

# Justice and Poverty as Challenges for the Christian Churches

With a Case Study on the Democratic Republic of Congo

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Bosela E. Eale

Patriotism | Advocacy | Governance | Social Justice  
Culture | The Church | Corruption | Dicta  
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**as Challenges for the Christian Churches**  
*With a Case Study*  
*on the Democratic Republic of Congo*



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## ABBREVIATIONS

ACP :	African, Caribbean and Pacific
ASV :	American Standard Version
BCK :	<i>Chemin de Fer du Bas-Congo au Katanga</i> [Bas-Congo to Katanga railway]
CENCO :	<i>Conférence Nationale Épiscopale du Congo</i> [Congo National Conference for bishops]
CIDA :	Canadian International Development Agency
DGI :	<i>Direction Générale des Impôts</i> [Income Tax Office]
DRC :	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECZ :	<i>Église du Christ au Zaïre</i> [Protestant Church in Zaïre, actually DRC]
EPAs :	Economic Partnership Agreements
FAO :	Food and Agriculture Organization
FLNC :	<i>Front de Libération Nationale du Congo</i> [Front for the National Liberation of the Congo]
FORESCOM :	Forestry Harvesting Company
GATT :	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP :	Gross Domestic Product
GECAMINES :	<i>Générale des Carrières et des Mines</i> [Congolese State Mining Company]
IMF :	International Monetary Fund

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INEACT :	<i>Institut National d'Études Agronomiques au Congo</i> [National Institute for Agronomic Research in the Congo]
JMPR :	<i>Jeunesse du Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution</i> [Youth branch of Mobutu's party]
MDGs :	Millennium Development Goals
MIBA :	<i>Minerais de Bakwanga</i> [Company dealing with diamond extraction and exports]
MPR :	<i>Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution</i> [Popular Movement for the Revolution]
NASV :	New American Standard Version
NCCK :	National Council of Churches Kenya
NEPAD :	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NRSV :	New Revised Standard Version
NGOs :	Non-Governmental Organisations
PPA :	Participatory Poverty Analysis
SAPs :	Structural Adjustment Programmes
SDR :	Special Drawing Right
UK :	United Kingdom
UMHK :	<i>Union Minière du Haut Katanga</i> [Mining Union for upper Katanga]
UN :	United Nations
UNDP :	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF :	United Nations Children's Fund

WB :	World Bank
WCC :	World Council of Churches
WTO :	World Trade Organization

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## SUMMARY

The central theme of this study involves an ethical examination of the issues of justice and poverty in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Chapter one deals with the methodology of the research. It also provides an overview of the DRC. Chapter two shows that justice occupies a special place in society. It represents a fundamental aspect of human beings that illustrates one's humanity. In the biblical perspective, justice is considered as a chief attribute of God. Chapter three discusses the phenomenon of poverty in the world, particularly in developing nations where people are unable to meet their basic needs. The chapter explores different causes of poverty on the African continent, as well as the crisis of underdevelopment, which to some extent is attributed to the exploitation of African nations by the Western powers. Chapter four explores poverty in relation to theological reflections. Poverty is considered as being evil. The responsibility of theologians and Christians in general is to promote a fair and just society in which the poor will be empowered in such a manner that they can contribute to the development of their community.

In Chapter five, research steers toward the role that Christian Churches could play in the areas of justice and poverty in the Democratic Republic of Congo (RDC). The Churches are challenged to promote justice and the struggle against poverty in all its forms. It is also challenged to fully play its prophetic role. In Chapter six the researcher deals with the situation of poverty in DRC and it is argued that regardless of its apparent wealth, the DRC remains one of the poorest countries in the world. The chapter explores the period of economic growth in the DRC, as well as its economic decline. Certain reasons for

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this economic decline are evoked, of which the most important are the economic policies of Zairianisation and radicalisation. In Chapter seven, the researcher makes some recommendations to both the Churches and the government, and concludes that patriotism, justice, moral values and commitments to African solidarity are pillars on which Congolese citizens should build their nation.

#### **Key Words**

Justice, Poverty, Challenge, Christian Churches, Democratic Republic of Congo, Corruption, Governance, Advocacy, Prophecy.

## **ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The ideal goal of any human being created in God's image is to favour justice and equity. Our understanding of human deprivation has moved from a static to a dynamic view of poverty. Poverty is no longer understood as a clear, quantitatively defined construct. Listening to what people who live in poverty have to say about their experiences has revealed the meaning and crushing burden of their deprivation (Narayan, Chambers, Shah and Petesch, 2000: 1). The disrespect from others and their own feelings of exclusion and powerlessness seem to be common factors, no matter where it is that poor people struggle to survive (Godinot, 2003: 1). In such a situation, the church should be a vigilant and responsible partner of the government.

If there is one community in the world in which justice is secured for the oppressed, the poor are freed from the indignities of poverty, and physical need is abolished by the voluntary sharing of resources, that community is the new Society of Jesus the Messiah (Stott 1998: 239-240). The question here is whether or not the church is able to influence the system, public opinion and government officials in order for justice to be right, equitable and respectful. No one can derive pleasure from being a victim of injustice. The majority of the problems that we currently face in society are the consequence of injustice: revolutions, wars, strikes, protests etcetera (Mbadu, 1981: 13).



### **1.1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Current poverty is in fact the result of increased injustice and the non-equitable distribution of resources. It is frequently in the name of justice that many countries became rich to the disadvantage of others whose populations descend into a situation of indescribable misery. The realities of living in poverty, alongside social institutions which often create and perpetuate the circumstances of injustice, are closely related.

The DRC is a palpable example of a country in which justice and equity are absent, and whose population is not able to benefit from the potential wealth of the natural resources that abound in its land.

If one were to conduct a socio-economic analysis of the DRC, one would realise that the country faces a multi-sectoral crisis never experienced previously. One would notice a remarkable social inequality, major poverty, meaningless wages, inaccessibility of education and health care, loss of purchasing power of the population, etc.

In view of the critical situation that confronts the DRC, it is necessary to ask the following questions:

- How did injustice and poverty take over in a country in which 95.29% of the population professes to be Christian? (Johnstone and Mandryk, 2001: 198).
- Why do Congolese people live in extreme poverty, while the country is extremely rich in its natural resources?
- What role should the Church, as a divine institution, play in poverty eradication?
- What are the theological imperatives of the church in order for the DRC to be just and prosperous?
- How could the church in the DRC be a light to guide the policy of officials regarding ethical issues?

The answers to these questions will help us to identify the real causes of poverty in the DRC and to formulate theological ethics which will help the Church within its framework of moral and ethical responsibilities in order to intelligently confront the decision makers who tend to be unaware of the immediate needs of impoverished communities.

### **1.1.2 Goals and Objectives of the Study**

Before defining the goals and the objectives of this work, it is important to point out the fact that, in our current society, injustice has become the rule rather than the exception. Economic and political officials often regard justice as an obstruction which slows down their effectiveness. The value of justice requires respect for the dignity of others. When this is neglected, it will inevitably result in inequity and poverty. For this reason, this researcher would like to show the implications of God's justice and the subsequent impact through the Church in the eradication of poverty in the DRC. The Church cannot be neutral when it comes to advocating for justice and equity.

The goal of this thesis is to investigate the role of the Church and government in the fight against injustice and the eradication of poverty, and to put at the disposal of the two institutions an instrument to work for the bringing about of justice and equity. With this intention, the following objectives have been identified:

- a. to motivate churches to play a meaningful role by supporting the development of a code of good conduct in economics and political governance, which should be used to measure the performance of the Congolese decision-makers;
- b. to suggest mechanisms by means of which churches should
- c. challenge government officials to ensure that a good portion of the expenditure of the national budget is devoted to the fight against poverty;

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- d. to direct churches to cooperate beyond denominational borders in order to gather resources that will generate the necessary income for their self-sufficiency, mission and the development of their communities;
- e. to develop appropriate strategies for the reduction of poverty, in light of the paradox represented by the abundance of resources mentioned; and
- f. to guide churches to participate in initiatives for the eradication of poverty and the resolution of conflict – one of the critical factors in the spread of HIV/AIDS – since these two problems are some of the major causes of poverty.

### **1.1.3 Assumption**

It was noted earlier that the concepts of justice and poverty are multidimensional. In this study God's justice, which is believed to be distributive, will be emphasised. This justice corresponds to legal justice but tallies better with the will of God which desires that any person created in God's image should respect the dignity of the human person in a spirit of love and sharing.

There is a new urgency to the challenge of Jesus who called persons to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and care for the sick. In terms of the current situation, we can agree with Messer that there is no lack of food in the world, but rather a lack of political will and personal compassion (Messer, 2005:1).

It is with this view of justice in mind that theological ethics can be established for the purpose of the eradication of poverty. This leads the researcher to formulate the assumption of this work as follows:

The introduction of an ethical and a distributive justice to the governing institutions of the DRC will generate an improvement in the living conditions of its people. This can become a reality, implying the love for fellow human beings, if all the decision-makers and government

officials are committed to reversing the basis of the foundations of the sins of avarice and injustice.

#### **1.1.4 Methodology**

Any academic study requires a methodology in order to reach a conclusion. In other words, research must have ways of producing and analysing data so that a theory can be tested, and then accepted or rejected. Thus, methodology is concerned with both the detailed research methods through which data is collected, and the more general philosophies upon which the collection and analysis of data are based (Haralambos and Halborn, 1995: 808).

*The difficulty in understanding just what the term ‘methodology’ means has not been helped by the fact that it is used interchangeably with ‘research methods’ and is often considered, mistakenly, to be close in meaning to ‘epistemology’, ‘approaches’, and even ‘paradigm’. Epistemology should be looked upon as an overarching philosophical term concerning the origin, nature and limits of human knowledge, and the knowledge-gathering process itself. A project’s methodology, on the other hand, is concerned with the discussion of how a particular piece of research should be understood as the critical study of research methods and their use. This term refers to the choice of research strategy taken by a particular scholar – as opposed to other, alternative research strategies, (Grix, 2001: 36).*

The primary research method employed in this dissertation is that of the qualitative study. A literature review formed the basis of this research. This method helped the researcher to acquire knowledge about the theoretical aspects of the field of study. Recent works were

consulted in order for him to be aware of current and past theories with respect to the research problem.

Both qualitative and quantitative methods are, however, used to collect relevant data. The two approaches are integrated together in order to produce a more complete picture of the social group. Data from each of the two approaches will also be utilised to check the accuracy of the conclusion reached on the basis of each method. The quantitative methods will include justice and poverty surveys using questionnaires, while the qualitative method will include indepth-structured interviews and focus discussions with the identified groups within the target population. Quantitative information will also be gathered by means of a desk review of previous studies and related information available within the study areas.

### **1.1.5 Significance of the Study**

In the DRC, as with many other developing countries, the ordinary people are usually neglected. More resources are allocated to military forces in order to keep officials in power for an inordinate period of time, regardless of the hardships with which the common people are faced.

In response to these hardships, which result in inequality, injustice and poverty, the Church will have to change its ways of thinking, challenge the government and motivate the population to conduct their lives ethically and to seize opportunities that will change their lives for the better.

It is against this background that this study strives to illustrate the paradox between the wealth of the country and the extreme poverty of the people living in it.

This study should lead to the establishment of viable strategies to assist churches in developing good governance and promoting justice and equity. It will also provide the church and policy-makers with

valuable insights into the interaction between poverty and related issues. By studying the underlying patterns of justice and poverty in the DRC, this study could provide an entry point for understanding the Church's role in this issue, which is often neglected.

This study should also lead to a more holistic understanding of community development, and will also reveal important factors that restrict the Church from participating effectively in policy and decision-making processes. Through this study, and based on local knowledge and past achievements with a view to empowering vulnerable communities to develop models of sustainable community development in the future, the researcher hopes to contribute towards enhancing the processes, means, structures and relationships between the government and the Church that are not currently functioning well.

#### **1.1.6 Definition of Terms**

*Justice:* Many intractable conflicts have been fought over the concept of “justice”, yet defining exactly what that concept entails is not as easy a task as one might think. Sometimes “justice” is defined in terms of equality – everyone should receive or possess the same amount, regardless of how hard they work or what they contribute. Other people define “justice” as equity – people should receive benefits in proportion to their contribution to producing those benefits. In other words, the harder and better you work, the more you should receive for it.

Commenting on the issue of justice, Maeise (2003: 1) argues that justice always occurs in accordance with the requirements of law. Whether these rules are grounded in human consensus or societal norms, they are supposed to ensure that all members of society receive fair treatment. The issue of justice arises in several different spheres and plays a significant role in causing, perpetuating, and addressing conflict. In most passages of the New Testament, the meaning of “justice” is determined by the Old Testament and the Jewish history of the concept,

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which suggests “justice” as the “right” conduct of God and humans, not from the viewpoint of an ideal norm of what is right, but rather from the perspective of the concrete relationship of partners with each other (Kertelge, 1990: 326). Arguing on the same issue, Goddard points out that:

*Justice is a communicable attribute of God, manifesting his holiness. The biblical words thus translated, sadaqa, sedeq, and dikaiosyne, are also rendered as “righteousness”. Used of man, justice refers to right rule, right conduct, or to teach getting his due, whether good or bad. God’s relative justice has to do with his rectitude in and of himself; by absolute justice is meant the rectitude by which he metes out rewards [remunerative justice, expressive of his love] and punishments [retributive justice, expressive of his wrath] (Goddard, 1984: 593).*

Justice means that love must always be shown, whether or not a situation of immediate need presents itself in a pressing and vivid fashion (Erickson, 1985: 298).

There are several types of justice, but Maeise (2003: 1-2) regroups them into three categories as follows:

- a) *Distributive justice* or economic justice involves giving all members of society a “fair share” of the benefits and resources that are available. The common agreement is that wealth should be distributed fairly, but disagreement also arises with regards to that which counts as a fair share. When the issues of distributive justice are inadequately addressed and the item to be distributed is highly valued, intractable conflicts frequently occur as a result.
- b) *Procedural justice* is concerned with making and implementing decisions according to fair processes that ensure “fair treatment”. In accordance with regulations, unbiased decisions

should be taken. Those who carry out the procedures should be neutral, and those directly affected by the decisions should have some voice or representation in the decision-making process. If people believe procedures to be fair, they will be more likely to accept the outcomes, even those that they do not like.

- c) *Retributive justice* appeals to the notion of “just deserts”. It is the idea that people should suffer in proportion to the harm that they have meted out to others, which yields the concept of retaliation. It is a retroactive approach that justifies punishment as a response to past injustice or wrongdoing. The central idea is that the offender has gained unfair advantage through his or her behaviour and that the punishment will set this imbalance right. This type of justice plays a key role in legal proceedings responding to violations of international law and human rights, as well as the adjudication of war crimes.
- d) *Traditional social justice*. This is another aspect of justice that is well known in most African societies. The concept comprises a moral aspect, which results in acts and precepts which encourage the human being to live justly or to be right with respect to others and to the Supreme Being. Our African legends and traditions abound with accounts whereby humankind, overcome by the problems of justice with respect to his fellow beings, resorts to the Supreme Being and ancestors for arbitration as infallible judges who know the limits of the rights of each human being.

The word “justice,” in the present time, refers to an ideal of fairness in the distribution of the goods and burdens of society. It is considered primarily as a virtue of institutions and social arrangements, as well as the fundamental moral quality of a society (Lacoste, 2005: 838).



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Commenting on justice, Sedgwick argues that justice has been the primary image of political responsibility. Justice is to give to each person what they deserve and demands more than simply responding to one's immediate neighbour. He adds that God loves everyone and, as such, justice demands that all people be treated equally. Certain minimal conditions for all people must be met in order to ensure individual dignity (Sedgwick, 1987: 91). To sum up Sedgwick's understanding of justice, one can say that it demands responsibility for the social and political order of the society in which we live.

*Poverty:* Poverty is a complex and multifaceted concept. It not only relates to economic factors such as insufficient income, lack of assets, etc., but it is also related to social, political and cultural factors, such as lack of access to education and training, poor health, lack of representation, and lack of empowerment. All these factors are interrelated, and this is why poverty is so complex. According to Wikipedia, poverty can be understood as the lack of material means, typically including the necessities of daily living such as food, clothing, and shelter (Wikipedia, 2006). Poverty, in this sense, can be defined as deprivation or lack of the essential goods and services needed for a minimum standard of well-being and life.

Poverty means that people are not able to meet their own basic needs. Poverty means being hungry and malnourished; drinking unsanitary water, having no access to even health care such as immunizations against childhood diseases, living in crowded, unsafe, inadequate or no shelter, having no shoes or shirt to wear, being illiterate. The poor are anxious and fearful, constantly struggling to survive. Poverty means breaking your back for twelve hours in the hot sugar cane field, only to go deeper in debt to the landowner, or sitting over a sewing machine for ten hours and still not being to afford three simple meals a day (Thompson, 1997: 31).

Schlabach defines poverty as an anti-life death. All that makes people human and all that expresses the image of God begins to die long before the body dies (Schlabach, 1990: 27). F. Sempangi, director of the Africa Foundation, a Christian relief and development organisation, quoted by Schlabach (1990: 27), contends that:

*poverty is not lacking of things; it is not having only one television or one car. Our poverty is a demonic force which enters human life and threatens to destroy it completely. It causes men and women, boys and girls, to be so ground into the dirt that their spirits are destroyed. It breaks all social norms down to the smallest rule of hygiene. Human life itself becomes the cheapest commodity...*

Currently, the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in its statement on poverty, defines poverty as a “human condition characterized by the sustained or chronic deprivation of resources, capabilities, choices, security, and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political, and social rights” (UN: Poverty, 2007).

*Church:* The church is the fellowship of the redeemed people, professing Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, and aiming to proclaim His resurrection until He returns. The church is universal, but is locally represented by individual congregations (Andriatsimalomanarivo, 2001: 18-19). In the context of this study, the term “church” refers to Protestant, Catholic, and Independent fellowships. To some extent, it can include other religious groups as well.

The Church is not merely a juridical or religious society founded by Jesus as an institutional means for salvation. Rather, it is the continuing historical presence in the world of God’s promise of salvation,

permanently established in the eschatological victorious death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Ackley, 1993: 157).

In his book entitled “The Becoming Church,” Adair (1977: 7-9) argues that the concept of the church should be defined and used in senses ranging from the concrete and local to the abstract and universal in order to describe the following:

a) A building for public worship

Adair points out that the word ‘church’ stems from an old German derivate of the Greek word *kyriakon*, meaning ‘The Lord’s house’. A Northern European variant, ‘*kirk*,’ also entered this language from the Old Norse and Scottish. Originally, the ‘Lord’ in question meant God rather than Jesus, although, of course early Christians would not press that distinction. He adds that the archetypal church in this sense was the temple in Jerusalem. Over time, the word has come to be applied to places of worship in any religion, for example, a Muslim mosque.

b) The clergy

As the common phrase ‘going to Church’ reveals, in some sense many people associate the clergy with being the Church. This meaning is closely related to (a) above, in the sense that the clergyperson these days is visually associated with the Lord’s house; he is seen to lead worship in it and to be largely responsible for maintaining the building. Moreover, the clergy are tangible because they can be seen and touched; they wear distinctive clothes, both in and out of the Lord’s house, which makes such recognition possible.

c) A congregation of Christians locally organised

A congregation, as viewed by Adair, is literally a body of persons assembled for religious worship. In this context, ‘church’ is a translation of a different Greek word, namely

*ecclesia*, which referred to an assembly; it is derived from the Greek verb for ‘calling out’ or ‘summoning people together.’ Behind its use in the Christian context lies in the Old Testament image of the assembly of Israelite tribes in the wilderness. On occasion, it is used in the Greek Septuagint to describe the collective body of Israel, which relates to (d) below.

- d) A religious organisation uniting a number of local congregations.

This definition is flexible enough to include sects, denominations, and communions, all of which are known as churches. In the larger churches, there is an infrastructure of groupings for congregations, such as deaneries, dioceses, and provinces.

- e) The body of the Lord’s faithful Servants

This more abstract and general meaning rests upon a holistic sense that the whole equals more than the sum of the parts. The whole is one: ‘One Lord, one faith, one baptism’. On the other hand, the question as to who belongs to this body – what in fact constitutes a Christian – is in dispute. While not nearly as acrimonious as it used to be, the disagreement amongst the churches about the nature of the church is still real and fundamental. In other words, the relations between churches in their present organisational forms are still problematic. Moreover, from a theological point of view, this concept of the church as a whole, spanning space and time, has to be related to the even more general and abstract notion of the kingdom of God as a forthcoming reality which is, in some sense, already present.

In the Augsburg Confession (1530), as quoted by Avis (1981: 25), Melancthon views the Church as being the assembly of saints in which the gospel is taught purely and the sacraments are rightly administered.

Calvin's thoughts on the Church are similar to those of Melancthon. Quoting Calvin, Avis (1981: 32) observes that the Church, the word and ministry are inseparable in Calvin's mind, as seen in his comments on 1 Timothy 3: 15:

*The Church is the pillar of the truth because by its ministry the truth is preserved and spread. God does not himself come down from heaven to us, nor does he daily send angelic messengers to publish his truth, but he uses the labours of pastors whom he has ordained for this purpose. Or, to put it in a more homely way: is not the Church the mother of all believers because she brings them to new birth by the word of God, educates and nourishes them all their life, strengthens them, and finally leads them to complete perfections? The Church is called the pillar of the truth for the same reason, for the office of administering doctrine which God has put in her hands is the only means for preserving the truth, that it may not pass from the memory of men.*

## **1.2 Research Approach**

Research methods, as observed by Blaikie, can be viewed as the 'techniques or procedures used to collate and analyze data.' The methods chosen for a research project are inextricably linked to the research questions posed and the sources of data collected (Grix, 2001: 29).

The main research approach selected for this dissertation is the qualitative method. As one can observe, qualitative research is not based on a particular, unified and methodological concept. Various theoretical approaches and their methods characterise discussions and research practice. According to Grix (2001: 29), subjective viewpoints are the starting point, the course of interactions is the second point, while seeking to reconstruct the structures of the social field, whereas the

latent meaning of practices is the third point. In qualitative research, we ought to analyse concrete cases in their temporal and local particularity, beginning with people's expressions and activities in their local context.

As Creswell (1994: 6) points out, the qualitative approach holds that the researcher should remain distant and independent of that being researched. One of the chief reasons for conducting a qualitative study here is its exploratory nature, since not much has been written about the topic or population being studied, and the researcher seeks to listen to informants and build a picture based on their ideas (Creswell, 1994: 21).

### **1.2.1 Case Study**

This section is designed to examine the questions of equity and poverty in the DRC. The contextual focus of the research is a contemporary examination by the researcher of the economic policies, and an in-depth analysis of the causes of poverty and injustice in the Congo since 1960, the year of independence. Quoted by Creswell, Merriam comments that a case study explores a single entity or phenomenon bounded by time and activity, and collects detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time (Creswell, 1994: 12).

The intention of this research is not to write a history of the period referred to but rather an attempt to analyse the strategies that churches, government, and NGOs could use to fight poverty and injustice.

### **1.2.2 Literature Review**

For the purposes of general orientation and background, a study will be made of relevant literature on justice and poverty, with the emphasis being placed largely on the struggle against injustice and inequality. The use of a literature review has been helpful in the carrying out of this research. As Creswell (1994: 21) indicates:

*The literature in a research study accomplishes several purposes. (a) It shares with the reader the results of other studies that are closely related to the study being reported... (b) It relates a study to the larger dialogue in the literature about the topic, filling in gaps and extending prior studies (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). (c) It provides a framework for establishing the importance of the study, as well as a benchmark for comparing the results of the study with others' findings.*

Books, journals and other technical tools such as the CD-ROM and the Internet will be of great help in this research.

### **1.2.3 Questionnaire**

In order to obtain information regarding justice and poverty in the DRC, the type of research to be undertaken will be largely qualitative, as mentioned earlier. Such a method is deemed necessary for the establishment of the nature of the contradiction between God's justice and poverty, both of which are issues pertaining to this study. The qualitative data will then be utilised as a basis for the questionnaire, which will contain questions of a qualitative nature.

### **1.2.4 Interview**

Interviewing is a basic mode of inquiry. The purpose of interviewing is not to obtain answers to questions, to test hypotheses, or to evaluate how the term is normally used. The root of in-depth interviewing is to understand the experiences of other people, and the meaning they make of that experience.

*Interviewing is a commonly used method of collecting information from people. In many walks of life we collect information through different forms of interaction with others. Any person-to-person interaction between two or more*

*individuals with a specific purpose in mind is called an interview. On the other hand interviewing can be very flexible, when the interviewer has the freedom to formulate questions...mind around the issue being investigated; and on the other hand, it can be inflexible, when the investigator has to keep strictly to the questions decided beforehand (Kumar, 2005: 123).*

The interviewer's task is to place the experience of the participants in context by asking them to disclose as much as possible about themselves in terms of the topic under discussion.

Interviews may be used in exploratory work or in descriptive studies. It is generally thought that they produce much richer information than postal questionnaires. Interviews vary with regard to the type of questions asked and the dominance of the interviewer or interviewee. Any interviews may be divided into three categories as follows:

a) Structured interviews

The researcher is in control of the content of the dialogue in a structured interview. Questions are prepared in advance, and the same wording and order of questions are used for each subject. The researcher should not adapt or elaborate on the questions being asked; no clarification may be given to the subjects who are told to answer questions in whichever way they interpret them. However, it is usual to allow the researcher to repeat a question if necessary. An interview schedule may be employed to assist the interviewer. The main advantage of structured interviews is that the results are easier to analyse than unstructured ones, which may be at the cost of overlooking valuable information because the interviewer was not in a position to ask further questions that may have revealed important facts or issues.

b) Unstructured interviews



In this situation, the interviewee is in control, and is encouraged to elaborate and expand on the opinions and feelings expressed. Such interviews are valuable in exploratory studies or when developing research instruments. The format may be unstructured when the interviewer has the freedom to explore any topic as it arises. However, most interviewers make use of an interview guide with which they work. Interviews may be focused: that is, although the researcher has the freedom to conduct each interview as it develops, there is a tendency to concentrate on specific topics. Unfortunately, there is the risk that all the interviews will turn out differently, and this makes it difficult to code and process the information obtained. Some investigators argue that this is a strength: their objective is to better understand the subject by trying to become immersed in the views of individual respondents. Many anthropological studies have been carried out on this premise.

c) Semi-structured interviews

As the name suggests, these interviews are a mixture of the two types of interviews outlined above. Generally, the researcher has a list of specific questions to be asked, but is free to pursue points of interest that may arise (Campling, 1996: 58-59).

### **1.3 Delimitations and Limitations of the Study**

Quoted by Creswell, Castetter and Heisler (Creswell, 1994: 110) argue that delimitation and limitation represent another parameter of a research study that helps to establish the boundaries, exceptions, reservations, and qualifications inherent in every study.

This study will confine itself to interviewing, observing, and analysing the situation of justice and poverty in the DRC. Government officials in the capital city of Kinshasa, church leaders and the common

people, as well as some NGOs and international organisations dealing with justice and poverty eradication, will be targeted.

The researcher has conducted research in and around Kinshasa as a case study. Therefore, all the field research will be limited to the area of Kinshasa.

The study will not be generalised to all areas of justice and poverty. The focus will fall on justice that will enable people to benefit from the resources of the country and to fight against injustice and poverty.

## 1.4 Democratic Republic of the Congo

Historical Background (Background Note: DRC, 2006)



### **1.4.1 Geography**

The DRC includes the greater part of the Congo River basin, which covers an area of 1 million square kilometres (400,000 sq. mi.). The country's only outlet to the Atlantic Ocean is a narrow strip of land on the north bank of the Congo River.

The vast, low-lying central area is a basin-shaped plateau sloping toward the west and covered by tropical rainforest. This area is surrounded by mountainous terraces in the west, plateaus merging into savannas in the southwest, and dense grasslands extending beyond the Congo River in the north. High mountains are to be found in the extreme eastern region.

The DRC lies on the Equator, with one-third of the country to the north and two-thirds to the south. The climate is hot and humid in the river basin and cool and dry in the southern highlands. South of the Equator, the rainy season lasts from October to May, and north of the Equator from April to November. Along the Equator, rainfall is fairly regular throughout the year. During the wet season, thunderstorms are often violent, but seldom last longer than a few hours. The average rainfall for the entire country is about 107 centimetres (42 in.) per annum.

*Location of the DRC:* Central Africa.

*Bordering nations:* Angola, Burundi, Central Africa Republic, Republic of Congo, Sudan, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

*Area:* 2, 345, 000 sq. km (905, 063 sq. mi., about the size of the U.S. east of Mississippi).

*Cities:* Capital: Kinshasa (pop. 6.5 million). Regional capitals: Bandundu, Bukavu, Goma, Kananga, Kindu, Kisangani, Lubumbashi, Matadi, Mbandaka, and Mbuji-Mayi.

### **1.4.2 People**

The population of the DRC was estimated at 58 million in 2004. As many as 250 ethnic groups have been identified and named. Some of the larger groupings of tribes are the Kongo, Lunda, and Anamongo. Although 700 local languages and dialects are spoken, the linguistic variety is bridged both by the use of French and the intermediary languages of Kikongo, Tshiluba, Swahili, and Lingala.

About 50% of the Congolese population is Roman Catholic. Most of the non-Catholics adhere to Protestant churches, traditional religions, or cults. Traditional religions include concepts such as monotheism, animism, spirit and ancestor worship, witchcraft and sorcery, and vary widely among ethnic groups, while none are formalised.

The syncretic sects often merge Christianity with traditional beliefs and rituals. The most popular of these sects, Kimbanguism, was viewed as a threat to the colonial regime and was banned by the Belgians. Kimbanguism, officially “the Church of Christ on Earth by the prophet Simon Kimbangu”, now claims approximately 3 million members, primarily among the Bakongo tribe of Bas-Congo and Kinshasa, and it was the first independent African Church admitted to the World Council of Churches in 1969.

Before independence, education was largely in the hands of religious groups. The primary school system was well developed at the time of independence. However, the secondary school system was limited, and higher education was almost non-existent in most regions of the country. The principal objective of this system was to train low-level administrators and clerks. Since independence, efforts have been made to increase access to education, while secondary and higher education have been made available to many more Congolese.

According to estimates made in 2000, 41.7% of the population had received no schooling, 42.2% had benefited from primary schooling, 15.4% had received secondary schooling, and 0.7% had enjoyed a

university education. At all levels of education, males greatly outnumber females. The largest state-run universities are the University of Kinshasa, the University of Lubumbashi, and the University of Kisangani.

The elite continue to send their children abroad to be educated, primarily in Western Europe. In 2004 literacy was estimated to be 65% in French or a local language. The mortality rate, as estimated in 2004, was 94.69/1000 live births, and life expectancy was 49 years.

### **1.4.3 Government**

*Type:* Republic; highly centralised with executive powers lying with the president. The DRC obtained its independence from Belgium on June 30, 1960.

*Constitution :* Established on June 24, 1967; amended in August 1974; revised on February 15, 1978; amended in April 1990; transitional constitution promulgated in April 1994; Constitutional Act promulgated in May 1997; draft constitution proposed but not finalised in March 1998; transitional constitution adopted on April 2, 2003. A new constitution was passed by the transitional parliament in May 2005. The DRC held a constitutional referendum on December 18-19, 2005. The official results indicated that 84% of the votes approved the constitution. The new constitution was promulgated on February 18, 2006.

### **1.4.4 Economy**

The DRC possesses the third largest land area in Africa after Sudan and Algeria. It is rich in natural and human resources, including the second largest rain forest in the world, fertile soils, ample rainfall, as well as considerable and varied mineral deposits.

Sparsely populated in relation to its area, the DRC is home to a vast potential in terms of natural resources and mineral wealth. Nevertheless,

it is one of the poorest countries in the world with a per capita annual income of approximately US \$ 98 as of 2003. This is the result of several years of mismanagement, corruption, and war.

In 2001, the Government of the DRC, under Joseph Kabila, undertook a series of economic reforms to reverse this steep decline. Reforms were monitored by the IMF and included the liberalisation of the petroleum price, exchange rates, and the adoption of disciplined fiscal and monetary policies.

The reform programme reduced inflation from over 500% per year in 2000 to only 7% as an annual rate in 2003. In June 2002, the World Bank and IMF approved new credit for the DRC for the first time in over a decade.

Bilateral donors, whose assistance has been almost entirely dedicated to humanitarian interventions in recent years, are also beginning to fund development projects in the DRC. In October 2003, the World Bank launched a multi-sectoral reconstruction and development plan. The Paris Club also granted the DRC the status of being a “Highly Indebted Poor Country” in July 2003. This will help alleviate the DRC’s external sovereign debt burden, which should potentially set it free for economic development.

Agriculture is the mainstay of the Congolese economy, accounting for 56.3 % of the GDP in 2002. The main cash crops include coffee, palm oil, rubber, cotton, sugar, tea, and cocoa. Food crops include cassava, banana plantains, maize, groundnuts, and rice. Industry, especially the mining sector, is underdeveloped in terms of its potential in the DRC. In 2002, industry accounted for only 18.8% of the GDP, with only 3.9 % being attributed to manufacturing. Services accounted for 24.9 % of the GDP.

The DRC was the world’s fourth-largest producer of industrial diamonds during the 1980s, after South Africa, Zambia and the USSR, and diamonds continue to dominate its exports, accounting for over half

of them (US \$ 642 million). In 2003, the DRC's main copper and cobalt interests were dominated by Gecamines, the state-owned mining giant. The production of Gecamines has been severely affected by corruption, civil unrest, world market trends, and a failure to reinvest.

For decades, corruption and misguided policies have created a dual economy in the DRC. Individuals and businesses in the formal sector have operated with high costs under arbitrarily enforced laws. Consequently, the informal sector now dominates the economy. In 2002, with the population of the DRC estimated at 56 million, only 230,000 Congolese working in private enterprises in the formal sector were enrolled in the social security system. Approximately 600,000 Congolese were employed by the government.

During recent years, the Congolese Government approved a new investment code under Law No 004/2002 of February 21, 2002, and a new mining code under Law No 007/2002 of July 11, 2002. It also established a new commercial court. The goal of these initiatives is to attract investment by promising fair and transparent treatment to private businesses. The World Bank also supports efforts to restructure the DRC's large parastatal sector, including Gecamines, and to rehabilitate the DRC's neglected infrastructure, including the Inga Dam hydroelectric system (Background Note: DRC, 2006).

Currently, the DRC can be seen to have gone through a democratic process. A new constitution was approved in December 2005, a new president was elected in December 2006, and a Prime Minister has been appointed. With regard to the new constitution, one of the duties of the Prime Minister is to form the government, which was carried out in February 2007.

The DRC is currently experiencing a culture of democracy. With this new development, there is more hope for a better life for the Congolese people.

## **1.5 Outline of the Proposed Study**

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Each chapter builds on the previous one and develops into the next. Chapter one will serve as an introduction to the research to be undertaken. It is basically a proposal that entails the nature of the study, the research approaches, the delimitations of the study, a background to the DRC, and an overview of the country to be studied. This chapter will close with an outline of the proposed study.

In chapter two, an overview of the concept of justice will be done. Certain conceptual problems will be analysed and discussed to comprehend how the concept will fit to the Congolese case. In this chapter, the concept in both the New and Old Testaments will be examined, in the light of the challenge for the Church.

Chapter three will concentrate on the conceptual problems of poverty. An in-depth analysis of the poverty issue and its causes will be conducted. The role played by international organisations, such as the WTO, IMF, WB, with regards to the eradication of poverty in developing countries, especially in the DRC, will be questioned while an analysis of the impact of industrialisation and globalisation on developing countries will be carried out.

Chapter four will discuss the theological concept of poverty. The aim of this discussion will be to develop theological ethics that can be applied by the Church in its struggle against poverty. The conclusion will follow. The main findings of this dissertation will be summarised, and recommendations will be presented to the church and government in the DRC with regards to the fight against injustice and the eradication of poverty.

In chapter five, the emphasis will be placed on the role of the Church in the eradication of poverty. It will explore ways in which the Church, government and NGOs can work together for the eradication of poverty.



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Some strategies that can be used by both church and government to eradicate poverty in the DRC will also be suggested.

Chapter six reports on a study of poverty in the DRC. The focus will fall on an analysis of economic policies since 1960, the period during which the economy of the country was prosperous, and subsequently, the researcher will try to examine the causes for the declining economic situation that led people to live in extreme poverty.

## GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE CONCEPT OF JUSTICE

### 2.1 Introduction

Justice is a concept which has particularly flourished during the last thirty years of the twentieth century as well as this century. As an intellectual movement in this modern period, the concept was spearheaded by John Rawls's famous book, *Theory of Justice*, and augmented by hundreds of authors who discussed the issue with close and acute tenacity (O'Neill, 2000: 1).

All moral people generally care about justice. When its apparent absence touches people directly or indirectly, they find themselves eager for justice. As Kass remarks (1996: 44), even the self-proclaimed moral relativists became outraged by the bombing of the World Trade Center and the Federal Building in Oklahoma City. He adds that justice is not cared about nor understood by everyone in the same manner. While most people probably regard both the unfair person and the lawbreaker as being unjust, some emphasize justice as being fairness or equality, and yet others place the focus on it as being law-abiding. While some focus on the just distribution of communal goods and burdens, others focus on just dealings in private exchanges in terms of receiving a fair wage that honours an agreement, or as just punishment for misdeeds, both civil and criminal.

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The concept of ‘justice’ is frequently symbolized in a particular way – as *justicia*, blindfolded, with a scale in one hand and a sword in the other. The blindfold symbolizes impartiality, which is her principal feature; the scales represent the idea of balanced judgment and equal considerations guaranteeing ‘to each his/her own’; the sword underscores the conclusiveness and authority of her judgment. Justice is the highest political-moral virtue by which legal and social conditions as a whole – the basic structure of society – can be measured (Forst, 2002: xi).

The struggle for justice has become so ideological and conflictual in current times that its neglect will cause still greater damage to and difficulties in the lives of people and their community. As Gardner (1995: 1) comments:

*Justice is the fundamental moral requirement of human life in community. Historically in Western culture, it has been a central concern both of law and of religion. Reflection on justice is a perennial theme not only in the classical political thought of Greece and Rome but also in the Biblical understanding of the righteousness and sovereignty of God. Although justice has both a legal and a transcendent dimension in each of these traditions, its transcendent character achieves its fullest expression in the ethical monotheism of the Hebrew prophets of the sixth to the eighth century B.C.*

Justice holds a special place in society because, in this regard, men are called ‘good’, and the duties that arise from it take precedence over those arising from other virtues. Justice is necessary for economic activity, as well as the preservation of the society in which we live. It is the need for justice that governs the choice of rulers and laws (Langhan, 1977: 156).

It is most important to be reminded that “justice” is a very complex concept with different meanings, and that it can be understood in

different ways. Justice is not a straightforward or singular concept. Like love, justice is a generic term embracing a variety of meanings and applications. This renders it very difficult to reduce justice to a simple, all-encompassing definition (Marshall, 2006: 27). Even though this study will explore the concept in some, but not all, of its meanings, the focus will be on biblical or God's justice, which the researcher believes is related to the Church as God's agency. In fact, biblical justice will be the focus of this study, although this does not mean that other aspects of justice will not be taken into account. Certain other aspects will also be explored but will not be examined in great detail.

The argument that each citizen's interests must be equally taken into account is central to Rawls' theory of justice. His guiding idea is that the principles of justice for the basic structure of society are the objects of agreement (Rawls, 1972: 11). Rawls further argues that:

*They are principles that free and rational persons concerned to further their own interests would accept in an initial position of equality as defining the fundamental terms of their association. These principles are to regulate all further agreements; they specify the kind of social corporation that can be entered into and the form of government that can be established. This way of regarding the principles of justice I shall call justice as fairness...those who engage in social corporation choose together, in one joint act, the principles which are to assign basic rights and duties and to determine the division of social benefits. Men [sic women] are to decide in advance how they are to regulate their claims against one another and what is to be the foundation charter of their society.*

The same concern was expressed in a speech by Rowan Williams (2006: 1), when he stated that:

*A just society is one in which people trust when power is not used in private interest. And when people in ordinary relationships will regard somebody as 'just' or 'fair', I think, that's part of what we mean when I said 'they are not undermining my interests by promoting theirs'. Crises of justice are therefore never simply about a penal policy vacuum, never simply about prison systems or sentencing policy. Crises about justice are crises about power.*

A just society is one that shows concern for the well-being of its people, and in which power is not used to abuse the rights of those whom one is called upon to lead. It is a society in which love is shown to one another. In Rawls's view, a just society is one which exemplifies the founding principles that people would wish to adopt (Brettschneider, 2001: 112).

## **2.2 Definitions**

The concept of "justice" is a most difficult one to define. It is a very polyvalent concept in its semantics. It embodies biblical, theological, philosophical, juridical, social, political, ethical, religious and secular meanings. It is an analogous concept, neither unambiguous nor ambiguous, which expresses a type of personal or social behaviour, either in the microstructure or the macrostructure (Fucek, 1994: 560). In the introduction to her book, *Six Theories of Justice*, Karen Lebacqz (1986: 9) states that:

*Justice is thus a bit of the proverbial elephant examined by blindfolded explorers. Each feels a different part – the foot, the ears, the tusks – and consequently each describes the beast differently – gnarled and tough, thin and supple, smooth and hard. The elephant itself – justice – is not encompassed by any of*

*the individual descriptions. At times they seem incompatible. And yet, each contributes something to its definition.*

“Justice is that condition and is thus a fundamental need, just as the need for food is fundamental for biological survival” (Tolman, 2006: 23). Marshall (2006: 27) confirms the complexity of the concept when he asserts: “We all know that justice is important, we all feel obligated toward the demands of justice, we all sense the primordial pull of justice. But we cannot say exactly what justice is, or how best to define it.” According to Rawls (1972: 7), justice is the basic structure of society in which the major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of advantages from social cooperation.

Discussing Aristotle’s view of justice, Gardner (1995: 24-25) argues that:

*For Aristotle justice refers, first of all, to the moral state of the agent. Justice means “the moral state which makes people capable of doing what is just, and which make them just in action and in intention.” As such, justice is contrasted with injustice, that is, with that moral state which makes people unjust in action and intention. Justice is basically what the just person does; nevertheless, Aristotle observes that...a just person, acting out of passion, may commit an unjust act such as adultery or theft without having any defect of moral purpose.*

According to Gardner, in order to comprehend the full meaning of justice as a moral state, as viewed by Aristotle, one does not only have to distinguish between just and unjust persons, but also between persons and their actions. Mott (1994: 81) discusses the aspect of justice which stresses fairness when he writes that:

*Justice is to be carried out without seeing particular people. It is to be carried out without giving special personal favors. It is to be rendered with impartiality. Biblical justice may seem to be*

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*contrary to the very nature of justice with its partiality to the poor and disadvantaged. Biblical justice is especially difficult to understand for those who have grown up in a liberal culture. The liberal conception of justice stresses that everyone is to be treated in the same way.*

According to Mott, there are two views of justice. One is the liberal view, which advocates the separation of one individual from another in order to avoid any harm to either. In this case, justice will play the role of offering guidelines for the freedom of one individual vis-à-vis another, while the other view is the biblical one. Mott does not regard this as being in opposition to fairness. However, he recognises that this view emphasises the responsibility of caring for one another in that the strongest should care for the weakest, and the rich should share their wealth with the poor.

Liberalism deals abstractly with people as human beings. In this sense, basic decisions are made in terms of laws rather than persons. This approach however has its weaknesses. The main weakness is the unusual difficulty it poses for affording recognition to special needs. However, its great strength is in impartially providing civil rights to everyone. How does the recognition of special needs relate to the impartial character of justice? (Mott, 1994: 82) In order to answer this crucial and challenging question, Mott points out that:

*This question is crucial for the direction of politics. If justice by its impartiality cannot take into consideration some people's lack of basic benefits of life in society, such as food, shelter, work and health, then the role of government on behalf of the needy would be rightly vastly restricted. It would justly do little beyond preventing the strong from taking advantage of the weak in acts that are intrinsically antisocial and wrong, such as robbery, fraud, or physical violence. To recognize a right to food, for example, forces the government to be partial (Mott, 1994: 82).*

This is not to say that everybody should enjoy the same standard of living. The issue here is that each person should be able to obtain whatever will help him/her to sustain himself or herself as well as fulfill his or her basic needs. However, what constitutes basic needs for one may not be the same for the other.

Biblical justice cannot be understood and defined as being either impartial or partial, since all theories of justice are both. The premise of biblical justice is that the impartial treatment of all members of the community requires very special attention to be paid to the groups in society that are most needy. If one considers the limits of what is due to the poor, such justice is partial to the poor (Mott, 1994: 82). This can be seen in the Bible in Deut. 17-18, when it is said that God is not partial and takes no bribes. He is the one who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves strangers, providing them with food and clothing. Mott confirms that these groups are favourably singled out with regard to justice in this passage and throughout the Bible (Mott, 1994: 84).

Advocating biblical justice, Mott (1994: 81-82) adds that:

*The biblical sense of partiality in justice, however, is not a weird view, one that is contrary to reason or general human experience. Its insistence on special treatment of the poor in justice and law was shared throughout the ancient Near East. Even in western Mediterranean cultures, which stressed to a greater degree of reciprocity among citizens, to the point of neglecting the mass of slaves, the emperor as head of the community had a special concern for the welfare of the weak—the elderly women, and children. Most people would not have considered a society just if it treated a blind person, for instance, no differently from anyone else.*



Equally, Beisner (1994: 58) views justice in two ways. The first is the impartial aspect of justice. This deals with that which is deserved, in conformity with fixed and definable standards. The second focuses on love, inclusion in the community, and meeting people's needs. These two views are consistent and complementary values that should be expressed by actions, both inside and outside the church. In order to clarify this, Beisner (1994: 58) comments that:

*The first view calls for impartiality in civil arrangements, exemplified by impartial application of rules to rich and poor alike; the second calls for "conditions such that each person is able to participate in society in a way compatible with human dignity," and it denies that what it calls "absolute poverty" fills those conditions. But if historical reality is that some people live in "absolute poverty", not because others oppress them but because they think and behave in economically unproductive ways, providing "minimal food and housing, basic education, health care, and employment," just participation in the community will require partiality in their favor.*

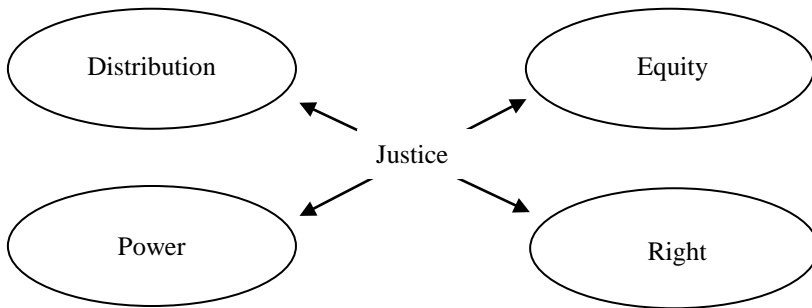
Beisner believes that a human being is an agent of change, regardless of the situation in which he/she may find him/herself, and as such, rules should be equally applied to all people. Furthermore, he argues that each person should have the capacity to participate in society with respect and dignity. This means that each person should think positively and develop his/her environment in such a manner that no-one need rely upon others for his / her basic needs to be met. Thus, according to Beisner, poverty or suffering exists because people think negatively. One may not, however, fully agree with this opinion. Suffering or poverty may also result from oppression or injustice. An unjust government will keep people in poverty and oppress them, even though they are thinking positively. Such a situation often occurs in countries with dictatorial regimes.

Justice is considered to be a fundamental aspect of being human. It essentially illustrates our humanity, without which our distinctly human capacities cannot be exercised. This is not to say that our sense of humanity would disappear if there were no justice (Tolman, 2006: 13). Tolman adds that “Justice is above all being fair in our dealings with others as well as with ourselves. It is unquestionably a moral idea...to that which makes us human.” (2006: 22). Winfield links the concept of justice to truth. According to him, the validation of the concept of justice relies upon the quest for truth. He suggests that the search for justice may have practices as its ultimate concern and that this search will remain blind unless it addresses the theoretical issue of understanding what justice is (Winfield, 1988: 1). In his argument concerning the concept of justice, Winfield (1988: 1) adds that:

*Justice consists in performing those actions and erecting those institutions that are valid, reasons are called for to certify them as just rather than merely operative practice, just as reasons are required to certify the true of knowledge.*

Winfield does not view justice as an isolated concept which can be understood on its own. Rather, it is a concept that entails dependency instead of autonomy. Its dependency lies in reason and truth. Even though justice may depend upon reason for its validation, the quest for its dependency upon the will for its realization suggests that the conformity of reason and will, truth and justice, or theory and practice, is in principle problematic (1988: 3).

In terms of the foregoing debate on the definition for the concept of justice, Marshall (2006: 37) views the concept as involving four key elements described as follows:



*Distribution:* justice entails the appropriate distribution of social beliefs, penalties and contending parties. Justice dictates that people obtain their fair share of society's goods and rewards (social justice), and that they are not subjected to punishment or penalties unless they are morally deserving (criminal justice).

*Power:* justice involves the exercise of legitimate power, whether to arbitrate between conflicting claims to implement social benefits, to enforce legal obligations, or to impose suitable sanctions. Injustice occurs when power is misused, so as to deny or rob people of what is rightfully due to them.

*Equity:* justice requires fairness and balance. Similar should be treated as similar and disputes should be adjudicated even-handedly, without regard to irrelevant, secondary considerations that will arbitrarily disadvantage one party.

*Rights:* justice has to do with honouring the rights of people, especially in conflict situations. A right is when someone has a legitimate moral or legal claim on some good, which others have a duty to respect or uphold. Justice gives moral legitimacy to such elements that belong to the being of God.

