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RESEARCH ARTICLE

**WOMEN IN DONOR SUPPORTED AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS ESTABLISHED IN ZAMBIA IN
 RESPONSE TO THE MEXICO DECLARATION.**

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Abstract

Prior to the advent of colonialism, agricultural production systems in Zambia were communally oriented. Males and females complemented each other in agriculture. At colonialism, males began to reign supreme in farming while females were relegated to an inferior status. This was due to the fact that colonialists did not perceive women as farmers but as housewives. Hence, they were marginalising female farmers, a situation that was perpetuated even at independence in 1964. In 1975, a conference organized by the United Nations Organisation to discuss the status of women world-wide was held in Mexico. Arising out of the conference, the period 1976-1985 was declared as the International Women's Decade. World-wide, governments began to establish bodies responsible for the promotion of women's interests. These included donor supported agricultural projects. The purpose of this article was to analyse the extent to which donor supported agricultural projects that were established in Zambia in response to the Mexico declaration addressed the challenges faced by female farmers in the country. Resting heavily upon primary sources of information, the article argued that some women derived benefits from these projects. It was further argued that in the projects that incorporated male and female members, it was males that reaped more benefits than females. It was suggested that efforts made to support women in farming during the decade impacted on agricultural policy planning in the decade's aftermath. Ultimately, in the National Agricultural Policy (2004-2015) and the Fifth National Development Plan (2006-2010), there were clauses for the inclusion of women in the country's agricultural agenda.

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Introduction:-

A lot has been written about Zambia's agricultural history. However, there is no comprehensive piece of work that documents the extent to which donor supported agricultural projects supported women in farming in the country. The lack of detailed studies on women in donor supported agricultural projects in Zambia has created a gap in the country's agricultural history. This article attempts to fill this gap.

In 1975, the world celebrated the UNO International Women's Year. It was envisaged that the year was to be devoted to intensified action to promote equality between men and women, to ensure the full integration of women

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in the total development effort. (Phiri and Milimo, 1990). As part of the celebrations, the first world conference on the status of women world-wide was held in Mexico City from June 19 to July 2, 1975 during which a number of issues to do with women across the globe were discussed. At the conference, proposals were made to declare 1976-1985 as the UNO International Women's Decade. Indeed, five months after the conference, the General Assembly of the United Nations declared 1976-1985 as the UNO Decade for Women. During the decade and its aftermath, donor funded agricultural projects were initiated in different parts of the country with the aim of addressing the challenges faced by female farmers in the country. While some of the projects born as a result of the Mexico declaration were aimed at primarily addressing the needs of women in farming, other projects aimed at reaching out to both sexes. It is against this background that this article examined the extent to which these donor supported agricultural projects reached out to female farmers in the country.

The article rested heavily upon primary sources of information. These included Provincial Agricultural Officers' Reports and Government of Zambia (GRZ) Annual Reports of the Extension Branch of the Ministry of Agriculture. Provincial Agricultural Officers' Reports were written by Provincial Agricultural Officers (PAOs). These were officers who were in charge of the agricultural activities of each province in the country. Their yearly reports were based on their day to day observations of agricultural activities in their provinces. Extension Branch Reports were written by officers in the Extension Branch of the Department of Agriculture annually after observing and monitoring how agricultural information was being disseminated in different parts of the country.

Literature Review:-

The Mexico declaration in Mexico in 1975 saw countries in Africa making visible cogent efforts to incorporate women in their countries' agricultural development. Some literature exists on the extent to which African countries responded to the Mexico declaration. Such literature includes a book edited by Creevey in which authors documented the work of donor supported agencies in countries of the Sahel and Mali (Creevey, 1986). The authors described the steps taken in these regions to promote the interests of women in donor supported agencies. Of significance was Traore's chapter, who at the time of writing the chapter was Director of the Training Centre for Rural Women Extension Agents at Ouelesebouyou in Mali (Traore, 1986). Her chapter was based on the work of this project known by the initials DFAR-UNFM which was born on August 1, 1980. It was established after a grant agreement was signed between the Government of the Republic of Mali and the United States of America to start a project there. The Training Centre aimed at developing the body of knowledge about rural women, lightening their work-load, decreasing literacy rate and giving women a greater opportunity to play an active role in the rural economy. Another chapter in the book that was illuminating was the one by Kantara who was in charge of a donor funded project (Kantara, 1986). Jointly funded by the Saudi Arabian Development Fund, the government of Mali and FAO, the Stock-Farming Development Project was concerned with animal husbandry, one of the pillars of the Malian economy. It sought to improve the life of rural women in production and other domestic tasks. It had problems like introduction of inappropriate or expensive and complex domestic technology leading to discontinued funding of the project.

