


TOPIC: URBANISATION AND THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN.
A CASE STUDY OF NUBIAN WOMEN IN KIBERA SLUMS.

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ABSTRACT

What is presented in this dissertation is a socio-economic study of the conditions of women in Kibera Slums, as they struggle to survive for daily susistence in the slum areas in the marginal Fringer of Nairobi city. The study is an attempt to describe the lives of these women who fend for themselves in a hostile enviroment.

In studing their changing lifestyles in an urban setting, the author has focused on their social life which include their up bringing education, married life, divorce and widowhood. A systematic view of women's lifestyles under situation of economic stress is also discussed.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

This paper is the result of a research done on the impact of Urbanization on Nubian Women in Kibera Slums. The study is an attempt to describe and analyse the struggle and strategies for survival for these women who have been up-rooted from their traditional societies and because of various reasons, forced to struggle for daily subsistence in slum areas in the Marginal Fringes of the city.

Emphasis is placed on the role of urbanization in encouraging the Nuclear Family, at the expense of kinship and extended Family relationships. It attempts to address itself to the changing roles of women, both in social and economic fields, as they strive to survive in a harsh and sterile environment.

Because Nubians are mainly muslims (there are a few christians among them), there are bound to be structural and cultural constraints enforced by Islamic Religion upon them. This is applicable in their upbringing, education, marriage, divorce and widowhood. Attempts, are therefore made to analyse the role of religion in preventing women from effectively participating in the development process and how urbanization has either tightened or relaxed this constraints.

A systematic analysis is also made of women's life situations under conditions of economic stress. Assuming that most of them are illiterate and uneducated, they will engage in petty trade to supplement their husband's incomes or to support themselves and their dependants if they are single household heads. The case of women as petty traders reflect a double constraint. One constraint emerges from their marginal position within the socio-economic structure where the living and working conditions are deplorable and chances of raising one's living standards are minimal. The other constraint relates to their feminine condition which restricts even more the range of working opportunities available in them. Because of their islamic nature, the constraint is trebbled since Islamic doctrines dictate that women are economically dependent on their husband and are not allowed to work outside their households (Akonga 1979).

HYPOTHESIS.

1. As a result of the urbanization process which is characterized with the move from traditionally integrated societies to nuclear families with side effects of secularization, individualism and lax morals, the life styles of Nubian women have also changed from the traditional Islamic life in an attempt to adjust to a fast changing society both in the children's socialization, in societal norms, married life, as divorcees and widows.
2. In a society where women are encouraged to be dependant, emotional, intuitive, unformed and inferior to men, Nubian women find it considerably hard to cope with situations where they are expected to display independent and administrative abilities like managing their households as single parents, divorcees, widows or married women with irresponsible husbands.
3. Because of the need to supplement their husbands meagre incomes or to generate enough income to maintain their families if they are single parents, they face several structural and cultural constraints which prevent them from being effective members of the development process.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature reviewed herein discusses the effect of the urbanization process on communal family lifestyles. Emphasis is placed on the nature of slum dwellings and how they affect those who live within them. Available Islamic Literature which can illuminate the situation of Muslim women in a changing environment is also be discussed.

Andrei Simic (1973:11) notes that for those who are in the rural areas, the city is the focus of economic and political power as well as the nations intellectual elite. Cities are the main channels of Foreign goods, ideas, influence and foci upon which lines of communication from the outside world converge. The city is the meeting place for diverse cultural elements and act as a levelling device intergrating disparate factions and groups into a new super regional whole.

Slum areas are the result of the urbanization process. Cizahs (1970:167) defines slums as, those areas in which housing is crowded, neglected, deteriorated and often obsolete. Poor slum housing is often associated with poor facilities, community services, poor sanitation and health services. There is often little privacy for families. This creates social tension within the population which is forced to live in overcrowded quarters and between these groups and the more priviledged social groups. Thus city life does not necessarily indicate an improvement in one's standard of living. Often, there is "Subsistence Urbanization" as Breese (1966:5) calls it.

On coming back to the situation of Nubians of Kibera therefore, I presume that being of the lowest stratum in the Urban setting, they struggled to generate income for survival by brewing illicit gin. The colonial Government encouraged the slum condition of the area by deliberately refusing to provide them with adequate facilities like water, electricity, adequate roads, better sanitation facilities with the aim of discouraging them from residing in the area, since they reasoned, they could move to those areas which already had these facilities like Pumwani. The District Commissioner categorically stated:

" I am opposed to any facilities whatever which might make Kibera residentially more attractive and feel that the Government should take advantage of every possible difficulty experienced by the natives there to cause them to remove themselves elsewhere. "

Kibera Nubian Soldiers Settlement Micro-film (1933).

In ignoring the needs of Kibera inhabitants, the colonial Government hit out at the most vulnerable members of that society:- the women and the children who in cases of such dire need have to struggle to survive since they have no other alternative.

Mukras (1982:206) therefore believes that as a result of the colonial situation, the Nubian population are experiencing what any typical resident in a slum area would experience. To him, Nubians are relatively more underdeveloped than most communities of their country. This is because of their lower income per capita, wealth, poorer education, standard of housing, sanitation and other social amenities are lacking. To generate income therefore, they engage in small retail commercial activities to earn a living engage in wage employment or building mud houses which they rent out to the lowest income category of city dwellers. Women also participate actively in this income generating activities with the aim of supplementing their husband's meagre incomes or maintaining their families if they are single parents.

According to Johnstone Muthoira (1970) for traditional societies, modernization signifies change in the very nature of human relationships. In moving to the city one must often change his beliefs and behaviour. By adjusting to a new and unfamiliar environment, he often has to abandon traditional customs and values. Those who dwell in towns are exposed to a sense of rejection and loneliness. The towns are often strange and social integration slowly disintegrates. Individualism and secularization predominate. The Urbanized man finds that his psychological needs are not met. He thus stops living and struggles for survival against despair, hopelessness and frustration only to end deeper into the mire.

An opponent of this theory however is Dr Burja (1972) who believes that the concept of community is very significant in both sociological and philosophical writings of Islam. There is a strong feeling of brotherhood among members of the Islamic

community arising from earlier times when Islamists strove to integrate the political life of their adherents.

Andrei Simic (1973) provides a middle ground between the two extremes. He points out that unlike the developed countries, where total secularization occurs as a result of urbanization, in developing countries modern elements co exist with traditional features without integration. To him, societies in which traditional elements and modern elements co-exist frequently in sharp conflict with each other are called intermediate in that they are no longer totally traditional, but have yet to complete the transformation into modern Industrial societies.

In my research therefore, I aim to find out whether the Nubians operate within any of the three theoretical frameworks. Are they totally isolated from their kith and kin living in isolation with a sense of loneliness and despair, or are they an integrated community which have remained intact despite their exposure to the urbanization process? Or have they had to adjust their life styles to incorporate both the traditional and modern thus fitting into what Simic refers to as the "Intermediate Lot"? Such fundamental questions shall be answered in my attempt to analyse their changing lifestyles in an urban setting.

Oscar Lewis (1966) in his study of the Puerto Rican slum dwellings, drew the following conclusions about the poverty stricken. Their needs are often not served in the institutions and agencies of the larger society because the poor are not eligible for such services, cannot afford them, or are ignorant and suspicious. The poor don't belong to labour unions, political parties, make little use of banks, hospitals department stores or museums.

There is chronic unemployment, low wages, lack of property, lack of savings and absence of food reserves in the home. Many do not marry legally since for the men, most have no steady jobs, no property and no prospects of wealth to pass to their children. They often live for now and not for the future. ~~By not giving their children, they have a stronger claim on the children~~ By not giving their husbands a legal claim on their children, the women have a stronger claim on the children and maintain exclusive rights on their property. There is a high incidence of weak ego structure, orality and confusion of sexual identity all reflecting maternal deprivation. Children are initiated into adulthood early and sex is indulged in at an early age.

