

**THE DEUTERONOMIC RESPONSE TO SOCIAL INEQUALITY IN ANCIENT
ISRAEL AND ITS RELEVANCE TO THE URHOBO SOCIO-CULTURAL
CONTEXT IN NIGERIA**

BY

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MATRIC NO.84938

A THESIS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ARTS

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph.D)

of the

University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria

MAY, 2014

TITLE: THE DEUTERONOMIC RESPONSE TO SOCIAL INEQUALITY IN ANCIENT ISRAEL AND ITS RELEVANCE TO THE URHOB0 SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT IN NIGERIA

Abstract

The literary composition of Israel's religious history has been attributed to several schools, one of which is the Deuteronomic school with a strong social vision. One of its social visions was the response to social inequality. Existing studies on the Deuteronomic history (Deuteronomy-2Kings) have focused on various levels of redactions and cult centralisation but have not clearly articulated the Deuteronomic response to the phenomenon of social inequality and relevance from the African (Urhobo) socio-cultural perspective. This study, therefore, investigated the Deuteronomic response to social inequality in ancient Israel and its relevance to the Urhobo society.

The study was anchored to Gottwald's Liberation Hermeneutics which identifies issues of social class, race and gender struggles inherent in biblical text. The Historical-critical method was employed for interpreting the chosen text segments (Deut.14²²⁻²⁹, 16^{9-12,13-15}, 24^{17-18,19-22}, 26⁵⁻¹⁵) A purposive sampling method was adopted in administering 400 copies of a questionnaire in three selected local government areas of Urhobo concentrated population in Delta State, namely, Udu, Ughelli South, and Okpe LGAs while three focus group discussion sessions composed of different categories of persons, age and sex were held in three villages: Emadadja, Egbo Uhurie and Orerokpe; chosen to correspond to the LGAs. Data collected were subjected to exegetical analysis using simple percentages.

The Deuteronomic response elicited in the text has four main procedures: advocacy for empowerment of the marginalised which transfers the exclusive use of the Tithe from the Priest to caring for the marginal groups (Deut 14²²⁻²⁹) and shift in emphasis of the festivals from solely cultic to sociological purpose (Deut. 16¹³⁻¹⁵) Others are: emphasis on social justice in Israel's judicial system including protection of the marginalised (Deut. 24^{17-18,19-22}) and the tradition-building process which interprets the salvation motif in the exodus tradition as a mandate for a humane society (Deut.26⁵⁻¹⁵) These were proactive and ideological responses against gender bias, class and socio-economic disparity introduced by the monarchical system that put the marginal groups (Levites, orphans, widows and the sojourners) in precarious conditions in the 7th Century. Responses identified in Urhobo setting include *Udje* dance songs, names and proverbs which advocate equal opportunities, the widow inheritance system, and the culture of extended family support system. Data evidence however suggests changing trends in Urhobo which necessitates a paradigm shift. A total of 171 respondents (56.7%) disagreed that Urhobo inheritance system adequately protects widows, while 263 respondents (87.7%) agreed there are cultural practices that encourage social inequality. The focus group discussion sessions recognised the growing impact of inequality on orphans, widows and increasing poverty.

Three aspects of the Deuteronomic Response for the Urhobo society, namely advocacy for protection of the marginal groups, empowerment and social justice are applicable to the religious and cultural situations in Urhobo society. These convergences adequately reflect the social inequalities characterising the Jewish and Urhobo societies.

Key words: Deuteronomic school, Marginal groups, Urhobo society, social structure, inequality, Ancient Israel.

Word count: 462

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To the Lord Our God and Father be ascribed all glory and honour and majesty for His grace and love that saw me through the period of this research. My profound appreciation goes to those who either by sponsorship, prayer, or moral support enabled us to complete the research. To my parents Pa Jacob Iyede and Mama Sarah Iyede (both of blessed memory) whose love and care at my tender age are instrumental to the progress and success in my academic journey. I particularly thank my mother who, in demonstrating her interest for me made the sacrifice of time and pleasure to fend for my fees. I remember how she would wait for me at the gate of St Vincent's College Okwagbe, to deliver my beverages and other food items to keep me happy at School on her way back from the village market. I believe that her labour has not been in vain. My thanks also go to the members of my family for their concern and support in the changing phases of life, from infancy to maturity because providentially I came as the last born of my parents. I am grateful to my senior sister and daddy, Ven. (Dr) & Mrs. J.O. Aruoren for supporting me in the ministry, for their parental care and the assistance towards my academic progress. To my senior brothers Comrade Simeon Iyede (of blessed memory) Rev. Canon G.O. Iyede, Mr. K.D. Iyede, Mr. J. Iyede, and my immediate brother Isaiah Iyede (of blessed memory) who went to be with the Lord in 1988 while serving in the church in the Diocese of Lagos, Anglican Communion.

I am grateful to my indefatigable Supervisor, Rt. Rev. Prof. J.O. Akao, a distinguished professor of the Old Testament, for painstakingly reading and correcting my ideas and making them scholarly presentable. Under him I have learnt the art of deep academic reflections in biblical studies both for spiritual growth and academics. The insight into the vastness of the Old Testament fields of study was gained in the course of the research. His interest in my research work gave the inspiration that sustained me even in the difficult times of the investigation cum the huge financial involvement of the research.

To the members of the academic staff of the Department of Religious Studies, University of Ibadan, I am very grateful: Prof I. Deji Ayegboyin (HOD) Prof. M.Y. Nabofa, Prof. Akpenpuun Dzurgba, Prof. S.O. Abogunrin, Dr O.A. Olukunle, Dr Dorcas. O. Akintunde (of blessed memory) Dr J.K. Ayantayo, Dr A.O. Dada for the

commendable role in supplying relevant information in the course of the research. To Dr S.A. Fatokun, Dr G.N. Toryough, Dr Helen A Labeodan, Dr P.A. Oguntayo, Dr O.O. Familusi, Dr C.O. Jegede, Dr J. Adekoya, Dr S.M. Mepaiyeda, Dr Abraham Adebo, Very Rev. O.O. Berekiah, Pastor S.O. Okanlawon, for the academic mentoring. Thanks to Dr Sunday Adesina of the Department of English, University of Ibadan, for his concern, Dr S.A.Odebunmi (SubDean, Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan) who's passionate support and insightful contributions shaped the content of the work leading to the successful completion. Thanks to Elder Charlse O. Nwogwugwu (Officer in Dean's office, Faculty of Arts), Mrs O.A. Oladipo (Secretary to the HOD, Department of Religious studies) and all workers of the Department, I am grateful.

I have the pleasure of humbly saying many thanks to the first Bishop of Warri Dioceses (Anglican Communion) Rt. Rev. J.O. Dafiewharen (of blessed memory) under whose episcopacy I began my ministry, to the Rt. Rev. N.A. Eneku (of blessed memory) whose wish for me was to do New Testament programme at the Postgraduate level, although my interest had been in Old Testament studies. Providentially at the time of my admission there was no New Testament supervisor for those who wanted to do New Testament studies and so I had no choice but to go for Old Testament studies which had been my original field of interest. He had also wanted that I continued my studies after my Masters degree, but I had to opt for a part-time due to exigencies of family life and also to give priority to my ministerial calling. I believe it was all God's design. To the Rt. Rev. M.O. Muoghereh the retired Bishop of Ughelli Diocese, I am grateful. To Sir & Lady G. Ohwokeywo, for their overwhelming support and constantly enquiring about my progress, for providing financial support from time to time, Evang. & Mrs. P.O. Okotie, Evang. & Mrs. B. Okotete, Sir Chief M.E. Agbogidi (of Blessed memory) Ven. & Mrs. J.O. Okpako, Ven. & Mrs A.O. Kaku, Ven. Prof. & Mrs. S.U. Erhivwo, Ven. & Mrs. R.O. Arhawho, Ven. Christopher O. Ejuvwiekoko (serving in Orerokpe as the Archdeacon and for providing vital information for the research) Rev. Canon & Mrs J.O.Okorodudu, Ven & Mrs Charlse Badawusi, and my nephew Sir & Lady Fred Oghenekaro for their constant concern about my academic progress and for their financial support. To my friend, Pastor & Mrs Abel Ogungbemi, who offered his room to me at Balewa Hall when I had no accommodation at the Master's Degree and who did not

cease to give moral and prayerful support, may God richly bless you and your family. To my friend, Dr. B. Taiwo who has been passionate about progress in my research, Mr Loveday C. Onyazonwu a fellow doctoral student at the time of writing, whose support was not insignificant I am grateful.

My appreciation goes to my father-in-law, Mr. P.J. Udaya (who passed on suddenly on August, 21, 2012) to my mother-in-law Mrs J. Tobore Udaya, for being a caring and loving mother. I pray that you live long and that you enjoy the fruit of your labour.

My appreciation goes to members of the Team ministry of Archbishop Vining College of Theology, Akure, Ondo state, the students and the members of the Chapel of the Annunciation for the uncommon reception, integration, and hand of fellowship extended to me and my family during my sabbatical leave between September 2011 and August 2012. The Dean Ven. Dr & Mrs S.A. Fagbemi and Ven & Mrs. E.B. Omowaye deserve my special mention because of their interest in my academic pursuit while on Sabbatical. I remember the effort made in enabling me procure my first Laptop which was particularly helpful in preparing my first draft of the Postfield Seminar paper of the thesis because it required the Hebrew text. It cannot be overemphasised that this encouragement was a catalyst in the course of the study. I on behalf of my family sincerely appreciate the lord Bishop of Ilesa Diocese (Anglican Communion) the Rt Rev. Dr & Mrs. S.O. Sowale for approving my Sabbatical at Vining and for their concern for our welfare and success in my studies. I am grateful to Rev.& Mrs Ezekiel Fadeji of Akure Diocese whose contact with my family started during my sabbatical leave at Akure and translated into a keen family friendship whose prayers for me is to ensure that the research is completed on time and successfully. May God bless his ministry. To The Rt Rev Dr & Mrs Isaac Nwaobia, the lord Bishop of Isiala Ngwa South Diocese (Anglican Communion) who has been a personal friend and spiritual mentor from theological school days (Trinity College Umuahia) and who kept asking of my progress in my studies I am grateful. My thanks go to Revs. Godspower Evru, Oju Ogagaoghene, Fidelis E. Ejenavi, Rev. Oghenedoro Oruese and Ord Gideon Onovughe for their prayerful support and desire that I complete the programme successfully. The same goes to the following persons: Ord. Osijonwo J.Olanrewaju (Anglican students' fellowship chairman Immanuel

College of Theology 2013/2014 Academic session) Akinsiku Ileayo S, Edemo O. Godwin, Obebe Festus S (students' body president, Immanuel College of Theology Ibadan) Obasan Muyiwa, Adejuwon Adeolu J(students' body secretary, Immanuel College of Theology Ibadan) Okoh Silas, Eyi Samuel, Akinwale John A, Ekpekuro Donald A, Fatile Temidayo O, and all past students of Immanuel College of Theology, Ibadan and those currently of the 2013/2014 academic session, for their enthusiastic and prayerful support towards the completion of the work.

I cannot also but thank the following persons who gave me vital information about the Urhobo Culture on the social status of the Orphans and Widows in the Focus Group Discussion sessions. I am grateful to Pa. Samson Gbawe (Retired Civil Servant from Obogo Town, Delta State) Chief S.P. M. Ewwirhe (Retired Civil Servant) Mrs Ejimiyeri Ovuodeyode, Pastor Victor Oghenekaro (Minister in Charge of Christ Crusaders Missionary Church, Emadadja Town) Mr John Iyede, Mr Raphael Eghirewovwi, Mrs Torhe Riaphreruhor, Mr Samuel Enafurho, Mrs. O. Eghwudjakpo (of Egbo-Uhurie Town) Mrs Charity Ero, Martha Delinrha, and Mr Sunday Ogofure.

To all past and present members of the Team Ministry of Immanuel College I am grateful. Ven. Dr & Mrs J.O. Igbari during whose tenure as Dean (2005) I resumed my work as Lecturer at Immanuel College of Theology and Christian Education Ibadan I am grateful; Very Rev. Prof S.A. Oyalana (of blessed memory) and his wife both of whom were hospitable to us. To Late Ven. Dr J.D. Adewale who was passionate about the progress of the study and whom I thought would have witnessed the completion of the research but was suddenly taken away from us by death. To the Rt. Rev. Dr & Mrs E.O. Abejide, who was a member of the team ministry before their election as Bishop in the Methodist Church and often wished me well for the successful completion of the process, I am grateful. May the Almighty God bless his episcopacy. To Ven. Dr & Mrs A.A. Atowoju who is now serving at Crowther University, Oyo, I am particularly grateful for being a friend. And to Very Rev. H. Sewapo who also served at Immanuel College of Theology, Ibadan, before moving to the University. To the present members of the Team Ministry I am grateful. Ven. & Mrs B.A. Adedapo (Incumbent Dean), Ven.& Mrs C.O. Adagbada, Very Rev. & Mrs. S Olu Owoseni (Sub Dean) Ven & Mrs J.O. Adeloye, Very Rev Dr & Mrs. W.A.O. Egbetakin. Others are: Ven. & Mrs. J. Ola Oyewole, Rev. Canon

& Mrs. Israel Odukogbe, Very Rev. Dr & Mrs. U.D.S. Ojimadu, and Very Rev. & Mrs. O.A. Kuyebi, who joined the Team ministry recently I am grateful. My thanks go to Omoniyi Olatunde, the Typist, whom I had to call upon to type and correct the manuscripts often.

My love and appreciation go to my wife and our children who shared with me the financial deprivation, and all the inconveniences associated with academic struggles, to my wife Mrs Rosemary Emojeje Iyede who is my love and prayer partner, our daughter Mercy Oghenefejiro, and Josiah Ogheneochuko, and Blessing Oghenevwairhe, I say God bless you all in all areas of life.

Matthew Ogheneochuko IYEDE

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CERTIFICATION

I certify that this work was carried out by Venerable Matthew Ogheneochuko Iyede in the Department of Religious Studies University of Ibadan under my supervision in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Religious studies.

.....
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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the glory of God and to my parents whose views about life (that of sharing and caring) were in tandem with the Deuteronomic spirit.

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Abbreviations

AASOR	<i>Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
ANET	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the Old Testament</i> , (ed), J.B.Pritchard, 1950
BA	<i>The Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BDB	<i>F.Brown, S.R.Driver, and C.A.Briggs. A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i>
BHS	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i>
Dt	<i>Deuteronomy</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
LXX	<i>Septuagint</i> (Greek translation of the Old Testament)
MGK	<i>Greek manuscript</i>
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i> (The Old Testament)

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Social inequality as a social phenomenon exists in human society in diverse forms. It has such positive and negative impacts that it makes an issue of global concern. A. Babalola observes that social inequality is somehow universal and endemic feature of all societies¹. It defines social situation or circumstance in which some people are worse off than others through no fault of theirs.² It also refers to a situation in which individual groups in a society do not have equal social status, social class and social circle.³ Globally, there is scarcely any society where social inequality does not exist in one form or the other. The opposite of such a society is an egalitarian⁴ society. In an egalitarian society no one experiences the satisfaction of occupying a higher social position than others, and no one suffers the indignity of being relegated to a position which commands no respect or honour.⁵ In such a society exploitation and oppression become rare words.⁶ Although this is an ideal society that most people dream of, nevertheless it has continued

¹ A. Babalola. 2010. *Fundamentals of Human Behaviour: A sociological perspectives*. Lagos: Chrisjane Nig. Ltd. p.62.

² 'Equality' Definition in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Retrieved Feb.,26, 2010 from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries>. Social inequality according to the Wikipedia encyclopedia, refers to a situation in which individual groups in a society do not have equal social status, social class, and social circles. It finds expression in several areas of life eg. Voting rights, freedom of speech and assembly, access to education, health care, quality housing, etc. It has been pointed out that social inequality involves the belief that some individuals are socially defined as disadvantaged, underprivileged, underachieved, unimportant and inferior due to their life circumstances.

³ Social inequality: from 'The Wikipedia', the free encyclopedia. Retrieved Jan., 3, 2012. from [http/en.wikipedia.org/social_inequality](http://en.wikipedia.org/social_inequality).

⁴ Egalitarianism is the belief in human equality. A belief that all men are equal in intrinsic worth and are entitled to equal access to the rights and privileges of their society (See M. Webster, 1986, *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the New English Unabridged*. Massachusetts: Meriam Webster Inc., p. 726.

⁵ M. Haralambos and R.M. Heald. 2007. *Sociological Themes and Perspectives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 24.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 24.

to remain a dream. In present day society there has continued to be disparity between the rich and the poor. The uneasy access to basic necessities of life such as housing, health facilities, education, etc, is evidences of the phenomenon of social inequality.

The phenomenon of social inequality has not only attracted the attention of philosophers and sociologists, it is also a matter of concern for biblical studies and investigation. From philosophical and sociological perspectives several works exist on the theme of social inequality. Among those who have pioneered the discourse on social inequality are Plato, Aristotle, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Karl Marx and Max Weber. From the philosophical perspective, Plato examines the subject of social inequality and considers society as made up of three groups namely the Guardians, Auxiliaries and Workers. The guardians, in his view, constituted the disinterested ruling class⁷ while the auxiliaries and workers are subjected to control by the ruling class. His view is not essentially different from Aristotle's who says that there are three elements in the society namely; the very Rich, the Middle class and the Very poor.⁸

In his study Jean Jacques Rousseau distinguishes between natural inequality and the inequality that result from social conventions. Biologically based inequality is natural because it is established by nature and this exists in the form of differences in age, health, bodily physic, strength and qualities of the mind or soul.⁹

Karl Marx, who attributes social inequality to economic enterprise, says that capital produces profits, which in turn accounts for inequality. Capitalism as a social system produces both wealth and poverty, thereby creating stratification and social

⁷ *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, p. 30.

⁸ M. Webster. 1986. *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the New English Unabridged*. Massachusetts: Meriam Webster Inc., p. 726.

⁹ Jean Jacques Rousseau. A dissertation on the Origin and Foundation of the Inequality of Mankind. Retrieved June., 2, .2011. from <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/rousseau-inequality>.

classes in the society. He divides history into different periods characterised by different economic systems. In the middle ages, Feudalism was very pronounced, a system in which people received land and protection by fighting and working for overlords. This system produced the low class and the high, a class structure consisting of the ruling and the oppressed.¹⁰ Karl Marx sees the ruling class as those who own and control the means of production and in a subtle way also control the moral and intellectual life of the people. What these views suggest is that social inequality exists (in the society) because forces that create the phenomenon of social inequality also exist. Some people are made worse off or marginalised by forces that create social inequality.

As has been observed, social inequality is divided along lines of natural and socially created inequality. In a patriarchal society, such as Israel and the Urhobo people, there are cultural evidences of gender bias to which the Deuteronomic response becomes relevant. The rule of ownership of women captured in war (Deut.21¹¹⁻¹⁴) the law of vows made by women (Num.30¹⁰⁻¹⁴) etc are evidences of social inequality in the biblical texts.

Apart from the social inequality associated with nature it has been argued that the structural functional model of society necessarily gives room for hierarchy and by implication social inequality. Thus the need for a proper administration that is aimed at bringing peaceful and harmonious relationship among the individuals living in the same community has led to the search for a suitable leadership. Purposeful and good leadership serve as a unifying force in binding the different social segments which exist in a community of human being.¹¹ In the theocratic structure of African society and belief

¹⁰ R. B. Seymour, M. Lipset. "Eds." *Class, Status and Power: Social Stratification in Comparative Perspective* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1970, p. 6.

¹¹ M.Y.Nabofa, 1999. Theocracy and Democracy from the perspective of the African Traditional Religion *Orita Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*. June & December. XXXI 1-2:29-44.

system there is a recognized hierarchical structure. The paramount ruler is the *Pontifex maximus* (Highest Priest) performing judicial function in the society. There are also Elders who form the council of elders. They adjudicate and settle disputes among the people. The Priest/King is regarded as the Divine vice-Regent or elect.¹² The hierarchical structure is a reflection of the need for an administrative structure in the African setting but which translates into social inequality in the society and thus make the phenomenon of social inequality inevitable. Three areas of differences are often identified with inequality. These are (i) Life chances, that is, all those material advantages which improve the quality of life of the recipient. (ii) Social status, that is, prestige or high standing in the eyes of other members of the society (which includes gender) and (iii) Political influence, the ability of one group to dominate others...¹³

The phenomenon of social inequality became pronounced (social phenomenon) in Israel's social structure during the emergence of the monarchy. As A.R. Ceresko says, 'An overlay of a state apparatus got introduced into Israel with the rise of the monarchy. This resulted in a hierarchically organised and socially stratified political and socio-economic order.'¹⁴ This phenomenon was rather extraneous, particularly with the social visions of the prophets who represented the older Mosaic tradition that goes back to Israel's earliest times. According to A.R. Ceresko the move to a territorial state opened the way to social and economic stratification. He says further:

In contrast to the prosperity and luxury enjoyed by the Kings and ruling classes, the life of the

¹² The authority of the African Traditional Ruler to govern the people derives from the divine. Such authority is well spelt out among the Yoruba, Igbo, Edo (Benin) and Urhobo people. See M.Y.Nabofa *op cit*. This view sees society as being hierarchical.

¹³ A.Babalola. 2010. *Fundamentals of Human Behaviour: A sociological perspectives*. Lagos: Chrisjane Nig. Ltd. p.62.

¹⁴ A.R. Ceresko. 2001. *The Old Testament: A Liberation Perspective*. New York: Maryknoll. p. 154.

average Israelite was generally harsh and precarious. The older traditions and structures of the tribal confederation continued at the clan and village level – the protection of extended families' patrimonial lands and the mutual aid mechanisms. But these became more and more hampered and seriously eroded by the overlay of the state structure, which weakened these older structures by drawing off 'surplus production' in taxes and forced labour.¹⁵

Biblical traditions and textual evidences suggest that there were evidences of social inequalities in Ancient Israel, especially in the context of her external relationships. For example, the strong ethnic sentiments against foreign nations within the biblical traditions (Isa 49²³, Deut. 23⁴⁻⁸, Amos 1¹³⁻¹⁵ 2^{1-3, 6-16}) are a reflection of Israel's socio-cultural disposition to other nations. Also the patriarchal social system of ancient Israel seems to support the predominance of social inequality, especially in view of socio-cultural practices that discriminated against women (e.g. on issue of inheritance). Contrary to this patriarchate system which kept women in an inferior legal and social position, Deuteronomy takes a radically different view.¹⁶ The argument that the book of Deuteronomy is the law book found in the Temple in the reign of Josiah has been used to justify Josiah's reform. The reform which was not only anti-Assyrian but the religious measures adopted by Josiah to correct the anomalies of social inequality which are leading features in the Deuteronomic legislation. The implication of this is that a study of social inequality in ancient Israel must take Deuteronomy as the biblical *corpus* for its

¹⁵ A.R. Ceresko. 2001. *Op. cit.* p.205.

¹⁶ J.O. Akao. 2006. The Old Testament Concept of Sexuality in S.O. Abogunrin "Ed" *Biblical View of Sex and Sexuality from African Perspective*, (NABIS Publications). No. 5, pp. 15-27. The texts which speak in strong terms against the woman's position include Deut 21¹⁰⁻¹⁴, Num 30¹⁰⁻¹⁴. Deuteronomy however has a more humane approach (See Deut. 21¹⁵⁻¹⁷, 22¹³⁻¹⁹).

study. It is against this background that this research has examined the Deuteronomic response to social inequality.

1.2 Statement of Problem

The phenomenon of social inequality, which manifests in the form of status, power, wealth and gender differences constitute one of the current themes in biblical discourse. According to Gottwald, wealth and power feature in biblical texts and serve as hermeneutical category.¹⁷ In patriarchal society such as Israel, the cultural bias against the female gender has been observed in several texts and occupies a major place in biblical discourse. This constitutes an aspect of social inequality. However social inequality is not limited to gender issues but it is also concerned with social conditions and circumstances in which some people are worse off in a society through no fault of their own. This is either in socio-economic status or life conditions and society's rating. The social status accorded to the individual in the society and the socio-economic standing of a person in the community constitutes the questions bordering on social inequality. The stratification that is inherent in virtually every human society is implicitly a defining factor in the status accorded persons in society. This concern can be observed in six selected texts in Deuteronomy (Deut.14²²⁻²⁹,16^{9-12,13-15},24^{17-18,19-22},26⁵⁻¹⁵) which specifically mention the protected groups in ancient Israel, namely, the widows, orphans, Levites, and the strangers (sojourners). There is a repeated concern for the protection of these groups of persons in the text segments. Their predicament is conceived to be the reason for the repeated demand by the Deuteronomist's philanthropic appeal with the

¹⁷ N.K. Gottwald. 1993. Social class as an Analytic and hermeneutical category in Biblical studies. *Journal of Biblical Literature*. (JBL) Spring. 112. 1: 3-22.

aim of addressing the social condition of the marginal groups. The social condition of the marginal group as painted in the text segments is irreconcilable and contradictory to the P-Source (Lev.27²¹⁻²⁴, Num.18¹⁹⁻²¹) where the texts prescribe that the Levites live by the tithes in return for their services as cult officials (functionaries).

Reference is also made to the assignment of forty-eight cities to the Priests and the Levites (Num.35¹⁻⁸, Jos.21⁴¹) qualifying them to be among those who are the upper echelon of society which again contradicts the vulnerable social image of the Levites painted in Deuteronomy. The motive for the consistent inclusion of the marginal group (widows, orphans and strangers) along with the Levites in the use of the tithe suggests that these texts either belong to different social interest groups or to different social conditions in Israel's history. This view corroborates the observation made by A.R.Ceresko on the social perspectives of the book of Deuteronomy:

The temptation in reading the Book of Deuteronomy is to adopt the perspective of its authors uncritically and to focus almost exclusively on the religious and theological aspects of the reform, downplaying or ignoring the social and political aspects, which were intimately connected with its theological aspects. One cannot talk about the beliefs or character of the religious doctrine of the Deuteronomistic writers divorced from the way they saw those beliefs expressed in action, that is, in the provisions for a just and humane political, social, and economic order.¹⁸

The Deuteronomic texts differ in formulation when compared with the P-source (Lev. 27²¹⁻²⁴, Num 18¹⁹⁻²¹) which implies that the texts belong either to different interest groups or to different social conditions in Israel. In the P-Source (Num.18²¹⁻²⁴), the

¹⁸ A.R.Ceresko. 2001. *The Old Testament. A Liberation Perspective*. New York: Orbis Books.

