

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Academic research into human welfare institutions is comparatively still new, but in the few decades since the subject first became established at major universities in Europe and North America, considerable progress has been made. Social historians concerned with social policy issues have produced a substantive body of knowledge about human needs and how society responded to these needs. Social scientists have also traced the historical emergence of these systems of welfare and documented the nature, organisation, funding and functions of social services. They have also debated many significant and complex issues that have arisen out of the provision of these social welfare services.

The history of Social Welfare vis a vis the care of orphans in Zambia especially during the pre-colonial and colonial period which is the focus of this study has been well documented. However, the historiography of Social Welfare in Zambia has mostly focused on educational and health institutions which were initially run by the missionaries and later supplemented by the Colonial Government. Therefore, the main focus of this study is the care of orphans in pre-colonial and colonial periods. This study will present the care of orphans as having been one of the most important social welfare services provided by the missionaries and the colonial government in pre-colonial and colonial Zambia.

The study will explore the causes and impact of as well as measures for dealing with orphans in the pre-colonial period. The study will also analyse the changing trends in the causes and impact of orphanhood as a result of socio-economic changes due to industrialization and urbanization during the colonial period.

In addition, different responses to the problem of orphanhood in the African community and the role that the missionaries played in both the pre-colonial and the colonial periods will be discussed. Although the interpretation of the causes of orphanhood may differ, there is no disputing the fact that there was a change, that is, from community based care for orphans to institutionalization through the creation of orphanages by missionaries. This marked an important revolution in social practice. The most popular historiographical response to the invention of social institutions to cater for the dependant members of the community has been to call it a “reform”. However, the study will analyse why there was the adoption of orphanages by the missionaries and why African communities welcomed this particular measure. The study will further explore the organisation, funding and care of orphans in the established orphanages.

In addition, the study will discuss the Colonial Government’s involvement in the provision of social welfare after 1948. This involvement entailed the passing of legislation to support the care of children in need such as the creation of the Northern Rhodesian Child Welfare and Adoption Society and the enactment of the Adoption Act in 1956. Government funding of the Mission-run orphanages will also be

discussed in order to fully appreciate the Colonial Government's involvement in the care of orphans and the overall changes in the care of orphans.

Finally, the study will analyse the impact of the institutionalization of orphans. This is because most of the parliamentary debates concerning issues on orphanages and care of orphans were extremely controversial. There was much concern on the impact on children removed from their natural environment and culture that they would not be able to cope or easily adapt to society once reintegrated as adults. It is hoped that the study will be useful not only to the students of history but also to those in the fields of Social Policy and Social Work.

Historical Background

There has been much debate among scholars as to whether or not the problem of orphans existed in pre-colonial and colonial Zambia. The argument has been that most of the orphans were European orphans who were looked after by the colonial government. Nevertheless, some scholars have also acknowledged the fact that in African society and culture, there were few unwanted children. In addition, due to the fact that those children who were unfortunate enough to lose both parents were taken care of and incorporated into the extended family system of uncles, aunties, co-wives of the late mothers and grandparents, there were very few notable orphans. This was further facilitated by the social organisation of most African ethnic groups into households that lived in close proximity.¹ However, orphans still wore a "tag" in many African societies. Sometimes, the orphaned children lived on their own and received some support from relatives and neighbours. Others were incorporated into

families as pawns for the purpose of providing labour in agriculture and other economic activities in exchange for food, shelter as well as protection from non-relatives.

Illife observes that orphaned, abandoned and vagrant children existed in the pre-colonial African societies. He further points out that such children were among the first who found refuge at the early mission stations². In Zambia, like in many other African societies, this marked the beginning of the institutionalization of orphans in orphanages.

The origins of the orphan problem in pre-colonial and colonial Zambia have been attributed to many factors, just like the existence of abandoned children in African societies. The existence of abandoned children in African societies had been attributed to the widespread taboos in most African societies. Some children were thrown away at birth due to some unexplained physical “disabilities”. For example, children who produced their first teeth on the upper gum were labeled as “would be incorrigibles”, and were thrown away. In some African societies, twins were also thrown away as they were perceived to have been cursed. According to the **Annual Report of the Northern Rhodesian Department, Social Welfare of 1963**, there were widespread taboos in African society against any woman feeding the child of another who had recently died. The report further states that this created a great need for necessary accommodation to be provided for the motherless babies³. In addition, social upheavals within African societies that included inter-ethnic raids and slave raiding

facilitated the emergency of abandoned children who found refuge in early mission stations.

The onset of colonial rule in Africa coincided with a period of natural disasters and widespread epidemics such as smallpox that led to high mortality rates among the African population⁴. This greatly contributed to the emergency of orphans. The escalation of the orphan problem during the colonial period has been, to a larger extent attributed to the socio-economic changes that African societies underwent during this period. The process of industrialization and the resultant increased population movements due to labour migrations and urbanization created many social problems.⁵ The industrialization process created high poverty levels in many newly created shanty compounds in the urban areas, such as poor sanitation and diet which were responsible for considerable illness, disability, death and family disorganization. Morris argues that labour migrations created individuals who had lost touch with traditional values, married in towns and raised children who did not know their background. This contributed to the emergency of a large number of orphans⁶. This was because when such individuals died, there was no extended family in the urban setting to take care of the orphaned children. Failure to trace their roots forced the children to remain in urban areas where orphanhood pushed them into destitution. As such, the traditional methods of caring for orphans became ineffective and non-existent especially in the urban areas. Some children ended up under the care of government Social Welfare and in established mission orphanages. Other children who were not fortunate enough to be taken care of merely loitered in the streets. Consequently, between 1945 and 1960, there was a marked rise in juvenile delinquency in the urban areas.⁷

In the 1890s many missionary societies established institutionalized social welfare services such as education, health and orphanages. This was despite the fact that “the first concern of many missionary societies was always the spiritual welfare of the Africans”⁸. This resulted in the establishment of many orphanages in Africa. Rotberg mentions Fr. Welfele Eugenes and Fr. Schoeffer of the White Fathers’ Missionary Society as having been active in the “gathering of African children into orphanages on the stations”⁹ in the Northern Province of Northern Rhodesia.

The history of orphanages in Zambia especially after independence is mostly associated with the establishment of the Kasisi orphanage in 1921 by Fr. Torrend. However, there were other orphanages that were established much earlier such as the Kalene Hills Orphanage established in 1914 in present day Mwinilunga of North Western Rhodesia.¹⁰ Other orphanages were such as St. Martins’ Home in Kitwe, Falconer Home in Kabompo, Hillwood Orphanage in Mwinilunga and the Luampa Mission Orphanage in Kaoma. In addition, other humanitarian organisations like the Northern Rhodesian Guild of St. Josephs and the Knights of Da Gama also established orphanages in parts of Northern Rhodesia.¹¹

In addition to the missionaries, the Northern Rhodesian Government also played an important role in the care of orphans. The general development of the social welfare services by the colonial government became a priority with the development of the Copperbelt according to Noyoo. Noyoo states that the urbanization of the Copperbelt led to the emergence of many social problems that attracted government attention¹². This was made worse by labour migrations to the area. After the end of the Second

World War in 1945, the colonial government's concern with African social welfare increased. This was mostly influenced by the change in social welfare policies in Britain after the Second World War, to counteract the effects of the war on the British society. By 1948, most of the welfare policies had been spread to British colonies overseas.¹³ In addition, the colonial government faced a lot of pressure from the emerging African welfare societies who demanded for the improvement of African welfare.

Due to these demands, the government became concerned with the plight of orphans and the running of orphanages by missionary societies because the African welfare societies increasingly called on government to support and assist orphanages run by missionary societies. This is because the government had been more concerned with the provision of health, education and recreation services. They also demanded that the government should establish a clear policy on missionary-run orphanages¹⁴. Therefore, in 1948, the Department of Social Welfare and Probation Services was created in the early 1950s to deal with social welfare issues. Before 1948, missionary societies running orphanages did most of the work of looking after the orphans. They provided staff, finances for running and building of orphanages as well as clothing and food for orphans.

The establishment of the Department of Social Welfare and Probation Services led to a change in the colonial government's policy on missionary run orphanages in terms of financing and legislation. However, some members of Legislative Council objected to increased government support for orphanages and called missionaries "baby

snatchers” who alienated the children brought up in the orphanages from their communities. But the government noted that:

African customs were changing, particularly in urban areas and there was need to have these institutions [orphanages] established in order to face the increase in the number of orphaned children.¹⁵

In 1948, government appointed a committee to look into the running and financing of orphanages. The Committee recommended that for children to be accepted as orphans, they had to be recommended by the Native Authorities and that the recommendation had to be endorsed by a District Commissioner.¹⁶ The committee further recommended that the cost of maintenance of the orphans should be borne jointly by relations to the orphan and the respective Native Authority where such an orphan resided.

The Northern Rhodesian government also established a special fund for orphaned and abandoned children who were mentally retarded for whom no suitable accommodation was available in Northern Rhodesia. Such orphans were sent to institutions in Southern Rhodesia and sometimes South Africa at government expense. However, this fund catered for European and colored children to be accommodated outside the territory “because of lack of suitable homes and institutions in Northern Rhodesia”.¹⁷

The Northern Rhodesian government facilitated the registration of the Northern Rhodesian Child Welfare and Adoption Society in 1956. This was the only registered adoption society in the territory that was responsible for considering cases of adoption and supervised the placement of orphans in foster homes in all the main towns along

the line of rail. The Society also considered applications of adoptive parents. The Northern Rhodesian Child Welfare and Adoption Society worked in close collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare and Probation, as well as the missionary-run orphanages.

The Government provided financial assistance for the construction of orphanages by missionaries. As a result, in 1950 and 1951, the government allocated £940 and £562 respectively towards the construction of orphanages by missionaries.¹⁸ Then in 1956, the government started a scheme to give aid to missionary orphanages caring for African children. The government gave £10 per child under mission care. The grant depended on the concerned Native Authority accepting to be responsible for an additional £5 per annum.¹⁹ The Government passed more legislation that facilitated the care and placement of orphans. On 1st August, 1956, the Adoption Act was passed to facilitate the processes and procedures of adoption that protected the rights of both the orphans and the adopting parents.²⁰

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Evidence so far shows that there has been no systematic disclosure on the history of the care of orphans in Zambia. This study attempts to open dialogue in the historiography of social welfare in the country. The study will present the care of orphans in pre-colonial and colonial Zambia as one of the most important social welfare services that was provided to Africans besides education and health services. Historiography shows that much emphasis has been placed on the provision of health and education as the main social services that were provided. In addition, the problem

and care of orphans has been presented by many scholars as being a contemporary issue due to the Human Immune Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS).²¹

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The Objectives of the study are:

1. To examine the causes of orphanhood in pre-colonial and colonial Zambia.
2. To analyse the impact of orphanhood in pre-colonial and colonial Zambia
3. To identify and analyse the roles of different institutions in the care of orphans.
4. To analyse the impact of the institutionalization of orphans in orphanages during the period.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Little has been written on the history of orphans in Zambia. This study will therefore contribute to the historiography of social welfare services and especially to that of caring for the needy children in pre-colonial and colonial Zambia. The study should be able to contribute to the already existing knowledge on the provision of social services in the period of study. In addition, the study will dispel the commonly held view that there were no orphans in pre-colonial and colonial Zambia because the extended family system acted as a safety net for those children who were orphaned. It is hoped that the study will be also useful to the students of social policy and social work.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Existing literature on the care of orphans in Zambia is mostly concerned with the current problem of the orphans as a result of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In addition, most of the existing literature on the provision of social welfare services during the pre-colonial and colonial period emphasized the provision of health and education facilities. This was done first by the missionaries, the British South African Company administration and after 1948, the Northern Rhodesia Government. This is clearly demonstrated by Rotberg in his book, **Christian Missionaries and the Creation of Northern Rhodesia**. Rotberg discusses in detail the role of the missionaries in the provision of education and the creation of African elite. He does not discuss missionary social work in terms of the need to establish orphanages to care for orphans.²²

Noyoo provides a general survey of the provision of social welfare services in Zambia from the pre-colonial period. He states that in pre-colonial societies, social welfare services were carried out through traditional institutions of the families. He further states that the missionaries were the first to provide formal welfare institutions such as schools, hospitals and orphanages in colonial Zambia and that religion was the major force behind their efforts. He states that in the 1940s, there was a positive change in the British policy towards the provision of social services in colonial Zambia.²³ He attributes this change to the development of the Copperbelt especially during the Second World War. The development of the Copperbelt had a profound social impact in terms of population increase due to labour migrations which necessitated the provision of welfare services. In addition, African Welfare Associations exerted pressure on the colonial government to provide adequate social services for Africans.