From the above discussion, it is therefore logical to assume that women from such environments, often become household heads and economically singlehandedly maintain their families, since the men who have no future prospects are often prone to shy, away from responsibility and leave their wives to fend for themselves. For women of Islamic origins who are constrained by Islamic doctrines, which states that men are the household heads and have the economic responsibility of maintaining their families, exposure to positions of independent decision making processes and economic responsibility will most probably unhearth a lot of constraints which affect their effective participation in the development process.

Because I am dealing with Nubians who are mainly muslims, its imperative therefore that the muslim literature available on women's situation in the Islamic world, be analysed with the aim of finding out the changes that have occured in their ~~in their~~ lifestyles as a result of the urbanization process and whether Islamism has fostered or hindered has fostered or hindered this process.

Accoridng to Nekki keddi and Loise Beck (1973:22) women in the muslim world are exposed to alot of structural and cultural constraints which hinder their effective participation in the development process both politically, socially and economically. Common characteristics in the life of women in most Islamic countries like Morocco, Turkey, Tunisia, Algeria, Kuwait, Iran and so on are:- boy babies are valued more highly than girl babies even on occassion to the point of female infanticide or sale. Girls are brought up to fulfill *maternal and domestic* roles. As they grow older, they are rarely educated. Marriages are controlled by the family. The girl is engaged as an infant, she is marreid at puberty and is expected to be a virgin at marriage. She goes to live with her in laws where she is subject first to her mother-in-law, next to her husband and relatives. She gains status only at the birth of a son. A barren marriage is a tragedy that is her fault and her contribution in economic development is valued less than that of men.

Joshua Akon'ga (1979) is a proponent of the above theory of women's insubordination in Islamic environs. In his study of the swahili of old town in mombasa, he points out that girls are restricted to the back rooms while boys remain outside the whole day during the socialization process. Women are excluded from prayer meetings which only men attend. Girls are chaperoned by older people when attending to missions outside the home. Married women seek for the husband's permission before leaving the house.

This restriction of the women's movements implies that there is limitation on their activities which would otherwise enable them to become independent members of the society. The adventures and explorative activities of the youth are denied them plus the knowledge that accompanies it. It would not be surprising therefore, if they become adults with a limited knowledge about the environment and its related problems.

According to Akon'go, authority in the swahili household is distributed on the basis of sex, seniority and birth order in the case of children. The household head is always the father and in exceptional cases like when a man is polygamous, and does not live permanently in any of his wives houses, or in the case of a widow or divorcee, a woman can then become a household head. It's therefore safe to assume that the decision making process is not the sole prerogative of male members of swahili muslims.

Economically, women are dependent on their husbands. This is because they are not allowed to work outside their households. Because women and children are dependent on men, men are therefore considered as being knowledgeable and women ignorant

because the men have freedom ^{to go} for going to public places and mixing with other people. They are believed to be confident, intelligent and rational in decision making, unlike women who are considered intuitive, emotional, uninformed and therefore inferior to men - a belief which according to Dr Akong'o is religiously derived and does not reflect cultural experiences.

It's my presumption therefore that women in the muslim world are so restricted from the functions of public life that they would automatically become helpless and ineffective if suddenly exposed to situations where they have to make decisions, administer or carry out other activities which require leadership qualities.

Islamic way of life is fully embedded in religion. The Kadhis court, deals with questions of muslim law relating to personal status, marriage, divorce, or inheritance. To fully understand how the urbanization process has filtered into the Nubian lifestyle, one must delve into the heart of religion which is the holy law of sharia, which presents itself as a totalitarian and comprehensive code of conduct which has a universal application and exclusive validity. Since Muslims believe that it's not an earthly source, none of its legal principles ~~or~~ can be altered by any human agency or institution according to them. This makes it all the more difficult to change the gender inequality that exists in Islamic communities.

However like any other institutions, new ideas also infiltrate into the Islamic sphere. For instance, because of the deficiencies of the traditional Islamic systems (especially in the area of public law) today, western standards and values have influenced Islamic law so much so that orthodox muslims are alarmed. Thus Islamic law in spite of itself has not always been static but has been forced to change when it has been necessary to do so.

Orengo (1979), opposes Akeng'a (1979) Nikki Keddie and Loise Beck (1978) when he states that the tradition of Islam has a history of leniency and proper consideration towards women. Islam to him raised women from the tyranny that was their lot in Arab countries where they were no better than slaves, and where they were totally excluded from inheritance because their heirs could only be those who took their share of duty in tribal battles and in guarding tribal property. Positive reforms were made by Muhammed to emancipate women from complete subseviancy in matters pertaining from marriage institutions to positions that guaranteed certain rights and privileges.

To Yasmin Ali (1980) Islam created and guaranteed rights to married women and compensation for them in cases of divorce. The muslim divorce has a well defined procedure of evidence, a complete examination of complaint and awarding of compensation to the angered party. Christianity, Hinduism and Budhism on the other hand do not allow divorce under any circumstances.

As concerns family affairs, the Quran states that a man should not marry more than four wives and it was stated 1300 years ago,

as a restrictive measure against men acquiring many wives whom they could not adequately maintain, since they were mainly used as slaves and concubines. In some countries like Pakistan, Syria, Iraq and Tunisia where Islamic law constitutes the substantive law, there are decisive changes geared towards abolition of polygamous marriages. This was established by the commission Pakistan in 1953. The Quran restricts its permission as to polygamy by requiring that the husband should be materially capable of supporting several wives, and that he should be able to support them partially.

Viewed in this light, Islamism seems to have raised the status of women to a certain extent. Under Islamic law, payment of Mohr (dowry) is necessary, but owing to the nature of the marriage, for it can be ended at any time by the pronouncement of taleq, the system of dowry is more complicated than that of traditional African law. For the muslims, the element of the sale of a wife as a commodity is repudiated by the fact that the bride is entitled to the dowry and its strictly payable to her although with her consent, it may be handed over to her parents. She can divorce by paying back the dowry if she so wishes. Thus viewed from the surface, one would presume that Islamism has in fact accorded women a relatively higher status as compared to other denominations like christianity or traditional African customs or hinduism. However on a closer analysis one would realise that Islamism does ~~not~~ relegate women to second class status and not enough has been done to improve their situation.

For example, in the Islamic law, the effect of marriage on status and hence on legal rights is sometimes very ambiguous. Some Islamic communities like the Ithna-Ashri recognises marriages which are contracted temporarily (muta) which has a duration from one to four years. The woman is paid a small sum for entering into the temporary marriage. The wife of such a marriage is greatly disadvantaged since she does not enjoy the rights of a wife under Islamic law. The existence of such a marriage does not call for a defined divorce procedure.

I therefore presume that most women who marry under such a contract would be economically disadvantaged especially during that period when they have left the temporary marriage and are seeking for another alliance.

Secondly, although the Quran allows muslims only to marry four wives, they can keep as many concubines as they like provided only four are recognized as legitimate wives. The question one would ask is, what rights both economic and social does those who are concubines have? What happens to children produced during such alliances? What is the societal attitude towards them? Obviously the concubines will be economically disadvantaged and will therefore have to earn their own living.

Besides in Islamic law, adultery is a serious criminal offence. One would however wonder on whom and how this could be enforced since men are polygamous and concubinage is rampant. This in effect means that its only married women who would be the victims of this law.

During divorce cases, a woman is greatly disadvantaged. When a man wants to divorce his wife, he merely pronounces three talaqs and no judicial court or tribunal is necessary. The husband's right to pronounce talaq is sometimes constrained by conciliatory bodies which often attempt to conciliate marriage disputes. Another conciliatory measure lies in the fact that a period of thirty days is taken between each pronouncement of talaq.

However the woman is still in a vulnerable position since the husband may divorce her for minor reasons. She can only divorce for limited reasons like, when the husband is insane, deformed, does not maintain her, deserts her, mistreats her, She must also divorce in court which is not a requirement for the husband.