The chapters cited above were significant in understanding the work of donor agencies in Zambia. Like in Mali and the Sahel, donor funded projects catering for the needs of female farmers were also born in Zambia after the Mexico Declaration. The constraints the Malian donor supported Stock-Farming Development project faced of inappropriate technology introduction were similar to the constraints faced by the Women's Appropriate Village Technology Project that was born in 1981 in Zambia (GRZ, 1985). Like the training centres for women born in Mali, this article argued that the Home Economics Section of the Department of Agriculture in Zambia embarked on a deliberate policy of training rural women at farmer training centres with the purpose of enabling them to be active in the rural economies.

Staudt documented the impact of the Mexico declaration on Kenya (Staudt, 1995). She pointed out that as a result of the declaration of the International Women's Year and Decade, a Woman's Bureau was created in 1975 in Kenya in the Ministry of Social Affairs. Donor institutions, armed with internal studies and vigorous advocacy organised themselves and recognized women's importance in agriculture. Thompson acknowledged the importance of international agencies in Tanzania although he was quick to point out that they did little to stop gender biases in agricultural extension (Thompson, 1991). Thus, it was common for male extension agents to reach out more to male than female farmers. The studies we have cited were very important in understanding the role played by donor agencies in supporting women in agriculture in Zambia. This article begins by examining the work of the Intensive Rural Development Programme (IRDP).

Intensive Rural Development Programme (IRDP):-

The idea of this programme was initiated by the Ministry of Agriculture in 1973 when it began the Intensive Development Zone in northern Zambia. Its objective was to provide resources for rapid economic development in areas outside the line of rail with focus on small-scale farmers and other vulnerable groups (Hurlich, 1986). In 1978, the government decided to extend the project to other areas and the name changed to IRDPs. Implemented in April 1978, the programme was funded by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). International assistance was also sought for continuing the Northern Province programme and opening a new IRDP in north-western Zambia (Hurlich, 1986). By 1986, IRDPs had been set up in different parts of the country. Apart from SIDA, other major bilateral donors were the Overseas Development Agency (ODA) from England and the German Technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ). Smaller contributions came from the Danish Development Agency (DANIDA) and the Norwegian Development Agency (NORAD). IRDPs strove hard to address the challenges faced by women in farming in the provinces where they were operating from.

In the 1979/1980 year, some Women's Clubs were trained on the Lima Concept (this concept will be discussed at length later in the chapter). Women's Clubs were initially organised under the colonial government primarily to train women in house-keeping skills. In 1966, they were nationally recognized after the government established a policy on the clubs and their participation in the country's development (GRZ, 1974). After the country became independent, the clubs began taking part in agricultural-related activities. It was reported in the 1979/1980 year that they were also assisted with fertilizer and seeds by IRDP, the Finnish International Development Agency (FINNIDA) and the Department of Community Development (PAO, 1979/1980). Such assistance led to more female participation in IRDP who were growing crops like maize, groundnuts and rice (Mweemba, 1983). In the 1984/1985 year, a good number of women from the Luapula Province attended mobile courses on crop production organised by the Department of Agriculture, FINNIDA and IRDP (PAO, 1985). In the 1985/1986 year, mobile courses continued to be funded by IRDP in the province with participants mainly being women and the youth (PAO, 1986). Reports from the North-Western Province indicated that IRDP was effectively carrying out its work. In that province, IRDP was giving agricultural extension advice to female farmers on improved production techniques and was also providing them with cash and loan inputs (PAO, 1982).

From the Eastern Province, it was reported in the 1983/1984 year that in Katete district, six Women's Clubs received Lima loans from IRDP enabling them to individually grow maize and groundnuts and that IRDP assisted Women's Club members with some packages of Lima loans which included seeds, fertilizer and other requisites (PAO, 1984). In the 1983/1984 year, IRDP funded mobile courses in different districts in the Northern Province of the country which were attended by 269 women (PAO, 1983/1984). As shown, IRDPs achieved some successes vis-a-vis reaching out to female farmers in the country. This was re-affirmed by Bardouille when he noted that IRDP projects did a lot to organise Women's Clubs in the provinces they operated from (Bardouille, 1986).

Some scholars have perceived IRDPs as being gender insensitive. Hurlich noted that most IRDPs were gender biased and did not include a significant number of women (Hurlich, 1986). Despite praising IRDPs for successfully organising Women's Clubs, Bardouille was quick to point out that they lacked the ability to integrate women in improving production techniques and that generally IRDP projects were biased against female farmers (Bardouille, 1992). Munachonga shared a similar view noting that the implementation of the IRDP project discriminated against women (Munachonga, 1992).

As has been noted, the IRDPs were the first projects to attract donor funding. Indeed, through these projects, many women farmers acquired various agricultural skills. This article contended that although they were criticized for focusing more on male than female farmers, their efforts at reaching out to female farmers were also significant. After 1978, the agricultural sector continued attracting donor funding through other projects. Among the many projects that attracted donor funding was the Lima Project initiated in 1979.