Noyoo notes the increased collaboration between the Government and the Native Authorities on one hand, and missionaries on the other, in the provision of social services.

Other authors tried to examine the causes of orphanhood that necessitated the establishment of orphanages in colonial Zambia. Lerrigo examined the causes of abandoning children in African societies. He states that the widespread taboos in most African societies were responsible for the practice. Babies born with teeth or those that were prophesied to bring misfortune by the oracles were abandoned. His aim was to portray some African customs and practices as barbaric and pagan, thereby justifying the establishment of orphanages and other welfare work in addition to evangelization. Lerrigo states that by 1900, there were 81 orphanages all over Africa with a total number of 844 girls and 908 boys.²⁴ However, he does not give a detailed explanation of the care of these orphans.

Morris attributes the causes of orphanhood during the colonial period to the socio-economic changes that the African experienced. Industrialisation and the consequent creation of urban centers led to labour migrations which also greatly contributed to the creation of orphans. Morris explains that individuals who moved to urban centers married in towns and raised children who, upon the death of their father or mother became orphans because they did not know the extended families of their parents. As a result, such children ended up under government welfare and in missionary established orphanages.²⁵

In most of pre-colonial East Africa, orphans were attributed to the slave trade. Some were abandoned during slave raids or lost their parents to slave trade while others were sold as slaves. Most of the children who ended up being orphaned were those who were born into slavery. According to Kollman, in December, 1869, there were 172 orphaned children and by 1871, the number had risen to 322 at Zanzibar. Some of these children were those who had been bought at the slave market that existed until 1873 while others were those that had been ransomed by the British Consul at Zanzibar and surrendered to missionary-run orphanages. In 1880, 500 such orphans were handed over to missionaries at Bagamoyo.²⁶ However, Kollman does not give a detailed account of how these orphans were cared for.

Shorter, in his book entitled **Cross and Flag in Africa: The White Fathers During the Colonial Scramble, 1892-1914**, presents a critical analysis of the care for orphans in missionary established orphanages in East Africa. He discusses many negative aspects of the missionary-run orphanages. Shorter emphasizes that “there were many ambiguities concerning the orphanages which the missionaries set up”.²⁷ He argues that the ulterior motive for the establishment of orphanages was to train African children as auxiliaries in the task of evangelization. Shorter presents evidence of orphans who rebelled against the severity of missionaries and lack of care, clothing and insufficient food in orphanages in French Sudan in 1905. Despite this widespread condemnation of the regime of orphanages, Shorter agrees with the Leopoldville (Kinshasa) meeting of the Catholic superiors held in 1907, which concluded that orphanages were necessary and in certain circumstances infinitely preferable to traditional upbringing of orphaned children.

Other issues that emerge from the existing literature on orphans concern the definition of who an orphan is. The definition of the term orphan has been determined by the age and whether or not a child has lost both or one parent and is in need of care. The general agreement among scholars is that an orphan is any child under the age of 18 who has lost either one or both parents, in which case she or he would be referred to as either a double or a single orphan, and in need of care.²⁸ This definition therefore assumes that by the age of 18, an orphan should be able to take care of him/herself emotionally and financially. In the colonial period, education for Africans was expected to end by the age of 18 since Africans, more so orphans, were not expected to go very far in education. But this is not the case now as most children at the age of 18 are still school going. Perhaps there is need to revise the definition. According to Elliot *et al*, one legal definition used in the United States of America is that an orphan is “someone bereft of parents through death or disappearance of, abandonment or desertation by, or separation from both parents”.²⁹ This seems to be a more comprehensive definition of the term orphans for the period under study. There it will be adopted as the working definition of an orphan for this study.

Existing literature on the care of orphans has also emphasised the need to distinguish between orphans and vulnerable children for the purposes of accurate statistics and determining the appropriate help to be given. According to a report of the UNICEF entitled **Orphans and Vulnerable Children: A Situation Analysis in Zambia**, vulnerable children can be those with both parents but whose wellbeing is affected by social problems such as poor sanitation, diet, health and education due to high levels of poverty.³⁰ Therefore, vulnerable children have been identified by livelihood

indicators and in many cases, orphans find themselves in the same situation of social problems such as poor sanitation, diet and health due to high levels of poverty.

Trotzkey concerned himself with the controversy over institutional care in orphanages and other forms of alternative care such as adoption and foster family care.³¹ According to Trotzkey, many advocates of the private family care and adoption insist that the orphanages must be discarded and replaced entirely by family care and adoption. This has been based on condemnation of orphanages by some scholars as having severe rules and insufficient care in terms of food, clothing and shelter.

As a result of increased preference for home care and adoption over institutional care, existing literature on the care of orphans has also focused on the procedures, legal and ethical issues involved in adoption. In **Adoption: Facts and Fallacies**, Pringles states that in the 1960s, there was widespread professional interest in the effectiveness of Adoption as a form of substitute care for orphans. Pringle focuses on the legal rights of both the child and the adopting parents, for the protection of both.³²

In addition, a United Nations study on procedures involved in the adoption of children was concerned with the fact that too much attention was attached to the economic suitability of adoptive families. This was at the expense of more important spiritual and emotional factors in the child-parent relationship³³. This has resulted into children being placed with wrong parents.

The policy and practice of the adoption of minority ethnic children or across racial boundaries has also been highly controversial among academics. This has been due to the common practice of adopting within the same race. The argument has been that a child adopted from a different race is likely to lose his/her cultural identity and this could have a lot of negative outcomes such as low self esteem. Kirtain states that it is unacceptable for a child to be denied loving adoptive parents on the grounds that the child and adopters do not share the same racial and cultural background.³⁴

Other literature deals with the stumbling blocks of taboos in African culture and customs in the care of orphans. It has been observed that during the colonial period, adoption was more popular with European families though this trend has since changed. Many African individuals and couples were unwilling to adopt children because of fear that it would anger the ancestral spirits³⁵. This fear was compounded by the fact that other relatives would in future blame any misfortune in the family on the presence of children among them with wrong totems from wrong clans. Most of all, it was embarrassing to adopt children, particularly for couples who were childless. It suggested impotence for men and barrenness for women, which was traditionally unacceptable in most African societies.

Based on the above review of literature, this study will examine the causes and impact of orphanhood in pre-colonial and colonial Zambia, identify and analyse the roles of different institutions in the care of orphans and finally assess the impact of the institutionalisation of orphans in Zambia.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research for the study was conducted between July 2008 and February, 2009. The University of Zambia Library and the Faith Encounter and Spiritual Centre of Zambia (FENZA) also commonly known as the White Fathers' Missionary Archives were consulted for most of the secondary sources on the care of orphans. These sources provided the necessary information on the care of orphans in colonial Zambia. The National Archives of Zambia (NAZ) was consulted on primary sources that provided information on the establishment of and the colonial government's policy on orphanages. In addition, the Department of Social Welfare of the Catholic Secretariat provided statistics and other data on orphanages run by the Catholic Church in colonial Zambia.

Research was also conducted at the Ministry of Community Development and Social Welfare Services, Department of Documentation for data on the role of the Welfare provision system in Zambia that provided insights into the colonial Welfare system that was adopted at independence. Research at Kasisi orphanage brought out colonial statistical records on the number of orphans admitted as well as data on orphanages of an educational nature. The Registrar of Societies yielded statistics on organisations that were involved in the care of orphans during the colonial period. Last but not least, oral interviews were carried with former institutionalized orphans. This was necessary to determine the impact of the institutionalisation of orphans.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The major limitation that the study encountered was the lack of adequate secondary sources on the care of orphans in colonial Zambia. Most of the data on social welfare services focused on the provision of education and health services.

ENDNOTES

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CHAPTER 2

ORIGINS OF THE ORPHAN PROBLEM AND ITS IMPACT IN PRE-COLONIAL AND COLONIAL ZAMBIA

The aim of this chapter is to examine the causes of orphanhood in both the pre-colonial and the colonial periods of Zambia. The chapter also examines the impact of the orphan problem in the above stated periods. For purposes of clarification, there is need to establish a working definition of who an orphan is. Generally, an orphan is a child whose natural parents are absent or dead. One legal definition used in the United States of America is that an orphan is someone bereft of parents through death or disappearance of, abandonment or desertation by, or separation or loss from both parents.¹ In certain cases where the father typically abandons the mother and the young at or prior to birth, the young will be called an orphan when the mother dies regardless of the condition of the father. These definitions of an orphan will be used in order to fully appreciate the dimensions of the problem of orphans during the pre-colonial and the colonial period in Zambia. However, common usage of the term orphan refers to children who have lost both parents.

Causes of Orphanhood in Pre-colonial Zambia

The major cause of orphanhood in the pre-colonial period was the loss of a mother due to disease or and especially during childbirth. According to Fischer, in most of Central Africa, women were home makers, they kept families together. The mothers and the maternal grandmothers and aunts had more influence than the fathers in matrilineal societies.² Therefore, when a mother died in the family, children suffered the most. As such, to the early missionaries, an orphan was not a fatherless child but

one without a mother. So when a child was taken to a mission station, it was not necessary to inquire whether the father was living or not.

Among some of the prominent diseases in the pre-colonial period that contributed to the mortality of women were diseases such as anaemia that were mostly associated with pregnancy and child birth. Though African societies had traditional medicines that had been used since time immemorial to cure some of the prominent diseases, they were not always effective.

Another cause of mortality among women in the pre-colonial period was childbirth. Among many African societies such as the Bemba, the death of a woman during birth was attributed to *incila* which was adultery and promiscuity during pregnancy not only of the woman herself but the husband's as well. Death during childbirth could have also been due to lack of facilities in childbirth. This was despite the fact that there were trained and experienced traditional midwives who used "primitive" methods.³ High mortality rates due to childbirth were compounded by widespread African taboos. In most African societies, it was taboo for any woman to breastfeed a child of another who had recently died.⁴ In some societies, there was the superstitious practice of starving the orphaned babies to death or burying them with their mothers, according to E. Botes.⁵ However, not all African societies observed these taboos. According to Luangala, among the Nsenga of Eastern province of present day Zambia, medicines were used to wash the breasts of a non-breastfeeding woman within the extended family and the breasts would begin to produce milk again and the orphaned child would suckle and grow big⁶. Other African traditional practices that

have contributed to the problem of orphans have been associated with cleansing rituals after the death of a woman. According to a report of the Missionaries General Policy, many African men ran away when they saw their wives dying. If they remained with them they were so harassed and persecuted by the wife's relatives during the funeral rituals that they had no heart to think of the children.⁷ In any case, in most matrilineal societies of Central Africa, the children belonged to the deceased woman's family. As such, most fathers did not have much love or sympathy for the orphaned children. This escalated the problem of orphans in many pre-colonial African societies.

Other African society taboos that contributed to the emergence of orphans and abandoned children were superstitions about children who were born with physical features such as teeth or those who showed their first teeth on the upper gum. In some African Societies, twins were also thrown away or abandoned as they were believed to be evil and that they would bring misfortune into the society in which they were born. Other children were also prophesied to be evil by local oracles even before they were born which led to them being abandoned at birth. Such doomed children were abandoned by being left on the outskirts of the village settlement⁸. In most cases, these children were eaten by wild animals which was the intended outcome though sometimes they were picked up by neighboring societies that did not harbour such superstitions.

In some pre-colonial African societies, children were also abandoned due to diseases that were unknown or incurable in such societies. Such children were abandoned to

the mission stations that later necessitated the establishment of orphanages. Child diseases such as epilepsy and other children's psychological diseases that were not understood in African societies also contributed to the abandonment of children. It was reported from Kalene Hills Orphanage in 1910 that "Kankiga, a terrified boy of 4 years was brought by his maternal uncle, he had epilepsy, this provides the reason why the uncle brought him to us to care for [him]"⁹ This meant that some children became orphans not because their parents had died but because their communities could not cater for their unique health needs.