After divorce according to Yasmin (1980) a husband maintains his wife until she delivers if she was divorced when pregnant. Yasmin however does not tell us what happens after the Idda period is over since this in essence would mean that divorced women would have to tend for themselves, since they are only maintained during Idda period of four and a half months when they are waiting to determine whether they are pregnant or not. In a society where women are totally dependant on men, this is a grave disadvantage. Thus Islamism which to some theorists has raised women's status, has not really done enough in my opinion to lift them from their subjugation. More needs to be done since they are still enclosed in a cultural and structural device which is so restrictive that they cannot effectively participate in the development process.

1. Little is known about Nubian women, their contributions to development, their needs and their ills. By directing my studies to their socio - economic status, I hope to contribute to the growing literature on the plight of women with the hope that this will help Government administrators and planners in initiating projects that would better their lives.

II. I also hope to contribute to any literature that exists on Nubians which future scholars would draw upon for reference.

OBJECTIVES.

1. In this research, I have analysed the effect of the urbanization process on the social lifestyle of Nubian women as they attempt to adopt to a fast changing environment. In this context, a comparison of what life used to be before the pervading influence of the urbanization process and what their present lifestyle is both in upbringing, education, marriage, divorce and widowhood are done.
2. I have studied the changing roles of Nubian women in an urban setting.
3. I have also had a systematic view of women's life situation under conditions of economic stress. Attention is paid to the structural and cultural constraints which inhibit their effective participation in the economic sphere and their attempts to overcome this constraints.

METHODOLOGY.

Originally I had planned to use group interviews with the assistance of the chief of Kibera. The aim was to obtain quantitative information. However this approach did not materialise because I realised that arranging for group interviews would take time and time was what I mostly lacked.

I therefore decided to use questionnaire which I personally conducted through random sampling where everybody had equal probability of being questioned. I however made sure that I interviewed Nubians from all sections of Kibera which included Lindi, Kambi Muru, Soweto, Katwekera, Toy, Karanja, Makina, and Makongeni.

Stratified sampling was widely used whereby I divided the women into different categories namely single parents, divorced women, married women and widows, with the aim of obtaining specific information about their life experiences and how they cope with the strain caused as a result of the urbanization 'process'.

Key informants were identified with the help of my research assistants (who were Nubians) and from them I obtained qualitative information about the traditional life style of the Nubians.

Because the Nubians are believed to be a closed society and hostile to strangers, I decided to use Nubian research assistants whom they knew and respected. One of my assistants was a married woman with seven children. This I felt was a very advantageous move because

- (i) Since they knew my assistants they provided information quite willingly.
- (ii) They acted as interpreters since there was the problem of communication between me and my respondents.

My interviews were however not devoid of problems. One major problem was the timing of my interview sessions. Many respondents felt that they could not spare the time for interviews since they were engaged in various activities ranging from housework to business. Others were extremely hostile since they pointed out that many people cheated them that if they provided information about their lifestyles, the government would assist them. So far they had not been assisted in any form. Therefore they would not waste any more of their time on interviews.

One of the major obstacles I faced, came from rumours which stated that I was one of the people who were collecting information with the aim of kidnapping small children and harming them. Very many respondents became unco-operative because of this rumour and my research assistants had a hard time in trying to prove the untruthfulness of his accusations. However they seemed very adept and eloquent while handling the situation. The success of my research thus depended very much on their efficient and practical approach towards my interviewees.

In the Malian culture, women are not allowed to go outside the compound in all aspects of their lives. Thus they had to be inside the compound all their lives. Children, married women, and unmarried women were all children into society. The socialization of children into society was assigned a nurse from her father's house, who was a former and helped her in the upbringing of her baby. Babies and children were mixed and grouped on the child's cultural level. If it was a boy the cord was tied seven times and for a girl three times. The woman stayed indoors for forty days. After this period of time, the child was washed and given a name.

The naming ceremony (fatia) was a religious ceremony (mw. limu). Three names were chosen by the father, mother and the mw. limu. A small child was called to choose one of the names. I however had contrary views on whether a boy or girl was usually called forward to choose a name. Table below is the response of the eight key informants when asked whether boys or girls choose the new baby's name.

Table I

CHOICE OF NEW BORN'S NAME BY BOY OR GIRL

	Response	Percentage
Boy	1	12.5
Girl	0	0.0
Both	7	87.5

From the above table, I deduced that it is most likely that it did not matter who chose the name of the new born and therefore both sexes had equal chances of being told to choose a name.

After fatia (naming ceremony) a mother was allowed to move freely within the compound but she could not leave it, she then stayed indoors for another forty days, and during this period, sexual intercourse between her and her husband was prohibited. The prohibition did not deprive the husband because usually he had other wives. The only restraint imposed on him was the belief that if he indulged in sexual intercourse indiscriminately, his child was liable to be infected by various diseases. It was necessary to practice abstinence because becoming pregnant almost immediately after delivery spelt misfortune and ill-health for the newly born. So old women thoroughly beat up the couple if such a case occurred. It was therefore only after the forty days were over and the wife had regained her strength that sexual intercourse was resumed.

After the forty days were over the boy was circumcised while the girl was circumcised at a later date. I was unable to establish how much later and when I inquired why this ceremony occurred at different times, I was told it was a requirement of Islam and therefore the custom.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

WOMEN IN THE NUBIAN SOCIETY

Before embarking on the discussion of urbanization and its effect on the socio-economic status of Nubian women, it is pertinent to give a history of the origins and cultural set up of the Nubians in traditional times before the onset of modernization.

Nubian is a name commonly given to the people whose native villages were located between Aswan, Egypt and the Angola region of Northern Sudan until the building of the High Dam at Aswan in 1962-1965. The building of the high dam necessitated massive resettlement of the inhabitants of these villages. The Egyptian Nubian population was re-allocated in New Nubia a government project located near Komomo, 20 miles north of Aswan. The Sudanese Nubians living near Wadi Haifa moved to Khartoum at Ghurba east of Khartoum. Over the last hundred years, a tradition of labour migration to Egyptian and Sudanese cities had resulted in social changes among Nubians. These changes were part urban part rural, part modern and a reflection of a traditional past. Elements of Christian kingdoms blended with the Muslim traditions which prevailed after the mass conversion to Islam from 10th century.

Historically, their situation along the Nile placed them in a strategic position between Egypt to the North and the African kingdoms in the South. In 6th century AD, missionaries from Byzantium sent by Queen Theodora established a theocratic regime. After some Arab conquest, this government was recognized by the Arab ruler of Egypt Abdullahin Said in the seventh century and a treaty was formed for six hundred years. Under the treaty the Christian Nubia became a tributary of the Muslim Egyptian community. This Nubians became an important source of slaves between Africa and the Egyptian world. However with the total conversion of the Nubians to Islam in the thirteenth century, slavery which they were subjected to ended and they became total Islamists.

It is therefore as Muslim that the Nubians came to settle in Kibera, a slum dwelling located on the outskirts of Nairobi city. It became necessary after the first world war (1915-1918) to obtain a place for the ex-soldiers of King Africa Rifles (K.A.R.) to settle. Colonel Graham therefore gave plots of land in 1912 to two Sudanese soldiers, Captain Mohamed Rafiq Effendi and Native Salim Makar to settle and later more plots of land were given to Sudanese soldiers as a result of settlement of a military reserve. In June 1928, the control of Kibera was transferred from the military to the civil authority. From the evidence provided by Kibera Nubian ex-soldiers settlements micro-film by the Kenya National Archives, it is probable that the Nubian Sudanese ex-soldiers were Kibera's first settlers.