The Lima Project:-

Originally worked out in 1979, it attracted the support of the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) in 1981. It aimed at constructing an effective instrument by which the extension service personnel could help the small-scale farmers to increase their productivity by using correct and efficient farming practices. Norby, a consultant to the Ministry of Agriculture pointed out that the programme encouraged the use of agricultural inputs for the major Lima (0.25 ha) of land using standardized measures of seed, fertilizer and insecticide (Norby, 1983). Lima recommendations or messages attracted much international attention because of their innovativeness and their

potential for increasing the productivity of small-scale farmers, whose returns on both land and labor were low. Luapula Province was the first province to be exposed to the Lima approach and different Lima programs were operating in the province under FINNIDA, IRDP and the Department of Agriculture.

Some scholars have argued that the Lima project represented a major step towards incorporating women into the country's agricultural development drive as it was directed primarily at female farmers. Chilivumbo and Kanyangwa pointed out that, whereas other developmental programmes concentrated their efforts on heads of households who were usually male, this one was exclusively for selected female members of a household (Chilivumbo and Kanyangwa, 1985). Reports from some provinces indicated that some women benefited from the Lima programme. In 1983, the Luapula Province Lima programme was so successful that for the first half of the year, 22-30% of participating farmers were women (Sjostrom, 1984). In the 1984/1985 year, Women's Clubs in different districts of the Luapula Province participated in the Lima programme (PAO, 1985). From the Southern Province, it was reported that in the 1982/1983 year, SIDA through the Lima programme had recognized the role of women (PAO, 1983).

Reports from the Northern Province point to the success of the Lima project there. A survey in late 1983 indicated that of the 308 Lima farmers, 36% were women and that field staff made special efforts to reach female farmers (Sjostrom, 1984). Through the Department of Home Economics, the Lima programme encouraged women in the Southern and Central Provinces to form groups that could either rear chickens or grow crops (Chilivumbo and Kanyangwa, 1985). Reports from the North-Western Province indicated that there was a high female participation in the Lima programme and that in 1983, participation of women farmers in the Lima in the surveyed area was 31% (Sjostrom, 1984). In the 1985/1986 season, interviews with women in the North-Western Province indicated that they were very active in Lima farming, primarily growing maize and earning considerably from Lima (Beck and Dorlochter, 1987). The Eastern province Lima programme was also described as a successful programme. Getting in-puts by Lima farmers in form of seed and fertilizer at mobile, seasonal or permanent depots in the province was said to be possible for both male and female farmers who were allowed to register as Lima farmers (Beck and Dorlochter, 1987). In the 1983/1984 year, 20, 000 Kwacha (K20, 000) was allocated from the women's programme vote to Lima credits for women and as a result, 42% of the total number of Lima loanees in the 1983/1984 year were women (Sjostrom, 1983).

Arguments presented above have demonstrated that the Lima programme benefited some female farmers. However, some scholars have argued that the programme was not gender sensitive as it was men that mainly benefited from it. Female interviewees in a Study on the Lima programme in the North-Western province noted that the Lima was a 'men-only' programme and that they had never been approached about the programme by male agricultural Extension Officers (Keller, 1986). Baser and Lesa argued that few single female farmers received assistance from any of the Lima programs except where funds were specifically earmarked for women and that in most areas, the percentage of women participating in the programs was substantially lower than that of men (Baser and Lesa, 1990). Munachonga stated that available evidence indicated that women did not benefit equally with men in the Lima programme (Munachonga, 1992). Saito, Mekonnen and Spurling pointed out that the Lima programme in Zambia illustrated how farmers could be unintentionally discriminated against by agricultural extension messages. They further pointed out that extension messages contained few, if any practical recommendations for important small-holder (and women's) crops such as cassava, sweet potatoes local maize, millet, sorghum, vegetables, almost exclusively tended by women (Saito, Mekonnen and Spurling, 1994).

This article is in contention with scholars who perceived the Lima project as reaching out to more male than female farmers. Reports from provinces across the country indicated that the programme benefited more males than females. In the Western Province, of the 12, 035 farmers in the Lima programme, only 1, 762 were female in the 1983/1984 year (PAO, 1984). Luapula Province showed a similar picture where reports indicated that more males than females benefited from the Lima programme. In the 1983/1984 training year, courses under the Lima programme at Farm Institutes and Farmer Training Centres were attended by 750 males as opposed to 180 females (PAO, 1984). In the 1985/1986 year, while 691 males attended Lima courses, only 227 females attended the courses (Crop Husbandry Officer, 1985/1986). It was reported in the 1988/1989 training year that while 214 men took part in demonstrations carried out by the Lima Ladder, only 64 women took part in the demonstrations (PAO, 1989). Another report from the same province read that, "The Lima ladder conducted six residential courses and four mobile courses which were attended by 73 males and 47 female farmers; in addition there were 744 field days attended by 4, 532 males and 1, 367 females." (PAO, 1989). It was reported from the Copperbelt Province that while

325 male farmers were trained in various Lima-related courses in the 1986/1987 year, only 161 female farmers were trained (PAO, 1987).