Other causes of the problem of orphans in the pre-colonial period were related to social upheavals in African communities. Such social upheavals included inter-ethnic wars, succession disputes within kingdoms, slave raiding and trading and natural phenomena such as draughts that resulted in famine and starvation. In particular, the establishment of mission stations in the Northern part of Northern Rhodesia by the White Fathers was also closely connected to the establishment of asylums for abandoned children in the 1890s. Some of the children were those that had been rescued from the slave raiders and traders of East Africa. White Fathers' Missionaries in the North part of Northern Rhodesia were renowned for their work in ransoming children from slave raiders and traders.¹⁰ As such, slave trading and raiding contributed to the emergence of orphans.

Inter-ethnic wars were also a major contributor to emergence of orphans. According to Powelson, in most African societies, war or other forms of violence were ordinary ways to resolve conflicts.¹⁰ This contributed to the emergency of orphans in society.

In the Bemba Kingdom of Northern Rhodesia, social upheavals such as succession wars in the 1880s led to the creation of abandoned and orphaned children. This prompted the missionaries to establish safe havens not only for the abandoned children and those who had lost their parents but also for adults who had become destitute due to civil wars. One of the most notable places that were created to protect the vulnerable was *Chilubula* Mission near Kasama in Northern Province of Zambia.¹²

In African history, the 1890s have been renowned as years of natural disasters that greatly affected the social life of Africans. These disasters included both human and animal diseases as well as natural phenomena such as drought. The natural disasters negatively affected food security and this resulted into famine and starvation.¹³ This increased the mortality rate in many African societies that greatly contributed to the emergence of orphans. In some cases, poor families adopted coping strategies that led to the abandonment of children. Some children were given to well-to-do families as pawns who had to work for their benevolent families in exchange for food for the family.

The Impact of Orphanhood in Pre-colonial Zambia

There has been a commonly held view among some scholars such as Ng'andu that there were no orphans in the pre-colonial African society due to the fact that those children who were unfortunate enough to lose their parents were incorporated into the extended family system and were taken care of.¹⁴ This view seems to suggest that orphanhood had no impact on society as well as the affected children. However, African oral traditions in many societies presents evidence to the contrary through

folklore which portrays the sufferings of orphans especially at the hands of their step mothers.

In many African societies, death was a serious matter as it presented a threat to the integration of a community threatened by the disruption of death. This was more so if it was suspected that death was caused by witchcraft.¹⁵ Therefore, any death in an African society negatively affected the tempo of life in the affected community. In addition, the death of parents in a community led to the disintegration of the very foundation of a community, the family which is the basic unit of society. This created problems in society especially in terms of food production.

Though many African societies were based on the concept of the extended family system, the presence of orphans in a family meant an adjustment and extension of the members' responsibilities to cater for the orphaned children. This in many cases led to resentment and the mistreatment of orphans by the adoptive parents especially the womenfolk. Oral traditions in form of folklore identify women as having been the main perpetrators of injustices against orphans.¹⁶ This was perhaps due to the fact that women in traditional society were mainly responsible for the homesteads and the everyday running of the households. This created a lot of tensions within communities, first within the family setting and with the rest of the community. This is because anti-social behavior such as selfishness and mistreatment of the needy members of the society that were sometimes associated with the care of orphans were contradictory to African cultural practices of charity and sharing.

As such, community members who were associated with unaccepted anti-social behaviour were perceived as being evil. In traditional African society, evil was associated with anything or anyone that was considered wicked, could bring harm, produce unhappiness or calamity for the community because individual actions could affect whole communities.¹⁷ In addition, in most African societies, evil epitomized witchcraft and those who were perceived to be evil due to their anti-social behavior were often accused of witchcraft. Witchcraft accusations often created or worsened conflicts in societies. Therefore, the presence of orphans and their treatment in society impacted greatly on social relations in Africa societies.

Orphanhood also had a severe impact on the affected children. To begin with, orphans were stigmatized in the African traditional society. This is evident from the fact that orphans had a special tug in African society. In *Nyanja* they were and still are referred to as *Mwana Wa Masiye*, in Bemba orphans are referred to as *Umwana Wa Nshiwa* while in Tonga they were called *Muchaala*.¹⁸ The fact that they had special tugs associated with their status, orphans were not fully integrated into their adoptive extended family systems. This could have had a negative impact on their self-esteem and sense of belonging and a constant reminder of their status in society.

In addition, the impact of orphanhood on the affected children in African traditional society can be seen or rather judged from oral traditions in form of folklore. All traditional folklore concerning the plight of orphans laments the injustices suffered by orphans especially from their adoptive stepmothers. Some of the most prominent injustices that have been portrayed in these folklores include starvation through being

denied food, being overworked almost like slaves to carry out chores such as fetching water and firewood as well as physical and verbal abuse, especially a constant reminder of their orphan status. One folklore states that:

Once upon a time, in a certain village there lived a girl called Lozi (Rose) whose mother died. The father married another woman who was cruel to Lozi and mistreated her. She was required to do all the house chores, fetch firewood and collect water from the stream. The stepmother would deny her food and constantly taunt her and openly wished that she would die and join the mother.

The stepmother would send her together with the other girls in the village to collect *masuku* across the stream. Since Lozi was an unhappy girl, she always isolated herself from her friends who also did not care much about her. They always left her behind so that by the time she reached the river it would be flooded. The other girls would cross the flooded river holding hands and leave her behind.

Up in a nearby tree, there lived a huge extraordinary bird that used to witness it all. One day, the bird asked Lozi if she needed any help. Lozi agreed and the bird carried her on its back across the river to safety and near the village. In return for this help, the bird warned Lozi never to say anything to the villagers. This exchange was in the form of a song,

Mulyaundi mulyandi yaya mulyaundi walya Lozi ×2, *ukaya kumudzi usakataneka Kuti cuni cantausha chingala mumkonzo*, (when you go to the village don't tell them that a huge bird, that has long feathers on its legs helped me cross) *mulyaundi walya Lozi* × 2

Lozi would sing this song each time the bird dropped her off near the village. The village people clearly knew her sorrowful voice but didn't understand her song and didn't care. Her stepmother would be disappointed that she had not drowned in the flooded river. The stepmother would beat her for being late demanding who could have helped her to cross the river. The bird used to witness all the questioning and beatings without Lozi knowing.

Sadly she could no longer continue hiding the truth for fear of more beatings, until one day she revealed the truth. And the bird knew what had happened. As usual, she found the river flooded again. The bird was there. The bird was disappointed with Lozi for endangering its life, but it revealed that it had been sent by Lozi's deceased mother to always help her. To put an end to Lozi's suffering, the bird carried her to the next village where she met a young man who she married and lived happily ever after never to see her cruel stepmother again.¹⁶

Folklore also portrays the mental anguish experienced by the orphans and their desire to be saved or rescued from their suffering. This rescue is portrayed in form of the dead mother's ghost or spirit (an important aspect of African religious beliefs) who comes to punish the perpetrator of injustices against the orphan. This punishment is in form of death or great misfortune while the orphan is given good fortune and grows up to become a prominent and respected member of the community with an opportunity to revenge against his/her tormentor.²¹

Like myths and legends, folklores are not concerned with historical accuracy, but it is important to note that they carry symbolic meaning which relates to the way people lived and asserts that the stories contain important messages and lessons for the continuity of society.²² Though no written records exist on the presence of orphans in Pre-colonial Zambia, orally transmitted myths and folklores about orphans in African societies are based on human experiences. Therefore, the presence of folklore concerning the reality of orphanhood and its impact on both the pre-colonial societies and the affected children in these societies is a clear indication that the problem of orphans existed and had a great impact in pre-colonial African societies.

The Causes of Orphanhood in Colonial Zambia

The establishment of colonial rule in Africa brought with it socio-economic and political changes that completely transformed the African way of life. During the years of the establishment of colonial rule in Africa and before the First World War,

most colonial governments were more interested in African areas that were valuable for their economic resources. This meant that most of Africa was colonised for the sake of possession in order to have access to valuable resources. Most colonial powers felt that “the main duty of governments in the new African colonies was to maintain law and order and to do so without expense to the European taxpayer.”²³ The maintenance of law and order was essential in facilitating the exploitation and export of Africa’s natural resources to the colonial *metropole*. As such, the colonial government imposed taxes on Africans. This led to the introduction of a cash economy and Africans had to adjust their socio-economic ways of life to cater for this new economic system. Such African communities were introduced to cash crops such as coffee from where they would obtain their tax money. Those communities that did not have this opportunity, resorted to labour migration. It is important to note that during this period of the establishment of colonial rule, the socio-economic impact on the African community was not so devastating yet.

After the First World War, most of the African Colonial governments consolidated their rule through the imposition of more socio-economic policies that severely affected the African way of life. Land policies in particular, negatively affected most Africans leading to the break up of their socio-economic systems. This led to increased labour migration in search of employment to pay taxes. The period between 1940 and 1960 was the period of active and rapid economic development in the history of colonial rule. The period saw an increase in local revenue and economic aid from the European governments to the colonies. This also encouraged the emergence of economic developmental projects such as the development of Hydro Electrical Power Stations that encouraged an increase in industrialisation and agricultural

production.²⁴ As a result, in Southern Africa mining and manufacturing industries grew rapidly especially after the Second World War period. This meant that the number of Africans employed on the Copperbelt mines rose to over 36,000 by 1943 while over 50,000 men went annually from Northern Rhodesia to work in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa.²⁵

The increasing numbers of labour migrants points to the fact that there was an increase in labour demands that could only be satisfied from African rural communities. This created the necessity for migrant labour that was enforced through compulsory taxation and restricted access to land. These were the main techniques of mobilisation of labour.²⁶ The constant colonial demand for labour and land became the greatest problem of African daily life that created social instability and other social problems such as the problem of orphans partly due to the absence of fathers, away as migrant labourers. Some of these never returned to their families either due to death or lack of desire to return. The emergence of urbanization as a result of the economic developments resulted in not only labour migrations, but individuals also migrated to urban centers in search of a better way of life. This exacerbated social problems that directly and indirectly led to social problems such as the abandonment of children some of whom ended up in mission established orphanages.

The colonial economic system of labour migration in particular contributed significantly to the emergence of social problems in African communities. Village life was mostly affected by the undermining of its institutions especially the family. This is because many of the productive male population who were husbands and fathers

left the rural areas for urban areas in search of labour to realize money for taxes and just for a better living in urban areas. This meant that ensuring stable marriage relationships became difficult due to the absence of men. Some men completely abandoned their families, while others became semi-permanent migrants. As Mair states, the enormous distances in Central Africa discouraged frequent visits home. For example, Northern Rhodesians could take two months to walk home from the Copperbelt or use two months' wages if they took motorized transport when and where this became available.²⁷ This led to the abandonment of women and children as some men chose to become permanent town dwellers.

In cases where women died due to natural causes, though there were reported cases of suicides due to depression from being abandoned, children were usually left motherless.²⁸ It was reported from Kalene Hills orphanage, that to the missionaries at the orphanage, an orphan was not a fatherless child because enquiries about the whereabouts of the father in most cases, revealed that he "has gone to the mines".²⁹ This clearly shows that the new colonial economy was to a large extent responsible for the emergence of the problem of orphans during the colonial period.

Labour migration and the absence of men in the rural areas also affected food production and consequently food security. With the absence of men in the villages during the agricultural seasons, women had to produce enough to provide for children and the old people. In most cases they could not produce enough due to the hard work required in clearing the bush and cultivating. This had a negative impact on the traditional welfare institutions especially as regards the care of orphans. Women who were looking after orphans were put under pressure to provide for the orphans. This is because the women were naturally more inclined to provide for their natural children

first and foremost before considering the orphaned children. As such, most of the children who had previously been cared for within the extended family system could no longer be catered for.³⁰ Thus, looking after orphans in such difficult times became an inconvenience. These orphans ended up being surrendered to the mission- run orphanages. This meant that the traditional institutions were being undermined by the new colonial socio-economic systems.