Before the Nubians settlers had been afflicted by the concrete effects of the urbanization process, their whole way of life was fully embedded in Islamic religion. The Islamic law or Shari'ah covered every aspect of human life. The individual's relations with God, with the state, with his neighbours and with his own conscience. Orange (1970)

Division of labour was strictly adhered to in the society: Through play and imitation, girls and boys learnt the various duties expected of them in the society. Girls were taught household duties how to rear children, handicraft and hair plaiting. The last two skills, have in time become extremely handy as a means of earning income today since most Nubian women are illiterate and unskilled and therefore do not have many options in initiating income generating activities. Boys in the other hand, farmed, collected firewood and performed those duties which were done by their father.

While boys went to pray and learn Quranic teachings about all aspects of Islamic way of life, girls were restricted indoors and were rarely allowed contact with outsiders. They were therefore ignorant about outside activities, the surrounding environment and were encouraged to be dependent, intuitive and emotional. Boys on the other hand, were given freedom to play outside and mix freely with their peers. They were expected to be knowledgeable about world affairs and its related problems.

While girls had to seek for permission and had to be accompanied by an elder person, when going anywhere, boys were less restricted and stayed out of doors. However, the boys too had their movement checked since it was feared that if boys were given too much freedom, they would, impregnate the girls which was considered an abomination. Even within the house, there was minimum contact between the sexes and men and women ate and stayed separately.

Periodic checking was done by old women to make sure that the girls retained their virginity. If by chance a girl became pregnant at home, she was chastised by the father, who then sent her to his sisters, who could then investigate who was responsible for the pregnancy. The boy then paid a fine which was equivalent to the amount of money that had been used to bring up the girl (kasibe) for the boy had destroyed her honour and brought shame on her family. He had no option but to marry her after that.

In marriage, a woman's role was minimal and it was the man who participated in the marriage transactions. Marriages were arranged between parents. A girl therefore had no say in who her husband would be. The boy however did have a say, since in most cases he was the one who became interested in a girl and sent his relatives to investigate her background. When I asked my respondents if they would have refused a boy if they did not like him, virtually all of them pointed out that it was not in their power to do so since their fathers know best. This often meant that they had to marry at the tender ages between twelve and sixteen years old.

After identifying the prospective bride for their son, the boys parents sent relatives to investigate the girls background. In this connection they considered the following about the girls: respect for elders, a hospitable nature, whether she was submissive and well mannered and if she was hard working. The boy's father then wrote a letter to the girls father who in turn investigated the boy's background. When I asked my respondents what role women (especially mothers of the couple)

Table II

ROLE PLAYED BY WOMEN IN MATRILINEAL NEGOTIATIONS

	Response	Percentage
Women played a role	1	12.5
Women did not play any role	7	87.5

From the above response, I deduced that women played a very minor role in marriage negotiations if at all.

After the girl's parents had consented, they wrote a letter to the boy's parents suggesting the amount of dowry they required for the father and mother and for making arrangements for the wedding. The bridegroom was responsible for all the expenses required during the wedding day. He bought cooking ingredients, a cloth of eight metres for the girl's father and wedding cloths for the girl. He then gave the girl's guardian (wakali) chosen by the girl's parents the dowry which was handed to them on engagement day (Nikka). The father got double the dowry given to the mother, and the girl demanded anything she wished. This took either the form of money, gold chains and eckees and so on. It is also possible that she bought something durable for her own use at the occasion.

I was however unable to establish the meaning of dowry giving among Nubian muslims. I therefore could not approve or disapprove Orange's theory (1979) which stated that for the muslims, dowry stabilized the married life of the couple in that the husband and wife were aware that divorce would be a social disequilibrium. On the contrary, it seemed to me as if the Quran gave a lot of room for divorce, since a man could divorce a woman merely because he disliked her. However a lot of importance was placed on dowry giving especially the one given to the wife. She then retained it as her property and left with it if she divorced. If it was not done, then the marriage was not considered as a man had the right to report the matter to the elders.

On the engagement day (Nikka) the boy and his relatives prayed in the mosque, then went to the girl's home where prayers were once again said by the wakali and they were blessed before the witness (wakali) who would be the couple's guardian throughout their married life. Seven fibres which were tied on the girl's wrist were cut by the husband. This action was referred to as "cutting the girl's wrist" and that, that was the end of her youth and freedom. It is however interesting to note that a similar vow was not done by the husband since it was assumed that for the man, marriage did not mean sticking to one partner.

The girl was then handed over to her husband by either her father or the elder brother. The husband then unveiled her and shook her relatives hands. The mothers of the couple played a role in the proceedings.

The bridegroom went back to his home and was followed at night by the bride. At his door step, the bride stepped on an egg which meant that she was now the owner of the house. Her legs were then washed by the brother-in-law and the water poured on the four corner of the house. She was then lifted on to her husband's lance.

There were celebrations in the husband's home on the following day. Old women established whether the bride was a virgin by checking on the white sheets which the couple had slept on. If the girl was not a virgin, her groom would have been told before hand, to avoid any embarrassment. This knowledge of her virginity was possible because of the periodic checking done on her by her relatives (old women). If the husband was not told, he either took her back to her parents, or retained her if he was kind.

On the seventh day, the girl's property was brought from her parent's home and counted. This meant that in the event that she left, she would know exactly what she had come with. I was however unable to establish the reason why Muslim marriages are observed with the numbers "seven" and "forty". When I inquired into its meaning, they stated that it was the custom and therefore had to be adhered to. This acceptance of custom without questioning is not a strange phenomenon among traditional societies who have habitually followed myths and rituals through generations.

The girl was then initiated into the role of a housewife by her sister-in-law who gave her household items like a broom, cooking pots and so on and told her to use them in her house henceforth. She then became a free and accepted member of the household.

Her subordination continued in the matrimonial bond. The husband was the household head. He made all the decisions concerning their married life and the woman never contradicted him. She consulted him when she wanted to do anything or visit her relatives or attend funerals. She never argued or fought back in a quarrel. She never communicated with him in the presence of visitors and never ate at the table with him. Division of labour was strictly adhered to. Women attended to household duties and reared children while men provided food in the home. Islamic religion reinforced this belief and prevented women from engaging in any sort of economic activity.

A woman respected her parents-in-law and never answered them back in any quarrel. She reported the matter to her husband and if he took no action, she reported the matter to her marriage guardian (wakali) who discussed it with the elders.

Although Islamic laws do not discriminate against barren women since it is believed that it is God's wish that a woman doesn't have a child, in practice the actual picture is a bit different. When I asked the few barren women I interviewed how they were treated by their husbands and his relatives, the response was as tabulated on the next page:

Table III

SOCIATAL TREATMENT OF BARREN WOMEN

	Response	Percentage
Those accepted	1	25
Those mistreated	2	50
Those divorced	1	25

From the above table, I deduced that its most likely that barren women were not wholly accepted by their husbands and his relatives. I was however unable to draw a more valid conclusion since I was unable to interview more barren women than I did. This was because they seemed quite scarce.

When I asked my interviewers the reasons that led to a women divorcing her husband, they stated that women never divorced their husbands. Only men did. Continued probing however revealed that a woman could divorce the husband on very rare occasions. Some reasons cited were: if a man was irresponsible or had mental problems. This reasons tally with Oran's (1979) and Yasmin's (1980) findings on the reasons for Islamic divorces. However, there was a lot of hesitation on whether a woman had the right to divorce a husband because of adultery. Many women were unaware that it was stated as a condition for divorce in the Quran. A number of them declared that they would take no action if their husbands were adulterous since men were allowed to be polygamous.

Men on the other hand could divorce their wives merely because they disliked them. I use the term "dislike" because love as we understand it presently was not taken as a main consideration within the marital bond. Others were divorced because their husbands heard rumours that they were adulterous. He didn't have to prove the validity of this rumours. Others were divorced because they bore only daughters or were barren, or because they were disrespectful to their relatives. Tabled below are the responses showing those divorced for various reasons.

