

What is the life of Kenyan women like? In Kenya, like many African countries, a deep paradox has been created. Kenyan women enjoy the benefits of modern life, yet their lives are largely determined by customary law. Although the majority of Kenyan women do not live in traditional society, they are still perceived within their traditional roles. Modern society has different requirements than the traditional ones, however only the segment of –self-confident and informed citizens are aware of their rights and are able to assert their rights.

While women compose the majority of the Kenyan population (52%) and play an active role in the development of the whole society, Kenya still continues to remain a deep patriarchal society with a very low regard of the status of women. Women in Kenya are unequal and under-privileged in most areas of their lives. This situation is propounded by the current legal and political system, as well as by prevailing socio-cultural factors.

The dissertation examines the different roles of the Kenyan woman – as a daughter, a wife and a mother. The main philosophical ideology which the African society is based upon is the continuation of life and keeping the patrilineal lineage where dead ancestors play the same role as children born to the family. It is presumed that women who play an essential role in this life cycle enjoy substantial rights and privileges. But contrary to that, women remain in subordinate positions without rights to decide about the essential issues of their lives. Moreover, harmful practices such as female genital mutilation, widow's inheritance and their ritual cleansing, unprotected intercourse, marital rape and home violence endangers women's lives, which is contradictory to the main philosophical thinking outlined earlier in this paragraph.