In terms of its philosophical aspects, Forst (2002: 1) argues that the question of justice has been at the core of political philosophy since Plato's *Republic*. It is an old but still relevant question that has to be answered anew each time. Rawls (1972: 3) views the concept of justice as the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is of systems of thought, while Mott (1994: 87) regards it as the rectification of gross social inequalities of the disadvantaged. According to Mott, justice is not just a mitigation of suffering in oppression, but rather, deliverance.

Commenting on the meaning of the concept in terms of its Greek background, Poter (2005: 838) writes: "In Greece during the Homeric era, the word usually translated by 'justice,' *dike*, referred to an eternal order of right relations that structured the natural and social worlds." He adds that in both *Republic* and the *Laws*, Plato identifies justice as one of four qualities that comprise moral goodness.

Quoted by Poter (2005: 838), Aristotle asserts that justice comprises the practice of any virtue, insofar as the act in question affects another person. He adds that any vicious action that harms another can be seen as a form of injustice. In Aristotle's view, the concept of justice as fairness is compatible with a strict social hierarchy, because he views people as being naturally unequal.

As one can see from this discussion, justice, in a philosophical sense, deals a great deal with the relationship between people or between them and the institution or society to which they are affiliated. As mentioned earlier, these relationships remain on a moral level.

Another concept that is also very important to this study is biblical justice. Like the philosophical concept of justice, the biblical concept does not have a straightforward definition. As Donahue (1997: 68-69) comments:

*The centrality as well as the richness of the biblical statements of justice is the very reason why it is difficult to give a 'biblical definition' of justice which, in the Bible is a protean and many-*

*faceted term. Justice is used in the legal codes to describe ordinances which regulate communal life (e.g., Ex. 21: 1-23:10) and which describe restitution for injury done to person and property, as well as for cultic relations. The Hebrew terms for justice are applied to a wide variety of things. Scales or weights are called just when they do what a path or way should do – lead to a goal.*

According to Donahue, the biblical concept of justice can be interpreted as fidelity to the demands of relationships. He views this in contrast to modern individualism because the Israelites belonged to a world in which life was lived in unity with others in a social context, either by the bonds of family or by the covenantal relationship. Equally, Bacote (2005: 415) disregards the concept of justice according to modern individualism when he says that:

*The biblical theme of justice provides a standard and practice for the theological interpretation of Scripture. It exhibits a contrast to modern, post-Enlightenment notions of justice, which focus on the power and freedom of autonomous subjects. It also contrasts with conceptions under the umbrella of postmodernity that consider justice a matter of freedom from tyranny of the majority, or privilege given to the perspectives of the marginalised. Whether focused on the liberty of individual rational thinkers or various oppressed constituencies, conceptions in modernity and post- modernity both contain primary commitments to the human subject.*

Bacote (2005: 415) adds that “to walk in the way, in the straight and right path, is to practice justice and righteousness in the establishment of law, the proper execution of justice and institution of social equity for...the poor and the widow”. According to Polan (1996: 510), justice is part of the moral fibre of a society. He alludes to the fact that in the

Bible, the covenantal relationship that people have with God forms the basis of the responsibility of justice that they have towards each other. He views justice as the mirror of divine justice. Commenting on this same issue, Tooley (2000: 757) argues that justice, in a philosophical sense, is understood as fairness, correct treatment or equitable distribution of resources, while in the Bible, the concept is more that of a simple distribution of goods. Tolley (2000: 757) continues, writing that:

*The Bible speaks of justice as a chief attribute of God... From the time of the wilderness wanderings the Hebrew people were given ethical instructions about their treatment of widows, orphans, and strangers, the practice of justice has been understood as the mission of those who follow Yahweh.*

The English word 'justice' is equated with two Hebrew words, *sedāqa* and *mīspat*. Both are translated as "righteousness" and "justice." The Hebrew word *sedāqa* refers to ethical and moral standards or equality of people before the law. At the same time, *mīspat* refers to law; the process of deciding on a civil case or religious government, execution of a judgment or, again, the rights of an individual under civil or religious law. Furthermore, these Hebrew words are identified in Greek by the words *dike* and *dikaioσύne*, which can be translated as "judgment" and "righteousness". These words are no longer associated with justice. However, with reference to oppression or injustice, their importance to both the Old and New Testament's concept of justice is clear (Tooley, 2000: 757).

In concluding with regards to the meanings of the concept of justice, one can perceive from the above discussion that the concept of justice is rooted in God's perfect character, and contained in it is something that God demands of those who believe in Him. This biblical concept of justice was understood and summarised by Beisner (1994: 64) as impartially rendering to everyone his or her due in proper proportion, according to the norms of God's moral law. This definition has revealed

the main criteria of justice, namely: impartiality, rendering what is due, proportionally and normatively (which refers to conformity to a norm).

### **2.3 Biblical Background of the Concept**

Malchow (1996: 1) observes that the origins of Israel's concern for social justice lay in the Near Eastern treatment of this issue. Later on, however, the concern stemmed from Israel's own foundational experience in the Exodus. Malchow (1996: 1) further asserts that:

*Most interpreters are agreed today that Israel received its concern for social justice from the Near Eastern cultures surrounding it. In fact, protection of the poor, widows, and fatherless children was a common policy in the Near East. In Mesopotamia there are frequent references to this concern as earlier than the Sumerian time (ca 2850-2360 B.C.E.).*

Israel understood what social justice stood for, and what injustice meant. She had been born in the midst of the unjust society of Egypt, and had experienced oppression and hopelessness. When reading the Book of Exodus, one can see how the Israelites endured suffering. The Book of Exodus states that Egyptians "set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh store-cities, Pithom and Ramses... and made their lives bitter with hard service in mortar and brick, and in all manner of service in the field..." (Exodus 1: 11, 13-14). ASV.

Therefore, it was through Israel's hardships and injustice that it drew its re-sources for meeting them from Near Eastern thoughts on the subject. The concept of social justice existed long before the existence of Israel, and began with the Exodus event at the very beginning of Israel's history (Malchow, 1996: 6). Fucek (1994: 561-562) agrees with the concept of justice for Israelites regarding this profane aspect when he states that:

*The origin and the model of the concept of justice in Israel are profane. Israel in the nomadic period shared the same concept as the other peoples of the ancient Middle East: the king's activity in administering justice with special regard to the poor and the oppressed was to protect them (Hammurabi). The king must be just, protecting the needy... Those, humanly speaking having no hope, throw themselves on the goodwill of their king.*

Fucek adds that it was as a result of revelation that this profane concept of justice became a religious one, and that the just king was the God of Israel (1994: 562). In theocratic society, Yahweh is the just king on whom the covenant depends, and as such, Israel was called upon to be just, perfect and holy, in order to imitate Yahweh (1994: 561).

“To the Hebraic mindset, the justice and righteousness of God is that which ‘seeks concretely to express His mercy and to accomplish His salvation’, not an abstraction that is at odds with an equally abstract mercy” (Riplay, 2001: 95).

As stated earlier, the biblical tradition of “justice” is a complex and multifaceted reality that relates to every dimension of human experience and implies different applications.

Elaborating on the Christian's attitude to justice, as described in the Bible, Marshall (2006: 25) argues that:

*Christians regard the Bible as a uniquely important source of guidance on matters of belief and practice. What the Bible has to say about justice, therefore, ought to be of a great significance for shaping Christian thought and action on the subject today. The Bible also has had a profound impact on the development of Western culture in general, so that exploring biblical perspectives on justice can help illuminate some of the convictions and values that have helped shape Western political and juridical thought in general...The Christian tradition has important and distinctive insights into the meaning of justice that*



*are still worth listening to. Every religious tradition has something valuable to offer to the unending quest for better justice in the accumulation of centuries of faith, reflection and experience preserved for us in the ancient biblical text.*

According to Kass (1996: 45), “the question of justice first enters the world with the anger of Cain, the first human being born of woman. This association indicates the unwholesome context of its birth”. He proceeds to assert that:

*The biblical rules of justice and procedures for executing it are enunciated as the Mosaic law, presented in the book of Exodus and rehearsed in Deuteronomy. Later, the prophets exhort and harangue the wayward people and their leaders, raising the demands for righteousness in elevated and inspiring terms. But the problems of justice, addressed by the Mosaic law, existed well before the law was given. Some of these problems are made highly visible in the stories of Genesis. Indeed, one might say that Genesis offers some elementary lessons about justice and in the process prepare us to appreciate the necessity and the wisdom of the law that comes later. But though justice is a lofty notion, the ABCs of justice shown in Genesis are rather mixed and hardly cheering.*

Questioning himself on the origin of justice, Kass (1996: 44) adds that:

*Justice is no simple matter. What it is, where it comes from... these are questions agitated and left unsettled by the great philosophers, from Socrates onward. But the operative notions of justice in the West, informing the attitudes of contemporary liberals and conservatives alike, come mainly from biblical religion.*

Harold Berman argues persuasively that the Western legal tradition as a whole rests upon the underlying religious belief in a God of justice, who operates a lawful universe (Berman, 1983: 529-530). He further argues that, if there is a crisis in applying modern law today, it stems from the dissociation of the law from its religious roots. Gardner observes that in the twentieth century, the historical connection between law and its religious roots has been substantially broken, and this erosion of its historical foundations is the basis of the real crisis that modern law is facing today (Gardner, 1995: 1). This argument is confirmed by Marshall (2006: 31), in averring that when:

*the great American civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., declared 'the universe is on the side of justice,' he was echoing a fundamental presupposition of the biblical tradition. Justice is the objective foundation of all reality. This justice is known, not primarily through philosophical speculation, but through observing God's actions to liberate the oppressed, and through heeding God's word in the Law and Prophets to protect and care for the weak.*

Berman's study is particularly relevant to the present examination of justice, since he calls attention to the manner in which the legal system of the West has been shaped by a variety of traditions, especially Greek and Roman law, and the biblical understanding of God's justice, as well as the customary laws of different people being seen as important (Berman, 1983: 2).

When one considers the concept of justice in the writings of both Judaism and Christianity, and compares this with the concept of justice in Greek moral philosophy, it is evident that justice is regarded by the Greek philosophers as being moral virtue, while for the Hebrews, it indicates obedience to God.

Even though the concept of justice existed a long time ago in Near Eastern practices, when the king was called upon to be just for the

protection of the needy and hopeless, its effectiveness is shown and communicated through biblical heritage, rather than in the laws that come from philosophy. Nowadays, one realises that the content of laws, as used in our different courts, is rooted in the Bible. This means that the Bible is the book that advocates “true justice”, which is God’s justice.

In any given society there is a notion of justice, but the kind of justice found in our different societies is always associated with relationship and this makes it more partial. While on the other hand, the true justice that comes from God is impartial.

### **2.3.1 The Concept of Justice in the Old Testament**

In the entire Old Testament, there is no concept that has such significance central to all relationships in human life as that of *sadaqa*, meaning “justice” or “righteousness”. The words “justice” and “righteousness” in the Hebrew Bible are interrelated. They involve the fulfilment of the demands of relationships, both between people and between God and people. Beisner (1994: 67) agrees on the issue of justice governing human relationships, asserting that “justice governs all human relationships, but what it requires and permits differs according to what relationship is involved”. Polan (1996: 510) values the concept of justice in the Old Testament when he comments that:

*Justice is a word that has far-reaching dimension in the Old Testament. On the one hand, it can refer to the legal systems of government and the expectations of societal relations. On the other hand, it is part of the moral fiber of a religious people who act in a particular way because they have discovered their God to be just and faithful. It is no exaggeration to say that the theme of justice is central to the theological message of the Hebrew Scriptures and weaves its way through almost every book of the OT.*

In order to fully understand the meaning of justice in the Old Testament, it is important to understand the two Hebrew words *sedaqa* and *mispat*, which can be translated into English as “justice” and “righteousness”.

*Sedaqa*: This word means righteousness (in government, of a judge, ruler, or king, of laws, as an attribute of God administering justice...); truthfulness...righteous acts (Beisner, 1994: 62). Beisner adds that the word *sedaqa* corresponds closely to the Greek word *dikaiosyne*, which means “uprightness, justice, moral and religious uprightness, righteousness (whether of persons, motives or actions)” (1994: 62). According to Polan (1996: 510):

*the word suggests an element of relationship in practice of authentic justice. Whether it is God or a person who is practicing justice, its perfect expression is founded on an understanding of “right relationship” between the involved parties.*

In his comments on the word *sedaqa* and its Hebrew roots, Sklba (1979: 76) observes that the basic Semitic root *sdq* seems to express the idea of being firm, strong, straight or right. In this sense, any object has a share of justice when it is somehow appropriate to its nature, faithful to its inner purpose, and in harmony with its function. He then adds that an object or person is just when it is properly related to something or somebody. Sklba advocates the fact that being just is to be correct, and that this is not an isolated splendour, but rather in relation to others, their needs and purposes. “Human judges are just when they act according to the true nature of things, not becoming shortsighted by reason or mere external circumstances or bribes” (1979: 76). The deeper meaning of the term, he continues, suggests interdependence and profound respect for the needs of others. For example, it could be viewed as justice in the mind and on the lips of Hebrew prophets.

*Mispat*: This word means “judgment”, that is, the act, place, process, case or justice, “sentence, decision, execution or time of judgment;

justice, right rectitude (of God or humans)” (Skiba, 1979: 76). Beisner (1994: 62) adds that these different words correspond closely to the Greek word *krina*, which means a dispute, lawsuit, decision, decree, judging or judgment, juridical verdict; sentence of condemnation; or pronouncement of judgment. According to Skiba (1979: 77), the basic form of the Hebrew word *mishpat* is the verb *shpt*, which means “to see something up, to judge, to act decisively, to exercise leadership, to intervene and bring a human situation to an appropriate resolution”. Skiba (1979: 77) adds that:

*Mishpat is the noun which describes the resulting decision or action. Such actions tend to create precedents...It suggests social structures which support and enhance human relationships. It is often translated “justice” but means ways of doing things.*

Polan (1996: 510) notes that the word Hebrew word *mishpat* appears over a hundred times in the OT, referring primarily to deeds of justice and the execution of judgment. Most often this term relates to legal situations where decisions are made according to a juridical procedure (Exod. 21: 31; 1 Kgs 3: 28). This word is also used to describe the action of God who is known as the “God of justice” (Isa 30: 18). With regard to biblical literature, Ripley (2001: 96) discusses the two Hebrew words as follows:

*The fact that we are able to read much of the Bible without having our basic presuppositions about justice thoroughly challenged point to that fact...it is important to note that, though two different terms (*mishpat* and the synonyms of *tsedeq/tsedeka*) are included in this discussion, these terms are often interchangeable (most notably in Amos 5: 24) and are frequently combined for emphatic usage...When linked together, these terms form a single idea (hendiadys), together representing the idea of social justice, focusing on the aspects of mercy and kindness.*

Even though the implication of the notion of God's justice in praxis is still far-reaching, one may observe that God has demonstrated a way of justice in order for human beings to know how to deal with one another. Debating the issue of justice in the Torah, Polan (1996: 510) comments that:

*From the very beginning, divine justice is seen in primedieval salvation history. God established a way for mortal beings to respond to the gift that was given to them. When the human response was disobedience, God's justice was seen in both punishment (Gen 3: 16-19, 23; 4: 11-12; 6:7; 11: 7-9) and mercy (Gen 3: 21; 4: 15; 6: 8; 9: 1-7)... In the event of exodus, the gift of the Covenant and Law were perceived as further manifestations of divine justice.*

Crossan (1967: 73) points out that in the Old Testament, God's justice is neither vindictive nor distributive, but is rather salvific. This justice is based upon the covenant relationship with Israel. That God is just means that He is faithful to the promise he made freely to save and deliver. In the Old Testament, terms such as justice, salvation, fidelity, and truth are interchangeable. Discussing the book of Deuteronomy, Polan (1996: 511) writes:

*The Book of Deuteronomy shows another dimension of divine justice. The mercy, compassion, and love which God showed to Israel and to all people in need are the same as that which Israel was to practice within its own community and toward foreigners (Deut. 10: 17-19). The initiator of the intimate relationship of covenant expected Israel to practice divine justice. In this expectation of the covenant relationship, we see how justice took a dynamic character: justice lives on in the world both by divine action and through those who fulfill the obligations of their covenant relationship with God.*

The sin of Israel was that of apostasy. Their abandonment of God led them to injustice, hardness of heart, and immorality, without having any concern for the poor or any regard for moral conduct. There was no righteousness, the poor were oppressed, and orphans and widows were not taken care of. In his comments on the book of Amos (5: 10-15), Hailey (1972: 108) states that: “the man who would judge fairly is hated by the ruler; therefore, only the corrupt are appointed. In such a state the poor receive no justice”. Hailey (1972: 108) further explains the practice of injustice in Israelite society as follows:

*In the ancient cities the seat of judgment was usually located near the entrance gate. The charge “they hate him...they abhor” does not refer to the people’s feeling for the prophet who spoke in the gate, but refers to the people in power who hated a judge that reprovved, or one that spoke uprightly. Judges were appointed to decide the matters of law between their brothers. They were to be located “in gates”: entrance to each city where they could be easily accessible to the people. In discharging his duties the judge was not to wrest justice due to the poor, show respect of persons, thereby “slaying the righteous,” or take a bribe. He was to keep himself innocent of all kind of false matters (Deut. 16: 18; Exod. 23: 6-9). Men of this character who would uphold the law and reprove sinners were not wanted. Those “in the gate” are severely criticized for their treatment of the poor, for their flagrant violation of the law. They trample the poor underfoot, exacting “gifts” or payments in wheat or other commodities before they would hand down judgment.*

Jacobs (2000: 208) argues that concern for the underprivileged in the Old Testament was based on the belief that their rights and well-being were safeguarded by God. Bribes are a form of the perversion of justice. Jacobs (2000: 208) further asserts that:

*The perversion of justice may also take the form of bribes. Bribes would be used to secure a favorable judgment in a case. In that instance the underprivileged would be at a disadvantage to the extent that they lack means to secure a bribe. The prohibition against the bribe aims at ensuring that the guilty and innocent receive their due regardless of their states.*

Among the pre-exilic prophets, Amos launched the fiercest attack against the deplorable treatment shown towards the hopeless and the injustice in the midst of Israel. He reminded the people of his time that God's justice would prevail at the time of judgment for those who had mocked the justice of God, rooted in care, compassion and steadfast kindness (Polan, 1996: 511). The prophet Isaiah describes the absence of justice as an experience of utter darkness and futility: "light is far from us and justice does not reach us. We look for light and behold, darkness; for brightness, but we walk in gloom! Like the blind we grope along the wall, like people without eyes we feel our way" (Isa 59: 9-10).

Central to the Old Testament's teachings about justice is the claim that Yahweh is the God of justice and will thus reinforce it. This claim is reflected in most texts on the subject (Houston, 2006: 203). Justice derives from the harmony of the relationship between man and the covenant God, and also between man and his neighbour, to whom he is related by means of a covenant bond. Throughout the Old Testament, Yahweh is declared to be a just judge. While Yahweh's justice restores the afflicted and the wicked, caution should be taken that the justice of Yahweh in the Old Testament is not regarded as being vindictive. As mentioned earlier, Yahweh's justice is neither distributive nor vindictive, but rather, salvific.

### **2.3.2 The Concept of Justice in the Intertestamental Period**

An overview of the meaning of the term "justice" during the intertestamental period, which covers the time from the exile to that of



Jesus, is crucial, not only to point out the transformation of justice in earlier biblical times, but also in order to provide a context for the New Testament interpretation of justice. It is noted that, in this period, the translation of the term “justice” into both Hebrew and Greek bore the same connotation as those found in the earlier period where justice was often associated with mercy, goodness of heart, love of one’s neighbour, compassion for the poor and weak, and harmony in families and social relations. As such, the term “justice” in that period was identified with individual qualities such as integrity, constancy, self-control, courage, and steadfastness amidst poverty and illness, etc. (Donahue, 1977: 79). While the meaning of justice in the Old Testament was maintained during this period, Donahue (1977: 77) argues that the concept has undergone three major transformations:

*(1) emphasis on the justice of the individual and the sectarian stress between the just and unjust, (2) the establishing of justice as a characteristic of the end time, or the influence of eschatology on justice, (3) the shift in the language whereby sadaqah means almsgiving or care for the poor.*

(a) The Just Individual

In this regard, Donahue argues that the emphasis on the justice of an individual arose when the Psalms, which were originally cultic laments, became codified into a book and became prayers for individuals. In the Psalms, such as 18, 25, 26, 31, 35 and 51, the term “justice” meant to uphold the statutes of the Lord, and freedom from any kind of guilt. Donahue (1977: 77) asserts that during this period, there was an emphasis and reflection on the call for a person to be just before Yahweh, and this was regarded with a growing awareness of the transcendent nature of God. This is what led to a theology in which only God is just (Sir. 18: 12; 1 QH. 1: 4), and which held that man alone is devoid of justice (Dan. 9: 18; Sir. 5: 8) (1977: 79-80). During the intertestamental period, one sees a new concept of justice emerging.

This had never been stressed or debated in the Old Testament. As Donahue (1977: 81) observes:

*Allied to the individualization of justice is the rise of the motif of suffering as a sign of justice. In the Old Testament the command was to remain faithful to the covenant God amid suffering and see God's saving power as the vindication of justice. In the intertestamental period suffering itself becomes a sign of a just person. This conjunction of justice and suffering provides the background for the Pauline idea of the cross as a stumbling block (1Cor. 1; 23) as well as manifestation of the saving justice.*

(b) Eschatological Justice

A very important development in this period was the image of the true justice of God being shown when the world ends. Donahue (1977: 82) argues that this motif is anticipated in the Old Testament, especially in the "Messianic" oracle of Isaiah 9: 2-7 and 11: 1-9 in the Isaiah Apocalypse (24: 1-27: 13) were themes such as eschatological judgment and the messianic banquet will prepare the command "Open the gates that the righteous nation which keep faith may enter in". According to Donahue (1977: 82), such prophetic sayings provide a matrix for the view that justice is no longer something to come or to be established by God in the sphere of history, but rather something that God will reserve for the end. With regard to eschatological justice, he concludes that "eschatological justice assumes different forms. One form is the revelation of justice by a final judgment of God. The just will be vindicated and the deeds of evil persons will come to light" (1977: 81).

c) Justice as Almsgiving

During the intertestamental period, one of the interesting issues is the transformation in terms of its denotation of the older biblical meaning of the Hebrew word *sedāqah*. In the earlier period, the word came to mean "almsgiving", and is thus signified by the Greek word *eleemosyne*

(1977: 81). With regard to the meaning of justice in the intertestamental period, Donahue (1977: 81) writes that:

*Justice in the sense of almsgiving is found in Tobit 1: 3, 12: 8-9 and 14: 11, and while the Greek text of Ben Sirach employs elemosyne in such sayings as “almsgiving atones for sins” (3: 30) and “do not be fainthearted in your prayers, nor neglect to give alms” (7: 10), the Hebrew original has sadaqah in these places. The change in meaning of the term can be seen from a comparison of Proverbs 10: 2 with Tobit 12: 9.*

Evidently, the idea of matching justice with suffering is not convincing. Living in an unjust society, which causes many prejudices and suffering for the hopeless, it is not sufficient to argue that God, the just judge, has always been on the side of the hopeless: orphans, widows and the poor. It is these categories of people, who are normally victims of injustice and suffering, which God supports. One wonders how suffering can become a sign of justice.

### **2.3.3 Justice in the New Testament**

As mentioned, the Greek words for “justice” are *dike* (right, penalty), *dikaiosyne* (righteousness, justification) and *krisis* (judgment). Polan (1996: 512) argues that the linguistic decision regarding the use of these words depends on the specific context in which the word occurs, as well as the theology of the specific translator.

New Testament statements on the concept of justice are neither as rich nor as direct as those of Old Testament witnesses. The early ones proclaim the risen Jesus as the just one. It has been observed that, when discussing justice in the New Testament, Paul, in his writings, places the main emphasis on the justice of God and the justice given to world by faith. As Donahue observes, the book of Revelation considers the tradition of justice as the eschatological vindication of the faithful ones,

while the letter of James, as well as 1 John, focuses on the care of a suffering member of the community. He asserts further (1977: 81) that the New Testament provides the link between the revelation of God's justice and the life and death of Jesus Christ.

When the discussion of justice in Paul is put in the context of his eschatology, certain conclusions are suggested. If the sending of Christ is salvation from the present evil age, and if this is a manifestation of the justice of God as in Rom. 4: 25, then justice is not simply the quality of God as righteous judge over against sinful man, but a relation of the saving power of God to a world captured by evil. God's justice is his fidelity which inaugurates a saving victory over the powers that enslave and oppress man (Donahue, 1977: 91).

With regard to the meaning of eschatological justice Felder, (1988: 21) argues that "unlike Old Testament retributive justice, Christian eschatological justice does not emphasize punishment, but a hope for repentance and God's final reward for doers of justice". He adds that:

*The prospect of eschatological rewards, in the thought of some of the New Testament writings, constitutes a warrant for accepting suffering and injustice, rather than reacting to injustice in ways that might create more harm... The Epistle of James warns of God's strict punishment for sins of injustice... but quickly relieves that possibility by reminding readers that God's dominant tendency is mercy, not strict retribution (1988: 21).*

In the New Testament, one sees another aspect of justice: justice through merciful acts. "Two examples from Matthew are presented to show that the new righteousness is qualified by mercy which reaches out to the marginal ones in the world" (Donahue, 1977: 104). This author states that:

*The parable of the unmerciful servant (Mtt. 18: 23-34) shows justice qualified by mercy. The parable is placed by Matthew at*

*the end of a section where Jesus proclaims a series of regulations for life in the community – a community which is concerned about the problem of forgiveness. The parable is familiar. A man who receives remission of a huge debt then goes out and demands payment of a minor debt from a fellow servant. When this action is brought to the master's attention he punishes the first servant and says to him: "Should you not have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?" ... Though on one level the parable seems to be an exhortation for forgiveness, on another level it is a parable of justice qualified by mercy (1977: 104).*

In terms of Matthew's theology, concludes Donahue (1977: 104-105), the new law of the Christian community is that the just are those who meet the demands of their fellows, because they live in a covenant relationship with a Lord who has given them mercy.

With regard to the ongoing discussion of justice in the New Testament period, Polan (1996: 512) divides the concept into three categories: (1) justice from human courts; (2) justice from God; and (3) justice from the church. He subsequently comments that New Testament writers always took a pessimistic view of the capability of human courts to render justice. They only trusted in God who possesses the ability to act justly and also to effect positive social change. The three categories mentioned by Polan can be described as follows:

(a) Justice from Human Courts

Polan argues that the trials of both Jesus and Paul share a similar cast of characters, expressed by conspiracy, perjury, and corrupt magistrates. He avers that human courts cannot render justice, but instead allow innocents to be punished while criminals are set free.

*The synoptic Gospels are quite clear on this point. Concerning Jesus, Mark writes: 'so the chief priest and scribes were seeking*

*a way to arrest him by treachery and put him to death' (Mark 14: 1); Matt. 26: 5; Luke 22: 2 tones down Mark's language, leaving the Jewish leaders simply unsure what to do. During Jesus' trial before the Jewish high Council (the Sanhedrin), 'many gave false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree' (Mark 14: 56; Matt. 26: 59) (Polan, 1996: 512).*

Furthermore, in their account of Jesus' trial before Pilate, Mark and Matthew, according to Polan (1996: 512), record that the prefect knew that it was the envy of Jewish leaders that had brought the case to trial (Mark 15: 10; Matt. 27: 18), but preferred to remain silent instead of denouncing the evil act, and similarly when Pilate washed his hands of the matter, even though Jesus was innocent. In Mark 15: 15; Matt. 27: 26; and Luke 23: 25, it is reported that Barabbas, a guilty bandit, was released in the place of Jesus, the innocent.

The failure of human justice is also seen in Acts, according to Polan (1996: 513), who remarks that:

*Acts continues this theme. Repeatedly, the apostles suffer false accusations by Jewish leaders and receive miscarriages of justice before Roman magistrates. Peter and John denounce the injustice of their Sanhedrin proceedings by saying: "whether it is right in the sight of God for us to obey you rather than God, you be the judge" (Acts 4: 19).*

As asserted by Polan (1996: 512), "the rest of Acts is devoted to the deeds of Paul, who finds himself numerous times before the juridical magistrate on trumped-up charges". The list of mob activities is not exhaustive, because Paul, Silas and others were treated in the same manner. Paul's letter to Corinthian believers, in which he told them not to seek justice in Greco-Roman courts (1 Cor. 6: 1-6), might have originated from all these trials. Christians must settle their disputes

before the congregation which acts according to divine justice and judgment.

(b) Justice from God

The early Christians claimed that pagan law was a purely human invention. According to Polan (1996: 514) this was not the Greco-Roman polytheistic belief. He adds that the New Testament acknowledges this belief and subsequently relates Paul's account of his trip:

In the sea voyage of Acts, Paul becomes a castaway on the island of Malta. The locals observe a viper bite Paul: "when the native saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to one another, 'this man must certainly be a murderer; though he escaped the sea, justice has not let him remain alive'" (Acts 28: 4).

In early Christian thought, the idea that justice had a divine origin had not yet been introduced. The theology of New Testament writers had been greatly influenced by Old Testament narratives that spoke of divine justice. God's response to the complaint of Job, to early Christians, seemed to indicate that God's justice was unfair. This is why Paul rebukes them in retorting, "but who indeed are you, a human being who talks back to God? Will what is made say to its maker, "Why have you created me so?" (Rom. 9: 20; see Job 38: 1-42:6). It should be noted that God's justice is not arbitrary, as appearances might suggest; it is not reducible to the level of human justice.

(c) Justice from the Church

Polan (1996: 514) asserts that from the time of the early Jesus movement, advocacy for the less fortunate was effective through the preaching of some early Christians. This term referred to those who were poor and disabled, widows or orphans, as well as marginalised, lowly segments of the rural and urban population. According to Polan, this concern for social injustice finds its fullest expression in Acts, where Luke describes the first Christian community as a collective one,

where all believers were gathered together and had all things in common, in such a way that there could not be any needy people among them.

From the abovementioned three categories of justice in the New Testament, as mentioned by Polan, one can understand that there was no trust in human courts, where judges were corrupt and could not issue a fair verdict. This might have motivated Paul to address his letter to Corinthian believers telling them not to settle their differences in human courts, as mentioned above. The situation of human courts in the New Testament appears to be the same as that in the Old Testament, where judges were known to be corrupt and were summoned by a prophet's message against bribery. As Whybray (2002: 47) writes, "The overriding importance of justice for Israel's life is summed up in the emphatic command of those who are appointed to judgeships". He adds: "Judges must resist all attempts that may be made to influence their decisions by bribery or other immoral means" (2002: 47).

Nowadays, the behaviour of certain judges in different courts is not that different from that of judges in the Old and the New Testament courts, where bribery and injustice were commonplace. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo for instance, magistrates are known as a group of people who are more corrupted. Bribery blinds the eyes of judges in such a way that the truth becomes evil. The person who won in the court is the one who has money. Therefore, innocent people and poor are victimised. Without God's justice, one cannot speak of a just person or a just society.

The early Church seemed to play its role in advocating social justice among its people. Throughout the New Testament period, the efforts made by the early Church regarding the care of those who were in need is evident, which is not so in the Church today, where selfishness and greed are common and the Church is becoming more and more uncaring. As Felder (1988: 19) comments:



*The significance...of love in relation to Christian justice is that the interest of others receives heavy stress as a norm for Christian social relations. In our modern world of selfishness, greed, individual competing self-interest, and human exploitation, the New Testament teaching is alien.*

It is reasonable to question the prophetic role of the Church today. If the Church is not an agent of change in society to bring about justice, what then is its role?

In a situation of injustice, the Church cannot remain silent or neutral, but should raise its voice, echoing God's plea for justice and love towards one another. If there is no justice, there is no love, and if there is no love, then God is not there. Where God is, love and justice will prevail.

The failure of human law to render justice is not surprising, as Polan (1996: 513) observes, since it is foretold in the words of Jesus against the hypocrisy of Jewish leaders, especially the scribes and Pharisees:

*Jesus accuses the Pharisees and Scribes of having a self-righteousness and so distorted view of Justice and Law... It is small wonder that Pharisees and Scribes become instrumental in twisting Jewish and Roman justice toward their own selfish ends as the plot of Gospel narratives develops. True justice is described to be divine in origin, achievable through private observance of love of enemies, almsgiving, and prayer done for the sight of God, not humans.*

Donahue (1977: 71) sums it up: "The justice of God is both gift and mystery, and the attempt to crystallize it by human standards can result in destroying the proper relation with Yahweh". For Block (1994: 37) biblical ideals of justice begin with one's respect for personhood, a predisposition which can be translated into actions that serve to affirm the poor, ameliorate the lot of the oppressed, or to oppose forces of

injustice. In order for this to be done, concern should be grounded in a confident and affirmative love that acknowledges and accepts. As such, widows, orphans, the poor and marginalised have a right to be seen as human beings who are deserving of respect and love.

## **2.4 State of Justice in the Governing Institutions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

The scriptural concept of justice implies that one refers to God as a just judge. In the biblical sense, a person who can be called just is one who lives in conformity with divine precepts, as required by biblical justice. In this sense, Hale and Thorson (1999: 1002) argue that to practice justice is to believe and obey. The person who is obedient is the one who loves, and to love is to possess spiritual life. The question one may ask is: how is justice practised in institutions in the DRC? In order to answer this question, the emphasis should be placed on the socio-economic as well as juridical features of this country.

It should be recalled that the human being was created in God's image. When God created man and woman, God gave him and her a sense of dignity. This dignity is in fact the source of justice. In terms of the image of God, all human beings are equal, because they have been created in the image of the unique God. This is why all believers should seek justice and even become agents of it.

The practice of justice is one of the virtues for establishing social order. From a biblical perspective, the way one treats others is always the expression or incarnation of one's relationship with God. It is impossible to have a healthy relationship with God if your relationships with your fellows are not sound. Christiaens and Dermange (1956: 18) state that no social order can endure or satisfy human aspirations unless it is just. God has created human beings in such a manner as to not be satisfied with the iniquitous conditions in which they find themselves. Therefore, these authors add that a responsible society is one in which

guardians of political or economic powers know that they are accountable to God, and to those whom they rely upon, for their deeds (1956: 31). Quoted by Lotter (1993: 41), Barrington comments that:

People living in a radically unjust society sometimes experience suffering, degradation, oppression, humiliation, and exploitation without necessarily conceptualizing this as being unjust. They accept their situation willingly and endure it passively, because they have internalized a set of ideas legitimating it.

Barrington's remarks express the current situation in the DRC, where most of the population lives in poverty due to the violation of their rights and privileges as natives of the country. The people respond passively to the suffering imposed on them by ruling leaders. After thirty-two years under the dictatorial regime of the late Marshal Mobutu, people preferred to live a miserable life and said: "We still want Mobutu, because he keeps the nation united and in peace." They said this despite the injustice, corruption, and mismanagement that was occurring in the country. Lotter (1993: 41) comments on such a situation:

This is a normative acceptance of their situation as they have come to accept the moral justification in the society, which they regard as legitimate, as they have come to accept the moral justifications for their situation provided by the group ruling the society.

Nowadays, one cannot talk about true justice in the DRC. Justice is violated every single day. There is domination, injustice, social inequality, and oppression in different forms in the life of the common citizen. The few rich people in the country are becoming richer, while a large portion of the population lives in extreme poverty.

The DRC is undergoing a profound crisis with regard to socio-economic issues. The last two decades (1980-2000) have witnessed the worst period in the history of this country. This has been characterized by a high rate of unemployment, continuous depreciation of the

currency, budget deficits, and so forth. Commenting on the dire situation in the country in its message to Catholic believers, the *Conférence Episcopale Nationale du Congo (CENCO)* (2004: 7), the Catholic bishops asserted that the Congolese leaders for the sake of their selfishness interests impose to the citizens suffering as punishment that they do not deserve. The future for the millions of the Congolese is at risk. Relegated to the back seat of the fight for political positioning of its leaders, these people pay the cost resulting from the competition from political families who share power. These bishops added that they are saddened to observe that instead of working for social development, the leaders of the DRC accord themselves social advantages, which openly demonstrates their general disinterestedness in the well-being of the majority of the population (2004: 7). They subsequently criticised government officials, saying that, while the budget of the country is experiencing problems in its implementation, the leaders of the DRC multiply missions outside the country with enticing advantages, offer themselves a high standard of living, and do not show any concern for the poor shape of national finances (2004: 7-8). “Injustice occurs when power is misused to take from others what God has given them, namely their life, dignity, liberty, or fruit of their love and labor” (Haugen, 1999: 72). On the same issue, Malchow (1996: xi) asserts that injustice is a major problem facing the world today. Injustice is an illegal act that deprives people of their rights. He continues that many unjust acts today are legal, since the present structure of society allows them to exist. One may not fully agree with the latter part of Malchow’s statement, yet an evil act, even though it is legitimated by society, will still remain evil. As Rosenberg (1995: 2) says: “It is ‘divine justice,’ making possible the triumph of good over evil”.

One can observe that government leaders in the DRC enjoy the comforts of life, while populations suffer in such a way that they cannot meet even their basic needs. Some facts that illustrate the lack of justice,

in other words, the lack of love of one's fellows, in the governing institutions of the DRC, are listed below:

- (a) Implementation of the national budget for the year 2003. Saint Moulin (2006: 34-35) notes that 112 projects were approved in the spheres of healthcare and education. At the time of their implementation, an amount of 3.9 billion Congolese francs from local sources had been allocated. Unfortunately, none of these projects were implemented, even though the spheres of health care and education were considered to be a high priority in terms of political development and the eradication of poverty. He further states that 17.4 billion Congolese francs from local sources were allocated to fund other projects, which were not carried over to the budget for the year 2003.
- (b) With regard to this situation, the National Audit Office, in its conclusion, issued a statement that the 2003 budget was not effective in terms of eradicating poverty (Moulin, 2006: 34-35). Saint Moulin (2006: 34-35) therefore asserts that macro-economic balance has been obtained to the detriment of social well-being.
- (c) How can one talk of justice or love for one's fellows when it has been established that a misappropriation of US \$ 28 million through fraudulent bank transfers carried out by the head of the Income Tax office, namely the DGI, occurred? (Obotela, 2005: 62). It is noted that no juridical action was taken against such behaviour.
- (d) Teachers and civil servants are receiving meaningless wages. For instance, a high school teacher receives US \$ 30 in wages per month. This amount has to cover transport, accommodation, health care, etc. During an interview held with the President of the DRC, Joseph Kabila, in August 2007, a journalist questioned him as to why the members of parliament

are each obtaining US \$ 4,000 in wages, while the teacher who gave them knowledge only receives US \$ 30. His answer was that if one added together the wages of the 500 members of parliament, it would still not be enough to pay the salaries of teachers. Is this justice? Or caring for the lives of fellow citizens? Is this not a careless way of dealing with the dignity of human beings?

- (e) Acts of injustice perpetrated in the DRC have also been confirmed by the report of the Lutundula Commission regarding the looting of mineral resources during the last war, which some referred to as a Third World War. A group of experts appointed by the United Nations General Secretary, Kofi Annan, on July 31, 2000, observed that in the camps of both belligerents, there were networks of elites, capturing for themselves the wealth of the Congo, to the detriment of its population (Lutundula Commission, 2005).
- (f) In the same way, in 2002, the United Nations panel report on the illegal exploitation of the DRC's natural resources and other forms of wealth shows the implications of those lootings by a large number of Congolese officials, through the network of internal elites (Ngub'Usim, 2007: 124). With regard to this situation, the United Nations panel report evaluated material losses due to this looting in terms of US \$ 5 billion, while the group of national experts evaluated the losses in terms of US \$ 10,118,299,046 or about twice as much. This is the loss and damage that Congolese people were subjected to as a result of the war (Lutundula Commission, 2005).
- (g) The image of the DRC was tarnished by the Transparency International report, a British NGO, in 2006. The report stated that in terms of corruption, the DRC was ranked as the 6<sup>th</sup> most corrupt country in the world. The country has retained this

position since 2004 (Tshikendwa, 2007: 88), and this has been confirmed by the National Commission for Ethics and Anti-corruption. On the issue of corruption, Ngub'Usim (2007: 124) argues that investigations have been carried out by the same commission with regards to thirty institutions in the country during the transitional government, and it has been confirmed that there was such corruption in various institutions.

With regard to the same issue of corruption, Obotela (2007: 197) ranks the institutions of the DRC as follows: Office of the President in first position, 23.47%; Magistracy, 13.89%; Customs, 9.87%; and Income Tax, 8.41%. The National Ethics Commission ranks the most corrupt government services as follows: Police in first position, 23.68%; Magistracy, 17.55%; Customs, 15.2%; Officers of Judiciary (Police), 11.87%, and Immigration, 12.78%.

It is evident that the list is not even exhaustive. How can justice be implemented in such a corrupt country? After being elected to the supreme magistracy, Joseph Kabila, in his investiture speech on December 8, 2006, stated that corruption was the root of non-development in the country. He added that corruption was an illegal profit which tarnished the credibility of the government and the legitimacy of democracy. Corruption was also a form of criminality against which he promised to fight.

Because of the careless attitude of the Congolese government towards social projects, in January 2006, the UNICEF report on the situation of children in the world revealed that one Congolese child in eight died before the age of one year, and that more than half of the children in the DRC did not attend school (Obotela, 2007: 197). Among the various reasons that may explain the disastrous state in which the DRC finds itself, one can identify the absence of justice as a major cause. In other words, there is a lack of conformity with God's precepts, on which the DRC officials should focus if they want the country to

change for the better. “So Justice occurs on earth when power and authority between people is exercised in conformity with God’s standards of moral excellence” (Haugen, 1999: 71). Ezekiel, in his eschatological vision, addresses the leaders of the people concerning the matters of justice and righteousness:

“Enough, O prince of Israel! Put away violence and oppression, and execute justice and righteousness; cease your evictions of my people, says the Lord God. You shall have just balances, a just ephah, and a just bath ...” (Ez. 45: 9-10). Isaiah also explicitly defines the task of the king in these areas: “Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, and princes will rebuke in justice” (Isa. 32: 1).

Currently, Congolese people are living in poverty owing to various reasons, especially the lack of godly leadership. People are without hope, and the only factor that consoles and gives them courage is the word of God. It is the promotion of biblical justice that will bring about change in the country. The message of justice should be shared everywhere in churches, working places, public places, etc. Bakole (1981: 106) argues that the problem of Christianity in the country is not that churches are empty every Sunday, but rather that there is a lack of witnesses for justice from Monday to Saturday. What is greatly lacking is not words to express faith or symbols or rites to celebrate it, but rather a new behaviour, or style of living to keep our faith alive, accomplish it, and integrate it into society.

It is important to note that justice will not have an impact on Congolese institutions unless men and women working in the various institutions of the DRC commit themselves to becoming agents of change in order to promote divine justice, and view this as their mandate from God. God’s justice is the demonstration of His love for humankind. Bakole (1981: 102) comments that Christian justice takes the first step and does not wait for others. This justice, Bakole emphasises, is more than conformity to certain rules, such as not to steal, be corrupt, etc.



God's justice is a positive attitude, typically religious, finding its source in God.

Justice implies love. Justice and love cannot be opposed to one another, but must be linked in order to contribute to political order, respect human rights, and achieve social justice. Without pretending to achieve absolute well-being, one needs, however, a minimum in order to sustain life and live with dignity. This means that one needs to have food to eat, be educated, and benefit from access to healthcare. If justice is neglected, love is also threatened. "To say that God is a God of justice is one way of saying that he is concerned about whether those who have power or authority over others are exercising it in accordance with his standards" (Haugen, 1999: 72).

A challenge for a just society should be the permanent questioning of all who are, or aspire to be, leaders of the DRC. Moral and Christian values should be emphasised in order to experience the justice expected by the majority of the Congolese population today.

## **2.5 Summary**

"Justice is a very sensitive condition. It disappears when people ignore God as the giver of life and instead rely on their own wisdom ... it can become a reality only if people open themselves to this force beyond time" (Schroeder, 2001: 15).

The concept of justice is rooted in God's perfect character. This concept was experienced in the Near East, even before Israel came into existence. Fairness and righteousness were required from the king in the Near East, who was supposed to protect the weak and the hopeless. The biblical view of justice was borrowed from Israel's neighbour, where the king was supposed to be just. Later on, Israel considered God as the just king, compared to the Near Eastern kings who were subjected to failure for not maintaining justice in the way it was supposed to be.

From its conceptual framework, one may deduce that true justice is divine justice. Biblical justice is God's divine justice. This justice stems from the relationship between humankind and the covenant God. It protects the rights of the poor, orphans, widows, as well as those of the ruler in power, but prevents the latter from oppressing the needy ones.

Biblical justice is the kind of justice that is needed in our institutions and society, because it cares for everyone and follows moral precepts. It is an expression of God's love for the world. To practise biblical justice is to seek God's reign. The next chapter will deal with the concept of poverty and its different understandings. It will also explore the role played by some international institutions in combating poverty.



## **GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE PHENOMENON OF POVERTY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The condition of poverty is complex, and should not be thought of as a single problem with a single solution. When one thinks of race, gender, familial status, age and place of residence, these are merely some, but not all, of the characteristics that enhance the risks of living in poverty.

Poverty is not a new phenomenon. All over the world, disparities between rich and poor, even in the wealthiest of nations, are rising sharply. It has been observed that fewer people are becoming successful and wealthy, while a disproportionately larger population is becoming poor.

In this regard, it can be concluded that there are many issues involved when examining poverty. Commenting on poverty as one of the major social problems in society, Vroonhoven (1985: 65) argues that:

*It is now generally accepted faith that poverty and the increase in poverty are among the most urgent social problems. For the less-developed countries...poverty is accepted as a major social problem, there is little agreement on its origins and, consequently, on the strategies to be followed in fighting poverty*

*and helping the poor. Those who see poverty as an individual and personal situation that arises from lack of initiative or unwillingness of the poor to help themselves will not be inclined to help or support. Those who see poverty as fate, descending upon people and convenient to supernatural arrangements that dominate human life, will see little hope of change and at the most are prepared to give charitable and humanitarian help.*

One could also easily argue that the poor are poor because the rich are rich and exercise the power to enforce trade agreements which favour their interests above those of the general population. This issue is a very serious problem in our society today as Alcock (2006: 7) remarks:

*Poverty exists within a dynamic and changing social order; and to some extent...it is created by, or at least recreated by the social and economic policies that have developed over time to respond to or control it. Thus the history of poverty involves an examination of policies directed at or developed for those who are poor.*

Poor men and women, who have often lost the capacity to take care of their families, are ashamed to face their neighbours and hungry children. Like all people, they experience a deep longing to belong, care and be cared for, be honoured, and experience the bonds of solidarity. One can argue that a sense of belonging not only affirms one's humanity, but also creates bonds of trust and reciprocity.