Levites live by the tithes in return for their services as cultic functionaries. On the other hand, in Deuteronomy, the Levites are grouped along with the marginal groups (widows, orphans and strangers) for whose purpose the tithe takes on a humanitarian motive. The variation in the formulation in the book of Deuteronomy may be attributed to the effort of the Redactors. In the view of O. Adoyo¹⁹, the book of Deuteronomy reflects a long and complicated literary history. This argument is supported by the major interests which scholarship have identified in the Deuteronomistic History namely the multiple Redactors theory which avers that there is Normistic (DtrN) interest which focuses on the law and secondly the Prophetic materials designated DtrP which centers on the prophetic interpretation of the Deuteronomistic History (DtrH). There is however a third interest identified in the text, the social interest in the Deuteronomic texts centering on the social status and social conditions of the marginal groups. This interest is what we encounter profusely in the law of the use of tithes, the advocacy of social justice, the appointment of Judges, and the Triennial tithe (Deut. 14²²⁻²⁹, 16^{9-12, 13-15}, 24^{17-18, 19-22}, Deut. 26⁵⁻¹⁵) in the D-code. Various attitudes emerged towards the phenomenon of social inequality which became pronounced under the monarchical system of government. For example the Jonadab and Rechabites who refuted the new way of life experienced under the monarchy resorted to live in tents, owning neither fields nor vineyards (Jer 35⁶⁻¹¹).²⁰ This response

¹⁹ Adoyo's work which examines the redactive layers in the Book of Deuteronomy says that current scholarship generally agrees that over centuries various redactors or redaction schools were successively involved in the making of this central book of the Hebrew Bible. It is claimed that these authors/redactors integrated both oral written materials in a large literary framework that exposes a characteristic style, vocabulary and 'ideology'. However, the so-called Deuteronomic School is not a uniform tradition, the book of Deuteronomy and related writings in the books of Joshua to Kings are a work of collective authorship. As a literary work these books reflect a variety of authors or redactors who over three to four centuries had revised and expanded in different historical situations the complex collection of traditions as contained in the Deuteronomistic History.

²⁰ H.F Halm. 1966. *The Old Testament in modern Research*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press. p.166

belongs to the Mosaic tradition, which obviously differs from the Davidic-Zionist tradition, although there is no literary work that has been attributed to this movement.

Despite the historical and cultural difference that exists between the *sitz-im-leben* (Life setting) of the texts and the Urhobo society, this study seeks to unravel the purpose of these texts in ancient Israel and their relevance to the Urhobo socio-cultural and religious context. It is worthy to note that as is in ancient Israel, the phenomenon of social inequality is evident in the hierarchical structure seen in the elders, women, and youth components of the society today. It refers also to the predicaments suffered by the less privileged in any given society as well as the physically challenged. Social inequality also by extension exists alongside gender and social status. Wealth, chieftaincy titles, or traditional position are evidences of social inequality in Urhobo social structure. Apart from these conventional social inequalities, there are variables which provide the rationale for the Deuteronomic text in addressing the problem of social inequality in the Urhobo society. The Deuteronomic texts segments under consideration are significant for the investigation of the phenomenon of social inequality in the Urhobo socio-cultural and religious setting. In this study effort is made to answer the following questions: What could be seen as the factors responsible for the promulgation of the regulations to take care of the less privileged group in ancient Israel. What were they intended to achieve in the religious and social setting in ancient Israel. Of what religious and social significance are they in contemporary society, for example, among the Urhobo people?

1.3 The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to promote the role of biblical contribution in addressing social problems in society and to show the importance of the Book of

Deuteronomy in addressing the phenomenon of social inequality. It aims at highlighting the importance of the book Deuteronomy and its interpretation in contemporary society, particularly in the socio-cultural and religious context of the Urhobo people. Although studies on the causes and nature of the phenomenon of social inequality have been carried out in different fields such as sociology and philosophy, the importance which the book of Deuteronomy brings to the discourse on the phenomenon of social inequality has not been given the desired attention in the biblical perspective. The book of Deuteronomy has the tradition which is particularly concerned with the less privileged in the society as pointed in the legal texts. D.J.Zucker²¹ observes: ‘Though the concept of caring for the stranger appears elsewhere in the books of the Torah (Ex.12⁴⁹,22²¹ Lev.19¹⁰ and so forth) it is in Deuteronomy that protection for the powerless has its strongest voice’.²² This has not been addressed in any socio-cultural context. It is against this background that this study investigates the role which biblical study can play in the effort at addressing the crises associated with the phenomenon of social inequality in the context of the Urhobo people. The aim of biblical studies is not restricted to theoretical considerations but a practical engagement with a living community. The study aims to show the role which biblical studies can play in addressing social problems of society.

²¹ D.J.Zucker. 2005. *The Torah : An Introduction for Christians and Jews*. New York: Paulist Press.p.174.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Although studies on the phenomenon of social inequality has largely been engaged-in from the point of view of sociology and philosophy, biblical studies has a major contribution to make towards addressing the crises associated with social inequalities. Therefore this study is relevant to the sociologists, political analyst, religious leaders, stake holders and leaders of thought who bear the responsibilities of leadership in communities. The study is relevant to the church as it highlights contemporary social issues which the church must be engaged with. Contemporary global, social and political crises cannot be said to be unconnected to inequalities in social status and wealth differentials which is the cause of the global political agitations and socio-economic related conflicts. The study is therefore relevance as it points to the sociological role the church has to play in contemporary society. It also serves as a contribution to the field of cross cultural studies as it draws attention to the similarities that exist between the Urhobo people and ancient Israelite society

1.5. Scope and Limitation of the Study

The concept of social inequality is dynamic. Social inequality exists when people receive more of a society's valuable goods than others owing to their position in the social network of relationships. Physiological differences such as exist in the eye, colour, body height, physical handicap, etc do not fall into the category of social inequality but that of natural inequalities. This is so because they do not result from social process. Jean J. Rousseau divides social inequality into two namely: Natural inequality, that is, those which result from natural process and those created by social conventions. In this research, emphasis has been placed on conventional social inequality that emanates from the social processes of the society. Theories about social inequality have also been

discussed from different perspectives; namely from the functionalist perspective, conflict and the symbolic interactionist points of view. The functionalist theory believes that society functions so that the individual plays a specific role. This perspective of social inequality holds that, inequality is not only inevitable but also necessary for the smooth functioning of the society²³. The conflict theory championed by Karl Marx sees social inequality as a negative phenomenon. It is the result of economic system which puts some people in a disadvantaged position. This perspective of social inequality considers that society functions so that the individuals and their related group struggle to maximize their benefits. What this theory implies is that the global political conflict can be traced to the phenomenon of social inequality.

The third theory of social inequality which is Symbolic Interactionism (SI) is a sociological theory which emphasises that human life is governed by meaningful interactions between persons.²⁴ Rather than see power as the capacity of a person or group to realize their will despite the resistance by others, the Interactionist sees power as something that is negotiated²⁵. According to Herbert Blumer, the term "symbolic interaction" refers, 'to the peculiar and distinctive character of interaction as it takes place between human beings. The peculiarity consists of the fact that human beings interpret or "define" each other's actions instead of merely reacting to each other's actions. Their "response" is not aimed directly at the actions of one another but instead is based on the meaning which they attach to such actions. Thus, human interaction is mediated by the

²³ Theories on social inequality from a functionalist, conflict, and symbolic-Interactionist points of view. Retrieved Oct.,6,2010 from <http://www.Oppapers.com/essay/Theories>. Social inequality. The functional structural theory believes that all societies have important jobs and tasks that need to be carried out and persons must fill those positions.

²⁴ Symbolic Interactionism, Retrieved. Sept., 6, 2011 from [http://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/social psychology](http://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/social%20psychology).

²⁵ Weber, Max. 1946. *The sociology of charismatic Authority in essays in sociology* edited by Hans Gerith and C.wright Mills. New York.

use of symbols, by interpretation, or by ascertaining the meaning of one another's actions. This mediation is equivalent to inserting a process of interpretation between stimulus and response in the case of human behaviour. It originates from the ideas of George Herbert Mead and Max Weber, but was developed by Herbert Blumer. This theory is relevant in interpreting the Deuteronomic response to social inequality in Israel as it points to the theological point of view of the Deuteronomic School about the mosaic tradition. Of the three theories of social inequality, this most appropriately applies to Israel's socio-cultural and religious experience because without rejecting the structural organization the Deuteronomic School required and argued for care for the socially disadvantaged of the society.

The literary scope is the D-code (Deut 12-26), particularly the legal, or legislative formulations which concern themselves with the social status of the marginal groups in ancient Israel. The References to P-source showing similarities as well as variations which are attributed to the redaction process of the legislation was also investigated. The research did not consider ethnic sentiments which constitute another aspect of social inequality.

Three Local Government Areas in Delta State of Nigeria of Urhobo concentrated population were chosen to give sufficient geographical and demographic coverage to the research. These are: Udu Local Government Area, Ughelli South and Okpe Local Government. The reasons for the choice of these Local Government Areas are because they are not only contiguous but represent varieties that exist within Urhobo cultural heritages and traditions. These three, namely Udu, Ughelli South and Okpe Local Government Areas constitute part of Urhobo ethnic group in which the study was done.

There are cultural similarities between the Urhobos in Deltal State and other ethnic groups which indicate the relevance of the study across different ethnic groups.

An initial setback to the field work was the hesitance by respondents, especially in the semi-urban places, to answer questions on documents. This was probably due to fear or suspicion. However, this was overcome by engaging known persons. In the villages where the researcher is known this was not a problem. The questionnaires were interpreted in both English and the local language which is Urhobo.

1.6 Research Methodology

In carrying out this research, several methods are employed. These are the Historical-critical method which is predominantly applied in the study of biblical texts and Questionnaire. The historical-critical method of exegesis focuses on the origin and development of a text in order to uncover its hermeneutical understanding and interpretation.²⁶ This method was employed in investigating the historical, social and cultural context of the relevant bible texts chosen for exegesis. Being a constellation of methods, two, namely Form-Criticism and Textual Criticism were chosen to analyse the texts. Form-critical analysis concerns the form of a text. According to K. Koch²⁷ the literary type determines the scope of the contents of a material in advance and restricts them to a particular function of communication. In the light of this, the texts were investigated following Abrecht Alt's classification of 'Apodictic' and 'Casuistic' forms. The Textual critical analysis, which deals with the quest for the original words within the text, was also used. The methods discussed above are the Hermeneutic principles of

²⁶ M.J. Gorman. 2008. *Elements of Biblical Exegesis. A basic Guide for Students and Ministers*. Massachusetts: Hendrickson publishers. Inc. p.15. The Historical-Critical method is the umbrella name for several methods which include *Textual criticism, Historical-linguistic criticism, Form criticism, Source criticism, Tradition criticism, Redaction criticism*. These are grouped as Diachronic - methods

²⁷ Klaus Koch. 1969. *The Growth of Biblical Tradition: The Form Critical Method*. London: Adams & Charles Black. p.5.

enquiry which were found relevant in the interpretation of the texts in order to arrive at the meaning of the text. Using the Normative theory of interpretation, the theory which attempts to answer questions of the intention of the authors of a legal text, the plain meaning of the chosen texts (Deut 14²²⁻²⁹, 16^{9-12, 13-15}, 24^{17-18, 19-22}, 26¹²⁻¹⁵) the D-code passages are simply taken in this study as a response to the phenomenon of social inequality which became prevalent in ancient Israel in the 7thc BC. In the light of this understanding, these texts are interpreted as response relevant in addressing the phenomenon of social inequality among the Urhobo people of Niger Delta of Nigeria.

Oral interview methodology²⁸ was employed as well as questionnaires which were administered in purposively selected villages and cities in three Local Government Areas in Urhobo²⁹ in order to elicit the necessary information on the people's view about the subject matter. Three 'Focus Group' discussions sessions composed of different categories of persons, age and sex was also constituted for the purpose of gaining first-hand information on the subject matter which the questionnaire may not be able to highlight³⁰. There was a visit to Orphanage Home for the purpose of fact finding of social conditions of Orphans.

The employment of the critical method and the questionnaire helped to arrive at an 'informed opinion about the relevance of the biblical text in the context of the Urhobo people. Four hundred (400) copies of questionnaire were distributed and later collected

²⁸ Samples of questions of the Oral Interview are in Appendix II. Those interviewed include. Pa. Samson Gbavwe (Retired Civil servant) , Chief Stephen Ewvrihe (Retired civil servant) Mrs Torhe Riaphreruhor (widow) Mrs Charity Ero (House wife) Mrs Bagge Vuodeyode (widow) Delinrha Martha (Orphan)

²⁹ Villages and Towns in which questionnaire were distributed include: Emadadja, Orhuwhorun, Egbo Uhurie, Otujeremi, Ovwian, Orerokpe, Oginibo Town.

³⁰ The Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) held show that the marginal groups (widows and orphans) have common experience in the Urhobo society. The groups recognized growing impact of social inequality and holds that the Church could be involved in finding solution to the problems associated with the phenomenon of social inequality.

with Three Hundred (300) returned, representing 75%. Efforts were made to calculate information gathered from the questionnaire by simple percentage using the formula

$$\frac{N}{TN} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

‘N’ stands for respondent and TN the total number of respondents whose questionnaire were retrieved per stated question. N is multiplied by 100 and total obtained divided by ‘TN’ to give the percentage to each variable tested. The standard deviation on each questionnaire was calculated to show the variation of the answers by the respondents to the mean. The questionnaire analysed on the above basis also complements the result of the other chosen methods.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was anchored to Gottwald’s Liberation Hermeneutics which identifies issues of social class, race and gender struggles inherent in biblical texts. It rests on the hypothesis that the Bible is the product and record of historical, cultural, gender, racial and social class struggles.³¹ In the view of Mosala I.J, Biblical hermeneutics of liberation uses the tool of struggling to interrogate the readers’ history, culture and ideology and as well addresses the question of the material conditions that constitute the sites of the struggles that produced the biblical text. Put simply it is interrogating the biblical text to understand the struggles behind the text and its relevance to the readers’ history and culture. The aim is to revitalize a biblical text for a different social context. This is biblical hermeneutics which according to Akao J.O employs various methods or tools to revitalise or interpret the word of God to the contemporary

³¹ I.J.Mosala. 1989. *Biblical Hermeneutics and Black Theology in South Africa*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. p.9.

audience.³² Liberation Hermeneutics which is a method in biblical hermeneutics therefore takes the results from its hermeneutics and applies to any social and cultural situation where elements of oppression and struggles exist.³³ In the view of Amilcar Cabral (In the context of South Africa) observes:

Liberation of the people means liberation of the productive forces of our country, the liquidation of all kinds of imperialist or Colonial domination of our Country, and the taking of every measure to avoid any new exploitation of our people we want equality, social justice and freedom. Liberation for us is to take back our destiny and our history.³⁴

Liberation Hermeneutics however does not concern itself with forces of external imperialism but considers from within concerns of inequalities which occur in any social system.³⁵ Where oppressive elements exist in the form social marginalization Liberation Hermeneutics takes them up for interrogation with the aim of proffering biblical response. The Deuteronomic Response to social inequality in ancient Israel takes the egalitarian ideology of the premonarchical period championed in the Mosaic tradition to address the phenomenon of inequality inherent in the royal Davidic tradition which is

³² J.O.Akao. 2000. *Biblical Hermeneutics: Principles and practice*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press. p.33.

³³ According to Ukpong, in his work "Rereading the Bible with African Eyes: Inculturation and Hermeneutics," says, "African scholars can neither nor should researchers avoid the contextual implications of exegesis, because the purpose of investigating a text is to allow the "gospel message" to transform and change society. By Gospel message here he means both the theological relevance of and life application of biblical text. The goal of exegesis is "to actualise the theological meaning of the text in a contemporary context. In the view of G. LeMarquand the interpretation of the text is undertaken not primarily to solve intellectual queries; the paramount concern of hermeneutics is to transform society. (See, J.Ukpong. 1995. Rereading the Bible with an African Eye: Inculturation and Hermeneutics. *JTSA*. 91:4.

³⁴ I.J.Mosala. 1989. *Biblical Hermeneutics and Black Theology in South Africa*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. p.67.

³⁵ Gottwald refers to a social system as the whole complex, communal interactions involving functions, roles, institutions, customs, norms and symbols. A social system may be understood as active in the communal production of goods, services and ideas and in the communal control of the distribution of goods, services and ideas. See, N.K. Gottwald. 1979. *The Tribes of Yahweh. A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel 1250-1050 BCE*. New York: Orbis Books. p.18.

status-quo oriented, a socio-cultural setting which leaves the marginal group in adverse condition. Where a replica of social conditions exist, the Liberation Hermeneutics is relevant in interpreting the Deuteronomic texts which is intended in the Urhobo socio-cultural context in the study.

1.8 Geographical Location and Origin of the Urhobo People

As this study is situated among the Urhobo people, it will be necessary to discuss the geographical location, origin and culture of the people. The Urhobo people are one of the various ethnic groups that make up the indigenous tribes of south Western Nigeria. They are a major tribe in the Niger Delta. They are not only united by virtue of ethnicity and culture but also by the geographical feature of the territory they occupy.³⁶ The area occupied by them lies between latitude $5^{\circ} 15'$ and 6° North and longitude $5^{\circ} 40'$ and $6^{\circ} 25'$ East. The region is characterised by a swampy terrain. The landscape is mostly plain dominated by the rain forest. The rain forest vegetation is made possible by the humid conditions and the weather which is characterised by the rainy and dry season with the rains for most part of the year. There are numerous rivers, lakes and streams within the swamp forest. The forests which are bushy with thick underground grasses and different species of trees is a source among other things of timber woods. As a result of these geographical features, two occupations are characteristic of the Urhobo people namely; subsistence farming and fishing. Bruce Onobrakpeya says, 'First and foremost the Urhobo people are subsistent farmers. They occasionally produce sufficient supplies to

³⁶ O. Otite "Ed." 2003. *The Urhobo People*. Ibadan: Shenason C.I. Ltd. p. 11.

allow for cash crops, but this is more the exception than the rule'.³⁷ The major crops are yam, cocoyam, cassava, plantain, peppers and assorted legumes.³⁸

Apart from the subsistence farming, the Urhobo people also engage in fishing. This is made possible by the abundance of rivers and streams. The swamps also serve as natural habitats for various species of fish. For the purpose of executing their fishing activities the Urhobo people engage in making canoes like their Ijaw neighbours; providentially in this, they have become experts.³⁹ Ponds are dug to breed fishes of different species providing large quantities of fish during the harvest season which falls in the dry harmattan season. The changing scenario which has thrown a large part of Urhobo into ecological degradation and near disaster is worth mentioning. Oil pollution has greatly affected the natural habitat and the people's economy, has been jeopardized. Simply put, the economic activities have taken a new dimension from the earlier agrarian economy to an industrial-commercial orientation with its own consequences on the people. The outcome is the emergence of variation in the socio-economic status.

The Urhobo ethnic group is made up of twenty-two political units or clans spread across nine local government areas. The twenty two clans are Agbarha-Otor, Agbarho, Agbon, Arhavwarien, Evwreni, Idjerhe Oghara, Ogor, Okere (Urhobo) Okparabe, Okpe, Olomu, Orogun, Udu, Ugbelli, Ughievwen, Ughwerun and Uvwie. The nine local governments consist of Ethiope East, Ethiope West, Okpe, Ughelli South, Ughelli North, Sapele, Udu, Uvwie and part of Warri South. They share common boundaries with the Isoko to the East, Ijaw to the South, Edo to the North, and Itsekiri to the West.

³⁷ P. Foss "Ed." 2004. *Where Gods and Mortals Meet: Continuity and Renewal in Urhobo Arts*. New York: MAA. p. 26.

³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 26.

³⁹ See: J.W. Hubbard. 1948. *The Sobo of the Niger Delta*. Zaria: Gaskiya Corporation.

Various traditions exist as to the origin of the Urhobo people. The four traditions are (1) Autochthony (2) Emigration from original Edo territory (3) Tradition of Origin from the Yoruba town of Ile-Ife and (4) Tradition of origin from Sudan and Egypt. The two mostly favoured are the autochthony and emigration from Edo territory. The autochthony says the Urhobo people are autochthonous asserting that they were original dwellers and owners of their territory. As aborigines they have been living in their territories from time immemorial.⁴⁰

The emigration tradition says that there were two major migrations which took place under the *Ogisos* and *Eweka*⁴¹ dynasties in *Bini* history. According to Otite, O., 'The Urhobo remember clearly the *Ogisos* dynasty consisting of 31 known rulers (*Ogisos*) before the alleged journey from *Ile-Ife* that gave rise to the *Eweke* dynasty.'⁴² It is said that the name '*Igodomigodo*' which refers to the name of territory is repeated and remembered in connection with cruelty, bitterness and deprivation which made the less powerful to leave their Edo abode in search of a more peaceful place with plenty economic resources. This took them to their present abode and this probably accounts for the egalitarian orientation of the people. Each community exist almost independently of the other. By its nature the social structure of the Urhobo people can best be described as hierarchical and communal. Recognition is given to persons for the various positions of authority they occupy and the functions they perform in society. This structure includes Elders, the Plutocrats, Men and Women and the Youth. This social structure also includes the privileged and the less privileged in society. It is clear from the experience in recent times that the communal nature of Urhobo social system in which the less privileged had

⁴⁰ O. Otite, *Op. cit.* p. 25.

⁴¹ The names *Ogiso* and *Eweka* refer to the dynasties and families after which they were named.

⁴² *Ibid*, p. 26.

previously received some form of protection in the past is not the same today? This study therefore investigates the relevance of the Deuteronomic response to the phenomenon of social inequalities and as it affects the marginal groups in Urhobo. Literature abounds about the culture and traditions of Urhobo people but has not addressed this perennial problem. What is the nature of the phenomenon of social inequality and how has this become more pronounced? Is there a social system that care for the less privileged?

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter examines the relevant literature on the subject matter adopting the thematic approach. The sub-themes include: (2.2) The concept of social inequality; (2.3) Deuteronomy, the Deuteronomist and the Deuteronomic School; (2.4) The language and style of Deuteronomy; (2.5) Social Class in Biblical studies; (2.6) Urhobo society and social structure; (2.7) The Deuteronomic Response to social inequality; and (2.8) Conclusion.

2.2. The Concept of Social Inequality

The subject of social inequality is dynamic and has been discussed in different fields of studies. These include Philosophy, Sociology and Biology. One view holds that the phenomenon of inequality is a theory which centres around the idea of an equal distribution of goods that are considered socially valuable, but focuses on deviations from this principle in the form of social inequalities⁴³. According to this theory, social inequalities consist of socially generated and stable restrictions on social groups to the access of desirable goods and life chances which are accepted in the society. From the above given definition, we can say that social inequality is in two broad categories namely; natural inequality and socially created inequalities. For the purpose of this study, social inequality can be defined as the prejudices and exclusions suffered by persons in any given society. These exclusions may include access to desirable goods of the society or denial of the right of individuals. Social inequality was a subject of major concern in

⁴³ E. Cyba. 2005. Social Inequality and Gender. Retrieved July, 12,2008, from <http://www.jsse.org/2005-2inequality-cyba.htm>

the Old Testament. According to Kohlenberger, J.R.,⁴⁴ one of the social concerns of the covenant in Israel is that no one, however disabled, impoverished or powerless, ought be oppressed or exploited. This theme is expressed both in the concern for the poor in the prophetic literature and in the legal codes. It is also shown in the concern for the neighbour. Israel as an alternative covenant community must be radically different from the great empires of the day which are highly exploitative and oppressive. Coorilos observes that the Monarchy in Israel brought major social and economic inequalities in the society of Israel which Deuteronomy addresses.

The sociological and philosophical meaning of the concept of social inequality was examined in the works of J. Jacques Rousseau⁴⁵, Plato⁴⁶, and K. Marx Webster⁴⁷. In the view of J. Rousseau two forms of social inequality namely natural (Biological) inequality and moral or political inequality exist. The latter refers to inequality which arises from social conventions. This means social situation or circumstances in which some people are worse off than others through no fault of their own. In this work emphasis is laid on social inequality arising from human conventions. It means the prejudices, restrictions which a group of people suffer from or are subjected in their community, e.g. the Orphan, the Widow and the Sojourner. Social inequality often leads to denial and lack of access to basic facilities or necessities of life. Contemporary view sees social inequality as referring to the ways in which socially defined categories of persons (according to characteristics such as gender, age, class and ethnicity) are differentially positioned with

⁴⁴ K.L Barker, J.R Kohlenberger (III). 1994. *Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. p. 256.

⁴⁵ J.J. Rousseau. A dissertation on the origin and foundation of the inequality of mankind. Retrieved June, 2, 2011, from http://wwwforhand.edu/Rousseau_inequality.

⁴⁶ *The New Encyclopedia Britannica* in 30 vol.

⁴⁷ See : O. Otite and W. Ogionwo. 2006. *An Introduction to Sociological Studies*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books.

regard to access to a variety of social goods, such as the labour market and other sources of income, education and health care systems and forms of political representation and participation.

Plato as well as Aristotle in their respective claims argues for equality of persons and access to justice. This position was based on the principle of Formal Equality. When two persons have equal status in at least one normatively relevant respect, they must be treated equally with regard to this respect. This postulation stems from Plato's philosophy 'treat like case as like'. This argument states that everyone deserved the same dignity and the same respect. The dominant idea in the argument is that justice demands proportionate equality. Locke who argues in the same vein states all human beings have the same natural right to both (self-) ownership and freedom.⁴⁸ This corroborates T.Hobbes' position who holds that in their natural conditions individuals possess equal rights. These philosophical postulations base equality on the principle of equity and justice. Nevertheless this does not deny inequality in society.