From the above arguments, what comes out is that it was mainly males that benefited from the programme. This is not what participants at the Mexico conference leading to the declaration of the decade for women had envisioned. They had envisioned total promotion of women's interests, a vision which the Lima project failed to achieve.

In a bid to address the challenges faced by female farmers in the rural areas of Zambia, a Home Economics Section was established in the Ministry of Agriculture in 1970. It had the goal of helping rural women to increase agricultural production. In the period stretching from 1980, this section, in concert with donor agencies initiated three projects. These were the Women's Appropriate Village Technology (WAVT), Women's Participation in Rural Development (WPRD) and Peoples Participation Project (PPP). The primary goal of these projects was to address the challenges faced by female farmers though some males also participated in these projects. In the next section, the article seeks to establish the extent to which these three projects addressed the needs of women in farming.

Women's Appropriate Village Technology (WAVT):-

Initiated in 1980, this project took off in September, 1981. Jointly funded by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ), the project was initially planned for three years after which GRZ and UNICEF entered into another three-year contract for its continuation (GRZ, 1985). A sum of K129, 898. 00 was contributed by UNICEF and K135, 631.00 by GRZ for the period 1981-1983 (GRZ, 1981). The project covered six provinces, that is, Central, Eastern, Southern, Luapula, Northern and Western Provinces. It was hoped that, through the project, the quality of life of women (and men) in rural areas would be improved (GRZ, 1985). The general aim of the project was, "to identify appropriate technological devices that would lighten the workload of rural women in food production and water supply, construct them using local materials and train women to use such devices" (Hurlich, 1986). It also had three specific aims (GRZ, 1981). It sought to improve the quality of life and reduce the burden of work on women in rural areas through the use of appropriate technology devices. It further sought to give exposure and create awareness among all women in rural areas about appropriate technology devices in all selected provinces by 1983. It finally sought to make available, by 1983 to all women in specific provinces, the skills-training required to construct technological devices appropriate to their needs.

From the on-set, WAVT strove hard to achieve its goals. In the 1980/1981 year, two workshops were held in Lusaka; one organised for extension staff by a SIDA women's consultant with the objective of trying to look into women's involvement through WAVT in rural development and the other on the WAVT project (GRZ, 1981). It was reported from the North-Western Province, in the same year, that the Norwegian Development Agency (NORAD) donated a total amount of K300 towards the activities of WAVT in the province (GRZ, 1981). WAVT was introduced to the Southern Province in the 1982/1983 year and female participants were taught how to use devices like charcoal coolers, raised sinks and dryers (PAO, 1983). It was reported from the Northern Province, in the same year that an orientation course for the Project Coordinator was conducted for one month in preparation for a new centre which was to be opened in the province (GRZ, 1983). As a way of enlightening women on the use of technological devices, a number of mobile courses were run at community level and few artisans were trained during the year under review (GRZ, 1983). In the 1983/1984 year, all Home Economics staff in the province attended a one-week course on WAVT at a Farm Institute in the Northern Province (PAO, 1984). In the same year, women in the Central Province took part in agricultural shows from ward to national level during which some devices from WAVT were exhibited (PAO, 1984). During the 1984/1985 year, the project's main activities in the province were the running of orientation courses for extension workers, disseminating appropriate technology to rural women and training rural artisans (PAO, 1985). Apart from courses, information on the use of technological devices was also disseminated to women through workshops.

Although many rural women were introduced to appropriate technological devices through the WAVT project, the project was not fully embraced by them. One of the reasons for this was that they did not understand the rationale behind them adopting technological devices. It was noted, for instance, from the Eastern Province that there was a slow rate of adopting devices by women because the women might not have seen the reason for adopting them (PAO, 1985). As a result of the slow pace at which the desired objectives were being achieved, a Needs Assessment Survey (NAS) was carried out in 1985 by UNICEF in four provinces, that is, Eastern, Southern, Central and the Northern Provinces. It was hoped that, using this Survey, one or two devices which rural women needed most in

villages could be detected. Inevitably, all activities of WAVT came to a stand-still as these activities depended on the Needs Assessment Survey (GRZ, 1985). By 1990, WAVT had ceased to operate.

Women's Participation in Rural Development (WPRD):-

Initiated in 1982, this project was coordinated by the Home Economics Section. It was operating from the Southern, Lusaka, Central, Luapula, Northern and Eastern Provinces. It aimed at improving the quality of life of the most disadvantaged rural women by encouraging them to increase food production through the adoption of modern techniques in agriculture, and decreasing the burden of work by introducing them to the use of Appropriate Village Technology devices (GRZ, 1983). It was hoped that equal opportunities would be provided for women to participate in all aspects of agricultural and rural development (GRZ, 1985). The project endeavoured to reach out to rural women by providing revolving credit funds for Lima in-puts to Women's Clubs. Emphasis was on giving training and credit to single and married women who had the capacity of profiting from such services and had previously had no access to this (GRZ, 1985).