Any study of poverty should begin with a definition of the problem one is trying to solve. The major question to which everyone expects an answer straight away is: "What is poverty?" Poverty is a topic that has been written about in thousands of books and articles over the last two centuries, but few have taken the trouble to ask this question. Most writers have taken it for granted that they and their readers know the

subject under discussion (Hazlitt, 1973: 31). Two of the many writers on the issue, Hemmer and Wilhelm (2000: 1), questioned the essence of poverty:

*What is poverty? How much poverty is there in the world today? Did we achieve any improvements in recent years or is poverty still increasing? What can we do to reduce and finally eradicate poverty? Who are poor and how can they be supported? Which organisations are best suited to fight poverty successfully? These are only few of the most fundamental questions concerning poverty that still need to be answered.*

According to Balasubramaniam (2002: 3), the 1999 Human Development report estimates that more than 1.3 billion people in the developing world today survive on the equivalent of less than one US dollar a day. Concerning research carried out with regards to the issue of poverty, Alcock (2006: 82) comments that:

*For most academics and researchers, as most politicians, the purpose of attempting to define poverty is to be able to measure its extent within or across societies, the implication being that where poverty is extensive, it should then be the focus of concern and policies should be developed to remove or ameliorate it.*

### **3.2 Poverty: Definitions**

Discussing the issue of poverty as viewed by the federal government in the United States of America, Kelso (1994: 14) writes:

*The failure of the war on poverty is reflected in the aggregate number of people who are classified as poor according to the federal government's official definition of poverty. Ironically, there was no national definition of poverty until the 1960s. Before the war on poverty began, welfare was primarily a state*

*and local responsibility, and the federal government thus had no need to identify the poor. When Lyndon Johnson launched his war on poverty in the 1960s, the need for a definition of poverty quickly became apparent.*

Poverty possesses many facets. Due to its multidimensional nature, one cannot say that there is a commonly agreed upon definition of poverty. In terms of research and policies, there is a coexistence of definitions. These definitions generally refer to different people and to the specific problems in question (Hemmer and Wilhelm, 2000: 3). Hemmer and Wilhelm comment that poverty is often understood to arise from a lack of income or assets. They believe that poverty constitutes more than low or insufficient income. They argue that poverty refers to a lack of goods or services (food, clothing, shelter, education, etc.) needed to meet basic needs at an individual or the household level. There are several notions of poverty emphasising different aspects of the phenomenon. Hemmer and Wilhelm consequently argue that these notions refer to different dimensions of poverty, and that the multiplicity of these concepts clearly shows that it is impossible to cover such a complex phenomenon by using a single definition (Hemmer and Wilhelm, 2000: 3). According to the UNDP (1995: 5), “poverty is lack of ability to participate in national life, most especially in the economic sphere”. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) states that “Poverty is deprivation and powerlessness. It is the lack of significant assets and income to satisfy basic human need for food, water, shelter, or tools to acquire income... And it is the lack of ability...to change the situation” (CIDA, 1991: 8). Even though it is extremely difficult to define poverty, in the Dictionary of Ethics, Theology and Society, Forrester (1996: 671) notes that poverty is about rights and relationships, about how people are treated and how they regard themselves, about powerlessness, exclusion, and loss of dignity. According to Herzog (1972: 206) the persistence of poverty and the

extensive movements into and out of it testify to the fact that problems of income inadequacy and insecurity are common to a large segment of the population. With regard to the ongoing discussion on the concept of poverty, Kelso (1994: 165) writes:

*Marxists believe that the poor are heavily influenced by the cultural tradition of society. But in contrast to the thesis...they insist that the poor suffer not from the breakdown of cultural norms or anomies, but from a sense of false consciousness that leads to political quietism. Unlike Durkheimians who see culture as a mechanism for promoting social cohesion and individual productivity, Marxists maintain that culture is more often a source of dominance that elites use to maintain their status in society.*

Kelso continues (1994: 167-168), arguing that:

*As an alternative to both Marxism and our anomic description of the poor, a rather disparate group of writers, sociologists, and political analysts have advanced another explanation of poverty to account for the destructive actions of the underclass which is commonly known as the culture of poverty thesis. But the proponents of this school believe that the difficulties of the underclass reflect the fact that many of the poor have developed their own separate and "pathological" set of beliefs which is not conducive to upward mobility and financial prosperity. Once these low-income groups establish their own subcultures, they can constantly recruit new members and socialize them into the deviant values of their association. The danger thus exists that the pathological beliefs of the underclass can be passed on to younger members of ghettos, locking many people into a vicious cycle of poverty and despair.*



It seems easy to argue as to why the poor are poor, or to comment on the state of poverty and its causes. The best way to describe poor people or poverty would be to put oneself in their shoes and live under their conditions for a while. Both arguments stemming from the two schools of thought regarding poverty, as Kelso describes them, are appropriate. However, the truth is that either way, poor people need assistance in order to rise from their desperate situation. Before one conducts any analysis of the origins of poverty, Kelso finds that it is essential to understand the magnitude of the problem through the examination of certain types of behaviour amongst poor people. He asserts that:

*The destructive actions of the underclass, such as a dropping out of the labor market, neglecting their family responsibilities or engaging in criminal behaviour, have made poverty a much more brutal and pathological condition than it was during the early years of the war on poverty...It is so important to know why some groups, such as Asian Americans, have been so successful in climbing out of poverty (Kelso, 1994: 29-30).*

Kelso argues that poverty, being a multidimensional problem, means that there are still grounds to believe that a war on poverty is potentially winnable. He further comments that if the financial difficulties of the poor are a result of a multiplicity of factors, policymakers are challenged to intervene in society at a variety of points in order to attack the origin of poverty (Kelso, 1994: 11). According to the Michigan study on poverty, it has been said that poverty is neither a long-term nor a permanent state of being for most people. The study shows that many people drift in and out of poverty and most of them stay in it for a limited period of time. The study discovered that people who experienced poverty for one year were able to escape poverty after the same period. The study concluded that poverty is a temporary experience that lasts less than one year (Kelso, 1994: 19). According to Sen (1988: 22), in order to recognise raw poverty and understand its

antecedents, there is no need for elaborate criteria, cunning measurement, or a probing analysis. The identification of poor people and the diagnostics of poverty may be far from obvious when one moves away from extreme and raw poverty. Different approaches can be used, such as biological inadequacy, relative deprivation, etc., while there are technical issues to be resolved within each approach. In order to comprehend the concept of poverty, Sen (1988: 22) adds that:

*Furthermore, to construct an overall picture of poverty it is necessary to go well beyond identifying the poor. To provide an aggregate profile based on the characteristics of those who are identified as poor, the problem of aggregation has to be squarely faced.*

Another key issue in discussing the concept of poverty is the nature of this condition. Manning and Tikhonova (2004: 24) comment that another issue has moved to centre stage in the discussion on poverty in the last ten years, to rival the old debate on relativism. The question is whether or not poverty is a matter of deprivation or income. In order to answer this question, Manning and Tikhonova (1984: 24) refer to the situation of poverty in Russia:

*Government has understandably as a consequence conflated poverty with low income, on the assumption that below a certain income, individuals and households will be deprived of the goods and services that citizens should have. However, this conflation is problematic on three counts. The definitions of income and deprivation are both contestable, and the relation between them is not straightforward. Income, or resources to buy goods and services, might be thought to be easily determined.*

Manning and Tikhonova (1984: 24-25) go on to say that the relationship between income and deprivation is not as close as it appears at first sight. They contend that the important issue of the price of goods

and services varies not only regionally, but also in the micro-economies of small cities, where purchasing small quantities of goods can considerably raise unit prices, including those of food, transport, and cloth.

Another issue that intervenes when discussing poverty is its measurement. To what extent can one measure poverty? Rodgers (1984: 49) avers that:

*Nations measure poverty in a variety of ways. The choice of measure has numerous implications. Some measures greatly reduce official estimates of poverty, providing a justification for a less vigorous anti-poverty policy, and less generous welfare programs. Some measures increase the official estimate of poverty, putting pressure on public officials.*

In any case, Rodgers believes that measures of poverty can be divided into two broad categories, namely absolute and relative poverty (Rodgers, 1984: 49).

Poverty analysts and researchers find it difficult to agree upon a single poverty measure. Poverty reflects many aspects of everyday life. This is why, from a sociological perspective, poverty is considered to be a multidimensional concept. Most discussions on the problem of poverty, and certainly most research into it, takes place within national boundaries. However, poverty is an international and global problem (Alcock, 2006: 48). Alcock then adds that there is a great disagreement over the definition of poverty associated with disagreement over both the causes of poverty and the solutions to it. Practically all these issues of defining poverty, its measurement, cause, and solution are bound up together in such a way that the understanding of the concept requires an appreciation of a certain interrelationship between them all (Alcock, 2006: 64).

According to this author, poverty should be arranged into what he calls 'new grouping'. This is absolute and relative poverty. Defining absolute poverty, Alcock (2006: 64) asserts that:

*Absolute poverty is sometimes claimed to be an objective, even a scientific definition of poverty. It is based on the notion of subsistence. Subsistence is the minimum needed to sustain life, and so being below subsistence level is to be experiencing absolute poverty because one does not have enough to live on.*

Hence one has to work out what people need to have and on what level the lack of means will equal the lack of subsistence, in such a way that one may be described as living in poverty.

It is noticeable that there is no common, standard measurement in terms of what can be considered as subsistence. What is considered as the minimum needed to keep living in one country may not correspond to the same need in another country. This consequently makes poverty a very complex concept to define. Alcock (2006: 65), defining it, comments that:

*The relative definition of poverty is associated in particular with the Fabian critics of post-war achievements of the welfare state in eliminating poverty in Britain, most notably the work of Townsend (1954, 1979) and Abel Smith provided enough to prevent subsistence poverty for most, in terms of their position relative to the average standard of living in society the poorest people were no better off in the 1950s and the 1960s than they had been in the 1940s.*

Equally, according to Rodgers (1984: 49):

*Measures of poverty can be divided into two broad categories...absolute and relative. An absolute standard attempts to identify the basic, even subsistence, resources required to live*

*above the poverty level. A relative standard defines poverty in relationship to the medium living standards of the society. A relative standard shows not only how many people live below the average standard in a society, it also provides insights into the distribution of income and wealth among the population.*

Sleeman (1976: 56) argues that the most commonly used definition is one which recognises poverty as a relative fact, and considers as a standard the officially recognised minimum income provided by the community to those in need, namely the scale rate laid down for families of different sizes by the supplementary Benefits Commission. Townsend (1993: 36) views poverty as deprivation, when he argues that:

*People are relatively deprived if they cannot obtain, at all or sufficiently, the conditions of life – that is, the diets, amenities, standards, and services – which allow them to play the roles, participate in relationships and follow the customary behaviour which is expected of them by virtue of their membership of society. If they lack or are denied resources to obtain access to these conditions of life and so fulfill membership of society they may be said to be in poverty.*

Poverty, according to Townsend, is the deprivation of a person's basic needs and services in the society in which he/she lives. It is the lack of necessary resources to permit participation in activities and other aspects of existence commonly approved by society. Townsend (1993: 36) suggests that:

*The driving motivation for putting forward poverty as 'relative deprivation' could be said to be scientific and international. There are respects in which the 'substance' concept minimises the range and depth of human need just as the basic needs' concept is restricted primarily to the physical facilities of the communities of the third world.*

In the same way, Ross (2002: 115) points out:

*Researchers have defined poverty in a variety of ways. It can be defined as deprivation experienced in material terms, such as hunger or poor housing quality; in economic terms such as inadequate income; or in social terms such as isolation from the community or feelings of low self-esteem.*

Quoted by Schlaback (1990: 26), Valerie Wermer, a Chicago housing development worker and single mother of three, speaking from a different context, defines poverty as

*lack of security and being extremely vulnerable. Your basic needs aren't being met; and the only one that you can really depend on to have those needs met is yourself, because you are not in a community that is working together to meet each other's needs.*

Vroonhoven (1985: 65-66) defines poverty as being a result of social interaction and human activities. As such, society is viewed as an arena of conflicting interests between the strong and the weak trying to sustain themselves by reinforcing their positions. This develops into a game with a winner on one side and a loser on the other, with resulting enrichment and impoverishment. People should be viewed in terms of rich or poor when they live in the same society. It is society that defines what is acceptable and what is not acceptable in terms of standards of living and this change over time. It should be noted that a culture determines to a great extent what people need. Because of all this, the experience of poverty varies from one society to another. As such, poverty cannot have a single and common definition. In developing countries, where it is generally known that people are poor, there is still difficulty in defining poverty. For people living in Kivu (one of the eastern provinces of the DRC), where the rural economy is mostly pastoral, a man who is called poor is one who has less than ten cows. However, a man who possesses ten cows or more, regardless of

education, shelter, healthcare, etc., is considered by that community to be rich. Poverty is a relative concept, and its measurement should take different parameters into account.

### **3.3 Understanding Poverty**

As previously mentioned, poverty is a contested concept, and debates regarding its meanings are bound up with those concerning what should be done about it. In the same manner, understanding poverty requires an understanding of social policies that have been developed in response to it, and have thus removed, restructured, or reviewed it. In order to understand poverty, one needs to recognise not only a difference in views regarding the nature of the problem, but also in terms of how to address the issue (Alcock, 2006: 4-5). Policy makers, politicians and researchers agree that poverty is a problem in society. Regardless of the definition or description that one may favour concerning poverty, and whatever state of affairs authors seek to draw one's attention to, the message is that poverty is not merely a state of affairs, but is an unacceptable one (Alcock, 2006: 4).

The understanding of poverty cannot be limited in terms of money and food, because one can have food and yet remain poor. As Schlabach (1990: 26) comments:

*If we describe poverty only in terms of money and food, we are likely to think of solutions solely in terms of money and food. Obviously, both are extremely important. But a prisoner on death row can have money tucked away and an ample diet, yet he has no future, no freedom, little dignity, no options. The same holds true for those whom poverty imprisons.*

“Poverty is hardly God's will. Poverty is anti-life. It is demeaning. It is death. Yet God works in a special way among poor people, for poor people, and through poor people” (Schlabach, 1990: 28).

While the discussion with regards to understanding the concept of poverty is ongoing, another question that comes to mind is: Why are some nations rich while others remain poor? Is this because of lack of access to natural resources? Nash (1986: 186) answers this question when he argues that, "If the major difference between being rich or poor nations were easy access to natural resources, countries like Japan and Taiwan would be poor while nations of South America would be rich".

The left's favourite explanation of why some nations are rich while others are poor is the charge that all poverty results from exploitation. If some person or nation is poor, it must be the result of malevolent actions by some more powerful nation. This leads to the charge that the Third World is poor because it has been exploited by the First-World capitalism (Nash, 1986: 186).

Nash (1986: 186) rejects the argument that the poverty of a Third World nation is a consequence of exploitation by the First World. He argues that the Third World has a number of legitimate complaints against the First World, but it is not true that the poverty of the Third World can be blamed on the First World. According to Nash, the economic superiority of the West is not an effect of colonialism. According to him, European nations such as Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Switzerland were never involved in the establishment of colonies, but are the richest and most advanced nations. Nash (1998: 187-189) adds that contact with the West has been beneficial for the advancement of the Third World economy:

*It was such contacts with the West that introduced the ideas, skills, and resources that helped the Third World nations which have developed. Western contacts have resulted in significant contributions to the development of many areas of Africa through the adoption of the rule of law, public security, modern means of communication and transportation, increased literacy, advances*



*in public health, reduced infant mortality, increased life expectancy, as well as the elimination of slavery.*

Nash (1998: 188) goes on to write that the ease with which many accept the exploitation theory provides an overview of how often Third World poverty is explained in terms of external causes or factors. This theory of poverty as a result of exploitation is represented in the following statement: "Nations are supposed to be poor or become poor because of what other nations have allegedly done to them". In contrast to Nash's argument on poverty in the Third World not being a result of First World exploitation, Khusro (1999: 36-37) argues that the impact of colonial domination, mostly by European powers in locations such as Asia, Africa, and Latin America, has caused two opposite effects on the phenomenon of poverty in these continents. On one hand is the story of exploitation where the organization of the colonial economies had the primary purpose of benefiting the colonial powers. This could easily be explained through the exodus of cheaply purchased or freely taken raw materials, namely cotton, jute, and mineral wealth or treasures; the production of goods back home at low cost with the use of cheap raw materials from the colonies, and the sale of these goods in the colonies, together with the suppression of the local urges of the colonial people, which spells a massive expansion of poverty and a suppression of economic growth and capabilities at local level.

Regardless of the negative aspect of exploitation on the side of colonial powers, certain contributions were made at some levels, such as the development of railways and ports, the laying of country-wide roads, the construction of hills stations and the establishment of some factories and plantations of tea, coffee, and other products. Certain developments occurred for governmental purposes and others for the sake of accommodating industry from the home country in the colonized areas. As one may notice, most of all, the priority was the interest of the colonial powers although contributions from the colonised power had

resulted in some employment, a degree of education, some local expertise, and the training of a number of personnel, both in the colonies as well as back home. In any case, it was the former phenomenon of domination and exploitation that led to massive exploitation and expansion of the phenomenon of poverty in these areas.

The poverty of African people, for instance, cannot only be viewed as being a result of exploitation by the Western nations. Many African governments have a long history of not using resources with good governance, regardless of whether or not those resources are developed locally or are given by donors. Government officials often corruptly keep the funds of the nation for themselves, placing the money in First World banks, where it does not meet the needs of the people for whom it was intended.

On the same issue of understanding poverty and its complexity, Forrester (1997: 86) observes:

*It is very difficult to understand and respond rightly to poverty. While no one denies that imprisonment should be an agency of justice, and many of the disagreements arise from conflicting views on what justice is, some people see poverty as a central issue of social justice while others deny that it has anything to do with justice. The whole notion of social justice is vigorously debated, with some thinkers like Hayek treating it as no more than a dangerous and misleading will-o'-the-wisp, while others, like Rawls, see it as the central component of the component of justice.*

According to Forrester, understanding poverty is the subject of a great deal of confusion. Questions, relating to what it is, how best to respond to it, and how to deal justly in terms of poverty as an issue, are challenging ones that can help to establish its causes and even fashion policies to deal with it. Discussion regarding poverty is not a matter of discussing ideas, but is, rather, related to people; it is about community

and human degradation. “Our interpretation and responses to poverty are in fact indications of how we respond to people who are our neighbours and whether we feel committed to loving them and doing justice to them or not” (Forrester, 1997: 87).

There are some general ways of responding to poverty, as Forrester (1997: 97) suggests. These ways are related to the understanding of the concept under discussion and often overlap. For some people, poverty is viewed as a cultural or psychological pathology. Others view poverty as a self-contained social problem which can be isolated from other items of social policy and treated as a separate entity. Either way, poverty, or the approaches one adopts thereto, involve a philosophical examination of beliefs and concepts, and cannot be viewed in terms of empirical facts alone.

*The people who say that a family is only poor if it cannot afford to eat are in fact making a political point, for in developed countries this extreme kind of poverty is rare and it cannot count as a major disease of society. They are suggesting that poverty is a small and manageable problem. Nevertheless, in situations where there is little absolute poverty, poverty exists as a major, and growing, social problem. Poverty cannot properly be understood as only the extreme end of the scale, any more than sickness can be defined as occurring only when a person is under intensive care or on the operating table (Forrester, 1997: 96).*

Poverty depends on the context. The nature of its main deprivation varies according to the social and economic conditions of the community in which one lives. Some of the main issues of poverty in developing countries that should hold the attention of researchers include hunger, literacy, epidemics, and the lack of health services or drinkable water. These issues may not be central in more developed countries, where hunger is rare, literacy is accessible to all, epidemics

are well controlled and taken care of, health services are typically widespread, and hygienic water is at the disposal of everyone.

### **3.3.1 Poverty and Inequality**

Inequality and poverty are like twins. They are subjects that generate impassioned debates which begin with basic questions related to the dimensions of inequality and poverty. What degree of inequality is too much? How low a level of income implies poverty? Is income the only criterion by which to measure poverty and inequality, or are there other dimensions of inequality that are more relevant? These are the most challenging issues for researchers of poverty and inequality (Schiller, 2008: 16). Schiller argues that:

*Many people regard inequality as a synonym for unfair. In their mind, a society that distributes large slices to some people and crumbs to others is morally corrupted. Such egalitarians believe everyone should share equally in the fruits of a just society. In the communist utopia envisioned by Karl Marx and others, each member of the society would contribute to communal output according to ability and share in that output as needed (Schiller, 2008: 18)*

Like poverty, inequality is a complex concept that cannot be adequately reflected in a single dimension. Monetary incomes, for instance, are an incomplete index of well-being, as they do not represent wealth, access to publicly provided services, or happiness (Schiller, 2008: 16). Debates about inequality and poverty are most often related to income. In other words, how much money should one receive in comparison to others? However, in order to measure well-being, money should not be used as a standard.

*Global inequality in income and living standard have reached grotesque proportion...While 1.3 billion people struggle to live*

*on less than US \$1 a day, the world's richest 200 people doubled their net worth between 1994-1998 to more than \$1 trillion. The world's top three billionaires alone possess more assets than the combined Gross National Product of all the least developed countries and their combined population of 600 million people. About 840 million people are malnourished, and close to one billion find it difficult to meet their basic consumption requirements. More than 880 million people lack access to health services, and 2,6 billion people have no access to basic sanitation (Conachy, 1999: 1).*

With regard to the severe situation of inequality among people and nations, Conachy (1999: 1) asserts that the gulf between rich and poor is growing, and that the income gap between the richest and poorest fifths of the world's population was 74 to one in 1997, up from 60 to one in 1990, and 30 to one in 1960. Conachy adds that the highest income countries possess 86 percent of the world's gross domestic product (GDP), 82 percent of the world's export markets, 68 percent of foreign direct investment, and 74 percent of the world's telephone lines. He subsequently states that those living in the poorest countries share only one percent of any of these (Conachy, 1991: 1).

Even though figures are not available for all the poorest countries, Conachy argues that poverty inequalities are even starker. A country such as Zambia, in 1997 had the average real GDP per capita of US \$ 960. While the poorest fifth of the world's population had a real GDP per capita of only US \$ 216, the healthiest fifth had US \$ 2, 197 (Forrester, 1997: 1). Poverty and inequality researchers from a multi-disciplinary team committed themselves to understand the dimensions and cause of these issues, and of course to propose potential policy solutions.

*Adam Smith examined the distribution of wealth in the commercial type society of his days when, long after that distant*

*'age of shepherds' in which the inequality of fortunes' began, centuries of accumulation of wealth, and the acquisition and appropriation of, and succession to, property inland and other stock had given rise to an unequal distribution. It was a society in which the majority of the population, made up of labourers, workmen and servants, were dependent on a minority of proprietors of land and stock (Taylor, 1990: 4-5).*

Alcock (2006: 48) agrees that there are inequalities in terms of the resources available to people in different parts of the world and within countries. This causes widespread deprivation in many relatively affluent countries and also severe deprivation in certain less affluent ones with the result that large sections of the population are living below the standard acceptable to the wider international community.

We live in a profoundly unequal world in which the extreme poverty that leads to starvation and early death is unfortunately quite common in some parts of the world, notably in sub-Saharan Africa. Such international inequity and extreme poverty are not new phenomena, but the increasing of development and international contact through international agencies and International trade are making it an ever more immediate problem for a wider community of nations (Alcock, 2006: 48).

The huge social inequality within the wealthiest countries and between the wealthiest and poorest countries has been the subject of discussion for a long period of time. Another issue that has also been under discussion is inequality within Third World nations. The South African National Non-Governmental Coalition (SANGOCO), Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) and the South African Human Rights Commission discussed this issue under the theme 'Poverty and Inequality Hearings Education' (Vally, 1998: 4) and observed that:

*Poverty in South Africa is directly linked to the political economy of inequality in a country where wealth and power has*

*historically been the preserve of a racially defined minority. Four years after the first elections, this equation of colour and class hierarchies remains largely intact. Despite attempts at modified reconstitution, through for instance the discourse of black empowerment, there is in practice enrichment for a small black elite grafted into the social structure which bestows severe deprivation for the majority on the one hand and enormous privilege for the minority on the other.*

In other words, the extent of inequality in South Africa is expressed through the indices that show that less than ten percent of the population own over 80 percent of the wealth of the country, while 53 percent of the population earns less than 300 rand per month. Overcoming extreme disparities within education and other social sectors will be successful only if one addresses the issues of extreme income inequality, high unemployment, and overwhelming poverty. Thus, poverty can be understood in terms of a system of inequality generated by the socio-economic structure. Failure to address the above mentioned issues through the introduction of a strategic plan to redress past imbalances will allow the distortions and dynamics introduced by the apartheid system to become self-perpetuating, and will thus continue to reproduce the basis of poverty and inequality (Vally, 1998: 4). If people remain poor and inequality becomes too pronounced, it may lead people to look for different ways to survive, and even to use any means to satisfy their basic needs. This is the reason why, in countries where inequality has created a large gap, crime and other kinds of evil are rampant. Schiller (2008: 19) comments that:

*Other critics of inequality emphasized the social consequences of inequality. Too much inequality may foster resentment and breed crime. Hence society has a collective interest in limiting the gap between the haves and the have-nots. A society steeped in inequalities may suffer from excessive crime rates or end up*

*allocating too much of its scarce resources to property protection, criminal justice, and confinement.*

Schiller's remarks on this situation of inequality seem to reflect the reality that the South African nation is facing; with a high rate of crime in comparison to other African nations. From the above discussion one can conclude that crime in South Africa is a result of apartheid, a political system which promoted inequality and poverty in this country.

Poverty and inequality in Africa are not seen only through the South African system of apartheid. In a country like the DRC, inequality was witnessed during the reign of the late dictator, President Mobutu Sese Seko, and through a group of people named 'Mobutists'. Mobutists were people who worked within the different sectors of the Congolese society, then Zaire, and who were loyal to Mobutu's philosophy, as enunciated in the unique national political party named the MPR (Popular Movement for the Revolution). The wealth of the DRC was held by and shared among those 'Mobutists'. People belonging to this so-called group were capable of buying villas in Europe and elsewhere in the world, whereas they could not build a single house in their own country. They invested more money outside the country than within it. They could afford to send their children to schools in European countries and America, while most of them, being government officials, did not do anything to build schools or hospitals, or to improve the state of these institutions. As Nest (2006: 18) observes, "Mobutu continued directing ever large proportions of state revenues towards presidency and the maintenance of patrimonial systems of rule, and away from economic investment or public good provision". Young and Turner (1985: 168) argue that the extraordinary scale of presidential financial intervention outside the framework of budgetary control was a constant target of external criticism of Zairian state finances but Mobutu clung tenaciously to the practice. The 'Mobutist' class was created around 1967, the year in which the MPR was proclaimed, in the constitution



called *Manifeste de la Nsele*, as a national political party. Every person who was born in the DRC, then Zaire, was granted membership of the party from birth. People working around the late President Mobutu created a kind of class stratification for themselves, and benefited from all the wealth of the country to the detriment of the majority of the population who were living in extreme poverty.

Examples of such a situation in African nations are numerous. This has caused many inequalities in different African communities and societies, with consequent widespread poverty.

The idea that the concept of poverty is essentially one of inequality has some immediate plausibility. After all, transfers from the rich to the poor can make a substantial dent on poverty in most societies. Even the poverty line to be used for identifying has to be drawn with respect to contemporary standards in the community in question, so that poverty may look very like inequality between the poorest group and the rest of the community (Sen, 1988: 24).

On the issue of transferring wealth from the rich to the poor in order to fight inequality and poverty, Nash (1986: 189) holds a different view from that of Sen, considering that:

*Many people believe mistakenly that the major step that must be taken before Third-World poverty can be eliminated is redistributing wealth within that nation. A major view is that there is enough wealth to go around. Even if a particular underdeveloped nation does have a class of wealthy people, it is so small that poverty would continue to exist if all that wealth were confiscated and distributed among the entire nation. Nor can the problem of Third-World poverty be eased by including the wealth of the West in any redistribution plan. Such a plan, if enacted, would succeed only in impoverishing everyone.*

Griffiths (1985: 12), argues similarly to Nash when he points out that “a good deal of wealth in the West is embodied in a highly skilled

labour force, so that it is impossible to transfer high-technology industry to less developed countries without at the same time transferring high-technology personnel as well”.

Griffiths’ argument regarding the wealth being linked to highly skilled labour may be correct. However, one wonders why, for instance, a skilled African person who attended the same school as Western people, and who might even have graduated *magna cum laude*, once he returns to his own country, never becomes as wealthy as the European, who might possess the same degree and skills, and is also working in a developing country. The question here is whether or not a Third-World skilled person actually exists. If the answer is yes, then, according to Griffiths’ argument, the problem is not one of obtaining high-level technology personnel from the West, but rather of making advanced technology available to the developing country and using most of the skilled Third-World personnel trained in the West. The main problem in developing countries is not the lack of qualified or skilled personnel, but the lack of tools, because one still finds skilled and well-trained Third-World people somewhere on the continent, but without any tools. All the theories that such people have learned in Western schools will be rejected, because the people lack the necessary equipment to utilise their skills. When one travels around the world, it is obviously possible to find people from developing countries who are professors in well-known universities in both Europe and America or engineers in large corporations in the West, and so on.

Inequality is an issue that evokes great social concern. For many people, inequality is not only inherently unjust, but also spawns social resentment, political isolation, and crime. On the other hand, inequalities accordingly act as an economic incentive to study, work, serve harder, and invest. The degree of inequality entails a subjective balancing of these equity and efficiency concerns (Schiller, 2008: 34). Poverty and inequality cannot only be understood in terms of income and wealth.

These two elements are not the only relevant dimensions of social status. Neither are they as precise, as one might assume.

### **3.3.2 Poverty and Development**

The low standard of living of the majority of the population in developing countries is singled out as the key issue in development. Economic development cannot only be explained by economic factors, and the concept of development includes more than mere changes in economic indicators. Most people who study the development issue do so because they feel that the present levels of poverty, misery, and injustice are simply unacceptable (Szirmai, 1993: 1-3). Implicit in the use of the term 'development' is the notion that some countries and regions of the world are extremely poor, whereas other countries, representing a relatively small segment of the world's population, are very prosperous.

Any discussion about development is always tied to a number of basic questions such as: Why are poor countries poor and rich countries rich? Why do poor countries lag behind rich countries in the development of their standard of living? How can poor countries become more prosperous and self-reliant? How can poor countries catch up with rich countries? All these questions suggest that the concept of development refers to the economic growth of national income per capita (Donnison, 1982: 6).

Development is a way of removing poverty and helping the poor to rediscover their human dignity. As such, Donnison (1982: 8) writes that:

*To keep out of poverty, people must have an income which enables them to participate in the life of the community. They must be able, for example, to keep themselves relatively well fed and well enough dressed to maintain their self-respect.*

When discussing development in the context of poverty, Narayan (2002: 50) believes that the engagement of poor men and women in optimal productivity and broad-based growth fuelled by private sector activity could be a way to reduce poverty and vulnerability, and at the same time create a path to development. Sen (1988: 28) views development as a process of improvement with respect to a set of values or, in comparison to the relative level of development in different countries, a comparative state of being with regard to such values. He adds that “the assertion that development is a more normative concept which will be measured differently by different people constitutes a serious charge, but is one which affects all areas of social sciences and is not unique to development studies” (Sen, 1988: 28).

According to Reitsma and Kleinpenning (1989: 23), a country should consider itself to be developed when material and immaterial needs have been reasonably satisfied. They view development and underdevelopment as moving in opposite directions, with developedness and underdevelopedness as respective results. Reitsma and Kleinpenning define development as a progressive process that consists of a series of parallel and successive changes which enable an underdeveloped country to become developed. On the other hand, they state that underdevelopment is a retrogressive process which eventually leads to a state of underdevelopedness. They consider both developedness and underdevelopedness to be relative concepts, in that every country or society may be said to be underdeveloped when it is less developed than it could be (Reistma and Kleinpenning, 1989: 23).

Reistma and Kleinpenning (1989: 23) highlight the fact that in 1960, the American geographer, Richard Hartshorne, argued, with regards to these concepts, that in even the richest and most advanced countries, not all material and spiritual needs are satisfied for everyone in all parts of the country. It is difficult, if not impossible, to reach an envisioned and

utopian situation of complete developedness, because there will always be new needs that emerge.

*(1) Development is a never ending process of change which has progressed further in some parts of the world than others. The result is a continuum ranging from comparatively advanced countries, often referred to as 'core' countries, via a wide variety of moderately developed countries, which may be labelled 'semi-core' and 'semi-peripheral' countries, to comparatively backward or 'peripheral' countries. (2) The development stage (high, moderate, or low) in which a country finds itself represents a multidimensional situation in which important needs (food, shelter, clothing, health, education, recreation, social security, personal freedom, religion, culture, etc.) are satisfied to a larger or smaller degree. (3) Since development is a continuing process, the meaning of developed varies with places and time. (4) Fully developed societies do not exist. All we can say is that a particular society may be moving toward a higher level of developedness or a high degree of needs satisfaction for more people (Reistma and Kleinpenning, 1989: 24).*

In order to compare developedness and underdevelopedness, one should choose a standard for measurement. In this regard, the First World has been chosen as the norm to measure developedness. Responding to this, Reitsma and Kleinpenning (1989: 24-25) point out that:

*In the First World as well as the Third World, people have accepted First World standards of material and immaterial well-being as the norm. And what is more, that is the norm which the Third World countries feel they should aspire to reach. To put it in different words, Western development has become synonymous with development, while progress has become synonymous with*

*change in the direction of Western levels of productivity and prosperity.*

Underdevelopment is a complex and burdensome phenomenon to explain. Even if one makes use of all the theories that have been put forward over the years, the concept is still difficult to understand. Underdevelopment is viewed as a growing discrepancy between raised expectations and the existing level of needs satisfaction, regardless of how low this level may be (Reistma and Kleinpenning, 1989: 24). Bednarz and Giardino (1988: 69-72) assert that it is not easy to evaluate and measure the role that resources play in the direct development of a country. According to Bednarz and Giardino (1988: 68), the development of the Third World countries is probably a function of the cultural system operating on the available physical resource base. Thus, although one accepts the importance of mineral resources as a basic requirement for industrialisation, it has been found to be very difficult to use this as a predictor of economic development and an indicator of the well-being of a population.

Bednarz and Giardino's argument is logical, in the sense that development is not a function of the natural resources a country might possess. A country such as the DRC, with all the different resources that it commands, has nonetheless been ranked among the poorest countries in the world. This raises questions such as: Why are Third World countries that possess many natural resources still in a state of underdevelopedness? Is it possible for Third World countries to take responsibility for their own development, without expecting foreign aid? Nash (1986: 190) responds to these questions:

*Many believe that the future development of the Third World and the easing of Third World poverty depends upon the West's provision of foreign aid. P.T. Bauer has objected to the use of the word 'aid' in connection with official transfers of wealth from one government to another. For one thing, much of this alleged*

*'aid' turns out to be aid for little more than the private bank accounts of well-placed officials and politicians in Third World nations. As Bauer sees it, foreign aid is much more likely to obstruct than to promote...the development of the Third World and the relief of poverty.*

In terms of the above mentioned argument, Nash is not in favour of wealth being transferred from the wealthiest countries to the poorest ones. He contends that bad governance and mismanagement will not allow common people to benefit from the wealth that might be thus transferred. It is unfortunate that Nash does not suggest what Third World countries can do to become self-sufficient.

Underdevelopment restricts in many ways. Sometimes, it affects the thoughts and beliefs of the underdeveloped in such a manner that they start thinking negatively about their future. Negative thoughts generally drag people down.

In his definition of underdevelopment, as quoted by Reitsma and Kleinpenning (1989:36), Senghaas, in his book written in German, defines underdevelopment as the structural heterogeneity of peripheral social formations and the concomitant obstruction of the autonomous development of productive forces resulting from the international division of labour caused by the dominance of the capitalist mode of production. This definition has been objected to by Reitsma and Kleinpenning (1989: 36-37) who contend that there are serious objections to this sort of definition. First of all, they argue that the concept of underdevelopment is given a meaning which it did not originally possess. According to Senghaas, the basic feature of underdevelopment is not poverty, low productivity, and rapid population growth, but rather, structural heterogeneity and lack of autonomous development. Reitsma and Kleinpenning view Senghaas' definition as implying that there is only one factor which allegedly causes underdevelopment; this is the constraining effect which capitalism exerts on

indigenous development. According to Reitsma and Kleinpenning, autonomous development, whatever that may be, is not better than dependent development. Senghaas' definition, with its built-in explanation, argues that countries like China and Mongolia cannot be considered as underdeveloped because they are barely integrated in the capitalist world system and are not dominated by foreign capitalist interests. This argument is also discarded by Reitsma and Kleinpenning. According to Senghaas, underdevelopment came with the rise of capitalism. Since he ascribes underdevelopment to an external factor, which is capitalist penetration, he also denies that internal factors might have played an important role. Structural heterogeneity, which may be described as the interwoven coexistence of the modern, capitalist mode of production and the traditional, pre-capitalist mode of production which enables the former to dominate and exploit the latter, is found not only in the Third World, but also in the First and Second Worlds.

Reitsma and Kleinpenning have made relevant remarks in their objections to Senghaas' view on underdevelopment, but it should be noted that the concepts of development and underdevelopment only came into existence after the invasion by Western colonial powers in several parts of the world. The root cause of this invasion was not to help "develop" the underdeveloped parts of the world, but rather to exploit them for the benefit of their own countries. Even though raw material from developing countries is not viewed by some Western researchers as a key element that boosted Western development, its positive impact on the development of Western countries cannot be denied.

Today, Colombia and the DRC are the greatest worldwide producers of columbite tantalum, a combined mineral used for computer chips and cell phones, yet the first beneficiaries of this mineral are the developed countries. While computer chips are made with this mineral, less than 1% of the population of the countries in which the mineral is produced



own computers. It is true that Western countries are not responsible for the underdevelopment of the Third World, but somehow they have been instrumental in keeping Third World countries in a state of poverty through unfair trade, exploitation, inequality, etc.

In exploiting raw materials from the Third World, Western countries could establish large corporations in Africa, Asia, and other parts of the world which are still underdeveloped, if their aim was to help these countries to develop. In this way, jobs could be created, people would have an income, and poverty would be eradicated in one way or another. This could be a starting point for the development of poor countries. However, Western countries have not done so, but rather promoted the well-being of their own people and the economies of their own countries. Discussing external constraints and endogenous development, Sachs (1988: 49) writes that:

*Raw materials prices are at their lowest, reflecting the working of a steady technological trend which reduces the materials input per unit of industrial output. As consequences of this marginalization of primary products in the industrial economies, the very foundations of traditional development theories and policies are shattered... Likewise the falling share of labour in the cost of industrial production...forecloses to Third World countries the options of an outward-looking industrialization, based on their competitive advantage for 'cheap labour' goods.*

### 3.3.2.1 *Causes of Underdevelopment*

Since the end of the Second World War, an increasing number of scholars from different fields have paid attention to the development problems facing Third World countries. Different approaches have been adopted in order to understand the root causes of underdevelopment in this part of the world. According to Stockwell and Laidlow (1981:5), these approaches can be grouped into the following categories: the

psychological, the ideal type, the diffusionist, and the theory of dependency approaches.

### *3.3.2.1.1 The Psychological Approach*

Supporters of this approach seek to account for the presence or absence of economic growth in terms of general personality traits or an inner psychic state that is characteristic of a particular society (Stockwell and Laidlaw, 1981:6). Rooted in Max Weber's classical analysis of the emergence of the Protestant ethic, the psychological approach states that the lack of development in a particular society is due to an insufficient number of people who possess the traits that are viewed as essential in order for development to occur (Stockwell and Laidlaw, 1981: 6). The possession of traits relates to personality. Hagen (1962: 99) defines 'personality' as the complex of qualities other than purely bodily ones which determine how an individual will behave in any given situation. Hagen (1962: 105) argues that several personality traits are associated with economic development. The most important ones, according to Hagen, are:

- (a) *Need achievement*: this refers to a quality that satisfies an individual in terms of resolving problems, manipulating a situation that contains elements not previously dealt with by exercising his judgment and abilities, and attempting to face something difficult in order to test his/her capacity.
- (b) *Need autonomy*: this is a feeling of self-reliance. It makes one independent of the control of one's judgment by others when making decisions.
- (c) *Need order*: this refers to logical achievement with regards to aesthetic relationship as a whole. A person who possesses this quality may be a good bookkeeper and organiser.

Stockwell and Laidlaw (1981:7) regard developing societies as 'traditional' societies characterised by authoritarian social structures, in

which the ascribed statuses are arranged in a hierarchical manner. As such, there is no expectation of economic growth. These two authors rely on Hagen's (1962: 119) comments that:

*The authoritarian individual...perceives the phenomenon of the world as forming a system whose operation is not orderly and perceives the world as not valuing him highly, and sees power as residing in position rather than resulting from accomplishment. Because of the rage and the need to curb it which these perceptions generate in him, he is high in need submission-dominance and low in need...autonomy and achievement and probably low also in need order, but driven to satisfy it by evading recognition of inconsistencies or discrepancies in his perception of the phenomenon.*

As is evident from the above comments and discussion, this approach emphasises personality traits as being one of the causes of underdevelopment in a given society.

### *3.3.2.1.2 The Ideal Type Approach*

This approach groups societies into various types on the basis of characteristics that claim to be indicative of different stages of development. Hence, economic development is viewed as nothing more than a process of change in which developing countries become more like industrialised ones (Stockwell and Laidlaw, 1981: 8-9). In other words, the development of poor countries will mainly depend on their becoming at least 'westernised' (Stockwell and Laidlaw, 1981: 9). Stockwell and Laidlaw wonder how this will happen, because this approach does not indicate how a transition from the traditional society to a modern one is supposed to take place.

A low level of technology, rigid social structure, fatalistic attitude, and low level of per capita output are some of the causes of underdevelopment in terms of the nature of the external economic

relationship that wealthy industrialised nations have historically established between themselves and poor countries (Stockwell and Laidlaw, 1981: 11).

### 3.3.2.1.3 The Diffusionist Approach

Diffusion is understood to be a process through which a cultural item rooted in one society is transferred to another. In its narrow sense, this concept is regarded as a process whereby a less developed country adopts a particular item or items from a more industrialised society in order to improve its own development (Stockwell and Laidlaw, 1981: 11).

This approach points out that facts, such as lacking the surplus capital needed to invest in development programmes, possessing a low level of technology, and having a low need for achievement due to a social structure characterised by the status quo, are the main causes of underdeveloped societies. With regard to the diffusionist approach, Stockwell and Laidlaw (1981: 12-15) conclude that:

*Like the preceding approaches, this one also contains an ethnocentric aspect, that the developing societies have to become more like 'us' with respect to their attitudes and values if they are to be developed. While it may be true that many aspects of their cultural belief systems represent potential obstacles to development, the need for some modification in this respect does not require that they become 'westernised'. From the point of view of the societal approach to be taken in this volume, the diffusionist model is limited by virtue of the fact that it explicitly places heaviest emphasis on the economic and social structural aspect of the problem, while paying attention to what we regard as the equality important demographic dimension of the development problem.*

Frank (1969: 48) argues that underdevelopment, according to this view, is the original 'traditional' state, as much as it is in the first mode. The tenets of this approach advise people in underdeveloped countries to await and welcome the diffusion of development aid from abroad. This approach also stresses that diffusion and acculturation bring about development. Resisting diffusion and acculturation leads to underdevelopment. In terms of the diffusionist approach, it seems clear that no society can be developed without becoming 'westernised'. This could be true if the concept of 'development' is understood in the sense of Western countries being the standard, as noted earlier.

The abovementioned causes of underdevelopment are not exhaustive. There are many causes but those listed here have simply been used as examples.

#### *3.3.2.1.4 The Dependency Theory*

This theory was developed during the 1960s by Latin American scientists looking for solutions as well as an explanation to the economic problems faced in their part of the world (Reitsma and Kleinpenning, 1989: 221). The dependency theory is concerned with the unequal relationship which exists between imperialist, developed countries and dependent, underdeveloped countries. The main problem here is to keep underdeveloped countries dependent upon more industrialised countries in order to meet the needs of the imperialists.

### **3. 4 Developing Countries and Industrialisation**

Industrialisation in the Third World is not a completely new phenomenon. In some countries, it dates back to the early part of the twentieth century (Jenkins, 1992: 19). Many countries in the developing world are former colonial territories which obtained their independence a short time ago. After the Second World War, these countries saw themselves as being different from European and North American

nations, in the sense that the former were very poor and less industrialised (Simpson, 1994: 94). Machines, factories and power stations seemed to be the way forward in planning their own future.

*Industrialization was the way to secure...the removal of poverty. Both politicians within and economists without, the developing countries regarded industrialization as having the key role to play in developing planning (Simpson, 1994: 93).*

Some developing countries are the reservoirs of craft skills, as Simpson (1994: 94) observes. He states that their production is geared towards local demand, and the exploitation of local raw material resources is too small to sustain a large modern factory. Most of the raw materials are agricultural products such as oils, fibres, and leather, while the rest are minerals (Simpson, 1994: 94). In terms of mineral exploitation, even though a large percentage of minerals emanate from the developing world, most, if not all, industrialised countries do not want to invest in developing countries which, to them, are regarded as being risky in view of their social unrest and local military activities (Cole, 1988: 64).

Africa is the least industrialised and urbanised continent on this planet. The African continent is characterised by indigenous local industries. Towns and villages in West Africa, for instance, display a range of domestic industries such as hand-spinning and weaving using cotton, camel hair or wool-producing cloth for clothing and bedding (Simpson, 1994: 94). Commenting on the operating system of traditional industries in developing countries, Simpson (1994: 94) writes that:

*The cattle, goats, and sheep, which are slaughtered for their meat, yield hides and skins which by elementary forms of tanning are converted to leather for saddles, harnesses, cushions, belts, and shoes in a sequence from primary processing through the skilled making-up and the application of artistic talents. Lean,*

*lateritic iron ores worked from shallow surface pits are smelted at low temperatures and beaten to a purity which enables iron worked by village smiths to produce tools for the home and agriculture including hoes of sophisticated designs. Brass and copper working produces prestige goods such as the brass pots given in marriage dowries; potters, either resident in large settlements or itinerant workers serving many small villages produce more mundane vessels from local clays.*

The traditional industry in developing countries does not operate in the same manner. It operates according to the environment and culture, as well as the historical experience of the milieu from which it stems. On the other hand, industrialisation in the First World, especially in Europe, has opened a door for the demand for raw materials to foster European industries. This situation has shifted the opinions of people in developing countries away from locally manufactured products to European ones. The reason for this is that products manufactured in Europe are regarded as better than those stemming from local industries. Simpson (1994: 95) observes that:

*An enlarged market for European manufacturers also became necessary. These manufactures were often superior to goods made by the domestic industries of the Developing World and increasingly replaced them so that what survives is but a relic of a former economy.*

European industries did not come into existence overnight, with the sudden appearance of large factories. Certainly, to begin with, there were small, local factories, as in developing countries. At that time, if colonial powers had invaded Europe, it is not certain what the European economy and industries would look like presently. If industrialisation in developing countries does not result in development, it can be concluded

that the invasion of developing countries by European powers has had a purpose of keeping Third World countries underdeveloped.

Beaudoin (2007: 58-59) observes that “industrialization and imperialism fundamentally altered the outlines of world poverty by transforming the way wealth was generated around the globe”. He adds that:

*The process of devastating more or less independent economies typically began by impoverishing the states that protected the autonomy of their market systems of production. In the same areas, like India and Sub-Saharan Africa, Europeans achieved this via outright domination and displacement of traditional rulers. In regions where indigenous sovereigns retained at least nominal independence, like China and the Ottoman Empire, industrialized nations used a combination of military and indebtedness to achieve their goals (Beaudoin, 2007: 67-68).*

Beaudoin (2007: 68) goes on to write that industrialised nations employed strategies to reduce the viability of independent economies in developing countries. One of these strategies was the alienation of native rights to natural resources, typically followed by the assertion of colonial control. This was accomplished by the displacement of the indigenous population from the areas where natural resources were to be exploited. Beaudoin (2007: 68) cites the example of Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, where Europeans appropriated over 15 percent of the land – more than 16 million acres, in the first decade of colonisation alone. Another example cited by Beaudoin is South Africa, where whites restricted black ownership of land in 1913. In such a situation, one wonders how Africans could prosper with such interference by Western nations, aiming to achieve their goals regardless of the needs of people in developing countries.

Industrialisation in developing countries varies in different sectors depending on the goals of industrialised nations during the colonial



period. Most business was associated with the extraction of minerals and also represented the industrial equivalent of plantations. There are numerous examples of this. For instance, in Africa, the copper mines and smelters in the DRC, formerly Zaire, and Zambia, and the tin mines of Nigeria, date back to the early part of the 20th century (Simpson, 1994: 96).

Because of the goal of Western countries to develop their own economies, the manufacturing industry in colonial territories was restricted. Economic development in the colonial period did not encourage the industrialisation of developing countries. Accordingly, Simpson (1994: 97) comments that:

*The economic development of the colonial era bears the mark of their external origin and focus. The transport development was essentially designed to extract resources and products and transport them to the new ports for shipping to the markets of the industrialized nations. The railway map of Africa demonstrates this most clearly with its series of isolated railway systems connecting interior to coast but rarely country with country.*

Yet another obstacle to industrialisation in developing countries was the small size of the domestic market. Most countries in the Third World were not populated, while also lacking purchasing power to provide a substantial market, particularly in the countryside (Jenkins, 1992: 19).

It is important to realise that economic change and industrialisation will never take place in developing countries without a change in the minds and hearts of their leaders and people. In order to achieve these goals, Third World people must work harder towards an ethic of self-reliance, and must constantly seek alternative ways of achieving the necessary progress.

### **3.5 Developing Countries vis-à-vis World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund, and World Bank**

#### **3.5.1 Developing Countries and the WTO**

International trade has a long history. In Africa, it dates back to the period of the trans-Saharan caravan, around the 11<sup>th</sup> century, in West Africa. In Central Africa, it is suggested that mining activities were linked to Arab export markets to the South-east of Africa. Research also indicates that in East Africa, trade in spices and ivory was carried out between Africans and Arabs. This long history indicates that African business was successful within an informal sector (Mbaru, 2003: 92). Madeley (1996: 1) advocates the importance of international trade:

*International trade has the potential to help materially poor countries out of poverty. Poor nations have seen richer countries increase their wealth by trading heavily with each other. For a resource-poor country the chance of getting a large slice of world trade offers a chance to earn more in richer markets, and to gain more resources to fight poverty, and the chance of moving from a peasant economy to a diversified economy that can meet the growing clamour for jobs.*

The World Trade Organization (WTO) was intended to be a place where nations could meet, discuss equality and negotiate rules of trade for their mutual benefit, in the service of sustainable, international development (Macarov, 2003: 104). Instead, however, Macarov observes that the WTO has become an unbalanced institution, largely controlled by the United States and other European nations (Macarov, 2003: 104). With regards to the unfairness of the WTO, he comments that “at the WTO meetings, important deals are hammered out in negotiations attended by the trade ministers of a couple dozen of powerful nations, while those of poorer countries wait in the bar outside

for news” (Macarov, 2003: 104). Fairness requires that all developed and developing nations sit together around the table and discuss matters of international trade that involve all parties. When a gathering on international trade takes place and representatives of developing countries are not participating, decisions that come out of this meeting will not necessarily benefit developing countries. Drimmelen (1998: 29) views free trade between nations as being beneficial to humankind. According to him, many politicians today should be regarded as God’s ambassadors, since scarcely a week passes without someone somewhere announcing that trade must continue.

*When the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) talks ended in December 1993, some 100 countries promised to cut tariffs, dismantle non-tariff barriers to trade and liberalize trade in services... The Uruguay Round was the creation of the World Trade Organization (WTO), a new institution to administer and implement, act as a forum for new trade negotiations, resolve trade disputes and cooperation with other international institutions in global policy-making (Drimmelen, 1998: 29).*

Even though the issue of free trade is welcomed by everyone, Mbaru (2003: 104) is more cautious when he argues that the idea of free trade between the United States and Africa needs to be approached carefully. Because of the highly divergent levels of economic development between the two, the implementation of free trade may turn out to be distinctly one-sided, with US exporters benefiting disproportionately from the removal of African trade barriers. It is in such a business relationship that one finds most developed nations falling into the unethical issues of greed, injustice, lies, lack of fairness, etc. Klay (1986: 127) recognises that if trade results in mutual benefits, it will not always be equally advantageous to both parties. Regardless of all this,

for a long time, international trade has been recognised as being an important vehicle for economic growth.