The impact of social inequality in contemporary societies is identified in the correlation between the phenomenon of social inequality and stress related illnesses, crime and violence. In addition, social inequality can impede democratic or political stability and may act as support for the establishment of authoritarian regimes. The opposite of social inequality is Equality. This is itself a highly contested term. It concerns the material requirements and measure of the ideal of equality. It involves such questions as, equality of what, equality among whom? Equality is said to signify correspondence between a group of different objects, persons, processes or circumstances that have the

⁴⁸ The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy definition of the concept of equality.

same qualities in at least one respect, but not in all respects.⁴⁹ In the view of G.A. Cohen, equality requires equal opportunity of welfare, for example, in a case of a paralysed person being given a wheelchair independently of the person's welfare level.⁵⁰ This is the principle of moral equality which is understood as prescribing treatment of persons as equals, that is, with equal concern and respect. Some advocates⁵¹ of equality think that inequality can only be ended by depriving those who are better off of their resources rendering them as poorly off as everyone else. This is however not the Deuteronomic view of social inequality.

What is penitent about the Deuteronomic advocacy for equity of all is that it has interface with social justice. While social justice aims at righting the wrongs and in the areas of deprivation and violation human rights, Deuteronomic equity advocates for accommodation and toleration of all cases of natural inequality cum social injustice.

The subject of social inequality has its ancient near eastern background. This was investigated in the Egyptian documents which relate that all men are created equal with access to basic necessities of life. The king is portrayed as the champion and protector of the weak in the Egyptian text. This suggests the similarities in thought and theological

⁴⁹ The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy defines the concept of equality and inequality that is relevant to the discussion. Retrieved April, 25, 2009 from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/equality>.

⁵⁰ The Stanford Encyclopedia, *Op. cit.* p.37. For more on 'equality' see, Cohen Gerald A. 1993. *Equality of What? On welfare, Goods, and Capabilities*, Oxford : Oxford University press, p.9-29.-----2000, *If you are Egalitarian How come you are so Rich*. Cambridge: Harvard University press,-----2007, *Rescuing Justice and Equality*. See: R. Dahrendorf, on 'The Origin of social inequality' in: *Philosophy, Politics, and Society*. Oxford: Blackwell.

⁵¹ This is Parfit's (1997) *Priority* view which calls for improving the situation of society's weaker and poorer members. It also corresponds to the *entitlement theory of justice* view of Nozick's (1974) which holds that the wealth of those better off be transferred for the sake of mitigating the distress of the weaker (See: Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy).

reflection of the Deuteronomic response to the Ancient Near Eastern culture. According to Maimonides,⁵²

A man ought to be especially mindful of his behaviour towards widows and orphans, for their souls are exceedingly depressed and their spirits low. Even if they are wealthy, even if they are the widow and orphans of a king, we are specifically enjoined concerning them as it is said, 'Ye shall not afflict any widow or orphan (Ex. 28²¹).⁵³

This comment sees the care of the orphan as a religious obligation and social responsibility in society as a response to social inequality. According to VanGemenen, the orphan is overwhelmingly listed along the widow and the alien as a compositional *triad* and points to the weak and helpless segment of society the ones who are most vulnerable to injury and abuse.⁵⁴ Social inequality constitutes a major concern of the Deuteronomistic and the Prophetic tradition by the regular call to attention of the marginal groups.

In the text segments (Deut 14²²⁻²⁹, 16^{9-12,13-18} 24^{17-18, 19-22} and 26¹²⁻¹⁵) mention is made repeatedly of the marginal groups (orphans, widows, sojourners, the Levites). The primary importance therefore lies not in the literary function but in the response which they deserve. The importance of these texts must be sought in the function which they perform in the context of Israel's society⁵⁵ The phrase, '*and the Levite because he*

⁵² Maimonides was a Jewish philosopher, physician, and foremost intellectual figure of medieval Judaism who wrote a commentary on the Mishna, the collected Jewish Oral laws. His name was originally Moses Ben Maimon. (Born 30th March 1135 died 13th Dec.1204 BC)

⁵³ *Encyclopedia Judaica* p. 1478

⁵⁴ W.A.VanGemenen. 1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. UK: Paternoster Press. p.570.

⁵⁵ See: J.H. Hayes. 1968. The usage of oracle against foreign nations in ancient Israel *Journal of Biblical Literature (JBL)*. Lxxxviii. 81. He understands the prophetic oracle from the functions they perform in Israelite society.

has no portion of inheritance with you and the sojourner; the fatherless and the widows who are within your town' (Deut 14²⁹) which occur repeatedly in the text segment depicts the Deuteronomic perspective about the social status of these groups in Israel's society. The understanding of the Deuteronomic thought about the social status of the mentioned group must be seen against the background of the social inequality in general and Israel's society in particular. Max Weber, who is mostly accepted as the doyen of sociology and other social sciences dealing with modes of inequality, believes that those who are in class position at the top of the apex (of power distribution in society) also hold most power in society. He identifies three dimensions of social inequality namely; class (which correlates with the economy) status (which correlates with the cultural aspects of society) and party (which correlates with the political aspect of society). Israel's society of the 7th century already had a classified social structure with the emergence of monarchical system of government with the king representing the party, the merchants the economic class (Amos 4¹) while retaining the structural functional model which accommodates the role of the elders, Judges, Priests and prophets. In the cultic setting the elders (probably with reference to the priests) lay hands on the sacrifice (Lev 4³⁻¹²). The functions of the elders were diverse, acting as leaders of communities and as decision makers and as judges. This hierarchical structure is largely similar to what obtains in the Urhobo society.

The selected texts dealing with widows, strangers and orphans which are conventionally viewed as rules meant to aid the plight of the vulnerable persons in ancient Israel has been contested by Harold Bennett⁵⁶ who argues that the Deuteronomic

⁵⁶ H.V. Bennett. Injustice made legal, Deuteronomic laws and the plight of widows, strangers and orphans in Ancient Israel. Retrieved April, 25, 2009. from <http://www.questia.com/googleScholar.qst>.

texts were actually drafted by a powerful elite class to enhance their own material condition and keep the peasantry down. He dates the texts to the ninth century and assigned them to the North. Using critical law theory he believes that the laws were meant to manipulate the peasantry rather than help them. Harold's thesis recognizes the relevance of these regulations as addressing the social condition of the marginal group but does not give recognition to the theological ties between the Deuteronomic school and the prophetic tradition in Israel. The relationship between the Deuteronomic theological persuasion and the prophetic tradition compels one to hold the view that they constitute the voice of the voiceless. The programme advocated by the Deuteronomic texts provides a benchmark for social reforms relevant to the phenomenon of social inequality in contemporary times. Recognition is given to men with great natural endowment and skill; i.e. men of great ability in the Old Testament (1Kgs.11²⁸). So also is reference made to very able men for the work of the service of God (1Chron 9¹³ 1Chron 26⁸ 1Sam 9¹) Sometimes the idea of being great is not used only in the special sense of being a man of great valour in battle but of marked moral or material worth.⁵⁷ Thus, the references to persons of high positions and their social status in Israel's society as well as the marginal groups draw attention to the phenomenon of social inequality and must be understood from both structural functional as well as from the symbolic-interactionist perspective.⁵⁸

Jean Jacques Rousseau, in his incisive philosophical enquiry into the subject of social inequality and its origins, differentiates between natural 'inequality' and socially created inequalities. He defines these as natural inequalities or moral and political

⁵⁷ The concept of being great entails both military prowess and material acquisition by which class is intended.

⁵⁸ Symbolic Interactionism focuses on how a person is valued by others in the society.

inequality. While natural inequality is established by nature and refers to the differences in age, health, bodily strength, the inequality of mind and soul, socially created inequality or political inequality consists of the different privileges which some enjoy to the prejudice of others such as that of being more rich, more honoured, more powerful or even in a position to exact obedience. Rousseau ties the phenomenon of inequality in human society to ambition. He observes:

Insatiable ambition, the thirst of raising their respective fortunes not so much from real wants as from the desire to surpass others, inspired all men with vile propensity to injure one another and with a secret jealousy which is the more dangerous, as it puts on the mask of benevolence, to carry its points with greater security.⁵⁹

The response of the Deuteronomist was to address both socially created inequalities and natural inequalities through the process of symbolic interactionism. The theory of social identity is applicable with the groups who as a result of race differ from Israelite commonwealth. Thus the *ger* (the sojourner) and the *almanah* (the widow who through natural occurrences has lost their bread winners) need social support.

E.M. Coorilos⁶⁰ in his study of neighbourliness in the Book of Deuteronomy draws attention to the understanding of Israel as a covenant community. The Deuteronomic understanding of Israel as a covenant community in the view of Coorilos demands that she expresses preferential option for the less privileged neighbours such as widows, orphans and strangers (Deut. 10.^{17-18,19} 15). Israel as an alternative covenant

⁵⁹ J. Jacques Rousseau. A dissertation on the origin and foundation of the Inequality of Mankind. Retrieved. June 2, 2011, from <http://www.edu/rousseau-inequality>. See: M. Haralambos. *Op. cit.*, p. 27.

⁶⁰ E.M. Coorilos. Being and Becoming a Neighbour Biblical Reflections. Retrieved Sept., 22, 2008 from <http://www.nccusa.Org/poverty/sermon.Coorilos.html>.

community must be radically different from the great empires of the day which are highly exploitative and oppressive. Coorilos observes that the monarchy in Israel brought major social and economic inequalities in the society of Israel which Deuteronomy addresses. This work though examines the theme of social inequality in the context of Israel's neighbourliness as a characteristic of Israel's community, Coorilos' work, however does not include the attention drawn to the response to the phenomenon of social inequality from the point of view of ancient Israelite traditions which constitute a major concern of the Deuteronomic School.

W. Brueggemann,⁶¹ in his work, *Trajectories in the Old Testament*; examines the two predominant traditions in Israel, namely the Mosaic and the Davidic traditions. Although the two seem continuous, such that the Davidic is derived from the Mosaic, yet there is tension and conflict between both. The Mosaic tradition tends to be a movement of protest which is situated among the disinherited and which articulates its theological vision in terms of a God who decisively intrudes even against seemingly impenetrable institutions and orderings. On the other hand, the Davidic tradition tends to be a movement of consolidation which is situated among the established and which articulates its theological vision in terms of a God who faithfully abides and sustains on behalf of the present ordering. By the present ordering, he means the socio-political realities that have been entrenched by the forces of social inequalities. Each trajectory, according to Brueggemann, reflects important socioeconomic and political concerns. This work is important for this study. Although he examines the traditions and their theological articulations, the response to the social structural anomaly as reflected in the biblical texts

⁶¹ W. Brueggeman 1979, 'Trajectories in Old Testament Literature and the Sociology of Ancient Israel' in *Journal of Biblical Literature*. June. 98.2: 161-185.

is not treated. This work is important for this study because the theological philanthropic articulation of the Deuteronomic School can properly be located in the Mosaic tradition.

Imoagene O.,⁶² in his book, *'The Nigerian Class Structure'*, argues in support of the emerging class structure in Nigeria. The arguments raised against the existence of classes in African societies in contrast to Europe namely Pluralism, Multiple ranking system, Tribal loyalties and lack of segregation and the phenomenon of corporate political activity were contended by Imoagene in his work. For example, the pattern of interaction between the elite and kinsmen and the non-elite as a result of the communal nature of African society, is said to blur rather than sharpen class divisions. On the contrary, Imoagene argues that an ecological study of any major town in West Africa today stands to show the extent of segregation between the elite and the masses.⁶³ The presence of what was known in colonial days as *European Quarters* or *Reservation Areas* justifies this. He also mentions the changing marriage pattern in the Nigeria society as a reflection of class consciousness. For him, there is an emerging class consciousness especially in terms of economic category. Imoagene's work highlights the nature of the phenomenon of social inequality in Urhobo as well as what was obtained in Ancient Israel and the need for a biblical response which this study investigates. Rather than the structural functional approach, the perspective of Imoagene's work takes the conflict theory which envisages confrontation in the society. He does not however apply the biblical approach as a response.

⁶² O Imoagene "Ed." 1989. *The Nigerian Class Structure*. Ibadan: Evans Brothers (Nigeria Publishers Ltd).

⁶³ *Ibid*, p. ix.

2.3 Deuteronomy, the Deuteronomist, and the Deuteronomistic School

Literatures⁶⁴ on the Book of Deuteronomy have concerned themselves mostly with the authorship of the Book of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic history. J. Wellhausen and W. M. C. De Wette, who consigned the entire book of Deuteronomy to Josiah's era, did so largely on the basis of the Deuteronomistic legislation enjoining a cultic monopoly. The basis of this argument is that the book of the law which was discovered during Josiah's reform was the book of Deuteronomy. This argument further believes that the legislations contained there were believed to have influenced Josiah's reform. Central to this discourse was whether there should be one cultic centre or several. Thus the catch phrase, 'the place which Yahweh will choose' dominated the argument. In the view of H. Baruch⁶⁵ the centralization formula should be understood in two distinct ways. These are, 'the traditional view which refers to a single site, usually Jerusalem, or a northern site and the second view represented by T. Oestreicher and A. C. Welch which denies and dismisses the traditional view but holds that the phrase 'the place that Yahweh chooses' had no single reference but distributive and presumed a multiplicity of sanctioned shrines. What the law of the cult centralization implies is that its promulgation would have resulted into the dislocation for the Levites who serve at the local sanctuaries. Therefore it is inconceivable to think that the Levites who served at the local sanctuaries would promulgate the cult centralization which would deny them of their cultic function. In support of this M. Weinfeld argues,

⁶⁴ Several monographs on Social Sciences include: Ahstrom Gosta, 1982, *Royal Administration and National Religion in Ancient Palestine*, Leiden: Brill. Berquist, Jon L, 1995, *Judaism in Persian Shadow: A Social and Historical Approach*, Minneapolis: Fortress, Carroll, Robert. P, 1988, *When prophecy Failed: Cognitive Dissonance in the Prophetic Traditions of the Old Testament*, New York: Seabury. Coote, Robert B, and Mary P. Coote, 1990, *Power, Politics, and the making of the Bible: An Introduction*, Minneapolis: Fortress.

⁶⁵ H. Baruch. 1987. The Centralization formula in Deuteronomy. *Vetus Testamentum*. Jan .xxxi.1:21.

‘For the Levites to compose and propagate the doctrine of centralisation would be like a man sawing through the branch (*of the tree*) upon which he is perched. Nor could the Levites have had access to the wealth of literary material which Deuteronomy comprises, only a neutral circle could have drawn upon the various types of literary material which make up Deuteronomy⁶⁶.

In the light of the above, M. Weinfeld seeks to find the authors in a neutral circle and this he does among the wisemen and scribes. This observation was reached on the bases of the similarities between the Vassal treaties of Esarhaddon (VTE) and the covenant form that the book of Deuteronomy exhibits. He says, ‘The similarities in the formulation of the Deuteronomic covenant and the Assyrian treaties led me to infer that trained scribes of the Judean court transferred literary patterns from the political sphere with which they were intimately familiar to the religious sphere with which they began to be active during the Hezekian-Josianic reign. This position differs from C.F.Burney, Wetch, Bentzen and Von Rad, who think that the authors must be sought among the heirs of the religious traditions of the Northern Kingdom and among the disciples of the prophets or in the Levitical circles. In the light of the diversities of opinions it is most probably that the authorship lies with the scribes and disciples of the prophets whose views were congruent with Mosaic traditions. The author combines exhortations and legal stipulations, all of which derive from older traditions and are interpreted in the light of changing social and political situations in Israel. The link of the authorship of the Book with the theme of social inequality is that Deuteronomy was a creation of the scribal circles which began their literary project prior to the reign of Josiah with the

⁶⁶ M. Weinfeld. 1972. *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School*. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press. p.55.

view of providing a theoretical framework for organising the cultic and social life of Israel. One cardinal objective of the book was to champion the course of the marginal groups which we find in the text segments.

M. Noth's Deuteronomistic History, which was built upon W.M.C. De Wette's thesis, assigns the book of Deuteronomy to the era of Josiah and designates the book of the law discovered under Josiah's Reform as the Book Deuteronomy. Rather than a single author of the Deuteronomistic History as propounded by M. Noth⁶⁷ the theory of the composite authorship championed by Von Rad, Smend, T. Veijola⁶⁸ observes that there are differences in the interests of authors leading to the theory of Multiple Redactors. The two major interests were the Normistic (DtrN) which focuses on the laws, and the Prophetic materials which are designated DtrP whose interest centers on a prophetic interpretation of the Deuteronomistic History (DtrH). The Deuteronomist (Dtr) here refers to the author(s) compiler(s) who put together the Deuteronomistic History. M. Weinfeld's, '*Deuteronomy and Deuteronomistic school*⁶⁹', whose interest is to discover the group behind the Book of Deuteronomy, Von Rad, Smend, T. Veijola which were examined ascribes the authorship of Deuteronomy to the Scribal Circles. These studies concern themselves with the authorship of the Book of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History. They identified the various interests of the redactors namely the Normistic (Dtr N) i.e. the law and the Priestly (Dtr P). Here a gap is found, namely that the phenomenon of social inequality which is reflected in the D-code, especially with

⁶⁷ M.Noth.1953. *The Deuteronomist History (Überlieferungsgeschichtliche studien)* 2 edition, Tübingen Niemeyer (Sheffield: JSOT Press. 1981).

⁶⁸ D.N. Freedman, G.A. Herion *et al* "Eds." 1992. *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (D-G) London: Double Day Press) pp.161-168.

⁶⁹ M. Weinfeld. 1972. *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic school*. Oxford: At Clarendon Press. see T. Oestericher.1929. *Problem of Deuteronomy* .(JBL) 48: 291-306.

reference to the social status of the marginal groups in Ancient Israel namely the Orphans, Widows, Sojourners and the Levites were not investigated which, by implication, are issues for the contemporary society. This gap exists largely because biblical studies have been concerned largely with theological matters rather than sociological issues. Coupled with this is the hegemony of biblical studies done from Western cultural background and has given little attention to issues of class inequality. The question that the authorship of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History raises is what group lies behind the literary work and what interest?

The Deuteronomic School

The understanding that the Deuteronomic School was responsible for the composition of Deuteronomy, the Deuteronomistic History and the editing of Jeremiah goes back to M. Noth's theory of the Deuteronomistic History (DtrH) Gerhard Von Rad⁷⁰, M. Weinfeld⁷¹ and those who understand the School as constituted by scribal guilds says that their redactional activities spanned a long period of time, from possibly as early as the Pre-exilic period to the Persian period and shortly before Ezra. Von Rad observes: Deuteronomy makes its appearance at a definite point in the history of Israel's faith. ...at a relatively late date it gathers together practically the whole of the assets of the faith of Israel, re-sifting them and purifying them theologically. This theological purification Von Rad attributes to the Deuteronomic School. By theological purification he meant the re-interpretation of the earlier traditions and rites in ancient Israel with the

⁷⁰ G. Von Rad. 1963. *Studies in Deuteronomy*, Bloomsbury. Street London: SCM Press.

⁷¹ M. Weinfeld comments on the Deuteronomic School as follows: The authors of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School must be sought for, then, among circles which held public office, among persons who had at their command a vast reservoir of literary material, who had developed and were capable of developing a literary technique of their own, those experienced in literary composition and skilled with the pen and the book: those authors must consequently have been the *soferim-hakamin*.

view of identifying their religious and social significance. The School however consistently also included the social significance to the cultic regulations inherited from the earlier traditions. In the view of R.F. Person the Deuteronomistic School was an all encompassing scribal guild which rose in the Babylonian exile and dominated the bureaucratic and literary output of the Persian-period community in Judah until its demise in the time of Ezra when a new scribal school replaced it. Nicholson holds a different view. He argues that the ancient traditions of Israel preserved by the northern prophetic circles were transmitted by members of these circles (i.e., the Prophetic circle) to the South as they fled to Judah following the fall of Samaria in 721 BC. This suggests that the Deuteronomistic School was a prophetic and a literary group which began its work even before the Babylonian exile. This view which contrasts Raymond's sees the Deuteronomistic History and the Chronicles as contemporary historiographers but was produced by different scribal guilds, one in Babylon and one in Jerusalem. For R.F. Person both histories have a common institutional ancestry in the Deuteronomistic school of the Babylonian exile. The split occurred when the Deuteronomistic school returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel to provide scribal support for the rebuilding of the temple and its cult, leaving what became the Chronistic School in Babylon.⁷² With this difference of opinions means is that it may not be clear at what point the School began its work; whether in the ninth century or the seventh century BC. What is more likely is that it started from the pre-exilic and continued into the exilic period.

A School is said to exist where there is a continuous literary activity such as we find in the work of the Deuteronomists. The existence of literary schools in the ancient near East is variously attested by the presence of and role attached to the Scribes. Three

⁷² R. F. Person Jr. 2011. *The Deuteronomistic History, the Book of Chronicles, and their relationship*.

Hebrew terms are commonly used to describe the scribes. These are *Soper* ‘One who enumerates’, the root *Str* from the Akkadian language which means, ‘to write’ while the third is *Mazkir* *ryKi(z>m;* which literally means ‘One who reminds’ or ‘Court recorder’ (2Sam 8¹⁶, 20²⁴ 1kgs 4³, 2kgs 18^{18,37} 1Chron 18¹⁵, 2Chron 34⁸) It has been observed that such scribal schools were established in Egypt and Mesopotamia, training which resembles contemporary apprenticeships in which novices working under the tutelage of more senior scribes were made to copy ancient manuscripts. Copying ancient texts which was part of their training not only exposed them to ancient texts but become familiar to texts from across different spectrums and genres. These include diplomatic and royal correspondence, legal documents such as laws, treaties, socioeconomic texts and marriage settlements etc. For this reason it is believed that the Deuteronomic School was a closed guild in which the scribal arts of reading and writing were taught as training for the scribal profession. This guild is viewed as part of the court or temple bureaucracy responsible for all administrative texts and for official literary documents and religious texts. In the view of Person the Deuteronomic School is meant to convey the notion of a collection of scribes with a common ideology, like a philosophical School. Another way of speaking of the Deuteronomic School is the work of the multiple redactors in the Deuteronomic corpus who are responsible for the composition of the Deuteronomic History and the modifications of its texts, and who have been influenced by the oral mentality of the social context to produce a free non-literal transmission of the tradition⁷³. It is arguable that the interest of the redactors was not simply to preserve the traditions through the literary work but to interpret them and in persuasive manner to address both

⁷³ The Deuteronomic School: History, Social Setting, and Literature, By Raymond F. Person. Jr. 2000. *Studies in Biblical Literature* SBL. 2 Atlanta : Society of Biblical Literature.

cultic and social issues of their own times. This is evident in the use of the legal texts which are found in the Deuteronomic texts under consideration. That Deuteronomy originates from the (rural) Levitical circles in the northern kingdom has been argued. This connection, according to W.H.Schmidt is drawn on Deuteronomy's concern for their welfare (12^{12,18}) and includes them among the unfortunate who need protection and help (14²⁷, 26¹¹). This social vision of Deuteronomy is what we find reflected in the texts which give philanthropic consideration to the marginal groups. One of the social issues of the day was social inequality, and constitutes the concern of the prophetic tradition in Ancient Israel to which the Deuteronomic School derives its inspiration.

Both **THEOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL VISIONS** exist in **DEUTERONOMY**. The theological intention of Deuteronomy, it has been observed centers around three themes namely; One God, One People and One Cult. The concept of the One cult is considered in Deuteronomy as reason for the identification of the one single sanctuary with Jerusalem and is upheld as informing the cult centralization policy of Josiah (Deut. 12¹³⁻¹⁹). This demand for the exclusivity of the one center, 'Take heed that you do not offer your burnt offerings at every place that you see; but at the place which the Lord will choose in one of your tribes there you shall offer your burnt offerings (12^{13f}) and which called for the concentration of the Liturgy in a single place brought radical changes both in the cultic and social life of Israel. The implications for the religious and social life of Israel were, One God, one cult and unity of the people of God. This social vision which emerges from the theological, according to Schmidt W.H seeks to use the Unity of the people of God as the basis for conclusions regarding the social life of human beings. It expresses concern for social justice and fair treatment of all thus:

The occupants of the highest offices are to come “from among the brethren” – thus the promised prophet (18^{15,18}) and even the King (17¹⁵) whose rights are sharply curtailed so that, ‘his heart may not be lifted up above his brethren (17²⁰) is there not perhaps an intimation here that despite the diversity of roles all are equal before God?’⁷⁴

These exhortations meant to regulate the social life of the people of Israel are considered relevant in contemporary societies as a result of the similarities in the social conditions especially as it affects the marginal groups. Schmidt W.H states further:

The relationship of the brethren to one another likewise yields social consequences. Even the impoverished fellow believer is your poor brother (15^{2f,7ff} etc also Lev.25³⁵) whom the Israelite is not to treat hardheartedly but whose debts he is rather to remit, so that the poor may have a share in God’s gift. Not only widows and orphans (Exo 22²²⁻²⁴ Isa. I^{17,23}) but also strangers ‘or’ citizens in need of protection (*gerim*) who live far from home and relations.⁷⁵

G.Holscher who is critical of the practical applicability of these regulations holds that ‘such regulations in which the rights of the individual or family may be put before the tasks of the community earns for Deuteronomy the criticism that it is ‘utopia’ in the sense of being remote from reality.’⁷⁶ This argument however fails to recognize the existing social structure of society which encourages inequality and puts some in marginal condition.

⁷⁴ W.H.Schmidt. 1984. *Introduction to the Old Testament*. London: SCM Press Ltd. p.134.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* p.132.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* p.135.