The project strove hard to achieve its goals. During the 1982/1983 year, it held a number of courses. Courses were conducted for Agricultural Assistants, Community Development Assistants, Society Managers, Women's Clubs leaders and members in Southern and Central Provinces (GRZ, 1982/1983). As envisaged, the project opened up access to credit facilities. By 1983, 150 women work groups in the project with a total of 1,500 members had received credit from the revolving fund through the Credit Cooperative Society (CCS) (GRZ, 1983). Surveys were conducted on women in Choma and Mumbwa districts in the Southern and Central Provinces respectively. A sum of K20 000 for small animal and crop production was then released to the two districts' project areas (GRZ, 1985). It was reported in the 1984/1985 year that in the Southern and Central Provinces where WPRD was first introduced, the first nine women's groups with a composition of 20 members per group had become primary cooperative society members and had applied for bigger loans through normal cooperative credit scheme channels (GRZ, 1985).

In the period 1982 to 1985, 1, 840 women were trained under the project in the Southern, Central and Lusaka Provinces; 760 in the Southern Province, 360 in Lusaka Province and 720 in the Central Province (GRZ, 1985). It was reported from the Southern Province in the 1982/1983 year that all women's groups were doing well with the exception of some groups in Monze district that were badly hit by drought (GRZ, 1983). WPRD in the Southern Province was supporting ten women's groups by providing them with loans (PAO, 1983). Pleased at the response of women towards loan recovery, the PAO of Southern Province proudly remarked that, "Despite poor yields at Macha, women are willing to pay back loans even from other sources and so far 80% of women have paid back!" (PAO, 1983). WPRD recorded remarkable successes in the Central Province. It was reported from Mumbwa district in the 1982/1983 year that the maize growing women's groups were doing well (GRZ, 1983). During the 1984/1985 season, seasonal loans which were utilized by individual members were given to Women's Clubs in the province (PAO, 1985). By 1985, a total of 38 Women's Clubs in the province were SIDA aided under WPRD (PAO, 1985). In the 1985/1986 year, it was reported that the beneficiaries of this project in the province were Women's Clubs formed by the least privileged women and that 15 Women's Clubs in the province received loans from SIDA during the year. (PAO, 1986). In the same year, five mobile courses were conducted on WPRD in the province, two of these being on general agriculture (PAO, 1986). It was reported in the 1988/1989 year that women's groups and women farmers in the province, through WPRD had access to credit, received training relevant to their production activities and were encouraged to participate fully in rural development after three years in the project (PAO, 1989).

Notable successes were also scored by WPRD in the Eastern Province. The project was introduced into the province on 2nd February, 1987. After a Needs Assessment Survey in the Katete and Chadiza districts, 10 women's groups comprising 20 members per group which were to be given inputs worth K37, 100. 00 were formed in Chadiza and each year, one district would be added to WPRD (PAO, 1987). It was reported in the 1987/1988 year that a total of K78, 23.00 was loaned to Women's groups in Chadiza district and that ten groups were also formed in Katete district where a total of K41, 154.00 was loaned out (PAO, 1988). As a way of reaching out to women in the province, WPRD began conducting field days. In the 1988/1989 year, five field days were conducted in the WPRD project area (PAO, 1989). A total of 400 women took part in the project from 1987 to 1989 (PAO, 1989). Like in the other provinces, WPRD scored significant successes in the Luapula Province. A report read that in Mansa district, through the WPRD project, 200 female farmers underwent village courses to grow maize and groundnuts. During the courses, contact farmers went forward and participated, encouraging the women to be fully committed to their project (PAO, 1987). In the 1988/1989 year, Women's Clubs under WPRD in the province raised a total of

K33, 127. 48 from maize sales (PAO, 1989). Lusaka Province WPRD also recorded significant successes from where it was reported in the 1982/1983 year that all women's groups under WPRD were doing well (GRZ, 1983). A number of Women's Clubs in the province received WPRD loans in the 1985/1986 year (PAO, 1986).