With regard to trade in developing countries, Madeley (1996: 54) states that the major opportunity for most developing countries to industrialise themselves for the export market relies on turning their primary agricultural commodities into processed foodstuffs, and developing their exports, namely textiles and clothing. In terms of competition of goods in the market during trade, Madelay (1996: 55) remarks of some unfair actions by industrialised nations:

*External barriers consist of those erected by purchasing countries, that is, constraints on the demand side. Chief among them are tariffs, quotas, rules-of-origin, 'voluntary' export restraints, health and administrative regulations, monitoring and surveillance, and subsidies given by governments of industrialized countries to allow their manufacturers to cut cost so that their goods can compete on price with imports from developing countries, which were contrary to GATT.*

Madeley illustrates the protection of the market on the side of industrialised nations by using a very simple example. He says that if an Indian garment is to be sold, for instance, in the United Kingdom for a price of 10 pounds, and within the UK, the same garment made by a UK citizen is sold for 12 pounds, UK manufacturers will not be happy about Indian products being sold in their country. Thus, they will do whatever they can by means of economic barriers to discourage Indian manufacturers from exporting their products (Madeley, 1996: 56). What is generally disturbing is that these barriers are one-sided. It is seldom that one sees developing countries constrain industrialised nations with barriers on their importation of either manufactured products or raw materials.

The difficulties facing developing countries in setting up barriers, as developed nations do, stem from the former countries not being united.

Every country tends to work independently. America has been united, and more recently, the European nations are now also united, economically speaking. How can a single African country set up barriers regarding the exportation of goods from one of the European nations or America? In doing so, there is no doubt that such a developing country disappears from the map of international trade. As long as Africa is not united, there will be no fair trade, and injustice will continue to occur.

Under the Lomé Convention, the 70 countries which made up the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group entered into an agreement to sell their manufactured goods and processed agricultural foodstuffs to the 12 European countries without facing any barriers. In theory, ACP countries were exempt from any kind of restrictions. The first aid deal was signed in 1975 at the Togolese capital, Lomé. This was a breakthrough in North-South trade and aid relations, and also a step forward in the New International Economic order (Madeley, 1996: 63). Madeley adds that:

*Although the Lomé Convention gives ACP nations the right to sell most of their manufacturer goods and processed agricultural foodstuffs in the EU, the ACP's share of its market has declined since 1975. The voluntary export restraint that was imposed against Mauritius...cast severe doubt on the spirit of the Convention. It shows that EU countries will not hesitate to restrict entry for products that considered a threat to their own industries. EU countries are only willing to import ACP manufactured goods if quantities are so small (Madeley, 1996: 63).*

The Lomé Convention raised high expectations among developing nations. Unfortunately, as Madeley (1996: 64) observes, “The Lomé Convention has been of doubtful benefit to ACP countries; it has not provided the economic uplift that many hoped for”.

On June 23, 2000, the European Union and the 77 ACP countries signed the Cotonou Agreement, which entailed cooperation in trade and aid for development. The agreement is renewable every five years for a period of 20 years, and includes an increasable amount of 15.2 billion euros from European Development Funds (EDF) for use between 2000 and 2005 (Powers and Deh, 2004: 5). One of the pillars of the Cotonou Agreement is financial assistance for the development of economic and social programmes as well as encouragement of regional integration for issues related to public health, the environment and transportation. Another pillar of the Cotonou agreement is that of cooperation through trade. This highlights the significant changes that have occurred since the Lomé Convention. By January 1, 2008, Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) had been negotiated in order to replace the former rules governing trade. These EPAs will be subject to all WTO guidelines (Powers and Deh, 2004: 5). Discussing the Cotonou Partnership Agreement and its implementation, Powers and Deh (2004: 6) indicate that:

*The Cotonou Agreement asserts four underlying principles: the equality of member countries as partners and the appropriation of their own strategies of development; the participation of groups outside the national government (civil society, private sector, local authority); mutual dialog and differentiation according to region, based on the needs and strengths of a particular area.*

However, Cotonou represents for many discontinuity between the professed ideal of sustainable development and the current focus on market competition and free trade zones. Some argue that the European Union is abusing its financial and institutional power, holding the ACP countries in a state of dependence.

Powers and Deh argue that the status of the Least Developed Countries (LCD) is accorded to 60% of the ACP group. Many of these

are African nations that are difficult to define. One of the MDGs, especially goal eight, advocates the establishment of global partnerships through the creation of a non-discriminatory and rule-based trade system. The aim of this is to address the needs of least developed countries by which means of tariff and quota-free access to exports, a high level of debt-relief or debt cancellation, and increased aid for countries which struggle the most, providing access to affordable medication, and making new technologies available, allowing countries in this particular category to receive special attention and treatment in order to accelerate their progress towards poverty reduction and sustainable development (Powers and Deh, 2004: 12).

### **3.5.2 Developing Countries and the IMF**

The IMF came into official existence on December 27, 1945, when 29 countries signed its articles of Agreement at the conference held in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, USA, July 1-22, 1944. However its financial operations only began on March 1, 1947. The Fund was created because of the need to prevent economic crises such as that of the Great Depression (Heakal, 2008: 1). The IMF remains a committed partner in the international effort to help countries reduce poverty, attain higher growth, and achieve the MDGs. The Fund provides support to low-income countries in different ways: policy advice, technical assistance, and financial support, including debt relief. The Fund's role in helping countries to establish macroeconomic stability and sustain high levels of growth is central to this support. The support of the IMF focuses on low-income countries and those applying poverty reduction strategies. Kabler (1995: 64) argues that the outpouring of advice and admonition that has marked the fiftieth anniversary of the IMF and the World Bank offered various alternatives to these international institutions. Some reactions against these two institutions are noted by Kabler:

*Critics on the left, convinced that Bretton Woods organizations perpetuate poverty and environmental degradation, and skeptics on the right, who counsel reliance on private financial markets, urge simple abolition of these institutions. Those who do not recommend this drastic alternative suggest one of two futures. A return to first principles marks the recommendations of the Bretton Woods commission: restoring the IMF to its place at the center of the international monetary affairs and linking to “a more formal system of coordination” among the industrialised countries, one that aims at stabilizing exchange rates (Kabler, 1995: 64).*

According to Spraos (1988: 183) there is a conflict between the role that the IMF was supposed to play and what it is undertaking currently. The said role was to provide early stage assistance to countries in balance-of-payments difficulties in order to ease their adjustment process and encourage them not to precipitate action which could be unduly disruptive to other countries. Spraos (1988: 184) asserts that:

*What the Fund is actually doing is quite different. Its conditionality terms are, or are perceived to be, so disagreeable that countries need to be desperate to resort to IMF’s assistance. For middle-income countries with a credit rating, this means that they come to the Fund only after they have sunk up to their necks in bank debt, at which point the creditor banks expect the Fund to play the role, if not of receiver, of creditor-appointed overload.*

Whatever reason is advanced, Spraos (1988: 184) views the conditionality practices of the Fund as they have developed over the years, and as currently operating in the context of the international debt crisis, as being in conflict with the role which the Fund was called on to play, namely providing early assistance for balance-of-payments need.



Irvin, Gilbert and Vines (2004: 203) agree that the IMF has an important role to play in the promotion of economic development, and this should be extended to include the liberalisation of the capital account in order to formalise it. The greatest contribution that the IMF can make is to offer advice to governments and Central Banks. The International Financial Institutions Advisory Committee, commissioned by the US Congress in the aftermath of the Eastern Asia crisis, recommended that the IMF focus entirely on preventing a crisis, and stop the practice of providing loans with policy conditions after a country has already entered a crisis (Vreeland, 2003: 1). The economic problem in the Third World is a serious one, which needs particular attention.

Fixing the economic problem of the Third World was no longer viewed as merely a question of stabilization. Rather, the fundamental structure and management of economy was now seen to be at fault. In the long run, stabilization was a futile task as the underlying problems in the economy remained. Hence, the IMF began to require that countries receiving foreign exchange assistance implement structural adjustment. In the 1990s, the IMF stepped up the number of specific conditions it required countries to meet. IMF opponents nevertheless continued to believe that policies of the IMF hurt growth, whereas the Fund argued the opposite (Vreeland, 2003: 3).

Klay (1986: 62) argues that some progress has been made by the IMF in providing increased foreign exchange to assist developing countries that are experiencing temporary problems of balance-of-payments. Poor countries need to be aided with debt relief, readjusting interest rates, and extending the payment period for loans.

According to Saitoti (1987: 30), apart from structural rigidities that obstruct a rapid response to Fund policies, economies on the African continent face another problem that restricts their ability to attempt a stabilisation cure. In favour of stabilisation, Saitoti contends that:

*In the long run...stabilization and liberalization prescriptions will lead to renewed economic growth. Under these conditions, in most African economies depending foremost on the out-put of small forms for general prosperity, renewed growth will spread its benefits widely among the population, benefiting small farmers, rural workers, small traders, and those currently unemployed. But we have to deal first with the short run to preserve both basic standard of living and political stability.*

On a continent such as Africa, where poverty results in a bare level of subsistence for many people, Saitoti warns governments to be careful about prescriptions for long-term recovery that raise the essential prices of commodities for the very poor. Saitoti's (1987: 30) description of the African economic problem suggests some guidelines in term of which changes in Fund procedures and conditions would be welcome:

*First and most obviously, we need loans that are larger and cover a long period of both disbursement and repayment. Second, African countries would be helped by a more flexible approach to the contributors of Fund assistance. In some cases, for example, adverse changes in circumstances may require larger disbursements to support certain policy initiatives, and in such instances it should be possible either to increase the funds available or to scale down our policy ambitions without forfeiting the next tranche of a stand-by. Third, the Fund should become more directly involved in difficult institutional changes needed to make markets work more effectively and, if necessary, be prepared to lend funds in support of such changes. Finally, the Fund should become more directly concerned about the distribution aspect of their conditions and assistance to ameliorate their effects on the poorest in our societies.*

Saitoti would like to call on the Fund to understand that the applicability of the Fund's policies is different in Africa, because of its uniqueness. Nyirabu (1987: 36) argues that the Fund should consider the fact that a monetary policy in Africa is less effective than in developed countries. One of the problems is the fact that in most African countries, there is great liquidity outside of the banking system.

*We are passing through a critical phase in the history of our relation with the Fund. Our balance of payments situation will take time to set itself right. In the meantime if the present policies of the Fund continue, most of us will be forced to repay large amounts of previously contracted Fund debt, as indeed some of us are already doing (Nyirabu, 1987: 36).*

The criticisms of the IMF come from across the political spectrum, from the radically liberal to the radically conservative, as Ripley (2006: 60) observes. According to Ripley (2006: 61), there is dissatisfaction with the policies of the Fund. In all criticisms, the only commonality about these complaints is that something is seriously amiss at the IMF, and that action should be taken to remedy the situation as soon as possible.

### **3.5.3 Developing Countries and the World Bank**

Facing the challenge of reducing levels of poverty while the population in developing countries continues to grow to an estimated 3 billion over the next 50 years, the World Bank works to bridge the divide and turn rich country resources into poor country growth (World Bank, 2008: 1). The World Bank is not a "bank" in the common sense. It is one of the United Nations' specialised agencies, made up of 184 member countries. The members and borrowing nations are aware of how the institution is financed, how its money is spent, as well as of how to abide by its regulations.

The World Bank is an internationally supported bank that provides loans to developing countries for development programmes with the stated goal of reducing poverty. This international institution was formally established on December 27, 1945, after the ratification of the Bretton Woods agreement. As far as history is concerned, the very first loan of US \$ 250 million was issued to France for its post-war reconstruction. The initial focus of the Bank's work was the reconstruction of European nations after World War II. Drimmelen (1998: 53) states that:

*The World Bank was set up to provide capital for reconstruction and development. After the war-torn countries had rebuilt their economies, it turned its attention to the South. Assuming that development could be achieved by transferring money to the South, the World Bank saw itself as an intermediary, borrowing money on the Northern capital markets to lend to countries in the South, not forgetting that it should make a profit on these operations.*

Not only does the Bank provide financial support to its member nations, but also analytical and advisory services to facilitate the implementation of the lasting economic and social improvements that are needed in many under-developed countries.

In terms of the operating system of the World Bank, Coffey (2006: 19) argues that "The Bank guarantees loans, which implies lending to governments. The usual maturity for such loan is 15 and 20 years, with a grace period of 5 years. During the period 1992-1997, annual average loans were \$ 14.5 billion." Furthermore, Colley (2006: 19) notes that the International Development Association (IDA) also provides loans from its own funds directly to governments for social projects such as building schools, hospitals and roads. Borrowers do not have to pay interest on the funds borrowed. The loans are made for a period of between 35 and 40 years, with a grace period not exceeding 10 years.

In the view of Narayan (2002: 9-10) the Bank enhances capacity building projects:

*Strong civil society and institutions – at both local and national levels – that learn consciously from their experience are essential for sustained poverty reduction. Bank-financed projects and programs that require local organizational capacity...the Bank can support the capacity of in-country intermediary organizations, research institutes and non-government institutions (NGOs) that conduct poverty, institutional, social and governmental assessments.*

According to Azcarate (1986: 184), one of the most interesting and useful aspects of the Bank's role has been its efforts in adaptation to changing and different conditions of member countries, and in learning from experience. The Bank's flexibility towards realities in different developing countries has made a major contribution, because programmes are adapted to the reality in the field. This is what is being requested of the IMF by many developing countries.

The Bank's assistance to Africa during the first years emphasized investment projects, microeconomic institutions and the alleviation of poverty, with the reasoned expectation that the later two objectives could be effectively combined. There is no doubt that, in some immeasurable way, Bank lending contributed to African growth and was instrumental in building a stronger institution base (Azcarate, 1986: 191).

In pursuing an empowerment agenda as an integral aspect of poverty reduction, the World Bank's comparative advantage lies in its relationship with more than 100 governments around the world. This advantage obviously lies in giving advice to governments, evaluating their work, facilitating links to financial investments, and enabling an empowerment agenda. The four areas in which the Bank provides support are: analysis, evaluation and advice, convening, and enabling

and capacity building (Narayan, 2002: 9). Meeting the MDGs by 2015 is being viewed as a difficult challenge facing many African countries today. Approximately 300 million Africans still live in extreme poverty. There is also the threat of HIV/AIDS wiping out any gains in life expectancy. The stagnation of the economy in certain key countries of the continent, as well as their political problems, is destroying the ability of the African continent to attract investments (World Bank, 2003: 83).

In Africa, the Bank's strategy is to speed up the process towards achieving the MDGs. The strategic objectives are consistent with those outlined by African heads of state and continued in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (World Bank, 2003: 89). As with the IMF, critics attack the Bank's policies towards underdeveloped nations.

## **3.6 The Effect of Globalisation in Developing Countries**

### **3.6.1 Definitions**

Globalisation is a complex, multi-layered concept: a multifaceted process that defies unique definition. Different authors emphasise different aspects of the relative causes and effects of globalisation, because of the differences in the definition of the process (Nkandawire, 2005: 155). Despite the fact that the definition of globalisation has been attempted by hundreds of authors and distinguished speakers on the topic, the word continues to hold very different meanings for different people. Nkandawire argues that whenever globalisation is associated with Africa, the word that often comes to mind is 'marginalisation'. Thus, Nkandawire views globalisation in terms of marginalisation:

*The threat of marginalization has hung over Africa's head like the sword of Damocles and has been used in minatory fashion to prod Africans to adopt appropriate policies. In most writings*

*globalization is portrayed as a train which African nations must choose to board or be left behind (Nkandawire, 2005: 155).*

Ugarteche (2000: 75) defines globalisation as growth in economic activity through the growing movement of goods and services by means of trade and investment across borders, as well as the exchange of information, within a very short time. He adds that:

*Globalization is a word that includes a number of concepts: from widespread access to the integration of markets for goods, services, capital and labour. It is said that the globalization of the economy will allow for development. Under globalization, competition is based on productivity (Ugarteche, 2000: 95).*

Bhalla and Lapeyre (2004: 182) view globalisation as a phenomenon involving not only interdependence but also new social and cultural aspects. They add that:

*Globalization is characterized by a process resulting from technological innovation – in particular in information and communication technologies (ICTs). These technologies have accelerated global transfers of capital, labour, information and knowledge. Indeed, they have facilitated the fragmentation of production around the world (Bhalla and Lapeyre, 2004: 182-183).*

Globalisation can be described as a process by which people of the world are united into a single society and live together. This process is always combined with economic, technological, socio-cultural, and political forces. As a term, globalisation is often used to refer to economic globalisation, which means the integration of national economies into the international economy through trade, foreign direct investment, capital flow, migration, and expansion of technology. Amoore, Dodgson and Gills (2000: 12) argue that “the term

‘globalization’ has served as an arresting metaphor to provide an explanation, meaning, and understanding of the nature of contemporary capitalism”. They subsequently point out that most scholars have reached a common agreement that globalisation comprises a broad range of material and nonmaterial aspects of production, distribution, management, finances, information, communication technologies, and capital accumulation. In their argument, Amoore, Dodgson and Gills (2000: 15) stress the fact that there are three main visible effects of globalisation:

- a. the increase in the speed and flow of capital in the form of money;
- b. the advancement of computer-driven technologies; and
- c. the renewed impetus towards regionalisation.

According to Ellwood (2001: 12), globalisation is a new word which describes an old process, namely the integration of the global economy that was established a long time ago with the launch of European colonialism during the last five centuries. The process gathered speed over the past quarter-century, with the explosion of computer technology, dismantling of trade barriers and expansion of the political and economic power of multinational corporations. Ahunwan (2003: 25) regards globalisation as being a contentious term. He argues that, in terms of both socio-economic and political thought, the concept raises debates on several issues such as its historical evolution, actors, effects, advantages, and disadvantages. He adds that “despite the disagreements, the term globalization describes social, economic, political, cultural, and technological changes that constitute the context of law”. With regards to the ongoing discussion about globalisation, Adams, Gupta and Mengisteab (1999: 1) consider that:

*Globalization is the defining characteristic of our time. The modern system of independent nation states and distinct national*



*economies is being replaced by a single translational political economy. Power and authority are steadily shifting to global institutions and corporations. National governments have seen their sovereignty and control over domestic political and economic affairs rapidly diminish.*

Even though globalisation affects all countries, Adam, Gupta, and Mengisteab (1999: 1) believe that the degree of change is not the same throughout the world, and that a distinction ought to be drawn between industrialised nations of the North and developing nations of the South. As Aisbett (2004: 3) states, “globalization may be viewed as the aggregate result of increased integration on behalf of many individual countries. We need to consider how individual countries become integrated into the global economy”.

### **3.6.2 Effects of Globalisation**

Globalisation is a two-edged sword, bringing benefits to some and misery to others (Drimmelen, 1998: 10). Writing in favour of competition in globalisation, Drimmelen advocates that:

*One of the hallmarks of globalization is increased and almost ruthless competition. No one would deny that competition can sometimes be very useful. It promotes innovations, stimulates production of better goods and services and helps to achieve an efficient use of resources. Human nature has room for both competition and cooperation, and economic practice should also allow for both: competition in appropriate areas, always controlled against trickery and manipulation, cooperative arrangements where that encourages the best contributions of all partners.*

Debate between pro-globalisation and anti-globalisation camps is misleading, as it obfuscates policy issues, according to Bhalla and

Lapeyre (2004: 183). They aver that the process of economic globalisation has become something irreversible, although opinions regarding the extent of global integration of the different economies of nations and regions may differ. On a global scale, labour has become more specialised, segmented and even complex, in effect creating a new international division of labour. Globalisation takes into account that economic growth and power is increasingly linked to control over international banking institutions, information and technology. With globalisation, power is dispersed among more actors, and interregional competition is heightened (Mittelman, 1996: 17).

### *3.6.2.1 Views on Globalisation*

#### *3.6.2.1.1 Proponents of Globalisation*

As Drimmelen previously stated, globalisation can be compared to a two-edged sword, meaning that it has both a positive and a negative aspect. Regarding its positive effects, Drimmelen (1998: 10) considers that globalisation has certainly brought progress and new opportunities to the world. He cites the world infant mortality rate that has been reduced over the last 30 years. Life expectancy in the North and South has also been increased by more than half by 23 years and 11 years respectively. Bhalla and Lapeyre (2004: 185) perceive tremendous economic growth opportunities in globalisation, reducing or even eliminating North-South antagonism. In the same vein, for Aisbett (2004: 8):

*Proponents of globalization often hold a much more optimistic view of the impact of globalization on corporate political power. They argue that corporate power input to policy-making can be constructive, and that globalization actually decreases the likelihood of policy capture by industry. The latter point is supported by the observation that globalization is often associated with increased accountability and openness of*

*national governments, and increased competition for national monopolies.*

Globalisation has allowed the emergence of worldwide production markets and broader access to a range of foreign products for consumers and companies. On the financial side, it has enabled the emergence of a worldwide financial market and better access to external financing for corporations, and national and sub-national borrowers. In the economic domain, globalisation has promoted a global common market open to everybody, based on the free exchange of goods and capital. With regard to its positive impact on some of the Third World nations, Brubaker (2007: 37) asserts that China and India are viewed as being the biggest winners as regards globalisation. These two Third World nations have experienced dramatic economic growth, which has exerted a positive impact on the reduction of poverty. Globalisation has gained a strong foothold in these two nations, when compared to areas less affected by globalisation, such as Sub-Saharan Africa, where poverty has remained stagnant.

*China's growth has been more than 10% a year over a number of years. India has grown 8% for the last three years; its large technology companies 30-40%. China increased its exports from USD 14 billion in 1980 to USD 365 billion in 2002 (Brubaker, 2007: 37).*

The researcher comments that proponents of globalisation believe that the first phase of globalisation, which is market-oriented, should be followed by another phase, which is one of building global political institutions representing the will of citizens. Discussing the limited impact of globalisation on the Africa continent, Aisbett (2004: 32) avers:

*Globalization's proponents claim that many of Africa's economic problems are due to lack of openness and exclusive, inappropriate government intervention. Globalization's critics*

*claim that Africa's woes come from sources (including corrupt or incompetent governments), but the forced liberalization imposed by structural adjustment programs and other lending conditions has not delivered the promised growth. Instead globalization has only made living conditions worse for the poor as government services are cut back, and instability increased.*

This argument by a proponent of globalisation should make African governments think twice. In some countries, such as the DRC, where the government imposes high taxes on the importation of products such as hi-tech equipment, it is normal that only a few people own, for instance, computers and other tools with which to keep in touch with the world, instead of being isolated.

#### *3.6.2.1.2 Opponents of Globalisation*

Anti-globalisation is a pejorative term used to describe the political stance of people and groups who oppose the neo-liberal view of globalisation. Macarov (2003: 102) argues that:

*Opponents of globalization see it 'as of benefit to the upper groups in society, to the multinational companies and the affluent world; and as detrimental to the satisfaction of public needs', and as a 'force for the perpetuation and accentuation of inequalities within and between groups of countries for the benefit of multinationals and the upper classes...'*

Bhalla and Lapeyre (2004: 190) assert that "the losers from globalization are the rising number of the working poor and precarious job-holders...who experience a growing economic and social vulnerability". On the same issue, Bhalla and Lapeyre (2004: 188) add that globalisation is a game with winners and losers, and often the rules of the game seem unfair to a great number of players who are more aware of the unfairness of the global economy, which is biased towards the interests of transnational corporations and the richest countries.

Similarly, for Ugarteche (2000: 95) “theorists suggest that globalization will shelter only the richest and most productive economies”. Critics stemming from the opponents of globalisation argue that poorer countries are sometimes at a disadvantage, because their main exports are usually agricultural goods, and it is thus difficult for them to compete in the global market with stronger countries that subsidise their own farmers. The deterioration of the protection of weaker nations against industrialised nations has resulted in the exploitation of people from the former, who become a source of cheap labour for the benefit of the stronger industrialised powers.

Buckman (2004: 4) argues that “the anti-globalization movement is a very broad church which takes in activists concerned with...poverty, the right of indigenous people, the rights of the unemployed...to name just a few issues”. While globalisation is boosting the economy of some developing nations, such as India and China, as previously mentioned, it is leaving a destructive and negative scar on the continent of Africa. As Mensah (2006: 15) observes:

*Africa’s marginalization in the global economy is a continuing concern to African leaders and the international community. Past promises of genuine partnership between Northern actors and Africa have failed to materialise into positive measures to alleviate the long-term economic problems facing the continent. Indeed, poverty on the continent is an ongoing challenge for Africans.*

According to Ahunwan (2003: 37), there is a general feeling that African countries are disadvantaged in the global economy because of their level of underdevelopment and appropriate policy approaches, which are still contentious.

Globalisation is viewed as a century-long process, tracking the expansion of the human population and the growth of civilisation which has increased dramatically over the past 50 years. Currently,

globalisation poses a challenge to each nation and people of the world as regards what should and should not be done. The opinion of poor nations suggests that the impact of globalisation on them is less positive than the measures of change in their average incomes would suggest.

### **3.7 Causes of Poverty**

The last thirty years have witnessed a proliferation of theories from the right and the left regarding the alleged causes of poverty. Some people insist that poverty is mainly a supply problem. They argue that the poor lack skills or appropriate attitudes to deal with poverty. On the other hand, others argue that the persistence of poverty can be attributed to the economy's failure to generate enough income or high paying jobs for the poor (Kelso, 1994: 32). Both liberals and conservatives hold similar views with regards to the causes of poverty, as Kelso (1994: 32) suggests:

*While liberals in the 1960s took a supply approach to poverty and focused on the educational deficiencies of the poor, more recently they have pointed to demand conditions – such as the changing economy – as the primary reason for the war on poverty's failure. Conservatives, on the hand, have insisted that supply conditions, especially the lack of adequate skills and motivation among indigents, is the major cause of poverty. This bewildering variety of approaches is due to disagreement among scholars about the plight of the poor: are they (1) unprepared and inadequately trained, (2) unmotivated, or (3) merely unable to find well-paying jobs?*

Poor people are capable of successfully accomplishing what people in developed countries do if they are trained and equipped with tools to accomplish the work that they are expected to perform. It is amazing to see, in most developing countries, especially in Africa, how young boys

without any formal training succeed in making items such as television antennae, which are more reliable than those that have been imported. They do this with local materials and without any support from the government or NGOs. This demonstrates that there is a potential capacity within poor people to create or innovate, but that the main barrier is training and lack of adequate equipment.

Commenting on the issue of the lack of training and skills being one of the causes of poverty, Kelso (1994: 49) notes:

*In the 1960s, the Johnson administration argued that the high incidence of poverty in countries was due to the poor training and lack of adequate skills of many of those in the labor market. If poverty was a result of too many individuals being ill-prepared and unqualified for the demands of the job market, the obvious solution to the problem was to improve their educational skills. As more people become better trained, the government could expect indigents to become more self-reliant.*

Nash (1986: 193-194) argues that nations are poor, not because of external factors such as exploitation, but because of internal factors that include education. Most people in lesser developed countries are illiterate. Another factor that contributes to national poverty is the lack of adequate health services. Poor health care has an evident negative effect on a worker's productivity. This very often leads to a shortage of tools and capital needed for production. Some other causes of poverty, such as cultural, moral, and religious factors, are sometimes difficult to explain.

*Cultural conditions are relevant in other ways. If a society chooses, for whatever reasons, not to kill cattle, this will have an obvious effect on their material well-being. If a society discourages women from seeking employment outside the homes, this will result in a lower per capita income than nations where*

*women are permitted to work outside home. A culture may hinder the ability of people to move upwards in society. For example, a caste system not only hinders upwards social mobility but has a negative effect on business where people in one class are prohibited from economic exchange with people in other classes (Nash, 1986: 194).*

According to Nash (1986: 195), both moral support and motivation of people, along with the institutions and policies of their country, are crucial elements for the eradication of poverty. The behaviour of individuals, as well as that of rulers, clearly affects the economic development of a nation. Linn (1983: 36) views the limited income earned by the poor in urban areas as the main cause of urban poverty. If this situation is to be changed, then attention should be given to policies designed to increase the employment and wages of the urban poor.

With regard to his argument on the causes of poverty in the world today, Schall (1990: 15) highlights ideology as being one of the causes of poverty. He writes that:

*The main reason the poor countries of the world remain poor is because of their ideologies. The best way to discover why Tanzania, for example, remains poor and depends on handouts is not to examine its soil or its rainfall, but to read the collected speeches of Mr. Julius Nyerere. He may be a very good man, but he chooses the wrong rhetorical ideology to explain his country's poverty to itself.*

In terms of the ongoing discussion about the causes of poverty, Hemmer and Rainer (2000: 43) believe that the causes of poverty cannot only be explained in terms of a low level of per capita income, but rather in terms of an unequal distribution of this income.

After years of research on the issue of why so many countries become poorer, the United Nations lays much blame on bad governance,



a message many leaders and seekers of aid and debt relief do not want to hear (Crosette, 2002: 87).

*Mr. Malloch Brown, a Briton who came to United Nations last year from the World Bank, has drowned hostility from developing countries. They accuse him of interfering in the internal affairs of governments... Development experts now accept the idea that local governments, often neglected or nonexistent in the developing world, must play a crucial role in poverty reduction. Historically, foreign aid has gone to central governments. When donors could no longer ignore how much aid was being siphoned off in corruption or misuse of funds (Crosette, 2002: 87-88).*

Among the causes of poverty in developing countries is corruption. Corruption often accompanies the centralisation of power, especially in countries not yet democratised, where leaders are not accountable to those whom they serve. Most often, one realises that corruption inhibits development when those in power help themselves to money that would otherwise be used for the development of projects. As discussed earlier, colonisation has been pointed out by some development scholars as being one of the causes of poverty in developing countries. The colonisers developed local economies to facilitate the expropriation of resources for their own economic growth and development. Shah (2007: 1) argues that structural adjustment is a major cause of poverty. In his criticism of some international lending institutions, he says that many developing countries are in debt and poverty due to the policies of international institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank.

It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of the causes of poverty. Merely a few causes are mentioned here. The consequences of poverty often reinforce its complex causes, thereby exacerbating the problem.

### **3.8 Summary**

Poverty is a serious issue in the world, particularly in developing nations where the basic needs of people are not being met. The Third World is a part of the world that is greatly affected by the predicament of poverty.

Poverty is a multi-faceted problem. Some authorities define it in terms of food and shelter, others define it in terms of per capita income, while still others view poverty as being a cultural and psychological matter. Many Third World people argue that their poverty is caused by exploitation by the western powers in this part of the world. This view is very controversial, because poverty in developing countries is linked to both internal and external causes.

While globalisation is accepted worldwide, it still attracts some negative reactions within developing countries, where scholars and researchers view it as another form of neo-colonialism. The nature of the economies of developing countries, which are non-competitive in the world market, suggests that globalisation is viewed as something that will leave developing countries behind. Globalisation is considered to be an instrument for the benefit of the strong, industrialised nations.

Poverty is not God's will. People in developing countries should stand firm alongside with those who support others who combat poverty.



## THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON POVERTY

### 4.1 Introduction

Throughout the Bible, one finds that the teachings with regard to poverty are ambiguous. In certain places poverty is described in a negative sense (Prov. 6: 9-10; 14:20), while in others, it is described in a positive manner (Luke 6: 20; 16: 19-31; 2 Cor. 8: 9) (Son, 1996: 72). In the Bible, the latter passages are often related to the spiritual sphere. The misunderstanding regarding the beatitudes often causes people to believe that Jesus valued material poverty as such. This was not the case. Son (1996: 73) argues, with regards to the rights of people to have their basic needs met, in these terms:

*Everyone has the right to eat and to be clothed regardless of whether one earns it or not. The hungry should be fed first of all, even with consecrated bread if no other food is available ... The right to eat and to be clothed seems to have priority over the right of property in the Bible. The Bible also encourages us to provide food and drink for our enemies (Prov. 25: 23) because preserving life has priority over anything else. It is unjust for any individual or society to let anyone starve to death.*

Theological reflections on this concept will enable the reader to grasp God's views with regard to the phenomenon of poverty, and how believers, as well as those who have been victimised by it, should respond to this phenomenon.

## **4.2 The Concept of Poverty in the Bible**

Poverty in the Bible is considered to be evil, especially when its victims are subjected to disrespectful treatment by their oppressors (Ajulu, 2001: 94). Poverty, being a scandalous condition of human life, is condemned by the Bible, which demands justice for the poor.

When one considers the historical context of the conditions of the poor in the Bible, it is clear that the issue of poverty can be traced back to the first couple, Adam and Eve, outside the gates of the plentiful and prosperous Garden of Eden. Santra (1998: 15) argues that it is sin that reduced the first humans to nakedness, starvation and deprivation, and shamefully removed all riches that had been put at their disposal, placing them in a situation of pain, harshness, want, subjection and, of course, all forms of poverty. Genesis 3: 14-19 describes the condition of humankind after the fall of Adam and Eve.

The Bible views poverty as a result of sin. The rebellion of human beings against God led to greed, selfishness and all kinds of suffering for people throughout the world. As Monsma, Orkar, Bruner and others (1991: 4) observe:

*Among other results of sin was the entrance of poverty in the world. Human beings were no longer good stewards to the riches of God's creation, selfishly they often tried to amass for themselves more wealth and power, and use for themselves more of the resources of their society...regardless of the fact that that left others poor.*

God invariably stands up for the poor, hopeless and oppressed people.

Monsma, Orkar, Bruner and others (1991: 5) comment that “the Bible makes clear that God does not wish poverty to exist in his world, and acts in a number of ways to limit its existence”.

Jebaraj (1996: 330) observes that during the last few decades, Christian theologians have been challenged by the growth of poverty and of oppressive regimes that violate human rights. This situation stimulated theologians to call for the involvement of the Church in the struggle of the poor and the restoration of human dignity. Throughout the Bible, God is portrayed as being concerned with matters related to this world. Prophets of the Old Testament and New Testament writers both repeatedly emphasised the need for justice in human affairs. It is even argued that for Jesus, there was no distinction between the religious and social aspects of the service that one can provide to others. This is illustrated in Matthew 25, where Jesus commends those who provide food for the starving, care for the sick, aid for prisoners, clothes for the naked, and housing for refugees (Clouse, 1984: 9). Christians, regardless of the situation in which they may find themselves, are called upon to follow Jesus’ footsteps by sympathising with people living in poverty, and seeking ways to remove them from this dehumanising situation.

In order for the Church to succeed in its mission to care for the poor, it should develop a better understanding of poverty as rooted in the Bible. Kim and Marak (1998: 1) argue that:

*The Nazareth Manifesto calls for a reconsideration of the theology of the poor and their place in Christian mission... The poor are with us and poverty is a reality which the Church must not overlook without addressing that reality adequately.*

A solid theological insight into poverty will urge Christians towards an understanding of the duty to care for one another, especially those living in poverty. Since Christians follow in Jesus' footsteps, they are also urged to care for the poor, just as Jesus did. Ajulu (2001: 93) comments that community concern for the poor is viewed in the Bible not as an exception, but as a rule. Israel's strength and power were founded on its solidarity, expressed through their brotherly and sisterly spirit as well as service to one another. The Old and New Testaments regard the community as a place where the needy ought to receive help so that they can become contributing members of society rather than dependants. Ajulu (2001: 95) recognises that the struggle against poverty is one issue on which the Bible is not silent – a struggle which is difficult and dangerous to undertake.

Prior to their entrance into the Promised Land, the Israelites were given a severe warning by God with regard to the way in which they should approach caring for the poor. Even though the Bible does not talk unambiguously about the issue of poverty, one must bear in mind that poverty is always an incontestable reality in the lives of the poor, marginalised, depressed and exploited people. What is interesting is that God cares for the poor even when those in power continue to exploit and oppress them. The responsibility of theologians and Christians is to promote a fair and just society in which poor people are empowered and able to contribute to the development of their community. Poverty constitutes a huge problem in the world today. As Hughes (1998: 25) observes, "A big problem needs a big vision to sustain those who are brave enough to tackle it. Poverty is a massive problem ...". The war against poverty, according to the views of most liberation theologians, is an integral part of the coming of God's kingdom on earth, while others argue that there is no justification in the New Testament for talking about the coming of the kingdom of God through any societal change, apart from the confession of Christ (Hughes, 1998: 26). If one takes a

holistic view, both arguments are valuable, while the only difference is that the starting point for the coming of the kingdom of God should be the confession of Jesus Christ, with societal change appearing as a consequence of this confession. It should be noted that one cannot place God in a box, limiting Him to working in only one way. God is sovereign, and as such, intervenes in one manner or another.

### **4.3 Biblical Views on Poverty**

#### **4.3.1 Poverty in the Old Testament**

When he was discussing the issue of poverty in the Old Testament, Domeris' (1986: 57) biblical view of the poor led him to believe that God's position regarding the poor and other marginalised groups, such as widows, orphans and resident aliens, is that of a guardian. God's concern for these groups of people is evident in the law given to Israel, which constitutes the Pentateuch.

Several Hebrew terms are translated into the English word "poor", and each Hebrew word has a particular meaning, which describes in one way or another the characteristics of poverty, namely: *dal*, which means low, weak, or downtrodden; *ani*, which means afflicted, oppressed or wretched; *muk*, which refers to being low and oppressed; *ebyon*, which means needy and deprived; *yarash*, which means dispossessed, and finally, *rush*, which means destitute. These Hebrew words primarily express the idea of people who are materially deprived, while also suggesting suffering and exploitation, with an exception in the book of Proverbs where certain passages link poverty to laziness (Domeris, 1986: 58). According to Santra (1998: 41), the term "poor" in the Old Testament referred to those who had no inheritance of their own, who lived in a situation of economic need and who held a low and insignificant social status. The term "poor" in this OT sense has been applied since the period of monarchy until the inter-testament period, including the time when Jesus lived on earth. The term "poor" referred



to those who, in a state of lowliness and humility, lived in dependence on God. Showing charity towards the poor was strongly recommended, whereas begging was denounced.

Prophets of the Old Testament believed that poverty resulted from the establishment of an unjust society in which the poor were oppressed by the rich, and in which the rich were depicted by Amos 2: 7 as those “who trample the head of the poor into the dust of the earth and push the afflicted out of the way” (NRSV). Commenting on the prophets’ views with regards to the oppressors of the poor and poverty itself, Ajulu (2001: 89) states that:

*Their attacks intensified as wealth and power became more and more contracted in a few hands because of increasing corruption and the growth of trade and commerce in cities living countryside in increasing poverty.*

The care of the poor in Israel constituted some measure of good governance. If one examines the law governing land in Israel, it can be deduced that the law was promulgated in such a manner that the stability of the family, which depended on the possession of land, could be guaranteed, while the manner in which the land was utilised ensured adequate provision for the poor, foreigners, widows and orphans (Ajulu, 2001: 89). The prophets of the Old Testament, as God’s spokespeople, viewed poverty not simply as one’s destiny or the result of laziness, or again as pleasure seeking, but, as Ajulu (2001: 90) argues, rather as injustice, the flouting of God’s law by the rich and powerful through acts of exploitation and oppression, and through the use of violence and practices of injustice. Equally, Cherupallikat (1975: 9-10) comments that:

*In the ancient world wealth was concentrated in the hands of a few and ordinary masses of people were poor. In monarchical countries riches were in the palaces of kings and with persons*

*connected with the royal affairs. For the rest, widespread poverty was taken for granted and poor themselves generally were quite resigned to their lowly estate. The best they could hope for was that the rich could not take undue advantage of their status to corrupt government officials and judges.*

According to Cherupallikat (1975: 13-14), there was no great discussion about wealth and poverty among the Israelites during the nomadic and semi-nomadic periods prior to the conquest. Poverty among the Israelites during these periods was relative. However, when the Israelites made contact with the Canaanites, who already lived in towns and had established social classes, in addition to experiencing the presence of conquerors, this gave rise to the problem of poverty. In response to the oppression of the new economic development of the monarchy and the creation of new classes, as well as the accentuation of social distinctions, the Book of the Covenant declared it to be Yahweh's will as ruler that there should be no permanent or hopeless poverty in the community.

Hoppe (1987: 23) asserts that in the agricultural economy of the Ancient Near East, where owning land was the basis of economic security, the people in this region believed that the categories of people who were in vulnerable positions, namely widows, orphans and other groups without economic power, enjoyed special divine protection. The king in the Ancient Near East was the representative of the gods, and as such, was required to protect people who were unable to secure their economic lives. Hoppe (1987: 24) continues:

*God's particular concern for those in the community whose social and economic state was insecure ought to move all Israel to insure that these people receive just and proper treatment... Deuteronomy wishes to protect these economically dependent groups from the kind of exploitation that is too easily accomplished and so difficult to undo because the widow, orphan*

*and alien were outside the economic and sometimes the juridical mainstream. Deuteronomy commends these people to the care of their more well-to-do neighbor. Their generosity can prevent the cycle of poverty from becoming a continuously downward spiral.*

A closer look at the prophets' writings reveals that they viewed the poor and oppressed as a socio-economic category of people under the particular care of Yahweh. They spoke out against all kinds of oppression which people faced and which kept them in a dehumanising situation. All kinds of trade linked to dishonest business, exploitation of customers and selling of righteousness were condemned. Exacting exorbitant interest from and imposing oppressive lending conditions on the poor were prohibited. Such practices are common in today's banks and lending institutions, such as the World Bank, IMF and others, behaviours which are strongly criticised by developing nations.

According to Pleins (1987: 67), the wise believe that poverty is not a reality against which to protest, but rather a reality to avoid. He further argues that the wisdom writer, unlike the prophetic social critic, does not draw any connection between the poverty of the poor and the wealth of the rich. He views poverty as being stressful, especially in terms of its friendless character. No one would enjoy friendship with the poor, as has always been the case with the rich.

To the wise the poor are insignificant elements in the social order from whom nothing can be taken. In its instructional use of poverty, however, Proverbs seems to display ambivalence in its attitude toward the poor, at times elevating the poor and at times disdaining them. But in this, the wisdom teacher is only concerned to make the student aware of the end to limit one's enjoyment of wealth and for this purpose, reference to poverty was a useful teaching device (Pleins, 1987: 72).

The most pressing concern of the poor person is his/her survival. On the agenda of the poor, food is the first among the needs to be met. Hoppe (1987: 26-27) argues that Deuteronomy is careful to ensure that

poor people have enough food available for their survival. Besides Deuteronomy's requirement that the dependent categories of people share in the meals with regard to the pilgrimage festival, as indicated in Deuteronomy 16: 11 and 14, this Book suggests some other ways in which the poor can share the agricultural bounty of the land. One of them is the triennial tithe, which is not brought to the central sanctuary, but which ought to be made available to dependent groups in every locality, so that classes have something to share in the harvest of grain, olives and grapes, as indicated in Deuteronomy 24: 19-22.

As one can observe from the above discussion, the tithe should also be viewed as Deuteronomy's attempts to provide relief for the needy on a regular basis. Hoppe (1987: 29) advocates that there are laws that are intended by the Deuteronomists to serve as a safeguard against the development of conditions which could render poverty an inevitable component of Israel's social order. In order to combat poverty among the Israelites, Hope (1987: 31-32) explains the strategy identified in the book of Deuteronomy as follows:

*First step was a call to the wealthy to renounce their rights and claims upon the poor. No interest is to be taken on loans (23: 19-20), the poor are to be released from their debts periodically (15: 16), a released bond servant is to be treated with generosity (15: 12-18) and forgotten sheaves from the harvest are to be left for the poor (24: 17-22). Deuteronomy asks people of means to follow a course of action which is contrary to their self-interest but which assures them that the result of such behavior will be of ultimate benefit because they secure God's blessing and continued possession of land. Deuteronomy's approach to the issue of poverty is not simply to legislate but to motivate. The book does so by implying that the quality of Israel's relationship with God is a by-product of a just intersocietal relationship. Failure to achieve such a relationship is a sin (15: 9; 24: 15).*

Second step was to characterize intersocietal relationships as familial. After all, the covenant relationship not only binds Israel to God but it binds individuals together in one family, the Israelite community. Poverty ought not to exist in a community made of brothers and sisters (15: 4). Indeed it would not if all Israel were obedient to the law. If poverty does exist then it is not because it is inevitable according to the laws of economics or because of some failure on the part of the poor. Poverty is the result of human decisions to ignore the law.

The book of Deuteronomy cultivates a sense of community life in which people are called upon to recognise God as the owner of all the wealth in the world, and the caretaker of all humankind. In addition, the book recognises God as the one who has a special concern for the needy. Hope (1987: 32) emphasises this point of view:

*Deuteronomy makes all sorts of calls for sensitive and caring behavior toward the economically dependent. Certainly the book could have gone beyond the few situations it specifies but enough is said to insure that Israel hears this message: the land and its wealth belong to no one absolutely. Along with material blessings enjoyed by the wealthy comes the responsibility to care for those with special economic needs.*

In the Old Testament, the prophets viewed poverty as being the result of the greed and avarice of wealthy people. This view is somewhat different from that of Proverbs, which considers poverty to be a consequence of the idleness and negligence of those suffering from poverty, as discussed earlier. The book of Proverbs also states with conviction that people are in control of their own destinies for the most part and that the choices they make will determine their future. Behaviour such as drunkenness and laziness, which cause much suffering in the lives of people, is denounced by Proverbs. Hoppe (1987: 93) remarks that:

*The sages were convinced that actions have consequences ... If experience has taught people anything it is that poverty comes inevitably to those whose undisciplined life is marked by drunkenness and laziness. This does not mean that every poor person must be an undisciplined alcoholic.*

Cherulallikat (1975: 17-19) views the attitudes of the Wisdom Literature towards poverty as being ambiguous, since some of the sayings of the wise person refer to poverty as a curse or punishment for sloth or frivolity. Other sayings seem to indicate a keen sense of justice and a perception that riches are fraught with danger. The reason for this ambivalence could be explained by the fact that the compilation stems from widely scattered periods. In the post-exilic period of Israel's history, poverty was linked with a spiritual disposition. Hence the true Israelite had to be poor before God, as well as before the Assyrians. Poverty here involved getting rid of all pride, and living a life of abandonment, humility and absolute confidence in God.

The evolution of the concept of poverty in the Old Testament, as Cherupallikat (1975: 21) observes, should not be viewed in terms of a caterpillar turning into a butterfly, nor as a paddy in the field growing ripe in an unfortunate way, but rather like the crest of a mighty ocean wave, which at certain vantage points and on rare occasions could attain loftier heights. Commenting on the poverty of the spirit, as viewed during the post-exilic period, Cherupallikat (1975: 21) states that:

*Writing more recently on the poverty of spirit is taken to mean that the poor in the OT had arrived at a mystique of the renunciation of temporal goods, we should affirm that this detachment does not exist in the OT: that would be a novelty proper to Jesus. Up to him poverty in every sense of the word was looked upon as evil: it was necessary to fight against it through fraternal assistance; the incessant prayer was to be delivered of it...*

When one looks back at the African society prior to the invasion of the continent by colonialists, the term “poverty” did not carry any meaning at all, since the African community’s way of life was one of sharing. This community life and solidarity could be compared to that of Israel’s community before their settlement in Canaan, at which time the Canaanites’ way of life influenced theirs in such a way that caring for one another could not be practised as previously.

#### **4.3.2 Poverty in the New Testament**

The Gospel is known as the Good News in view of the fact that it introduces a completely new moral ethic, which is needed in order to achieve and preserve the quality of life to be found in the new kingdom. The reception of the gospel implies commitment to the total transformation of the corrupt world, with all its corrupt systems, into a place where people would be able to experience the fullness of life that God intended to become a reality. Although the perfect enjoyment of freedom from all oppression and poverty imposed on some groups of people still lies in the future, the process must begin in the present (Ajulu, 2001: 91). As previously mentioned, there are several Hebrew terms that refer to the poor in the Old Testament, while there are also several passages in the New Testament, especially in Matthew and Mark, that use the term “poor” to refer to the category of people who are beggars, lowly in social status, powerless, and dependent on the mercy and help of others in order to survive (Mt. 25: 34-36; Mk. 10: 21; 12: 41-44 etc.). Certain passages even classify the poor along with those who are physically handicapped, such as the blind, lame, lepers, and the deaf (Mt. 11: 4-5; Lk. 7: 22; 14: 13-21; Rev. 3: 17) (Kanagaraj, 1997: 41). Kanagaraj further argues that:

*even though most of the people in Jesus’ time lived in economic poverty and low social status, for some at least poverty was caused by their faith commitment to Christ and to divine*

*righteousness. The missionary agenda of Jesus tabulated in Luke 4: 18-19 seems to be mainly concerned with the spiritual aspect of poverty, although the socio-economic-political dimension of poverty also is not missing (Kanagaraj, 1997: 44).*

Here Kanagaraj adds another aspect with regard to understanding poverty in the New Testament, one which is caused as a result of faith and commitment to Christ, along with the choice to live a righteous life. These people were not only spiritually poor, but were also affected by material poverty.

The question one may ask here is: does a life of faith cause people to become poor? It can be assumed that Kanagaraj is referring to people who abandoned everything and followed Jesus, without knowing what their future held. They did not have any means of their own, but instead depended on Christ for their basic needs. Their poverty was therefore by choice. According to the understanding of the researcher, such people could be viewed as those to whom Jesus referred as being poor in the beatitude – people who were hungry to first seek the kingdom of God.

According to Parker (1996: 60), in the early church, poverty was not an economic issue because they exercised generosity towards the needy. The members of the earlier church were aware of the fact that they belonged to a new socio-religious group in which caring for one another was highly recommended.