2.4. The Language and Style of Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy is marked with both theological and peculiar literary style. According to S.R.Driver, 'Nowhere else in the Old Testament do we breathe such an atmosphere of generous devotion to God, and of large-hearted benevolence towards man; and nowhere else is it shown with the same fullness of detail how these principles may be made to permeate the entire life of the community'⁷⁷. In vocabulary there are comparatively few exceptional words; but particular words and phrases, consisting sometimes of entire clauses which recur with extra-ordinary frequency, giving a distinctive colouring to every part of the work. Among the phrases characteristic of Deuteronomy are: 'In thy gate' (of the cities of Israel)(see Deut 12^{12,15,17,18,21}, 14^{21,27-29}, 15^{7,22}, 16^{5,11-14,18}, 17^{2,8} 18⁶ Ex.20¹⁰, 1Kgs 8³⁷, 2 Chron 6²⁸); The stranger, the fatherless, and the widow (see Deut 10¹⁸. 24^{17,19,20,21} 27¹⁹ cf. Ex 22^{21f} Jer 7⁶, 22³ Ezek.22⁷) The genre in Deuteronomy include; History, Law and Prophecy.⁷⁸ Each appears in various forms, and each is sometimes combined with one or both by the Deuteronomistic editor. The Deuteronomist makes use of both laws and narratives. Sometimes it combines Old traditions to arrive at its judgments. This is reflected in the text segments considered. The laws include various types of legislation, codification and related form of argumentation. From the text segments investigated the apodictic form of the laws are found employed by the Deuteronomist. The Deuteronomist's language is predominantly imaginative, abstract, and idiomatic. The style of the Deuteronomist is also parenitic⁷⁹, a method which the author(s) adopts, and subordinates to the historiographic and educational aim.

⁷⁷ S.R.Driver. 1956. *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*. New York: Meridian Books. p.79. For Holzinger this constitutes one of the leading principles of Deuteronomy.

⁷⁸ B. Peckham. 1993. *History and Prophecy: The Development of late Judean literary Traditions*. London: Doubleday. P .652.

⁷⁹ Parenetic is from *Paraenesis* which means to speak in praise of somebody or something.

From the beginning to the end the book was an address to the community. It is in Deuteronomy that social Israel can be reviewed and interpreted.

2.5. Social Class in Biblical Studies

Several works also exist on the phenomenon of social class⁸⁰ in Ancient Israel and its reflections in biblical texts. These include three categories namely; those that reflect the sociological realities and the social location reported about the text; Those whose concern is with the social location of the authors/Redactors of the text; and, Those who begin from the social location of the contemporary biblical scholars. These three approaches aim at one thing, namely, to show the sociological interest of the author in the texts.

N.K.Gottwald in his work 'Expropriated and the Expropriators in Neh. 5' examines the literary representation of events under Nehemiah's governorship that was congruent with the ancient Near Eastern political economy. This study highlights the social and economic affairs represented in the text. The study provides insight into the social identity of the debtors and creditors, the scope and remission of debt which is a reflection of social inequality in the 7th C and carried over into the post-exilic period. In identifying the causes of social inequality with the economic system, he says;

Social class may be said to exist whenever one group is able to appropriate a part of surplus labour product of other groups. In such a situation of exploitation, wealth and power accrue disproportionately to those who are able to claim and dispose of what others produce. Those who have this power of economic disposal tend to also have political predominance and ideological hegemony.⁸¹

⁸⁰ M.R Sneed. "Ed." 1990. Concept of class in Ancient Israel. M.A Sweeney 2000. Review of Biblical Literature from [http://www, JBL-Site.org](http://www.JBL-Site.org), Atlanta.

⁸¹ N.K.Gottwald. Social class as an Analytical and Hermeneutical category in Biblical studies. *Op cit*.

Gottwald argues that the presence of class in biblical texts is coloured to reflect the interest of the literary class. The Deuteronomic texts which are regarded as the response of the literary group to the phenomenon of social inequality corroborate Gottwald's argument for class distinction in biblical texts. Those who championed the course of the marginal groups in Israel in the 7th Century BC did so to protect the marginalized group from the negative impact of social inequality.

Sara Mandell in 'Primary History as a social construction of a Privileged Class' argues that the Primary History (Genesis-2Kings) was a social construction by a privileged class in Israel. She observes that it was the work of those who had the time and leisure to compose and enjoy such bucolic⁸² fictions. No class analysis or class realities are depicted in the text. To argue that social class was glossed over in the Primary History is an incorrect judgement as the Deuteronomic code (particularly the chosen text segments) poignantly address the social conditions of the marginal groups and the social changes brought about by the monarchical system, and the city life in ancient Israel. This position also argues against the acclaimed Wellhausen's JEDP documentary hypothesis which identifies four sources as the components of the Pentateuch. Rather than attributing the entire history to the privileged class in Israel whose interest it is to project the rights and privileges of the well to do in Israelite society, there were within the literary contents of the history the concerns for the less privileged in the society represented by the Deuteronomic School.

⁸² Bucolic means relating to the country side. Deuteronomy definitely does not dwell on the life of the country side alone.

M. Sneed⁸³ study in biblical sociology considers the development of the two primary classes namely the slaves and masters in Israel and traces it to the economy based on the land and landless dichotomy. Analyzing the Hebrew legal codes he notes the presence of laws that either presupposes these two classes or reinforces such class lines. Social class is the product of an economic system that empowers the land owners and marginalizes the landless of the society. Although the presence of these two interests is assumed in the work of Sneed, the motive for such difference is not articulated by the work. It is in this quest for the legal interests as a reflection of social inequality and the approach towards its resolutions in the biblical texts that the search for the Deuteronomic interest becomes relevant.

Niel Peter Lemche⁸⁴ objects to the use of the term social class for ancient society such as Israel. Israel has neither classes nor class consciousness, both of which are characteristic of industrialized societies. Rather than use such sociological and anthropological terms as family, lineage, tribe etc. to describe the social political construction of Israel, he suggests the term patron/client model. This argument does not however take into consideration the diachronic changes in Israel social structure especially with the emergence of the monarchy and its socio-economic impacts. The emergence of social inequality and social disparity in Israel political and economic arena had become pronounced in the national life of Israel in the 7th C as a result of the incursion of the monarchical system which eventually called for the Deuteronomic response.

⁸³ M. Sneed "Ed." 1999. A middle class in Ancient Israel (In the concept of class in Ancient Israel) Atlanta: Scholar press.

⁸⁴ N.P.Lemche. 1999. The Relevance of working with the concept of class in the study of Israelite society of the Iron Age. *Review of Biblical Literature*.

Philip Davies⁸⁵, in his work, *'Is There a class in this Text?'* identifies the authors of the Judean canon with the scribal classes and traces its origin to the Persian and later period. He also identifies a non-scribal but literate urban politically and economically well placed group that produced literatures that reflected their values e.g the Book of Esther, Ruth, and Song of Songs. Davies' assertion of the presence of the aristocratic group whose interest is said to be projected in the biblical texts supports the argument for the phenomenon of social inequality in Israel's social structure.

Roland de Vaux's *'Ancient Israel: Social Institutions'*⁸⁶ presents a detailed analysis of the social life of Israel with institutional and social structure of Israel. The components of the various institutions are examined with the view of providing the religious as well as social values attached to them. Describing the social status of the resident alien, Vaux observes that from the social point of view, the resident aliens were free men, not slaves but they do not possess full civil rights and so are different from the Israelite citizens. Although the Israelite cultus excludes persistently the resident alien from it, this exclusion the Deuteronomists tries to redefine by including them in the tithe regulations (Deut 14²²⁻²⁹) the Feasts and other social and religious activities. Vaux's work is valuable in this study as it identifies of the various segments of Israel's society.

Rui de Menezes,⁸⁷ in his book, *'God of Israel or God of All' Goal and function of the Pentateuch'* identifies the four Hebrew words used for the resident alien in the Pentateuch and their diachronic interpretations. These are *nokri* which refers to a total stranger or foreigner; The *zar* which refers to an unauthorized person and sometimes

⁸⁵ P. Davies. *Is there a class in this text?* In Mark R Sneed "Ed." 1999. *Concepts of Class in Ancient Israel*. South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism. 201.

⁸⁶ R. de Vaux. 1965. *Ancient Israel: Social Institutions*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

⁸⁷ S.J. Rui de Menezes. 2010. *God of Israel or God of all: Goal and Funtion of the Pentateuch*. Mumbai: The Bombay Saint Paul Society.

called an outsider, and the *ger* which is described as ‘resident alien’ or ‘expatriate’. Menezes assigns the fourth group called the *tosab* to the Book of Numbers as it is frequently used in the book in reference to the ‘resident alien’. He observes that the two (ie, *ger* and *tosab*) appear together as a pair also in the Holiness code, and they seem to have the same status (Lev.25^{47ff}) He adds, ‘sometimes one gets the impression that they form a *hendiadys*’ (Gen.23⁴) ~k, _M'[i ykiPnOa' bv'îAtw>-rGE (“I am a stranger and a sojourner among you;”) He defines the *ger* as a temporary resident alien and the *tosab* as a permanent resident alien, an assertion which however does not conform to the deuteronomists use of the term in the Deuteronomic text. The *ger* is rather the permanent resident sometimes an Israelite who does not have an enhanced means of livelihood. Sometimes as a stranger and does not partake in all cultic rites. The relationship between the *ger* and the rest of Israel’s citizenry was therefore a major concern in the Deuteronomic text.

2.6. Social Inequality in the Dead Sea Scroll

One very important document for the study of the phenomenon of social inequality is the Dead Sea scrolls. It has been described as a major source of data for the the earliest Hebrew and Aramaic manuscripts of almost all the biblical books⁸⁸. They also provide us with insights to any biblical concepts particularly the theme of social inequality. Of particular importance in the study of the Deuteronomic response to social inequality is the Hymn of the Poor in 4Q434 and 436⁸⁹. As a requirement for peaceful co-

⁸⁸ The Dead Sea Scrolls are believed to have been hidden for over 2000 years until they were discovered in 1947. They provide a unique insight into Jewish as well as Christian origins. 4Q434 means Qumran Cave Four manuscript number eg 434 , See Eisenman, M. Wise, 1992, *The Dead Sea scrolls Uncovered*, USA; Element Inc. Timothy H. Lim. 2005. *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Introduction*.Oxford: Oxford University press.

⁸⁹ 4Q434 means Qumran Cave Four manuscript number eg 434 means the number of the manuscripts while the 4Q simply means the cave number.

existence, the life and teaching of the Qumran community center prominently on 'Righteousness'. Among the several recurring associated themes which describe the ethos of the Qumran community are 'Righteousness', 'Piety', 'Truth,' 'Knowledge', 'Foundation' 'the Poor', the Meek, etc. The emphasis of the Qumran community was on social equality, justice and righteousness. Although the term social inequality is not referred to in the Qumran texts, it finds synonyms in several Hebrew concepts such as *Ebionim* (the Poor), *Dal* (Down trodden) and *Ani* (the Meek). Loving one's neighbour was the rule in the Qumran community. It states, 'if you made economic distinction between men it was impossible to be perfectly righteous.' The view of the Qumran community may have been derived from the Deuteronomic code or influenced by it.

2.7. Social Inequality in Urhobo social structure.

G.Darah,⁹⁰ in his work 'The Political-Economic Factor in Urhobo Song-Poetry, articulates evidences of social inequality in Urhobo song-poetry. The songs are seen as literary devices used as response to the rupture that occurred in the Urhobo society as a result of the incursion of colonialism. He states, 'Our source data are songs because, unlike the more stable forms such as drama and tales, songs usually provide more reliable evidences of the various ways Urhobo people have responded to the ruptures in their material and super structural situations due to the influence of colonialism. He distinguishes between the classical and modern traditions inherent in the song poetry. The two traditions namely the classical (*ile ahwaren*)⁹¹ are satirical, ie, they are critical of moral failures in individuals and as such were meant to criticize actions and sanitize the

⁹⁰ Godini G.Darah. 1985. The Political-Economic factor in Urhobo song-poetry. in Georg M.Gugelberger "Ed." *Marxism and African Literature*. London: James Currey Ltd. pp.178-194.

⁹¹ *Ile ahwaren* - Literarily means Old songs. These were songs composed and sung for their ethical teaching. Their contexts were different from the modern panegyric songs.

society. The other tradition, ie, the modern tradition (*ile okena*)⁹² is panegyric. The significant and swift change in temper from the satiric to the panegyric (praises) of persons experience in Urhobo song-poetry is traced to the newly acquired economic prosperity. Unfortunately the panegyric note in the modern song-poetry celebrates the heroic achievements of those who rightly or wrongly are seen as harbingers of a prosperous and modern world without questioning the character of these persons, the *nouveau riche*. He observes, 'The celebrated hero may be one of a notorious character'. The Urhobo response to social inequality which was aggravated by colonial influence was captured in the songs because the songs are felt to be a medium of expression of the people's philosophy of communism and egalitarian leaning. The people became severely disabled in their struggles to have a dignified existence. There was class distinction and loss of sense of identity. This insecurity provided the most enduring theme for Urhobo song-poem. Darah observes, 'The reason why the panegyric poets employed their songs and intellectual resources to extol only the prosperous minority in the society cannot be found in the realm of art alone. A fuller explanation must be sought in the context of the political-economy of contemporary Nigerian society and the social relationships it has engendered. This disruption in social relationship has necessitated a new approach which we find in the Deuteronomic response to social inequality in Ancient Israel. The questions Darah raises are significant. Have the Urhobo people perceived evils of social inequality as a matter of concern, or are they overlooked by those concerned? Do the marginal groups in Urhobo society find similarities to ancient Israelite society and as such demands advocacy from the perspective of biblical studies which we find captured in the Deuteronomic response to social inequality?

⁹² *Ile okena*- Literarily means modern songs.

Nabofa, M.Y.⁹³ in his “*Akpo: Urhobo ontology of life and the universe*” puts together a collection of 133 Urhobo personal Names, Philosophical, Theological, Political, Psychological and Sociological expressions having the Urhobo word *Akpo* as either prefix or suffix. They express the various ways the Urhobo and by extension Africans look at life in general. The word ‘*Akpo*,’ which means, ‘the physical world’ or a man’s existence, when prefixed to a name or as a suffix, often reflects the people’s philosophy of life. They also adumbrate the people’s philosophy of social inequality e.g. *Akpobaro* means there is propitious life ahead. ‘*Akpojevwa*’ meaning, ‘we are still existing which may convey sociological meaning. Such names sometimes reflect hope for a change of social status. The Urhobo personal names aphorisms, maxims; pithy sayings with the word *Akpo* as either prefix or suffix embody many aspects of Urhobo culture, philosophy, metaphysics existence and concept of the universe. This study is relevant in the study of social inequality in the context of the Urhobo people. Several names given with this prefixes or suffixes often convey the people’s philosophy and demand answers not often addressed in the local communities or political policies. This needs a pragmatic advocacy.

M.Y. Nabofa and B.O. Elugbe examine the people’s beliefs and the ability of the *Oboepha* (The Diviner) to tell them of the source of their troubles or ailments. The work discusses the reasons why people consult the supernatural world. This process, which usually involves the visit to the *Obo- Epha* (a Diviner) , may be compared to the Yoruba belief in *Ifa*. There is a close similarity between the *Ifa* and *Epha*. Although the paper discusses the phenomenon involved in consulting the supernatural as a practice among

⁹³ M.Y. Nabofa. 2005. *Akpo: Urhobo Ontology of Life*. P. Ekeh (Ed) *Studies in Urhobo Culture*. Ibadan: Intec Printers Ltd. pp. 122-129.

the Urhobos, the motive is closely linked to social inequality which is a very strong factor in the Urhobo society. When people consult the Diviners they also do so not only with the aim of solving the problem of physical ailment but probing into the reasons for poor social conditions.

In the study of “Reincarnation the doctrine of hereditary and hope in urhobo culture” M .Y Nabofa identifies five entities which the Urhobo consider to make up a human being. The various rites of passage which enable the individual to live a happy and successful life now in the earth and in the hereafter are discussed. It is believed that the terms of predestination are usually concluded in the spiritual realm before birth. Going by this belief, social inequality is determined by act of predestination. Should a person’s status be pre-determined as it were by place of birth or by origin? Is social status tied to family descent? Is social status welfare tied to individual achievements or is there social responsibility?

Onigu Otite⁹⁴ in examining political institutions in Urhobo defines the term ‘institutions’ as those relationships which are strategic to the structure and functions of a society. He divides the political institutional structure of Urhobo into two types namely the Gerontocratic political organizations and the Plutocracy. Gerontocracy is the government by elders and age grade organization while plutocracy is the government by the rich and wealthy. In some Urhobo communities, these two were combined. Otite observes that kingship in many Urhobo politics is comparatively recent. He attributes the emergence of Urhobo kingship to the need for self-preservation. He says:

The first is the need to meet the threat
posed by neighbouring groups and then to

⁹⁴ O. Otite. 2003. Political Institutions. *The Urhobo People*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books (Nig) Ltd. pp. 327-349.

strengthen the socio-political organization. There was a shift of emphasis from the head's ritual functions, religious and non-religious to political functions, being the result of the growing complexity of their societies and the need to organize military and political resources to consolidate their territorial integrity.⁹⁵

Going by the above description, the Urhobo people and Israel followed the same trajectory in the emergence of the kingship political organization. The various political titles, The *Ovie*, (King), The *Otota* (spokesmen), The *Ohovworen* and *Okakuro* (Chiefs) and their functions are discussed. It confirms the social inequality of Urhobo society but does not describe the socioeconomic inequality and the religious function in addressing the phenomenon of social inequality. The various scholarship works on the Urhobo society social structure and culture by M.Y. Nabofa', S.U. Erivwo, O. Otite, G.G. Darah and others that had been examined explicate the various aspects of the Urhobo society religious, cultural and social life that predicated the phenomenon of social inequality⁹⁶.

W.R. Bascom,⁹⁷ who examines the theme of social status, wealth and individual differences among the Yoruba, gives the analysis of the structure of the Yoruba society noting that there is effect of wealth on the social position which one occupies in a society as well as such social positions which are dependent on hereditary. He observes that

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 332.

⁹⁶ G.G. Darah. 2005. *Battles of Songs: Udje Traditions of the Urhobo*. Lagos: Malthouse Press Limited. See: S.U. Erivwo. 1978. Christian Churches in Urhoboland II: Their Trials and Growth. in *ORITA, Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*. June Vol. XII.1. pp.33-41, Erivwo S.U. 1979. *A History of Christianity in Nigeria. The Urhobo, The Isoko and The Itsekiri*, Ibadan: Daystar Press. S.U. Erivwo. 2005. Urhobo Traditional Beliefs and Values. in P. Ekeh (ed) *Studies in Urhobo Culture*, Ibadan: Intec Printers Ltd., pp.149-226. Erhueh, A.O. 2005. Image of God in Man, Dialogue Between Christianity and Urhobo Traditional Religion. in P. Ekeh (ed) *Studies in Urhobo Culture*, Ibadan: Intec Printers Ltd. Erubvetere, J.O. 2005. Urhobo Traditional Marriage and Modern Influences on its Institutions' in P. Ekeh "Ed." *Studies in Urhobo Culture*, Ibadan: Intec Printers Ltd. M.Y. Nabofa. Akpo: Urhobo Ontology of Life and the Universe, in P. Ekeh ("Ed") *Studies in Urhobo Culture*, Ibadan: Intec. Printers Ltd. M.Y. Nabofa. Akpo. 2005. Reincarnation: The Doctrine of Heredity and Hope in Urhobo Culture. in P. Ekeh "Ed." *Studies in Urhobo Culture*, Ibadan: Intec Printers Ltd., 2005. Igbe Ubiesha: An Indigenous Charismatic Movement of the Urhobo People in P. Ekeh "Ed." *Studies in Urhobo Culture*, Ibadan: Intec Printers Ltd.

⁹⁷ W.R. Bascom. 1951. Social Status, Wealth and Individual Differences among the Yoruba. *American Anthropologist*. January- March. 53: 1.

individual differences and wealth are factors which affect the social position which one occupies. Referring to the Yoruba the nature of the social status and individual differences that exist in the communities he observes that the Yoruba are divided politically into a number of independent kingdoms of varying sizes under hereditary rulers. These include the Oyo, Egba, Ijebu, Ijesa and Ife. These, according to Bascom, have the same cultural affinities like their immediate neighbours. The Yoruba society according to him, have complex and highly stratified social structure in the society. Rank depends upon a series of factors other than an individual's personality or capabilities. These include wealth, sex, station to which a person was born, either as free or slave; his relative age, the rank of the clan into which he is born, the political or religious offices which he is able to achieve or inherit; and the social position of his relatives, friends and associates. The phenomena of social inequality as described above are clearly those of social conventions. That is, they are created by the society. Like the Urhobo people, the concept of *Ori* (the head) which asserts that individual status or economic achievement is matter of chosen destiny, is regarded as very significant in determining the social status of an individual.

A lucky person (*oloriere, eda rere*) is one who has a good head or a good Creator while an unlucky person (*olori buruku, eda buruku*) has a bad head or creator. To a lucky person, good things come with apparently little effort, while an unlucky person is not only unfortunate in his own affairs, but with associates as well. This belief, which is very strong among the Yoruba people, is also present among the Urhobo. Bascom discusses factors that give man recognition in the Yoruba culture which include character. As an individual's luck is located in his head, so his nature is associated with his stomach. A good-natured or kind-hearted person (*oninu rere*) is one who has a good "belly" or

‘inside, while a bad natured or hard hearted person (*oninu lile*) has a hard “belly”. People’s status is therefore not determined only by wealth but also by character. Both wealth, family descent (i.e. positions that are hereditary) determine people’s social standing in the society. Wealth, sincerity and individual differences are determinants of social status. In the Yoruba society nine strata of the social structure were identified as follows:

1. The King (*Ooni*)
2. The town and palace chiefs (*Ijoye Ooni*)
3. The major priests (*Onisoro*)
4. The men of leisure (*Lodoko*), the king’s body guards (*Ogunbe*) the king’s messengers (*Emese*) and members of the Ogboni society without higher titles of their own.
5. The *Modewa* clans, from which the palace chiefs are chosen.
6. The Ife clans, or town people, from which the town chiefs are chosen.
7. The royal clan, whose members are known as children of the king (*Omoba*) from compounds other than that from which the king was chosen.
8. The “strangers” (*elu*), or Yoruba from other parts of the country.
9. The non-Yoruba (*Kogbode*) or Hausa, Ibo and members of other tribes.

This social structure which represents the pattern common to most Yoruba communities is same in most Africa tribes. The relationship that exists between the different strata of the African society from its earliest time was often that of respect for one another (a situation which is fast changing) The kingship in Yoruba is not hereditary. For example, when a king dies, his successor is chosen by the chiefs from the members of

the royal clan, which includes some 22 compounds and numbers probably about 5,000 individuals. Each of the eligible compounds campaigns for its own candidate to be chosen, and usually spend a lot of money in entertaining the chiefs and conferring with all those who might influence the chiefs who make the final choice. Social inequality can therefore be said to exist in the Yoruba communities as exemplified in the above social structure. The form of relationship that exists between the upper and lower stratum of the society is such that there is a tendency to create imbalance in access to basic necessities of life. Inequalities in the form of status and wealth define the way the society thinks of her values and to what extent those values are pursued to the good of the individuals. This incisive work of Bascom draws attention to the existence of the phenomenon of social inequality which forms one of the concerns of the Deuteronomic School in ancient Israel.

The most comprehensive work on the sociology of the Yoruba by N.A. Fadipe, examines the Yoruba society, culture and social norms. On social hierarchy the office of the *baale* is discussed. The *baale's* role among other things include; executing punishment for anti-social behaviour such as theft, incest and adultery. It is his duty to warn members of the compound to avoid being engaged in acts which would involve the family in a disgrace such as theft, burglary, or a change of adultery emanating from outside.⁹⁸ He holds legislative power to punish recalcitrant members of the compound and was formerly responsible for raising taxes.⁹⁹ The work engages in the social organisation of the Yoruba people and shows the structural functional model of the society. It does not however discuss the disadvantages suffered by the marginal groups.

⁹⁸ N.A. Fadipe. 1970. *The Sociology of the Yoruba*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, p. 108

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 19

S.A. Afonja¹⁰⁰ examines social inequality from the perspective of gender particularly sex roles and sex inequality in the society. Arguing from the point of culturally imposed values he observed that there is a growing consciousness of African women and struggle to free them from the ideological domination imposed by culture. Thus, this piece of work reiterates the need for a response to the phenomenon of social inequality. He discusses the Yoruba Culture which sees a woman who declares herself free from her husband's control as deviant. The same applies to the Urhobo society.

Larry M. Bartel's *et al*¹⁰¹ study on American Democracy in an Age of Rising Inequality examines the report of task force set up to review factors responsible for rising inequality. The majority of the public opinion suggests that persons from society's lower social orders have fundamentally different and conflicting interests with those from the higher rungs of economic ladder. The study suggests the imbalance associated with social inequality and people's reactions. While it is impossible to avoid inequality a more egalitarian disposition is required for the wellbeing of the society.

2.8 Conclusion

From the literatures reviewed in this chapter, it would be observed that the phenomenon of social inequality is a concept discussed in various fields of studies as a matter of major concern. Social inequality in the context of the ancient Near Eastern texts, in the social structure of ancient Israel and the Urhobo society are discussed. The Deuteronomic School responds to this phenomenon in the textual segments which shall be studied in the next chapter using the Historical-critical tool of investigation.

¹⁰⁰ S.A. Afonja. 1980. Current Explanations of Sex Role Inequalities: A Reconsideration. *The Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social Studies*. March. 22. 1: 85-108

¹⁰¹ Larry M. Bartel et al 2006. Comment on American Democracy in an Age of Rising Inequality. *Political Science and Politics*. Jan. xxxix. 1.

