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M O I U N I V E R S I T Y

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN KEIYO TRADITIONAL  
RELIGIOUS RITES //

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the roles played by women in Keiyo traditional religious rites. It also aims at finding out if there is a significant relationship between the roles played by women in Keiyo religion and the feminine attributes ascribed to God by the Keiyo.

The research for this study was carried out to investigate the following:

1) the religious roles played by Keiyo women, 2) the rituals where these roles are played, 3) the significance of these rituals to the community, 4) the importance of the women in the performance of religious rites among the Keiyo, and 5) the relationship between women's religious roles and the feminine attributes of God among the Keiyo.

The findings of this study are that Keiyo women played prominent roles in Keiyo religion. They performed priestly roles of blessing, praying, anointing, purifying, and cleansing the individual and the community. They carried out exclusively important rituals for the survival and continuation of the individual and the community. The research has further indicated that women's presence in all ritual-performance is indispensable since the society regards them as embodiments of peace, goodwill and fertility.

The findings also show that there is an association between the feminine attributes of God and the roles of women in Keiyo rites. The roles of women in the ceremonies seem to be derived from the roles and qualities of God

which are represented by feminine attributes. The association has resulted in an exalted position for women in Keiyo religion.

In conclusion, I have recommended that there is need to draw useful teachings from Keiyo traditional religion on the role of women in order to advance gender harmony today. Also, the role of women in traditional religion could be used to guide Christianity and other faiths in the process of contextualization and indigenization of their faiths in Africa.

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