enough land allocated to them. Women who wanted to supplement their husbands' income grew some vegetables for them to eat and sell the surplus. However, these vegetable plots were too small to grow other food crops so as to be self-sustaining. Some enterprising women even got into the business of trade in market places. Here, various items were traded in and these included fish from Luapula Province, meat from Lusaka and Mazabuka and other food crops from within the Copperbelt¹⁵. Neighbouring farmers such as Mr Bradley near Bwana Mkubwa, also supplied dairy products such as milk to market places in Ndola. Although women who sold in market places raised some money, it was not enough to make them independent of men. Like in Lusaka, women on the Copperbelt sometimes obtained their initial capital through ways that left much to be desired. These women were desperate to earn a living and so if the husband had no money to spare for her to begin a small trading business, the woman resorted to other means. This brought women into further disrepute as is evidenced by the fact that women marketers were often perceived as prostitutes. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, women on the Copperbelt were also affected in terms of traditional beliefs as well as the mode of dressing. As was discussed in

Chapter Two, many traditional beliefs were eroded by urbanisation. This was due to the detachment that occurred between the rural areas and the urban centres. It is also worth mentioning here that women have been the focus of attention in terms of the impact of urbanisation because it was the women who were hardest hit by the rules and regulations of tradition.

ENDNOTES

1. A.L. Epstein, *Politics in an Urban African Community*, (Manchester : Manchester University Press 1958), p.1.
2. Epstein, *Politics in an Urban African Community*, p.1.
3. National Archives of Zambia, Lusaka, File Number KSN 2/1: Ndola District Note book, 1904 - 1962.
4. National Archives of Zambia, Lusaka, File Number KSN 2/1 : Ndola District Note book, 1904 - 1962.
5. The Northern Rhodesia Information Department, *The Northern Rhodesia Handbook* (Lusaka : 1953) p.86.
6. J. Clyde, Mitchell, 'Aspects of African Marriage on The Copperbelt of Northern Rhodesia', in H.A . Fosbrooke (eds) *Human Problems in British Central Africa* (Manchester : Manchester University Press, 1975), p.1.
7. National Archives of Zambia, Lusaka, File Number KSN 3/1.
8. National Archives of Zambia, Lusaka, File Number KSN 3/1.
9. Hortense Powdermaker, *Copper-Town : Changing Africa*, (New York : Harper and Row Publishers, 1962), p.153.
10. Powdermaker, *Copper-Town*, p.163.
11. National Archives of Zambia, Lusaka, File Number KSN 1/3.
12. Powdermaker, *Copper-Town*, p.163.
13. Mitchell 'Aspects of African Marriage on The Copperbelt of Northern Rhodesia', p.9.
14. Mitchell, 'Aspects of African Marriage on The Copper of Northern', p.9.
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CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION

In this study we examine the impact of urbanisation on the behaviour of women in Lusaka and the Copperbelt in the period 1935 to 1965. A number of conclusions have been drawn. The study has shown that no matter where women found themselves, urbanisation did affect them. It brings out issues on the impact of urbanisation on the behaviour of women. However, this research could not have managed to assess the change in behaviour without using certain indicators such as the effect on attitudes towards traditional beliefs, marriage, morality and dressing.

Firstly, the research dealt with women in Lusaka and considered the aspects of traditional beliefs, socio-economic role and dressing. It has been established that urbanisation brought what may be called enlightenment to women. The study also brought out the fact that the change in women's dressing came as they were introduced to the western style of dressing which came with urbanisation. According to Schuster, traditional dressing of a 'chitenge' and sometimes a headscarf, was largely replaced by western style mini-skirts and trousers¹. This research begs to agree with Schuster because even in today's situation where rural dwellers usually meet a 'Cultural Shock' where they quickly adapt to the urban way of dressing, sometimes even surpassing those who have lived in the centres for a long time.

Further, the study established that the socio-economic role of women in the urban centres of Lusaka, Ndola and Luanshya change. Indeed, the research agrees with the findings, which point to the fact those women's roles in urban centres changed because of change

of environment. Women became more and more dependent on men unlike in rural areas where women could survive even without a man's daily assistance.

Nonetheless, women used their initiative to improve and adjust to the ways of the urban centres. This is how prostitution, immorality, and other social vices began in women in urban centres. These were not the only ways used to adjust to the new socio-economic order. As pointed out in the research, some women began small-scale business in trading.

Further still, the research has revealed how women on the Copperbelt were affected in terms of marriage. Indeed, Mitchell's report of a survey carried out seems to show that marriages were very unstable on the Copperbelt due, largely, to women's unfaithfulness². Other reasons could have contributed which include a wife's or husband's infertility, lack of a husband's support or even a nagging wife. However, Mitchell's survey portrays a precise picture on the welfare of marriages in Luanshya's mine township.

The research had also revealed that women in urban centres changed their way of regarding traditional beliefs such as birth rites. Schuster establishes this fact when she discussed this issue in her book. Women slowly disregarded certain practices in order to adjust to the modern way of life³. This study agrees with Schuster because certain traditional practices, like today, had to go as they had no place in the urban centres.

Having discussed the above, the research has shown that women were affected more by urbanisation than men. Though it was the initial policy to keep women outside the urban centres, their presence later seemed to stabilise labour. The absence of employment for women left them not only vulnerable but susceptible to the vile ways of survival. Therefore, the impact of urbanisation on women was significant as is evidenced in today's society. The findings of this study are that women were indeed affected by urbanisation in terms of dressing, traditional beliefs, marriage, immorality and their socio-economic role. It was due to this effect that women had to devise measures of survival in a bid to adapt to the urban way of life.

ENDNOTES

1. I.M.G. Schuster, *New Women of Lusaka*, (California : Mayfield Publishing Company, 1979), p.3.
2. J. Clyde Mitchell, 'Aspects of African Marriage on The Copperbelt of Northern Rhodesia', in H.A Fosbrooke, E. Colson, M Gluckman and J.C. Mitchell, (eds) *Human Problems in British Central Africa*, (Manchester : Manchester University Press, 1975), p.1.
3. Schuster, *New Women of Lusaka*, p.3.

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