CHAPTER THREE

TEXT CRITICAL AND FORM-CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF TEXT SEGMENTS

(Deut. 14²²⁻²⁹; 16^{9-12, 13-15}; 24^{17-18, 19-20}; 26⁵⁻¹⁵)

3.1 Introduction

John H. Hayes¹⁰² in his book *Biblical Exegesis* says, ‘when studying a biblical text, the interpreter frequently encounters different wordings, or variant readings for the same passage. This of course is attributed to a number of factors. First, none of the original manuscripts or autographs has been preserved. What have survived are copies of copies, handwritten by scribes. The processes of copying texts by hand often lead to errors emerging within the texts. As a result of these errors, variations were bound to occur. Two types of variants or corruptions exist in biblical texts namely (a) Unintentional or (b) Intentional error. According to Hayes, unintentional errors include mistakes copyists would make in wrongly hearing a text or in wrongly reading a text. Sometimes a scribe may read a whole text of a book aloud while a room full of scribes wrote copies. This often led to wrong hearing and thus copying a wrong word. Unintentional error could also occur in producing a wrong word as a result of wrong hearing or by skipping a word or a line, or writing a word or a line twice, misspelling of a word or reversing the order of letters within a single word or reversing the order of words within a sentence. This may occur as a result of confusion of consonants (eg *b/k, b/m, b/n, g/w* etc.) or Haplography (ie, writing once) as a result of *homoioteleuton* (ie, words with similar endings) or Metathesis (the accidental exchange or transposition of two adjacent

¹⁰² J.H. Hayes and Carl R. Holladay. 1982. *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook*. Atlanta: John Knox Press. p. 30.

letters within a word)¹⁰³ Apart from the unintentional errors, there could be intentional changes. Intentional changes in the wording of the text could occur for a variety of reasons. A scribe might feel compelled to correct the spelling or grammar of a manuscript being copied and regardless of whether the correction was right or wrong, which is regarded as linguistic changes. This would introduce variation into the textual tradition.

In this chapter the text segments will be examined using the historical-critical methods namely the textual analysis and form criticism. The intentional variations in the text segments will be studied in view of the Deuteronomic ideology which will help account for their meaning. Secondly the form-criticism of the text segments is intended to highlight the life setting addressed in them. Klaus Koch's remark is quite apposite in this regard. *'No biblical text can be adequately understood without a consideration of the setting in life of its literary type.'*¹⁰⁴ To establish the setting in life of a text the following questions must be posed, 'Who is speaking? Who is listening? What is the prevailing mood? What effect is sought? The task of the form critic involves three steps which will be followed here. First, it is to isolate the formula and be sure of its recurrent speech pattern and literary features, secondly, to link other examples of the formula having the same or shared content; and thirdly, to try to reconstruct the implied social context both from the bible and the rest of the ancient Near East.¹⁰⁵ These principles of genre analysis were taken into consideration in the investigation of the texts to determine the social context of the editors or redactors and purpose of the Deuteronomic school. These are (1) The setting of the text (2) The focus and perspective of the text (3) The intended audience

¹⁰³ W.A. VanGemeren. "Ed." 1996. *The New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. United Kingdom: The Paternoster press.p.62.

¹⁰⁴ K. Koch. 1969. *The Growth of the Biblical Tradition: The Form-critical method*. London: Adam & Charles Black. p.33.

¹⁰⁵ M. Smith. 1955. *Latin-English Dictionary*. London: John Murray publisher. Ltd. p.50.

(4) The relationship of the author and readers of the text (5) Expectations conventions and requirements for the text (6) The background knowledge and values indicating what is important to the writers of the text and (7) The relationship the text has with other texts¹⁰⁶. The social setting of the texts was the 7th century Israel when the well being of many was jeopardized by exploitative royal policies of the various administrators/kings of the monarchical system.

3.2 Origin and Use of the Tithe in Ancient Israel.

In view of the often repeated reference to tithe in the text segments under consideration, (Deut.14²²⁻²⁹, 16^{9-12,13-15},24^{17-18,19-22},26¹²⁻¹⁵) it may be necessary to examine its origin (ie, of the tithe) in the context of the Ancient Near East, its traditional place and the Deuteronomic innovations brought into it. The Ancient Near Eastern context provides its general understanding.¹⁰⁷ The Hebrew (*ma'aser*) which occurs about thirty-two times in the OT means *tithe* or a *tenth*.¹⁰⁸ The cognates which occur in other Semitic languages generally refer to *the tenth of* or the *tithe*. The Akkadian root *esir* from which is derived *esretu* and *esru* (sg) both connote the idea of a tenth and refer to *tithe* or a *tenth*. Both words (ie, *esretu* and *esru*) were used in secular as well as in sacred (religious) contexts. In secular context it generally referred to taxes that were levied by the local king (or ruler)¹⁰⁹. That the practice of tithe in the form of a tax was customary is reinforced by the Akkadian texts which refer to *tithe of garment* and other agricultural products such as barley and dates. In the ancient near eastern context there are reported cases of kings

¹⁰⁶ B. Patridge. 2006. *Discourse Analysis*. New York: Continuum Books. p. 99.

¹⁰⁷ Is the concept of tithe known to the traditions of kingship in African and African societies? There is no doubt that taxes were levied by African Kings on their subjects but whether it was considered as a tithe is not clear.

¹⁰⁸ G.W.Bromiley, E.F.Harrison, *et al* "Eds." 1988, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. Four Q-Z, William B. Eeremanns publishing company, p.862.

¹⁰⁹ W. VanGemeren. 1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Vol. 2. U.K: Paternoster press. p.1035.

giving the tithe of a whole village to an individual (probably one of his subordinates) as gift. The tithe was generally on the agricultural produce which would include barley, beer and sheep of the pasture. The common understanding of the tithe in the ANE is that the tithe was most often a secular impost, ie, an entitlement that was due to the king.¹¹⁰ This ANE context therefore provides insight to the biblical references to the concept of tithe; Although the meaning of the tithe as secular imposition by the king was never implied by the regulations concerning the tithe in the Old Testament. The tithe was never used as such but that this understanding about the tithe in the ANE context was well known to biblical editors is implied by the reply to the demand for the monarchy (a king) in Israel and stating its social implications (I Sam. 8^{15,17}) for Israel's national life. In ancient Israel however, the tithe was a theological concept. W.Bromiley *et al* observes, 'No institution in Israel including tithing existed merely to carry out a political economic or humanitarian function. By giving tithes, the Israelites declared solemnly that they were giving a portion back to the Lord who had prospered them.'¹¹¹ Israel's recognition of the tithe as belonging to the king (which in their context is Yahweh) reflects its ANE environment. This theological understanding of the tithe and its ANE underscores Abram's tithe to Melchizedek King of Salem (Gen 14¹⁸⁻²⁰) a text which is often regarded as the origin of tithe in Israel. The account reads, 'After Abram led the battle to defeat the northern Kings and returned to the land of Canaan, Melchizedek, King of Salem, and, Priest of God Most High brought food and drink and blessed Abram' (vss. 18-20). The

¹¹⁰Several texts exist on the concern for the tithe. See: H. Jagersma. 1981. *The Tithe in the Old Testament, Remembering all the way*. J.Milgrom. 1976. *Cult and Conscience*. G.B.Davies, 1987, *Are Christians supposed to pay Tithe?* W. VanGemeren. 1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Vol. 2, U.K: Paternoster Press.

¹¹¹ G.W.Bromiley, E.F.Harrison, *et al.* (eds) 1988. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. Vol. Four Q-Z, William B Eeremanns publishing company. p.863.

purpose was to express appreciation to Abram. However two conflicting positions are often encountered in regard to Melchizedek's actions. One opinion argues that Melchizedek is the subject of 'he gave him one tenth of everything' (vs. 20) and by this thinking Melchizedek, paid tithe to Abram. A second position argues that Abram reciprocated Melchizedek's favour and recognized the latter's status as a true priest of the true God by paying a tithe of all the spoil to Melchizedek.¹¹² This second view which is more in tandem with the ANE practice has received a more popular support, for example, Westernmann and Anderson, both of whom viewed this particular narrative, as well as Jacob's dream (Gen. 28²²) as etiological, consider both accounts as traditions that legitimate payment of tithe in Israel.

The figure Tenth (10th) or tenth part has also raised problem of interpretation, ie, as to what exactly is meant by it. For some, the figure *ten* or *tenth* meant a solid 10 percent of the produce of (the Agricultural or Animal output) and remains the standard regulation, a position supported by J Jagersman. Baumgartner on the contrary holds the conviction that the *ma'aser* can be used in reference to any hieratic impost regardless of its rate. A tithe in this case could mean any form of imposition or contribution made toward providing for the Levites for their sacred duties or assignments.

Critical Issues: How many tithes? The discrepancies that exist in the texts regarding tithe regulations in the OT have been problematic. There are differences in the regulations between the P-Source and the Dt.(Deut. 14²²⁻²⁹ cf, Lev.27³⁰⁻³³, Num.18²¹⁻³²). In P (Lev.27³⁰⁻³³, Num.18²¹⁻³²) the tithe is given wholly to the Levites (with a tithe of the tithe going to the priests) Dt does not seem to have knowledge of the tithe being given

¹¹²W.VanGemeren. *Op. Cit.* p.1037. Hamilton and Wenham both favour this translation. Abraham's action of rejecting his own share of the booty has antecedents in the O.T (I Sam.30¹⁸⁻³¹).

wholly to the Levites, who were in turn to pay a tenth to the priests. An attempt to resolve these discrepancies has led to the suggestion that the tithe in Israel went through different historical stages of development. According to Wellhausen there are three discernable historical stages;

At first the tithe was offered voluntarily and directly to God (not to the Levites or Priests) at the tribal sanctuary (e.g. Bethel in Gen. 28²² and Amos 4⁴) and it was consumed by the worshipper in a communal meal. In the second stage, the tithe was offered as a yearly obligation directly to God (again not to the Levites or Priests) at the Central Sanctuary in Jerusalem (Deut. 12^{6,11,17}, 14²²⁻²⁷) and it was consumed by the Worshippers in a communal meal in which the Levites were included as special guests.....There was another innovation added at this time. The tithe of the third in the cycle was to be deposited in the local town (not eaten by the worshippers at the Central Sanctuary) for the support of the landless Levite and others who were economically disadvantaged.¹¹³

Despite this analogy of the historical development by Wellhausen supported by several academic positions amongst whom are Y.Kaufmann, M.Weinfeld and others, the sociological factors which give rise to the various transformations in the regulations concerning tithing have not been accounted for. According to Y.Kaufmann and M.Weinfeld who holds that the tithe passed through these various historical stages of development believed that the post-exilic community re-instituted the tithe system after the Babylonian Captivity and simply added Lev.27³⁰⁻³⁷ and Num.18²¹⁻³² to Deut.14²²⁻²⁹ which thus ended with multiple tithes.¹¹⁴ This does not also explain the discrepant attention given to the marginal groups.

¹¹³ W.VanGemenen.1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Vol.2. U.K: Paternoster Press. p.1039.

¹¹⁴ W.VanGemenen, *Op..cit.* p.1040.

The Jewish tradition which favours this possibility, namely that the tithe passed through various historical epochs, and supported by recent scholarship identifies three different tithes in ancient Israel. The first consists of the tithe to the Levites (Num.18³⁰⁻³⁷, Deut.14²⁷) The *one tenth* that was identified in Deut 14²²⁻²⁶ was the tenth from the ninth which was eaten by those offering it. A third, called third year tithe (Deut 14²⁸⁻²⁹ and 26¹²⁻¹⁵) was a tithe for the poor which occurred only in the third year.¹¹⁵ According to Jewish tradition the third year tithe (supported by Josephus Anti IV 8²³) took the place of the second in the third year. Harold V. Bennett¹¹⁶ who argues against the validity of the use of the tithe in satisfying the need of the marginal group questions what could be the relevance of this tithe in an interval of three years, particularly as the provisions needed for three years could not be adequate. Another view held in connexion with the tithe is that the evidences provided by the OT suggest that there were originally one and the same tithe but that they were interpreted to be different multiple tithe by later community of faith. Y.Kaufmann who also argues in favour of this position, namely, that the tithe was one but interpreted differently thinks that Dt was one of the devices invented by the author of the Law of Centralization in linking the people with the chosen city. While these arguments explain the historical development of the tithe, the Sociological motive for the consistent inclusion of the marginal groups in the use of the tithe was not explained.

¹¹⁵ G.W.Bromiley. *Op cit.*The *Mishna* which corroborates this, states that there were three types of tithes (a) The Levitical tithe from which a tenth was tithed to the Priest (Lev.27³⁰⁻³³, Num.18²¹⁻³²) (b) The second tithe which was consumed by the worshippers in Jerusalem (14²²⁻²⁷) and (c) The poorman's tithe which takes the place of second tithe in the third and sixth year of the seven-year cycle (Deut. 14²⁸⁻²⁹ , 26¹²⁻¹⁵).

¹¹⁶ See H.V.Bennett. Injustice made legal, Deuteronomic laws and the plight of widows, strangers and orphans in Ancient Israel.

3.2.1 The Use of the Tithe and the Deuteronomic Innovation.

That the use into which the tithe was later put in Israel in its historical development varied is one which requires further explanation. The common practice as it appears from Dt was to have a feast whenever one brought his or her tithes and other offerings to the Lord. According to the overall principle and Israelite was allowed to eat at least part of the regular tithe at the time of its presentation.¹¹⁷ While the offerings and the sacrificial system in ancient Israel allow the worshipper to eat part of the offering, this was not so clearly stated in the earliest regulations about the tithe. The tithe constitutes (as its ANE context affirms) a form of tax for the upkeep of the king and the administering of the state. Thus the tithe was reserved for the Levites as they had no portion or allotment with the rest of the tribes in Israel. Although according to Dt, it appears as a standard procedure to have a feast wherever and whenever one brought tithes and other offerings to the Lord¹¹⁸ the practice was a latter introduction to the regulations governing the tithe. C.A.Briggs, S.R.Driver *et al* observe that throughout Israel's history sacrifices consisted of two great classes: those (*Hlh*) that were withheld from human consumption and given wholly to the deity; were consumed by the altar fire. These may be ultimately given to the Priest. The other class formed the substance of a sacrificial meal in which the Offerer and his family, and those who might be associated with him participated¹¹⁹. The tithe from the beginning falls into the second category. There was no time at which the tithe was offered by fire. It was given wholly to the service of God. The tithe was given as compensation to the Levites for their service in the Sanctuary and was

¹¹⁷ VanGemenen, p.1048.

¹¹⁸ C.A.Briggs, S.R.Driver. 1906. *A critical exegetical commentary on Numbers*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. p.237.

¹¹⁹ W.VanGemenen.1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Vol.2. U.K: Paternoster Press. p.1048.

not to be shared with the offerer even at the earliest stage of its development. It was essentially part of the Levites' reward for their services (Num. 18²¹⁻²⁴)

The innovation brought by the Dt source is the inclusion of the Levites along with the sojourners, widows and orphan into a matter which should be entirely their prerogative. *'And do not neglect the Levites living in your towns, for they have no allotment or inheritance, of their own'* (14²⁷) A new turn in the administration of the tithe was the Deuteronomic innovation which extended the distribution of the third year tithe (as well as the second) beyond the Levites to include the aliens the fatherless and the widows (Deut. 14²⁹). VanGemenen observes that this was the natural extension of the principles of benevolence that underlines much of the theology in Deuteronomy (eg. Deut 15¹⁻¹¹) as well as Numbers.¹²⁰ This benevolence which characterised much of the theology of Deuteronomy was a response to social inequality that dominated the 7th and 8th century Israel such that the disadvantaged people (the alien, fatherless and widows) who were not provided for through the land inheritance system of ancient Israel¹²¹ were profusely made a matter of urgent concern in Deuteronomy. This orientation it would be observed was conspicuously absent even in the Nehemiah-Ezra passages (Neh.10³⁷⁻³⁹, 12^{44,47}, Ezra 2³⁶⁻⁴², 8¹⁵, Neh.7³⁹⁻⁴⁰, Ezra 2⁴⁰⁻⁴²) It is obvious that the use to which the tithe was put shifted in its emphasis in the Deuteronomic text from the purely cultic to philanthropic, sociological bent, the aim of which was to address a social context characterised by socio-economic inequality and status imbalance. According to Bergart D, *et al*

¹²⁰ W. VanGemenen. 1997, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Vol.2. U.K: Paternoster Press, p.1048.

¹²¹ Land was source of wealth in ancient Israel. The landless such as the sojourners, orphans, widows and the Levites inclusive were therefore the most impoverished by this social system.

The concern for the poor is one manifestation of a broader humanitarian bent within Deuteronomy. For example Deut 14²²⁻²⁷ implies that the purpose of tithing is to provide food especially for the poor. There is no mention of any sacral purpose for tithing as an offering made for God's benefit. Even the use of the tithe as support for priest and Levites is ignored by Deuteronomy (cf. Num. 18²¹⁻²⁷) The Levites received part of the tithe not because of their priestly status but because of their need as those without economic status.¹²²

3.3.0 Textual Exegesis

Textual critical Analysis of the text segments (Deut. 14²²⁻²⁹; 16^{9-12, 13-15}; 24^{17-18, 19-20}; 26¹²⁻¹⁵)

3.3.1 (i) Regulations Concerning Tithes (Deut. 14: 22 - 29)

Deut. 14 ²²⁻²⁹	BHS	LXX
<p>Deut 14²² <i>You shall tithe all the yield of your seed, which comes forth from the field year by year.</i></p> <p>RSV Deut 14²³ <i>And before the LORD your God, in the place which he will choose, to make his name dwell there, you shall eat the tithe of your grain, of your wine, and of your</i></p>	<p>Deut. 14²² rFeê[;T. rFEâ[;é ^ [<+r>z: ta;äWbT.- lK' tae `hn")v' hn"iv' hd<PF'h; aceîYOh; p</p>	<p>Deut 14²² deka, thn avpodekatw, sei j panto. j genh, mato j tou/ spe, rmato, j sou to. ge, nhma tou/ avgrou/ sou evniauto. n katV evniauto, n</p> <p>MGK Deut 14²³ kai. fa, gh avto. e; nanti kuri, ou tou/ qeou/ sou evn tw/ to, pw w- a'n evkle, xhtai ku, rioj o` qeo, j sou evpiklhqh/nai to.</p>

¹²² D. Bergant, J.K.Robert et al, *The Colledgeville Bible*, Minnesota : The Liturgical Press, p.212

<p><i>oil, and the firstlings of your herd and flock; that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always.</i></p> <p>^{RSV} Deut 14²⁴ And if the way is too long for you, so that you are not able to bring the tithe, when the LORD your God blesses you, because the place is too far from you, which the LORD your God chooses, to set his name there,</p> <p>Deut. 14²⁵ then you shall turn it into money, and bind up the money in your hand, and go to the place which the LORD your God chooses,</p>	<p>Deut. 14²³ ȲynEåp.li T'úl.k;a'w> é~AqåM'B; ^yh,^al{a/ hw"åhy> érx;b.yI-rv,a] è~v' Amåv. !KEåv;l. ^åv.royTi(^n>g")D> rf:Ü[m; troïkob.W ^r<êh'c.yIw> ![,m;äl. ^n<+acow> ha'²r>yll. dm;^al.Ti ^yh,Pl{a/ hw"ihy>- ta, ~ymi(Y"h;-lK' éDeut.14²⁴ ^øM.mi hB,'r>yI- yki(w> al{å yKiä</p>	<p>o;noma auvtou/ evkei/ oi;sete ta. evpide,kata tou/ si,tou sou kai. tou/ oi;nou sou kai. tou/ evlai,ou sou ta. prwto,toka tw/n bow/n sou kai. tw/n proba,twn sou i[na ma,qh j fobei/sqai ku,rion to.n qeo,n sou pa,saj ta.j h`me,raj</p> <p>Deut 14²⁴ eva.n de. makra.n ge,nhtai avpo. sou/ h` o`do.j kai. mh. du,nh avnafe,rein auvta, o[ti makra.n avpo. sou/ o` to,poj o n a'n evkle,xhtai ku,rioj o` qeo,j sou evpiklhqh/nai to. o;noma auvtou/ evkei/ o[ti euvlogh,sei se ku,rioj o` qeo,j sou</p>
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<p>Deut. 14²⁶ and spend the money for whatever you desire, oxen, or sheep, or wine or strong drink, whatever your appetite craves; and you shall eat there before the LORD your God and rejoice, you and your household.</p> <p>Deut. 14²⁷ <i>And you shall not forsake the Levite who is within your towns, for he has no portion or inheritance with you.</i></p> <p>Vs. 28. At the end of every three years you shall bring forth all the tithe of your produce in the same year, and lay it up within your towns;</p>	<p>%r<D<^ah; qx;Ûr>yI-yKi(èAtaef. élk;Wt rv<Ûa] ~AqêM'h; ‘^M.mi hw"âhy> ‘rx;b.yl Amβv. ~Wfil' ^yh,êl{a/ ^βk.r<b'y> yKiî ~v'_ `^yh,(l{a/hw"ihy> Deut. 14²⁵ @s,K'_B; hT'Pt;n"w> ^êd>y"âB. ‘@s,K,'h; T'Ûr>c;w> ‘T'k.l;h'(w> rv<ia] ~AqêM'h;- la,</p>	<p>Deut. 14²⁵ kai. avpodw,sh auvta. avrguri,ou kai. lh,myh to. avrgu,rion evn tai/j cersi,n sou kai. poreu,sh eivj to.n to,pon o]n a'n evkle,xhtai ku,rioj o` qeo,j sou auvto,n</p> <p>^{GK}Deut. 14²⁶ kai. dw,seij to. avrgu,rion evpi. panto,j ou- eva.n evpiqumh/ h` yuch, sou evpi. bousi. h' evpi. proba,toij evpi. oi;nw h' evpi. sikera h' evpi. panto,j ou- eva.n evpiqumh/ h` yuch, sou kai. fa,gh evkei/ evnanti,on kuri,ou tou/ qeou/ sou kai. euvfranqh,sh su. kai. o` oi=ko,j sou</p>
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<p>VS.29 and the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, who are within your towns, shall come and eat and be filled; that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do.</p>	<p>^yh,Pl{a/ hw"ihy> `AB* Deut. 14²⁶ @s,K,†h; hT'ät;n"w> hW<"a;T.-rv,a] •lkoB. !aCo^ab;W rq"åB'B; ^øv.p.n: lko±b.W rk'êVeb;W '!yIY:'b;W ^βl.a'v.Ti(rv<ia] 'ynEp.li ~V^a T'l.k;ää'w> ^v<+p.n: ^yh,êl{a/ hw"åhy> `^t<)ybeW hT'îa; T'Px.m;f'w></p>	<p>MGK Deut. 14²⁷ kai. o` Leui, thj o` evn tai/j po, lesi, n sou o[ti ouvke;stin aútw/ meri.j ouvde. klh/roj meta. sou/ Deut. 14²⁸ meta. tri,a e;th evxoi, seij pa/n to. evpide, katon tw/n genhma, tw'n sou evn tw/ evniautw/ evkei, nw qh, seij aúto. evn tai/j po, lesi, n sou Deuteronomy 14²⁹ kai. evleu, setai o` leui, thj o[ti ouvke; e;stin aútw/ meri.j ouvde. klh/roj meta. sou/ kai. o` prosh, lutoj kai. o` ovrfano.j kai. h` ch, ra h`</p>
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	<p>Deut.14²⁷ ywliLeh;w> al{å ^yr<P['v.Bi- rv,a] Al± !yaeî yKiä WNb,_z>[:t;¥ `%M")[i hl'P̄x]n:w> ql,xe</p> <p>Deut. 14²⁸ vl{åv' Yhceäq.mi ‘ayciAT ~ynI©v' ^êt.a'äWbT. ‘rf;[.m;-lK'-ta, awhi_h; hn"βV'B; `^yr<(['v.Bi</p> <p>Deut.14²⁹ yKiä ywI³Leh; ab'äW hl'øx]n:w> ql,xe' •Al-!yae(rGEh;w>û %M^a[i</p>	<p>evn tai/j po,lesi,n sou kai. fa,gontai kai. evmplhsqh,sontai i[na euvlogh,sh se ku,rioj o` qeo,j sou evn pa/sin toi/j e;rgoi; oi-j eva.n poih/ j</p>
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	rv<âa] ‘hn"m'l.a;h'(w> ~AtÜY"h;w> ^yr<ê[v.Bi ![,m;Ûl. W[be_f'w> Wlßk.a'w> hw"âhy> ‘^k.r<b'y> hfeî[]m;-lk'B. ^yh,êl{ a/ `hf,([]T; rv<ia] ^ßd>y"	
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The Law of Tithing (Deut. 14^{22 - 29}). This text segment deals with the law of tithing in Israelite cultus. The Hebrew construction here is emphatic. The verb employed is the *Piel* which means ‘to tithe’ or ‘to take a tenth of’. The *Piel* conveys the sense of an intensive action. It could also mean an action performed often or for a long time. The emphasis suggests that it was mandatory and legal stipulation instituted as part of cultic regulations in Israelite society. V.23 stipulates the items to be tithed namely the produce of the field i.e. grain, new wine, and fresh oil as well as animal. This verse refers to the

produce of the field especially the grains as well as the firstlings, thus linking it to the ancient practice. It does not limit it to the grains. This pericope, which is variously tagged as *Regulation concerning the tithes* or *The law of Tithing*, gives instructions about the use of the tithe in ancient Israel in accordance with the Cultic rites. The Deuteronomist here, however, interprets this regulation in a new light particularly in the light of social changes of the 7th century. According to C. A. Briggs *et al*, the Deuteronomic law of tithe exhibits irreconcilable conflict with the law of P.