The concept of poverty in the New Testament, as Cherupallikat (1975: 22) observes, is still obscure. He advances the following reasons:

*The first is that the Gospel and the Acts do not speak explicitly of poverty, but they treat about poor. The poor are concrete persons, while poverty is abstract. Secondly, as we know, Jesus spoke Aramaic with a vocabulary quite close to that of the OT Hebrew. The Gospels, however, were written in Greek, and under the influence of profane Greek, the vocabulary of poverty in them presents palpable differences in comparison with that of*



*the LXX. For this reason enquiry about the New Testament poverty cannot be based on a selected few texts but rather located in the overall teaching of Christ.*

Even though poverty is abstract, the reality is that it is right here and its negative effects are evident in the lives of those who are its unfortunate victims. Cherupallikat does not intend to deny the existence of poverty as such – his argument is based on the meaning of terms stemming from the Greek and Hebrew languages, which in fact leads to the conclusion that poverty is a reality in both the Old and New Testaments.

When one turns to the New Testament, especially the Gospel according to Matthew, the dominant view of poverty suggests that Jesus did not come to exalt poverty, but rather to deliver humankind from it (Oborji, 2002: 89). Oborji further argues that:

*The kinds of poverty and the mechanisms of impoverishment which are operative in Jesus' time and which he condemns have neither human or religious values... their mechanisms are agents for the debasement of people and the destruction of their dignity as persons (Oborji, 2002: 89).*

According to Oborji (2002: 91), the structures that breed poverty are created by humans. The social structures that are currently present in society, to some extent, have resulted in the current poverty. This situation has been created by the rich and powerful people in society. In today's world, many people are building their wealth by seeking donations in the name of the poor. Most of them behave like Judas Iscariot, who sought to build wealth in the name of the poor, but who in reality was looking after his own interests, as John 12: 1-9 describes.

Poverty is humankind's creation. It is based on the exploitation of the powerless, the greed and selfishness of the powerful, and the

establishment of structures that benefited the rich. Oborji (2002: 92) elaborates on Jesus' attitude vis-à-vis the dehumanisation of the poor:

*The social and economic condition of Jesus did not exhibit the 'piety of poverty' of the OT, he does indeed recommend the attitude, but the attitude arises from a real social and economic depression. He preached against the structures that breed the dehumanizing socio-economic conditions and worked for the liberation of the poor from such an oppressive situation.*

Poverty in the Bible cannot only be viewed as a political or economic problem. It should be regarded as evil and an attack on the unity of those who have been created in God's image and likeness. The disparities created by poverty make it hard to share with and talk of one another as belonging to the same Father who is in heaven.

#### **4.4 Jubilee Commands: A Paradigm for Poverty Eradication in Both New and Old Testament**

One of the most important teachings in the Bible regarding the mitigation of poverty was the Jubilee Year. There are three basic references to this teaching namely, Luke 4, Leviticus 25 and Isaiah 61. Reading contemporary commentators on jubilee, it becomes clear that this concept provides avenues for religious education as well as a vital response to the challenge of the complex issues of contemporary life (Harris, 1996: 2).

In the ancient Near East, where the economy was based on agriculture, the land issue was of great importance. Being expelled from the land was a pathway to enslavement and poverty. In Leviticus chapter 25, for instance, the jubilee text comprises the following elements (Bergsma, 2007: 50-51):

*(1) the promulgation of "freedom" proclamations involving release of slaves, debts, and land (Lev. 25: 10), (2) the*

*declaration of certain populations and regions as servants (slaves) of a particular god (Lev. 23: 42), (3) the observance of special festivals in the seventh month involving temple purgation, re-assertion of the rule of patron deity, and acts of (at least symbolic) social justice (Lev. 25: 9-10), (4) the practice of fallowing fields (Lev. 25: 4), (5) the inalienability in principle of ancestral land, with its corollary – redemption laws (Lev. 25: 23-25)... The Levitical legislation regarded the Israelites as sacred slaves (hierodoule) and their land as sacred precinct.*

Equally, Yoder (1972: 60) argues that the jubilee year included prescriptions such as leaving the soil fallow, the remission of debts, the liberation of slaves and the return to each individual of family property. Yoder (1972: 61) finds that leaving the soil fallow and the liberation of slaves are central to the teaching of Jesus and even his theology. Yoder (1972: 62) qualifies the Lord's Prayer as a jubilar prayer. He comments that:

*The "Our Father" is genuinely a jubilar prayer. It means the "time has come for the faithful people to abolish all the debts which bind the poor ones of Israel, for your debts toward God are also wiped away (for that is the gospel, the good news).*

With regards to the jubilee, Bergsma (2007: 72) argues that Neufed views jubilee as a way to restore ancient Israelite common law in the midst of growing urban economic differentiation that provoked hardships, unemployment, detribalisation and even extreme poverty. Bergsma (2007: 84) describes the loss of the land as a pathway to impoverishment when he writes:

*The stages of impoverishment clearly move from bad to worse. The poverty-stricken Israelite is compelled first to sell his land (vv. 39-43), then his house (vv. 29-34), then to become dependent on charity (vv. 35-38), and finally to sell his person to a fellow*

*Israelite (vv. 39-43) or – in the “worst-case scenario” – to a foreigner (vv. 47-55).*

The jubilee injunctions compel Israelites to return to their land. This was a provision to avoid progressive impoverishment that begins with the alienation of property and ends in the enslavement of people. The jubilee commands promoted the welfare of individual Israelites. As Bergsma (2007: 105) comments:

*The primary imperative of the jubilee was the return of each Israelite to his ancestral possession of land and his clan. The reunification of the family with land is the central concern of all the stipulations.*

For Harris (1996: 37), forgiveness is an essential component of jubilee, for it emphasises the wiping away of debt. He then asserts that commentators name the wiping away of debt in the first position. Jubilee forgiveness begins with the removal of the very specific burden of a monetary debt. Bergsma (2007: 85) points out that the Israelites' being God's slaves, by the fact of their redemption from Egypt, is the theological basis for the prohibition on slavery in the land. Therefore they should not be sold to human masters, because God is for them the only master.

According to Yoder (1972:63) S W Baron, in his history of Israel, blames Herod the Great for being responsible for enslaving the Israelites by way of progressive indebtedness. Herod crushed the people with heavy taxes and went further to expropriate the property of recalcitrant owners. Yoder (1972: 63) adds that:

*To escape such appropriation the peasant would borrow from the usurer, who was often in liaison with the king's representative or the tax collector. His property, which he gave as security, soon fell into the hands of the usurer, and the peasant became his sharecropper or servant. But the problem of the peasant was not*

*hereby resolved. His unpaid debts continued to pile up to astronomic levels. Then, in order to regain his funds, the creditor ordered that the sharecropper should be sold with his wife and children and all his possessions in order to cover the debt.*

This situation reflects that of the unmerciful servant in Matthew 18: 21-35, where Jesus describes the relationship between the rising indebtedness of the poor peasant with the loss of his properties and his liberty. The proclamation of the jubilee year was really a relief for the servant who appeared before the king for the forgiveness of his debt (Yoder, 1972: 64).

Not only did the jubilee year have a positive impact on the lives of those who were set free from any kind of bondage, but, as Yoder (1972: 64) argues, it also exerted a negative impact on the economy of the country, because the wealthy hesitated to give land to the poor for fear of losing their capital through the jubilee command regarding the forgiveness of debts. This situation paralysed the economic life of the country, regardless of the measures that were put in place such as “an action formalised before the tribunal” that aimed to prevent the loss of the capital on the creditor’s side.

Bergsma (2007: 297) therefore asserts that an ethical reinterpretation of the jubilee legislation does not seek a literal observation of the commands, but rather a contemporary application of ethical principles upon which it is based.

## **4.5 Moral Virtue, Poverty and Social Justice**

All people are equal before God and have also been created in God’s own image and likeness, as stated in Genesis 1: 27. If they are created in God’s image, then all human beings must be of great value. When God created human beings, they were equal to one another; they were not made as different social classes or castes, as aristocrats or commoners,

as superiors or inferiors. Equality was a foundation stone of God's society (Holman, 1997: 6). It is unfortunate, as Holman (1997: 8) observes that:

*The divine ordinances were largely ignored and so led to economic practices out of keeping with God's intentions. Consequently, one of the major themes of the prophets, those human messengers from God, was to condemn the powerful wealthy who, in promoting inequalities not only harmed their fellow creatures but also disobeyed God.*

When certain people live in unprecedented luxury and flamboyance, poverty in Africa and other countries is an offence against social justice. This situation stands as an inexcusable scandal, and a monumental affront to right, reason and ethics. Sadly, Ogbunwezeh (2005: 9) argues that:

*No ethical tradition or socio-philosophical pedestal can even rise up in justifiable defence of a manufactured situation, where millions of people in one part of the world are terminally exploited, abandoned and actively encouraged to die for want of food, basic health care, clean potable water, shelter, and clothing. Yet these simple people are forced to yield up their labour in perpetual repayment of debts which are at best odious. It is really sickening that dogs, cats and other domestic pets in the Western part of this our global village, are deluged with food, health care and other necessities that is unaffordable to cover 650 million people in the Third World. Is it not a scandal that these animals enjoy, in the climes, what can be conservatively called a sybaritic lifestyle, equipped not only with the necessities, that the Third World needs, but with pleasures that human beings in some parts of the same world cannot even dream of...*

If one condemns the West for maintaining the world in such an imbalance in terms of wealth, African political leaders should also be blamed. Instead of suffering with theirs in the search of promoting a better life for the people, they identify themselves with corporations and wealthy people in the West in order to loot raw materials on the continent. Holman (1997: 24) recognises that, at the top of society, there are people who hold political, financial and media power, those in government who control capital and head major institutions, etc. A moral, ethical, and Christian view is that they should use their political, economic and social power to promote the common good, to spread privileges and resources, to reduce injustice, to uphold integrity and honesty. Without any effort to promote moral virtues, the victory against poverty will be a utopian dream.

In today's world, called the global village, global pillage instead appears to be the order of the day. Poverty is not only deprivation in one's life. It means degradation, shame; the searing of the most sensitive part of one's moral and mental nature as with hot irons, as Ogbunwezeh (2005: 9) said. It is the denial of the strongest impulses and the sweetest affections. Poverty is surely a tragic failure of human solidarity. Cherupallikat (1975: 35-36) views poverty not as the detachment from creatures, or giving up of things created, or even turning away from them, which in themselves hold little value. In ancient Greece, certain Greek philosophers chose to live in voluntary poverty but still considered themselves as superior to the ill-bred crowd. Cherupallikat's argument here does not link poverty to material goods, but rather views it as an inward disposition of one's attitude to God. Regarding the same issue, Cherupallikat (1975: 36) adds that:

*It would be insufficient also to view poverty as a moral virtue related to temperance by which we regulate the use of material goods. Before having to do with good external to man, it is man's own attitude toward God himself that determines his poverty.*

*Poverty therefore, is not any single virtue, but a synthesis of many.*

O'Connell (1997: 77) argues that the recognition of interdependence in every society in the world is witnessed where people accept solidarity with one another. This leads people to formulate, in one form or another, a concept of the common good, which expresses those broad ends that members of society pursue together. When members of a community or a society work together for the common objective, they will certainly value moral virtues and social justice and a life of solidarity will become the common ground of all. Equally, Hollenbach (2002: 173) stresses the fact that human beings have to live a life of dependence on one another not only for the higher achievements of cultural life, but also for the necessities of material and economic well-being. Thus, for the eradication of poverty and the advancement of economic justice, a serious effort ought to be made in terms of active social commitment for the common good. According to Hollenbach (2002: 196, 198), justice should function in such a way that citizens remain active members of the community, using their agency not only for their own good but for the good of the entire community. It is also suggested that contributive justice calls citizens to act in ways that lead to meeting the basic material needs of their fellow citizens. People can live in dignity only when they interact with others in society, whether in the economic, political, or cultural spheres. This is very important because contributive justice requires the active participation of citizens. They should employ their freedom and agency to develop the common good. In so doing, they will promote moral virtue and social justice at the same time.

Poverty presents a challenge to the just and humane society that some people are trying to create. This statement reflects Stackhouse's (1987: 383) argument that:



*We are to care for the poor and the oppressed, to labor diligently in our vocations as well as for the establishment of just institutions, and to exercise stewardly responsibility for God's creation.*

This view indicates the moral virtue that ought to be achieved and practised. Stackhouse (1987: 389) considers that there is no choice for the modern Christian but to attempt to demonstrate that at least some theological claims, ethical principles, or social themes found in the Bible are of more than contextual importance.

The widespread nature of poverty in the world is a result of the collapse of values, especially among the rich who do not understand their duty; otherwise they would voluntarily provide for the needs of the poor. Poor people lack the ability to participate effectively in the life of society. Their situation has affected them psychologically as well as damaging their relationship with others in society. Commenting on the moral and psychological effects of poverty on poor people, Son (1996: 70) argues that:

*what makes poverty still more painful is its social and psychological effect. The poor feel not only helpless, desperate and angry but they are also ashamed and indignity is subjective but it depends to a great extent upon the attitude of others toward them.*

Poverty is painful and acute, especially when the poor are at the mercy of the rich for survival or for other necessities of life. It is humiliating enough to rely on others' mercy, apart from the often associated moral blame (Son, 1996: 71). Describing the condition of the poor, Atherton (1983: 90) adds that:

*For most people living in poverty the unremitting living from hand to mouth is rather productive of constant stress which saps all vitality and destroys all hope. For them poverty always*

*diminishes, it never enhances. It gradually and systematically poisons every sphere of their daily lives from their physical and mental health to their most intimate relationships.*

To care for one another is a moral and biblical obligation all are called to perform. It is also a moral obligation for all to promote justice in society, without which poverty will not be tackled.

There is no way to deal with the issue of eradication of poverty or changing the situation of the poor for a better life without dealing with the issue of justice in society. As Brady (2006: 366) contends:

*Developing the virtue of justice requires motivation, concentration, and opportunity. We need to respond to requests for our time, our energy, and our assets. By repeated actions for good, justice can become as natural as breathing ... Our involvement in justice differs over time, but the important thing is to begin to be involved and to follow through the meaningful acts. Our small steps toward welcoming the poor into our minds and, ultimately, the community can grow over time to including all at the table of decision making.*

Good law should be established in economic affairs in order to maintain a state of justice in economic relationships. That law can support the good in human life by encouraging the strong to meet their obligations of coming to the assistance of the weak when the rights of the latter are under threat. It can also promote justice and act as a defence against the growth of injustice. When Wogaman (1986: 76) asserts that liberation theologians are correct in believing that Christians should identify with poor people in a special way, he does not assume that the poor are morally superior to others, nor even that they have greater insight into the causes of their own situation of poverty, but rather that people reveal the point of greatest social weakness. Therefore, they should be considered as being the point of highest

priority. Sleeman (1976: 75) praises Christians when he suggests that they do not only view their vocation as an individual act of compassion and help to their neighbours, but that they also assist in the organisation of charity through which the needs of their neighbours can be met more effectively and systematically.

Christianity continually calls upon people to demonstrate compassion for the weak, the hopeless and the vulnerable. It adheres to the Old Testament idea of justice, which calls the rich to have compassion for widows, orphans and strangers. Justice is concerned with the structural injustice which impoverishes and dehumanises the less fortunate.

The issue of moral responsibility for the poor still presents a major challenge to African governments. The case of the DRC, the country in question in the present work, is deplorable. In the eyes of the world, it seems as if the government of the DRC does not feel any obligation to the poor, representing the majority of the population of the country. When one examines the government's programme, no development policy has been formulated for the welfare of the people, especially the poor. There is no clear policy regarding housing, water and sanitation or education for the poor and lower-income citizens. If there is any, it is merely theoretical. This does not mean that the government lacks the means to elaborate or implement policies in favour of poor people; the issue here is one of the lack of social justice and moral virtue of those in power. This aggravates poverty. As has been said, there cannot be any pretension to the eradication of poverty without moral virtue and social justice.

#### **4.6 Church: An Agent of Change**

The Church is ontologically a vehicle of integral and holistic human salvation. It will always constitute a chasmic contradiction in terms and in fact, the pain and misery of human beings should experience a

compassionate empathy in the Church's heart, obtaining a prophetic as well as empathic response from her. To face the Church with its responsibility, Ogbunwezeh (2005: 12) argues that:

*This is more instructive against the backdrop of the fact that the life of Christ who founded this Church, was played out in the human ambiance of the rough Galilean countryside; a Roman colony that was under the socio-political bondage, rude inconvenience, and psychological siege that are all fallouts of a city under occupation of foreign colonial power and imperial domination. Yet, Christ was neither swallowed up by the ethical insensitivity which such times necessarily engender, nor was he empathically immunized by the egocentric demands for personal survival, which such climes decree. He rose to the conquer the challenges imposed by those times, and in the process, wrote for all time with the ink of his blood, that man [sic] must have life and have it most abundantly.*

Ogbunwezeh (2005: 13) further argues that any economic system or socio-political engineering that dehumanizes the person created in God's image under any pretext, or allows the oppressive exploitation of a human being, or again condemns any person to abhorrent poverty, hunger, powerlessness and insignificance, is a supreme insult to religion and good conscience. Here, Ogbunwezeh draws attention to the importance of the role that the Church should play in the life of people. It should defend and preserve the dignity of life through the promotion of just values since human life is sacred and needs to be preserved by any means.

In the Bible, especially in the Old Testament writings, the prophet Amos was one of those who was greatly concerned with the welfare of the people. He spoke out against all kinds of evil in society. The Church should emerge from what can be called the "theology of unconcern"; a kind of theology in which one seeks to know God much better but does

not care about meeting the basic social needs of human beings while on earth. It is a theology that does not care for the defence of the hopeless nor promotes social justice but rather focuses strongly on heaven. This theology leaves humankind at the mercy of all natural circumstances without questioning these. Omari (1991: 56-57) reminds one of the Church's roles in society:

*The Church's role as prophetic voice needs courageous people: people with clear minds, speaking the truth. But in order for the prophetic voice to succeed, a social atmosphere which allows people to speak freely is required... The Church must be a model for the whole world in demonstrating that, in spite of confusion and crises of all sorts faced by people in our societies today such as injustice, corruption and all other social evils, there is still an Amos in the midst who speaks and challenges authorities on the evils facing people.*

The Church is continually challenged to act as God's agent on earth. This challenge should be made a reality through the involvement of all those who call upon the name of Yahweh, people who feel pain about victims of indignity and suffering. As a human being, one should feel hurt and anger when one stands in the shoes of the poor. As Sung (2005: 4) comments:

*Not everybody feels such indignation, no matter how grave the social problems are. There are those who do not feel it because they do not see the victims or because they have excluded the victims from their vision field, or even because they no longer consider the victims as persons. There are also those who feel uncomfortable with the unveiling of the victims' suffering, but since the discomfort does not result in ethical indignation, they forgot about it as time goes by.*

One should notice that the poor have always been socially powerless. For reasons beyond their control, they suffer indignity and cannot help themselves. Most persons find themselves in poverty because of conditions not of their own making: divorce, loss of jobs, prejudicial hiring practices, low wages due to exploitation, disabilities, unemployment and many other reasons not listed here. God is on the side of the poor and admonishes all to follow His example. Nowadays, the Church is deeply concerned about programmes such as running a good Sunday school or confirmation classes, good facilities, or a good worship team, but the welfare of needy people is not always a concern for the Church. The early church, in spite of the plan it had to fulfil, the great commission given by the Master, never forgot to promote concern for the other person. This is a summons to value moral virtues and social justice. It is a call to be indignant about the dehumanisation of the poor. Sung (2005: 4-5) observes:

*For a person to be indignant in view of a situation in which someone is being mistreated or reduced to a subhuman condition, such a person must recognize the humanity of that individual. Without this recognition no ethical indignation is possible, for nobody feels indignant regarding a situation in which a subhuman being is being treated as subhuman. This is so because, in this case, the humanity of such a mistreated person is not recognised.*

The salvation that Christ brings is surely a radical liberation from all manner of misery, despoliation, and alienation, and exerts an impact on all of human reality, as well as on the entire religious dimension (Bell, 2001: 60).

## **4.7 Democratic Republic of Congo Nation-Building**

For more than forty years, the DRC has been undergoing many struggles: socially, politically and economically. After thirty-two years of a dictatorial regime in which the rights of citizens were abused, followed by almost ten years of civil war starting in 1998, the people of the DRC continue to live in a desperate situation despite the democratic institutions that have been put in place.

The challenge that Congolese people are facing now is that of nation-building. How should they create their nation? What should the basis be on which the nation should be built? After conducting an overview of the current situation in the DRC, the researcher has come to believe that the following elements are important, if not crucial, in serving as a basis for nation-building:

### **4.7.1 Patriotism**

Patriotism is the love of one's country and one's willingness to offer sacrifices for it. It is devotion to the welfare of one's country and strong feelings of willingness to fight for and defend it. That was the sentiment of the fathers of the independence of the DRC, such as Patrice Emery Lumumba, who fought for love of the DRC and the liberation of his country from the colonialists. Love for the country creates in one's mind respect for the common good. In this respect, one identifies oneself with the state and develops a sense of ownership.

Patriotism is something lacking in the lives of many Congolese who are ready to sell their country for personal and selfish interests. During the Congolese Inter-Dialogue in South Africa in 2002, President Thabo Mbeki urged Congolese delegates in the dialogue to put aside their selfish interests and differences and to work for the future of the Congolese nation, following the path of Patrice Emery Lumumba. President Mbeki was convinced that the land that gave birth to the great

African patriot, Patrice Lumumba, possessed the wisdom, the talent and the determination to solve its problems and turn the country of Lumumba's birth into an African giant of peace, democracy, human rights, prosperity, good neighbourliness and African solidarity (Sebelebele, 2003: 1). In some ways Thabo Mbeki's speech offered guidance to Congolese people with regards to what they ought to do to build their country. The development of patriotism is a *sine qua non* for nation-building, for it creates a sense of ownership and respect for public goods.

#### **4.7.2 Justice**

It is important to note that there is no democracy without the implementation of justice in all its forms. All societies, wherever they might be, are based on some concept of justice. When one talks about justice, the term evokes a desire for order, fairness, equality, honesty, equity, integrity and even lawfulness. These words are used as synonyms for justice. Justice in the common sense can be understood as consisting of right relationships among people and a social norm that establishes a course of expected conduct (Dawsey, 1995: 469). The Bible asserts, "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people" Proverbs 14: 34 (NASV). Righteousness should constitute another pillar on which the Congolese ought to build their nation. In this respect, the government has much to accomplish. Human rights records remain weak in all areas of the country. The government of the DRC should hold security forces accountable for continuing abuses, including unlawful killing, disappearance, torture, rape, and arbitrary arrest and detention, practices that violate human rights. The government should employ all possible means to stop life-threatening conditions in prisons, prolonged pre-trial detention, dependency and ineffectiveness in the judiciary and arbitrary interference with privacy, family and home.



Security forces and well-placed officials must stop harassing local human rights activists, as well as abusing and threatening journalists.

The nation should be founded on justice; and justice calls for freedom. The constitution of the DRC promulgated in 2006, in its article 23, advocates freedom of speech. The primary social need of individuals is freedom. The government of the DRC should understand that as an institution, its mandate is to protect individual rights. The moral task of the government is to ensure that those individuals are at liberty to use their property as they see fit to sustain and enhance their lives. If individuals in a given country are assured of a reasonable political guarantee of freedom from both individuals and government, they will invest, produce, and reap as much profit as their skills, dedication and ingenuity allow. They will be free to reinvest or consume their profits, they will even feel at ease to form voluntary associations that will enhance their production and hence their profits. All these will contribute to the nation-building process.

Another aspect to consider in this respect is social or distributive justice. This aspect of justice refers to the fair distribution of social goods and equal respect before the law. It determines the rights individuals should enjoy and the duties individuals owe to society. When one considers the DRC, one will realise that there is poverty in a country of plenty. The government of the DRC should make an effort to treat its citizens fairly in such a manner that everybody can benefit in one way or another from the nation's resources.

So far there have been groups such as parliament, senate and members of government who have been well taken care of, with decent salaries as well as many other privileges, while magistrates, university professors and others are struggling to survive on their own. This unfair treatment of the majority of the white collar class (to say nothing of the working class) in terms of wages and privileges will not help to build the nation. For this reason most of the medical doctors who graduate from

the universities of the DRC seek a better life abroad. The government does not appear to realise that the brain drain causes the loss of individuals who could help in the process of developing the nation.

#### **4.7.3 Christian Values**

The implementation of Christian and moral values in the DRC is currently an urgent necessity in order to help eradicate behaviour such as lying, mismanagement, squandering of public funds, etc. Christian and moral values were taught in schools from the elementary level upward before missionary schools were handed over to the government in the 1970s. Since then, little or no respect for the public good among citizens has been evident. At state level, government officials could deliver public speeches containing lies and not apologise for or disavow their statements.

The issue of rampant corruption not only keeps a category of citizens in extreme poverty but also maintains the underdeveloped status of the country. As far as the researcher is concerned, the information received at his level is that some foreign firms, which were willing to invest in the DRC, witnessed their applications being turned down because of their refusal to pay ten percent of the capital investment into the pocket of the minister of the ministry concerned. Such behaviour puts a brake on the development of the country and will not contribute to the building up of the nation.

With regards to the aspect of the moral values that should be promoted, Snarey (2005: 751) argues that it is moral to avoid breaking rules, to comply for obedience sake, and avoid causing physical damage to people or property. This includes avoiding penalties and acknowledging the superior power of authorities. It also leads to undertaking the actual duties one has agreed to perform. This involves contributing to one's own society, group, or institution. Keeping institutions functioning, maintaining self-respect for having met one's

defined obligations and avoiding setting a socially disruptive precedent are also signs of promoting moral values. Christian and moral values should be promoted in the government and private sectors while all who transgress laws and moral values should be prosecuted.

#### **4.7.4 African Solidarity and Territorial Integrity**

The late President Mobutu should be blamed for economic crime, a dictatorial regime and so forth. However, one should congratulate him for creating solidarity and, mostly, unity among citizens. It is difficult to build up the nation without these elements.

The last national elections held in 2006 that brought President Joseph Kabila to power created two schisms, which in the view of many people are a threat to the unity of the Congolese people. These schisms separate the people of the Eastern Congo, which has been more supportive of President Joseph Kabila and in which Swahili is the lingua franca, and the Western Congo, which has been more supportive of Mr Jean Pierre Bemba, President Kabila's opponent, and in which Lingala is the lingua franca. At this level, President Kabila is doing his best to unite the Congolese people. Without this, any effort at nation-building would be in vain.

In order to develop the Congolese nation, the people of the DRC should stand as one people and one nation. East-West schisms should be eliminated. Job positions should be distributed not according to ethnic or clan perspectives, but rather on the basis of qualifications. The Congolese people should stand in unity to oppose any person or group of persons that suggests the idea of the balkanisation of the DRC. This calls upon the Congolese to bear in mind the inviolability of the national territory for which all citizens should fight. Now that the country is recovering from several years of war, a war that many called "African World War III" due to the involvement of several armies from different African countries in both government and rebel sides.

The researcher believes that it is time for the Congolese people to hold hands in rebuilding their country in unity and love and with Christian and moral values. In so doing, the country will be uplifted and the fight against the common enemy, poverty, will be feasible.

## **4.8 Summary**

Poverty as described in the Bible is neither glorified nor ignored but is treated with the greatest seriousness. God desires justice for all humankind. He stands against any kind of oppression, exploitation, slavery, alienation, dehumanisation and suffering.

The Christian Churches should hear the cry of people who are suffering and challenge authority. The Churches should furthermore work to bring about change for social and economic justice in favour of those who suffer from evil-doing as a result of the established structure of society; otherwise its gospel is useless. As an institution that represents God on earth, the Church should reflect Battle's (2007: 153) words that:

*as a Church, we are responsible for 'standing before' the crucified people, getting them down from the cross by ensuring that there are institutions in place to prevent more being nailed up, and offering a new vision and practice of 'person in community' that is truly international and 'Catholic' in character.*

In the same manner as the earlier Church followed the commission of the Master and succeeded in establishing a community of sharing, the Church today is called upon to struggle against poverty by affirming its solidarity with the poor. Promotion of moral virtues and justice should be one of the concerns of Christians today. Monsma (1991: 17) argues that Christians should take advantage of the opportunities available to them to them to operate politically. If the Church as an institution cannot

support particular parties or candidates or protest against legislation, it is the duty of the Christian to do so. Christians could even seek political office. In so doing, Christians should not seek to serve their own interests but should rather seek greater justice in society, especially for the poor. This is a better way for Christians to show the world that they are salt and light in a flavourless and dark world.

In the war against poverty, Scripture does not offer a blueprint, but shows us that God is against poverty and He desires that His creatures should live an abundant life. This is the reason why He champions the cause of the poor in order to eradicate poverty. The experience of poverty is painful and it often impels the poor to accept their present condition without hope. As a community of faith, the Church should oppose poverty and stand in solidarity with the poor.

The promotion of social justice and moral values in society is a path that leads to a change in the condition of the poor and the eradication of poverty. Theological reflection on poverty will bring about a new understanding of the situation of the poor and consequently lead to new perspectives that will enable one to defend the rights of the poor, namely their humanity and dignity. Poor people deserve a good life, respect and dignity, as does every human being on earth. The poverty of many is not by choice: therefore the poor cry for help from those who have the heart and who can stand beside them.

## **THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: A CASE STUDY OF POVERTY**

### **5.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter, the researcher discussed the complexity of the issue of poverty. Its causes were examined, as well as the impact of the Bretton Woods institutions on developing countries. In this chapter, the researcher will focus on the issue of poverty and economic decline in the DRC.

The DRC possesses significant economic potential. It is “endowed with unique biodiversity, vast mineral and forest resources, and rich soils conducive to agriculture” (UN panel of experts, 2001: 6). The economy of the DRC is slowly recovering from decades of decline. The conflict which began in August 1998 dramatically reduced national output and government revenue, increased external debt, and resulted in the death of more than 4.5 million people from violence, famine and disease. The DRC has long been recognised as one of the richest countries in the world in terms of mineral resources. Its mineral wealth is greatest near its eastern borders and south into Katanga, where the country shares the rich Copper Belt of the Lufilian Arc with neighbouring Zambia. There is a prolific diamond area within the Kasai Crafton area in the south-central part of the country, along with the

north-easterly Angolan Kimberlite trend (Mines, 2006: 1). As Nest observes:

*Politics and economics in the Democratic Republic of Congo have always been shaped by the exploitation of its abundant natural resources. Natural resource exploitation lay at the very foundation of the foreign economic interest in the colony, and shaped its link to foreign governments and global markets. From about 1920 to 1990, one mineral-copper reigned supreme as the largest source of government revenue and most foreign exchange (Nest, 2006: 17).*

The DRC boasts substantial reserves of copper, cobalt, cadmium, diamonds, gold, silver, zinc, manganese, tin, uranium, germanium, columbite-tantalum (coltan), bauxite, iron ore, oil etc. According to estimates by mining researchers, the DRC contains 80 percent of the world's coltan reserves, 34 percent of its cobalt reserves and 10 percent of its copper reserves, while the gold potential is substantially under-explored (Nest, 2006: 1). Commenting on the importance of the mining sector in the Congolese economy, the IMF (2007: 35) states that:

*The DRC has the second largest reserves worldwide of copper and cobalt (10 percent of the planet's entire reserves). GECAMINES' cobalt reserves represent 80 percent of the global total. The DRC also is the world's largest producer of cobalt. In 1992, the DRC's share of world copper production was 2.5 percent, of cobalt 45 percent, and of zinc 0.5 percent. Export proceeds in 1990 amounted about US \$ billion.*

The growth of mining is hampered by poor overall management of resources, fraud and lack of structural and legal reforms, in such a manner that the country has not benefited fully from the opportunities provided by rising world mineral prices. As Turner (2007: 44) observes, "The mining of copper, diamonds and other riches under Belgian

Colonial rule also generated profits for shareholders in Belgium and elsewhere”.

Regardless of its wealth in human and natural resources, the DRC is currently known as one of the poorest countries in the world. According to the Human Development Index of 2005, the DRC is ranked 167 out of 177 countries. Years of war have destroyed most of the infrastructure and productivity, as well as placing the country and its people in a dire economic situation.

The DRC is a result of the change that affected Africa during the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885. Before the country became a Belgian colony, it was known as the Congo Free State, until the scramble for Africa began on July 1, 1885. The Congo Free State had been the personal property of Leopold II, the Belgian king. Then, in October 1908, the king ceded the state to Belgium, and it became known as the Belgian Congo, until its independence on June 30, 1960. When the Belgian Congo gained its independence, it was named the Republic of Congo-Kinshasa, and Joseph Kasa Vubu became the first president. After five years of secessions, political strife and rivalry after independence, Colonel Joseph-Desire Mobutu took over power by means of a coup d'état, and became the second president on November 24, 1965 (Naniuzeyi, 1999: 678). The country was then renamed “Democratic Republic of the Congo”. In 1967, President Mobutu renamed the country the “Republic of Zaire” and restored an authoritarian regime. Towards the end of 1996, a rebel movement began war in the eastern Congo, then Zaire, especially in the South Kivu region. On May 17, 1997, the Alliance for the Democratic Force for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire, backed by Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda, seized power in Kinshasa, and Laurent Desire Kabila became the president. Kabila renamed the country “Democratic Republic of Congo”, the name by which it is still known today.



In this part of the study, for the sake of discussing the history, the name Zaire will be used in its context and period before the country was renamed once more as the DRC.

## **5.2 Democratic Republic of Congo's Economy at The Dawn of Independence**

Named *Congo Belge* (Belgian Congo) after the country altered its status from the Congo Free State, the private property of the Belgian king, to Belgian Congo, the newly renamed state was highly prosperous in economic terms. Leslie (1993: 99-100) observes that many Belgian financial groups succeeded in obtaining generous incentives to develop the mineral resources of the Congo. It has been noted that the development of infrastructure occurred alongside the development of the country's natural resources. With regard to the exploitation of mineral resources and infrastructure in the Belgian Congo, Leslie (1993: 99-100) writes that:

*In 1902 the Group Empain agreed to establish a railway – the chemin de fer du Congo Supérieur aux Grands Lacs (CFL) – in the eastern part of the country. In return, the company secured 4 million hectares of land and extensive mineral rights. Four years later the financial Conglomerate Société General de Belgique launched three major undertakings: the Union Minière du Haut Katanga (UMHK), the Société Internationale Forestière et Minière (Forminière) and the Compagnie du Chemin de Fer du Bas-Congo au Katanga (BCK).*

Arrangements were made in such a way that the UMHK was granted mineral rights in the southern part of Katanga, the very extensive copper deposits site, while Forminière received a ninety-nine years' monopoly over any mineral deposits that could be found within a period of six years in an area covering 140 million hectares, which equals half of

Belgium. At the same time, BCK was granted mineral rights for 21 million hectares in the Kasai basin, for a prospective rail line. The agreement was made in such a manner that the Belgian state provided all the capital needed for construction of the railway, and the BCK was responsible for construction and operation costs (Leslie, 1993: 99-100). As soon as the BCK railway project reached Elisabethville (current Lubumbashi), copper exports from Katanga began and by the year 1923, the Belgian Congo became the world's third largest producer of copper.

The exporting of copper alone from the mining area of Katanga represented fifty percent of the total exports of the Congo (Leslie, 1993: 100). Discussing the economic development of the Congo during that period, Leslie argues that at the same time, agricultural products such as palm oil, cotton, and coffee also became well established as exports. The expansion of roads and rail networks enhanced economic growth, which would be beneficial for war efforts during World War I (Leslie, 1993: 100). It was at this time that the large Belgian financial groups took their opportunity to become firmly established in the colony. This was the case with, for example, Société Générale in 1928, which controlled 70 per cent of the local economy, an involvement that could be compared to that of the Oppenheimer Group in South Africa (Leslie, 1993: 100). Even though the economic situation in the country was fairly prosperous, local people were not treated well. The colonial authorities prevented them from carrying out many activities. As Leslie (1993: 99-100) comments:

*Congolese were legally restricted to production of raw materials, whereas processing and marketing could be undertaken by only foreign companies. The native population was confined by the state to shifting cultivation (working a plot of land until the soil was depleted, then moving to another plot) and temporary wage labor. Such policies were not implemented without local resistance. A serious revolt by Pende in the Western Congo, for*

*example, resulted in over 500 deaths and the imprisonment of local chiefs following the repressive intervention of the local Force Publique.*

After World War II, the economy of the Congo became very strong. By the early 1950s, Leslie (1993: 101) observes that in terms of industrial development, the Congo was second only to South Africa. By 1953, it became the leading African producer of minerals such as cobalt, diamonds, tin, zinc, and silver, as well as the second largest producer of copper after Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia). As Cotton (1957: 2) argues:

*The end of the Second World War the Belgian Congo in a strong economic condition as a result of the prosperity her natural resources of strategic materials had brought her during the shortage years. But it was not until after 1950 that the pace of her economic development really started to gather momentum. The introduction that year of the Ten-year Plan laid the foundations of a modern state, equipped with new power and transport facilities, and endowed it with a series of social welfare schemes far in advance of most African territories.*

The Ten-Year-Plan of the Belgian Congo, which was conceived in 1947 and published in 1949, aimed at providing the basic economic necessities for modern life, in order to raise the standard of living of the local population. It entailed the equipping of the Colony with modern power and transport facilities as well as the provision of improvements in the fields of agriculture, housing, higher education, and social benefits (Cotton, 1957: 34).

During the colonial period, therefore, the Belgian Congo was able to boast of being one of the richest territories on the African continent. With its tremendous reserve of natural resources, especially minerals, and with its reputation for political stability, the Belgian Congo had a

great impact on the world market, and even became an attractive territory for capital investment (Cotton, 1957: 2). Huybrechts, Mudimbi, Peeters and others (n.d.: 199) argue that the Congolese economy was actually one of the most industrialised economies in Sub-Saharan Africa. For thirty years preceding independence, the average economic growth, between 1929 and 1959, was 13 per cent. The colonial economy of the Congo possessed two characteristics: an industrial sector that was heavily dependent on imported capital equipment and a rural sector which focused mainly on agriculture. However, the Congolese natives did not enjoy the benefits of the natural resources which God had bestowed on their land. Leslie (1993: 101) illustrates this:

*The native Congolese had been marginalized economically, while the small European population (1 per cent of the total) held 95 per cent of the capital assets and accounted for 50 per cent of the national income. Finally, the economic resources of the state, including land, were overwhelmingly in the hands of the giant corporations operating locally. The financial fortune of the colonial government was tied to the mining sector. Union Minière alone provided the government with 70 per cent of its foreign exchange... The cumulative effect of these trends was a system that soon began to show signs of strain.*

During the colonial period, unemployment was not evident in the Congo. Although it was present in cities such as Leopoldville (Kinshasa) and Elisabethville (Lubumbashi), which attracted unskilled labour from the surrounding countryside as a result of the high wages and fascination of big cities, one cannot sense the presence of unemployment (Cotton, 1957: 6). Even though there were some cases of unemployment in Kinshasa and Lubumbashi, this was not really noticeable, because civic authorities enforced restrictions on immigration into cities. Travelling from rural areas to the cities required proper permission and a travel document from the authorities. This document had to state the city to

which a person was going and the duration of his/her stay there. Consequently, immigration to the cities was not easy, and this helped to reduce the rate of unemployment in the cities. The restriction on immigration to the cities forced those living in rural areas to focus on agricultural work in their respective milieu, instead of crowding cities with job seekers.

### **5.2.1 Production and Industry**

#### *5.2.1.1 Agriculture*

The quantitative and qualitative development of Congolese agriculture has been remarkable ever since the colonial period. This phenomenon is due to the implementation of scientific methods set up by INEAC, the National Institute for Agronomic Research in Congo, and certain specialists in the private sector. As a matter of fact, agricultural production doubled within twenty years. From 1936 to 1957, exports grew from 320,000 to 720,000 tons (Fédération des Entreprises Congolaises, 1960: 52). Cotton (1957: 17) stresses the importance of the implementation of advanced ideas for the development of agriculture:

*Government or para-statal assistance is directed mostly to African cultivator, and the technical assistance and research and experimental experience of INEAC (Institut National d'Etudes Agronomiques au Congo), an officially sponsored agency, is available to assist him to develop his agriculture along modern scientific lines. In recent years, the farming of cash crops has been accelerated by possibilities of sale in foreign markets. The official policy is to guarantee minimum prices to the African farmer for those crops which he sells to European concern for processing and distribution. This system is well exemplified in the rich cotton-bearing lands of the North East and the Kasai, where the crop is cultivated by Africans and sold to Belgian-owned*

*COVENCO (Comptoir de Vente des Cotons du Congo) organization for ginning and disposal on world markets. The cultivation of oil-bearing palm tree is also carried on the same basis.*

In terms of quality, Congolese agriculture has achieved much progress, in such a manner that it competes with foreign products in the international market. Introduced through scientific exploitation, Congolese agriculture has proved itself to have a great impact on development. Cotton (1957: 18-19) classifies agricultural activities in 1955, during the colonial period, as follows:

***Palm Oil Products:*** *European plantations of oil-bearing palm trees amounted to 136,000 hectares in 1955, mostly in Leopoldville, Equateur and Orientale Provinces, along the banks of the Congo and its tributaries; those under African control comprised about 67,000 hectares...The total amount of palm oil produced was 196,000 tons and about 120,000 tons of palm kernels. Processing plants for palm oil are to be found in Alberta, Elizaberta, Brabanta and Flandria, along the Congo and its tributaries, and belong to the Huileries du Congo Belge, a subsidiary of Unilever.*

***Cotton:*** *The total area allocated to cotton cultivation in the Belgian Congo in 1955 was 350,000 hectares, mostly in the Kasai and Orientale Provinces. This is a crop farmed exclusively by Africans, and one in which European supervision is leading to improved yields. In 1955, the total cotton crop amounted to 145,000 tons or about 417 kilograms per hectare.*

***Coffee:*** *The 'robusta' type of coffee is farmed extensively in the north-eastern Congo and the Kivu, while lesser quantities of 'arabica' are produced in Kivu. In 1955, European plantations amounted to 43,000 hectares of 'robusta' and 10,000 hectares of*

'arabica,' with 40,000 hectares devoted to young plantations. The Congo crop in 1955 amounted to 30,000 tons, of which over 27,000 tons came from European plantations.

**Rubber:** *Hevea* rubber cultivation attracts both Europeans and Africans, the total area under production in 1955 being 53,000 hectares, of which Africans owned 7,000 hectares. The most important plantations were in the Equateur and Orientale Provinces. Production in 1955 was 28,000 tons, which represented an increase of 16 per cent from the previous year.

**Cocoa:** This is concentrated in the Leopoldville and Equateur Provinces, along the banks of the Congo River, and is essentially a European venture. The area under cultivation in 1955 was about 21,000 hectares, yielding a crop of about 3,600 tons.

**Ground nuts:** This is a crop grown by Africans all over the Congo. The area under cultivation is 300,000 hectares, and the yield is about 180,000 tons a year. Unsatisfactory world prices have prevented producers from obtaining reasonable cash yields for this crop.

**Rice:** The area devoted to rice has been growing each year, and the tonnages produced have also risen. Cultivation is concentrated in the Orientale and Equateur Provinces, which together produce almost 70 per cent of the crop. The total crop in 1955 amounted to 200,000 tons, and it commands a ready sale in the urban centres, and big mining concerns, such as Union Minière, purchase large quantities to give as rations to their employees.

**Fibres:** These are chiefly grown in the Leopoldville and Orientale Provinces, but the amount planted is subject to

*fluctuation, according to price. Recently, the crop was about 10,000, divided equally between urena and punga.*

**Tea:** *Tea cultivation is an exclusive European activity, and there are many plantations in the Kivu highlands, where the acreage and yields show progressive increases. The figures for 1955 were 3,000 hectares, producing about 860 tons.*

**Sugar:** *Sugar is grown almost exclusively in European plantations, which in 1955 amounted to 3,500 hectares producing 18,000 tons. This crop supplies most of the local needs, and is locally refined. Production will soon be increased in the eastern Congo, where a new refinery will shortly come into existence.*

**Maize:** *This is chiefly a native crop, grown primarily in the Kasai, Oriental and Leopoldville Provinces, as well as Ruanda-Urundi. The area sown is about 350,000 hectares, which yielded a crop of about 320,000 tons in 1955. Only 80 tons of this is for commercial purposes. The supply of maize exceeds the demand, and prices are low.*

**Manioc or Kassava:** *This is the staple food of people throughout the Congo, but particularly in the Leopoldville and Kasai Provinces, where alternatives are few and far between. It is estimated that the 1955 crop yield was 7, 5 million tons.*

**Bananas:** *The importance of bananas is growing each year, especially the plantain variety that is grown by African farmers. In 1955, 2 million tons were produced, largely in the Orientale, Equateur and Kivu Provinces. Table bananas are grown in the Mayumbe region of the lower Congo by European concerns, which export substantial quantities to Belgium.*



The purpose of developing agriculture in the Belgian Congo was to feed the population. Although some products such as maize, bananas, cassava, rice, etc., were destined for local consumption, palm oil, rubber, coffee, cotton, and cocoa were intended for exportation. In 1957, their percentage of value exported was stated by the Fédération des Entreprises Congolaises (1960: 53) as follows: Coffee 12, 1 %, Palm oil 9, 7 %, Cotton 7, 6 %, Rubber 4, 2 %, Cocoa 0, 5 %.

As is clear from the above figures, the development in terms of the cultivation of coffee is far beyond that of the other products. This development took place between 1950 and 1957. During this period, the production of coffee doubled, while local consumption was insignificant. In 1957, coffee exports increased to 67,000 tons (Fédération des Entreprises Congolaises, 1960: 53). As far as the welfare of the population was concerned, nobody spoke of famine or poverty during this period. The population could obtain the minimum quantity of food needed to stay alive. With regards to the local market, Cotton (1957: 21) writes that:

*Local markets within the Belgian Congo has become increasingly important as the population and the nation income increases. This applies not only to such articles as manioc, maize, bananas, sweet potatoes, etc., which are formerly reckoned chiefly as articles for local consumption, but also to a wide range of African products. Judging from the latest returns, international markets are becoming more and more commercialized.*

Since the local market was fuelled by agricultural products, as previously mentioned, it is doubtful that famine or poverty were in existence, which is currently the case in the DRC.

#### *5.1.1.2 Mining*

The mining sector has been central to the Congolese economy since the early decades of the twentieth century (Turner, 2007: 44). The

wealth of the Belgian Congo was drawn from its minerals, as well as its mines. The industries of the colonised territory were exclusively in the hands of the great Belgian societies, among which were the Société Générale and the Union Minière du Haut Katanga (UMHK), named GECAMINES after the independence of the Société Générale. The UMHK mining concession covered many thousands of square miles in the Katanga province and operated in the different mineral beds of Elisabethville (Lubumbashi), Jadotville (Likasi) and Kolwezi (Cotton, 1957: 21). Later, extraction of diamonds would start in Kasai; gold was mined in the north-east of the territory around Watsa, while tin and associated minerals were extracted from the Maniema and Kivu regions. The extraction of copper, cobalt, uranium and other minerals in Katanga was handled by the Union Minière (Cotton, 1957: 21). The mining products were all exported. Further details of the production of minerals in the Belgian Congo in 1955, as Cotton (1957: 22-25) indicates, are:

***Copper and Cuprous Minerals:** The only producer of copper in the Belgian Congo is the Union Minière du Katanga, which owns a concession amounting to 20,000 square kilometres, the mines being centred around the cities of Elisabethville, Jadotville and Kolwezi. The total production of the UMHK in 1955 amounted to 235,100 tons. The copper ingots produced at the Lubumbashi smelter are further refined in Belgium by the Société Générale Métallurgique de Hoboken at its installations in Olen.*

***Cobalt:** The Union Minière is the sole producer of cobalt in the Congo. The deposits occur alongside the copper-bearing ores in the Kolwezi group of mines, and produced 8,600 tons in 1955 or about 75 per cent of the world's production. Production comprises 5,100 tons of granulated metal produced electrolytes at Jadotville-Shituru, and 3,500 tons of metal recovered from cobalt alloys in the Panda electric furnaces at Jadotville.*

**Zinc:** This is found to be mainly associated with copper in the deep UMHK Kipushi mine near Elisabethville on the Northern Rhodesia frontier. Some degree of refinement is carried out at Kolwezi by the Société Métallurgique du Katanga (METALKAT), a subsidiary company of the Union Minière. In 1955, production of zinc amounted to 115,000 tons of concentrate, with 61 per cent zinc content. The METALKAT electrolytic zinc works produced 34,000 tons of electrolytic zinc of almost pure quality, compared with only 7,800 tons in 1953 and 32,000 tons in 1954.

**Cadmium:** Is also produced as a by-product of zinc by METALKAT and SOGECHIM (another subsidiary of the UMHK), and in 1955, production amounted to 166 tons.

**Uranium:** is produced by the Union Minière du Haut Katanga at its mine in Shinkolobwe. This is an underground mine which had been used for many years to produce radium and pitchblende, but production is now concentrated on uranium. At the outset, the ore reputed to be 60 per cent pure, but less valuable ore is now being extracted. The veil of secrecy surrounding any mention of uranium and Shinkolobwe after the war led to a vastly exaggerated perception of the value of the mineral. It now seems clear that it is no longer a major source of revenue for the Union Minière, and its importance to the Congo economy is not significant. No figures of production are available, and it is almost impossible to secure permission to visit the mines, where the labour is carefully controlled and strictly segregated. In conjunction with the Société Générale Métallurgique de Hoboken, a process has been perfected for the production of nuclearly pure uranium for use in atomic reactors. By-products of the Shinkolobwe mine include platinum and palladium.