Table IV

REASONS FOR DIVORCE

	Response	Percentage
Rumours of adultery	4	16.7
Dislike by husband	12	50
Financial irresponsibility	5	20.7
Had only girls	1	4.2
Barren	1	4.2
Non responsive	1	4.2
Total	24	

It seems to me therefore that women were in a distinctly disadvantaged position. When it came to marriage and feared the time they would fall out of favour with their husbands. Ya min (1950) Nekki Keddie and Loise Back (1978) share a similar point of view.

While women divorced in court, for a man this was not a requirement. He simply called a witness to confirm that he had given his wife a talaq. The first talaq was temporary and allowed reconciliation with the husband. The second one meant that a woman could remarry, but she still communicated with the husband and attended his funeral when he died. The third talaq was irrevocable and meant total separation. There was therefore a lot of caution when pronouncing this final talaq.

A woman could leave with her children until they were seven years old. During this period the husband financially maintained them until he reclaimed them. After divorce, a woman stayed indoors for three months to determine whether she was pregnant or not. This was important since it determined the father of the child who then took financial responsibility for it. A pregnant woman however could not divorce until she delivered.

In widowhood, women were still relegated into second class status in society. She did not participate in the burial arrangements of her husband, which was the men's responsibility within the community. She stayed indoors for forty days (karakum) a period when she constantly stayed in company to prevent her from too much grief. She then stayed indoors for four more months to determine whether she was pregnant or not. After this period, she was usually married by brother-in-laws, older than her husband, but never the younger ones. This therefore indicates that a widow of the elite brother was never remarried by her brother-in-laws.

THE EFFECT OF URBANIZATION ON THE LIFESTYLES OF NUBIAN WOMEN.

The proceeding discussion has fleetingly mentioned the effect of the urbanization process on its dwellers. I discussed the same problem at some length in my literature review where authors like John Muthoira (1970) stated that the urbanization process results in the disintegration of integrated family life and encourages nucleus families with its side effects of individualism, secularization and lax morals. Those who dwell in towns are exposed to a sense of rejection and loneliness since the towns are often strange and impersonal. The urbanized man realises that his psychological needs are not met. He thus stops living and struggles for survival against despair, hopelessness and frustrations only to end deeper into the mire.

In my evaluation of the Nubian situation as they attempt to survive in such a hostile environment, I did not wholly agree with Johnstone Muthoira (1979) in his extreme view of total modernization of African urban dwellers, whereby a complete transformation from traditional to modern lifestyles occur. On the contrary, I would refer to the Nubians as an "Intermediate lot" to borrow Andrei Simic's term (1973). They like most African ethnic groups in urban setting combine traditional and modern elements which co-exist frequently in conflict with each other. They are no longer totally traditional, but have yet to complete the transformation into modern Industrial societies.

When the Nubian women were asked whether they still lived in community integrated families, their response was as tabled below.

TABLE 5. EXISTENCE OF NUCLEAR FAMILIES AMONG NUBIANS IN KIBERA SLUMS.

	Response	Percentage
Married couples	37	30.8
Single parents	3	2.5
Divorce women plus children	15	12.5
Widowed women plus children	17	14.1
Non responsive	48	40.1

From the above table, it is evident that there is some disintegration of communal family life which was a common feature of traditional societies. Nucleus families are a common phenomenon with married

and widowed women and their children. The situation is some what abit different when it concerns single parents and divorced women. Most of the single mothers live with their parents because they are not earning any means of livelihood.

The divorced women on the other hand stated that they were living alone, but their children stayed with their relatives because they needed abit of independence to earn money which they sent home for the children's upkeep, or the single mud walled rooms they lived in were too small to contain their children, or some of their children needed male discipline especially boys.

One would argue that children from divorced mothers missed both guidance and parental love and this in itself indicates a breakdown in communal family solidarity. However, one can clearly surmise that those women are not totally alone. When they are in need they have someone to turn to. Communal solidarity has therefore not totally broken down.

There are ofcourse a few cases of extreme secularization whereby some of the Nubian refugees took flight during the Ugandan war leaving behind children, husbands and relatives. However such cases are few since many of them came to stay with relatives in Kenya.

However, the effect of the urbanization process on their traditional lifestyle is so intense and rapid that in the very near future total modernization is bound to occur with its adverse side effects of secularization, individualism and lax morals. Although gender assymetry did exist in traditional Nubian societies in all aspects of their lives, socially, economically and politically, the subordination of women has intensified as the Islamic doctrine based on the Quaran are slowly eroded by the ~~and~~ infiltration of western values, so that even the little protection which had been accorded to women by Quaranic law has been destroyed. This erosion of their lifestyle is clearly evident in the present socialization of their children in marriage divorce and widowhood.

The Nubian population, as mukra's (1982) correctly stated, are experiencing what any typical resident in a slum area would experience. They like other slum dwellers live in one roomed mud houses, which are crowded, neglected, deteriorated and often absolute. They have poor facilities and community services and poor sanitation and health services. There is lack of privacy and in some homes I visited, there were as many as ten children living in one room. There is chronic unemployment for the fathers, low wages, lack of property, lack of savings and absence of food reserves in the home. The men therefore have no steady jobs, no property and no prospects of wealth to pass to their children.

Its therefore in such an environment that todays Nubian children are brought up. One would not be surprised if there is a great deal of change in the socialization of these children from traditional times. Although the rituals after the birth of a baby are still adhered to like in traditional times, today, there is a general confusion concerning the right direction to take while sociolizing the children into societal norms. Most parents

are suspended between the traditional and modern lifestyles. As a result, some of them become extremely traditional. Others are very modern and a few marry various aspects of traditional and modern ways of life.

Thus aspects like division of labour is no longer strictly adhered to by many parents. Tabled below is the reponse of my married interviewees when they were asked whether boys and girls performed similar duties like housework and cookery.

TABLE 6. DUTIES PERFORMED BY BOTH SEXES.

	Response	Percentage
Both boys and girls perform household duties.	14	40
Boys don't perform household duties.	3	22.9
Non responsive	13	37.1

From the above table, I deduced that division of labour is no longer strictly adhered to and many parents see the need for teaching their male children household duties. When they were asked why they deviated from tradition in this respect, they argued that the world was changing. Their sons would in time work away from home and live alone. They would therefore need to be self reliant, or for those who had only sons, they said the boys would assist them in case of sickness or any other calamity. In all cases however, the boys were not taught hair plaiting and handcraft which were considered exclusively as women's duties.

Those who indicated that their sons did not learn housework said that they merely roamed about or played outside since there was nothing else they could do. This is because the traditional structure which had specified duties like farming, hunting and so on for men is no longer in existence. As a result the boys wasted their leisure time in unproductive activities.

It was interesting to note that, now both boys and girls went to learn the Quaran, a thing unheard of in traditional times. They even have women religious teachers(muslims). They however still sit separately from the boys during prayers. To me this is quite significant since it means that :-

- (i) The communication barrier that had existed between men and women is slowly being eroded.
- (ii) Girls in going for prayer meetings can mix freely with their peers and as a result have a better knowledge of the world and its related problems which had formerly been denied them.

Confusion among parents on how to bring up their children was further illuminated, when I asked them whether they restricted their daughters or allowed them to engage in outside activities like the boys, go for films and attend dances. Tabled below is their response to the above question.

TABLE 7. PROVISION OF FREEDOM FOR GROWING GIRLS BY PARENTS.

	Response	Percentage
Those who gave their daughters total freedom.	8	33.4
Those who slightly restricted daughters	5	20.8
Those who imposed Total restriction	11	45.8

From the above table, I deduced that even the strict surveillance that had been kept on the girls has been reduced. Many parents, still believe that their daughters should be restricted in doors, others think that they should give them freedom, but not too much. While, others have swung to the other extreme and now give them total freedom. It didn't matter whether their mothers were married, divorced or widowed. The response was mixed in all categories. However even those parents who restricted their daughters wondered whether it was any use since they complained that despite that, pregnancy was still rampant and their daughters who lack respect and obedience nowadays continued to sneak out for films and dances without their knowledge.