In Num. 18^{21 - 28}, the tithe is appropriated entirely to the maintenance of the priestly tribe, being paid in the first instance to the Levites, who in their turn pay a tenth of what they receive to the priests; in Deut it is spent partly at sacred feasts (partaken in by the offerer and his household) partly in the relief of the poor – in both cases the Levites (by which in Deut are meant the members of the tribe generally including priests (18¹) sharing only in company with others (18^{20 - 29}) as the recipient of the Israelite's benevolences).¹²³

The P-source¹²⁴ (Num. 18^{21ff}) does not include the theme of fellowship meal but assigns the tithe to the Levites for their sacred duties. In Dt however, the marginal groups, Orphans, Strangers and Widows are required to participate in the meal. This form of provision, which Deuteronomy introduces, serves as a protection which is intended as a

¹²³ C.A.Briggs , S.R.Driver and A. Plummer (ed) .1906. *A Critical and Exegetical commentary on Deuteronomy*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, p.172.

¹²⁴ Johann Gottfried Eichhorn, Wilhelm de Wette, Karl Heinrich Graf and others have put forward the view that the P-Source ie, the Priestly source was the last of the four sources and was written during the Babylonian exile in c.550 BC. It is commonly held that the Priestly source made up largely of the law-code of Leviticus has connection with all other books of the Pentateuch except Deuteronomy. In comparing the P-source and the view of the Deuteronomist, who are responsible for the book of Deuteronomy it affords us to show the difference in the stages in the evolution of the religious practice in ancient Israel as well as the sociological view. Each of the sources- Yahwist/Elohist, Deuteronomist, and the Priestly – reflects a different stage in evolution of religious practice in ancient Israel. See, the *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels* in Wikipedia the free encyclopedia.

response to social inequality. The tithe consumed by the offerer in the chosen place was not to be limited to him and family but was to be shared by the Marginal groups. The emphasis given to the Tithe in these verses contrasts with the Priestly source in Number 18²¹⁻³², and Lev 27³⁰⁻³³, where the widows, Orphans and Strangers with the Levites were excluded. They, the Stranger, the Orphan (Fatherless) the Widow and the Levites were constantly the objects of the Deuteronomist's philanthropic concern. (See, Deut. 10¹⁸, 16^{11, 14}, 24^{17, 19, 20, 21}; 26^{12, 13}; 27¹⁹) Although the stress on care for the marginal group was already alluded to in the J and E sources (Ex. 22²¹⁻²⁴) the relevance of this regulation was not to become obvious until the 7th century.¹²⁵ Thus the Deuteronomist applies the tithe regulation to meet a new social context and need namely to address the phenomenon of social inequality.

The phrase ׁ~ymi(Y'h;-lK' ^yh,Pl{a/ hw"ihy>-ta, ha'2r>yIl. dm;^al.Ti *That you may learn to fear the Lord all your days* is a deuteronomic expression meant to emphasize the importance of the regulations. Here it is used in the infinitive construct meaning 'to fear', 'to be afraid of' or 'to reverence', or hold in honour, specifically of God. This is to be understood in contrast with the fear that comes for disobedience. (Gen. 3¹⁰) This theme of the fear of God is one that is predominant in Deuteronomy. The author of Deuteronomy asserts that God is to be feared 'all of one's days. (Deut. 4¹⁰, 5²⁶, 14²³, 31¹³) ׁ~ymi(Y'h;-lK'

¹²⁵ See: W.A. Van Gemenen. (*Gen. Ed*) 1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Vol. 1. UK: Paternoster Press. p. 413. He observes that later in the history of Israel, after the settlement in Canaan, the tribalism gave way to the life in cities and villages which made the widows became victims of the development of growing social contrasts. For this reason they were often mentioned together with other poor and miserable people of Israelite society like orphans (fatherless), aliens, or Levites (Job 29¹³; 31¹⁶; Jer. 22³; Zech. 7¹⁰).

‘~k,Pyhel{a/ hw"ihy>-ta, ~t,²ar"y> ![;m;ól. The same theme occurs in other Deuteronomic passages. (Josh. 4²⁴ ; Ikg. 8⁴⁰; Jer.32³⁹). The idea brought to expression by the use of this phrase is that the fear of God must be the guiding principle in man’s life and must remain uppermost in his mind at all times. The term is used in different contexts. The Sanctuary is seen as an object of honour or to be revered (Lev 19³⁰). In this verse (vs 23) God is to be revered in the use of the title.

Vs 27 states the Deuteronomist response to the economic social status of the marginal groups to which the Levites were identified ywliLeh;w>

`%M")[i hl'Px]n:w> ql,xe Al± !yaeî yKiä

WNb,_z>[;t;¥ al{å ^yr<P['v.Bi-rv,a] *And you shall not forsake the Levites who is within your towns (within your gates). The LXX has πόλις, n (which means city or capital or main city- metropolis). The 2per masc. (thy towns) may be interpreted to mean both rural setting as well as cities. The LXX however suggests a later date by the specific use of the term for a city rather than a village setting. In whatever community the law was to be applied which specifies that the marginal groups were not to be forsaken (or neglected) means that there had occurred conditions which put them, ie, the marginal groups in a precarious situation.*

The word WNb,_z>[;t; (pl.) means ‘do not forsake’ or ‘abandon’ occurs several times, e.g. to leave behind objects e.g. Cloths (Gen. 39¹²; II Kings 7⁷). God does not forsake the righteous (Ps 37²⁵). It may refer to cease from anger and forsake wrath (Ps 37⁸). The verb as used here generally is an injunction not to neglect the marginal

group in their state of need by the rest of community. In this context it is an injunction not to forsake the Levites in the disposition of the tithe for reason of social condition.

Vs. 29. Introduces the three marginal groups who must not be neglected in ancient Israel namely the sojourner **rGEh;**(*hagger*) the Orphans (fatherless) **~AtÜY"h;** (*hayyatom*) and the widow **hn"m'l.a;h'** along with the **LEVITES ywI³Leh.** The phrase consistently employed by the Deuteronomic editor reads, ‘*And the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, who are within your towns, shall come and eat and be filled; that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do*’

yKiä ywI³Leh; ab'äW
 rGEh;w>û %M^a[i hl'ox]n:w> ql,xé' •Al-!yae(
 ^yr<ê['v.Bi rv<ää] 'hn"m'l.a;h'(w> ~AtÜY"h;w>
 hw"åhy> ‘^k.r<b'y> ![,m;Ûl. W[be_f'w>
 Wlßk.a'w>
 `hf,([T; rv<ia] ^ßd>y" hfeî[]m;-lk'B. ^yh,êl{ a/

Is repeatedly employed by the Deuteronomist to draw attention to the social status of the marginal groups and the particular social conditions they were exposed to under the new social system in Israel.

The sojourner (alien) **rGE** (*ger*) is one who, either alone or with his family, leaves his village because of war (II Sam 4³) famine (Ruth 1¹) pestilence or blood guilt and seeks shelter and sojourns elsewhere. In his new community his right to own land, to marry and participate in administration of justice is curtailed. The Deuteronomist

consistently uses the terminology *rGE ger* for the sojourner, who is a resident alien instead of the term *nokri*¹²⁶ which means a foreigner in the sense of someone outside the covenant status in Israel or a person who visits for commercial transaction and returns to his home immediately. The LXX uses the terminology *prosh,lutoj*, that is, a proselyte to describe the sojourner which does not convey the thought of the Deuteronomist. If care giving is limited to the converts of faith then God's generous purpose is not being obeyed.

¹²⁶ The adj '*nokri*' which occurs about 45 times in the OT is used of that which is alien and to be excluded. Thus the foreigner which is designated by this term is usually perceived as dangerous or hostile. The nominative '*nekar*' which often occurs in the construct relationship refers to those outside the covenant relationship and are disqualified from participating in the cult. (Gen. 17¹², Exo. 12⁴³, Ezek.44⁹ For the adj. see the following Zeph1⁸, ISam2⁶, Prov.20¹⁶, Ex.21³) The Deuteronomist makes the distinction between the *ger* and the *nokri* in the rule of the *nebalah* in Deut.14²¹ *hN"n<âT.Ti ^yr<ø[v.Bi-rv,a] rGE"l; hl'ben>û-lk' Wlâk.ato al{â*

`AM)ai bleîx]B; ydIPG> IVeîb;t.-al{) ^yh,_l{a/ hw"ßhyl; hT'êa; 'vAdq' ~[;Û yKiä yrIêk.n"l. 'rkom' AaÛ HI"ak'a]w:

3.3 .1 (ii) Textual Variants in Duet. 14²²⁻²⁹

In this segment the variant readings are examined to show the significance which these texts bring to the interpretation and understanding of the texts in relation to the theme of social inequality. The view of Ricoeur expressed by VanGameren is quite apposite in this regard. A text cannot carry *any* meaning, but it does carry a meaning *intended* by the original speaker or author, related to the context within which it was generated and the cotext of which it is a part.¹²⁷ The variants in the texts in all probability may have been influenced by the social and cultural context in which they emerge. Vs. 22 has the variant $\text{ace}\zeta\text{A}\ddot{\text{A}}\text{y}$ for the word $\text{ace}\dot{\text{Y}}\text{Oh}$; which is supported by the Samaritan Pentateuch (*Pentateuchi textus Hebraeo-Samaritanus secundum A. Von Gall*) The word used here is in the substantive meaning ‘that which brings forth’. The reference is to that which the field brings forth. This implies that the tithe required of the Israelites were from the produce or yields of the field which are to be given to the Levites who along with the marginal groups were its beneficiaries. The variant is imperfect which means a future and continuous action. This phrase is linked to the next $\text{`hn"')v' hn"iv' hd}\langle\text{P}^{\text{F}}\text{h}$; which means that which comes from ‘the field year by year’. The Syriac codex manuscript reads ‘in the year,’ probably meaning the year of tithing. The phrase ‘that which the field brings’ means that the quantity of the tithe will be determined by the quality which the field produces.

Vs.23 has a variant for the word $\text{T}'\dot{\text{u}}\text{l.k;a'w}$ which means ‘to eat’ (2 per sg. masc) ‘And you shall eat’. The variant supported by the *Samaritan Pentateuch* as well as the LXX conversely reads Atl.k;a' . (with the third person pronominal suffixes) which

¹²⁷ W. A. VanGameren. (Gen Ed.) 1997. *The New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Vol.1. UK: Paternoster Press. p.144.

when translated reads, ‘And he shall eat’. The subject of the sentence which is 3per masc probably means the one who offers the tithe rather than the Priest. The act of sharing in the fellowship meal provided by the one who offers tithe is the Deuteronomic introduction to Israelite worship and social activities which is intended to create a balancing effect of the stratifications introduced in the Canaanite setting.

The variant in vs.27 occurs in the word $\text{WNB,}_z>[\text{t};\text{¥} \text{al}\{\text{â}$ which means ‘you shall not forsake’¹²⁸. This is in reference to the Levites who dwell ‘within your cities’. This phrase is wanting in the manuscript V^{ken69} (*varia lectio codices manuscript Hebraici* 69) according (*secundum*) to B.Kennicott. This is also omitted in the Septuagint (LXX). The omission by some Hebrew manuscripts suggests that the phrase may not have been originally part of the text but was added by a later editor. The semantic field for the word $\text{WNB,}_z>[\text{t};\text{¥}$ includes ‘to leave’, or ‘abandon’ (Gen.2²⁴ Isa.60¹⁵) ‘to forsake’ (Isa.60¹⁵) ‘to be abandoned’, or ‘neglected’ (Lev.26⁴³ Isa 7¹⁶ 27¹⁰ 62¹² Ezek 36⁴ Job 18⁴) The nuances have different connotations. It could refer to ‘leaving a thing, person or situation behind’ without a negative intention; e.g, as ‘When a man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife’ (Gen.2²⁴) or when one has a change of heart and turns from an evil practice (Isa.54⁷) Alternatively the term could mean ‘to abandon’ ‘forsake’ or ‘to be neglected’ in the negative sense. The Levites are not to be neglected as they had no portion. This phrase in its synchronic sense takes a different meaning in the context of the Deuteronomic usage. The socio-economic and social system of the 7th century which

¹²⁸ bz:[’ The common meaning of the term is ‘to abandon’, ‘neglect’. Does this always connote a negative interpretation? Not in all cases as the use of the expression in Gen.2²⁴ could not be intended to neglect one’s parents as a result of being married to one’s wife. `dx'(a, rf"ib'l. Wyàh'w> ATêv.aiB. qb;äd"w> AM=ai-ta,w> wybiPa'-ta, vyaiê-bz"[j]y:¥ ‘!Ke-l[;

had brought great social imbalance had also affected the social status of the Levites such that they are grouped along the marginal groups (the orphans, widows, and the sojourners) The disadvantages suffered by the marginal groups as well as the Levites became a matter of concern for the Deuteronomic School who in editing the literary works inserted such phrases that convey this concern.

Vs 28 has notes on the words T'Px.N:hiw> and ^yr<([v.Bi with variant readings in the Samaritan Pent. and the Septuagint (LXX). The *Targum Pseudo Jonathae* (secundum M. Ginsburger) has ~k,yre[]v; instead of ^yr<([v.Bi within your gates. The 2 per masc suffix seems Deuteronomic and this is consistent in its occurrence. (See `!Ay*b.a,h' ^yxiPa'me ^êd>y"â-ta, '#Poq.ti al{Üw> ^ab.b'l.-ta, #Meäa;t. al{ô %l"+ !tEânO ^yh,Pl{a/ hw"ihy>-rv,a] ^êc.r>a;'B. ^yr<ê[v. dx;äa;B. ^yx,'a; dx;Ûa;me !Ay÷b.a, ^'b. •hy<h.yl-yKi "If there is among you a poor man, one of your brethren, in any of your towns within your land which the LORD your God gives you, you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother") The plural is however intended in the use of ~k,yre[]v; instead of ^yr<ê[v...; The phenomenon of social inequality which became pronounced in Israel was not only evident in the local communities but very pronounced in every city where all segments of the population live. The use of the term gate in Israel's tradition moves from its traditional place of jurisdiction motive to the cities of Israel.

Vs 29. Note 'a' on the phrase hfeî[]m;-lk'B. has a variant in the Septuagint (*textus Graecus originalis*) as ^d(<)y" xl;îv.mi lkoßb.W ^f,ê[]m;-lk'(B. .The

phrase simply means the occupation of the people of Israel which at this time was mainly agrarian economy. It is not unlikely that some were engaged in commercial activities to which the phrase the *work of your hands* would refer. However it is more appropriate to consider the agricultural activities as the main occupation at this time in Israel's national history coupled with commercial activities.

3.3.1 (iii) The Form-Critical Analysis of Deut.14²²⁻²⁹. The form of a text is determined by its life setting. As Klaus Koch observes; 'no biblical text can be adequately understood without a consideration of the setting in life of its literary type.'¹²⁹

Where a way of life is particularly complex and has developed along its own line, a particular terminology comes into existence which then pervades all its literary types. For instance, the cult of the temple of Jerusalem has a style of expression quite different from the language used say, in legal circles. One and the same word – *sedeq*, for instance (which means loyalty to the community) – can have very different meanings in different situations. In any study of Hebrew terminology it is therefore important to consider the literary type and with it the setting in life where the word under study belongs.¹³⁰

In the view of Koch what we know of the setting in life of the apodictic law (series of prohibition) have much that is akin to what we know of the setting in life of the Hittite covenants. He states three things characteristic of the Hittite laws relevant in defining the 'Form of the title regulation' in the text segments. First, the Hittite laws were inscribed in stone tablets and kept in the sanctuary; second, that they were intended to be proclaimed ceremonially in public, and, thirdly, the Vassal appeared before the king as Israel were commanded to do (Exo.23¹⁷, 34²³). These similarities exist in the life setting

¹²⁹ K.Koch.1969. *The Growth of the Biblical Tradition: The Form-Critical method*. London: Adams & Charles Black. p.33.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

of the text segments. The Dt text repeatedly instructed the worshipper to go to the place which the Lord God will choose. $\text{'}\sim\text{k,yhel}\{\}\text{a/ hw}''\ddot{\text{U}}\text{hy} > \text{rx;}'\text{b.yI-rv,a]}\sim\text{AqúM'h;-la,-}\sim\text{ai(yKi}$ *'But you shall seek the place which the Lord your God will choose out of all your tribes to put his name and make his habitation there; thither you shall go'* (Deut.12⁵ 1³³ cf IKg 8³⁰) By implication the cultus provides the life setting of the tithe regulations and for public proclamation of the tithe regulations.

In deciding the life setting of a text, the following questions may be asked. Who is speaking? Who is listening? What is the prevailing mood? And what effect is sought? The answers to these questions are given in various terms. A.Alt thinks that the speaker was, a Priest, while M. Noth thinks that the speaker was a 'Judge' in Israel. Other suggestions see the speaker as a cultic Prophet and bearer of the mosaic office.¹³¹ It is not impossible that all of these personels were made speakers of this legislation at one time or another since the life setting required for proclamation of the tithe regulation would have been the Liturgical setting of annual festivals. While it did not matter who did so at any point in time, Koch simply refers to the speaker as a cultic official.¹³²

Regarding the effects sought by the regulations it was obvious that it was meant to appeal to the populace, religious officials, and political personels to encourage social inclusiveness in all spectrum of the society which aim it was to bring about a just society and egalitarian society. For those addressed by the regulations two possibilities exist. These are worshippers at the regular Liturgical services or at Annual festivals (Deut.26⁶⁻

¹³¹ *Ibid.* p.32.

¹³² *Ibid.* p.32.

¹²⁾ or the freehold Israelite farmer (who have reached adulthood) who alone are privileged in cultic affairs.¹³³

3.3. 2 The Feasts of Weeks and Its Social Relevance (Deut 16^{9-12, 13-15}) Deut. 16⁹⁻¹²

RSV	BHS	LXX
<p>vs:9 "You shall count seven weeks; begin to count the seven weeks from the time you first put the sickle to the standing grain.</p> <p>Vs:10 Then you shall keep the feast of weeks to the LORD your God with the tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give as the LORD your God blesses you;</p> <p>vs:11 and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your son and your daughter, your manservant and your maidservant, the Levite who is within your towns, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow who are among you, at the place which the LORD your God will choose, to make his name dwell there.</p>	<p>Deut.16:9 t[oßbuv' h['îb.vi lxeÛh'me %l"+-rP's.Ti lxeäT' hm'êQ'B; 'vmer>x, h['Pb.vi rPoês.li 'tA[]buv'</p> <p>Deut.16:10 'tA[buv' gx;Û t'yfiø['w> ^yh,êl{a/ hw"âhyl; rv<âa] ^ßd>y" tb;îd>nI tS;²mi ^ßk.r<b'y> rv<ia]K; !TE+Ti '^yh,(l{a/ hw"îhy></p> <p>Deut. 16:11 ÿynEâp.li T'úx.m;f'w> hT'a; ^yh,¹l{a/ hw"âhy> ^âD>b.[;w> é^T,biW ^ân>biW</p>	<p>Deuteronomy 16:9 ~Epta. e`bdoma,daj qe,leij avriqmh,sei eivj seauto,n\ a;rcison na. avriqmh/ j ta.j e`pta. e`bdoma,daj(avfou/ avrci,sh j na. ba,lh j to. dre,panon eivj ta. sparta,Å</p> <p>Deuteronomy 16:10 Kai. qe,leij ka,mei th.n e`orth.n tw/n e`bdoma,dwn eivj Ku,rion to.n Qeo.n sou(meta. th/j avnhkou,shj aavtoproaire,tou prosfora/j th/j ceiro.j sou(th.n o`poi,an prosfe,rh j(o[pwj se. euvlo,ghse Ku,rioj o` Qeo.j souÅ</p> <p>Deuteronomy 16:11 Kai. qe,leij euvfranqh/</p>

¹³³See K.Koch. *Op.cit.* p.32. It is not unlikely that there were infants in the Liturgical services except that the regulations were not directly aimed at them. Koch observes that the apodictic series of prohibitions were not originally intended for the instruction of children.

<p>vs:12 You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt; and you shall be careful to observe these statutes.</p>	<p>rv<åa] ‘ywILeh;w> è^t,m'a]w: rGE±h;w> ^yr<ê[‘v.Bi rv<åa] hn"ßm'l.a;h'w> ~AtiY"h;w> ^B<+r>qIB. ‘rx;b.yI rv<Üa] ~Aq^aM'B ^yh,êl{a/ hw"åhy> `~v'(Amßv. !KEiv;l.</p> <p>Deut. 16:12 db,[,î-yKi T'êr>k;z"åw> T"år>m;v'w> ~yIr"+c.miB. t'yyIßh' t'yfiê[‘w> `hL,ae(h' ~yQIßxuh;¥- ta,</p>	<p>evnw,pion Kuri,ou tou/ Qeou/ sou(su. kai. o` ui`o.j sou kai. h` guga,thr sou kai. o` dou/lo,j sou kai. h` dou,lh sou kai. o` Leui<thj o` evnto.j tw/n pulw/n sou kai. o` xe,noj kai. o` ovrfano.j kai. h` ch,ra(oi[ti nej ei=nai evn me,sw sou(evn tw/ to,pw o[ntina evkle,xh Ku,rioj o` Qeo.j sou(dia. na. katoiki,sh evkei/ to. o;noma au`tou/Å</p> <p>Deuteronomy 16:12 Kai. qe,leij evnqumei/sqai o[ti dou/loj evsta,qhj evn Aivgu,ptw \ kai. qe,leij fula,ttei kai. evktelei/ tau/ta ta. diata,gmataÅ</p>
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Two feasts¹³⁴ are merged in this pericope, namely the feast of Weeks (Deut.16⁹⁻¹²) and the feast of Booths (Deut.16¹³⁻¹⁵). The first, which is called ‘The Feast of Weeks’ goes by several names. It is also called ‘The Feast of Harvest’ or ‘Day of First fruits’ (Exo 23¹⁶, Num.28²⁶, Lev.23¹⁵⁻²¹). This feast was celebrated between 15th and 21st day of the seventh month and spans a period of seven days (Lev.23³³⁻³⁶). The feast commemorates Israel’s experience in the wilderness. In its observance the Israelite was commanded to take the fruits of goodly trees, fronds and of palm trees, and boughs of

¹³⁴ The Israelites are commanded to observe three feasts namely, the feast of unleaven bread, the feast of weeks, and the feast of Tabernacles (Exo.23^{16,17} 2Chron.8¹³).

thick trees etc and so dwell in booths for seven days to remind them of how their ancestors had dwelt in tents (hK'su: sf. AtK'su; pl. ṭAÀKosu) during their passage through the wilderness (Neh.8¹⁴⁻¹⁸)¹³⁵ This feast was one which the Deuteronomist¹³⁶ takes up for a re-interpretation with the aim of drawing attention not only to its religious significance but as well as to its sociological purpose. In the view of P.C.Craigie the religious significance of the celebration of this feast was essentially about the gracious provision of God in the harvest, a feast which would become an essential part of Israel's life in future when agriculture became basis of the society¹³⁷. The feast took place on the 50th day counting seven weeks from the beginning of the harvest of grain (Lev.23¹⁵⁻²¹). It was later known as the feast of Pentecost following the Septuagint (LXX) Frank E. Gaebelein *et al* observes, 'This feast was to begin seven weeks from the time the sickle was put to the standing grain (Deut. 16⁹). More specifically, Leviticus 23¹⁵ says that the beginning of the feast starts with the counting down made from 'the day after the Sabbath. This was the day when the sheaf for the wave offering was brought-in 'which was on the second day of the Passover Festival (Abib 16). The phrase 'fifty days' in Leviticus 23¹⁶ led the LXX to designate this feast as the 'Feast of Pentecost' being the Greek name for the feast. It falls on Sivan 6 (May/June).¹³⁸ The feast is also linked with the name of Passover. What links the feast with the name Passover is simply the use of the two waved loaves. The tradition about the loaves is that the loaves used at the

¹³⁵ C.A. Briggs, S.R.Driver *et al*. "Ed." 1906. *A critical and exegetical commentary on Deuteronomy*. New York: Charles Scribner's sons.p. 197.

¹³⁶ The Deuteronomists seem to have combined the J-Source and the P-Source. While the J-Source calls it the Feast of Ingathering, the P-Source calls it the Feast of Booths.

¹³⁷ P.C.Craigie. 1976. *The Book of Deuteronomy*. Grand Rapids Michigan: W.B.Eerdman's Publishing Company. p. 244.

¹³⁸ F.E.Gaebelein, R.P.Polcyn, Walter C. Kaiser Jr. 1992. *The Expositor's Bible commentary*. Vol.3.Grand Rapids Michigan: Zondervan publishing House. p.110.

Passover were unleavened while those presented at Pentecost were leavened.¹³⁹ This difference is accounted for in that while one was a memorial of the bread hastily prepared at Israel's departure, the other was a tribute of gratitude to God for their daily food, which was leavened.¹⁴⁰ The theological and sociological importance of the feast is highlighted by W.L.Alexander who says that, 'the Hebrew were to regard the produce of the soil as given to them by the bounties of God and as such to honour God by a public thanksgiving for his goodness. As for its sociological importance, he argues that the feast, which was seen as Israel's national holiday, was also to be observed as a time when goodwill and kindness was to be shown towards the 'stranger', 'the fatherless' and 'the widow'.¹⁴¹ This social view about the observance of the feast is one which the Deuteronomist employs for his didactic purpose emphasizing both the cultic aspect of the feast as well as the sociological importance of the feast particularly to meet the needs of the time namely the prevailing imbalance in social standard of living in Israel. The institution of the feast which is prescribed in the P-Source (Lev.23¹⁵⁻⁴³) describes in detail the cultic procedures which include burnt offering (v.18) and Sin offering (v.19) but which are conspicuously absent in Dt.

The developments leading to the legislation including the marginal groups in the celebration of the feast particularly can be traced to the changes that occurred in Israel's social and economic systems of the 7th century BC. As A.R.Ceresko remarks,

The move to a territorial state opened the way to social and economic stratification. Under the tribal confederation, structures and institutions were

¹³⁹ The unleavened bread is the flat baked bread mixed only with water, while the leaven bread was that which was fermented.

¹⁴⁰ See Jamieson –Fauset-Brown commentary.