As argued above, WPRD scored notable successes in its operational areas. However, the project was also fraught with constraints. It was difficult for women to use appropriate technology introduced under WPRD. Keller, Phiri and Milimo argued that, "The plough was basically owned by males compelling WPRD participants to hire others to plough their fields. Thus, women were typically the last to be served resulting in late planting and lowered yields" (Keller, Phiri and Milimo, 1990). Larson and Kanyangwa pointed out that while WPRD participants felt they had become better off in terms of their ability to feed their families, a significant number had to pay their loans from cattle and not from crop sales, an important disadvantage considering that female households owned fewer livestock (Larson and Kanyangwa, 1990). Baser and Lesa noted that participants in some of the women's programmes were often well-to-do farmers and not rural women as originally intended (Baser and Lesa, 1990). In 1984, 70% of the 290 Southern and Central Province recipients of loans under the SIDA funded WPRD were said to be well-to-do (Baser and Lesa, 1990). Indeed, there is some credence in arguments that WPRD was fraught with some flaws despite the notable successes it scored. A report of 1989 from Central Province pointed to flaws in the WPRD project. It read:

Ever since the WPRD project was introduced, women have welcomed it despite the disappointment which repeats itself every season. Inputs are released late and as a result, most of the groups have a lot of credits. At times, inputs run out of stock, thus delaying the loanees' activities even more. Money for training is also released late. Transport for close supervision and loan recovery is inadequate. There is also a shortage of packing materials (PAO, 1989).

These constraints to its work made it difficult for SIDA to continue funding the project. It was envisaged that the project was to cater for the needs of the rural poor. Paradoxically, as has been highlighted, many well-to-do women benefited from the project. This flaw and the other flaws highlighted made continuation of donor support to this project to be withdrawn. SIDA support to the project was terminated in 1990 (GRZ, 1991).

Peoples' Participation Project (PPP):-

Women in farming in western Zambia were boosted through PPP. Funded by FAO and the donor country, the Netherlands, the project was initiated in the Western Province through the Home Economics Section in 1982. The objective of the programme was to help initiate a suitable developmental approach primarily for the lower income rural women especially female headed households. It also aimed at developing replicable activities and institutional channels that would result in the strengthening of self-reliance, increased production, nutrition and family income (GRZ, 1983). Its operational areas were three districts of the Western Province, that is, Kalabo, Kaoma and Mongu districts. Women in PPP had access to group loans which were guaranteed by a government guarantee risk fund. Training of staff and identification of women's groups started in 1983. By the end of the 1982/1983 year, a total of 241 women representing 22 groups in Kalabo and Kaoma districts were involved in various projects under PPP (GRZ, 1983). Apart from growing crops like maize, groundnuts and vegetables, they were also involved in handicrafts and sewing. PPP was able to reach more of its target group because of the funds it was getting from donor agencies (GRZ, 1985). By 1985, improved and increased food availability at household level had been noted because participants in the project preferred to sell only part of their crop to repay the loan and retain the rest of the crop for family consumption. The project had good local administration and frequent contact with local groups (Hurlich, 1986). It was not only female headed households but even women in married households and even men who participated in the project. The project achieved its goals through engaging in various activities as a result of accessing loans.

Despite recording some successes, the project was also fraught with constraints. The successful implementation of the project was constrained by two factors. Inadequate transport hampered progress in most of the project areas and a shortage of trained staff to carry out its activities slowed down its work (GRZ, 1983). These constraints, however did not significantly affect its work, no wonder it proceeded into a second phase. At inception, it was agreed upon that the first phase would end in 1988. At the end of the phase, an evaluation was carried out which concluded that the project was very successful. Therefore, it was recommended that the project move into a second phase. It was reported that during the second phase, membership to PPP increased. In the 1990/1991 year, Kalabo had 581

members, Kaoma, 905 members while Mongu had 518 members (GRZ, 1991). This was an indication that the project was appreciated by farmers in the areas it was operating from.

Apart from PPP, there were other donor funded agricultural projects that were initiated in specific provinces. These included the Agricultural Extension Project (AETP) in the Luapula Province, the Eastern Province Agricultural Development Project (EPAD) and the Small-Scale Services Rehabilitation Project (SSRP) in the Luapula Province.

The Agricultural Extension Training Project (AETP):-

Supported by FINNIDA, this project was initiated in the Luapula Province in 1980. The objective of the programme was to train Lima farmers and assist them through the Co-operative Credit Loans, training extension staff and facilitating collaboration between research and extension staff. (PAO, 1985). AETP also aimed at developing a feedback system between research, extension and the farmer in order to improve on extension messages and technical passages (PAO, 1989). In the 1981/1982 year, a Ms. Prantilla who was in a Finnish delegation went to the province to assess the effectiveness of the project with the main interest of finding out the number of female headed households in the province and their participation in club activities (PAO, 1982). Its preliminary activities involved training farmers. To this effect, in the 1983/1984 year, 374 farmers underwent a basic Lima course for five days and were given free inputs for the first year while another 500 farmers attended two refresher courses for two days sponsored by the programme (PAO, 1984). In the 1984/1985 year, 405 farmers underwent a basic Lima course for five days and were given free in-puts for the first year of a Lima each while another 567 farmers attended a two-day refresher course sponsored by AETP (PAO, 1985). In the 1985/1986 year, AETP funded mobile courses for women in the province (PAO, 1985). During the 1988/1989 training year, it conducted a number of mobile courses in the province to train new and existing farmers which a total of 3, 768 males and 2, 077 females attended (PAO, 1989). Twenty one field days and five agricultural shows were also conducted during the 1988/1989 year which were attended by 2, 310 people and the project also channeled a total of K1, 444 000 Cooperative Credit loans during the year under review (PAO, 1989).