The creation of urban centres as a result of the economic developments and labour migration worsened the social problems in the urban centres which led to rising new concerns over child welfare issues. Morris argues that labour migration and the process of urbanization created individuals who had lost touch with their traditional values, married in town and raised children who did not know their background.³¹ This caused a lot of problems for the children when their parents died. This was because the urban centres lacked the established social safety networks such as the extended family system that existed in the rural areas. As a result, when children lost their parents in towns, they could not be taken back to their village hence they ended up being looked after by the established welfare institutions such as orphanages in the urban centres.

The spread of diseases was another serious consequence of colonialism that led to high mortality which in turn contributed to the emergence of a higher number of orphans in the urban centers. This was partly due to greater mobility as men and women moved out of their rural home environments in search of work. The spread of diseases was further escalated by the poor health conditions that prevailed in the work

places and shanty compounds in the mining towns of the Copperbelt. This led to increased mortality in these areas resulting in the emergence of orphans in the urban areas. For example, it was noted by the Northern Rhodesian Department of Probation and Social Welfare that between 1945 and 1960, there was a marked increase in the number of orphaned and children in need of care on the Copperbelt.³²

The prevailing socio-economic conditions in the urban centers also put a lot of pressure on the institution of marriage. According to Martin:

Due to labour migrations, men preceded women to the new towns for employment, they greatly outnumbered them. The numerical imbalances of sexes was a major cause of social instability and this together with poverty, shift-working and a lack of economic opportunities for women put pressure on marital relationships Consequently, a high percentage of marriages failed to endure.³³

The high levels of divorced women greatly impaired the welfare of children who ended up being abandoned. The situation was worsened by the fact that most women went to the urban areas as dependants due to colonial administrative restrictions that made it difficult for women to find work. Most women lost the economic role they had in the villages that at least enabled them to provide for their children to a certain extent.

Another impact of migration of women to urban areas was the emergence of coloured children. There were few economic opportunities for women most of whom turned to petty trading, beer brewing and in most cases prostitution in order for them to survive economically. In some cases, women tended to have sexual relationships with white men especially in the mining towns. This is because white men had more money than

black men. According to the Northern Rhodesian Annual Report of the Department of Social Welfare for the Year 1964, there was a notable increase in the number of abandoned coloured children on the Copperbelt.³⁴ Most of the coloured children were rejected by their white fathers and the African mothers rejected them because of stigmatization, especially if they had to return to their rural areas. These ended up in the care of the Department of Social Welfare. Another area that was noted for increased numbers of abandoned coloured children was Fort Jameson (Chipata) of colonial Zambia. This was as a result of the presences of Indians in the area. For the maintenance of the status quo, many Indian men who had children refused to acknowledge these coloured children thereby forcing their African mothers to abandon them for fear or ridicule from their communities which were still very conservative in the colonial period.³⁵

From the above explanations, it can be seen that the establishment of colonial rule greatly affected the social stability of African communities and created many social problems that had repercussions on the general welfare of children. This is because the socio-economic impact of colonial rule such as taxation, land policies and the resultant labour migrations led to the disintegration of African institutions. The disintegration of marriages in particular had both a direct and an indirect impact on the welfare of children leading to the abandonment of children who were later surrendered to mission- run orphanages.

The Impact of Orphanhood in Colonial Zambia

One of the most notable effects of the problem of orphans during the colonial period was the increased juvenile delinquency and immorality among the youth in the urban centres and the emergence of street kids. This is because not all children that lost their parents in urban centres were able to trace their roots to the rural areas and not all were fortunate enough to be taken care of by the established welfare institutions and orphanages. This led to the emergence of vagrant children in the urban centres.³⁶ It was noted by the Department of Child Welfare and Probation Services, that in urban streets, there was an emergence of juvenile delinquents who were involved in petty crimes such as pick pocketing.³⁷ This was done in order for them to survive in the streets. Most of these graduated into real thugs as they grew in the established townships of the Copperbelt in particular. This posed a security risk to Africans as well as whites who lived in established white areas of the Copperbelt.

The Northern Rhodesian Department of Social Welfare and Probation observed an increase in the number of juvenile delinquents especially in urban areas and most of them were orphans while some were abandoned children.³⁸ This was especially notable after 1945 due to the development of the Copperbelt. For most of the orphaned girls who could not be incorporated into the welfare system and orphanages, they ended up prostituting in many of the urban centres. Again, this was more noticeable on the Copperbelt. This exacerbated the issues of immorality in the towns leading to increased numbers of orphans. In addition, most of the orphans who ended up getting married could not sustain their marriages due to lack of proper upbringing and teaching in their childhood. This generally contributed to problems of weak morals in the urban centers.

In concluding this chapter, it can be stated that the causes of orphanhood in African societies were varied. Apart from the natural causes due to death of mostly a mother in child birth, African customs and superstitions concerning children who were prophesied to bring bad luck to the communities due to certain features they were born with also contributed to the emergence of orphans. In African societies, kinship foster care was a cultural pattern that had been a normative social response to the problem of orphans in communities. However, there was always discrimination within households against orphans. This is because naturally, altruistic behaviour between two individuals is an increasing function of the degree of genetic relatedness between them. As such, one's own children were likely to be favoured over orphaned nephews and nieces or other such children.

Therefore, the presence of orphans in African communities had a great impact on the communities as it created social tensions in families resulting from the mistreatment of the orphans. The status of orphanhood also had a negative impact on the children due to stigmatization and bad treatment from some of the members of the extended family especially the stepmothers. During the colonial period, the impact of the socio-economic policies of the colonial government, such as taxation and land alienation that necessitate rural-urban migrations led to the destabilization of the social way of life of the African communities. This contributed to the emergence of orphaned children in urban centres. One of the notable effects of the problems of orphans during the colonial period was the emergence of juvenile delinquents in the urban areas that contributed to other resultant social problems such as immorality, crime and prostitution.

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CHAPTER 3

RESPONSES TO THE PROBLEM OF ORPHANS

This Chapter deals with the main responses to the problem of orphans in pre-colonial and colonial Zambia. The responses were mostly either African community responses, responses from missionaries or other non-African organisations including individuals. The Most common response to the problem of orphans within African communities in pre-colonial Zambia was to incorporate them into the extended family systems though this had certain negative consequences as stated in the previous chapter. However, from the 1880s, as part of their evangelisation, missionaries established orphanages as one of the main interventions in the care of orphans in the African communities. The missionaries observed that despite the fact that African communities could care for orphans, there were special circumstances that made it difficult for such communities to care for orphans especially infants. It was especially difficult for African communities to raise infants whose mothers had just died in child birth in the absence of milk formula (baby milk) until the babies reached an age when they could eat ordinary solid foods. Consequently, it was reported that “more than ninety percent of African infants whose mothers die, and African communities are unable to feed them under six months, fail to reach adult life”.¹ This prompted the establishment of orphanages by missionaries as a response to the plight of African orphans.

In addition, other philanthropic organisations such as the Northern Rhodesian Guild of St. Josephs and the Knights of Da Gama also established orphanages in parts of Northern Rhodesia. However, these humanitarian organisations seemed to have been more concerned with European and coloured orphans in Northern Rhodesia than

indigenous African orphans. Some individuals were also involved in the care of African orphans. For example, a Mrs. A. Jakeman of Kawambwa of Northern Rhodesia is reported to have been involved in the care of orphans and educating them using her individual resources from her deceased husband's estate.² However, most of the African orphans were taken care of by the mission established orphanages. It is for this reason that this chapter will emphasise more on the mission established orphanages as missionaries offered a willing and valuable service to both African and European/coloured orphans.

African Community Responses to the problem of Orphans

Since the problem of orphans affected the African communities first and foremost, African communities adopted ways of dealing with the problem within the African community. The most obvious response to the problem of orphans was to incorporate them into the already existing social structures of the extended family system. Though this system seemed to have been the most successful, it has now been established that this common response to the problem of orphans left much to be desired. Many children who were incorporated into the extended family system were neglected and treated with cruelty by the adoptive parents who in most cases already had large families of their own to care for. As such, in most cases, the orphaned children were merely permitted to exist without much love and affection. However, in some cases the orphaned children were "adopted" by sterile couples who ended up accepting them fully and giving them as much love and care as would be given to their natural children.

Another common response to the problem of orphans was to employ them as pawns especially by non-relatives in exchange for food, shelter and security.³ In most cases, these ended up being treated like slaves and were overworked as a way of paying for their upkeep.

Missionary Responses to the Problem of Orphans

The missionaries responded to the problem of orphans through the establishment of orphanages in Northern Rhodesia as early as the 1880s. According to Noyoo, the missionary societies established the earliest forms of institutionalized welfare services including orphanages in the North-Western part of colonial Zambia by 1887.⁴ This marked the beginning of the institutionalisation of orphans. It is important to note that the principle duty of the missionaries was to spread the gospel. However, from the beginning, missionary societies were also involved in the provision of social services such as health and education services. In fact, in most areas where missionaries established hospitals, it became necessary to establish orphanages too. This was because in most cases, if a woman came to the hospital with a child and she died in hospital or in child birth, the duties of looking after such orphaned children were initially carried out at that hospital by the nurses and doctors.⁵ In many instances, it became necessary for missionaries to also establish orphanages to care for such children. The care of African orphans was of great necessity as these missionaries were aware of the plight of African orphans especially infants who were left motherless.

The missionaries justified their care of African orphans as an important component of evangelisation by arguing that Jesus stated that, “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.”⁶ The missionaries also quoted other bible verses that promised eternal rewards to those who were concerned and took it upon themselves to care for orphans and widows.

Therefore, a number of missionary orphanages were established before and during the colonial period. Among the most prominent and renowned missionary orphanages were such as the Kalene Hills Orphanage in Mwinilunga in present day North-Western Province of Zambia. Kalene Hills Orphanage was established by the Missionaries of the Christian Mission in Many Lands under the leadership of Dr.W. Fischer and his wife 1914. Dr. Fischer, a medical doctor by profession, initially established a mission station at Kalene Hills.⁷ This was followed by the establishment of the Kalene Hills Hospital where the first cases of abandoned and orphaned children were brought to the attention of the missionaries. Dr. Fischer became a prominent member of the Northern Rhodesian Legislative Council and was very influential in bringing government attention to the plight of African orphans and advocating for government involvement in the care of orphans during the colonial period.

Kasisi Orphanage, another very important orphanage was established in 1921 by Fr. Torrend, a Jesuit priest. Kasisi Orphanage is situated thirty seven kilometres north-east of present day Lusaka city. However, due to the fact that the Jesuit Order did not have nuns to facilitate the care of orphans, the orphanage was handed over to the Dominican Sisters in 1926. In 1928, Kasisi Orphanage was again handed over to the

Little Sisters of Mary Immaculate, a Polish Catholic Order that is still running the orphanage to date.⁸ Since its founding, Kasisi Orphanage has grown to be the largest and best known orphanage in Zambia.

Missionary-established orphanages took on the responsibility of looking after infants due to the fact that missionaries were totally against the African methods of looking after orphans. Missionaries initially accepted infants whose mothers died during childbirth and there were no female relatives to look after such children. This was of great concern to the missionaries because even in cases where some female relatives were willing to take care of the orphaned children, these relatives were usually handicapped because of lack of baby milk to feed the infants until they reached a stage when they could take ordinary solid foods.⁹ As a result, there was a reportedly high mortality rate of such orphans. This was the main reason that prompted the missionaries to establish orphanages.

Some Missionary societies also established orphanages to take care of infants as a way of curbing some of the African cultural practices that they considered to be negative. The missionaries observed widespread taboos concerning the breast feeding of an infant whose mother had just died. In response to a query from the Office of the Director of Medical Services in Lusaka concerning the care of African orphans, E. Botes of the Magwero Dutch Reformed Church in Fort Jameson stated that:

We take in little orphan babies under two weeks of age whose mothers have died in giving birth and who are doomed to death to try and eradicate the superstitious practices of starving these little ones to death or burying them alive with their mothers.¹⁰

Whether or not some missionaries exaggerated these African superstitious practices to justify their role in the care of African orphans since they were sometimes accused of being “baby snatchers”,¹¹ is difficult to ascertain. Practices or rituals that were associated with superstitious beliefs, killing infants whose mothers had died or burying alive such infants with their dead mothers were performed in secrecy, in most cases.