Because of this provision of freedom to girls, pregnancy is an everyday occurrence. In almost every home that I ventured into, there was an unwanted child. Mothers who now had the extra responsibility of taking care of their grandchildren since their daughters left them in ~~and~~ their care when they got married or went to work, lamented at the breakdown of traditional lifestyles.

Tabled below are women between 36-60 years of age whose daughters had delivered at home.

TABLE 8. PARENTS WHOSE DAUGHTERS HAVE DELIVERED AT HOME.

	Response	Percentage
Daughters of married women.	21	52.2
Daughters of widowed women	6	31.6
Unresponsive	3	16.2

The table therefore indicates that at least half of all married women and nearly half of widowed women above the age of thirty six years had unwanted grandchildren.

When asked whether the boys who impregnated the girls took responsibility and married the girls, they said that this no longer happened since the girls themselves refused to reveal those who were responsible. Besides even if the girls named the fathers of the children, the boys denied responsibility and the elders took no action when the matter was reported to them. It therefore goes without saying that virginity is no longer of importance in the Nubian community. No parent therefore expects it of her daughter. The rituals which were connected with establishing its validity have therefore been abolished.

Even the method of disciplining children has changed. While formerly mothers only disciplined their daughters, the fathers disciplined the sons, Now both parents discipline the two sexes. For those, who are single parents, this responsibility wholly lies on their shoulders. Many women admitted that they had quite a problem in the disciplining of their male children. They blamed this extra responsibility on the disintegration of traditional family lifestyles.

One of the most appalling things I noted on the upbringing of Nubian children was the fact that nearly half of them did not attend school. This affected both sexes, but more so the girls. In all cases, the parents couldn't afford the school fees which they referred to as "Har-miso money". This too glaringly illuminated the irony of the term "free education" which has constantly been stressed by our politicians since it was effected in 1970. Many parents lamented that they could not afford the standard one entrance fee which often amounted to over one thousand shillings. Others could not afford the school uniforms or the text books required in school. So their children were expelled and stayed at home. The situation seemed even more pathetic when I discovered that none of the women's husbands were having steady jobs. For nearly all of them, the husbands were either unemployed, or were engaged in temporary jobs with no steady incomes.. They could therefore hardly make ends meet.

Tabled in the next page is the reponse of my interviewees both married, widowed and divorced when asked whether their children attended school or not.

TABLE 9 THOSE PARENTS WHOSE CHILDREN ATTENDED SCHOOL.

	Response	Percentage
All children in school	29	49.2
Some children in school	6	10.2
No children in school	24	40.6

From the above table, I therefore deduced that nearly half of the children from Nubian homes in Kibera slums did not attend school.

Girls were worse off when it came to education, because many parents decided to give priority to the education of boys when they lacked enough money to send both to school. Besides most of the girls left school because of arranged marriages, which as I mentioned in the previous section, occurred between the ages of twelve and sixteen years. As a result, only four out of one hundred and twenty respondents had reached form four. This clearly means that most of them were illiterate or semi-illiterate, had no steady employment and lacked any skills which could enable them to earn sufficient income to maintain themselves.

The long arm of modernization has also infiltrated into the marriage sphere. Marriage relations between husbands and wives are subtly changing and many women are becoming more assertive in relation to their husbands and his relatives.

While all the women interviewed still considered their husbands the household heads, a few of them indicated that they could make some decisions without consulting their husbands. Many declared that they freely mixed with and went with their husbands. Yet others said that they could answer their husbands back in a quarrel. Those who didn't have the courage to do so, indicated that they were tempted to argue back especially when they felt that they were being wrongly accused. A few women stated that if their husband's relatives quarrel with them they would answer back, a thing unheard of in traditional times.

The most drastic and devastating change that has occurred to most married women, is the fact that most married women have to economically sustain themselves, since their husbands are either jobless or irresponsible.

This seems to be an extremely strenuous task because traditionally, women had been encouraged to be economically dependent on their husbands, a belief reinforced by Quranic teachings (Kong'o (1979).

Besides, they have never been equipped with any skills apart from making handicrafts and hair plaiting which make it impossible for them to engage in any meaningful and productive economic activities.

Tabled below is the response of my interviewees when asked whether their husbands were earning steady income.

TABLE 10 Husbands Earning Steady Incomes.

	Response	Percentage
Husbands with steady jobs	5	12.5
Those who are jobless	9	22.5
Those with temporary jobs	10	25.0
Those who are financially irresponsible	7	17.5
Unresponsive	9	22.5

The above table indicates that the majority of Nubian husbands are either temporarily employed, jobless or irresponsible. It is therefore imperative that married women supplement their husband's meagre incomes. This has resulted in changing roles for Nubian women which I shall discuss in detail in the next chapter.

Divorced women bear the worst brunt of modernization. All the rights formerly accorded them have perished. They remain defenseless and impoverished in an environment so hostile that they barely manage to survive. As I had stated in the previous section, they are divorced for various reasons both concrete and imaginary. Thus a husband divorces his wife because he dislikes her, or because he has heard rumours that she is adulterous or that she disrespects his relatives and so on. In traditional times if a husband divorced a woman because he disliked her, she reported the matter to the elders who settled the problem. However today, many women divorced on such grounds, told me that the elders do not act when such matters are reported to them. They have lost faith in the elders whom they feel no longer care about their problems. They therefore have no forum of airing their grievances, for the kadhi is corruptible and decides the case in favour of those who bribe him.

Two women interviewed were divorced when pregnant, an abomination in the olden days. The husbands didn't maintain them during this

period claiming the children weren't theirs. The majority of the women pointed out that despite the fact that Islamic teachings required their former husbands to maintain them during Idda period (the four months they stayed indoors to determine whether they were pregnant or not) and their children, none of their husbands did it, so they were left all alone to fend for themselves with little or no skills which could be effectively employed in productive economic activities.

Tabled below are the responses of those asked whether their former husbands maintained their children or not.

	Response	Percentage
Those who maintained their children	2	8.3
Those who didn't	22	91.7

The above table depicts the deplorable situation divorced women face. They must economically maintain their children, they are household heads and they must play the double role of being both mother and father to their children. The result as Oscar Lewis (1966) states, would mean a high incidence of weak ego structure, brutality and confusion of sexual identity all reflecting maternal deprivation.

The situation of widows is just as deplorable as that of divorced women. None of the respondents interviewed said that she was remarried and maintained by a brother in law, a requirement of the traditional Nubian society. When asked as to why this was so, they stated that after their husbands' death, their husband's relatives change in their attitude towards them and abandoned them to fend for themselves and their children. In a few cases the children were withdrawn from the women who were driven back to their homes.

The most deplorable situation, concerned inheritance of the dead man's property. Many of the women as I stated earlier were ignorant of the Islamic law of inheritance which stated that a dead man's property is divided between the widow, the husband's brothers and the children. They all believed that they inherit nothing from the husbands and were therefore merely trustees of their husbands' property until the children grew up and could fend for themselves.

It's therefore because of this ignorance on their part and a fatalistic attitude derived from superstitious beliefs that everything is left to Allah, that they have ended up falling prey to hungry gold-diggers who have often snatched their property leaving them poverty stricken. This property snatchers emerge in

CHANGING ROLES OF NUBIAN WOMEN IN KIBERA SLUMS.

In the preceding chapter, I briefly touched on some of the factors that have resulted in the changing roles of Nubians in their attempts at survival. As mentioned in the Literature review and in chapter one, Nubian women had consistently played a subordinate role in the traditional society and they had been economically dependent on their men in marriage, divorce and widowhood. Akong'a (1979), Nikkie Keddie and Loise Beck (1978).