Arguments presented on the work of AETP demonstrate that this project was embraced by farmers in the province. Through the project, farmers were able to receive in-puts and female attendance of mobile courses, judging from reports was impressive. The project also achieved its goal of training not only male extension staff but also female trainers. The Eastern Province Agricultural Development (EPAD) in the Eastern Province and the Small-Holder Services Rehabilitation Project (SSRP) in the Luapula Province were based on an extension strategy known as the Training and Visit system of extension. Before examining these projects, this system of extension will be examined.

The Training and Visit System of extension:-

The World Bank played a key role in highlighting the importance of agricultural extension in agricultural development through financing large-sized projects on extension. The Training and Visit system of extension was an essential part of the World's Bank assistance package to developing countries (Qamar, 2011). It was adopted as an extension strategy by Zambia's Department of Agriculture in 1978. The adoption of this strategy was born out of the realisation that many of the field staff in the agricultural sector were not well trained, making it difficult for them to effectively reach out to male and female farmers. Another reason for the adoption of this extension strategy was that prior to its introduction, there was no systematic programme for regular contact between extension staff and farmers. By using contact farmers to advise fellow farmers, there would be a wider spreading of information (Sutherland, 1987; Norby, 1983; GRZ, 1983). The idea of the contact farmer was that he/she was the person the extension worker visited regularly. It was the role of the contact farmer to pass new knowledge to farmers within the same target group. It was assumed that production techniques and knowledge of improved practices, if taught to one contact farmer would trickle down from the contact farmer to the mass of small-scale farmers in a particular farming community.

Evaluations of this system of extension concluded that it was mainly males as opposed to females who benefited from it, the more reason why donor supported projects based on it were deemed as being more to the benefit of males than females (as will be discussed later). In a study conducted in Central Province, it was concluded that male headed households scored a slightly higher level of contact than female headed households. It was noted that when dealing with male headed households, in about 80% of all households, local male extension workers targeted their intervention at husbands rather than wives. Even the two female extension workers in the study area leaned in the same direction, regarding women more as target for home craft type activities than as major decision workers

(Sutherland, 1987). In an evaluation of this system of extension introduced into the Southern Province in 1983, few female headed households were chosen as contact farmers (Due, 1986). It was on rare occasions that women were selected as contact farmers by their communities as was seen from the Eastern Province where only 5% of contact farmers were women (Phiri, 1986). From the above arguments, what comes out is that this system of extension was perceived as advantaging males and not females. The extent to which the Eastern Province Agricultural Development Project based on this extension strategy reached out to female farmers will now be examined.

Eastern Province Agricultural Development Project (EPAD):-

The World Bank and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) provided \$12 million for large-scale agricultural development involving the Training and Visit method of extension (Hurlich, 1986). It was this financial boost to the Ministry of Agriculture that led to the birth of EPAD. This project was established in the Eastern Province in accordance with the agreement 2001-ZA between GRZ and IBRD of 1977 (GRZ, 1983). The project was to run from mid-1982 to mid-1987. It had, as its aim, a long term and sustainable increase in the output and productivity of small-scale farmers in the province through reorganising the agricultural extension service on the basis of the Training and Visit system (EPAD Report, 1987). Efforts were made to involve women in the project through the inclusion of the Home Economics Section in its activities. The Home Economics Section participated in the provincial and district training teams in the Training and Visit extension system meetings (PAO, 1988). An evaluation of the project's work indicated that although under the Training and Visit system of extension, extension staff were encouraged to include females as contact farmers, there was generally a dearth of female contact farmers in the EPAD project. According to an in-house research report conducted by the project's Research and Evaluation Unit in July 1985, while 95% of contact farmers were men, only 5 percent women (Glassmire, 1992). Glassmire lamented that:

Despite their numbers and their roles in food production, women remain under-represented and consequently are not reached by a project that maintains a goal of assisting small-scale farmers. There is no woman employed at any stage in EPAD project planning and the project has no policy regarding gender quotas for staff. There is a total male consultancy within the EPAD project (Glassmire, 1988; 1992).

In 1986, all the 12 expatriate staff of EPAD were male (Glassmire, 1988). Munachonga argued that the percentage of contact farmers indicated that women were under represented in the project (Munachonga, 1992). Not only were there few female contact farmers but their access to credit was also not easy. The most pervasive problem constraining women's access to credit was their inability to guarantee part of the lending policy as poor rural women did not own machinery or livestock that would constitute satisfactory assets against which a loan could be secured (Glassmire, 1988). This article contends that the failure by extension staff to include a sizeable number of female farmers as contact farmers under the Training and Visit System of extension on which it was premised was an indication that the project disadvantaged females. It was supposed to end in 1987 but was extended for a year to enable it to complete some unfinished projects.