The Colonial government became increasingly concerned with these superstitions and hoped that:

In the long term, the problem would be resolved through counseling relatives in order for them to overcome their superstitions about these children so that they will care for them within the established extended family unit which is still particularly well established in the rural areas.¹²

In order to ensure that only those babies who were really in need of care were surrendered to the mission orphanages, both the District Commissioner and the Native Authority where the orphan was coming from had to endorse the admission of the orphan into a missionary orphanage. However, sometimes this resulted in delays that sometimes cost the infants’ lives. As such, missionary run orphanages requested that provisions be made for orphan babies to be accepted by orphanages prior to approval by the concerned Native Authorities in order to facilitate the much needed interventions to save the lives of the orphaned infants.¹³

In some cases, missionaries also accepted older children who were abandoned or orphaned and could not be cared for by their extended family system for whatever reasons. Sometimes older children were abandoned or taken to missionary orphanages

because of health reasons. Sometimes unknown or incurable diseases such as autism in children led to the abandonment of the children. This was due to ignorance of how to deal with a disease like autism which causes retarded growth both physically and mentally. In addition, the disease makes a child unable to interact socially with fellow children and adults. Such children in most cases were taken in by missionaries because they ended up being neglected by their families.

Most missionary societies believed that some orphaned children could not be taken care of properly by the extended family systems because in most cases orphaned children were as a result of detribalization. To make matters worse, most of them had already heard of and experienced neglect and cruelty when left to the care of older relatives or others who already had large families of their own and merely permitted the orphaned children to exist without much love and care.¹³ Missionaries were convinced that juvenile delinquency and practices of immoral living were due to the fact that orphans did not receive proper care and training in their childhood.

Missionary Administration, Funding and Care of Orphans before 1948

The main aims of the missionaries in establishing orphanages were to build homes that would provide the orphaned children with basic needs, care, love and protection and to ensure that the children would be self-supporting once they reached adult age. As the family is the best place for a child, missionary orphanages also tried to find solutions by taking the children back to the members of their extended family.¹⁴ Sometimes arrangements were made for orphans to be visited by relations from the villages. Within the orphanages, missionaries tried to create a home environment as

best as they could. This was achieved through the employing of African Christian couples in the mission orphanages who acted as surrogate mothers and fathers to the girls and boys. This was in addition to the presence of Sisters of the Order taking care of the orphans. This seemed to have been one of the pre-conditions especially for White Fathers in the Northern part of Northern Rhodesia for establishing orphanages on mission stations. The aim of the missionaries was to maintain as much of a natural African environment as was possible without alienating the children from their African culture. Indeed it was reported from Kalene Hills Orphanage that:

All that is good in a native village is allowed in the orphanage and children are trained in their own natural environment minus its filth moral, mental and physical¹⁴

The need to maintain much of an African environment in the mission run orphanages was in response to the accusations that were leveled against the missionaries as alienating the African orphans from their African culture. However, it is difficult to determine how much of the African “filth” was left out of the education of African orphans. This is due to the fact that many missionaries generally condemned most of the African cultural practices without understanding them. According to the Report of the Director of Social Welfare for the Year 1960:

A careful study of the situation in these missions during 1960 showed that every effort was made to return these children to their families and something like ninety percent of those received had been returned to their tribes. Above all it was encouraging to note that there was no attempt in these missions to proselytize and indeed they were doing their best to provide the care that the children needed whatever their background or religion.¹⁵

Despite the fact that the government seemed to have been satisfied with the services provided by the mission-run orphanages, the aims and motives of the missionaries in establishing orphanages also seemed to have been ambiguous in many aspects. There were concerns that the main motives of the missionaries in taking care of the orphans

was to train them as auxiliaries in the task of evangelization.¹⁶ Whether this was due to a deliberate policy or the environment in which the orphans found themselves, most of them ended up being among the earliest African nuns and priests.

Some orphanages were also involved in the training of housemaids and nursemaids. These orphanages worked in collaboration with some European settlers because the increasing European population needed trained servants and nursemaids for their households. It was hoped that, “these orphans trained in a suitable environment may later develop into good Christian African citizens ready to do their part to build up their country”.¹⁷ This clearly shows that in some cases, missionaries cared for orphans to serve their own interests and those of their fellow Europeans at the expense of the orphans.

The views stated above notwithstanding, the more established and renowned orphanages such as Kasisi and Kalene Hills orphanages were still able to give a proper education to the orphans. Orphans were given a proper primary education and at the secondary level, orphans entered schools of the mission order. For example, most of the orphaned girls from Kasisi Orphanage went to Lwitikila Girls Secondary School in Mpika, hundreds of Kilometres north of Lusaka for their education. Even after the establishment of Kasisi Girls Secondary School, some girls were still being taken to Lwitikila Girls Secondary School.

The administration of most of the mission-run orphanages was done in collaboration with the missionary order of the missionaries running the orphanage before the government became actively involved in the care of orphans. This was because most of the funding for the running of the orphanages was sourced from the mother countries of the missionary Order in charge of respective orphanages. According to the Bible Class Mission in Choma:

If necessary, we are prepared to carry out this work [caring for orphans] at our own expense without government assistance ... at present being supported by friends in America Australia and England. A committee has been formed in Australia and arrangements are being made to obtain necessary permits to send out monthly support.¹⁸

In addition, well wishers from the missionary order's respective country held fund raising activities to support orders that were involved in the care of African orphans as part of the social services provided by missionaries besides health and education services.

In the beginning, missionaries provided most of the funds for the care of orphans. They provided the funds for the building of orphanages, and bought the food as well as the clothing for the orphans. However, with the increase in numbers of orphans in the 1940s, the missionaries were now under a lot of strain to meet all the needs of the orphans. In addition, the missionaries also observed that Africans became even more reluctant to look after orphans even in cases where they previously had been able to care for orphans. It is for these reasons that the missionaries demanded that the guardians of the orphaned children that were brought to the mission orphanages should contribute towards the upkeep of these orphans. Guardians to the orphans who were surrendered to the mission stations were required to contribute between six and

eight pence per month. Sometimes, the guardian or the father to the orphaned child was given work at the mission station to earn the monthly fee.¹⁹

The Mission-run orphanages also received financial support for the care of orphans from the Native Authorities from where the children had come within Northern Rhodesia. The Native Authorities were required to contribute up to £5 annually towards the care of orphans coming from their areas. This system worked better in rural areas where the orphans and the mission-established orphanages were in the same region, hence there was no difficulty in establishing the Native Authority involved. For Orphanages that were established in urban or near urban areas, such as Kasisi Orphanage, it was difficult to establish the Native Authorities involved since the children who were brought to these orphanages in most cases came as a result of detribalization and the Native authorities from where their parents originated could not easily be traced. Other orphans were children merely picked up by passers-by after being lost or even abandoned by parents. Others were those left by mothers seeking medical treatment but died at the mission hospital.²⁰ In some cases the mother could have either have had no relatives while in hospital, or the relatives could have left the infant behind after the mother's death. In such cases, the mission run orphanages maintained far more children than they ever received grants for and offered a wider service than most government figures indicated.²¹

After 1948 the Northern Rhodesia Government became actively involved in the care of orphans especially in funding the mission established orphanages. There was the establishment of the Social Welfare Fund which also catered for the care of orphans

as a social service in addition to the provision of health and education facilities. Most of the funds provided by the government were used to subsidize the care of orphans in providing shelter, clothes and food for orphans.

In addition, Catholic mission-run orphanages also received grants from the Catholic Secretariat's Department of Social Welfare especially after the establishment of the Lusaka Diocese. The Department of Social Welfare of the Catholic Secretariat was established to supervise the works of Catholic institutions that were involved in the provision of social services such as health and education services as well as the care of orphans.²² The Department also provided subsidies annually for the provision of these social services.

The Mission established orphanages also provided health and education facilities especially primary education for the orphans. However, once the orphans reached secondary school-going age, they were expected to attend schools of the missionary order running the orphanages. As earlier stated, most of the girls from Kasisi Orphanage went to Lwitikila Girls Secondary School which is run by the Little Sisters of Mary Immaculate. Most of the school and boarding fees of these orphans came from donor funds from Germany, Norway and Switzerland, which were paid directly to the school.²³ In some cases, the Catholic Secretariat's Department of Social Welfare also helped by providing educational grants to the mission run orphanages.

The Mission-run orphanages also worked in collaboration with the Northern Rhodesia Department of Social Service particularly the Northern Rhodesia Child Welfare and Adoption Society to ensure that the needs of the orphaned children in the orphanages were well catered for. The duties of the Child Welfare and Adoption Society were mostly confined to the role of inspectorate. This is because most of the demands for adoption of children in the colonial period were made by white couples wishing to adopt white orphans while most of the mission-run orphanages mostly catered for African orphans.

This chapter can be concluded by stating that missionaries offered the most effective response to the problem of orphans both during the pre-colonial and the colonial period through the creation of orphanages. There was a transition from the African response to the problem of orphans that was limited to incorporating them into the extended family system. The strategies for coping with the problem of orphans in African societies were inadequate particularly in the care of infant orphans. There were inadequate facilities for feeding these infant orphans until they could take solid foods. In addition, social changes as a result of the imposition of colonial rule also meant that the traditional ways of caring for orphans diminished especially in urban areas. This necessitated the establishment of orphanages by missionary organisations. African orphans began to be cared for in institutionalized orphanages. This marked a revolution in social practice for African communities.

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CHAPTER 4

THE COLONIAL GOVERNMENT'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE CARE OF ORPHANS AFTER 1948

The central theme of this chapter is on the Northern Rhodesian government involvement's in the care of orphans especially after 1948. This involvement was to a large extent influenced by events that were happening on the international scene especially as a result of the impact of the Second World on the European continent, Britain in particular. This prompted Britain to establish welfare policies and funds to cater for the underprivileged members of society including vulnerable children, which is the main concern of this dissertation. Most of the social welfare policies that were formulated were also extended to British colonies including Northern Rhodesia. However, within Northern Rhodesia, there were a number of socio-economic transformations that forced the government to start providing welfare relief to the underprivileged especially in the newly created urban centres and the resultant shanty compounds.

Background to British Colonial Welfare Policies

Before 1948, most of the efforts in the care of orphans and other underprivileged members of society were by Christian missionaries. African colonial governments concentrated on economic development and exporting African raw materials. However, after 1948, there was a new attitude towards social responsibility in colonies that was influenced by two factors. These were the development of the welfare state in Britain by 1948 as a response to the social and political difficulties due to the evils of a modern system of economic organisation.¹ In addition, after 1945,

the British government also took its own steps towards post-war reconstruction that entailed the formation of a welfare state. As such, social welfare policies that were being passed in Britain were also extended to the British African colonies.

Another factor that influenced the colonial governments to establish social welfare policies in their colonies was that colonialism came under international attack for being over exploitative and impoverishing Africans. Therefore, “its continuance could only be defended if the colonies could be shown as benefiting by association”.² Within the colonies, it was also observed that the process of labour migrations and the resultant process of urbanization, like in other parts of the world created many social problems that begged the attention of respective colonial governments. This led to the establishment of many social welfare policies to care for the underprivileged in society, which also included the care of orphaned children.

Legislation to Support the Care of Children in Need

Among the earliest Acts that were passed by the British Government to care for children in need was the Children’s Act of 1908. The Provisions of the Children’s Act became applicable in Northern Rhodesia long before the passing of Social Welfare Acts in the territory.³ This Act provided safeguards in cases where children were adopted by an institution like an orphanage. By this Act, the institutions were required to fulfill the duties of parents by providing orphans with necessities of life such as food, clothes, shelter and medical care. It was the Children’s Act 1908, which the earlier Missionary societies who established orphanages used to defend themselves against allegations of being “baby snatchers”.

Another important Act that proved to be vital to the Care of orphans in Northern Rhodesia was the Children and Young Persons Act of 1933. This was passed in Britain as a way of providing society with the responsibility to care for children in need of care for whatever reason. In 1948, this Act was revised to extend the responsibility of society up to the age of 17.⁴ This Act was extended to Northern Rhodesia and provided the framework for the Department of Probation and Welfare Services in dealing with needy and delinquent children in Northern Rhodesia.