As married women, their husbands were household heads and bread winners. As divorced women, their children were maintained by their fathers while the women often returned to their parents home who took care of them. As widows, their husbands relatives maintained and protected them. Thus despite their subordinate role, they were often cushioned from the grim realities of life and their lives were therefore relatively bearable.

This unfortunately has not been the case with the onset of the urbanization process which has resulted in the disintegration of communal life and encouraged individualism and secularization. Today the Nubian population have to struggle to survive for daily subsistence in squatter settlements and slum areas with the conditions of such squalor that water and sewage systems are inadequate and sanitation facilities are deplorable. They have lower income per capita, poorer education, their men have chronic unemployment and low wages. They lack property or savings and no prospects of wealth to pass to their children. The women therefore have no alternative but to step in to the men's world and engage in income generating activities in order to maintain themselves and their children.

Many of the married women I interviewed, informed me that they were forced to engage in income generating activities which proved extremely difficult because they had no other skills apart from hair plaiting and handcraft which did not provide enough income since the market was overflooded with similar goods, for nearly all Nubian women are engaged in the same activity.

For the majority, the combination of rearing children and working for money was terribly taxing since they couldn't employ maids to take care of their children because they lacked the money. Many of them therefore had to go with their children to collect fibres for making handcraft, which was a long distance walk to Dandora (for they rarely have money for transport) where they had to pluck fibres from stagnant water in the forest and risk the possibility of being beaten by snakes and other poisonous insects, or they left their children with neighbours or for those who plaited hair, they carried their small babies on their backs and this resulted in lack of customers since they had to stop their work several times to attend to their children's numerous needs. Others stayed at home and risked starvation since nobody could take care of their children while they were at work.

Tabled below is the response of those women both married, widowed and divorced when asked where they left their children when engaging in income generating activities.

TABLE 13 WHERE CHILDREN ARE LEFT WHEN MOTHERS ARE TO WORK

	Response	Percentage
Those who have employed maids	5	1.0
Those who go with their children to work	16	13.3
Those who leave children with neighbours and relatives	31	25.8
Those who leave work and rear children because there is nobody to leave them with	11	9.1
Those who are unemployed	57	47.5

From the above table, I deduced that most of those women who engaged in income generating activities had double roles of rearing children and earning income and they had great difficulty in coping with the two roles. As a result, they could not effectively perform both duties, that is, they were neither very efficient as mothers or breadwinners.

Women's roles have also changed in another direction. Many of them have now become household heads. For married women, many have to take over the administrative role of being household heads, either because their husbands are working away from home, or because they are simply irresponsible and somebody has to make decisions and discipline the children. However despite the fact that they perform this role, theoretically their husbands remain household heads despite the fact that their husbands do not adequately maintain them. The husbands therefore still make the major decisions on their return. This in itself is a constraint since it is the women who are mainly on the scene when certain decisions have to be taken. (The husbands still make major decisions even when working away from home, the women can only make minor decisions). Married women however participated a bit more in socializing the children into societal norms and they even disciplined the male children, when the need arose, a thing unheard of in the past. Many women in fact indicated that they were fully capable administrators when it concerned the welfare of their children, both boys and girls.

The situation seemed quite different when it concerned both divorced and widowed women. They became the sole household heads of their houses and made all the major decisions concerning their families. Many of them admitted that they found this multiplication of roles extremely difficult to cope with and some indicated that they preferred married life where the decision and duties were shared between husband and wife.

The overriding problem that clouded the lives of my respondents and made them less efficient in the performance of their roles as breadwinners and househeads, was lack of enough capital for adequate maintenance of their families. Many women claimed that if they could be economically better off than they presently were, they would more efficiently monitor the problems that beset their homes.

In conclusion therefore, as a result of the urbanization process, there are changing roles for Nubian women, who by they engage in economic activities to maintain themselves and their families and at the same time they are household heads, a thing rarely heard of in traditional times. In the next chapter therefore, I shall discuss the cultural and structural constraints that beset them as they engage in various economic activities in an attempt to survive on the marginal fringes of Nairobi City.

STRUCTURAL AND CULTURAL CONSTRAINTS FACING NUBIAN WOMEN IN THEIR ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES.

In the preceding section, I have consistently dwelt on the impoverished state the Nubian population subsist in. I have also mentioned that as a result of this state of affairs, women have abandoned their traditional role of dependance on their menfolk and stepped into the "men's world" with the aim of engaging in income generating activities in order to survive. Apparently, societal attitude towards working women is not negative, provided as one woman informed me, they don't engage in prostitution, which is forbidden by Islamic religion. I did come across a few women though, who engaged in this activity to earn some income.

In their attempt to supplement their husband's meagre incomes in the case of married women or to maintain themselves and their families. For divorced, widowed and single parents, they face several structural and cultural constraints which make it extremely difficult for them to effectively participate in income generating activities. One constraint emerges from their marginal position within the socio-economic structure where the living and working conditions are deplorable and chances of raising one's living standards are almost nil. Thus these women are forced to struggle for daily subsistence with little hope of ever emerging from their quagmire existence.

The livelihood of most urban dwellers whether temporary or permanent comes from regular wage employment from the formal sector or in informal enterprises. Wage employment absorbs a majority of the urban labour force (80% males and 50% of the women), D.O. Ahawo (1986:). This is because they have the advantage of higher average wages, greater security, better working conditions in most cases and so on. Nubian women are usually uneducated and lack the skills required in formal employment. They therefore have to forgo formal employment and engage in the informal sector with the risks and uncertainty that are part and parcel of informal enterprises. This therefore is a structural constraint since these women are left with little option but to engage in small income generating activities like being housemaids, hair saloonists, small business women dealing in mandazis, vegetables, tomatoes, embroidery, handicrafts and so on.

Their lack of adequate education has arisen because of cultural constraints and biological factors. Culturally the Nubian population believed that education was not a necessity for a girl since she would eventually marry anyway. Therefore the education provided her by her mother on the art of rearing children being respectful, hardworking and hospitable was enough to make her an ideal wife. Hair plaiting and handicraft was engaged in by the girls only for decorative purposes which is not the case presently. Her economic needs were catered for first by her parents when she was under their roof and later by her husband. This trend has persisted to the present generation and many women have had to leave school because their parents have arranged marriages for them. Others left school because they were pregnant while others could not afford the school fees.

Tabled below is the response of my respondents from 18-39 years when asked at which level they left school and why.

TABLE 14 LEVELS REACHED IN SCHOOL BY NUBIAN WOMEN FROM 18-39 YRS.

	Response	Percentage
Those who left school at primary level.	47	61.7
Those who reached secondary level	13	17.1
Those who never went to school	16	21.2

The above table clearly indicates that the majority of my respondents left school at primary level. This in essence means that they have not acquired any skills or certificates which is the gate way to formal employment in Kenya. For those who reached secondary school, either they did not finish up to form four or they failed their exams. I was only able to locate one respondent who worked in the formal sector from my seventy six respondents. To me this is a pathetic situation, since women who are available tool for development are not effectively utilised.

TABLE 15 THE REASONS FOR LEAVING SCHOOL.

	Response	Percentage
Those who left because of arranged marriages	14	28
Those who became pregnant	8	16
Those who left because of lack of school fees	23	45
Refugees	5	10

From the above table, I therefore deduced that quite a number of Nubian women left school because of arranged marriages.

This is a cultural barrier and it completely renders the affected women economically unproductive and they are therefore a hindrance to development. Nubian women have a greater problem in coping with the hardships of survival because at the ideological level, their Islamic doctrines preach and encourage economic dependence on their husbands, worse still, they are expected to be intuitive, emotional and ignorant, a condition which is in total contrast to the men who are expected to be knowledgeable about world affairs, calculating and able to deal with knotty situations. It therefore becomes extremely difficult for the male populace to accept those qualities in a woman which are regarded as manly and which in essence are a necessity for a successful person in the competitive world of income generating activities.