¹⁴¹ H.D.M. Spence, J.S.Exell. "Eds. *Deuteronomy, The Pulpit Commentary*. Chicago: Milcox & Follett. p. 274 .

designed to inhibit and discourage the accumulation both of land and resources as well as decision making power in the hands of individual groups. The Canaanite City-State system was the opposite of what the tribal confederacy was designed to be. Now the way lay open to a return to the Canaanite City State model of hierarchy and social stratification. The elite ruling class of the Davidic and Solomonic state held the decision-making power and the ability to impose those decisions even by force.¹⁴²

This newly introduced socio-economic system led to the collapse of the mutual aid way of life which characterized the Old Tribal Confederacy. Consequently, the social condition of the marginal groups became worsened. As W.A.VanGemenen puts it, 'Later on when, after the settlement in Canaan, the tribalism gave way to the life in cities and villages, the widows became victims of the development of growing social contrasts'.¹⁴³

¹⁴² A.R.Ceresko. 1992. *The Old Testament: A Liberation perspective*, Maryknoll: St Paul's academy. p.196.

¹⁴³ W.A.VanGemenen, (ed) 1997, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* Vol.1, UK: Paternoster press, p.413.

3.3.3 Deut. 16¹³⁻¹⁵ The Feasts of Booths and Social Relevance

<p>Deut 16:13 "You shall keep the feast of booths seven days, when you make your ingathering from your threshing floor and your wine press;</p> <p>Deut. 16:14 you shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter, your manservant and your maidservant, the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow who are within your towns</p> <p>Deut. 16:15 For seven days you shall keep the feast to the LORD your God at the place which the LORD will choose; because the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you will be altogether joyful.</p>	<p>Deut. 16:13 hf,î[[]T; tKo±Suh; gx; ~ymi_y" t[;äb.vi ^ßl. ^ßn>r>G"mI) ^êP.s.a'B. `^b<)q.YImiW</p> <p>Deut. 16:14 ^G<+x;B. T'Px.m;f'w ^T,'biW ^Ün>biW hT'a; ^t,ê'm'a]w: ^åD>b.[;w> ~AtiY"h;w> rGE±h;w> ywI©Leh;w> rv<ia] hn"ßm'l.a;h'w> `^yr<([v.Bi ‘</p> <p>Deut. 16:15 gxoT' ~ymi^y" t[;äb.vi ~AqßM'B; ^yh,êl{a/ hw"åhyl; rx:åb.yI-rv,a] hw"åhy> ^úk.r<b'y> yKiä hw"+hy> lkoÜB. ^yh,^l{a/ ; 'lkob.W</p>	<p>Deut 16:13 e`orth.n skhnw/n poih,seij seautw/ e`pta. h`me,raj evn tw/ sunagagei/n se evk tou/ a[lwno,j]sou kai. avpo. th/j lhnou/ sou</p> <p>Deut. 16:14 kai. euvfranqh,sh evn th/ e`orth/ sou su. kai. o` ui`o,j sou kai. h` quga,thr sou o` pai/j sou kai. h` paidi,skh sou kai. o` Leui,thj kai. o` prosh,lutoj kai. o` ovrfano.j kai. h` ch,ra h` ou=sa evn tai/j po,lesi,n sou</p> <p>Deut. 16:15 e`pta. h`me,raj e`orta,seij kuri,w tw/ qew/ sou evn tw/ to,pw w- eva.n evkle,xhtai ku,rioj o` qeo,j sou autw/ eva.n de. euvlogh,sh se ku,rioj o` qeo,j sou evn pa/sin toi/j</p>
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	‘^t.a'(WbT. t'yyIBh'w> ^yd<êy" hfeä[]m; `x;me(f %a:	genh,masi,n sou kai. evn panti. e;rgw tw/n ceirw/n sou kai. e;sh euvfraino,menoj
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Deut. 16¹³⁻¹⁵ The Feast of Booths. The second feast mentioned in this pericope is the ‘Feast of Booths’ (Deut. 16¹³⁻¹⁵) Heb. *hag hassukkot* tKo±Suh; gx;ó This feast which goes by various names was instituted not only to have religious significance in Israel’s society but also sociological. The feast was celebrated between 15th and 21st day of the seventh month, thus spanning a period of seven days (Lev.23³³⁻³⁶, see vs 39)¹⁴⁴. The feast commemorates Israel’s experience in the wilderness. In its observance the Israelite is commanded ‘to take the fruit of goodly trees, fronds of palm trees, and boughs of thick trees etc and to dwell in booths (Lev. 23³³⁻³⁶) for seven days (Neh. 4¹⁴⁻¹⁸) to remind them how their ancestors had dwelt in tents during their passage through the wilderness’¹⁴⁵. While in the J source the feast was called the ‘Feast of Ingathering’ or ‘First fruit’ (Exo. 23¹⁶, 34²²) in the P- source it is called the ‘Feast of Booths’ (Lev. 23^{33-36, 37-43}, Num. 29¹²⁻³³) which was the name by which the feast became generally known in later Old Testament books (Zech. 14^{16, 19}, Ezra 3⁴, 2 Chron 8¹³). Being the most popular and widely observed feast among the three festivals in ancient Israel it was also sometimes simply called ‘The Feast’ or ‘Pilgrimage’ (1Kg 8^{2, 65}, 2 Chron 5^{3, 7}, Neh. 8¹⁴, Lev. 23³⁹).The emphasis with which this festival was celebrated points to the strength of its impact both

¹⁴⁴ The P-source calls it the feast of Ingathering (Exo.23¹⁶,34²²,Lev.23^{34,36,39}) and specifies the time of the celebration extending from the fifteenth to the twenty-first of the seventh month which is Tishri (Sept/Oct) See; F.E.Gaebelein, R.P.Polcyn, Walter C. Kaiser Jr. 1992. *The Expositor’s Bible commentary*. Vol.3. Grand Rapids Michigan: Zondervan publishing House. p.110.

¹⁴⁵ C.A.Briggs, S.R.Driver *et al* “Eds.” 1906. *A critical and Exegetical commentary on Deuteronomy*. New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons. p.197.

for the religious and social life of Israel. It did not only had a large attendance but reflected an elaborate celebration (see 2 Chron 7⁸ cf Num 29¹²⁻³³)

The Deuteronomic text introduces a new interpretation not only to its religious importance but its social significance. Although the feast is combined with an agricultural festival (the first fruits) which reminds the worshipper of God's provision, the Deuteronomist goes further to introduce the sociological implication for Israel by the focus which the feast must incorporate, namely, the care of the marginal groups (the orphans, widows, strangers and the Levites). It was therefore intended to be religious celebration but not without social significance. That the phenomenon of social inequality exists in the social context of the text was a fact which had already been proven by the denunciation of the prophets. 'When you come to appear before me, who requires of you this trampling of my court? Bring no more vain offerings' (Isa. 1^{12,13}). A cultus without right judgement and social justice was no cult. In the observance of the feast¹⁴⁶, the Deuteronomist introduces the ideological renovation whose inspiration goes back to the mosaic tradition and given advocacy by the prophets. The provision to be made for the marginal group emphasizes the need for an ideological response to the phenomenon of social inequality already perpetuated by the class structure in Israel under the monarchical system. The Deuteronomist puts these regulations on the lips of Moses to give legitimation and authority to their applications in Israel's community hence the regular occasion for the proclamation of these regulations was in Israel's cultic setting. In comparing the apodictic series of prohibitions with the Hittite state treaties K.Koch

¹⁴⁶ The Israelite is commanded to observe three feasts namely the Feast of unleavened bread, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles (Exo.23^{16,17}, 2Chron.8¹³) The feast of booth was also called the feast of ingathering or tabernacle. The Deuteronomist incorporates into the religious significance the sociological importance.

equally observes that they were intended to be proclaimed ceremonially. In the case of the speaker at the festival, it is believed to be a cultic official who proclaims the prohibitions as God's own word.¹⁴⁷

3.3.3 (i) Form-Critical Analysis of the Text Segment

Form-criticism according to W.H.Schmidt seeks to determine the *sitz im leben* (the life setting or social context) of a text, by inquiring into the social relations (institutions) in which the traditions grew.¹⁴⁸ It also defines the form or genre of the text. In this text segment the occasion for the proclamation of the regulations was Liturgical setting of the celebration of the feast. In this worship/Liturgical setting the proclamation could only have a homiletic purpose in view. The speaker may be traced to a cult official but not conclusive. W. H. Schmidt remarks:

It is hard to determine what group was responsible for this preaching of the law. Like others before G.Von Rad sees Deuteronomy as originating in (rural) Levitical circles in the northern kingdom, they would be responsible for the priestly and the militant spirit of the book and it would have been their task to instruct the laity (Deut.33¹⁰; Neh.8⁷ etc) But since 'Levi' in the OT is something complex and hard to pin down to particulars, it can hardly serve to shed light on the origin of the book. There must, however, been some connection between Deuteronomy and the Levites (cf. the additions in 27^{9ff};31^{9,24ff}) Since Deuteronomy is concerned for their welfare (12^{12,18f} and often) and included them

¹⁴⁷ Various identities are given to the speaker in Israel's cult. A. Alt thinks that he is a Priest; M. Noth thinks he is one of the Judges, while A.Bertholet and H.J.Kraus think he is a cultic prophet and bearer of the Mosaic office.

¹⁴⁸ W.H.Schmidt. 2008. *Old Testament Introduction*. New York: St Paul's Press. p.68. Form criticism begins by identifying a text's genre or conventional literary form such as parables, proverbs, epistles or love poems. It goes on to seek the sociological setting for each text's genre, its 'situation in life' (German: *Sitz im leben*) For example, the sociological setting of a law is a court, or the sociological setting of a psalm (hymn) is worship..... *from wikipedia*. In the text segments under consideration the sociological setting of the law moves from the ordinary situation of a court to its cultic setting.

among the unfortunate who need protection and help (14^{27ff}, 26^{11ff})¹⁴⁹

M.Weinfeld on the contrary thinks that agents of transmission of the law are to be looked for among the Sapiential scribes at the royal court in Jerusalem. Although the group may originate from the royal court in Jerusalem, they belong to different ideological group whose concern was directed at advocacy for the marginal groups.

The occasion for the proclamation of the law was the Liturgical gathering for the feast of Booths which W.H.Schmidt observes may have been developed as part of the Liturgy at a later time. Laws were read out in the Liturgy (Deut.31^{10ff}; 2Kgs23² cf.Exo.24⁷, Neh.8; Ps.81, etc). One particular occasion in which the law was read to the whole congregation was the feast of booths.

And Moses commanded them, 'At the end of every seven years, at the set time of the year of release, at the feast of booths, when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God at the place which he will choose, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones, and the sojourner within your towns that they may learn to fear the Lord your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law (Deut.31¹⁰⁻¹²).

The form of the law following A.Alt categorization is expressed in the 'apodictics' You shall keep the feast of booths seven days, when you make your ingathering from your threshing floor and your wine press.....(Deut.16¹³). The apodictic does not express conditional statements as in the 'casuistics' but gives a mandate on how Israel's society would be governed as a covenant community. Cognizance is to be given to the marginal groups in the celebration of the feasts in ancient Israel. The purpose of the

¹⁴⁹ W. H. Schmidt. 2008. *Old Testament Introduction*. New York: St Paul Press. p.147.

feast thus moves beyond gratitude for deliverance from the Egyptian bondage but to social concern for the widows, orphans, sojourners and the Levites. Three concerns may be recognized in these regulations, namely; concern for the widows who suffer from gender bias and thus negligence and material needs (IKgs 17⁸⁻²¹, 2Kgs 4¹⁻⁷), the concern for discrimination against the sojourner who has no equal social status in Israel, and concern for the socio-economic condition of the orphans and the Levites. This social context is most pronounced in the context of the 8th century prophet in Israel. We often meet this in Amos and Isaiah's message.

Learn to do good seek justice correct
oppression defend the fatherless plead for
the widow (Isa.1¹⁷)

This social context as aptly described by A.R.Ceresko from message of Amos shows the impact of social inequality on Israel's social structure;

One practice that particularly irked Amos was the accumulation of properties into large estates by wealthy individuals and families. One of the foundation stones of the socio-economic order under the tribal confederation had been the possession by each extended family of its own dwelling and plot of land sufficient to provide the basic necessities of life to its members. In addition to this were the provisions for mutual aid and support among the extended families of a clan, among the clans which formed each of the tribes, and finally among the tribes themselves within the larger confederation.....Both of these foundation stones were being crushed and thrown by the wayside.¹⁵⁰

A major change that was introduced by the influence of the Canaanite city social system was social stratification and the eventual loss of the mutual aid system. It is

¹⁵⁰ A.R.Ceresko. 1992. *The Old Testament: A Liberation Perspective*. New York: Orbis books. p.242.

however questionable how long it were possible to retain the old mutual aid social system in the face of industrialization and globalization; yet the tradition of a caring community represented by the mosaic regulations holds importance even for the 21st century.

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3.3.4. Dispensation of Justice and the Law of Gleaning as Responses to Social Inequality (Mutual Aid Mechanism in Ancient Israel) (Deut. 24^{17-18,19-22})

Deut. 24: 17 – 18, 19 – 22	BHS	LXX
<p>Deut. 24:17 "You shall not pervert the justice due to the sojourner or to fatherless, or take a widow's garment in pledge;</p> <p>Deut. 24:18 <i>but you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this.</i></p> <p>Deut.24:19 "When you reap your harvest in your field, and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; <i>it shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow;</i> that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.</p> <p>Deut. 24:20 When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow.</p> <p>Deut. 24:21 When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not glean it afterward; it shall</p>	<p>Deut. 24:17 jP;Pv.mi hJ,êt; al{â al{âw> ~At+y" rGE `hn")m'l.a; dg<B<β lboêx]t;</p> <p>Deut.24:18 T^ar>k;z" w> ~yIr;êc.miB. 't'yyI'h' db,[,Û yKi ^yh,Pl{a/ hw"ihy> ^±D>p. YIw:) ^W>c;m. ykiÛnOa' !Keú-l[; ~V'_mi `hZ<)h; rb"βD'h;- ta, tAfê[]l; 'ä Deut. 24:19 ^'r>yci(q. •rcoq.ti yKiä rm,[oâ T'óx.k;vYw> ^d<øf'b. 'bWvt' al{Û hd<^aF'B; ~AtiY"l; rGE±l; ATêx.q;l.</p>	<p>MGK Deut.24:17 De.n qe,leij diastre,fei th.n kri,sin tou/ xe,nou(tou/ ovrfanou/(ouvde. qe,leij qlamba,nei to. i`ma,tion th/j ch,raj evne,curon\</p> <p>MGK Deut. 24:18 avlla. qe,leij evngumei/sqai o[ti dou/loj evsta,qhj evn Aivgu,ptw (kai. se. evlu,trwse Ku,rioj o` Qeo.j sou evkei/gen\ dia. tou/to evgw. prosta,zw eivj se. na. ka,mnh]j to. pra/gma tou/toÅ</p> <p>Deut. 24:19 eva.n de. avmh,sh]j avmhto.n evn tw avgrw/ sou kai. evpila,qh dra,gma evn tw/ avgrw/ sou ouv evpanastrafh,sh labei/n auvto, tw/ ptwcw/ kai. tw/ proshlu,tw kai. tw/ ovrfanw/ kai. th/ ch,ra e;stai i[na euvlogh,sh se ku,rioj o` qeo,j sou evn pa/si toi/j e;rgoi] tw/n ceirw/n sou</p>

<p>be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow.</p> <p>Deut. 24:22 You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this.</p>	<p>hy<+h.yI hn"βm'l.a;l'w> '^k.r<b'y> ![:m;Ûl. lkoßB. ^yh,êl{a/ hw"âhy> ^yd<(y" hfeî[]m; Deut. 24:20 ^êt.yzE) 'jBox.t; yKi rGE±l; ^yr,_x]a; raEßp't. al{ï `hy<)h.yI hn"βm'l.a;l'w> ~AtiY"l; {ï Û</p> <p>Deut. 24:21 ^ê.m.r>K; 'rcob.ti yKiÛ rGE±l; ^yr,_x]a; llePA[t. al{ `hy<)h.yI hn"βm'l.a;l'w> ~AtiY"l; ï</p> <p>Deut. 24:22 db,[,î-yKi T'êr>k;z"âw> ~yIr"+c.mi #r<a,äB. t'yyIßh' ykiÛnOa' !Keú-l[; tAfê[]l; '^W>c;m. `hZ<)h; rb"βD"h;-</p>	<p>Deut. 24:20 VAFou/ tina,xh j ta.j evlai,aj sou(de.n qe,leij pa,lin evlaiologh,sei tou.j kla,douj\ qe,lei ei=sqai dia. to.n xe,non(dia. to.n ovrfano.n kai. dia. th.n ch,ranÅ</p> <p>Deut. 24:21 VAFou/ trugh,sh j to.n avmpelw/na, sou(de.n qe,leij stafulologh,sei pa,lin\ qe,lei ei=sqai dia. to.n xe,non(dia. to.n ovrfano.n kai. dia. th.n ch,ranÅ</p> <p>Deut. 24:22 Kai. qe,leij evnqumei/sqai o[ti dou/loj evsta,qhj evn gh/ Aivgu,ptou\ dia. tou/to evgw. prosta,zw eivj se. na. ka,mnh j to. pra/gma tou/toÅ</p>
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This pericope deals with two different issues but which the redactor brings together for his didactic and hermeneutical purpose. These are vss 17-18 which deal with Israel's judicial system, which appeals for justice and the protection of the weak in the society and vss.19-22 which prescribe the law of gleaning as mandatory in Israelite agrarian society to empower the weak. This has variously been described as the 'mutual aid mechanism' or 'socialism' in modern terms. The aim was to take care of social inequality in the economy produced by the new social system in ancient Israel. The new social system in which ownership of land and political hegemony created the wealthy and the poor ensured a gap. For example the *ger* (strangers) which in the view of D.J.Zucher he refers to the resident aliens were non-Israelites who often did not own land, were poor and dependent upon others.¹⁵¹ This legislation seeks therefore to address the social condition in which the marginal groups became impoverished in society. The legislation requesting justice in Israel's judicial system in this text segment (Deut.24⁷⁻¹⁸) follows closely Deut.16¹⁸⁻²⁰ which prescribes the appointment of Judges and Officials ~yrI^aj.vO)w> ~yjiäp.vO(*sop^etim* and *sof^erim*) in every city; Deut.16^{21,22} and 17-24⁶ being an interpolation. The chapters between take up other cultic regulations but resume the theme of Israel's judicial system again in 24⁷. Evidently the aim of this legislation also was to meet the challenges of the cities following the settlement in the Canaanite city states which was not only hierarchical but commercial in orientation. Baalism was a fertility cult that emphasised social economic engagements without the

¹⁵¹ D.J.Zucher. 2005. *The Torah. An introduction for Christians and Jews*. New York: Paulist Press. p.179.

moral response to effects of social imbalance created by such system. Yahwistic faith conversely takes this up as mandate for the people of Israel as covenanted people. The emphasis in the text was repeatedly the need for justice in Israel's judicial system which is reflected in the similarities in the phraseologies employed.

Deut. 16:18 "You shall appoint judges and officers in all your towns which the LORD your God gives you, according to your tribes; and they shall judge the people with righteous judgment".

~yrI^aj.vo)w> ~yjiäp.vo
 ^yr<ê[v.-lk'B. ^l.-!T,Ti
 hw"ôhy> rv,'a]
 Wjip.v'w> ^yj,_b'v.li ^ßl. !tEiñO
 ^yh,²l{a/
 `qd<c,(-jP;v.mi ~['Ph'-ta,

Deut. 16:19 You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality; and you shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the cause of the righteous.

jP'êv.mi hJ,ät;-al{
 yKiä dx;voê xQ:âti-al{w> ~ynI+P' ryKiPt; al
 @LEßs;ywI) ~ymiêk'x] ynEây[e 'rWE[;y>
 dx;Vo^ah;{
 `~qI)yDIc; yrEîb.DI

Deut. 16:20 Justice, and only justice, you shall follow, that you may live and inherit the land which the LORD your God gives you.

@Do=r>Ti qd<c,P qd<c,î

#r<a'êh'-ta, T'äv.r:y"w>
 'hy<x.Ti(![,m;Ûl.
 `%l") !tEinO ^yh,Pl{a/
 hw"ihy>-rv,a]

Compare this with the phraseology in chapter 24¹⁷⁻¹⁸

Deut. 24:17 "You shall not pervert the justice due to the sojourner or to the fatherless, or take a widow's garment in pledge;

jP;Pv.mi hJ,êt; al{å

`hn")m'l.a; dg<B<β lboêx]t; al{åw> ~At+y" rGE

The impact of the Redactors on the text is evident in the similarities of syntax. The phrase *'You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality; and you shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise'* `hn")m'l.a; dg<B<β

lboêx]t; al{åw> ~At+y" rGE jP;Pv.mi hJ,êt; al{å finds an echo in

Deut.24¹⁷ ("You shall not pervert the justice due to the sojourner or to the fatherless, or take a widow's garment in pledge;) with half the verse repeated verbatim in Deut.24¹⁷.

The Deuteronomist practically adopts the sacral apodictic legal formulation which already exists in the Covenant code (Exo.23⁶⁻⁹) and conveys the same thought on the need for social justice and equity in society. The Deuteronomist interprets the text in the light of the social setting of Deuteronomy of the 7th century. The re-interpretation of the covenant code in the light of 7th century Deuteronomy is evident by the inclusion of the

marginal groups in the text where originally they were absent.(See Deut.16¹⁹⁻²⁰ Cf. Exo.23⁶⁻⁹).

The declarative negation, ‘no’ $\text{al}\{\ddot{\text{i}}$ is in the construct with the verb $\text{hJ,}\hat{\text{e}}\text{t};$ (from the *Qal* hj'n'' which has various shades of meaning.(see Gen.3⁴, Deut.13¹, Hos.9¹⁵). Primarily it means ‘to extend’ or ‘stretch out’ eg of hands (Exo.7¹⁹) or of staff (Exo. 9²³). It also connotes ‘to turn aside’ (Num.20¹⁷). The infinitive means ‘to turn away from’ (Num. 22³³). In a metaphorical sense it means ‘to be hostile’ (Isa. 21¹²). Thus the phrase $\text{rGE jP;}\text{v.mi hJ,}\hat{\text{e}}\text{t}; \text{al}\{\ddot{\text{a}}$ *You shall not pervert the justice due to the sojourner* could be interpreted to mean ‘You shall not turn aside, pervert, extend, or delay justice due for the weak. The LXX employs the term evkklinei/j which means ‘to extend’ or ‘turn away’ from which the sense of wrong judgment is derived.

The concept of fair judgment is expressed by the phrase $\text{qd}<\text{c,(-jP;v.mi}$ translated as *righteous judgment*. The Heb. jP'v.mi *mišpat* means judgment, decision by arbitration or legal decision. The Deuteronomist in this pericope employs the apodictic formula and merges it with the historical narratives of Israel’s experience in Egypt to arrive at his didactic objective.

You shall not pervert the justice due to the fatherless, or take a widow’s garment in pledge but you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there, therefore I command you to do this

The formulation is not entirely a law but an exhortation aimed at addressing the social conditions of the marginal groups who were the most vulnerable group in a stratified society such as Israel had become.

3.3.4(i) The Law of Gleaning (Deut. 24^{17-18,19-22}) Vss 19-22 describes the law of gleaning which requires that the owner of the field leave some of the crops or fruits voluntarily for the less privileged in the society during the harvest. Where it is forgotten the farmer (or owner) was also not required to go back to take it. That the concept of gleaning is reflected in both texts can be seen in the similarities that exist in the literary composition of these regulations for example,

Lev 19 ⁹⁻¹⁰	Deut 24 ¹⁹⁻²¹
<p>When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field to its very border; neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest.</p> <p>ryciäq.-ta, ‘~k,r>c.qub.W* ta;îP. hL,²k;t. al{ô ~k,êc.r>a; rco=q.li ^βd>f’ `jQE)l;t. al{i ^βr>yci(q. jq,l,îw> 10 And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the LORD your God.</p> <p>lleêA[t. al{â ‘^m.r>k;w> jQE+l;t. al{â ^βm.r>K; jr<p,îW ‘rGEI;w> ynIÜ[‘l, ~t’êao bzOæ[]T; `~k,(yhel{a/ hw"ihy> ynIβa]</p>	<p>When you reap your harvest in your field, and have forgotten a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow; that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.</p> <p>^’r>yci(q. •rcoq.ti yKiä ‘bWvt’ al{Ü hd<ªF’B; rm,[oå T’óx.k;v¥w> ^d<øf’b. hy<+h.yI hn"βm’l.a;l’w> ~AtiY"l; rGE±l; ATêx.q;l. lkoβB. ^yh,êl{a/ hw"âhy> ‘^k.r<b’y> ![:m;Ûl. `^yd<(y" hfeî[]m; 20 When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow.</p> <p>^êt.yzE) ‘jBox.t; yKiÛ ~AtiY"l; rGE±l; ^yr<_x]a; raEβp’t. al{i</p>

	<p> $\text{`hy}(\text{<})\text{h.yI hn}''\beta\text{m}''\text{l.a;l}'\text{w}>$ 21 When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not glean it afterward; it shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow. $\text{^}\hat{\text{e}}\text{m.r}>\text{K}$; $\text{'rcob.ti yKi}\hat{\text{U}}$ $\text{^}\text{yr}(\text{<}_\text{x})\text{a}$; $\text{lle}\beta\text{A}[\text{t. al}\{$ $\sim\text{AtiY}''\text{l}$; $\text{rGE}\pm\text{l}$; $\text{`hy}(\text{<})\text{h.yI hn}''\beta\text{m}''\text{l.a;l}'\text{w}>$ </p>
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For example, the phrase $\text{^}\beta\text{d}>\text{f}' \text{ta};\hat{\text{i}}\text{P. hL},^2\text{k};\text{t. al}\{\hat{\text{o}} \sim\text{k},\hat{\text{e}}\text{c.r}>\text{a}$;
 $\text{ryci}\ddot{\text{a}}\text{q.}-\text{ta}$, $\text{'}\sim\text{k,r}>\text{c.qub.W}^*$ which translated reads, 'when you harvest the grain in your field' (Lev.19⁹), is the same employed by the Deuteronomic redactor $\text{hd}(\text{<}^{\text{a}}\text{F}'\text{B}$; $\text{rm},[\text{o}\hat{\text{a}} \text{T}'\acute{\text{o}}\text{x.k};\text{v}'\text{Y}\text{w}> \text{^}\text{d}(\text{<}\acute{\text{o}}\text{f}'\text{b. ^}'\text{r}>\text{yci}(\text{q. } \bullet\text{rcoq.ti yK}$. There is no sufficient differences between the syntax employed except the term for gleaning $\text{jq,l},\hat{\text{i}} \text{Leqet}$ which does not occur in the Deuteronomic text but has the idea conveyed. The term jq,l , (cs. = construct sg) means gleanings (of harvest) or part of the harvest from the farm usually left for the benefit of the less privileged. According to Charles A. Briggs *et al* , gleanings in the corn field, the olive-garden and the vineyard are not to be claimed in a grasping spirit by the owner, but to be left for the stranger, the fatherless and the widow. In this regulation, three agricultural products are mentioned namely corn, the fig of olives trees (vs 20) and the grapes (vs 21) and by this suggests that the regulation was limited to plants. Animal were not part of the law of gleaning. The

supplies. The probability then is that the original manuscript does not include the phrase and that the phrase ‘*the widow’s garment*’ was probably added later by the Deuteronomic editor to suit his purpose or concern for the social condition of the marginal groups. Vss 19 and 20 also find a replacement of the phrase ‘*it shall be for the sojourner, for the orphan, and for the Widow*’ $\text{hn}''\beta\text{m}'\text{l.a;l}'\text{w}> \sim\text{At}\ddot{\text{t}}\text{Y}''\text{l}; \text{rGE}\pm\text{l};$ by the single word $\text{!Ay}=\text{b.a}$, which means ‘*the poor*’. This variation has the support of the *codices minusculis scripti*¹⁵³ as well as codex ms(s) ie codex (codices) versionis Graecae where the Greek repeatedly use $\text{ptwcw}/|$. the Greek for the poor.($\text{auvto, tw}/|$ $\text{ptwcw}/| \text{ kai}$)) This also reflects the ideology behind the text that its focus was the matter of social inequality affirmed by the social status of the marginal group. Rather than conceive the social condition to which the marginal groups belong by the descriptive term evndeh, j which means ‘the poor’ or ‘to be impoverished’ the editor repeatedly refers to the marginal group by their designations (ie, the Sojourners, the orphans and the widows). This categorization may be the creation of the Deuteronomist to distinguish the poor in terms of being pious in spirit which has a positive connotation rather than economically poor and socially marginalized to which the marginal group belongs.