As a result of the above mentioned transformation in the provision of social welfare, the British government passed the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940.⁵ By this Act, the British government took up responsibility for subsidizing the provision of social services in British colonies. This was because most of the colonial governments had limited resources to provide adequate standards of education and health services among other social services. In 1945, a second Colonial Development and Welfare Act was passed. As such:

Between 1946 and 1955, £210 million, from funds provided by the Act, from private investments, and from money raised by the colonial governments themselves, was spent on development plans in the British territories.⁶

This led to the creation of the Social Welfare Fund that was aimed at providing funds for social welfare services including the care of orphans. It was from this fund that the colonial government provided funds for grant aided missionary run orphanages.

Perhaps one of the most important Acts that was passed by the colonial government to facilitate the care of orphans was the Adoption Act of 1956 which also led to the

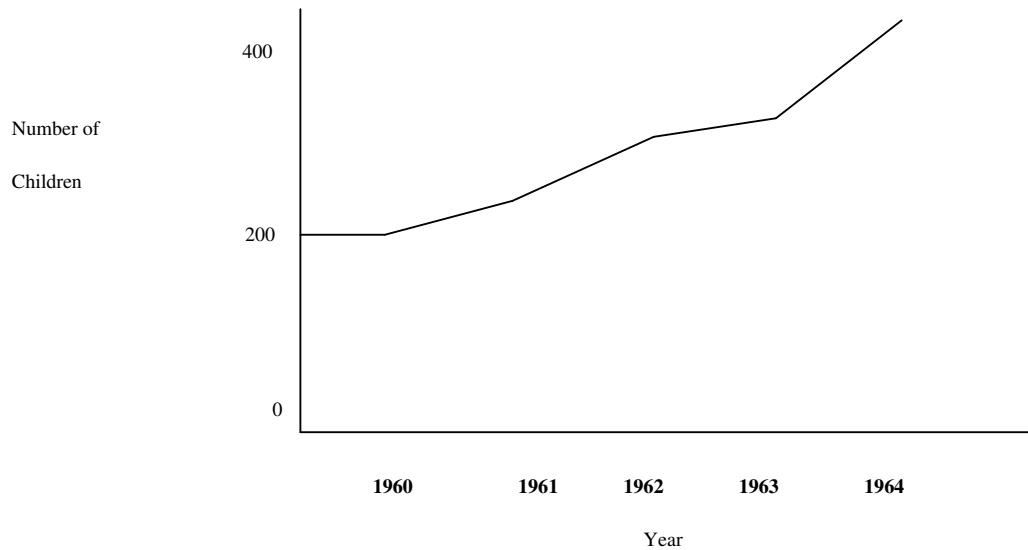
founding of the Northern Rhodesian Child Welfare and Adoption Society in June 1956.⁷ By this Act, the government provided a legal framework by which prospective parents, as stated earlier in this chapter, would be allowed to provide the various necessities of life. This was to be achieved through the process of Adoption. Adoption is “an act by which relationships of paternity and affiliations are recognized as legally existing between persons not so related by nature.”⁸ Among the qualifications or requirements for would-be adoptive parents included the right age that is not above 50 and not below 25 years. The adoptive parents had to be of acceptable nationality, in this case from within the British territories. The religion of the adoptive parents was also essential and they had to be Christians, with a good occupation and a good income. Applications for adoption had to be supported by the employer. This was in order to ensure that the adopting parents would provide the best possible home environment and security for the orphaned children.

Government Funding of Mission Run-Orphanages

As earlier stated in Chapter three, the missionary societies that established orphanages in the beginning were expected by government to provide all the requirements of the orphans without government assistance. Before 1948, the official government stance was that the missionaries wishing to establish orphanages were to be prepared to foot the whole bill for the care of African orphans. In the beginning, most missionary societies were able to source funds from donors in their mother countries. This took care of many of the financial requirements of the mission run orphanages because the numbers of orphans were minimal. However, after 1945, government clearly noted that the number of abandoned and orphaned children was rapidly increasing especially in the urban areas.⁹ There was a notable increase in the number of orphans

that were admitted to mission stations between late 1950s and early 1960s as noted in the graph below:

Figure 1: The Number of Motherless Children Admitted to Missions over a period of Five years



Source: Republic of Zambia, Ministry of Labour and Social Development, Department of Social Welfare, *Annual Report for the Year 1964* (Lusaka: Government Printers, 1964), p.17.

The graph above shows that there was quite a steep increase in the number of orphans admitted in mission-run orphanages from around 200 in 1960 to more than 400 by 1964. The government also admitted the fact that the numbers of orphans in mission-run orphanages could have been much more than statistics indicated since most mission-run orphanages were many and numerous especially in the rural areas. With the increasing numbers of African orphans, missionary Societies that wished to undertake and continue the care of African orphans queried the extent to which the government was willing to give assistance in capital outlay and maintenance to mission-run orphanages.¹⁰

In response, the Northern Rhodesia government established a Committee on the Care of African Orphans. The committee was tasked to inquire and establish general and

specific views on the problem, to suggest ways in which the problem could be alleviated and to find out whether or not the missionary societies that were already involved in the care of orphans would be prepared to continue caring for orphans with or without government assistance.¹¹ Among other things, the committee recommended that for a child to be accepted as an orphan, he/she had to be recommended by the Native Authority from where the child was coming from, and the recommendation had to be endorsed by the District Commissioner from the area. Before the involvement of the government in the funding of mission-run orphanages, the relatives of the orphaned child (if they could be traced) were required to contribute towards the care of the orphans by law.

As part of the colonial government's financial support for the mission-run orphanages, it was required by law that the guardians of children in mission-run orphanages were required to contribute towards the upkeep of the child. This was in addition to the contribution the Native Authorities from where the children were coming from had to make as discussed in chapter three.¹²

The provision of funds for social welfare programs under the Second Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1945 ensured that more money was made available for social welfare such as the care of orphans. As such, the Northern Rhodesia Government provided financial assistance for the construction of orphanages by missionaries. In the 1950 and 1951 financial years, the government allocated £940 and £562 respectively towards the construction of orphanages by missionaries. Some of the funds were given to the Bible Class Mission in Choma who had earlier applied

to the government to aid it in the construction of special accommodations for orphans.¹³

In addition, the Northern Rhodesian government provided funds to the mission run orphanages for the care of orphans in addition to supplementing the contributions of the Native Authorities from where the orphaned children came from. According to the Annual Report of the Director of Social Welfare for the Year 1956:

During the year, a scheme was introduced to provide grants-in-aid to missions who care for African children who are motherless Native Authorities [were] to provide £5, Government £10 and a total of £3,000 was provided to meet grants during the financial year 1956-1957.¹⁴

This was the first official scheme that government put in place to cater for African orphans under the care of mission operated orphanages. With the increase in the number of orphans in the 1960s especially in the urban centres, there was need for government to increase funding to mission-run orphanages. Between 1956 and 1964, the colonial government was able to increase subsidies to mission run orphanages up to £12,000 annually.

Government funding of mission-run orphanages also extended to the provision of funds for expatriate medical attention outside the territory due to lack of proper medical facilities within Northern Rhodesia. The government of Northern Rhodesia also created a special fund for orphaned and abandoned children who were mentally retarded or had other special ailments. Such children were sent to medical institutions in Southern Rhodesia and sometimes South Africa at government expense. For example, in 1960 government spent over £15,000 on the care of orphans outside

Northern Rhodesia.¹⁵ This amount also included expenses for the care of European and coloured children outside Northern Rhodesia before the establishment of orphanages for European and coloured children within the territory. The Colonial Government provided educational grants to mission-run orphanages especially those that also ran primary schools for orphanages though this was also catered for under the budget for the provision of Native Education.

Government Run Orphanages

The Northern Rhodesia Government took an active role in the care of orphans in the 1950s especially with the establishment of the Northern Rhodesia Child Welfare and Adoption Society in 1956 through which most of government work in the care of needy children was carried out. In the Northern Rhodesian Department of Social Welfare Annual Report for the Year 1964, the government observed that:

Rural-urban migrations is a phenomenon with which most countries have to contend with and in Zambia, the process is occurring at an ever increasing rate bringing with it several social problems. Efforts to reverse this tide constitute a long process, involving social reforms.¹⁶

This increased government involvement in the care of orphans enhanced the level of care provided to orphaned children in the Northern Rhodesian territory. This could be said to have been a good response to the socio-economic problems created by the colonial regime. Apart from involvement through the passing of legislation and funding to support the care of orphans, government also established government run orphanages under the supervision of the Northern Rhodesian Child Welfare and Adoption Society. Yet this policy had its own setbacks as shall be seen in the next paragraph.

It is important to note that although government established its own orphanages in colonial Zambia, it seemed more concerned and directly involved with European and colored orphans than with indigenous African orphans. This seemed to extend the colonial racist undertones to the care of orphans. In January 1960, the colonial Government, in association with the Northern Rhodesian Child Care and Adoption Society established Highridge House in Kitwe on the Copperbelt. This orphanage was established for European girls who had previously been accommodated in Southern Rhodesia or South Africa. In comparison to mission-run orphanages on which the colonial government spent on average £5000 to £6000 annually, the government contributed over £19,000 while the Lotteries contributed about £10,000 annually. The Highridge House accommodated twenty-four girls of all ages¹⁷. This clearly shows the colonial state's practice of inequality in the provision of care between European and African orphans.

Another step that the colonial government took in the establishment of government run orphanages was the opening of another orphanage in Fort Jameson (present day Chipata). A hotel was converted into a children's home that was called Springbok Lodge and was officially opened by the then Provincial Commissioner Mr. F.R. Phillips on 20th October 1960. The new orphanage accommodated between twenty-four and twenty-six coloured children. Again it was possible to bring children back from other territories because "suitable" accommodation had been found within the territory¹⁸. This also pointed to the fact that government was more concerned with the care of colored and European orphans who were provided with better accommodation and more funding as opposed to African orphans in mission-run orphanages. In

addition, in March 1960, Other plans were being made to convert a hotel in Broken Hill (present day Kabwe) into an orphanage for half-caste (coloured) children to be run by the Northern Rhodesian Child Welfare and Adoption Society.¹⁹

As part of the colonial government's direct involvement in the care of orphans, the government through the Department of Community Development and Social Services also operated what were referred to as transit homes for orphans and other children who were in need of care especially in urban areas.²⁰ The transit homes were not necessarily orphanages but they were important in providing temporal accommodation to children in need before they could be handed over to other government established orphanages or missionary orphanages.

The Northern Rhodesian Child Welfare and Adoption Society

The Northern Rhodesian Child Welfare and Adoption Society was founded in June 1956. The Society was created as a response to the increasing numbers of orphans in the urban centres especially after 1945. The Government founded the Society in order to facilitate the adoption and placement of orphaned children in foster homes since the Society "made its motto of the children's place being in a natural home".²¹ The Society played an important role in augmenting the role of the mission-run orphanages. This was an important milestone in the care of orphans in colonial Zambia.

The Northern Rhodesian Child Welfare and Adoption Society was also created in order to facilitate the Adoption of Children outside Northern Rhodesia. This is

because prior to 1956, when the Adoption Act came into effect, Northern Rhodesia had no adoption laws. As a result, Europeans were required to adopt children outside Northern Rhodesia. For example, whites of South African origin preferred adopting children from South Africa through the Society for the Protection of Child Life that was based in Cape Town.²² In addition, British citizens within Northern Rhodesia were allowed to adopt children from any other territories within the British Empire such as the Channel Islands, New Zealand, South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. It is important to note that most requests for Adoption were made by Europeans. The end of the Second World War had also heightened the problem of orphans in the British Empire. This was as a result of children who lost their parents during the war especially in Europe. There was an increase in demand for the adoption of evacuated children from Europe and other British territories. A Children's Overseas Reception Board was created based in 1945 and was based in South Africa. The Board was responsible for receiving evacuated children awaiting adoption in Southern Africa.

