

MAKERERE



UNIVERSITY

**THE CHURCH'S CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS THE CARE OF THE VULNERABLE
IN THE LIGHT OF EVANGELII GAUDIUM IN MUTOLERE PARISH**

BY

NDAGIJ'IMANA FIDEL (BA PHIL.) (URBANIANA)

Registration No: 2014/HD03/2420U

Student No: 214022539

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE
GRADUATE SCHOOL AS A PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE AWARD OF A MASTER'S DEGREE IN RELIGIOUS
AND THEOLOGICAL STUDIES OF
MAKERERE UNIVERSITY**

MAY, 2016

ABSTRACT

One of the fundamental principles of social teaching of the Church is the preferential option for the poor according to the compendium of the social doctrine of the Church (2005, p. 98). In *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013, n. 199,) Pope Francis says that, “Without the preferential option for the poor, the proclamation of the Gospel, which is itself the prime form of charity, risks being misunderstood or submerged by the ocean of words which daily engulfs us in today’s society of mass communications”. According to Innocent Anguyo in *New Vision* of (Monday, April 07, 2014), revealed that about 67% of Ugandans are either poor or highly vulnerable to poverty. This is a fact in Mutolere parish, located in South-Western Uganda, Kisoro District. From experience, observation, and upon interacting with some of the people in their families, it has been observed that, in some families, there is a number of the vulnerable who live below the poverty line. There are many poor people (mostly Batwa), orphans and vulnerable children, widows, sick people, old age and refugees, in this parish.

Since the coming of missionaries to Uganda in February 1879 up to date mother Church has done much in the areas of religion, education, health, economic development, culture, and politics in trying to fight vulnerability (Cf. *The Church in Buddu Province of Buganda 1879-1925* by John Mary Waliggo 2010, p. 16). Despite all these efforts made by the Church, there still exists vulnerability in many parts of Uganda including Mutolere Parish. With this background, a study on, “*The Church’s Contribution towards the Care of The Vulnerable in the Light of Evangelii Gaudium in Mutolere Parish*” was conceived with a general objective to evaluate the Church's contribution towards the care of the vulnerable people in Mutolere parish. The three specific objectives namely: To discover the causes of vulnerability among the people of Mutolere parish, to investigate the Church’s contribution towards solving vulnerability among the people of Mutolere parish, and lastly, to explore the failures of the Church and how best she can lead to human promotion in the light of the Joy of the Gospel were conceived to guide the researcher. Guided by these objectives, literature related to the study was reviewed and analyzed.

The methodology used in this research was both random and non-random sampling. Different tools of data collection were used and they included oral interviews, questionnaires, participatory observation, non participatory observation, and focus group discussion. After getting a letter of

introduction from the Dean of studies National Seminary Ggaba and using the tools indicated, the researcher carried out the field study in Mutolere catholic Parish of Kabale Diocese. Data from the field was analyzed and presented. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically while quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics which involved the use of tables, frequencies, percentages, charts and graphs. The study findings were discussed by the researcher, comparing them to the reviewed literature. The researcher then came to conclusions that, the Church seems not to have done what is expected of her towards the care of the vulnerable people in Mutolere parish. Alleviating vulnerability is part of her main mission to the people of God as seen clearly in the Gospel of Luke 4:16-18.

The findings revealed a number of factors leading to persisted vulnerability among which is: limited resources, high birth rate, unemployment, lack of ground information, few priests and religious, few schools and only one hospital, excessive demand for money from the Christians by some Church leaders, ignorance, among others. The best ways in which the Church can lead to human promotion in the light of the Gospel of joy include: Organising Seminars and workshops on life promotion, carrying out home to home visitations to give each family advice depending on its situation, visiting people in hospitals and refugee camp with collected charity (pastoral care), improving the liturgy to attract many people, teaching mystagogical catechesis zealously, Empowering lay apostolate and movements with economic projects to mention but a few.

The above study findings and conclusions led the researcher to recommend that: The Church should start with working on families to change their mindset and encourage them to be hard working, the parents should train their children how to work using their own hands in holidays to make their homes better and free from vulnerability, all the Church leaders like Pope Francis in our present situation should never cease to emphasize being merciful to the vulnerable, The Church should start projects such as vocational training schools for people from very diverse backgrounds, medical dispensaries and hospitals serving the needy, Church leaders to use all possible sources of information like the media, observation, interviews, in order to get know what is on the ground about the vulnerable people, the Church in cooperation with the government and NGOs should emphasize gender balance, the Church should come up to preach openly and strongly against clericalism, secularism, indifference and corruption, the Church to have an integrated developmental plan for the salvation of the souls. The researcher finally came

to a general conclusion in line with the speech of Pope Francis at Nalukolongo on 28th November 2015, who said that, "... Jesus is present here, because he said that he would always be present among the poor, the sick, convicts, the destitute, those who suffer. Today, from this home, I appeal to all parishes and communities in Uganda - and the rest of Africa - not to forget the poor! The Gospel commands us to go out to the peripheries of society, and to find Christ in the suffering and those in need. Our parishes must not close their doors, or their ears, to the cry of the poor. This is the royal road of Christian discipleship. In this way we bear witness to the Lord who came not to be served, but to serve." These words of the Holy Father in conclusion therefore, should be taken serious by the Church and all others concerned to devise means to reach everywhere attending to this Papal call to help the Vulnerable.