**Manganese:** *Manganese ore, which is produced in Katanga, is of growing importance. There are two main deposits: the first, exploited by the Société Minière du Beceka, is in Kasengi, and the second, mined by the Société de Recherche Minière du Sud-Katanga (SUDKAT), is situated in Kesekelesa in the south-west of the province. Kasengi entered into production in 1950 and has produced nearly 200,000 tons of manganese ore of only 50 per cent purity. The total production in 1955 amounted to 462,000 tons. The ore is exported down the Bengwela Railway to Lobito in Angola, where modern mechanical loaders have recently been installed.*

**Lead:** *SUDKAT also exploits lead in Kasengi, a metal which is not of much importance. It is processed in Jadotville and is used to meet local requirements.*

**Tin:** *Important tin ore deposits are found in the Katanga province, the Maniema region of the Kivu and Ruanda-Urundi. In 1955, production was valued at 1.3 billion or 8 per cent of the colony's total mineral wealth. Over 85 per cent of all tin is derived from the processing of cassiterite, and the remainder from cassiterite mixtures and from columbotantaline and wolfram. Of the 18,000 tons of tin produced in the Congo in 1955, 45,000 tons came from the Katanga province, 11,300 tons from Maniema and 2,200 tons from Ruanda-Urundi. Manono is also the site of a cassiterite smelter, in which tin production in 1955 amounted to 3,000 tons.*

**Gold:** *Gold is found in the north-east of the Belgian Congo, particularly in the Uturi highlands and in Ruanda-Urundi, and beds stretch as far south as the Maniema region of Kivu. Some gold is also produced on the southern border with Angola. Production in 1955 amounted to 11,300 kilograms. The main*

*producer of gold is the Société des Mine d'Or de Kilo Moto, which is responsible for about two-thirds of the gold production in the Congo, which accounts for only 2 per cent of world production and is subject to strict public control. Gold is only sold through official channels.*

**Diamonds:** *Both gem and industrial diamonds are found in the Congo, particularly in the Kasai province, around Tshikapa. The main company engaged in the exploitation of diamond deposits is the Société Internationale Forestière et Minière du Congo (FORMINIÈRE), which belongs to the Union Minière group and therefore to the Société Générale. This company also acts on behalf of the consortium de l'Entreprise Kasai-Luebo (E.K.L.), and between them they run 49 mines, 35 of which belong to FORMINIÈRE, and the remainder to E.K.L. In 1955, production of gemstones amounted to 628,000 carats, while that of Lubumbashi, or industrial diamonds, amounted to 12,413,000 carats.*

**Coal:** *There are only a few coal deposits in the Belgian Congo, and those that do exist are only used to provide for local industry. The main area for coal is around Albertville. In 1955, production reached a total of 480,000 tons, which was an increase of 100,000 tons on the previous year's figure. The quality is low grade.*

Besides these main mining activities, Cotton (1957: 25) reports that the Belgian Congo also possesses a certain amount of minerals for which a market is found within the colony. This is the case in Bas-Congo, where raw materials extracted from quarries provided local industries with cement, as well as the production of bituminous sand, which, in 1955 increased to 17,700 tons.

Economic activities in the Belgian Congo were not limited to agriculture and mining. They were extended to manufacturing industries, as well as transportation. For the purposes of this study, the researcher is of the view that agricultural and mining activities have furnished a clear picture of what the economy of Congo looked like at the dawn of its independence. It is again important to note that famine and poverty were not significant issues during the colonial period.

### **5.3 Democratic Republic of Congo's Economy During the Post-Colonial Era**

When the DRC became independent in 1960, its economy was one of the most promising in Africa. Its annual GDP was estimated to have an annual growth rate of 6 per cent, and lasted for many years. Ikambana (2007: 32) argues that at the time of its independence, the DRC was one of the most industrialised countries in Africa, with a vast range of industries in different sectors: minerals, food and agriculture, textiles, cement, chemicals and industries providing for all of Black Africa's construction and electricity.

The average annual income was estimated to be US \$680, and the rate of industrialisation was 41 per cent, with relatively high standards of infrastructure, especially in the health and welfare sectors. Unfortunately, the Second Republic contributed negatively to a decrease in the average income to US \$ 100, and reduced national industrial productivity to its lowest level since 1974. With regard to the economic standing of the DRC, Ikambana (2007: 32) comments that:

*The economy was prosperous, and the results were spectacular. The country's food supply was self-sufficient, and many products were being exported (e.g. coffee, rubber, palm oil, cotton, and the like), contributing 40% of the state budget.*

After its independence, between 1960 and 1966, the DRC experienced a number of political difficulties. These were the years of secessionist movements during which the country registered a loss in its economic activities. This loss was visible in the annual growth rate of the GNP, which was 6% at the time of independence but 4% during the movements of secession (Ikambana, 2007: 32). Up until the emergence of the Second Republic, the DRC still boasted a strong economy. The military coup d'état by Mobutu, then a Lieutenant General in the Congolese army, established peace as well as territorial integrity, putting an end to post-independence political disorder. The rich mineral province of Katanga, which claimed its independence from the rest of the country, was returned after Mobutu's reprisals, assisted by the United States and Belgium. Mobutu justified his military coup d'état in the name of national order and security in a country wounded and divided by a civil war between regional factions. Ikambana (2007: 32-33) describes the start of economic activities in the Second Republic:

The rebuilding of state institutions, monetary stabilization, and most importantly, the rebound in copper production created a more favourable climate for economic growth. The new regime slowly started investing in sectors necessary to boost the national economy. However, future mismanagement of national resources revealed a hidden side of the new political system. Most of these investments over long term, resulting in obstruction to industry, an increase in debt, and the deterioration of the national economy.

The period from 1968 to 1974 was a time of economic growth for the DRC, as well as the height of Mobutu's popularity within and outside the country. During this period, the price of copper, Congo's chief export, was high, and investors were attracted to the country. This resulted in a massive inflow of Western capital. With the euphoria of a better future for Congolese citizens, the government began to overspend in the early 1970s (Leslie, 1987: 62).

### **5.3.1 Economic Policy of Zairianisation**

After its independence, all the economic resources of the DRC were exclusively in foreign hands. The government embarked on what it claimed to be a quest for economic sovereignty and economic development, through Mobutu's policy of authentic Zairian nationalism. This led the government to re-evaluate the status of conglomerates such as Union Minière, with the idea of transferring their resources to locals and state control. The purpose of this was to develop the economy in such a way that the DRC would become a powerful state and a leading regional economy in Africa (Leslie, 1993: 104). The economic policy of nationalisation or Zairianisation of national enterprises, as dictated by Mobutu's regime in 1973, as well as the radicalisation of the same economic policy in December 1974, deepened the crises faced by a young and promising economy. They resulted in the obstruction of the industrial sector, as well as the fall of the country's economy. Zairianisation allowed the regime to take over any enterprise run by a non-national, while radicalisation allowed the regime to take control of all units of production and distribution (Ikambana, 2007: 33). Ikambana adds that:

*As a result, the country's long-term economy became entrapped by significant debt, a negative underground economy, an imbalance between currency production and national wealth production and, finally, a complete deterioration of natural wealth (2007:33).*

Not only did Zairianisation and radicalisation contribute to the decline of the economy in the DRC, but they also exerted a significant negative impact on the development of the Congolese economy (Tables 4.1 and 4.2 below, see Ikambana, 2007: 33).



**Table 4. 1 Exportation of National Agricultural Products (in Tons)**

Products	Year			
	1954	1974	1980	1991
Palm oil	185,000	62,433	10,007	2,714
Palmist oil	60,000	33,983	18,737	1,969
Robusta Coffee	46,267	68,658	67,717	74,671
Arabica Coffee	10,300	9,046	6,406	14,818
Rubber	40,152	26,617	19,472	5,512
Cotton Fibre	52,800	1,622	0,000	0,000

**Table 4. 2 Exportation of National Mineral Products**

Products	Year			
	1959	1974	1980	1991
Copper (in tons)	282,320	499,699	459,392	299,782
Electric Zinc	53,438	68,716	43,484	23,318
Cobalt (in tons)	6,501	17,545	14,482	7,953
Fine Gold (in kg)	10,957	4,064	1,271	7,286
Industrial Diamonds	16,004	12,991	8,001	8,895

Furthermore, the decline in productivity in key areas had a profound negative effect on the economy of the country. This was due to the government's failure to implement sound economic policies. Zairianisation and radicalisation seem to be even more complex phenomena. There are various reasons why it is difficult to analyse these issues. Most often, state services and institutions never express the willingness to disclose any information needed for research, under the pretext that the subject demands discretion by the state (Lukombe, 1979:10). Commenting on the phenomenon of Zairianisation, Yabili (n.d.: 2) argues that it was first of all an economic revolution, with reference to foreign economic interests and the 30 November 1973 economic measures. Thereafter, it became a social revolution aimed at ironing out social inequalities within the country.

The economic policies of November 30, 1973 were announced in the last part of Mobutu's 20,000 word speech to members of the Congolese (Zairian) parliament. These policies were divided into three categories:

the first category contained some new policies which included, for example, the Zairianisation of plantations, livestock farming, farms, quarries, and forest exploitation; refining of copper, management of GECAMINES, insurance, maritime transportation, and so forth. The second category consisted of policies that already existed, but whose implementation had not been effective. These policies were related to commerce, charter companies, and associates of the Union Minière. The third category comprised policies whose purpose was to reinforce previous decisions – for example, mandatory automobile insurance, the creation of the Compagnie Maritime Zairoise, the regulation of the work of foreign companies, etc. (Yabili, n.d.: 6). During the period of Zairianisation, many companies in which the DRC had possessed shares together with Belgium became one hundred per cent Congolese. This was the case with the MIBA, a company dealing with diamond extraction and exports; the FORESCOM, a company dealing with timber exploitation; the BCKL, a company dealing with the extraction and exporting of copper and other minerals, etc.

All the companies affiliated with GECAMINES, and GECAMINES itself, now belonged to the DRC. On November 30, 1973, decree no. 73-365 was signed by President Mobutu, appointing a native by the name of Umba, a mining engineer, as the manager of GECAMINES. This company, since its establishment, has been able to support more than 50 per cent of the total budget of the country. According to Mobutu, with regard to some of the companies in which Congo had shares with Belgium, Belgium never retroceded the Congolese shares. This was the case with the company Interfor, which on May 16, 1968, became Indufor (Yabili, n.d.: 11-12). Zairianisation was one of the reasons that Mobutu wanted to regain Congo's shares from Belgian companies doing business with Congo.

The economic policy of Zairianisation was intended to promote economic freedom in the country because, as stated by Mobutu, 90 per

cent of the economic activities in the country were in the hands of expatriates. Mobutu based his economic reform on article 22 of the constitution, promulgated on June 24, 1967, which stated that properties of private enterprises that represented an essential national interest could be transferred by decree to the Republic or to a more public person, by means of paying to the owner an equitable indemnity (Lukombe, 1979: 16). Zairianisation and radicalisation are the two economic policies, among other factors, that destroyed the economy of the DRC due to the fact that President Mobutu did not take the time to think carefully about the implementation of these economic policies. As a dictator, nobody in the country could say otherwise or contest this economic reform. With regard to the abovementioned facts, Leslie (1993: 105) comments:

*Undoubtedly the most far-reaching policy in the government's drive for economic autonomy was Zairianization. In a speech before the Nation Legislative Council on November 30, 1973, Mobutu announced plans for the seizure of those small and medium-sized enterprises in Zaire that remained in foreign hands – commercial ventures, plantations, transportation companies, and construction firms. This strategy was clearly aimed at the expatriate entrepreneurial class in Zaire, which consisted exclusively of Greeks, Portuguese, Italians, and Jews – many of whom had migrated to Zaire during the colonial period. Measures were announced for adequate compensation, but as it turned out many financial settlements were not made until well over a decade later.*

The idea behind Zairianisation was sound, but the policy was poorly implemented. There were no indications given to state officials as to how the programmes should be executed, until a couple of weeks later when instructions were issued to local administrators to conduct a census of foreign-owned enterprises. Leslie (1993: 105) adds that:

*Although the scheme was presented as a positive step along the road to economic independence, it soon became clear that the government's goals were highly political and self-serving. Distribution of the approximately 2,000 businesses involved was based on political influence. The bulk of the companies therefore went to individuals at the top of the regime's hierarchy – including, incidentally, Mobutu himself and members of his family.*

Within a few months, the disastrous effects of the Zairianisation policy became more evident. Since businesses were simultaneously allocated to both regional and central government levels, in this confusion, many firms were handled by more than one prospective *acquereur* (owner). As they could not successfully manage their businesses, many *acquereurs* quickly liquidated the inventories and financial resources of the acquired businesses, or merely abandoned them (Leslie, 1993: 105). Given that the attribution of Zairianized enterprises to Zairians was made on a political basis, the new owners or acquirers generally lacked experience in business management (Muamba-Ntolo, 1980: 351). The Zairianisation policy was really a failure in terms of its implementation, and its effects harmed the Congolese economy.

### **5.3.2 Economic Policy of Radicalisation**

The Political Bureau of the Popular Movement for the Revolution did not turn a deaf ear to critiques aired against Zairianisation regarding its negative political and economic impact (Muamba-Ntolo, 1980: 352). By the end of 1974, the failure of Zairianisation was being acknowledged within and outside the country. The local press started to attack the greed and conspicuous consumption of the *acquereurs* (Leslie, 2007: 106). At this time, Mobutu came up with another economic policy called “radicalisation”, which is in fact a complement,

if not a continuation, of the idea behind Zairianisation. Discussing radicalisation, Leslie (1993: 106) contends that:

*Radicalization was essentially a ten-point program to address major Zairian 'scourges' such as unemployment, inflation, social injustice, and individualism. In what he claimed was a war against personal enrichment, Mobutu declared that MPR officials and other top civil servants had to surrender businesses obtained through Zairianization to the state and confine their activities to agriculture.*

However, the evidence showed that the target of radicalisation was not to return businesses that had been acquired by the Zairian elite to the state, but rather to Belgian-owned companies that been established in the country since the colonial era, and which had not been affected by Zairianisation. The aim was for the firms representing all key sectors of economy to be taken over by the state. At this point, Belgian businesses in the country were seriously affected by radicalisation measures. In return, the parent companies of Belgian firms confiscated under Zairianisation and radicalisation cut off credit, and the Belgian office dealing with export insurance for shipments to the Congo suspended its operations as an expression of dissatisfaction with the Congolese (Zairian) government. It is against this background that the DRC (formerly Zaire) began to experience serious economic difficulties (Leslie, 1993: 106). Leslie adds that although certain foreigners did reacquire their businesses, the economic disruption caused by the government's policies was something that the DRC could ill afford. Zairianisation measures were conceived in order to exert state control over the mineral sector, which in fact was the heart of all Congolese economic activities (Leslie, 1993: 106). "The desire for economic autonomy was laudable, and with a less self-serving political elite and a technically competent business class, some level of economic independence might have been achieved" (Leslie, 1993: 106).

According to Huybrechts et al (1960-1980), the economic policy followed over the past twenty years widened the gap between the main parts of the population – the farmers and workers in town on the one side, and a small group of upper class people on the other, where the bureaucracy of business was sufficiently privileged to gain many advantages. These authors add that the factors involved in the ongoing inequality of income distribution are due to the kinds of economic, political, and social policies adopted. In terms of Zairianisation and radicalisation, the IMF (2007: 36) states that:

*the suicidal measures of Zairianization and radicalization taken by the regime in power, contributed in their turn to halting the take-off of the productive sectors by introducing a climate of mistrust, especially among expatriate economic operators, and hence triggering capital flight.*

Similarly, according to Muamba (1980: 354):

*Radicalization, however, did not improve the catastrophic economic condition brought about by Zairianization: disruption of internal trade, mismanagement, shortages, layoffs, production decreases, and inflation. On the contrary, the situation got worse. Radicalized enterprises, even though under government control, were managed by the same inexperienced Zairian. Furthermore, many radicalized enterprises were subsidiaries of European trading companies which had not yet paid damages since Zairianization. So, radicalization made relations between them colder and colder and ultimately disrupted the stock supply.*

The Zairianisation and radicalisation measures contributed to the severity of the economic and financial situation already created by the past economic, investment and budgetary policies of the Mobutu regime (Katwala, 1979: 272). These economic measures not only harmed the

economy of the DRC, but also weakened the private sector, the principal source of wealth and job creation in the country.

### **5.3.3 Democratic Republic of Congo: Economic Decline**

The DRC, since its independence on June 30, 1960, has experienced difficulties with the complicated nature of external attempts to implement a development policy package in the midst of domestic and international constraints. As Leslie (1987: 61) notes:

*The political turmoil of the early 1960s caused severe dislocations in the Zairian economy, resulting in falling production levels, low export earnings, government overspending, and inflation. With the restoration of some measure of political stability, an IMF stabilization program was adopted in June 1967, supported by a one-year stand-by arrangement for \$ 27 million. The program aimed to re-establish economic growth, and with a very favourable world market for copper that resulted in significant increases in government revenues, no drawings had to be made under the stand-by arrangement.*

During the rule of the late President Mobutu, corruption was institutionalised throughout the Congolese society, and the exploitative nature of the regime and the pervasiveness of patron-client politics made the DRC stand out from other African countries. The political system set up by the state favoured the ruling elite in order to maintain power and consolidate its economic base (Leslie, 1987: 6). Leslie (1987: 6) describes the behaviour of the elite during the rule of Mobutu:

*This group, with its “bullion fixation”, sees development assistance as yet another means to accumulate personal wealth. Hence, what is considered to be simply bureaucratic disorganization and economic mismanagement by external actors*

*such as the Bank and the IMF, is to Zaire's ruling elite a rational policy of 'organized disorganization' designed to maintain the status quo. Thus in Zaire, the World Bank faces what might be described as a hostile domestic environment.*

The mismanagement of the economy in the Congo was directly associated with the privatisation and personalisation of the state by President Mobutu. As the country's leader, he felt entitled to dispose of public property and funds as though they were his own (Nzongola, 2004: 11). Nzongola (2004: 11-12) adds that:

*There were instances in which public officials would unexpectedly but pleasantly be surprised to learn that the president, in his magnanimity, had decided to cede to them as a gift the government villas in which they resided. Lives could be changed and the state impoverished with a stroke of the presidential pen. Thus, a large number of state properties were privatised, whose beneficiaries often proved how grateful they were by reciprocating with gifts of money and other resources to the president's family.*

Examining the desperate economy of the country, Nzongola (2004: 12) argues that Mobutu and his government officials used an enormous amount of money, mostly produced locally from the country's resources, including diamonds, gold and electrical power, to neutralise their enemies, and that much of this money never went into the state treasury. As an example, it was estimated that a sum of between US \$ 40 to 60 million was generated each month from mining and petroleum revenues in 1996. Yet, by the end of July of the same year, the government of Prime Minister Kengo wa Dondo claimed to have raised less than US \$ 150 million for the 1996 budget exercises, two-thirds of which supposedly came from customs revenue. One wonders where the rest of the money went. As far as Mobutu's wealth was concerned, Kapstein



(1980: 6) observes that there has been no reliable estimate of Mobutu's personal wealth. There is a report which asserts that 25 percent of all government funds went into a special presidential account, and he dispensed these funds at will. A great deal of money allocated to his office went into his own pocket, and probably even more went into buying loyalty from his henchmen.

Leslie (1987: 8-9) argues that after more than twenty years of independence, the economic picture of the DRC was still bleak. This is a paradox because, in terms of its natural resources, the DRC is one of the richest countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, as mentioned earlier. It is very unfortunate that, in spite of seven IMF stabilisation programmes, seven Paris Club re-schedulings, one formal re-scheduling by a Western bank in the London Club, and six major devaluations of the nation's currency, the Zaire (currently Congolese Francs), the economic and debt crises continue to exist.

During the early 1970s, the government of Zaire undertook several ambitious and disastrous development projects, which were all financed by external donors. One of them was the construction of a steel mill at Maluku (Leslie, 1993: 104). In this regard, Leslie (1993: 104) reports:

*German and Italian contractors began construction on a steel mill at Maluku...to process iron ore from rich deposits in Haut-Zaire and Kasai. Because of the very favourable feasibility study conducted by an Italian consulting firm in the late 1960s, President Mobutu had become personally committed to the scheme, even though in strictly economic terms the local market seemed too small to justify the investment. In spite of investor scepticism, the government decided to proceed, bearing the entire cost of the \$ 250 million project. Although the steel plan was proclaimed a major achievement by the regime, it turned out to be a white elephant... The facility could not process Zairian ore because of inappropriate equipment and therefore had to*

*depend exclusively on imported scrap. As a result, it never operated at more than 10 per cent capacity, and by 1980 the plant had closed.*

The World Bank and the IMF had been instrumental and active actors in advocating market-oriented reforms and liberalisation programmes, in order to restore economic stability in the DRC. In their policy conditions, matters such as monetary control, decreases in public spending, massive devaluations, as well as the sweeping liberalisation of the international market, international trade and control were included (Mommen, 1996: 285). This author adds:

*In spite of all these reforms, Zaire failed to cope with economic decline and impoverishment. Although Zaire was one of the first African countries to adhere to Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) imposed by the Bretton Woods institutions, its economic transformation process was frustrated by its foreign indebtedness, falling export earning, and the inability of the ruling bureaucratic class (Mommen, 1996: 285).*

In 1986, after protesting against the IMF's policy, which he perceived as being inhumane, Mobutu mobilised Third World opinion against the SAPs and cancelled the application of IMF guidelines after the country's failure to meet its commitments in this regard. Consequently, in 1987, the IMF suspended its financial intervention in the DRC (Mommen, 1996: 293). Mommen argues that the main problem in the DRC was the outflow of capital. This totalled US \$ 2 billion between 1983 and 1987, and by 1987, the DRC had become an important international debtor, with a foreign debt of US \$ 8.63 billion (Mommen, 1996: 293). Examining the causes of the financial crisis during this period, Mommen (1996: 295) argues that:

*As consequence of the economic crisis, export earnings declined and caused a sudden breakdown of state finances. Five*

*intrinsically linked causes were at the very origins of financial crisis of the state. First, a shrinking taxable base caused by the crisis in the copper industry and falling export revenues; second, the foreign debt burden; third, the overall decline of industrial and agrarian production; fourth, high inflation rates making impossible a calculation of taxable incomes; and fifth, the increasing importance of levying personal taxes by powerful people in and outside of the Zairian administration.*

Another fact that contributed to the decline of the Congolese economy was that the requirements for a mining company's investment remained high, and the government tried to compensate for this shortfall through an increase in foreign lending, as well as inviting foreign investors to float GECAMINES, the main mining company. At the same time, the copper price fell in the international market, while the DRC was not the only copper-producing country in this market. Other copper-producing countries increased their output, and foreign investors became very sceptical about investing in the Congo's bankrupt mining activities (Mommen, 1996: 295) since the economic situation in the DRC was not showing any improvement, as Mommen (1996: 296-297) argued,

*In 1993 Zaire's foreign debt amounted to \$ 10.7 billion. Since 1992 debt servicing had stopped and in 1993 arrears totalled some US \$ 640 million (US \$300 million to IMF, US \$ 300 million to the African Development Bank (ADB), US \$ 40 million to the World Bank). Zaire never paid more than a fraction of its loans, except in years it received large amounts of exceptional foreign aid. Meanwhile Zaire had contracted a high interest loan of some US \$ 200 million brought together by a consortium of Arab bankers.*

As one can perceive, the economic situation was rapidly deteriorating. Around 1967, one Zaire currency was worth US \$ 2, but in

the early 1990s, the Zaire currency became worthless. Mommen (1996: 303) states that economic decline in the DRC was accelerated by predatory practices and corruption, since Mobutu was backed by the major Western powers until 1989. In light of this situation, the SAPs were unable to halt the overall decline of the Congolese economy. The SAPs encountered many difficulties, some of which were external, while others were internal. Among them was the lack of willingness by the government to curtail its spending and the financing of the deficit in the government's budget by means of an increasing reliance on domestic bank funds, which in turn provoked a sharp expansion of the money supply, as well as an acceleration of inflation. Leslie (1987: 9) views the economic decline in the DRC in terms of the nature of the regime. He explains:

*Given the country's strong resource base, the persistence of the crisis can be understood only through an examination of the nature of the regime. What initially was seen as a typical military coup has evolved into a highly personalized, authoritarian form of rule, in which Mobutu has been able to frustrate internal opposition and manipulate external Western allies by taking advantage of their competing interests. Further, Mobutu and his clique engage in systematic illegal extraction of state's resources. This behaviour permeates the entire society, and institutionalized corruption is often seen as the means of survival by the average Zairian, in the face of harsh economic realities.*

According to Leslie (1978: 62-63), the turning point for the Congolese economy arrived in 1974, owing to several factors (which began in 1973): the falling price of copper in the international market; the economic disruption caused by the closing of the Bengwela railroad during the Angolan civil war; the rising cost of oil and other key imports; and the reduction of economic productivity and distribution,

due to the economic policy of Zairianisation of many foreign-owned businesses. All this plunged the country into an economic crisis.

The government adopted a one-year stabilisation programme. This programme was aimed at economic recovery, with the following conditions: that 42 percent of the Congolese currency be devalued in terms of a Special Drawing Right (SDR), that the import and government spending levels also be cut, as well as a shift in investment priorities in favour of agriculture. In spite of this change in priorities, the economy did not show signs of improvement (Leslie, 1987: 63). In March 1977, when the copper belt region of Katanga (formerly Shaba) was invaded by FLNC forces (Shaba I), followed by a second Shaba invasion in 1978, bilateral creditors, led by the United States, France and Belgium, started to seriously question Mobutu's ability to secure foreign investments, as well as his regime in general. The second Shaba invasion demonstrated the government's inability to control the mining region of Katanga. Furthermore, the poor economic performance proved that the country could not meet its international obligations without sweeping economic and structural changes (Leslie, 1987: 64). According to a World Bank study in 1979, the decline of the DRC's economy began in 1975. Several attempts by the IMF to boost the economy of the country in 1977 were made in vain. Under the aegis of Belgium in Brussels on June 13-14 and November 9-10, 1978, the Paris Club and certain private banks, by means of consultations, attempted to consolidate and reschedule agreements in 1976 and 1977, as well as to ease the burden of servicing the debts owed to them. Before the consultations were held, the Congolese government, since 1977, had formulated an emergency plan known as "Plan Mobutu", a three-year plan for implementing investment programmes (World Bank Country Study, 1979: 2).

With regards to the decline of the mining sector in the Congolese economy, the IMF (2007: 35-36) comments that:

*except for the expanded activities in artisanal gold and diamond mining, industrial mining production has collapsed in its entirety. The copper production of GECAMINES dropped from 465,000 metric tons at a price of US \$ 2,855 a ton (in 1990) to 19,000 metric tons at a price of US \$1,800 a ton (in 2002), with serious consequences in the economic and social areas. With the bankruptcy of GECAMINES, Katanga Province underwent a profound socioeconomic transformation. The entire population of Katanga mining region, which was dependent on that enterprise, was plunged into absolute poverty overnight. The re-structuring and regulation of the mining sector initiated throughout the country in 2004 have led to the expropriation of small farmer landholdings to the benefit of other mining sectors and mining concessions, to widespread fraud, and to unconscionably one-sided contracts.*

Another fact to be taken into account with regard to the decline of the Congolese economy is the process of democratisation in the 1990s, which plunged the country into a disorderly process of multi-party politics and a proliferation of labour unions, which led to frequent strikes and a climate of widespread insecurity throughout the country (IMF, 2007: 36). On April 24, 1990, Mobutu announced his plan to institute a series of reforms which would include lifting the ban on independent political activity. At this time, the outcry against his dictatorship was escalating, and people in the country rallied in support of his political demise. Zaire's National Conference was determined to strip Mobutu of all but ceremonial power, and to proceed with the nation's transition to democracy. In his attempt to thwart this effort, Mobutu set into motion a series of massacres across the country, perpetrated by his personal security and armed forces, which he used to intimidate, repeatedly postpone, and defy the National Conference.

The disagreement between Mobutu and the democratic opposition, led by former Prime Minister Etienne Tshisekedi wa Mulumba, created a power vacuum. Government ceased to exist, and lawlessness reigned throughout the country. In the midst of this chaos, foreign businesses were taken over. In December 1992, Mobutu stripped Tshisekedi of his post. Zairian troops went on a rampage and plundered Kinshasa and other cities, causing foreign businesses to leave the country in droves. The West then froze Mobutu's foreign funds, and cut all ties with the dictator. The cabinet surrounding him was opposed to the political change that had taken place. While the majority of the Zairian population aspired to a radical change in the political system, a powerful minority of Mobutu loyalists opposed political change, in order that acquired privileges could be retained. This turmoil, in the eyes of the international community, appears to suggest that the democratisation of Zaire was a failure. Ikambana (2007: 49) argues otherwise:

*Zaire's democratic process did not ultimately fail. Instead, it met and successfully confronted an obstruction of the democratic process – this is, an obstruction that threatened to hinder the attainment of a political system of the people and by the people characterized by assuring the citizenry's participation in the country's administration, a guarantee of basic human rights, a respect of the law by minorities, and the choice to freely elect and control its governors.*

This was a warning sign that discouraged many investors. It would be unfair only to blame the government of Zaire for its failure to honour the structural adjustment programme and its indebtedness, and hold its lenders, namely the World Bank, IMF and other financial institutions, including the WTO, blameless. In most cases, these institutions, instead of becoming a solution for developing countries, became a burden which had to be carried by the impoverished population. Kapstein (1980: 7) observes that:

*In mitigation, one must point out that it is not all Zaire's fault. Ten years ago, international lending organizations were pressing all kind of expensive loan packages on the less developed countries, and many trace Zaire's downfall to the ambitious \$ 400 million Inga-Shaba power project started in the early seventies.*

The comments of critics on the IMF policy conditions are not always in favour of the borrowing countries. The IMF management would like recipient countries to own the policy conditions much more than they have done, while genuine ownership can only be achieved if the countries in question participate in the making of policies. Unfortunately, the IMF usually imposes policies against the wishes of the governments of these countries. The consequence is that many developing countries, if not all, are neither growing nor developing. For many, the situation is bleak. Khor (n.d.: 2) argues that:

*The failure of the IMF and other international financial agencies to prevent such crises should be recognised as one of its major flaws, and this should be rectified. Indeed, the failure of the IMF in preventing the global financial system from going down the road of such rapid regulation and liberalization (with the consequences of currency instability, volatility of capital flows, and financial speculation), and instead of presiding over this road that was taken, is a major mistake... At present, debtor countries are at the losing end. They are not organised among themselves, and are often caught in a crisis without enough time or sufficient knowledge to think and plan properly. In contrast, creditors and creditor countries are well organised among themselves, and they organise to obtain maximum return for their loans.*



Critics also claim that the IMF is generally indifferent, if not hostile, to their views of democracy, human rights, and labour rights, since the IMF considers economic stability to be a precursor to democracy, an argument discarded by critics. Commenting on the manner in which the IMF and World Bank operate, Radin (2002: 1-2) writes:

*The agencies are not accountable to anyone but top financial officials of the wealthiest nations, they make decisions in closed meetings and they fail to produce the desired results...Widening the worldwide gap between rich and poor, installing 'terminator genes' in crops so that poor farmers cannot save seed from year to year, jeopardizing monarch butterflies in an effort to grow pest-resistant corn – all are examples of what the protesters now gathering in Washington see as a global corporate mentality running wild at the expense of self-determination and self-sufficiency of ordinary people.*

Molina and Pereira (2008: 7) argue that the practice of attaching conditions to grants and loans undermines ownership and imposes inappropriate policy choices. Conditionality is an infringement on national sovereignty, and has not been effective in inducing economic policy reform. The use of conditionality by Washington-based international financial institutions means that other bilateral donors usually turn to the World Bank and IMF to determine their own economic policy conditions. Molina and Pereira (2008: 13) add that:

*The Fund continues to push for privatization and liberalization of poor nations' economies, interfering with decisions which should be freely taken by countries according to domestic priorities and needs. Among the loans approved during the last three years, almost a quarter of all conditions required policy reforms related to privatizing or liberalising.*

Another criticism by Molina and Pereira (2008: 17) is the lack of coordination between the two financial institutions:

*Lack of coordination between the Bank and the Fund has been a long-standing problem. Over the last twenty years, as many as nine reports have been issued to address this problem... Cross conditionality is not an example of good coordination, but rather an example of how the Fund is stepping into areas where the Bank has greater competences. It evidences the absence of division of labour between the two institutions and the waste of resources in duplicating their efforts to push the same reforms in poor countries.*

With regard to the WTO, critics further show the relationship between massive, odious debt and poverty in developing countries, together with the effect of the current form of globalisation that marginalises a vast majority of people around the world. Critics always point out that beneficiaries of world trade are largely wealthy people in Western nations and transnational corporations, while the majority of people throughout the world will not benefit.

Moreover, the predicament of the citizens of many poor countries has become worse under the policies of economic globalisation that are prescribed by the World Bank, IMF and the WTO. It should also be noted that the debt of dictators in developing countries involves the lending of billions of dollars by the IMF, World Bank, and other multinational banks and international financial institutions to brutal dictators all over the world. This was the case in Zaire, where Mobutu received much financial support from the West.

## **5.4 State of Poverty in The Democratic Republic of Congo**

A major participatory poverty analysis (PPA) was undertaken in the DRC from October to March, 2005, under the supervision of the ministry of planning. The PPA project was directed by the technical committee responsible for the design and implementation of the country's national Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS).

In 2004, the government of the DRC decided to investigate poverty in the country, by creating a space for voices of ordinary citizens, asking some 35,750 Congolese citizens to furnish their views on poverty. It was a comprehensive and participatory poverty analysis, carried out through a process of consultation and dialogue with Congolese men and women. These consultations were conducted in 470 Congolese villages and districts across 94 of the 145 territories in the DRC, in the administrative centres of 11 provinces, as well as during a national workshop held at Kisantu in the Bas-Congo province from May 30 to June 4, 2005. All these consultations helped to identify priority issues relating to poverty for the whole nation (Poverty, Insecurity and Exclusion in the DRC, 2006: 4).

Poverty is one of the factors which is affecting 60 million Congolese people in their daily lives and which has reached significantly high levels and led to intensive suffering. To help eradicate this phenomenon, one should break with previous methods of working based on top-down planning. Representatives of local communities, non-governmental organizations, civil society, and the private sector throughout the country were consulted through the PPA, and were asked to contribute their own ideas and analyses regarding the state of poverty in the country, and to identify ways and means of improving living conditions in poor communities. It has been noted that the PPA undertaken in 2006 was a valuable tool that provided qualitative data as well as a problem analysis for the whole country. The project was achieved through a

process of reinitiating a long overdue dialogue between the state and its citizens. According to the PPA, in the DRC, the state of poverty can be understood in terms of some key characteristics, namely: (a) basic needs that are unmet; (b) the decline of productive activities; (c) the lack of security and peace; and (d) a culture of impunity that leads to further corruption and greater injustice and exclusion (Poverty, Insecurity and Exclusion in the DRC, 2006: 6-8), which will be explained below.

#### **5.4.1 Failure to meet Basic Needs**

Concerns related to the failure to meet basic needs can be expressed in terms of:

*Having enough to eat, adequate clothing, housing, and the capacity to consult a physician when illness strikes... These are the first experiences identified and discussed by the people when they speak about poverty (IMF, 2007: 18).*

##### **(a) Lack of Food**

This is the inability of a person to feed his/her family members, and applies to both rural and urban settings across the country. Lack of food is an issue that affects the entire country. It is not an issue that only affects the most vulnerable, but indeed the whole population. A survey on how people perceive poverty also indicates that food insecurity is widespread. It is stated that 79 per cent of those surveyed expressed a critical dissatisfaction regarding food and nutrition.

##### **(b) Lack of Access to Safe and Decent Housing**

This is another issue that indicates the level of poverty in the country. During the conducting of the PPA, one participant shared the following experience: “In Bukama, Katanga, men don’t have a bed; they sleep on the floor, on a mat or animal skin, and cover themselves with a

cloth that their wives wear during the day.” The same situation is experienced by many Congolese all over the country.

(c) Lack of Access to Doctors or Medical Treatment

The lack of access to doctors, among other things, means that women are likely to give birth at home on their own, without any assistance. People rely on self-treatment and traditional healing. The extent to which the achievement of the MDGs for the health sector is falling short has reached an unprecedented level. To illustrate the weakness of the health sector, it is stated that:

*Only 46.1 percent of pregnant women received prenatal care from trained medical personnel. In the same year, the proportion of pregnant women for whom childbirth was attended by trained personnel was 23.7 percent. By way of comparison, the proportion of pregnant women assisted in childbirth by unqualified personnel (relatives, friends, or without assistance) was close to 40 percent. The percentage of mothers excluded for financial reasons ranges from 7 percent to 30 percent, depending on the case (IMF, 2007: 38-39).*

Some other aspects such as a reduction in professional quality of health care, a proliferation of educational and university institutions offering medical training at acutely expensive rate, a lack of decent and motivating working conditions, inequitable distribution of the scarcity of qualified personnel, etc., have caused a deterioration in the health system and led households to assume almost the entire financial cost of health services in the absence of a well organized health insurance system (IMF, 2007: 40).

(d) Lack of Decent Clothing

In both rural and urban settings, many families resort to buying second-hand clothes sold at local market stalls and imported mainly

from charities in Europe. The wearing of these clothes is seen by many as a sign of poverty. The worst affected are those living in remote communities that are ravaged by war, where people face difficulties in finding suitable clothing. In some places, the husband and wife alternately wear a piece of cloth, and sometimes children walk naked in the street.

(e) Inability to Send Children to School

Sending a child to school is a huge sacrifice for parents, especially those living in provinces and areas badly affected by war. Most parents are unable to pay school fees for their children. As a result, children drop out of school and devote themselves to small businesses.

(f) No Access to Drinking Water and Electricity

In most villages and districts, there is a complaint with regard to the availability of and accessibility to drinking water and electricity. In terms of electricity, the DRC has a rich hydrography, which yields a hydroelectric potential estimated at 100,000MW, or 13.0 percent of the global hydroelectric potential (IMF, 2007: 36). As observed, however:

*Despite their strengths, the Inga power plants taken together are working at only 40 percent of capacity. A substantial proportion of this production is intended for export, thus leaving local demand unmet. As a result of this situation, the rate of access of people to electrical power is 1.0 percent in rural areas, 30.0 percent in the cities, and 6.0 percent nationally, while the average for Sub-Saharan Africa is 24.6 percent (IMF, 2007: 36).*

What surprises many Congolese, if not all, is the lack of electricity in most parts of the Bas-Congo province, where the Inga Dam is located. Nowadays, many districts in Kinshasa are without electricity for weeks or months. No one can enjoy uninterrupted electricity in the Congo. Some families in Kinshasa who can afford to store food are forced to

buy food on a daily basis. Downtown and in many other places, the use of generators has become common. The majority of the population cannot afford to purchase a generator, and as a consequence, they are condemned to suffer darkness and other inconveniences.

#### **5.4.2 Decline in Productive Activities**

Due to the collapse of the Congolese economy, the financial channels for facilitating productive work and employment have been obstructed. There is a low level of production, few buyers and a lack of outlets. Those working on farms and in industrial sectors need to reinforce their capacity in order to increase production. Besides this is the thorny issue of transport, which does not facilitate the transfer of goods from villages to major commercial centres, due to the bad state of the roads.

Another factor is scarcity of employment opportunities. Large companies such as General Motors, GECAMINE, etc., are closed, and the few that are operational can only employ a very small number of people. The lack of incentives has stifled business initiatives owing to the non-availability of support to help them get started.

#### **5.4.3 Lack of Security and Peace**

It is evident that throughout the DRC, insecurity affects the welfare of most communities and people on all levels: social, economic, and even psychological. Insecurity turned into violence when war broke out on the eastern borders of the country in 1994. There is no doubt that the insecurity which has spread all over the country is the consequence of this war. This insecurity has led to people being displaced. On the eastern borders of the country, poverty could also be viewed as an outcome of the continuous displacement due to the war, because when war breaks out, people move from one place to another in order to find shelter, and often without taking anything with them. The conflict

situation affecting the DRC since 1998 has exerted a negative impact on the well-being of its people, especially on the psychological level (IMF, 2007: 19).

#### **5.4.4 Culture of Impunity**

The above-mentioned survey has identified a culture of impunity as another factor that contributes to increasing poverty in the country. It is clearly stated that:

*A pervasive culture of impunity is seen to foster corruption, injustice, and people's exclusion/marginalisation. Widespread impunity in the DRC is seen as a key contributor to widespread abuse of power at various levels of management in state affairs (IMF, 2006: 8).*

The IMF report on the DRC asserts that people are adamant about the culture of impunity in which they live, because they believe it encourages evil practices such as corruption, injustice, and exclusion. This culture is regarded as a major factor behind the suffering endured by people (IMF, 2007: 20). Government has been unduly passive, to the extent that citizens have started to act as if there is no law in the country. Justice cannot do its work because of corruption, and also because of the interference of politics in judicial matters. The culture of impunity in the DRC has created a class of people who are untouchable, for whom prosecution is not possible. These untouchables could be national citizens or foreigners who have connections either with government officials or high-ranking members of the army or police.

#### **5.4.5 The Main Causes of Poverty**

Due to the fact that poverty is a multidimensional and complex concept, the causal relationship between it and its determining factors is also complex. The findings of the participatory consultations suggest



that several factors may cause a particular form of poverty, and several manifestations thereof may have the same cause. Among its numerous possible causes in the DRC, the following causal relationships have been identified:

#### *5.4.5.1 Poor Governance*

The PPA findings show that poor governance is regarded as a result of ineffective public administration. In other words, a dysfunction in public administration, which is riddled with corruption and abuse of political power, translates into violations of basic human rights. This in turn undermines and reverses efforts to promote economic and social development (Poverty, Insecurity and Exclusion in the DRC, 2006: 17). In terms of poor governance, the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2002: 23) states that:

*This is the most frequently cited cause of poverty. It is held responsible for the lack of human capabilities in health, education, the environment, nutrition, governance management, culture, human and financial resource management, and social and road infrastructure.*

It is noted that the image of the Congolese public administration is extremely negative. The state of basic public services not only fails to meet quality standards and deadlines, but has also become a source of corruption. Throughout the country, there is no guarantee of access to these services. The neglect of civil servants and state employees for several decades is at the root of the current situation with regard to public administration. The worst thing is that the wages paid are paltry and meaningless when it comes to sustaining people's lives, there is a lack of client-centredness and career management, and physical working conditions are unsatisfactory, while job descriptions and duties are poorly defined.

With regard to poor governance, the inefficiency of the judicial system, up to the level of an officer of the court, is also apparent. The judicial sector has experienced a meaningful increase in extra-judicial settlements in terms of court decisions not enforced, as well as the mistrust of the judicial system. Other factors are the massive violation of the principle of equality of all before the law, poor management of human resources and the careers of officers of the court, as well as the absence of training programmes to reinforce capacities and public awareness campaigns on the operation of the judicial system. These are the flaws that undermine the justice sector (IMF, 2007: 30-31). Poor governance not only exerts a negative impact on administrative governance, but also reaches all other sectors as well, social, political, economic, etc.

Another issue is mismanagement. As noted, the late president Mobutu used the resources of the country for his own benefit. This has been illustrated by Wrong (2002: 10), when he discloses that, in 1978, an IMF official discovered that the governor of the Central Bank of the DRC ordered GECAMINES, a state company, to deposit its export earnings directly into Mobutu's personal account. With regard to this issue, Koyame and Clark (2002: 203) assert:

*The widespread corruption, economic controls, and the diversion of public resources for personal gain during the Mobutu era thwarted economic growth. Some of the blame should also be put on President Laurent Kabila's disastrous economic mismanagement, including the introduction of unrealistic price controls, regulation of foreign exchange market, and the printing of money to finance government budget deficit.*

In addition, a special report on the DRC by the FAO (2000: 4) states that the use of an overvalued exchange rate in government and formal business transactions has had the adverse effect of driving hard currency out of the banking system and into government coffers, instead of into

the black market. This situation has exacerbated the scarcity of such essential products as fuel, whose prices are controlled through the official exchange rate. This led an IMF mission, in February 2000, to recommend, among other things, the harmonisation of official and parallel exchange rates for the Congolese franc, in order to gradually lift the price control of petroleum products.

**Table 4.3 Views regarding the causes of poverty in Lemba and Bandalungwa**

	Men	Women
Total interviewed	79.81% (265/332)	20.18% (67/332)
Unemployment	40,75%	58,20%
Poverty of soil	0%	0%
Poor management	43.77%	44.71%
Bad leadership	56.22%	55.22%

Source: Survey conducted in Kinshasa in June-September 2008 by Bosela E. Eale.

This survey, using a small sample, does not adequately represent the population under study. Nonetheless, it provides a clear picture of the status of poverty in a given group of the population at a given point in time, and can be used to obtain indicators that are alarming enough to launch an intervention or to justify its continuation.

A survey conducted by the researcher in the Lemba and Bandalungwa districts of Kinshasa from June to September, 2008, shows that among the 332 men and women interviewed regarding the causes of poverty in the country, 43.77 percent of the men attributed poverty to poor management of the country in all respects, while 56.22 percent attributed poverty to a lack of good leadership. Likewise, 44.71 percent of the women attributed poverty to poor management of the country, whereas 55.22 percent believed that poverty was due to a lack of good leadership.

#### *5.4.5.2 Social Values*

Factors perceived as the second most important cause of poverty in the DRC and related to this issue include, among others, social behaviour, ways and customs, and social values in general. These factors are also perceived to constitute the root of gender inequality, malnutrition, and a decline in governance in the fields of culture and leisure, as well as human and financial resource management, and, in fact, are blamed for being the basis of the destruction of socio-economic and physical infrastructures (Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, 2002: 23). With regard to gender inequality, as one of the negative aspects of social values, Akinboade (2005: 255) comments that:

*Issues of...cultural traditions, environmental influences, and political, social, and historical conditions which combine to create poverty, are inter-twined in a vicious cycle. Without this wide understanding, the solutions will be difficult to proffer. It is argued that gender discrimination provides a common thread linking the contributing factors, and that could be used to work out effective solutions.*

Gender barriers not only limit women's participation in governance and decision-making, but also reinforce the power gap, thus keeping women in a position of inferiority.

#### *5.4.5.3 Dilapidation and Destruction of Infrastructure*

This factor has also contributed significantly to the decline in social and cultural values, and has exerted a negative impact on health, environment, access to safe drinking water and electricity, and socio-economic infrastructure, etc. (Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, 2002: 23). This can be understood by observing the state of school and sanitation facilities as well as that of roads throughout the country.

A major priority of the DRC is the improvement of the poor condition of the transport infrastructure, without which economic growth cannot be sustained. The IMF report (2007: 34) states that:

*The transport system is made up of 16,238 kilometers of navigable waterways, 5,033 kilometers of railways dating for the most part from the colonial era, 145,000 kilometers of national and regional roads and secondary rural roads, 7,400 kilometers of urban thoroughfares, and 270 airports throughout the country, including five international airports (in Kinshasa, Lubumbashi, Kisangani, Goma, and Gbadolite). This transport system in the DRC no longer provides the economic and social sectors with infrastructure and services conducive to trade of all kinds or which improve the mobility of persons and goods.*

It seems that Congolese people do not have a sense of ownership. It is very easy for them to destroy, in a short space of time, something that took a lot of time to build. One may recall the destruction of General Motors and other companies during the looting that took place in 1992 in Kinshasa. This resulted in thousands of Congolese becoming unemployed, which in turn led many into a state of poverty.

#### *5.4.5.4 Neglect of the Agricultural Sector*

This sector is suffering from low productivity, which has resulted in food insecurity, increased importing of primary commodities, and a decline in the export of cash crops. Even though natural conditions are favourable for agriculture, this sector has, for a number of years, been reduced to subsistence farming. The favourable conditions for agricultural activities in the country are described by the IMF (2007: 33) as follows:

*Approximately 97 percent of the arable land has a crop season spanning more than eight months of the year. Moreover, the country has about 135 million hectares of agricultural land, or*

*34 percent of the national territory, of which only 10 percent have been improved. As a result, 16 million people are suffering from hunger. The FAO estimates that almost 73 percent of Congolese people are living with food insecurity. Agriculture export now represents only 10 percent of GDP, as compared to 40 percent in 1960.*

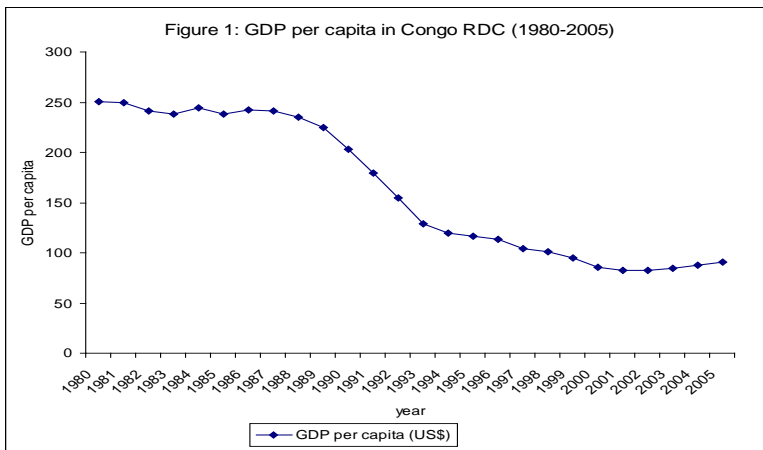
It is noted that for twenty years, the agricultural sector has been experiencing problems of various kinds, especially in terms of market access, harvesting produce, conservation, and the production of quality seeds. All this has prevented this sector from contributing effectively to economic growth (IMF, 2007: 33). In the survey conducted in the Lemba and Bandalungwa districts, regarding the causes of poverty in the country, three answers were provided, namely: the poverty of the soil, poor management, and bad leadership. It is interesting to note that, among the 332 respondents, none of them highlighted the poverty of the soil. This suggests that Congolese people acknowledge that their soil is suitable for agricultural activities. Investigating the importance of agriculture for economic development in the DRC, Tollens (2003: 33) argues that:

*At the current stage of economic development in the DRC, agriculture is still the sector which offers the best perspectives for sustained economic growth which benefits the majority of the population. No other sector can employ as many people and provide as much real wealth as the agriculture sector. Relatively few means are relatively needed in order to relaunch the agriculture sector and make it contribute significantly to economic growth.*

However, the question that one may ask is: why are the Congolese importing almost everything in terms of food? In order to justify the lack of productivity in the agriculture sector, some may use the argument of

the unsuitability of the roads for transporting products. Nevertheless, why can agriculturally related activities not be carried out in cities such as Kinshasa, Lubumbashi, Kisangani, and others? One may recall that some years ago, during the reign of the late president Mobutu, commodities produced in the country such as canned pineapples, canned tomatoes, and other canned food were not permitted to be imported. All these were produced and manufactured in the presidential domain of N'sele in Kinshasa. In this domain, food was grown and farms produced chicken and pork. The consumption was local, and the importing of food and other commodities was forbidden. Again, the question one may ask is: what is wrong with carrying out agricultural activities around the cities of the country, while one waits for the road infrastructure to be repaired? The abandonment of farm operations around cities and places that have been affected by the war can be understood, such as that in the Oriental, Nord and Sud Kivu provinces, but there is no excuse for not undertaking such activities in other provinces and cities.