In Northern Rhodesia, applications for adoption to the Board based in South Africa were a long and tedious procedure. The aspiring parents had to apply through the Chief Secretary of Social Services in Northern Rhodesia who had to forward the applications to the Secretary of State for Colonies in London. The applications were finally re-routed to and processed in South Africa where the Children's Overseas Reception Board was based. For example, a Mr. J.J. Brummer of Mufulira on the Copperbelt of Northern Rhodesia is on record as having been one of the parents who adopted one of the evacuated children, through the Children's Overseas Reception Board in 1946.²³ Therefore, the Northern Rhodesia Child Welfare and Adoption Society was created to facilitate adoption of children from within and outside

Northern Rhodesia. With the enactment of the Adoption Act in 1956 and the establishment of orphanages for White orphans within Northern Rhodesia by 1960, most of the work of the Northern Rhodesia Child Welfare and Adoption Society became localized.

It was the duty of the Child Welfare Society to scrutinize the applications of the aspiring adoptive parents in order to ensure that the children being adopted would be properly taken care of financially and emotionally. Some of the qualifications of the adoptive parents were that they had to be middle aged, had a good income and had a good and stable marriage. The adoptive parents were also expected to present references from their employer and religious leaders among other requirements.

It is important to note that most of the cases that the Northern Rhodesia Child Welfare and Adoption Society dealt with since its establishment to about 1975 concerned white couples. This is because it was mostly the European couples that were interested in adopting white orphans. There were very few reported cases of European couples applying to adopt African orphans²⁴ or African couples applying to adopt children at all. European couples resorted to adopting perhaps due to the fact that it was part of European culture to adopt children officially. Many African individuals and couples were unwilling to adopt children because of African taboos and stigmatization. There were concerns over bringing a child into a family whose background was not known and the possibility that adopting such a child of unknown ancestry would lead to misfortune in the family.²⁵ In addition, those who adopted children were stigmatized as adoption was an admission of barrenness and/or

impotence and a source of embarrassment especially for women. In any case, childless couples in African societies opted for unofficial “adoption” from their extended family rather than from a strange family. Therefore the services offered by the Society were utilized more by the European couples than their African counterparts.

The Northern Rhodesia Child Welfare and Adoption Society was responsible for the placement of children in foster homes on a temporal basis. This was mostly common in urban areas and in towns along the line of rail. Placing orphans in foster homes was preferable to the Northern Rhodesian Child Welfare and Adoption Society. The requirement for a foster home was to offer as close to a natural home environment as possible. This was a serious matter that also required the scrutinizing of would-be foster parents to determine whether they were suitable or not. Apart from the important requirements in adoption cases, foster homes were to have natural children to contribute to the required natural home environment.²⁶ Case workers who were trained professionals were expected to study the home environment of the aspiring foster parents in order to ensure the orphaned children were being placed with the best possible parents.

Unlike adoption, where the adoptive parents took permanent custody of the adopted orphan and became legally obliged to provide for the child, as a natural parent would, foster parents were subsidized by the government. The government contributed financially towards the upkeep of orphans under foster care. Through the Department of Community Development and Social Service, the government provided a subsidy

of up to £2 monthly to foster parents.²⁷ Again, like adoption, fostering of orphaned children was more common among European couples who preferred the fostering of white and coloured orphans. Again, it was very rare , if at all among African couples because the practice was not part of the African cultural. However, African traditional society had a form of fostering which was closely related to apprenticeship. Parents of children who wanted their children to learn certain specialized skills such as iron-smiting would entrust the care of their children to a renounced iron smith for the children to learn the art.²⁸

The Northern Rhodesia Child Welfare and Adoption Society also operated what were referred to as transit homes on behalf of the colonial government. These transit homes were established especially in urban areas to provide temporal accommodation for children who were in need of care. These children were kept temporarily before they could be admitted into mission orphanages such as Kasisi, if they were African orphans. European and coloured orphans were taken to government run orphanages such as the Highridge House on the Copperbelt of Northern Rhodesia.

The Northern Rhodesia Child Welfare and Adoption Society worked in close collaboration with other organisations such as mission-run orphanages that were involved in the care of orphans. As already discussed, applications for the adoption and fostering of children were made to the Northern Rhodesia Child Welfare and Adoption Society. As such, it was the responsibility of the Society to consult with mission-run orphanages such as Kasisi in providing orphaned children who were available for adoption and placement in foster homes. However, such collaborations

were rare due to the fact that most mission-run orphanages mostly catered for African orphans and as earlier mentioned, it was mostly the European couples that were interested in both adoption and fostering of orphaned white and coloured children. Therefore, the Northern Rhodesia Child Welfare and Adoption Society mostly dealt with government-run orphanages that cared for white and colored children.

The Northern Rhodesian Child Welfare and Adoption Society also acted as an inspectorate of institutions that dealt with child welfare especially the individual and mission established orphanages. This was in order to ensure the orphaned children who were under institutional care were taken care of properly. This was also in order to curb reported abuses in some of the established orphanages such as severe rules and corporal punishments of orphans as well as insufficient clothing and food.²⁹

In conclusion, government played a vital role in the care of orphans especially after 1948. The government facilitated the care of orphans through the passing of legislation such as the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts that facilitated funding for social services particularly the care of orphans which is the focus of this study. Perhaps the most important legislation passed by government to facilitate the care of orphans was the Adoption Act of 1956. Government also took an active role in the care of both African and European/colored children through the provision of grants-in-aid for the mission-run orphanages and government established orphanages under the Department of Community Development and Social Services. The establishment of the Northern Rhodesian Child Welfare and Adoption Society by the

government also contributed greatly to the care of orphans though its services were not fully utilized by Africans due to cultural beliefs.

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CHAPTER 5

IMPACT OF THE INSTITUTIONALISATION OF ORPHANS

The institutionalisation of orphans in mission-run orphanages marked a revolution in the care of orphans in African society. As earlier mentioned, orphans were incorporated into the extended family system to be taken care of after the death of their parents. Missionary societies extended their welfare work in African communities to include the care of African orphans in addition to health and education. This led to the establishment of orphanages such as Kalene Hills orphanage in Mwinilunga and Kasisi Orphanage in Lusaka. The socio-economic transformation of the African communities as a result of the advent of colonial rule increased the number of orphans that were admitted to the mission-run orphanages. This new social practice of keeping orphaned children in institutions called orphanages raised a lot of concerns on the impact or consequences of the new practice. This was due to removal of children from the natural African cultural environment. The aim of this chapter therefore is to establish the possible impact that the institutionalisation of orphans had on the orphans and their ability to cope after leaving the orphanages and being re-integrated into mainstream society.

With the increase in the number of orphans and the problems associated with this new phenomenon, most colonial leaders, especially in African territories became concerned with the plight of African orphans in mission-run orphanages. As such, Legislative Council debates became increasingly concerned with the plight of African orphans the possible ways of dealing with it. It was conclusively established that the creation of mission-run orphanages to care for African orphans had become a necessary evil in the light of the ever changing socio-economic situation of most

Africans in both the rural and newly established urban areas due to colonial rule and its policies. Most members of the Legislative Council were skeptical about the impact of the institutionalisation of African orphans. The missionaries were in most cases referred to as “baby snatchers” in many Legislative Council debates.¹ This term suggested a negative connotation or attitude towards the work of missionaries in the care of orphans. The concerns of most African leaders were that the missionaries’ aim and general practice in the care of African orphans was to Europeanise them by alienating them from their African culture and environment. This was because in their evangelisation, many missionary societies denounced African societies as being immoral and pagan in their cultural practices. However, in the 1964 Department of Social Welfare Annual Report, the colonial government observed that in most of the mission-run orphanages, there was no “deliberate” policy to alienate orphans from their African environment and culture.²

International studies have shown that there is a lot of controversy concerning the impact or consequences of the institutionalisation of orphans in different cultures. According to Trotzkey, this created a controversy between the placing of children in foster homes or institutionalisation in the care of orphans. The argument has been that the institutionalisation of orphans in orphanages does not provide the necessary family environment that children in need are supposed to have.³ Advocates of private family care and adoption insisted that orphanages should be discarded and replaced entirely by placing orphaned children in foster care or adoption. However, this could not be achieved in pre-colonial and colonial Zambia due to the fact that the practices of adoption and fostering⁴ were foreign to African societies and only a few European couples were involved in these practices with a preference for European and coloured

children.⁵ Most of the African orphans were left in the care of mission-run orphanages such as Kasisi Orphanage. However, in many cases, orphanages were condemned as being inefficient and unworthy in terms of offering the best home substitute for orphans.⁶ Such condemnation of orphanages was based on severe rules and regulations in the orphanages, lack of care and clothing and insufficient food and alleged abuses of orphans. For example, Fr. Torrend, founder of the Kasisi Mission Orphanage was charged with allegations of using his charges as cheap labourers.⁷ These were some of the allegations concerning the mission-run orphanages that raised a lot of concern on the possible negative impact of the institutionalization of orphans.

The colonial Government was equally hesitant in entrusting the care of African orphans completely to the mission-run orphanages. The government wanted the African extended family system to absorb as many orphans as possible. To this effect, the government stated that:

It would be a great pity if we were to hasten the break-down of this admirable family cohesiveness [in the care of orphans] by encouraging the placement of these children in institutions quite apart from the deleterious effect from a child care point of view.⁸

This clearly shows that the colonial government was also skeptical of the impact of the institutionalisation of orphans

In addition, some academics identified and outlined certain risky aspects of institutional care of orphans and the possible outcomes that were likely to produce a negative impact on children brought up in orphanages. According to Jackson, the absence of stable loving parent substitutes in orphanages would have the possible

outcome of low self-esteem, insecurity and lack of trust. Other risks associated with institutional care in orphanages include little staff training in child development whose possible outcome would be inadequate psychological development and guidance for children.⁹ This was more so for mission-run orphanages that were maintained by clergy men and women with the assistance of African helpers who were not trained in child welfare. There were also other concerns over the loss of knowledge, identity, totems, clans and local customs in orphanages that would result in individuals who had no real identity and were strangers in their own society. According to a United Nations publication entitled *Orphans and Vulnerable Children; a Situational Analysis in Zambia*, it was observed that:

Orphans who grow up in an institution frequently experienced a type of dysfunction upon return to the community. They were raised without Zambian rituals and often felt disassociated from their community¹⁰.

These have been some of the arguments that many scholars have used to discredit the institutional care of orphans in orphanages.

However, the general aim of the missionaries in the establishment of orphanages was to care for needy children, to provide love, care and shelter and to help the orphans to develop into responsible adults who when integrated back into society would contribute positively. Missionaries did not have a deliberate policy of alienating African orphans from their African cultural environment as was feared by all who were concerned with the possible impact of the care of orphans in institutions.

From the information obtained through oral interviews, the mission-run orphanages were able to produce individuals who have made positive contributions to society especially economically due to the quality of education that was provided by the missionaries.¹¹ Many of the orphans brought up in the mission orphanages have become influential members of society such as doctors, nurses, teachers and many other professions. However, many more of the orphans that were brought up in mission-run orphanages also ended up becoming part of the clergy for the missionary societies. Whether this was due to cohesion or a natural process of being influenced by the environment in which these African orphans were brought up is difficult to state.¹²

On the social front, many of the orphans found it very difficult to establish intimate forms of associations with other members of the community. To begin with, most of the orphaned children who left orphanages to boarding school away from the orphanages found it difficult to associate with other children. In an interview with Sr. Marion of Kasisi Orphanage, she stated that girls who went to secondary schools such as Lwitikila Girls Secondary School were initially reported to have been associating more with other girls from the orphanage at the exclusion of other girls from different backgrounds¹³ This observation was also confirmed by the former Head of Lwitikila Girls High School.¹⁴ This was partly attributed to the stigma that was associated with the girls' tag as orphans from Kasisi. However, the girls seemed to have been more comfortable with their fellow orphans from Kasisi. In addition, a common practice in most of the orphanages was to send the orphans to single sex schools for boys and girls this meant that these orphans were unable to be fully incorporated in small school communities because of their background.

Nevertheless, the institutionalisation of orphans seemed to have had a positive impact on the emotional development of the orphans. Orphans were observed to have been more mature in their approach to everyday issues. This was perhaps due to the fact that growing up in orphanages ensured that they became more responsible for their own well-being at a very early stage in life. This was especially evident among orphans in boarding schools.

