

ABSTRACT

The North Eastern Diocese has been growing over the years. This year in the month of July 2015, the diocese will be celebrating her Jubilee of a hundred and twenty-five years since the mission work started. It is for this reason that the Diocese was created to meet the needs of the members in a holistic way, for the church is God's instrument of transformation in society. However, for some decades now the church has been trying to meet the needs of the people in different ways. For example, some churches have been trying to address the needs of the people through material things like food, clothes and other in kind as an expression of love among Christians. The assumption was that, in doing this kind of charity the poor people will be sufficient.

Even though the church was preaching, doing bible studies and evangelism, it was the focus of the church to put more effort on spiritual poverty. There was no connection between material poverty and spiritual poverty. The study was conducted to find out how the established diaconia work in the congregations of North Eastern Diocese had impacted positively or otherwise on the lives of poor people. But also how can the diaconia ministry be transformed from charity to empowerment of the poor. The study used research tools including interview question administration, focus group discussions, personal observation and the review of related literature.

The findings of the research showed a number of important issues. The research showed for example that the congregations of North Eastern Diocese were vigorously involved in diaconia activities such as home visits, educational support to the orphans, food and clothes was also offered to the widows, old people and orphans. This practice created dependency among poor people who are supported by diaconia.

The search showed that the diaconia committees in the congregations lacked knowledge and skills to manage the work for the poor. Although the poor people had suggestions on how the church can intervene to their various situations.

The study concluded with recommendations of strategies that can be used to empower the poor, diaconia committees, congregations and the church as a whole. This will also include the stakeholders who are pro-poor . For proper self-reliance, the diocese must take economic empowerment of the people very seriously. This means the structure of congregational based diaconia should be revisited, to find out the existing gaps. The diocese can encourage the congregations to embark on empowering diaconia. Sermons, bible studies and the teachings should focus on self-reliance .

Networking is also necessary in any process of empowering the poor and their enhancement. It helps in sharing information, resources, knowledge and the best practices in addressing the needs of poor people.