

FAITH BASED INSTITUTIONS AND WOMEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT: A GENDERED ANALYSIS OF ZAOGA FIF IN BINDURA, ZIMBABWE

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ABSTRACT

Whilst the economic status of women remains contested in the religious fraternity, this research paper stresses that Faith Based Institutions have been instrumental in initiating the economic empowerment of women in Zimbabwe. In that respect, the ZAOGA FIF has essentialised women economic empowerment through championing talents and other empowerment related programmes. Through talents, women are empowered to execute both formal and informal businesses from a religious background. Equally important, these talents have effected and triggered the realisation of women capabilities both at home and outside home. At home, some men have also benefited from the projects undertaken by women thereby raising the livelihood status of the family at large. In gathering information, the study successfully employed interviews and questionnaires. Secondary data sources from relevant scholarship were used in the study. For example, the immense scholarship provided by the archbishop of ZAOGA FIF, Professor E.H Guti, provided the much needed secondary information. More importantly, purposive sampling was employed to acquire information from seven key informants from the ZAOGA FIF church leadership from Bindura's seven districts. Findings of this paper indicate that the ZAOGA FIF doctrine of working using your own hands among both sexes is not just a biblical follow-up, but has also contributed much towards poverty eradication among the ZAOGA FIF women and men. As such, this paper acknowledges that issues surrounding women economic empowerment should be understood after appreciating the historical development of Talents as a church principle of empowering women, the study concludes that Faith Based institutions should not always be understood from a religious standpoint but also as vibrant institutions which empower both men and women through religious procedures hence the call for all relevant stakeholders to compliment these efforts.

Keywords: Economic Empowerment, Faith Based institutions, Talents, Sexuality.