The major concern of most of the African parliamentarians and some scholars concerning the raising of orphans in institutions was that they would be alienated from their African culture and would not be able to cope once they were integrated back into their communities. Data collected seems to indicate that this was not a major problem for most of the former orphans. This is because those who were integrated into society as adults were fully prepared for life after the orphanage through education and professional training. The cultural aspect of their African heritage was not a major issue especially in urban centres where most of the former orphans ended up settling. This is because these former orphans almost entirely spent their lives in urban surroundings and their norms of behaviour and aspirations were determined by the urban environment.¹⁵

The African urban elite in most of the established urban centers adopted most of the European cultures and ways of doing things. Most of the former African orphans who found themselves in the urban centers did not suffer any lack of African cultural orientation because, the new urban cultural practices of the urban elite was very familiar to them.¹⁶ However, in the new setting, from life in the orphanages, most of

the orphans brought up in orphanages admitted having difficulties in forming social relations, such as making friends throughout their schooling and professional training. Apart from this, there were no other serious consequences of their orphan up-bringing impeding of their ability to cope with social demands.

According to records at Kasisi Orphanage, there was concern over the children and teenagers who had been surrendered to their communities, especially rural communities after being admitted to the orphanage for a short period of time. This is because sometimes, orphanages temporarily admitted abandoned and orphaned children in need depending on the circumstances of the family. Such children would be returned at any point to either their biological parents or their extended family members. A follow up on such children in most cases is what revealed that they were unable to cope with their changed social environment. This was because in the orphanages, the children had enjoyed a certain level of comfort in terms of good nutrition, clothes and education. In addition, such children would have also formed social bonds with their fellow orphans and care givers. When such children were suddenly removed from the orphanage back into a village setting, they were bound to react negatively to the changed environment.

This was and is mostly due to the fact that children are impressionable and easily adapt to their changing environment and circumstances faster than the adults. In some cases, children were reported to have withdrawn and exhibited signs of depression such as refusal to eat and play with other children.¹⁷ But After some time they would get back to normal and settle down.

Teenagers also found it very difficult to be integrated back into their communities after staying in the orphanages for a while. Most teenagers who were removed from orphanages experienced social-emotional problems as a result of not only staying in orphanages but also due to them being uprooted from the orphanage. This is because like small children they also tend to develop what some scholars have referred to as attachment disorders.¹⁸ These disorders can be manifested in form of indiscriminate friendliness or withdrawal from any kind of relations or association in any social situation.

Therefore, the institutionalization of orphans with the creation of mission-run orphanages had noticeable impacts on the orphans. At whatever stage, orphaned children and adults who have spent an extended period of time in an orphanage in most cases display deficits in some areas of development especially when compared with children who were raised in a normal family environment or those orphans who were adopted and home-reared from an early age. However, as adults, orphans who were brought up in orphanages were in most cases better equipped to deal with societal demands especially in urban settings due to the educational and professional training that was given at the mission-run orphanages. Therefore, the negative impact of the institutionalization of orphans was less severe in orphaned children who left the orphanages as adults after their education and professional training than their counterparts who left before these stages.

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CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The care of African orphans in pre-colonial and colonial Africa was one of the most important welfare services that were provided to the needy in society. Orphans were present in African communities as a result of deaths as well as abandonment. However, for many academics and other casual observers, this was not a notable problem as the most common assumption was that those children who lost their parents were incorporated into the extended family system. In fact many academics have gone as far as stating that orphans did not exist in African societies¹. This was perhaps due to the African extended family system which was very cohesive and was able to incorporate the orphaned and abandoned children. The other reason for the assumption that there were no orphans in the pre-colonial African societies was that the numbers of orphans were not as many as the case came to be later. Even if this may have been the case, the presence of orphans in African communities was still one of the social problems that African societies were generally able to deal with.

This dissertation has presented of the presences of folklores on the existence of orphans in African societies. Many traditional African societies have folklore that portrays the presences of orphans and how they were cared for by the extended family system. Though the traditional methods of caring for orphans seemed to have been adequate, orphans were sometimes mistreated and suffered stigmatization in the community and within their adopted families. According to oral traditions, the presence of orphans in African communities was a source of concern as their treatment was sometimes a source of conflicts and social tensions.²

Though no written records exist on the presence of orphans in pre-colonial Africa, orally transmitted myths and folklores about orphans in African traditions are based on human experiences. They have depicted orphans wrestling with mysteries of life and death. African myths and folklores have been products of people's reflections on the relations among human beings and responses to challenges of the unknown and to the universal need to create order and reason out of chaos.³ The presence of these myths and folklores in African traditions is a clear indication of the presence of orphans and the difficulties associated with the care of orphans in pre-colonial Africa.

In addition to the African traditional response of incorporating orphans into the extended family system, missionaries also played a very important role in the care of African orphans. The advent of missionary societies in Africa marked a turning point in the care of African orphans. This is because a new practice in the care of orphans was introduced involving the institutionalization of orphans in orphanages. Among the missionary societies that were active in the care of African orphans were the missionaries of the Dutch Reformed Church who established an orphanage in Chipata former Fort Jameson at Magwero under the leadership of E. Botes. However, the most famous missionary societies that established orphanages in Northern Rhodesia were the Christian Missionaries in Many Lands (CMML) who established Kalene Hills Orphanage in Mwinilunga under the leadership of Dr. Fischer in 1914. Kasisi Orphanages in Lusaka was initially established by the White Fathers under the Leadership of Fr. Torrend 1921.

In addition to the provision of social services such as health and education, the missionaries undertook the care of orphans as part of their evangelisation work to care for the underprivileged members of society. This was also done as part of discouraging some of the African practices that encouraged the abandonment of infants and children for various reasons. The establishment of orphanages by missionaries became even more necessary with the increased numbers of orphaned and abandoned children in the colonial period due to the changing socio-economic circumstances that had a negative impact on African social institutions such as marriage. These circumstances were mostly as a result of the imposition of colonial rule on Africans by Europeans, the British in the case of colonial Zambia.

Besides the missionaries, other humanitarian organisations such as the Knights of Da Gama also established orphanages. After 1948, the colonial government also got involved in the establishment of orphanages through the Department of Social Welfare and Probation Services, such as the Highridge House in Kitwe. However, most of the government orphanages were more concerned with the care of European and coloured orphans rather than African orphans who were left to the care of mission-run orphanages. This seems to point to racism in the care of orphans which was common in all other aspects of colonial social services provision. The involvement of all the above mentioned stakeholders in the care of orphans both in pre-colonial and colonial Zambia is a clear indication that the care of African orphans was a major concern.

The dissertation has also demonstrated that the problems of orphans took a new dimension during the colonial period mostly due to the imposition of colonial rule. This mostly led to the increase in the number of orphans. The problem of orphans seemed to have escalated as a result of the socio-economic policies that the colonial government introduced, such as taxation and forced labour migration. The development of industries during the colonial period and the resultant process of urbanization promoted rural-urban migrations. All these processes led to the disintegration of African traditional institutions that in most cases acted as a safety net for African social problems such as the care of orphans.

The presence of orphans, in particular African orphans, became one of the social problems that required the colonial government's attention especially in the urban centers after 1948. This became evident in most of the Northern Rhodesian Government reports on social welfare which showed a steady increase in the number of orphans in urban centers from the early 1950s. In addition, the plight of African orphans became a major issue in Legislative Council debates in Northern Rhodesia. Members of the Legislative Council became concerned with the increasing numbers of African orphans and the government had to get more involved in the care of orphans.⁴

The process of labour migration led to many men abandoning their families in the rural areas without ever looking back and becoming what were referred to as *Machona*⁵. In situations where the mother died, children of such men became orphans dependent on the extended family system for care and support. Some families who

migrated to urban centers also contributed to the increasing numbers of orphans during the colonial period. This was because when migrants died, many orphaned children ended up on the streets of urban centers as many had no way of getting back to the rural areas where their parents had come from. Some of these children who had been born and raised in urban centers had no way of tracing their roots.

After 1948, the colonial government became actively involved in the provision of funds for various social welfare services including the care of orphans. This is because after 1948 the British government had established a welfare state in Britain in order to deal with the devastating effects of the Second World War on the British society. Most of the social welfare policies in operation in Britain were extended to British colonies such as Northern Rhodesia. The colonial government became actively involved in the care of orphans not only through the establishment of government run orphanages but also through the passing of legislation to support the care of orphans in Northern Rhodesia as well as funding of mission run orphanages. One of the most important Acts that was passed by the colonial government to support the care of orphans was the Adoption Act of 1956. This Act facilitated the care of orphaned children. The Act was carried out through the Northern Rhodesia Child Welfare and Adoption Society.

The colonial government thus provided grants-in-aid to mission orphanage that were actively involved in the care of African orphans. Government provided between £10 annually per child in Mission-run orphanages provided that the Native Authority from where the child was coming from also contributed an additional amount of £5. The

funds were used to help missionaries in building more orphanages, providing food and shelter for orphans as well as any other necessities that were required in caring for orphans. Thus after 1948, the colonial Government's active involvement in the care of orphans supplemented the efforts of the mission-run orphanages. This was mostly due to the increase in the number of orphans during the colonial period.

The fifth chapter of the dissertation has dealt with the impact of the institutionalisation of orphans in orphanages. In this chapter it has been argued that with the increase in the number of orphans in the present era of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, many contemporary scholars such as Jackson in her book entitled *AIDS Africa; A Continent in Crisis*, have become increasingly concerned with the possible negative consequences of the institutionalization of orphans. The concern has been that orphans brought up in orphanages would not be able to cope once integrated back into main stream society. During the colonial period, Legislative Council debates depicted similar concerns about the impact of the institutionalisation of orphans. Members of the Legislative Council were concerned about the fact that missionaries in the orphanages were *Europeanizing* African orphans by condemning African cultural practices.

However, oral interviews with former orphans reveal that there was no major negative impact on orphans who were raised in mission-run orphanages on the basis of cultural alienation. In fact, orphans brought up in mission-run orphanages seemed to have developed a sense of responsibility much earlier in life and were equipped to deal with society's problems and the fast changing socio-economic and political scenario

especially during and after the colonial period. This was mostly because many of the former orphans were mostly integrated into the urban areas where emerging African elites had, to a larger extent, adopted many aspects of the new European culture. Therefore, the problem of cultural alienation did not seem to have been a major obstacle to social integration for many African orphans. The institutionalisation of orphans seemed to have given the former African orphans a material advantage over other African children as they were given a very good education from a very early age in life. They were also exposed to other important necessities such as access to better health facilities, clothes and shoes. Yet, all these material advantages could not make up for the absence of parents and a normal stable family environment.

The negative impact of the institutionalisation of orphans was more noticeable for those orphans who were integrated back into their communities while still young or in their teens. This is because sometimes orphanages accepted abandoned or orphaned children temporarily depending on the circumstances of the concerned children until the parents or relatives of an abandoned child were able to take back the child. The children were especially affected if they were integrated back into an impoverished rural community that lacked the facilities that were previously provided by the orphanage. A follow up of such children who were integrated back into the communities usually revealed that many such children were having difficulties in fitting back into their communities.

Therefore, the presence and the care of orphans in the pre-colonial and the colonial period was one of the pressing social problems that the society faced. As such, there

was need to invent social practices to deal with the problem. In the pre-colonial African society communities incorporated the orphaned children into the extended family system. The advent of missionary societies led to a revolution in the care of African orphans through the creation of orphan asylums in form or orphanages. The colonial government's social welfare reforms after 1948 presented a further improvement in dealing with the problem of orphans through funding and passing legislation that further facilitated the care of African orphans.

ENDNOTES

1. That was the initial reaction from some members of the History Department.
2. Interview, T. M. Phiri, Katuba, Kabwe Rural, 12th December, 2008
3. H. Coulander, *A Treasure of African Folklore: Oral Literature and Traditions* (New York: Crown Publishers Inc, 1975), p.5.
4. Northern Rhodesian Government. Hansard No. 84, *Verbatim Report of Debates of the 1st Session of the 10th Legislative Council 8th March, 1955* (Lusaka: Government Printers), p.34.
5. “Machona” is a Nyanja word which was used to refer to those who had left the rural areas in search of work as far as Southern Rhodesia and never returned to rural areas as a result of enjoying urban life. In most cases, such people completely lost touch with the rural areas and their families.

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