Small-Holder Services Rehabilitation Project (SSRP):-

This was yet another project based on the Training and Visit System of extension. The final quarter of 1987 brought good news for small-scale farmers with approval by the International Fund for Development (IFAD) of \$20.5 million loan to improve services to the agricultural sector, with particular emphasis on the needs of women farmers (GRZ, 1988). The funds were targeted at increasing the availability of in-puts such as fertilisers and encouraging the formation of cooperatives. SSRP was an extension component of IFAD and it provided complimentary support to agricultural extension in the Luapula Province (PAO, 1989.) Its main emphasis was on the Training and Visit system with modifications to fit the local conditions. It was restricted to the Nchelenge, Mwense and Samfya districts of the Luapula Province. However, like EPAD, it was reported that more male farmers than females were contact farmers in 1989 (see Table 1)

Table 1: Male and female Contact Farmers under SSRP-1989

Month	Male Contact Farmers	Female Contact Farmers
March	3 249	768
April	3 519	962
May	3 858	929
June	3 699	929
July	3 768	929

August	3 938	808
September	3 995	782
October	4 255	686
November	4 332	1 177
Total	34 613	7 041

Source: PAO's Report Luapula Province, 1988/1989, 74

The statistics in Table 1 above show that male contact farmers were more in number than female contact farmers. Worse still, the gaps between male and female contact farmers were wide. SSRP concluded that between March and November, the average percentage ratio between male and female contact farmers was 80 to 20 percent (PAO, 1989). It was, therefore concluded that the choice of contact farmers was gender biased as SSRP aimed at having over 40% of female contact farmers (PAO, 1989). As shown, SSRP like EPAD based on the Training and Visit System of Extension failed to effectively reach out to female farmers. Arguments presented on the work of SSRP demonstrate that, like the EPAD project premised on the Training and Visit System of Extension, SSRP failed to effectively reach out to female farmers.

As demonstrated from arguments above, donor agencies established during the decade for women and its aftermath did not completely achieve their goal of fully integrating women into the country's agricultural development. This was the case in the UNO system as a whole as was re-affirmed by Madeley when he pointed out that:

Many development projects pay little attention to women farmers. Despite the sentiments of its Director-general, less than one percent of FAO projects included strategies for reaching women; in the UNO system as a whole less than 4 percent of projects benefit women (Madeley, 2002).

Indeed, as Madeley pointed out, development projects embarked on with donor support during and after the Women's Decade in Zambia reached only a fraction of female farmers. Zambia has for many years been grappling with how best to make less visible the gender divide in agriculture. Since the Decade, there have been efforts by the Zambian government to bridge the gender divide in the agricultural sector. In the Fifth National Development Plan (2006-2010), it was pointed out that agricultural productivity especially among female headed households was being affected by a myriad of problems. These included limited access to agricultural in-puts and inadequate access to agricultural service support like credit and market (GRZ, 2006) In the National Agricultural Policy (2004-2015), it was pointed out that Women and young farmers have not in the past benefited much from agricultural services such as credit, extension and labour saving technologies despite the vital role they play in agriculture. In order to change this situation, agricultural research, extension, credit and land tenure services need to be refocused in order to address the needs of women and young farmers (GRZ, 2015).

The strategy, in the National Agricultural Policy, among other things envisioned creating gender awareness among policy makers and farmers and building capacity for Ministry of Agriculture, at national and field levels in gender analytical skills and techniques. It also envisioned facilitating the mainstreaming of gender in agricultural training institutions' curriculum (GRZ, 2015). In spite of these envisioned strategies under the National Agricultural Policy, a year before the end of the Policy, a Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Chief Policy Analyst lamented about gender biases in the agricultural sector. He challenged district and provincial heads of departments in the Southern Province to bridge the division between male and female needs in the agricultural sector. He noted that cooperating partners were desirous to see the needs of males and females addressed in an equitable manner. He stated, 'As Heads of departments in the Ministry of Agriculture, we must ensure that the gap between males and females in providing the farmers needs and services is narrowed. They must have the same opportunities' (Kabutu, 2014). The goal to completely incorporate women is yet to be achieved. It is only a retrospection of the benefits and shortcomings of the National Agricultural Policy by Ministry of Agriculture officials that will inform Zambians about the extent to which female farmers were incorporated into the country's agricultural sector during the period of the Policy.

Conclusion:-

The article has demonstrated that, arising out of the International Women's Decade, a number of donor supported agricultural projects were born in the country, some targeted at females only while others were open to male and female participants. Through these projects, there was a drive to support women in farming in the country. In some projects, it was a dismal picture as women seemed to be completely side-lined. In other projects, there was a

measure of success and some women responded positively to the opportunities they were accorded through the projects to take part in farming activities in their communities. The article has concluded that, much as flaws were seen in the work of these projects, the few women participants learnt better methods of farming.

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