The effect of the war on agricultural production is one factor, among others, that should be taken into consideration when discussing food insecurity, poverty, and so forth. This is illustrated by the tables below, with reference to national production.



**Figure 1: GDP per capita in the DRC (1980-2005)**

Source: World Development Indicators (World Bank), 2007

As indicated in the above chart, the decline of the GDP per capita in the DRC from 1980 until 2005 demonstrates how poverty has affected the population. In 1999, the GDP per capita dropped below 100, and the situation continued until 2005. This is due to the war that paralysed the socio-economic sector.

**Table 4.4 Sector contribution to real GDP growth, 2000-2008\* (in percentages)**

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Agriculture, forestry livestock hunting and fishing	-35.80	-92.4	6.51	9.92	4.39	15.63	23.58	20.59	9.67
Extractive industries	-31.88	4.08	30.33	25.65	29.73	22.88	2.12	5.38	27.80
Manufacturing industries	0.00	-36.86	7.99	-2.43	13.91	3.23	0.90	3.41	1.39
Electricity and water	0.54	3.24	0.72	1.26	-1.00	0.17	0.57	0.21	-0.04
Construction and public works	-27.30	13.40	15.23	20.34	19.64	20.61	18.15	7.06	21.03
Trade and commerce	-32.34	-6.49	9.06	10.96	15.30	22.36	28.84	38.81	22.02
Transportation and telecomm	-10.99	12.27	21.23	19.69	8.43	6.69	11.81	9.84	5.61
Market services	-4.36	-29.25	9.91	6.17	7.10	6.39	7.96	6.90	5.08
Non market services	7.99	-27.03	1.89	4.66	3.53	-0.95	1.97	1.88	1.03

\*Revised for 2006-2007 / Estimated for 2008. Source: DRC authorities

Provisional aggregate situation of sector contribution to GDP growth shows industry well ahead of services and agriculture in 2008.

**Table 4.5: Aggregate sector contribution to real GDP growth, 1998, 1999 (in percentages)**

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Real GDP growth	-1.7	-4.3	-6.9	-2.1	3.5	5.8	6.6	7.8	5.6	6.3	12.0
Agriculture	42.7	62.8	-35.8	-92.4	6.5	9.9	4.4	15.6	23.6	20.6	9.7
Industry*	-13.5	-31.6	-58.6	-16.1	54.3	44.8	62.3	46.9	21.5	16.1	50.2
Services	-86.5	-49.3	-39.7	-50.5	42.1	41.5	34.4	34.5	50.6	57.2	33.7

(\* Including extractive, manufacturing and construction industries

Sources: DRC authorities

As indicated in tables 4.4 and 4.5, during the period between 2000 and 2004 there was a serious decline in agricultural activities, when the war ravaged most parts of Eastern and South Eastern Congo. Insecurity



was created by the war, and consequently women could not work in the fields for fear of being caught by the soldiers and eventually raped.

During the same period, the GDP was seriously affected. From 1999 to 2001, as shown in the figure below, the situation of productivity deteriorated. The economic crisis was aggravated by war and all indicators fell below 0 per cent.

The Congo wars is a long story which have had a negative impact in the economy of the country. The first war of the liberation of the Congo against Mobutu's dictatorship regime started in 1996. It ushered in a new wave of illegal exploitation of the DRC's resources by foreigners, aided by Congolese. Laurant Desiré Kabila, then rebel leader, backed by the Rwandan, Ugandan and Burundian armies overthrew the late President Mobutu on May 17, 1997 and took over the leadership of the country. Few months later, President Kabila summoned the Rwandan and Ugandan soldiers to return to their respective countries. Unhappy with the decision, they decided to invade the Eastern Congo. As Turner (2007: 40) observes:

*The UN panel suggests that the first war was important also in giving the Rwandan and Ugandan military officers an idea of how easy it was to obtain riches in Congo. Several informants told the panel that Uganda's decision to take part in the second war, in August 1998, was defended by high-rank officers who had had a taste of the business potential of Congo... Starting 1998, aircraft began flying to Congo from the military airports at Entebe (Uganda) and Kigali (Rwanda), transporting arms, military equipment, soldiers and merchandise, according to the panel. On the return trip they carried coffee, gold, diamond traders and business representatives, and occasionally soldiers.*

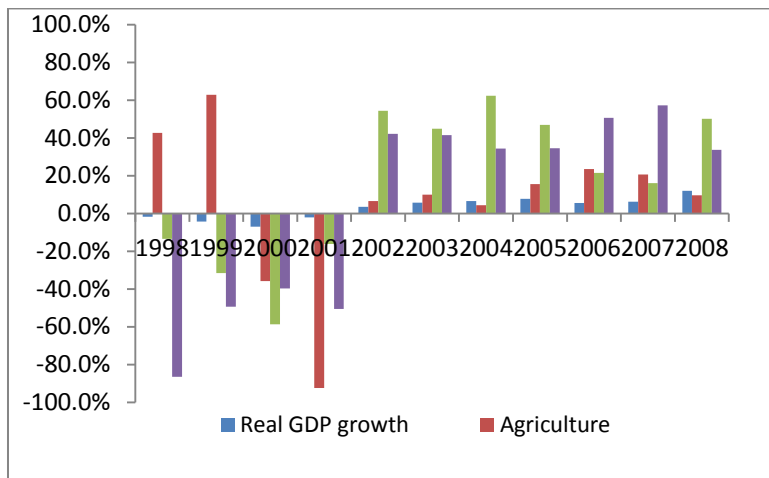
During the second war in 1998, President Kabila extended an invitation to some allies to stand with the DRC. Countries such as Angola, Zimbabwe, Libya and Namibia responded positively and sent

their armies to intervene in the DRC alongside the DRC's army. Nest (2006: 102) likewise comments that:

*The Congo war has also had a negative affect [sic effect] on market entitlements, including people's assets, what they gain from their labor, and the prices they pay to get essentials such as food and other services. Many belligerents have forced cultivators to sell their crops at depressed prices and have coerced local miners into relinquishing a portion of their finds to armed groups. As land and trading routes came under the control of armed groups, civilian economic opportunities were further constrained.*

Since cultivators could not have easy access to their land, food in the Eastern Congo as well in the other part of the DRC became a seious issue.

**Figure 2: Aggregate sector contribution to real GDP growth**



## 5.5 Summary

Living standards in the DRC have been declining since the 1970s, largely due to poor economic management and civil strife. The situation has been aggravated by war since 1998, with associated massive population displacements from areas affected by the war (FAO, 2000: 1-2). Obtaining food in the DRC is currently, more than ever before, a daily challenge faced by the Congolese. It is a problem of generalized poverty and low purchasing power, and cannot be reduced to a single factor (Tollens, 2003: 33). Here, poverty has been identified in terms of various factors such as corruption, mismanagement, poor governance, lack of security and peace, decline in productivity, etc. One wonders how Congolese people manage to live on less than one US \$ a day. Tollens (2003: 33) remarks:

*The situation on the ground is undoubtedly more difficult than indicated by statistics and surveys. But Congolese have become specialists in devising coping strategies and facing unexpected shocks and hazards. Recourse to informal sector and coping abilities of Congolese are apparently an inexhaustible source of means of survival in the DRC. This is beyond the understanding according to the Cartesian way of thinking which characterizes European cultures.*

How can a family of eight to ten people as it the case of many Congolese live with a wage of less than \$ 50 a month and children will still go to school? Sometime the payment of the wage can be delayed for two to three months but people are still alive. This is what Tollens points as being beyond the understanding.

The implementation of a poverty reduction strategy calls for stabilisation of the political, economic and social environments, failing which any development efforts will be in vain (IMF, 2007: 59). It is the

responsibility of the government of the DRC to allocate an appropriate budget to poverty eradication for the improvement of the lives of the Congolese. A failure to do so condemns Congolese people to starvation and death. In the next chapter, the researcher will discuss the role of the church in a country where justice is not applied and people live in extreme poverty, despite the natural resources with which the country is endowed.



# **THE ROLE OF CHURCHES IN JUSTICE AND POVERTY ERADICATION IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

## **6.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter discussed the issue of poverty in the DRC. It explored economic problems, mismanagement and corruption as being some of the main causes of poverty in the country. The aim of this chapter is to discuss the role that the Churches should play in advocacy on behalf of the voiceless and poor people who deserve a good life, but who can also be empowered to participate in community life. This is critical to the government since it is responsible for the well-being of all its citizens. Poverty, with its associated effects of alienation, marginalisation and dependency, poses a serious challenge to the mission of the Christian Churches in Africa (Ukpong, 1994: 350). Unless stated otherwise in quotations, the word “Church” (as a proper noun) will be used to designate the entire body of Christ while “church” (in lower case as a general noun) will designate a local congregation.

Christianity is generally viewed as a religion while many consider it to be a personal relationship with God in Jesus Christ (Bryson, 2001: 28). Either way, the Church is regarded as the context in which this phenomenon takes place. The Church should be viewed as the focus of the existential reality of Christian life as such. It is viewed

simultaneously as a spiritual as well as human society. As a spiritual society, its values are viewed as being essentially spiritual, while as an institution, its functional mode is political in character (Bryson, 2001: 28, 35). Depending on what one believes, it gives the impression that the church could find itself in a dualistic situation, and this could slow down its efforts in terms of playing the key role of advocating for justice and poverty eradication. With regard to the issue of dualism in the Church, Bryson (2001: 35-36) comments that:

*Our experience is that very often, but not always those who would consider themselves to be the spiritual society have a bias towards emotional expression and away from intellectual involvement. We have heard such a person proclaim that 'the church does not need theology, it just needs a simple faith'. Such a doctrine is fallacious as it includes contradiction. Faith in God requires certain knowledge of God...those given to the institutional element of the church, on the other hand, seem to be wholly preoccupied with material and organizational matters. The priority is given to what is termed 'the fabric' and the 'the spiritual'. The great joy of the member of an institution is to see material development in some way. Such development requires that members involve themselves in church politics leading often from a local to a denomination perspective. This perspective can develop as a basis of a kind quasi political theology or sociology concerned, for example, with the material poverty of the poor or the political equality of oppressed sections of society. The great ideal of justice is understood in material and political terms and virtue in terms of the attack on inequality.*

The Church is not spiritual in one level and a human society on another level. From the ongoing discussion, the researcher believes that the spiritual and material cannot really be separated conceptually. Every Christian is both "human" - ordinary but flawed, and amenable to the

social – scientific analysis of ordinary human behaviour – and also divine. This goes for our most refined moments of spiritual inwardness as well as for the political operation of the Church.

The Church should not be narrow-minded, but should instead combine both spiritual and development activities. It should provide a holistic ministry which cares for the spirit, the soul and the body. The church should not limit itself to its four walls, avoiding seeing and participating in what is going on outside. Commenting on the Church's responsibility, as viewed by Martin Luther, Nurnberger (2005: 298) asserts that: "Church leaders must go public with a clear message; congregations must become caring communities and individual members must act as Christians in their secular contexts." As a caring community, the church provides hope for its people. It is called on to examine the value of life, defend human dignity whenever it is threatened, promote human rights, empower the human family to pursue justice through the search for just living conditions, and direct institutions to guarantee human dignity (Ludwig, 1995: 135). Therefore, it is a challenge for the Church, in this case especially in the DRC, to promote and fight for the rights of children, men and women whenever they are abused by misguided powers. In this situation, it is extremely important to consider the Church's response to injustice, poverty, corruption and bad governance throughout the country. As a community of faith, hope and love, the Church in the DRC should break its silence and take the responsibility of facing its uncaring government and advocating for the well-being of the people. In addition, as an agent of change, Nwaigbo (2004: 187) believes that the Church in Africa, as a major contributor to the moral transformation of all people, is challenged to transform the moral conditions of the African society.

The DRC is known as one of the countries in the Central African region with a large number of Christian inhabitants. Throughout the country, churches are "popping up" like mushrooms, but as one can



observe, the Church in the DRC is uncaring when it comes to acting on behalf of and advocating for the Congolese people. It is evident that human rights are not respected in this country, that poverty has reached its apogee, and that the economy of the country is being destroyed, while corruption and bad governance have become commonplace – yet, the Church remains silent.

It appears, in the eyes of many people, as if the Church in the DRC has retreated into a narrowly defined spirituality. Its work is mainly limited to evangelism and prayer, which is perceived as the answer to all the problems being faced by the Congolese society. The saddest aspect of this is that everything has been spiritualised and as such, people consequently expect all solutions of problems to arrive from God, whereas God has given the gifts of discernment and wisdom to those who truly seek Him. It should be noted that Church ministers have a responsibility in terms of the social development of the poorest, most ignorant and disadvantaged communities. They can emerge as dynamic forces for social change at the community level, especially with their privileged positions, and could address issues such as poverty, corruption, governance, gender etc. Nieman (2006: 595) argues that:

*Traditionally and historically, churches have shown social and political will as part of their mission to do good by being involved in helping people who are poor, destitute, sick and helpless. This mission to do something about the social and personal needs of their followers has found expression in a wide range of operations and activities.*

The Church is called upon to bring a radical dimension to human life, but it is unfortunate that most of the time it fails in this regard, and is either itself a victim of oppression or remains indifferent to those in great need and consequently becomes judgmental. Only the true Church in Africa can preach effectively against the false understanding of life as propagated by means of the corrupt practices occurring within many

African societies (Bryson, 2001: 255). Commenting on the people's expectations of the Church in African society, Bryson (2001: 255) adds that:

*This is the task of the churches in Africa which they are struggling and often failing to execute. We need a profound depth of theological knowledge, alertness and unshakable spiritual commitment. The Christian leaders in Africa today must be those who have a wealth of theological training and a clear call from God to lay the firm foundation upon which those who follow must build. The prophet's message has to be directed to any and every society to which the church is called to address itself. Cultural, (and tribal) differences, even within Church circles, economic exploitation of African people, the intimidation of Africans by their own political leaders and corruption generally ought to be boldly addressed.*

The Church in Africa today finds itself in a strange and confusing situation. Although it possesses power, it finds itself struggling, not knowing what to do about the many issues it faces in contemporary society. The Church knows its origins, but seems unable to explain its intended. In the midst of social conflicts and ethnic clashes, such as those between the Hema and Lendu orchestrated by politicians in the DRC, the Church was not able to address these, since the people who were killing one another were identified as Church members.

*Those who have suffered, in great pain, the loss of everything, including the deaths of family members, are asking real and basic questions... The church will, and does require to have a crystal clear message which must be bold enough to recognize and take on board these questions and endeavour to answer them. It must wrestle with the profound but basic issues; the real questions of real people in real in pain. It must adequately*

*convey to them something of God's love and it must do so in the context of convincing theodicy (Bryson, 2001: 259).*

The Church is called on to stand up for the voiceless, as well as those who suffer and lose hope. Bryson (2001: 267) argues that the Church in Africa must reach deep into the African heart and feel the pain and anguish which is slowly eating away the precious lives of men and women who do not know where to turn for a solution or remedy. It is at this very moment that the Church has to discover the depths of the problem and offer to carry the burden on behalf of those suffering, so that it will know the pathos of God.

According to Bryson (2001: 270), any form of Christianity which does not accompany people on their journey of life will not fully grasp their pain or problems. Once the Christianity that grows out of the African Church understands the real issues facing people in their daily lives, it should be able to develop an appropriate theology in which real issues are addressed. The church will then be able to deliver a relevant message of encouragement, challenge and warning. It is the responsibility of the African Church to face the challenge of transforming society, and not to be simply satisfied with delivering sound sermons on Sunday mornings and evenings.

Just as the Church addresses the issues of Spirit and faith, so it must address the issues of justice and poverty. To show its commitment to Christ, the Church must actively help the oppressed, the voiceless and those whose rights have been violated. In South Africa, for instance, various congregations are undergoing change. This compels them to adopt a wider view of their role in society, particularly in the communities that they serve, which in many instances are poor, underdeveloped and lack resources (Nieman, 2006: 595). This presents a real challenge, and one which the Church in the DRC has to face.

When one examines the Bible, it is clear that the content of the prophetic messages against oppression and injustice confirms that much

poverty, especially in Old Testament times, was related to injustice and oppression. Hence the Church of today has to stand firm and combat injustice.

## **6.2 Challenges**

As noted, the suffering and impoverishment of the Congolese people, despite the natural resources that abound in their land, has reached its peak. Since the colonial period, Congolese people have not enjoyed the blessings of their land. After thirty two years of dictatorship under the late president Mobutu, the country is still experiencing severe economic, social and political problems, which make citizens feel hopeless most of the time. They do not trust any of the governments that have been installed, because greed and selfishness can be read on the faces of the government officials. Each and every minister who takes up office first takes care of his own interests. The people whom they claim to represent are forsaken; poverty has invaded the country; and injustice and corruption have become common practice. One may ask the following questions: is there any hope for the well-being of the Congolese people? What role should the church in the DRC play in such a desperate situation?

It is time for the Church in the DRC to affirm and play its public role as an agent of change within Congolese civil society. Turner (1968: 84) argues that: "At all times the Church carries the responsibility of reading the signs of time and of interpreting them in light of the Gospel, if it is to carry out its task." Turner (1968: 84) adds that while there is an abundance of wealth, resources and economic well-being, an overwhelming proportion of the population is still tortured by hunger and is almost totally illiterate. Otieno and McCullum (2005: 47) comment that the churches in Africa have been asking pointed questions and carefully evaluating the claims emerging during this century regarding the different visions aimed at awakening Africa's economy,

such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the G8 poverty elimination programme, the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and the Commission for Africa in 2005, chaired by the former UK Prime Minister, Tony Blair.

The challenge of the African economic situation led the Church as a whole to examine the problem of development on the continent during the last three decades or so, and the finding was that the continent has never been allowed to develop its own models of economic growth, which might be more relevant to the realities of life on the African continent. Otieno and McCullum (2005: 49) believe that people in Africa should be able to meet their basic needs, especially with regard to food, water and shelter. In order for this to happen, the Church in Africa is called on to enhance the people's capacity for self-reliance, advocate for debt cancellation, and seek solidarity with institutions and people in the North who share the same concerns. This can only be accomplished by the church if this process is undertaken on a national and continental level.

The Church in Africa should move away from its narrow understanding of mission. Its role is more than only teaching people how to get to heaven while they are on earth, even though this is its primary mission. Bosch (1980: 9) argues that one should not affirm the validity of the Christian mission without attempting to take into account the full dimension of the present crisis regarding mission. Otherwise, one would certainly be culpable in God's sight. God's will is that the Church should understand and discern the signs of the times and do mission work accordingly. Traditionally, mission as viewed by the Jesuits was understood in terms of the spreading of the Christian faith among people who were not members of the Catholic Church, including Protestants. This traditional view was associated with the colonial expansion of the Western world into the Third World (Bosch, 1991: 1). The Church should repent as regards her way of undertaking and understanding

mission. This call for repentance should not be considered as a call to disregard the meaningful work that has been accomplished in the past, but as a challenge to the Church to see the missionary task with new lenses and perform it differently (Bosch, 1991: 365). With respect to the same issue of the new challenge facing mission, Bosch (1991: 366) paraphrases Koyama when he explains that:

*Repentance has to begin with a bold recognition of the fact the church-in-mission is today facing a world fundamentally different from anything it faced before. This in itself calls for a new understanding of mission. We live in a period of transition, on the borderline between a paradigm that no longer satisfies and one that is, by nature, a time of crisis...the point where danger and opportunity meet.*

During the past half century or so there has been a shift toward understanding mission as God's mission. Earlier, mission was understood and interpreted in different ways. In soteriological terms, mission was interpreted as saving individuals from eternal damnation; in cultural terms it was seen as introducing people from the East and South to the blessings and privileges of Christians in the West. In the ecclesiastical sense, mission was considered as the expansion of the Church. The new understanding of mission is not primarily viewed as an activity of the Church, but rather, an attribute of God. Mission is thus perceived as a movement from God to the world. In this sense, the Church is viewed as an instrument for mission while God, Himself, is considered as the one who has a mission of salvation to fulfil in the world (Bosch, 1991: 389-390). The Church's mission is holistic, not narrow. Otieno and McCullum (2005: 54-55) challenge the Church to shift from its narrow understanding of mission, when they write:

*The church in Africa has yet to come to terms with the language of the market in order to engage it with a clear understanding.*

*Theology must articulate a vision of life that comprehends and transcends the logic of the market. The church, through various ecumenical programmes, especially the economic and social justice witness at WCC and AACC, continues to point out that the market in its current form, characterised by exploitation...is but one phase in the evolution of global capitalism.*

In addition, Otieno and McCullum (2005: 56) say that:

*the big challenge to the faith Community has always been how it can help enable Africa to overcome poverty. Often where there is a church there is some economic activity in the vicinity. There could be a church hospital or clinic and a school to provide healing to the sick and nourishment to the mind. Wealth in African traditional society has always been perceived as the significant total value of the person to the community and vice versa.*

Nangulu (2004: 237) views the Church as an institution whose duty it is to educate and appeal to respective African governments and members of civil society regarding the virtue of being mindful of the welfare of the poor and less fortunate in society. Equally, Hasebarth (1976: 13) argues that as part of its ministry, the Church should influence those within the power structures to take action with regard to the problem of unemployment, because employment not only creates satisfaction and joy, but also provides basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter.

In a country such as the DRC, the rate of unemployment is very high, 91.27 percent (Makatubu, 2008: 8). As a result of the desperate economic situation, many churches, especially “independent” and “charismatic” ones, contribute considerably to the increase in unemployment, because of the preaching of a prosperity gospel, a series of prayers that endures for a month or so, with the expectation that God

will provide for all the people's basic needs, including jobs. The churches should not operate in this manner, especially at the very time during which the DRC is facing various challenges. Nwaigbo (2004: 287-288) asserts that:

*The church should encourage the unemployed to be creative. Above all the church should be in solidarity with the unemployed people in their frustration, depression, resignation and hopeless situations. The theology and ethics of work should emphasize key topics such as: self-reliance, service, solidarity, co-operation, love, justice and hope.*

It is a major challenge for the Church in Africa today to develop new structures and redefine its participation in public affairs. Many Christians currently carry the financial burden of building gigantic churches, a phenomenon that is currently being questioned in view of widespread poverty, inflation, unemployment, civil wars, etc (Kobia, 2003: 162), while the social issues threatening the lives of many people do not appear to engender a cause for concern for the church.

In the case of the DRC, a potentially rich country in which the majority of people live in abject poverty and in which human rights are not always respected, the Church is therefore challenged with regards to its prophetic role, which has not been effective for a long time. One even wonders whether this role has been fulfilled at any time in the history of the Church in the DRC. In terms of the challenges facing the Church, Poling (2002: 205) argues that:

*Churches must have the courage to protect the vulnerable and to comfort abuse of power within the community and in the larger society. In contrast, unjust communities organise power on the basis of privileges and dominance, so that those who have power are permitted to accumulate resources beyond what they need*



*while others are marginalized and denied basic necessities, including personal safety.*

The Church has a delicate task in attempting to fulfil its mission in the context of political and social injustices (Pieterse, 2001: 31), which have caused much suffering in the lives of people. In the case of South Africa, Pieterse (2001: 31) argues that the practice of civil disobedience was viewed as part of the prophetic witnessing against apartheid. Once it was clearly stated that apartheid laws were morally wrong, it was the moral and religious duty of the church to obey God, rather than human beings. This is what many churches in Africa ought to do with regard to government policies and decisions that are not concerned with the welfare of the people. Mugambi (2003: 198) states that:

*Ideally, churches should have served as role models, as 'salt' and 'light'. Unfortunately, they became so conformed to the politics and economics of their respective nations that it became difficult for them to provide new insights for creative and reconstructive initiatives in Africa.*

As an institution that gives hope to people, the Church should not remain silent when those in power are abusing the rights of the common people. The Church should ensure that it plays its role of advocacy on behalf of the people, regardless of their religious beliefs. Dolamo (1992: 148) suggests that:

*The Church should challenge the government to abandon its dangerous policy, failing which the church should work towards replacing it by a more just, equitable, workable and peaceful political system.*

Furthermore, the Church should avoid being dependent on the government. If one cannot hear the Church in the DRC raising its voice against an evil deed of the government, this occurs because of its close

relationship with the government. This does not mean that the Church should always consider itself an opponent of the government, but it should be cautious in terms of its relations in order to avoid being compromised. Once the leaders of the Church become involved in corruption, the Church will become powerless, and will not be able to play its role effectively nor accomplish its mandate of advocacy for the needy. Commenting on the Church's stand, regarding the government and certain politicians, Isaak (1997: 50) writes that:

*The church ought to be distinct from, but interrelated with, the Government in order to make itself free to execute its mission. Some political leaders claim that the church should not be involved in matters of human rights and freedom because, in promoting them, the church is interfering in government business. They claim the separation between these two should be encouraged because it leaves the church free to execute its 'proper mission.'*

It must be understood that the church is not only a religious institution from which one expects the teaching of the word of God, but also a social institution, which forms part of civil society and, as such, should play its role of advocating for the welfare and human rights of the people who are its members.

The Church should pay close attention to the issues of poverty and justice – these two elements, among others, form part of its mission. Nwaoru (2004: 2006) argues that the religious implications of poverty alleviation are evident not only in the Bible, but also in the teaching of the Church, and that the eradication of poverty is regarded as a religious act in every tradition. In view of the above challenges, one can say, in agreement with Mugambi (2003: 199), that churches should lead the way in terms of the secular social structure. They ought to become torch-bearers for the future, rather than following the models designed by secular leadership. According to Pillay (1994: 25), it is necessary for

churches to maintain a critical distance from the government, even when they may have reasons to be well disposed towards or even commend it. He (1994: 25) concludes that this is the lesson which was uniquely emphasised in South Africa's history, when churches confronted the government, openly criticised unjust laws, and strengthened the resolve of liberation movements.

## **6.3 Expectations**

### **6.3.1 Advocacy of the Church**

The Church has a critical role to play in ensuring that the voices of the poor reverberate in the halls of public policies. Advocacy in the Church refers to the work of the Church, which, together with other institutions of civil society, aims to change the structures and influence the economic and social policies of government or international institutions, in a such a manner that these are not skewed against the poor, but instead are just and equitable and operate for the good of the poor as much as anyone else (Taylor, 2003: 61). Equally, Gibbs and Ajulu (1999: 12) argue that advocacy covers a range of activities from discreet personal lobbying to high-profile, public campaigning. It can also involve engaging with the general public to raise awareness regarding an important issue, as well as influencing policy-makers towards desired solutions.

Advocacy also involves raising awareness of the larger issues that affect the poor and the community. It is speaking out, whether in support or criticism of the deeds of governments, financial institutions and policy-makers. This is achieved through pressure exerted by the population by means of demonstrations and campaigns. Taylor (2003: 58) believes that churches should co-operate more closely with one another in order to realise their potential to constitute a powerful global alliance against poverty. Gibbs and Ajulu (1999: 11-12) argue that:

*Advocacy is notoriously difficult to define and is used by different people to mean different things. In some ways this is helpful since it demands that the concept evolves, changing over time and being shaped by different contexts and understanding of power and politics. As groups engage in a process of trying to influence people or policies they build on their experience and in a cycle of evaluation, modification and innovation consolidate their method and approach.*

Regardless of its definition or interpretation, Gibbs and Ajulu (1999: 12) recognise advocacy as an important part of the church's task, and add that churches place advocacy at the heart of their work. Ajulu (2001: 57) adds that in a society where political, economic and social relationships, arrangements, structures and institutions often foster and perpetuate the powerlessness of the poor, it is important that justice calls for, among others, the just treatment of the poor, and for their position and opportunities to be improved in a manner that empowers them to participate in social life. This is the work that the Church ought to do on behalf of the poor and powerless. For the sake of human dignity, churches should pressurise governments to alter the situation of the poor in such a manner that they too become contributing members of the community.

As a member of civil society and advocate for the well-being of people, the Church is called on to accept responsibility to speak out whenever actions of the state are morally questionable. This has occurred in countries such as Kenya where the National Council of Churches Kenya (NCKK) played its role of advocacy. In this regard, Gibbs and Ajulu (1999: 53) comment that:

*The independent nature of the NCKK is also a major strength. The NCKK has always assumed an independent stance vis-a-vis the state. It therefore became, given to the lack of political opposition within parliament, virtually the only effective arm of*

*opposition against the government during the period of one-party rule. The church was better positioned than other bodies, groups, or individuals to organise, for example, demonstrations that would be feared by the government. Besides church leaders were not on the government payroll and so did not fear reprisals by the State concerning their jobs and businesses in the way that other organisations and individuals did.*

The NCK played a major role in defining church-state relations. Since its inception in the 1960s, and throughout the 1970s, this body of churches maintained a strong and critical relationship with the government of Kenya.

The situation in the DRC, as elsewhere on the African continent, has shown the necessity for democratic movements from within civil society, among which the Church is included, to respond to economic decline, social and political injustice, and also to speak out against crises of legitimacy forced upon the majority of the population by an authoritarian state, as exemplified by the current situation in Zimbabwe since the March 2008 national polls.

With regard to the economic, social and political situation in the DRC, the Church is called on to take responsibility for advocacy on behalf of the people. Economic resentment has been aroused by the massive corruption of those in public office and those who are closely associated with the government. This group of people prosper while the majority of the population suffers and is left behind. The Church in the DRC should recognise its position within civil society, and join the struggle for justice. It should stop being so supportive of the government or remaining neutral with respect to political, social and economic issues when government actions in this regard are morally questionable.

Advocacy should start with the Church leadership, since many societies have a strong respect for the hierarchy, and people tend to look up to their leaders (Gibbs and Ajulu, 1999: 39). Instead of taking

advantage of the respect and consideration they are given in society in order to do something good, it is sad that many Church leaders ignore their standing, and do not have any influence within their community. Gibbs and Ajulu (1999: 38) argue that:

*Although the church has a high profile in some countries it is often only a very few personalities at the top of the Church hierarchy who are actively involved in advocacy work. Whether this is to do with the nature of power relations within the Church or the lack of capacity of the majority to get involved needs to be examined.*

If the Church in the DRC is silent, vis-à-vis the abuse of the population by the government, one should acknowledge, however, that the Catholic Church in the DRC, through the Episcopalian Conference of Bishops, has always spoken out, either through its pastoral letters or statements to the media, condemning any evil actions by the government. For instance, Muzong (2008: 69) attests that:

*The Catholic Church, through regular and adept analyses of social, economic and political developments, denounced the predominantly unethical behaviour of the politicians and the looting of the country's resources. This very often puts the Church at loggerheads with the political class, who could not ignore its criticisms as the majority of Congolese people are Catholics.*

The difficulty that the Church in the DRC faces with regard to advocacy work is that not only are churches not united, but they do not all have the same perception regarding the issue. It should be noted that if the Church is not united against the government's evil actions, this means that while some churches will speak out against political injustices, others are co-opted by the regime to be supportive of it, and still others might prefer to remain neutral.

When one talks about the Church in the DRC, it can best be understood in terms of its different parts, namely: (1) The Church of Christ in Congo, which is a federation of sixty-five Protestant denominations under the leadership of a bishop at the national level, and which is well-structured at national, provincial and local levels; (2) The Catholic Church, which functions under the leadership of a Cardinal appointed by the Vatican. All Catholic bishops from the six ecclesiastical regions meet annually or whenever necessary at the Episcopalian Conference of Bishops to examine and discuss important issues related to either the life of the Church or the nation. The Catholic Church in the DRC operates in six ecclesiastic provinces, with each being headed by an archbishop; (3) The Kimbanguist Church, which is an African independent church originating in the DRC, but with the greatest impact on three countries: Angola, the DRC and the Republic of Congo. It is a well-structured church and operates throughout the DRC; and (4) The Revival Church in Congo, composed of Charismatics and Pentecostals, which operates under the leadership of a bishop. This Church is not well-structured, and is struggling to become organised. Besides these bodies, there are other religious groups such as the Orthodox and Islam, which used to meet under the category of what was called “religious interfaith groups”. Since the Catholic Church has now removed itself from this group and performs advocacy work on its own, the group no longer exists. Protestant, Revival, Orthodox and Islam groups meet sometimes, but not often, in a type of coalition referred to as “interfaith religious groups”, whose aim is to fight against HIV/AIDS.

In order to achieve successful advocacy in the DRC, these different bodies of the Church and other religious groups should work hand in hand for the good of the people, the majority of whom are poor and victims of the abuse of power. Gibbs and Ajulu (1999: 37) comment that:

*a widespread constituency and the moral position that the Church has are of critical importance...whilst the government may be able to close down and ban NGOs they can't close down the Church, that simply wouldn't be possible in Africa.*

Gibbs and Ajulu (1999:35) emphasise that Archbishop Tutu could not have played the role he has played inside South Africa from outside the Church. There was a hope that many others would follow his example in addressing politically sensitive issues from within the Church – otherwise, the Church's advocacy role in Africa would continue to be weak. With regard to the changes that need to be brought about in the DRC by civil society during the post-election period, Muzong (2007: 17) comments that:

*Those who want to bring about change will be faced with a government which will not be ready to listen or to be swayed. Rightly or wrongly, it will claim to be democratically elected and to have the mandate of the people whose priorities were expressed through the ballot box... Civil society organizations should be strengthened in order to educate and mobilize people at the grassroots to exert pressure and demand accountability from their government at the national provincial and local levels.*

The Church, along with other civil society members, still has the power to influence Congolese people to claim their right of making the government accountable to them. The Church is recognised as being the only solid organisational structure outside the government. Gibbs and Ajulu (1999: 37) believe that ecumenical bodies are critical for advocacy work, because they allow politically difficult statements to be made, without putting any one church on the spot. It is very important for churches to work together for advocacy. Taylor (2003: 58) emphasises this when he writes that:



*Churches are recommended to co-operate more closely and realize their potential to be a powerful global alliance against poverty. Advocacy is stressed but not to be exclusion of projects and programmes... More adequate Christian teaching is stressed and the need for churches to practice what they teach.*

The Church in the DRC should imitate and consolidate the actions of other civic groups by building on wider social changes and speaking from a position of moral and spiritual authority. It should play a key role in poverty eradication, as well as people's social and political rights. In so doing, it will help the state to perform its duty. As Mbayo (2004: 252-253) comments:

*The State is charged with the task of supporting and caring for the people who are affected by unemployment and others who have never had any decent means of sustaining their lives. Therefore when such people come together to form development associations in order to improve their living conditions, the State should not suppress but support them... The State has to co-operate with its citizens democratically by their complaints about wrong or oppressive policies.*

The Church in the DRC should speak out against the government when the latter signs contracts with mining companies that are not beneficial to all citizens, but are rather only of benefit to a small group of people in power. In this regard, Otieno (2005: 54) argues that:

*It is also vital for African governments and the companies exploiting mineral or oil resources to make public the contracts or agreements between them. This way, the opportunity of abuse of revenues by the state, or elites, is limited. The remedy to the resource curse is putting in place inclusive institutions that govern the use and access to resources for the benefit of all.*

Condemning the lack of care taken by the government of the DRC in signing opaque contracts with foreign companies for the exploitation of minerals, Muzong (2007: 16) says that:

*The government, which signed up to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EIT) in 2005, has not followed its public declarations with concrete action to show its commitment to the scheme. Steps need to be taken for the extractive sector companies to publish what they pay to the government. The latter should also make public all revenue that it collects from the enterprises. This will introduce transparency in the sector and will make it possible for civil society organizations and other stakeholders in the country to monitor the government's use of the revenue accruing to it, and to demand accountability.*

Furthermore, Muzong (2008: 34) argues that the mining sector deserves special attention because of its importance to the Congolese economy, particularly since the government of the DRC signed contracts without involving any international invitations to tender.

Poverty and inequality are the greatest scandals and threats of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They are undeniable realities in the DRC, as well as in most other African nations. They have been created by the unjust political and economic systems practised by human beings. Poverty is first and foremost an issue of injustice, rather than lack of wealth. Therefore, justice is in some ways the answer to poverty eradication. This is why churches and ecumenical movements derive their mandate to advocate for people and tackle poverty as an imperative of the Gospel.

### **6.3.2 Church Partnerships with Other Civil Society Members**

Ecclesiastical institutions need to build partnerships with other civil society groups, social movements and political parties with regard to immediate constitutional and legal reform processes (Kobia, 2003: 161).

In order to succeed in its mandate of fighting for justice and restoring human dignity through the eradication of poverty, the Church cannot operate alone. It should network with other civil society groups, in order to require the government to be accountable to the people. Taylor (2003: 72-73) observes that:

*The gathering strength of the global economy and its negative consequences call for an organised countervailing power for life or what was described as 'global solidarity.' Its voice would be prophetic, drawing on biblical faith. Building on many existing networks as well as encouraging new ones, it would create a global alliance against poverty, greed and injustice.*

Equally, the AACC (2005: 20) argues that:

*Churches and church organizations will form a coalition to hold governments accountable for their contribution to the root cause of displacement, uprooting, warehousing, and detention of uprooted people.*

It is very important for the Church, at either the national or international level, to establish alliances with other civil society groups, because these alliances would expose and challenge economic policies, which are invariably to the disadvantage of poor people. These alliances would search for alternatives and advocate for just reforms. They could reach even further in tackling issues such as trade, governance, sustainability, and the creation and distribution of wealth and opportunity. If churches are properly mobilised, they will be known as one of the largest “NGOs” in the world, with great potential in the struggle for justice (Taylor, 2003: 73).

When churches and NGO members of civil society work together to promote human rights and dignity, this network will foster a sense of coherence and, at the same time, mutual reinforcement when sharing policy frameworks and a common strategy for action, which should be

inclusive and effective (Taylor, 2003: 73). In order for churches and NGOs to collaborate effectively, Taylor (2003: 74) advises them to consider that:

*One source of information for the churches could be a World Church report on Poverty and Wealth along the lines of this 'prototype' produces every five years or so. It could provide them with an overall picture, a shared strategic framework in which to act and advocate in their various ways a means of evaluating progress, and a stimulus to action.*

Developing effective partnerships is a central challenge for all organisations. The Church should not only seek to develop partnerships with NGOs, but should enter them to some extent with the state as well. With regard to the issue of partnerships between the Church and the state, Kahiga (2004: 227) challenges the Church and the state to consider the urgent need for action on policy issues with regard to malnourishment, premature mortality and illiteracy, issues that he considers to be crucial to the development and economic growth of the continent.

For a long time, the Church in the DRC has been in partnership with the state in the domains of health and education. Most of the Church-affiliated schools are subsidised by the state, and many, if not all, Church-affiliated hospitals built by missionaries have now become "reference hospitals" in different government health zones. The state supplies these hospitals with medicines, but their management is still under the care of churches. An issue that should be raised here concerns the wages of elementary and secondary school teachers. In the DRC, education is a sector that has continually been neglected. In most government schools, one will find that the conditions are not conducive to studying. Apart from the insignificant wages paid to teachers (nowadays, less than US \$ 30 a month), pupils sit on the floor because of the lack of desks, there are no pedagogic materials, etc. No school

year passes without teachers going on strike because of the low wages they receive – while the government is not able to increase the wages of teachers, the salaries of government officials and members of parliament are being regularly and significantly increased. In a case such as this, one believes that the Church should speak out, because this is the future of the Congolese nation which is in danger. The Church, along with other civil society groups, should encourage the government of the DRC to take action to improve the social conditions of teachers and other civil servants, including military personnel.

It is the duty of the Church and civil society to suggest to the state that it must plan education that will be able to provide people with not only knowledge, but also skills to develop and manage the economy of the country, because poor education can only lead to poor development. This means that education should be in line with the needs of society. The Church should challenge the state to support productive self-employment, in order to avoid unemployment and the resulting poverty.

In order for this to occur, the Church in the DRC and civil society group members should denounce harassment by government services, which does not encourage the running of productive self-employment activities. Taylor (2003: 74) emphasises the role that churches should play in networking:

*It is of course important for the churches and their members to participate in even wider networks and strategies (like the Millennium Development Goals aimed at cutting poverty in half and Poverty Reduction Strategies). Churches must join hands with all men and women of good will. This does not always prove easy. The churches may lack confidence. Government may exclude them. The churches' visibility can be lost. A strong alliance of churches themselves should therefore be a step towards more effective engagement on a wider front but not a way of withdrawing from it.*

Equally, Nieman (2006: 601) advocates in favour of networking and partnership, commenting that:

*Collaboration is seen as particularly relevant for the social development discourse. The reason for this is that, through the process of collaboration, the uneven degrees of power represented by the role players, such as social workers, church leaders, health and other government officials, community leaders, as well as poor and less sophisticated people, are levelled out.*

Sometimes, the government perceives its sovereignty as being compromised when constituent bodies of civil society demonstrate and maintain an independence from them by virtue of external support and relations. Such financial support often protects members of civil society, especially the church, enabling them to maintain a detached position, that is, from an authoritarian state (Fowler, 2008: 59). The Church ought to lead and guide other members of civil society, mobilising them to form a stronger partnership and effective advocacy.

### **6.3.3 Good Governance and the Fight against Corruption**

Although the millennium celebrations have drawn to an end, the challenges of good governance remain paramount in the eyes of citizens, while criminality and corruption of all kinds have become common practice amongst hireling people equipped with the latest generation of money-transferring and communications skills (Ziegler, 2001: 71). Since the late 1980s, institutionalised corruption, as a pernicious, nation-destroying factor, has become a cause for significant concern to the world. The use of public power for personal gain has been a major issue on the international political agenda, as it evidences an ability to harm economies, undermine public and private morality, ruin ecologies and corrode intellectual integrity (Ziegler, 2001: 71). The situation is even

worse in Sub-Saharan Africa, where leadership continues to impose itself through questionable elections or military interventions. Economic decisions made by ruling elites are always clouded by lack of accountability (Ziegler, 2001: 72). As the AACC (2005: 18) observes:

*One of the major areas of focus for overcoming poverty must be addressing the challenges caused by CORRUPTION in our society. Corruption has become a cancer. As a result of this, one of the major challenges to churches. The churches in Africa must find a way of uprooting it from its source by addressing the moral and ethical issues in society. The weakness or the breakdown of moral and ethical discipline by society has to a major extent contributed to the spread of corruption. As a result in many of our societies corruption has become a way of life. The African churches have to take their moral leadership seriously. Therefore the churches at all times and on all occasions, irrespective of where it happens, must say NO to corruption...*

Governance is defined by the World Bank as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development management. The UNDP views good governance as the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority to manage a nation's affairs. United State Agency for International Development (USAID) considers good governance as something related to efforts as regards democratisation. This includes a focus on human rights, public sector accountability, rule of law, democratic institutions, etc (Marquette, 2003: 63). These definitions converge on the fact that sound governance promotes accountability and transparency. Generally speaking, governance of this kind leads a government towards a framework that is accepted by a participatory public as being legitimate, responsive to the needs of the population, and committed to improving its welfare by ensuring law and order.

Since its independence on 30 June 1960, the rule of law and the protection of civil liberties and human rights have been questionable in the DRC. Civil liberties have never been protected by state institutions, which instead, have harassed the population through arbitrary arrests, torture and execution, and extorted money from the population. The resulting climate of criminality and disregard for the law have created a culture of impunity, and have led to the belief among Congolese people that the state, with its governing institutions, is a threat to be avoided, rather than a provider of public goods such as security and participation in decision-making (Vlassenroot, 2007: 25). This shows that justice, governance and corruption are still significant issues to be dealt with in the DRC.

Corruption and bad governance are arguably the two most destructive elements of any economy in the world. In such a situation, the wealth of a country lies in the hands of a well organised minority bent on destroying the economy of the entire nation. Bansikiza (2004: 279) observes that:

The situation largely enables a privileged minority to manipulate and selfishly possess the God given richness, meant for all, making the poor poorer, by denying them a fair share. Corruption thrives since the systems in place that are used to manage resources are flawed.

Otieno and McCullum (2005: 45) have noted that corruption on the continent of Africa has become a cancer whose treatment requires nothing short of invasive surgery. It is a huge moral crisis, which poses the greatest challenge to Africa with respect to ethical leadership. This is why the church is expected to play a specific role in this regard. Nwaigbo (2004: 267) describes the way in which bad governance and corruption operate as follows:

*The problems that lead to unemployment and poverty in Africa are basically rooted in the nature of greedy and poor leadership. Leaders who are voted into power are unwilling to relinquish*



*power when their tenure of office expires. They continue to amass wealth for themselves at the expense of the entire nation, to establish security for their children and their immediate relations. The powers and positions gained are used for selfish exploitative economic and authoritative interest, instead of sharing the nation's wealth equally with other citizens.*

Instead of political leadership being licensed to serve personal interests at the expense of other citizens, Nwaigbo (2004: 268) adds that political leaders should rather represent the hope of those whom they serve, while reducing misery and poverty. He acknowledges that people who hold to an honest and genuine vision of serving others are not often found on the African continent. Vlassenroot (2007: 4) notes that the late president Mobutu was correct when he predicted the events that occurred in the DRC after 1996, with the words “*après moi le deluge*” (after I am gone, the flood will come). This occurred through the weakening of the state, the decomposition of the country's infrastructure, the deeply rooted corruption, and the impact of ‘divide and rule’ politics, which foretold that the country was heading towards a total collapse. Even though Mobutu predicted the disintegration of the country, he was also responsible for creating the environment for such a collapse. Vlassenroot (2007: 4) goes on to describe the environment of corruption during Mobutu's regime, when he explains that:

*Corruption was openly encouraged and turned into a main condition of daily life. The president assured himself of the loyalty of his soldiers not by paying them a salary but allowing them to predate upon the population. Also local administrators, who hardly received any official salary, were allowed to exploit the Congolese population and roam off a large part of the state revenues, as long as they shared it with their colleagues and paid off their patrons. The Mobutu regime increased the opportunities for corruption by amplifying the state bureaucracy. Individuals*

*and businesses needed several official documents and authorisations for the simplest of activities, and this created uncountable opportunities for bureaucrats to fend for themselves, while it forced the population into a very dependent position.*

Church (2006: 1), the director of the Great Lake Centre for Strategic Studies, commenting on the situation of corruption and bad governance in the DRC, reports that:

*Transparency International recently ranked D.R.C among the most corrupt states in the world. The level of corruption in the D.R.C is evident in all aspects of government to include the mining, aviation, and security sector and is a significant factor determining the future of the D.R.C.*

The Corruption Perception Index (CPI) has ranked the DRC as the country with the sixth highest level of corruption out of 163 nations (Church, 2006: 1). The nefarious effects of corruption not only harm economic systems, but also destroy the lives of people. Church (2006: 1) observes that:

*In the aviation sector, DRC is among the countries registering the highest rate of fatal plane crashes. According to the African Airline Association (AFRAA) Secretary, Folly-Kossi, the DRC and Nigeria experienced serious accidents in 2006, with a death toll amounting to 31 fatalities for the DRC and 98 fatalities for Nigeria, out of 137 cases registered so far in Africa.*

The Church in the DRC should not content itself with organising funerals and burying the dead of such aviation accidents when it is well known that most aircraft flying in the DRC's air space have been banned from flying to Europe and America. The Church should stand up and speak out against the use of these aircraft in the DRC. In so doing, there will be fewer deaths, and the lives of many Congolese, as well as other

people living in the DRC, will be preserved. What is most shocking is that the government of the DRC acknowledges that these aircraft are not reliable, and even refers to them as “flying coffins”, yet still allows them to fly within the country. It is in such a situation that the voice of the Church should be heard. The Church should exert pressure on the government to withdraw flying licenses from these companies. The Church should not underestimate its power, particularly since the state usually fears any action that might be initiated by the Church. Bryson (2001: 246) comments that:

*The church doesn't play by the rules of the corporation yet it is perceived as being authoritarian. It is, therefore, a place of suspicion for secular identities. They do not know the so-called rules of the game in the Church - therefore, they reject it before it rejects them. Some reject even the notion of Church as they have never been to Church, and perhaps never will. There is an even more profound reality to be teased out here and that is that secular man and woman reject God before He rejects them.*

The lack of prosecution for any act of bad governance or corruption within the government's institutions has encouraged the institutionalisation of corruption in all sectors of society. Reflecting on this issue, Muzong (2007: 13) pertinently argues that:

*The lack of prosecution and guaranteed impunity for corrupt acts have created a great deal of cynicism among the Congolese, who are now convinced that nothing can be done about corruption and that the international community is complicit in the plundering of the country. It is believed that the development partners of Congo would do everything they can to maintain the status quo so that, in collaboration with Congolese elite, they can continue to extract from the Congo all the resources they want.*

*Any genuine effort to fight corruption will need to find ways to overcome the prevailing cynicism.*

Muzong (2007: 17) notes that civil society in the DRC has been weakened by the active commitment of its leaders to politics, but he still agrees that there are a number of very courageous civil society organisations operating in the country. In order to increase their capacity, these entities need to be assisted, and should be encouraged in terms of the possible formation of coalitions for building synergies and avoiding duplication of efforts. Corruption in the DRC has exerted serious effects on its economy. From Mobutu's to Joseph Kabila's reign, corruption has constituted a common element of country. Muzong (2007: 1-2) comments that:

*It has been well documented that corruption is one of the main causes of the Congo's disastrous economic situation and the appalling and enduring poverty of its people in one the richest countries on the African continent. It has also been identified as one of the main factors fuelling and maintaining conflict and instability in the whole region of the Great Lakes.*

The mismanagement of the abundant resources of the DRC and the culture of impunity have been identified as key elements of bad governance in the country. Mondonga and Binswanger (1998: 11) denounce the mode of governance in the DRC since Mobutu's regime, the effects of which continue to echo, arguing:

*that patrimonial mode of governance, where public offices were appropriated by personal and social groups and their benefits used to feed patronage networks and personal fortunes, undermined the managerial rationality, predictably and accountability. It also undermined governmental organizations, the domestic capacity to maintain order and to formulate and implement policy changes. The administration and bureaucracy*

*were opaque, inefficient, over-staffed, corrupt, and unaccountable.*

In September 2001, the IMF denounced the practice of corruption in government structures. In a speech to the nation, President Joseph Kabila acknowledged the weakness of institutions in terms of fighting corruption, as well as the generalised nature of corruption in the country. For instance, Muzong (2007: 11) comments on the attitude of government with regard to the issues of corruption and governance:

*In October 2001, after the publication of the results of an audit that documented the catastrophic mismanagement of state enterprises, President Joseph Kabila suspended 90 per cent of managing directors. However, none of these directors were ever prosecuted. In the same year, the Auditor-General (cours des comptes) started preparing comprehensive auditing reports on public administration, which were not made public.*

As it has been observed, the practice of corruption is a major cause and consequence of poverty in the world, and in the DRC in particular. This practice occurs at all levels of society. Its impact on poor countries is still more severe. Muzong (2007: 6) observes regarding the practice of corruption during the Mobutu regime:

*As the tax revenues dwindled and foreign aid was no longer available to the country, the corrupt elite networks had to find other means of survival. The collection of taxes was privatized as civil servants working for the powerful members of Mobutu's entourage levied taxes for them and captured OFIDA. High-ranking officers and other dignitaries of the regime, bypassing the central bank, had massive amounts of money printed abroad for their private use. It was very common to find in circulation wads of banknotes bearing the same number or with no number at all.*

Furthermore, Muzong (2008: 18) notes that general corruption during the Mobutu regime was reflected not only in people's attitudes, but also in the language of the country. Corrupt acts were referred to as "coop", which represents an abbreviation of the word 'cooperation', or as "*madesu ya bana*," in the Lingala language, which means 'children's beans', that is in fact is an act corruption. It was reported that in one of Mobutu's speeches in 1973, a speech in which he aimed to denounce state employees who had embezzled large amounts of money, Mobutu advised them in Lingala to "*yiba na mayele*," which means 'be smart while you are stealing'. This declaration to the public meant that it was acceptable to steal from the state, as long as one was not caught. Equally, Mondonga and Binswanger (1998: 7) comment that during Mobutu's reign, bribery and corruption became pervasive as well as a necessity for engaging in private business. The absence of disciplined bureaucracy and a lack of transparency in the administration of the country, encouraged those in charge of tax collection to find an opportunity to appropriate a large share of the potential revenue for themselves. Mondonga and Binswanger (1998: 7) add that:

*In addition, the public revenues which were collected under the Mobutu regime were dissipated into private consumption and wealth for Mobutu, his family, and those who held key offices within the state. A vast body of evidence suggests that Mobutu misappropriated several hundred million dollars annually that belonged to the national treasury. He and his family and associates misdirected up to 40 percent of the government capital budget. They used these funds for luxury consumption, for personal investment abroad, payments to political allies to buy their allegiance, and for other activities which fall completely outside the scope of legitimate governance.*

Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers (2008: 42) condemn corruption and mismanagement during the Mobutu regime:

*During Mobutu's reign the absence of state-led economic development, the opportunity 'to get rich quickly,' almost became a new state ideology, in which 'Article 15' ('debrouillez-vous', or the necessity to fend for oneself), was tolerated by the regime in return for unlegitimated and rapacious state predation.*

With regard to the issue of disorder, which has caused corruption and bad governance in the DRC, Church (2006: 2) comments that due to corruption and the abuse of human rights, the national army (FARDC) and police have been weakened. The lack of a regular salary for the armed forces has been attributed to mismanagement. The frequent embezzlement of funds by senior officials, instead of paying soldiers, has evoked the violation of human rights, banditry and many other kinds of crimes against the Congolese.