The Nubians have another unique problem. quite a number of them are refugees. They therefore do not seem to be entitled to basic rights and facilities like education which is supposedly 'freely' provided by the Kenya Government. No concessions therefore seemed to have been made, in the educational sector for those who took flight to Kenya during the Ugandan war. On coming to Kenya, they are not absorbed in the educational system and are therefore forced to do without education. This therefore is another structural constraint that has worked against Nubian women as they struggle to participate in economic activities with the aim of enhancing development.

Other constraints they face are related to the economic activities they engage in and how they marry it with their age old household responsibilities and the rearing of their children. As I had mentioned earlier, for the majority of the women, playing the double role of rearing children and performing their economic activities proved extremely strenuous. Many of the women who were engaged in handcraft work, had to walk to Pandora forest, along a distance from their residential areas, pluck the fibres from the stagnant water risking the bite of poisonous insects and carry the heavy load back home, (they often had no bus fare) often with their babies tied on their backs or they would leave the babies with relatives or neighbours. This resulted in a lack of sufficient care for the babies and intense anxiety on the part of the mothers on whether their babies were properly being taken care of in their absence. For hair saloonists, they often went with their babies to work where they had to stop work several times to attend to their babies needs. This rendered them less efficient in their economic endeavours and resulted in a loss of customers. For small business women like vegetable, tomatoes and mandazi sellers, they too either went with their babies to the market or left them with their neighbours.

Those women who dealt in handcraft faced another structural constraint:- they could not obtain market for their goods. This is because nearly all Nubian women are equipped with the art of handcraft making. As a result their goods overflowed the market and few items are sold. Secondly, their goods are directed towards a certain section of the Kenyan population, the Nubians themselves and European customers.

or the Nubians, each woman can make an item for herself in her home. So she doesn't need to buy a lot of items from outsiders, thereby greatly reducing the number of potential customers. Besides, the sellers need the right contacts to reach their European customers. This has however proved extremely difficult, and the Nubian Maende leo ya Wanawake women's group I interviewed informed me that the government was aware of their problem, but so far nothing had been done. Thus they generate very little income from this enterprise and some of the women had abstained from making handcraft as a result.

For the hair saloonist, they too lacked customers because hair saloonists have mushroomed all over town. As a result there is intense competition and those who are not perfectionists have to fall out of the race. Besides many of them worked on the basis of commissions. This means that, a hair saloonist shared her proceeds with the owner of the saloon under whose roof she performed her economic activities. Thus if she plaited no customers on that day, she went back home empty handed. This meant sleeping on an empty stomach both for herself and her family.

For the vegetable hawkers, they could not overrule the fact that due to lack of customers, their goods which are perishable would rot. They could not afford refrigerators so lost a lot of profits as a result.

All respondents interviewed indicated that they did not have enough capital to start any meaningful business activity. As a result, all their plans aimed at improving their lives were dashed before they could implement them. Many of them were therefore full of despair and wondered what the Government was doing to assist them in their plight.

In conclusion therefore in their effort to effectively participate in development, Nubian women face several cultural and structural constraints which heavily curtail their economic activities. Because of cultural barriers, many of them are removed from school to marry prematurely through arranged marriages, so they are rarely equipped with the necessary skills for engaging in any meaningful economic activity. Another constraint emerges from their original position within the socio-economic structure where living and working conditions are deplorable and chances of raising one's standard of living are almost nil. Besides they face a number of constraints as they engage in their daily activities in the informal sector, which effectively hinders them from fully participating in the development of the country.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

embarked on my investigation on status of Nubian Women on the basis of three hypothesis:- one was that, as a result of the urbanization process which is characterized with the move from traditionally integrated societies to nuclear families. With its side effects of secularization, individualism and lax morals, the lifestyles of Nubian women has also changed from the traditional Islamic life in an attempt to adjust to a fast changing society, both in the children's socialization, in societal norms, married life, as divorcees and as widows.

In this connection I dwelt at length on the background history and culture of traditional lifestyle of Nubians and the position women were relegated to before the onset of the urbanization process. In this connection, the following observations were made:- That although women were relegated to second class status in society, they were guaranteed certain rights and thus in most cases were cushioned from the grim realities of life. In marriage, they were economically adequately provided for. They did not play the double role of socializing the children into societal norms being household heads and providing the basic necessities for them. Their husbands and the community greatly assisted them in this aspects. As divorced women their husbands financially maintained their children and did not deprive them of this children when too young thus sparing them the mental anguish associated with not knowing how their children were being taken care of in their absence. Widowed women on the other hand were maintained and protected by the relatives of their dead husbands.

By comparing the traditional lifestyle, of the Nubians with their present way of life, I draw the conclusion that modernization has played havoc with the traditional lifestyle of these women. Their subordination has intensified as they struggle to marry tradition and modernity usually plunging further into the mire of confusion and impoverishment. Like any other institution, new ideas have permeated the Islamic sphere. Because of the deficiencies of the traditional Islamic system, today western standards and values have influenced Islamic law so much that Orthodox Muslims are alarmed. To me therefore, Islamic Quaranic law has become extremely inefficient in dealing with modern problems of its populace. Corruption and laxity has pervaded the institution, and the Kadhi seem helpless in dealing with domestic matters, divorce, matters of inheritance and the like. Thus married women who were economically provided for by their husbands and protected in this respect by the law, are vulnerably exposed to impoverishment, because their men are unable to maintain them. This is because of their marginal position in the socio-economic structure where the living and working conditions are deplorable and chances of raising one's living standards are almost nil. Divorced and widowed women come off worst, since not only their husbands and his relatives who abandon them and their children, but due to the adverse effect of the urbanization process which creates disintegration of family relations and enhances secularization and individualism, they are left alone and defenceless with nobody to turn to for assistance.

The second and third hypothesis dwelt on the changing roles of these women as they struggle to survive for daily subsistence in squatter settlements and slum areas, in the marginal fringes of Nairobi city.

In this connection, the cultural and structural constraint they faced in their economic activities were discussed. I therefore draw the following conclusion:- Because their men face chronic unemployment, low wages, lack of property and therefore have no prospects of wealth to pass to their children, they often live for now and not for the future. The women are therefore abandoned to fend for themselves and their children. They become household heads, a position rarely occupied by them in the traditional times. The family tends to become mother-centred and as a result there is a high incidence of weak ego structure, orality and confusion of sexual identity all reflecting material deprivation.

In their attempts to marry their economic activities and their age-old activities of bearing and rearing of children, they face an intensification of roles which often prove extremely strenuous and more often than not they do not effectively perform both duties. They are thus neither very efficient as mothers nor as bread winners. Besides, because of their lack of education, they therefore have no skills which they can utilize while engaging in income generating activities with the aim of improving their lives and thus retarding the development process of the country.

From the above conclusions, I therefore have a few recommendations to make;

(i) Although Islamic Quaranic law concerning legal matters seemed adequate in traditional times, today, it seems unable to adjust to and cope with changes which has occurred as a result of the urbanization process. Therefore the government with its arm of the Judiciary, should take over matters pertaining to divorce, inheritance matters and the like, since, this are the institutions which seem worst hit by the brunt of modernization.

(ii) Although Islamic law approves of arranged marriages and indeed encourages it, for effective development, it is a great hinderance since many of the affected women have to abandon education to get married. As a result they are forced to struggle for survival without adequate skills required for successful competition in income generating ventures thus retarding the development process. It is therefore imperative that the government stop this practice, either through the judiciary or through mass education with the aim of enlightening the muslim populace on the benefits of education.

The economic impoverishment of the Nubians however reflect the general trend that has consistently afflicted underdeveloped third world countries. Slum areas are a result of the urbanization process. It allows its inhabitants only subsistence existence on the fringes of its environs without hope of ever improving their lives. Therefore, unless total economic reforms are initiated and implemented, we shall soon become a decadent society without any hope for survival.

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