In the DRC, corruption should not be considered as merely a problem of dishonest individuals working in the government, or in business, or even of people working in civil society. Rather, it is a systematic problem which requires systematic solutions. The practice of corruption cannot be tackled by a single institution or law. The solution to it requires the institutionalisation of integrity by means of different agencies, laws, practices and ethical codes. It is a holistic approach to the problem that will bring about change (Muzong, 2007:14).

While corruption is becoming rampant, Akpan (2008: 954) argues that the phenomenon of bad governance is becoming more and more globally visible. He adds that the failure of the political leadership to embrace and respect the virtues that bond society and promote stability and harmony, such as social justice, equity, rule of law and respect for individual rights, along with other democratic principles, is a feature of such governance.

One can believe that the role of the church in combating corruption is crucial, especially in the area of ethical codes. One of the ways in which the Church could combat corruption would be through sermons

and biblical teachings. Church leaders and ministers could offer these on anti-corruption subjects for believers. It would also be advisable that some supplementary education be given to religious leaders (pastors, priests, monks etc.). In this regard, everybody will become able to understand the importance of the anti-corruption movement and ethics education for members. In addition, it is also important that in Bible colleges, faculties of theology and seminaries, students take one or more courses in anti-corruption strategies. The Church should implement programmes and materials for lay members and children in Sunday schools and confirmation classes in order to fight corruption. Information with learning material could even be sent to them from time to time.

The Church and other groups in civil society should create an anti-corruption movement together with their members. This would serve as a corruption watchdog, whistle-blower and constructor of an anti-corruption infrastructure. One should bear in mind that there is no limit to anti-corruption efforts among believers. In so far as they are participating in order to cleanse society and ensure global prosperity in the interests of all, every religion could act as an effective partner to each other.

The Church and civil society group members should together play the role of watchdog over the government. In order to fight corruption and promote good governance in the DRC, Muzong (2007: 21) recommends that:

*The government should demonstrate at its highest level the leadership and political will to combat and eradicate corruption in all sectors and in society by improving governance and economic management, by endeavouring to create a climate that promotes transparency, accountability and integrity in public as well as private efforts. Political leaders should take specific actions that send a clear message that corruption is no longer*



*tolerated at any level of the society and that nobody is any longer above the law.*

It is the responsibility of the government of the DRC to set a good example by implementing Article 99 of the Constitution, which requires the president and government officials to submit to the Constitutional Court a written declaration of their assets on assuming and leaving office. The Constitutional Court should be given the right to and means of verifying these declarations. The government bears the responsibility of developing a reliable anti-corruption strategy, which should be based on a comprehensive diagnosis of national integrity, and the stakeholders should be included in the development of the strategy (Muzong, 2007: 21). Since the constitution of the DRC was promulgated, several governments have succeeded each other, yet Article 99 of the constitution is still not being applied with regard to this matter. To begin with, the assets of government officials are not declared on assuming office, which opens the way for corruption and mismanagement, because there will be no control of their assets when they leave office.

Corruption was not only rampant during the Mobutu regime, but has been endemic since the transition period until the present. Although the population of the DRC is paying a heavy price, it tolerates the vice because it is considered as a means for survival for poorly paid civil servants. In order to motivate such civil servants to render a service, one feels obliged to bribe them. This situation cannot be attributed to greed, but rather to poor remuneration and working conditions. In 2004, salaries ranged from US \$ 5.95 for the lowest-ranking civil servants to US \$ 25.74 per month for the highest level, namely the permanent secretary, making the Congolese civil servant the lowest paid in the world (Muzong, 2008: 30), and therefore there is no doubt that such a mechanism of corruption was developed among civil servants whose family members' demands might be a contributing factor. While civil servants receive the salaries mentioned above, in the same Congolese

society, one comes across from other people who receive thousands of US dollars in their salary per month. The researcher does not intend to assert that salaries must be equal for all people, but rather that there is a way in which to narrow the gap so that everybody shopping in the same market might find something to buy with their earnings. Any appointment to a higher position in the office of government is viewed as a path to enrichment for the appointee and his/her relatives. As Muzong (2008: 17) comments:

*Corruption became an accepted and tolerated reality. Corrupted individuals, who flaunted their ill-acquired riches, were admired and became role models. An appointment to a government position...which gave the appointee access to the state coffers, was greeted as a blessing by the relatives and associates of the person.*

The legitimacy and authority of the Church is an important factor when one considers its ability to engage in advocacy activities. The widespread identification of a large number of Congolese people with the Christian faith accords the Church its legitimacy. Since many politicians are also found to be Church members, the Church is able to refer to a high moral ethic and spiritual authority in formulating its critique and analysis of government. Drawing on the prophetic tradition of the Church, politicians can be held accountable for their policies by referring to those Bible teachings that call on society to show compassion, love and solidarity with its poorest and most marginalised members. Different denominations and churches should do this through a national body; unfortunately such a body does not exist. The creation of a body such as the “National Council of DRC Churches” would be beneficial for advocacy work, while, along with other NGO members of civil society, it could also play the role of watchdog over the government.

The Church and other members of civil society have a major role to play in exerting pressure on the government to be accountable to its people. Advocating for the role that the Church should play in civil society in the DRC in terms of corruption and governance, Muzong (2007: 23) recommends that:

- Civil society organizations engaged in governance and the fight against corruption should form a coalition and coordinate their activities with a view to building synergies and avoiding duplication.
- Civil society organizations should educate and mobilize people at the grassroots with a view to empowering them to exert pressure and demand accountability from their government at all levels.
- In order to improve their credibility and the impact of their work, civil society organizations should develop expertise to gather and process information to inform evidence-based advocacy. They should explore possibilities of collaboration with academia to generate evidence.
- Civil society organizations should develop the capacity to conduct independent service delivery perception surveys, public expenditure tracking surveys and corruption perception surveys to inform their advocacy work and make it more credible.
- Civil society organizations should develop expertise in the monitoring of government activities in such important areas as budget transparency, public contracting and declaration of personal assets by politically exposed persons.

Leadership and professionalism would constitute the key success factors for the Church and other civil society group members in their advocacy work. Individual and common letters from bishops, as well as the professional nature of the staff who would work in the coalition of civil society or a body such as the “National Council of the D.R.C Churches”, if such a body were to be created, would result in a profound

positive effect on the influence of the Church and civil society group members. The manner in which those at the top of the Church's hierarchy would engage the government and speak out would therefore be influential.

A firm commitment on the part of the Church and other group members of civil society should be made in order to ensure transparency and accountability in the government and key businesses. Pressure from the Church and other civil society group members should be used to commit the government to zero-tolerance of corruption. The Church should encourage Congolese people not to settle for minor government concessions in the area of administration, but instead demand complete transparency concerning government's involvement in activities such as mining, which is in fact the main source of revenue for the country. With the democratic foundations that are being formed, one hopes that the future of the country will lie in the hands of the people.

At this very time, where Mobutu's legacy of kleptocracy continues to be the model of governance, many years after his demise, the collapse of the state and the invasion of the country by its neighbours have created new opportunities that allow the elite to continue to loot the country in collaboration with corrupt foreign and criminal networks (Muzong, 2008: 39). The Church's role should be one of defending the vulnerable in society, both Christians and non-Christians, by exerting pressure on the government to be more accountable to its citizens. The Church should emerge from its silence and speak out against the practices of injustice, corruption and bad governance within the state. In order to keep the Church from compromising its ability to criticise the government, it is very important that Church leaders be careful when dealing with government officials who invariably seek political legitimacy through close relationships that often lead to financial support, which in fact is a kind of moral corruption. Once this occurs, the prophetic role of the church could be compromised.

#### **6.4 The Government's Failure to Fight Corruption**

Corruption continues to undermine the economy and administration of the DRC. It is reported that the abuse of public office for personal benefit is still common practice and stretches from minor civil servants to the highest members of government, with implications reaching as far as international corporations. The interference of political actors in administration, customs services, army and the control of natural resources leads to the embezzlement of funds. This laissez-faire attitude has perpetuated a predatory government, with the state living off the citizenry and the country's resources without even the most rudimentary social services (International Crisis Groups, 2006: 4). In April 1990, after Mobutu had experienced pressure from his former masters at the end of the Cold War, he agreed to liberalise politics, allowing multi-party democracy. As pressure mounted from numerous political parties which had been created after the liberalisation of political space, Mobutu agreed to convene a National Sovereign Conference to discuss the political future of the country. This conference succeeded in reviewing the history of mismanagement of the country by Mobutu's regime, as well as the crimes committed since independence (Muzong, 2008: 7-8).

The National Sovereign Conference was the hope of all Zairians. Those gathered at the Conference emerged with a common agreement that the cause of rampant poverty in the country was corruption, bad governance and mismanagement of the country's resources by Mobutu's regime. They also stressed the fact that the culture of impunity played an important role in destroying the country. The Conference emphasised that the lack of morality and ethics for good governance was an issue that should receive the attention of Zairians in the future government.

It was decided at the National Sovereign Conference that the issue of morality and a code of ethics should be placed on the agenda of the coming government. The Conference elected Etienne Tshisekedi as prime minister, but this situation did not last long. He was fired by

Mobutu in the month following his election, before he had even appointed ministers to the different offices. As Muzong (2008: 8) asserts:

*Mobutu and his entourage did not relinquish power and lose all the privileges that they enjoyed. They did their best to disrupt the running of the new government and then used military force to remove it from power. Thereafter, a number of prime ministers were appointed including Bernardin Mungul Diaka, Jean-de-Dieu Ngunz Karl I Bond, Faustin Birindwa, Leon Kengo wa Dondo and General Likulia Bolongo.*

In May 1997, Laurent Desire Kabila, together with his troops, invaded Kinshasa and a few days later, he proclaimed himself president of the DRC. He reinstated the personality cult that characterised the worst period of Mobutu's regime and appointed a group of inexperienced and incompetent people to ministerial posts and top managerial positions in state enterprises. Following in Mobutu's footsteps, the newcomers began to openly loot state resources. The United Nations Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of the National Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the DRC documented the activities of 'unsavoury politicians' in the government of the DRC, who personally profited from the situation (United Nations, 2001a : 41).

On January 16, 2001, after the murder of Laurent Desire Kabila, allegedly by one of his bodyguards, his cabinet appointed his son, Major-General Joseph Kabila, as his replacement (Muzong, 2008: 10). In comparison to Laurent-Desire Kabila, Joseph Kabila was more conciliatory in his views than his father had been. Muzong (2008: 10) comments that:

*The new ruler of the Congo proved to be more accommodating than his father was to the demands of the international community. The Inter-Congolese Dialogue provided for in the*

*Lusaka Agreement finally took place and culminated with the Sun City Global and Inclusive Agreement (hereafter the Sun City Agreement), which was approved and signed at Sun City in South Africa in December 2002 by most of the parties to the conflict. The new government was put in place in June 2003 and was known as the '1+4 formula'. It was led by Joseph Kabila, who remained president of the DRC and included representatives of all the parties to the Sun City Agreement.*

The '1+4 formula' meant that the president and his four vice-presidents inaugurated the transition period in the DRC which led to democratic elections in 2006. Hussein and Cone (2004: 70) argue that the absence of the state in the DRC effectively transformed this country into an open treasure chest for the taking, owing to the fact that its natural riches serve as an attraction for actors to become involved in the conflict.

In order to protect the country against the deteriorating economic situation due to corruption and mismanagement resulting from the predatory regime of Mobutu and its continuation during the transition period, and also in response to the international pressure as well as internal criticism due to the chronic political instability that bred corruption, resulting in the continued appropriation of resources needed to combat poverty (Kabemba, 2001: 227), the transitional government established anti-corruption institutions and strategies. Among these are the following: The Court of Auditors, the General Inspectorate of Finances, the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission, and the Observatory of the Code of Ethics for Public Officials.

#### **6.4.1 The Court of Auditors**

The Court of Auditors, known as *Cours des Comptes*, is the supreme auditing institution in the country, created by law No. 87-005 of 6 February 1987. As one can note, this institution has been in operation

since Mobutu's regime. Its mandate, as Muzong (2008: 53) indicates, was:

- To independently audit the general public finances and the execution of the government budget
- To audit the accounts and management of public enterprises
- To monitor the reimbursement of loans due to the state
- To audit public procurement procedures and contracts
- To audit tax collection and expenses incurred on the government general budget.

Owing to a lack of transparency, the government would not allow this office to perform its duty as expected, which is why, as can be observed, the government invariably overspent its budget.

According to the Constitution of the transition period, in its Article 165, the Court of Auditors is charged with the duty of reporting to the National Assembly, while its members were appointed by the president on the recommendation of the National Assembly. In addition to annual reports submitted to the president and the National Assembly regarding the audit of the public institutions, it was also the duty of the Court to report to relevant ministries, the prime minister and the National Assembly with respect to their management (Muzong, 2008: 54). As the Court of Auditors could not freely access all the information needed, it submitted regular reports with information in its possession to the National Assembly, as stipulated by the law. The Court of Auditors, which was supposed to be an independent service for the purposes of exercising control, could not operate independently without the interference of the office of the president and some other 'untouchable' ministries, such as the ministries of budget, finance etc. Even though the Court regularly submitted its reports to the National Assembly, Muzong (2008: 5) asserts that:



*in reality it continues, as under the Mobutu regime, to come under the purview of the president's office and to be considered part of it. This practice reduced the court's perceived and real independence vis-a-vis the president. The lack of accountability that characterized the institutions of the transition period made it difficult, if not impossible, for the Court to have access to the information that is needed from the government and the various state enterprises.*

As one can observe, the government, during the transition period, did not make the work of the Auditor-General easy. This is exasperating in that the reports submitted by the Court to the National Assembly were neither discussed nor acted upon. Muzong (2008: 54) adds that the only exception was the audit report which the Court of Auditors produced at the request of the president in 2004 – and yet, its activities, until the present day, remain a mystery to the entire Congolese population.

#### **6.4.2 The General Inspectorate of Finance**

The duty of this service was to audit all public bodies of the state, including the Ministry of Finance, of which it was a special unit. It is reported that the service was placed under the purview of the president's office from 2002 to 2003. Candidates for the posts of the General Inspectors of Finance were called upon to undergo a competitive and rigorous examination, and were appointed by the president on the recommendation of the Ministers of Finances and Public Administration. The service was expected to undertake audit missions at the request of the finance minister, the president or any other ministry. There was also the possibility for the service to initiate a mission on its own (Muzong, 2008: 55). The mandate of the Inspectorate, as Muzong (2008: 55) notes, was to:

- Control the implementation on a day-to-day basis on the budgets of the government and of decentralised administrative bodies
- Ensure that the internal audit units in ministries and decentralised administrative bodies were well organised
- Audit the financial operation of the state enterprises, organs and private enterprises which were subsidised by the state or of which the state was a stakeholder
- Control tax, customs and accounting situation of any person or body that was liable to taxation, at the request of the finance minister, the president or the vice-president in charge of the economic and financial commission
- Ensure that all units in charge of collecting taxes and spending state revenue complied with and applied the legal and regulatory provisions as well as institutions relating to the posting of operation (*Ordonnance no. 87-323 du 15 septembre 1987, Article 2bis*).

All these ideas appeared very sound on paper, but in practice, nothing was done because the government was hostile to any kind of control. The Inspectorate could not carry out any substantial activities in order to perform its duty. The service was marginalised and even deprived of necessary resources to allow it to play its role. Muzong (2008: 55) comments on the difficulties that faced the Inspectorate:

*For most of the transition period, it could not access its operational budget. It was often manipulated by the minister in charge to settle their score with political enemies. The bodies that it was supposed to audit ganged together against it. There were even instances when audit missions were publicly prohibited by these powerful institutions. In the rare cases where the audit was carried out, the inspectors' recommendations were ignored.*

One can clearly see that the government of transition organised itself in such a way that corruption and mismanagement continued to have a destructive effect on the country. Once again, the government has failed to combat corruption through this service. It is obvious that such a service cannot accomplish much in terms of combating corruption owing to the fact that it does not operate independently.

### **6.4.3 Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission**

Corruption has been one of the most serious problems affecting not only the economy but also the moral behaviour of the Congolese. The Inter-Congolese Dialogue, held in Sun City, South Africa, resolved through the Constitution of the transition period, in its Article 154, to create the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (CELC). The Commission's main aim was to promote the practice of moral and republican values, as stated in Article 156 of the Constitution of the transition.

The law promulgated on 30 July 2004 by President Joseph Kabila (Muzong, 2008: 57-58) listed the duties of the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission as being:

- To promote good governance
- To make the public and private sectors more ethical
- To build the management capacity of state institutions and the private sector with regard to developing and implementing their respective professional codes of ethics
- To put in place networks and cooperation relations with state institutions at the local, national and international levels, which have similar objectives
- To combat negative values, such as money laundering, influence peddling, embezzlement of funds and bribery
- To promote the development of a positive Congolese value system

- To investigate violation of ethical values and acts of corruption in all sectors of the nation and to propose appropriate measures to the authorities
- To advocate for the introduction at all levels of the national curriculum of the teaching of practical moral and republican values
- To promote transparency in political party financing
- To take concrete proposals to the government on its anti-corruption policy and strategy.

Putting all this into practice would be moving towards an ideal DRC, where corruption would really be eradicated, and offenders would be easily prosecuted. Muzong (2008: 58) adds that the members of the Commission could not be arrested or prosecuted while in office for any opinions expressed within the framework of their duties. The possibility of their being prosecuted would only be present if they were caught in the act after the plenary Assembly had lifted their immunity.

The task of the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission was not easy, especially because of the nature of the agreement of the transition period, which was in fact a power-sharing between belligerents. Anybody could be appointed to the Commission, regardless of his/her expertise. Muzong (2008: 60) sadly argues that:

*The prevailing cynicism with regard to the efforts to combat corruption complicated the commission's task. In fact, a number of previous efforts to combat corruption had failed miserably. These included the Commission against Corruption, Fraud and Smuggling as well as Counterfeiting of Currencies and Brands, which was created by Presidential Decree no. 116/2002 of August 2002 and launched a few months before the beginning of the transition period.*

Rudge (2006: 5) notes that the local Congolese population has yet to reap any reward from the wealth of minerals in the country, since the multinational companies and local elites allegedly pocket the money instead of spending it on social welfare and infrastructure programmes. Rudge (2006: 5) further states that corruption and lack of transparency within the government and international companies operating in the DRC seriously impede the country's economic and social development. It has been reported that an estimated amount of sixty to eighty percent of customs revenue is embezzled. It must also be noted that none of the decrees signed to combat corruption were abrogated. All are in effect up to the present, even though they have not been applied. The government that was introduced after the democratic presidential elections in 2006 is aware of all these decrees, but still no action has been taken. One can ask the following question: who benefits from the silence while corruption is still rampant?

Hussman and Bunga (2005: 20) critically observe that the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission had a negative reputation because of allegations of unethical behaviour by some of its key members, owing to the rivalry within the organisation. Regardless of its failure to be effective in terms of implementing concrete strategies to combat corruption, the Commission has managed to organise seminars for students, lecturers and managers of state enterprises.

#### **6.4.4 Observatory of the Code of Ethics for Public Officials**

This body was created by the Presidential Decree, Law no. 017/2002 of 3 October 2002, which concerned the Code of Conduct of Public Officials. The duties assigned to this body, as Muzong (2008: 62) indicates, were the following:

- To promote, disseminate and popularise the Code of Ethics for Public Officials and monitor its implementation

- To ensure the adequate implementation of the Code and recommend to relevant authorities appropriate measures to prevent and punish those who violate the provisions of the Code
- To publish annual reports on the implementation and effectiveness of the Code

The term ‘public officials’ refers to any person who holds a public office and is a salaried employee of the state. This includes, among others, the head of the state, members of parliament, government ministers, magistrates, civil servants, staff of state enterprises, etcetera (Muzong, 2008: 63). The purpose of the implementation of the Code was to improve ethical behaviour in public administration and define the rules of conduct relating to moral integrity. It aimed at helping public officials to uphold these rules and facilitate good management of the state (Muzong, 2008: 63).

Muzong (2008: 63) suggests that it is difficult to overemphasise the role that an organisation such as the Observatory of the Code of Ethics for Public Officials can play in an environment where ethical behaviour is no longer the norm and negative values prevail. He also considers that the implementation of the Code was hampered by a lack of political will by the government to promote ethical values. Nevertheless, Muzong (2008: 65) argues that:

*if OCEP is properly tooled and equipped, and backed up by strong political will at the highest levels of the state, ...it can effectively fulfil its mandate and tackle the terrible ethical hangover and the kleptocratic legacy left by Mobutu’s reign, by numerous wars and year of looting by warlords turned politicians.*

Equally, Santos (2003: 45) points to the difficulty of implementing the new laws in the country when he writes that, “regarding the several

laws approved during 2002, some of them have very good contents and structure, but they are still far from being implemented ‘on the ground’.

The implementation of these laws, as Tremblay (2004: 21) observes, was addressed by international observers and local human rights organizations, which saw the importance of filling the chronic accountability gap and correcting at the same time the lack of transparency in the democratic governance model.

From the ongoing discussion regarding corruption and anti-corruption programmes during the period of transition in the DRC, no change is evident. Corruption and mismanagement continue their destructive effects on the economy and moral life of the Congolese, just as they did during Mobutu’s reign. Almost three years after the free and democratic elections were held in the DRC, a new constitution was promulgated, a head of state was elected and a new government established, yet corruption is still rampant in the country, despite the fact that the decrees that were signed and laws promulgated with regard to corruption still have effect. It should be noted that the culture of impunity is one of the elements that most strongly supports corruption and mismanagement in the country. Tremblay (2004: 52) stresses the importance of combating impunity:

*Moreover, the campaign against impunity is an important framework for analysis of the illegal exploitation of natural resources. The revenues generated by this commerce in no way benefited the Congolese people who, on the contrary, were kept in a state of material precarity which damaged the social fabric in production zones.*

Another element that should be taken into account when discussing the government’s failure to fight corruption, as Tremblay (2004: 58) comments, is the implementation of the “Truth and Reconciliation Commission” (*Commission Vérité et Réconciliation*), whose mandate was to determine responsibility for the most notorious crimes committed

in the history of DRC, not with a view to punishing the guilty parties, but rather requiring them to ask pardon from the victims and their relatives and ensuring that compensation was paid. The mandate was broad and even political, economic and social crimes committed since independence in 1960 could be examined. It is very unfortunate that for reasons of political and personal convenience, the government could not even mention what could be done in this regard. A cynical circle of impunity is created if people know that prosecution will not follow any crime that has been committed.

The researcher believes that it is difficult, if not impossible, to have an effective institution that will combat corruption and mismanagement while operating under the purview of either the president's office or any other ministry in the government.

The only way in which the situation could change, according to the researcher, is to institute strong watchdog bodies outside the government that could freely exert pressure on the latter in terms of issues that need to be changed. The Church and NGOs in the DRC are regarded as being able to exert pressure on the government to implement all the good ideas that have been promulgated in laws and decrees. Hence the researcher believes that if the Church in the DRC takes a stand, it could face the challenge posed by all these ethical and moral issues in order to ensure a better life for all Congolese.

## **6.5 Churches Struggle against Mobutu's Dictatorial Regime**

The struggle of Churches against apartheid in South Africa was not much different from that of the Church in the DRC against the dictatorial regime of the late president Mobutu. Even though the two cases are non similar, in some respect they have a common ground that is a call for advocacy. The conference convened in 1942 by the Christian Council of South Africa at the University of Fort Hare was of real



importance because it helped the Church of South Africa, in unity, to reflect on its future role in the country. Seven years later another conference was convened, but this time at Rossettenville near Johannesburg. The theme of the conference was “the Christian Citizen in a Multi-Racial Society”. These two conferences constituted a means to create awareness of the arrival and the implementation of the apartheid ideology by the National Party (De Gruchy, 2005: 51).

As this new political phenomenon entered the scene, the English churches and other denominations belonging to the Christian Council became concerned since it contradicted their hope for the future of the churches and the country. In 1948 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa criticized the legislation aiming to deprive Africans of their limited parliamentary representation, an act that was seen as a retrograde step contrary to the claims of Christian responsibility. In the same month, the Methodist Conference advocated for constitutional rights regardless of race. The same sentiments were shared by the Congregational Assembly, which went further to state that the government policy of apartheid had no sanction in the New Testament (De Gruchy, 2005: 52). Santmire (1987: 18) sadly reports that:

*In South Africa the law defines blacks and coloreds as inferior people, without any rights to speak of. That situation remained basically unchanged after the promulgation of the new South African Constitution a few years back. That document defines ‘coloreds’ and ‘Indians’ as second-class citizens, and it totally omits any legal status for the blacks at all!*

In regard to this political phenomenon that segregates and dehumanizes black people in South Africa, the English churches, mostly black, stood against the apartheid state. During the 1970s and 1980s this resulted in action against church leaders, Christian agencies, pastors etc. (De Gruchy, 2005: 89-90). While most, if not all, English churches were

in the forefront of the struggle against the apartheid regime, De Gruchy (2005: 97) argues that Catholics and Lutherans were not as visible as the other English churches in this regard. Although their mother churches are Latin and German, they have been mostly 'English Speaking' in South Africa for a while.

This situation is actually contrary to that which occurred in the struggle of the Church in the DRC where the Roman Catholic Church was in the forefront, playing a key role in defending human rights and facing Mobutu's corrupt and dictatorial regime, while the Protestant Church appeared to feel comfortable in being supportive of the regime.

The struggle of the Church in the DRC against the dictatorial regime of president Mobutu began in the 1970s when the Catholic Church was regarded as the most persistent and most effective opposition to the Mobutu regime. As reported in Zaire (1993: 1):

*Mobutu's ambition for the state expansion necessarily implies conflict with organized religion, and the main adversary of the expansionist regime was the Roman Catholic Church which claims 46 to 48 percent of the population as active members. The Catholic network of schools, clinics, and other social services was as large as that of the state, and more efficiently run. The role of the church thus was pervasive, and its moral authority made in uncomfortable competition for the comprehensive allegiance that Mobutu sought.*

When Mobutu came to power in 1965, the Catholic Church welcomed the new regime and in fact supported the consolidation of its authority. A year after his coup, Mobutu founded the Popular Movement of the Revolution, or MPR. It became the country's sole party and membership of it was made obligatory for all Zairians.

The first tension between Mobutu and the Catholic Church became evident when Mobutu founded the MPR. Two years later, the Conference of Catholic Bishops noted that the regime was developing

dictatorial tendencies. This led to Cardinal Joseph Malula, then the head of the Catholic Church in Zaire, publicly expressing fear about the regime's intentions during a mass celebrating the tenth anniversary of independence (Zaire, 1993: 1). Opposition to Mobutu's regime stemmed mostly from the Roman Catholic Church and the students. In 1971, Mobutu's regime decided to nationalize the Lovanium University (a prestigious Catholic University in Zaire, actually known as the University of Kinshasa) along with the Protestant University of Kisangani. This act stimulated resistance from the Catholic Church, which led to tension between Cardinal Malula and President Mobutu. As Mbambi notes:

*The resistance to the nationalization of the universities of Kinshasa, led by the Catholic Church, and of Kisangani, led by the Protestant Church, resulted in Mobutu removing Christian names and installing a section of the Youth of MPR in all seminaries; this quickly caused serious tensions with the Roman Catholic Church, especially its leader, Cardinal Joseph Malula.*

Cardinal Malula protested against this decision and instructed his bishops to ignore it. In retaliation, the regime seized the Cardinal's residence in Kinshasa and converted it into the JMPR (the youth branch of Mobutu's party) headquarters, stripped him of his national honours and forced him into exile in the Vatican. After weeks of tension and closure of the seminaries, the bishops in 1972 accepted JMPR cells, on condition that their party link passed through the church hierarchy (Zaire, 1993: 1). Longman (2001: 12) comments on the issue:

*President Mobutu sought to rein in the power of the church by nationalizing church schools and hospitals, and in the ensuing conflict, Cardinal Joseph Malula was driven briefly into exile before a compromise was reached with the regime.*

Another battle between the regime and the Roman Catholic Church ensued with regards to the concept of “authenticity”, which the Catholic Church regarded as a threat to Christianity. As said earlier, the concept of authenticity led to the banning of Christian names. For instance, Joseph Desiré Mobutu became Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu Waza Banga. The regime viewed authenticity as a means of releasing Zairians from mental colonization as well as cultural disalienation. This could have been read by the Catholic Church as a veiled attack on Christianity as an import from the West. The banning of Christian names was a measure that particularly offended the church. The church’s opposition led to attacks by the regime on Cardinal Malula as a “renegade of the revolution”. Mobutu banned all religious publications and dissolved church-sponsored youth movements. The zenith of the regime’s campaign, as reported in Zaire (1993: 1), occurred in 1994 when the public celebration of Christmas was banned and the display of artifacts was limited to the interior of churches (Zaire, 1993: 1). Since the regime found it difficult to manage the schools taken from the churches, it began to concede and eventually returned the schools to the management of churches. As one can observe, the voice of the Church against the nepotism of president Mobutu emanated from the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church was somehow the hope of the Congolese people who were faced with the rampant brutality of the regime. Another fact that demonstrates that the strongest opposition came from the Catholic Church is the nature of its statements. As reported in Zaire (1991: 2):

*By 1976, the Catholic church had reemerged as the strongest critic of the existing sociopolitic [sic, socio-political] order. Following the abandonment of education ‘reforms’ and Zairianization of the economy, and the fiasco of intervention in Angola, a mood of profound demoralization settled over the country, and the church expressed the prevailing mood in a pastoral letter. Outraged, Mobutu summoned the Catholic*

*bishops and demanded that they disavow the letter; they flatly refused.*

The observers noted that the death of Cardinal Malula in 1989 was a relief to the regime because the most prominent opponent of Mobutu had been removed. After Malula's death, another Catholic bishop who was opposed to the regime was Monsignor Laurent Mosengwo Pasinya, then archbishop of Kisangani, who was elected president of the Sovereign National Conference in April 1992.

As stated earlier, the Church in the DRC has been divided ever since. While the Catholic Church held a strong position against Mobutu's regime, the Protestant Church took a different stance, as noticed in Zaire (1993: 2):

*Leaders of the ECZ seem to have decided that the Mobutu regime's authenticity campaign offered them an historic opportunity. Unlike the Catholics, they embrace authenticity and its leader, Mobutu. The clash between Cardinal Malula and President Mobutu, culminating in the nationalization of Lovanium University and the exile of the cardinal, seemed to compensate for the advantages Catholicism had enjoyed under Belgian colonialism. Even though they lost their own newly established university, the Free University of the Congo (Université Libre du Congo--ULC), the Protestants apparently considered that what was bad news for the Catholics necessarily was good news for them.*

The Protestant church remained supportive of the regime, despite its nature, until Mobutu's announcement of the process of popular consultation had led to a multiparty dispensation and the "democratization" of the country. Later in February 1990, the executive committee of the ECZ (Protestant Church in the Kasai-Oriental region) submitted a memorandum that criticized the constitutional structure of

the Second Republic. The committee denounced the abuse prevalent in the functioning of the various institutions and proposed a series of changes, but did not demand the replacement of the regime. A month later, the head of the ECZ, on behalf of the entire Protestant Church in Zaire, sent another memorandum to President Mobutu, but curiously it was observed that the proposals of the Protestants were similar to those made by Mobutu in his speech of April 1994, notably the limitation of political parties to three and the placing of the president above the parties. Observers concluded that the ECZ had been influential in shaping Mobutu's ideas and that the leaders of the ECZ were sufficiently well informed regarding that which President Mobutu planned to include in his speech. Therefore, they were able to tailor their document to support Mobutu's plan (Zaire, 1991: 3). Kimbanguists and Muslims likewise were supportive of Mobutu's regime. When one talks of the Church struggle in the DRC, the term 'struggle' should particularly refer to the Catholic Church which had demonstrated endurance and has continued to fulfill its prophetic role in the country. In the same manner in which the Catholic and Lutheran churches joined the English churches in the struggle against the apartheid regime, the expectation is that Protestant, Kimbanguist and Revival churches in the DRC will unite to fight against injustice, corruption, and mismanagement that perpetuates the dehumanizing situation of the Congolese people.

## **6.6 Summary**

The situation of injustice and poverty in the DRC is very evident. Poverty in itself is merely a consequence of an unjust society that does not promote moral and ethical values. Since the establishment of the transitional government after the Sun City agreement in South Africa, Congolese people have continued to live in the midst of extreme

poverty. One wonders why the country cannot be developed, considering all the natural resources with which the land is endowed.

Corruption and mismanagement of state resources have been viewed as another source of poverty in the country. Despite the sound programmes that the government has put in place to fight corruption and mismanagement since the transition period, none of these have been successful. The reason for this is that all the institutions and services put in place to monitor and combat corruption have not been able to operate independently. There has still been interference, either by the office of the President or powerful government ministries.

The Church and NGOs in the DRC have been identified as institutions that could challenge the government in terms of the eradication of poverty, since the two bodies are not dependent on the government. The Church in the DRC should be united under a body such as the “Democratic Republic of Congo Council of Churches” or any suitable ecumenical body when facing challenges such as poverty, justice, governance, HIV/AIDS, etc.

The Church in the DRC should organise itself into inclusive structures and networks with NGOs in order to serve as watchdogs over the government. It should pressure the government, using any means it can, in order to advocate for change to the benefit of the Congolese people who have endured hardship for a long time. It is now time for the Church to stand up and speak out against the government, which has been incompetent regarding social issues with regards to the common practice of rampant corruption and mismanagement. As Dolamo (1992: 111) asserts, “The basic calling of a pastor in a sociopolitical [sic, socio-political] situation is to be theologically on the side of truth, justice and righteousness ...” In the following chapter, the researcher will engage in a discussion, from a theological perspective, regarding the issue of poverty. The next chapter will provide a theological reflexion on poverty and its biblical, as well as contemporary, interpretations.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **7.1 Introduction**

The aim of this study was to investigate justice and poverty in the DRC and the role that the Church should play in combating injustice and the eradication of poverty. The findings challenged the Church in the DRC to play its prophetic role fully and also encouraged it to promote justice, equity and good governance in the country. In other words, the Church has been challenged to act as a watchdog over the government. This concluding chapter encapsulates the main arguments by providing some concrete recommendations in an attempt to assist the finding of the path to the prosperous future that the DRC deserves.

### **7.2 Concluding Remarks**

From the literature reviewed, the concept of justice was developed, showing that justice occupies a special place in society, for it advocates that the interests of the citizens must be taken into account consistently. In the discussion, a just society is envisaged as one that shows concern for the wellbeing of its people, but also as one in which power is used to preserve the rights of those whom one is called upon to lead.

Justice has been observed as representing a fundamental aspect of human beings that illustrates one's humanity; without it, one's human capacities cannot be exercised. From a biblical perspective, justice has



been regarded as fidelity to the demands of a relationship. This was illustrated in the Israelites' way of living, which was in unity with others in a social context or by the bond of family, or again, by a covenantal relationship. In this regard, justice was considered as a chief attribute of God. Biblical justice as discussed in this chapter is the kind of justice that is needed in today's society and institutions.

This study discussed the phenomenon of poverty in the world, particularly in developing nations where people are unable to meet their basic needs. It observed that the Third World is most affected by this issue. Because of its multidimensional nature, it has proved difficult to formulate a commonly agreed upon definition of poverty. This study explored different causes of poverty on the African continent, as well as the crisis of underdevelopment, which to some extent is attributed to the exploitation of African nations by the Western powers during the colonial period. It was noted that internal factors on the continent had also contributed to the problem of poverty. Underdevelopment on the African continent has created a growing discrepancy between the expectations that were raised and the existing level of needs and satisfaction, regardless of how low this level might be. The research indicated that globalisation, regardless of its acceptance worldwide, meets with a number of negative reactions among developing nations because of the nature of the competitive economy in the world market. Globalisation is regarded as a movement that leaves developing nations out of economic competition.

The researcher also dealt with the situation of poverty in the DRC. It has been argued that regardless of its wealth in human and natural resources, the DRC remains one of the poorest countries in the world. The study explored the period of economic growth in the DRC, as well as its economic decline. Some reasons for this economic decline were evoked in this chapter, of which the most important were the economic policies of Zairianisation and radicalisation, policies that were intended

to promote economic freedom in the country but did not, because Mobutu did not take the time to think carefully about their implications. These policies instead harmed and destroyed the economy of the country. The researcher then probed deeper to explore the institutionalisation of corruption throughout the entire Congolese society and the exploitative regime of the late President Mobutu, which was conducive to poverty in the country. Mismanagement, privatisation and personalisation of the state by Mobutu indicated what the future of the people in the DRC would be. The resulting war in the DRC was another factor that aggravated the conditions of poverty in the country.

The research was subsequently steered toward the role that the Church could play in the areas of justice and poverty in the DRC. The Church has been challenged to promote justice and the struggle against poverty in all its forms and has been called to move away from its narrow understanding of mission. It should understand and discern the signs of the times and perform its mission accordingly. The church leaders and clergy should not be limited to delivering sound sermons but should also be involved in advocacy on behalf of the voiceless. They should follow the path of people such as Martin Luther King Jr. of the USA, Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, Cardinal Malula of the DRC, Cardinal Sin of the Philippines and many others who have been instrumental in advocacy work.

The Church as a spiritual society should avoid being dependent on the government so that it might be able to play its prophetic role freely. This does not place the Church in the position of being an opponent to the government, but rather prevents the Church from compromising itself. As such, the Church ought to be light and salt for the world, rather than following the corrupt models designed by the secular leadership.

The Church has been called upon to speak out whenever the conduct of the government is morally questionable. Issues such as social and political injustice, corruption and the crises of legitimacy forced upon

the majority of the population by any authoritarian state are among the issues that the Church ought to deal with.

Church leaders in the DRC have been called upon to stop being complacent and supportive of the government, disregarding the latter's irresponsible conduct. It has been noted that advocacy should begin with the Church leadership. To avoid any contradiction in their actions against political injustice and any other kind of evil action by the government, the churches in the DRC should be united. Lack of unity among different denominations renders the Church in the DRC powerless. As such, the Church cannot play its prophetic role correctly.

The Church and other civil society groups in the DRC have been encouraged to create an anti-corruption movement that will serve as a corruption watchdog over the government. The Church, along with other members of civil society, is called upon to exert pressure on the government so that the latter will be accountable to its people.

The Bible considers poverty as being evil, especially when it subjects its victims to disrespectful treatment. Poverty is also considered as a violation of human rights. The responsibility of theologians and Christians in general is to promote a fair and just society in which the poor will be empowered in such a manner that they can contribute to the development of their community.

From a theological perspective, it was shown that the law in the Old Testament was intended to protect the disadvantaged. Poverty as discussed in this chapter was found to be humankind's creation. It is based on the exploitation of the powerless and the establishment of structures that benefit the rich, owing to the fact that people have forgotten God's laws.

Moral virtues, social justice and solidarity constitute a common ground for a life of dependence on one another. This contributes greatly to care and concern for each person's problem. For the eradication of

poverty and the advancement of economic justice, an effort ought to be made regarding social commitment and respect for the common good.

It was also argued that the widespread occurrence of poverty in the world is a consequence of the collapse of values among the rich. Patriotism, justice, moral values and commitments in terms of African solidarity were identified as pillars on which Congolese citizens should build their nation. The Church should not be indifferent to hearing the cry of suffering people when it has the opportunity to challenge the authority of the state.

## **7.3 Recommendations**

### **7.3.1 The Church**

- (a) Besides the existing Church bodies, the Church in the DRC should be united on one
- (b) platform that could be named the “DRC National Council of Churches”. This body would deal with the issues of advocacy, governance, corruption, HIV/AIDS, human rights, justice and poverty in the country.
- (c) The Church should compile an anti-corruption curriculum that could be taught in schools and universities. This will help students understand the negative impact of corruption in society.
- (d) The Church should develop the necessary expertise in collecting and processing data for evidence-based advocacy. The Church in the DRC should collaborate with other churches and faith-based organisations overseas to shape its role of advocacy.
- (e) The Church should develop the capacity to conduct independent surveys of service delivery, corruption and mismanagement and also to track surveys in connection with public expenditure to make sure that such expenditure benefits the people.

- (f) The Church should embark on particular projects for eradicating poverty and target the most urgently needed locations for its implementation. This could entail projects such as agriculture, micro-credit loans and a wide variety of entrepreneurial projects.
- (g) The Church should return to its prophetic role and speak out against all evils committed by the state authority and governing institutions. It should publicly denounce any morally questionable and unethical acts on the side of the government.
- (h) Since the eradication of poverty is one of the priorities of the government, the Church should monitor the effectiveness of the implementation of the Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy and make sure that poor people benefit from the funds allocated to this programme.
- (i) The Church should condemn the abuse of human rights that has become commonplace in the DRC and speak out on behalf of the victims of injustice and the abused.

### **7.3.2 The Government**

- (a) The DRC seems to be regarded by many as a country that is not being effectively governed because of the culture of impunity. The government of the DRC should eradicate this culture.
- (b) The government of the DRC should avoid any interference in judicial matters and leave prosecutors to do their work independently and peacefully.
- (c) The government of the DRC should promote democracy and avoid arbitrary arrests and the violation of human rights in all its forms. It should be reminded that no one is above the law and that government officials are also subject to prosecution whenever they transgress the law.

- (d) As part of a programme to eradicate poverty, the government of the DRC should develop programmes that deal with the welfare of people, such as housing, transportation, food etcetera.
- (e) The government of the DRC should make sure that its poverty reduction strategy is implemented and bears fruit; reports on any improvement regarding the situation of poverty in the country should be made available and published in the media to ensure transparency.
- (f) The government of the DRC should provide the necessary means for the functioning of institutions such as the Court of Auditors, the General Inspectorate of Finance, the Ethics and Anti-corruption Commission, etc. These institutions and strategies should operate independently from the office of the President or government and their reports should be submitted to Parliament. These institutions and strategies should not be intimidated by the office of the President or by the government.
- (g) Government officials should be patriotic and seek first of all the interests of the Congolese people rather than their own.
- (h) The government of the DRC should set an example of transparency; declarations regarding assets should be made by all members of the Executive in compliance with Article 99 of the Constitution and be published. The constitutional court, which receives them, should be given the right and resources to check the declarations and even to monitor them.
- (i) The government of the DRC should make sure that all Congolese people benefit in one way or another from the wealth in the country. Distributive justice should be at the top of its priority list.

## **7.4 Conclusion**

Poverty and injustice are serious concerns for the present and future of both the Church and society in the DRC. Commitment to poverty eradication is more than just a policy action. There has to be a concomitant change in the thinking of leaders in both Church and the government of the DRC about poverty. The researcher is convinced that without a resurgence of moral responsibility and a reaffirmation of fundamental moral and ethical values, any programme for economic growth, eradication of poverty or fight against corruption and injustice will be ineffective.

The people of the DRC do not deserve the poverty that has been imposed on them. The resources available in the country, good quality leadership and a little political will should be sufficient for the country to flourish.

The Church in the DRC should wake up from its deep sleep and play the prophetic role expected from it, guiding people in the light and warning leaders who tend to oppress people through allowing suffering of all kinds.

May the reader find something here worth applying to his/her knowledge and experience, and be enriched for having read this thesis.

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# APPENDIX

## Questionnaire

**Note: Circle the answers that best express your opinion, and comment wherever necessary.**

1. How do you view justice in the Democratic Republic of Congo?

- Fair**
- Unfair**
- Worse**

2. What institution in the Democratic Republic of Congo is accountable for justice?

- Government**
- Church**

3. How can justice be restored in the Democratic Republic of Congo?

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. What kind of leader is needed in order to restore justice?

- Military**
- Clergy**
- Civil**

5. Does the Church in the Democratic Republic of Congo play the role of an agent of justice?

**Yes**

**No**

6. Does the Congolese government play its role as a warrant of justice?

**Yes**

**No**

7. When it comes to raising its voice against injustice and poverty the Church in the Democratic Republic Congo is always:

**Silent**

**Active**

**Neutral**

8. Is the Church in the Democratic Republic of Congo involved in eradicating poverty?

**Yes**

**No**

9. The Democratic Republic Congo is a potentially rich country. What do you think is the root cause of poverty?

**Poor land**

**Mismanagement**

**Poor leadership at the State level**

10. What can the Church do to bring about justice and eradicate poverty in the country? Comments:

.....

.....

.....

.....



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# Justice and Poverty as Challenges for the Christian Churches

With a Case Study on the Democratic Republic of Congo



## Bosela E. Eale

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The goal of this thesis is to investigate the role of Christian churches and the government in the fight against injustice and the eradication of poverty. In the first two Chapters, an overview of the concept of justice is proposed in both the New and Old Testaments, in the light of the challenge for the churches. Chapter three concentrates on an in-depth analysis of the issues surrounding poverty and its causes. The role played by international organisations with regard to the eradication of poverty in developing countries, and especially in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), is questioned, while an analysis of the impact of industrialisation and globalisation on developing countries is carried out. Chapter four discusses the theological concept of poverty. The aim of this discussion is to develop theological ethics that can be applied by the churches in their struggle against poverty. The last Chapters tackle poverty in DRC: plausible explanations are given for why some people live in extreme poverty and not others.