3.3.4 (ii) Form-Critical Analysis of Deut.24^{17-18,19-22}

Vss.17-18 is a legal formulation in the apodictic category. *You shall not pervert the justice due to the sojourner, or to the fatherless or take a widow’s garment in pledge.*

$\sim\text{At}+\text{y}'' \text{rGE}\grave{\text{a}} \text{jP};\text{Pv.mi hJ,}\hat{\text{e}}\text{t}; \text{al}\{$

¹⁵³ The *Targum Jonathae* and the *Codices* are ancient manuscripts which are reflected in the BHS critical textual apparatus

ִּהַנְּ"מ'ל.א; dg<B<β lboêx]t; al{åw>

The concern for the marginal group in the text segment were interpolations as they are couched in a legal framework and differ from the preceding verses that follow. The Deuteronomist employs the legal framework as advocacy for social justice in Israel's society. Justice, right, rectitude are the attributes of God and must reflect in Israel as God's covenant community. To marginalize the sojourners, orphans and widows in the dispensation of justice amount to contradiction. It is in this social context that the Deuteronomic school employs the legal framework as instrument of advocacy for social transformation. The Chronicler historian whose views compare with the Deuteronomic school critique the monarchy yet considers justice as the fundamental premise for existence for the nation. The king is set to execute justice in the society.

Blessed be the Lord your God who has delighted in you and set you on his throne as king for the Lord your God. Because your God loved Israel and would establish them for ever, he has made you king over them, that you may execute justice and righteousness (2 Chron.9⁸⁻⁹).

The theme of justice and social equality is therefore considered as an imperative in the covenant society of ancient Israel. This theme also finds expression within the Holiness code.

You shall do no injustice in judgment, you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbour (Lev.19¹⁵).

The demand for social justice and egalitarian society was not peculiar to Israel though, as it was a theme common in the ancient Near East. It finds echoe in the Hammurabi's code. The rhetoric of the prologues and the epilogues of the law codes

mention the monarch's responsibility toward the widow as a fundamental virtue of a just reign. The prologue of the law code of Hammurabi (c.1750 BC) states that his (ie the Kings') calling from the gods is to establish justice and in the epilogue he explains the measure he has taken to protect the widow.¹⁵⁴ The epilogue to the Hammurabi law code reads:

The laws of justice which Hammurabi, the efficient king set up, and by which he called the land to take the right way and have good government. I Hammurabi the perfect King, was not careless (or) neglectful of the black-headed (people) When *Enlil* had presented to me, *Marduk* had committed to me; I sought out peaceful regions for them, I overcame grievous difficulties; I caused light to rise on them. With the insight that *Enki* allotted to me with the ability that Marduk gave me I rooted out the enemy above and below; I made an end of war; I promoted the welfare of the land; I made the people rest in friendly habitations, I did not let them have anyone to terrorize them. The great gods called me; so I became the beneficent shepherd whose scepter is the righteous. I always governed them in peace; I sheltered them in my wisdom in order that the strong might not oppress the weak that justice might be dealt the orphan.¹⁵⁵

The social context (*sitz im leben*) of this regulation was the quest for social security for the marginal group in a stratified Israelite society.

Vss 19-22. These verses have been described as laws of charity which require that part of the three main crops (grains, olives, grapes) be reserved for the poor, a form of welfare

¹⁵⁴ T.D.Alexander & D.W.Baker. 2003. *Dictionary of the Old Testament Pentateuch*. England: Intersociety Press.p.890.

¹⁵⁵ See: B.J.Pritchard. 1969, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the Old Testament*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. p.178.

state in which the deprived was able to profit by their own efforts.¹⁵⁶ Thus these laws are not seen as mere rehash of laws from elsewhere in the Pentateuch but as deliberate literary creation to respond to the phenomenon of social inequality that has become endemic in Israel in the 7th and 8th century BC in which the marginal groups stood the most vulnerable. In the light of contemporary socio-cultural experiences, Deuteronomy can no more be regarded as a mere rehash of narratives and laws but relevant theologically and spiritually. It also has sociological relevant value for today. R. Brown writing on the sociological importance of the book says

The book (of Deuteronomy) contributes helpfully to contemporary discussions about the dangers of debt, alcoholism and drug abuse. It emphasises the necessity of compassionate but uncompromising biblical teaching on matters such as honesty, community welfare, social hygiene, marital fidelity and sexual ethics. Here is a book which has something to say to the present ecology and conservation debate, and which comments on responsibility for the deprived millions in our world, the care of the elderly, human rights, sexual equality, child abuse, injustice, safety in the home, urbanization and animal rights....¹⁵⁷

The social contexts for which the use of these laws probably would belong would be Liturgical gatherings such as the holy convocations (Lev.23²¹) in ancient Israel. These would have been part of the exhortations given to the gathering for the purpose of instructing the worshippers. The appeal was to draw attention to the inclusive social system that is expected of the covenant community rather than the exclusive social system characteristic of the Canaanite cities. The regular occasion for the proclamation of these laws would be the festivals in Israel. (Lev.23²², Deut.24¹⁹)

¹⁵⁶ C.A.Briggs, S.R.Driver *et al* "Eds." 1906. *A critical and Exegetical commentary on Deuteronomy*. New York: Charlse Scribner's Sons. p.197.

¹⁵⁷ R.Brown.1993. *The Message of Deuteronomy*. England: Inter-Varsity Press. p.26.

3.3.5 Deut. 26¹²⁻¹⁵ The Triennial Tithe Regulation as Response to Social Inequality

Deut. 26: 12 – 15	BHS	LXX
<p>^{RSV} Deut. 26:12 "When you have finished paying all the tithe of your produce in the third year, which is the year of tithing, giving it to the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, <i>that they may eat within your towns and be filled,</i></p> <p>Deut. 26:13 then you shall say before the LORD your God, 'I have removed the sacred portion out of my house, and moreover I have given it to the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, according to all thy commandment which thou hast commanded me; I have not transgressed any of thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them;</p> <p>Deut. 26:14 I have not eaten of the tithe while I was mourning, or removed any of it while I was unclean, or offered any of it to the dead; I have obeyed the voice of the LORD my God, I have done according to all that thou hast commanded me.</p> <p>Deut. 26:15 Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel and the ground which thou hast given us, <i>as thou didst</i></p>	<p>Deut. 26:12 rfe[.l;û hL,úk;t. yKi ^±t.a'WbT. rf:ô[.m;-lK'- ta, hn"iV'B; rfE+[JM;h;(tn:áv. tviPyliV.h; ywI©Lel; hT'ät;n" w> hn"ëm'l.a;lÿw> ~AtâY"l; 'rGEl; ^yr<P[v.bi Wlik.a'w> 'W[be(f'w></p> <p>Deut. 26:13 ynEp.li T'‡r>m;a'w> yTir>[:ôBi ^yh,ôl{a/ hw""hy> 'ywILel; wyTiÛt;n> ~g:"w> ~AtâY"l; 'rGEl;w> ^βt.w" c.mi-lk'K. hn"ëm'l.a;l'w> ynIt"+yWlci rv<âa] ^yt,βwOc.Mimi yTir>b:i['-al{ 'yTix.k'(v' al{iw></p> <p>Deut. 26:14 ynI÷aob. yTil.k;'a'-al{ WNM,'mi yTir>[:Ûbi- al{w> WNM,'ami ameêj'B. tme_l. WNM,βmi</p>	<p>Deut. 26:12 V Afou/ teleiw,sh j na. dekati,zh j pa,nta ta. de,kata tw/n gennhma,twn sou eivj to. tri,ton e;toj(to. e;toj th/j dekatei,aj(kai. dw,sh j auvta. eivj to.n Leui<thn(eivj to.n xe,non(eivj to.n ovrfano.n kai. eivj th,n ch,ran(kai. fa,gwsin evnto.j tw/n pulw/n sou kai. cortasqw/si(</p> <p>Deut. 26:13 to,te qe,leij eivpei/ evnw,pion Kuri,ou tou/ Qeou/ sou(VExekaqa,risa evk th/j oivki,aj mou ta. avfierw,mata(kai. prose,ti e;dwka auvta. eivj to.n Leui<thn kai. eivj to.n xe,non(eivj to.n ovrfano.n kai. eivj th.n ch,ran(kata. pa,nta ta. prosta,gmata, sou(ta. o`poi/a prose,taxaj eivj evme,\ de.n pare,bhn ta.j evntola.j sou ouvde. evlhsmo,nhsa auvta,j\ Deut. 26:14 de.n</p>

<p><i>swear to our fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey.</i></p>	<p>yTit;în"-al{w> 'lAqB. yTi[.m;^v' lkoßK. ytiyfi§[' yh'êl{a/ hw"âhy> `ynIt")yWici rv<ïa]</p> <p>Deut. 26:15 !A[?M.mi •hp'yqiv.h; ~yIm;^V'h;-!mi ^øv.d>q' ^M.[;-ta,(%rEÜb'W hm'êd"a]h' 'taew> laeêr"f.yI-ta, hT't;Pn" rv<ïa] 'T[.B;`v.nI rv<Üa]K; Wnl' tb;îz" #r<a,² Wnyteêboal]; `vb'(d>W bl'Px'</p>	<p>e;fagon evx auvtw/n eivj to. pe,nqoj mou(ou;te e;lapon evk tou,twn dia. avka,qarton crh/sin(ou;te e;dwka evx auvtw/n dia. nekro,n\ u`ph,kousa eivj th.n fwnh.n Kuri,ou tou/ Qeou/ mou(e;kamon kata. pa,nta o[sa prose,taxaj eivj evme,\ Deut. 26:15 evpi,bleyon evk tou/ oi;kou sou tou/ a`gi,ou(evk tou/ ouvranou/(kai. euvlo,ghson to.n lao.n sou to.n VIsrah,l(kai. th.n gh/n th.n o`poi,an e;dwkaj eivj h`ma/j(kaqw.j w[mosaj pro.j tou.j pate,raj h`mw/n(gh/n r`e,ousan ga,la kai. me,liÅ</p>
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This section (Deut.26¹²⁻¹⁵) preceded by the Aramean confession (Deut.26⁵⁻¹¹) may be considered together as forming a literary unit. In this text segment the Deuteronomist links the cultic rite of the triennial tithe with its sociological purpose. In the P-source (Num.18²¹⁻²⁸) the tithe is appropriated entirely for the maintenance of the priest, being paid in the first instance to the Levites who in turn pay a tenth of what they received to the Priests. In Dt, however, the tithe is spent for a sacred feast in which both the Levites and the marginal groups namely the sojourner, orphan and the widows took

part. In the triennial tithing the tithing was purposely reserved for the care of the marginal groups. As regards the procedure for the distribution Frank E. Gaebelein observes, 'The triennial tithing was probably presented in the donor's town and would be logistically wasteful to carry these tithes to a central sanctuary and then return them to the towns from which they came and there distribute them to the Levites, the aliens, the fatherless and the widows¹⁵⁸. The point in which the ordinary tithing differs from the Triennial tithing is that the ordinary tithing was in part applied to the maintenance of the landless Levite, while the triennial tithing was applied wholly as a poor rate to relieve the needs of the landless and destitute classes. It does not appear to have any knowledge of the purely cultic function of the tithing or if it does simply ignores this purpose and transfers its importance to its social function. Mayes A.D.H, observes, 'It is clear that in this section older material has been adapted to a new context. The precise place and time of origin and use of this older material are obscure, but in the present context it is a deuteronomistic editor who has brought an ancient confession of cultic purity into the context of a confession of obedience to the commandments in general.¹⁵⁹ What is regarded as the purely cultic purpose for the tithing is that, 'In return for their service about the tenth, and in lieu of any tribal possession of land the Levites are to receive the tithes offered by the Israelites to Yahweh.¹⁶⁰ This is clearly absent in Dt. Thompson J.A, observes,

Every third year the tithing was kept in the villages for the relief of the poor (14^{28,29}) and was thus outside the control of the Priests. To prevent irregularities in its distribution and at the same time to preserve the religious character of the obligation, the *men* of

¹⁵⁸ F.E.Gaebelein "Ed." 1999. *The Expositor's Bible commentary* (Vol.3). Deut – 2Samuel. Grand Rapids. Michigan : Zondervan publishing House. p. 156.

¹⁵⁹ A.D.H.Mayes. 1979. *Deuteronomy New Century Bible*. London: Oliphants. p.335.

¹⁶⁰ C.A.Briggs, S.R.Driver *et al* "Eds." 1906. *A Critical and Exegetical commentary on Numbers*. New York: Charles Scribner's Son's.p.233.

Israel was required to make a solemn declaration at the central sanctuary that he had used the tithe according to the divine law.¹⁶¹

He observes further, 'The under privileged in Israel's society, the Levites, the sojourner (*ger*) the fatherless and the widow were to be given the benefits of the tithe on this occasion. They were to eat to their full. It would be observed that Dt removes the tithe regulation from its religious preserve and assigns it for a social function. The worshipper equally declares his innocence of any abuse of the triennial tithe for any ungodly or in an unacceptable manner. The phrase, 'or offered any of it to the dead', may refer to the Canaanite practice of putting food in the grave with the dead, a practice which the Israelites were sternly warned not to emulate (see Deut.7^{1ff}) This superstitious belief of offering food to the dead is one which finds resemblance to the Urhobo culture of pouring libation to the dead, usually seen in the practice of pouring drinks on the floor in community or family gatherings. How the dead participate in the eating is uncertain¹⁶².

These verses (vss 12-15) which are appended to vss 5-11 appear to belong to one pericope. The confession of the worshipper, 'A wandering Aramean was my father.....' has been a subject of long standing debate in Old Testament scholarship. According to G.Von Rad these verses have the characteristics and attribute of a creed. They may be the earliest recognisable example of a creed in the history of Israel¹⁶³. The phrase, 'A wandering Aramean was my father' translates the Hebrew, 'ybiêa' dbeãao 'yMir:a] which

¹⁶¹ J.A.Thompson.1974. *Deuteronomy, An Introduction and Commentary*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press. p.257.

¹⁶² There is a common practice among the Urhobo people in which a house is built for the dead parents by children after their death a practice which appears very irreconcilable as the dead cannot stay in such houses. While this remark is not intended to disparage this cultural practice yet it calls for a rethink as it is better to build houses to take care of the Parents while alive and for the living.

¹⁶³ P.C.Craige. 1992. *The Book of Deuteronomy*. Grand Rapids. Michigan: W.B.Eerdmans Publishing Company. p.321.

has several meanings. It has also been translated as, 'A Syrian ready to perish'¹⁶⁴. The import of this declaration is not only theological by which it is a reflection of gracious act of God in delivering Israel from the bondage in Egypt but sociological for the society. The sociological implication for the Israelite community is the mandate to care for the marginal groups. The inclusion of the Levites, the sojourners and widows for special consideration in the observation of the Triennial tithes corresponds with the expectations that mark the celebration of the liturgy of the first fruits (Deut. 26⁵⁻¹¹) in which the celebrant is made to ensure that the marginal groups were not neglected.

3.3.5(i) Intended Audience: Although, traditionally, the authorship of Deuteronomy is assigned to Moses, the Documentary Hypothesis of the Wellhausen School holds that the D-Source belongs to the Deuteronomist whose literary interest was not only historical but sociological as a result they re-interpret older materials in the light of new social situations in Israel. Standing in the tradition of the Prophetic School the emphasis of the literary composition was on the level of compliance and obedience to the requirements of the laws given by Yahweh. In Deuteronomy this is expressed by the apodictic formula, 'When you.....' which is followed by the stipulations (e.g, 'When you come to the land which the Lord your God gives you.....you may set as king over you....., only he must not multiply horses for himself). The difference between the Deuteronomic school and the Prophetic tradition is that, while the one made use of oratory approach the other adopts the literary device to articulate its vision. As for the intended audience of the regulation, the triennial tithes was meant for the entire community of Israel, the worshipper at the central sanctuary, the nobilities, the priests and all cult personalities as well as the

¹⁶⁴ The verb *dbeäao* is from the Qal '*abad*' which means to 'become lost' (Lev.26³²) or 'to go astray' or 'a fugitive' or 'one in danger of perishing' (Jer.50⁶, Ezek.34^{4,16}) This idea was applicable to Jacob as ancestor of Israel for his many wanderings.

translates the general laws of God (Gen.26⁵, Exo.20⁶) It is used interchangeably with the term Torah (Gen.26⁵ Exo.16²⁸, Lev.27³⁴, Num.36¹³, Deut.30¹⁰) and on occasion it refers to the content of a kings command (Esth.3³, Eccl.8⁵, Isa.36²¹)¹⁶⁵ The 2per masc.sg suggests that the address is made as a declaration and as article of faith by the worshipper.

3.3.5(iii) Form Critical Analysis (Deut.26¹²⁻¹⁵)

This text segment has been described as a cultic Liturgy (being one of the cultic Liturgies Deut.26^{1-11,12-15}) which concludes the Deuteronomic code (12-26) A remarkable feature of this Liturgy is the manner in which it links the blessing of the soil not with the cyclic natural forces but with God's saving acts in history. The Liturgy of the first fruit is followed by a confession made by the worshipper as to obedience to the observance of the triennial tithe. What the worshipper confesses about the observance of the tithe regulation does not convey the earlier traditions about the use of the tithe in ancient Israel but a later tradition which gives an overwhelming attention to the marginal group in Israel.

I have removed the sacred portion out of my house,
and moreover I have given it to the *Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow*, according to all thy commandment which thou hast commanded me; I have not transgressed any of thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them;
(Deut.26¹³)

The speaker is the worshipper who comes to the central sanctuary for annual celebration of the first fruit feast. G. Von Rad describes the content as a creed and as such would serve as an article of faith for the religious life of the people with social implications.

¹⁶⁵W.A.VanGemenen. "Ed." 1997. *New International Dictionary of the Old Testament Theology and Exegesis (Vol.2)*. UK : Paternoster Press. p.1020.

3.4 The Concept of Social Inequality in Hebrew Syntax

The literary works that articulate the social inequality concepts in the Pentateuch can be attributed to the Deuteronomistic School. Whereas the Yahwists were a privileged class of officials which sprang up around the monarchy, the Deuteronomists were more of the mosaic - prophetic tradition. They lean more support to the Old legal traditions which derives from the covenant mandate contained in the legal requirements. Thus, unlike the Yahwist whose prime concern was with salvation history, the Deuteronomist not only interprets the history but employs the legal stipulations to shape the history. David J. Zucker observes that the ideas of the Deuteronomist were initially accepted and incorporated into the reforms of king Hezekiah of Judah (715-687 BC) but unfortunately his son and successor, Manasseh who ruled for fifty- five years had no interest in such reforms. It was not until the time of Josiah c.622 BC that the Deuteronomist found a champion. The historical context of the texts was therefore such that perpetuated social inequality. It is against this background that such phrases as , ‘The Levites without inheritance’ $\%M^{ra}[i\ h'l'ox]n:w> ql,xe'$ •Al-!yae(yKiä ywI³Leh; ab'äW (Deut.14²⁹), ‘Casting down righteousness’ (Amos 5⁷) ‘To gather the outcast’ (Zeph. 3¹⁹) ‘Justice for the weak’ (Ps 82³ *Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute*) are to be understood.

The concept of social inequality in Hebrew has a wide semantic field. Primarily it derives from the root *Hlq* which expresses the idea of ‘a class’ ‘portion’ ‘inheritance’ ‘partial’ or ‘to be part of a larger whole’ (see Deut.4¹⁹, Jos.18², I Sam.30²³) . It means to ‘divide’ or ‘share’ an item of good. The cognate in the Assyrian language ‘*eklu*’ means

‘possession’. In the infinitive it means to divide or apportion lands to a person or to describe a person’s possession. (Deut.4¹⁹, 29²³). The infinitive form *Heleq* refers to portion ie (acquired) possession. (Dt,32⁹). It is used to describe the assigning of duties to the Levites over the temple (2 Chron.23¹⁸, 1 Chron.24^{4,5}). The P-Source frequently applies the term for apportioning of land by lot to the Israelite tribes (Num. 26^{53,55}) In a spiritual sense the term is used to describe Israel as Yahweh’s possession (Deut.32⁹).

In Deuteronomy the use of the term *heleq* is frequently used in association with the right of the Levites as it relates to their privileges (Deut.10⁹,12¹²,14²⁷⁻²⁹,18¹) In the sapiential literature the term is associated in the infinitive with the social status of the poor in contrast with the rich (Prov.16¹⁹). Status and possession are therefore conceived in the usage of the term. Sometimes it means to give a portion of land to a person (Isa.53¹², Josh.19⁵¹ Mic.2⁴, Ps.60⁶ 108⁸, Dan. 11⁹) or to possess an inheritance. From the root is also derived the term *haluq* and translates the idea of ‘division’ ‘difference’ or ‘separation’. It is the use of the term which informs the concept of ‘class’ or social inequality. It is also from the root *Hlq* which in a technical sense derives the meaning which is to organize the Priests and Levites, ie, to assign or distribute Levites to their services in Israel’s worship (1 Chron. 23⁶, 24¹, 26^{1,12,19} 2 Chron.8¹⁴, 31² 35^{4,10} Neh.11³⁶).

It is important to say that the philosophy behind the use of the terms for social inequality represents the Deuteronomic School. This concept is implicit in several other terms among which are the following.

- I. **aFoïm;** (*masso*) This word means ‘to be partial’. The word occurs in a few places and describes the ethical standard required in the judicial system in Israel. When Jehoshaphat appointed judges, he charged them to judge carefully because they

judged for the Lord who was present with them and because with him there is no partiality of face ($\sim ynI\beta p' aFoim;W$ *masso panim*) (See II Chron. 19⁷). Other terms associated with the concept of the lowly are: $!Ay=b.a$ 'ebyon' which means the 'poor' or 'needy' (Deut. 15^{4,11}, Exo. 23⁶) The word $ID;$ 'dal' translates the idea of being weak or crushed¹⁶⁶ (Amos 4¹) The care for the marginal group connects them to the Levites in Deuteronomy and is constantly enjoined in the D-code and the Jubilee Code.(Lev.25) as a response to social inequality. This position is better argued in view of the fact that the response emerges not from the royal tradition building centre in Israel but the Prophetic school to which the Deuteronomist belongs. The phrase, $\`dx;vo)-xQ;miW \sim ynI\beta p' aFoim;W hl'2w>[; Wnyhe^a\{a/hw"^\`ahy>--[I!yaeu-yKi$ ('For there is no perversion of justice with the Lord Our God, or partiality or taking of bribe', is Deuteronomic phraseology for describing the egalitarian principle for which Israel must exist as a community of God's people. To treat persons unequally before the Law is a perversion of justice and it runs contrary to the mosaic tradition which the Deuteronomic code represents. The social structure in Israel in the 7th Century no doubt was already characterised by a widening gap between landed people and the landless.

II. Another term associated with the phenomenon of social inequality in the Hebrew syntax is $ynI['$ ('*ani*). It is an adjective used to describe a class or category of

¹⁶⁶ W.A.VanGemeren. "Ed. 1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Vol.2. United Kingdom: Paternoster Press.

persons regarded as poor, overwhelmed by want, poor or someone who is wretched. The basic meaning is 'humble', 'needy,' 'afflicted' or 'to be poor' (Deut. 24¹⁵, Jer. 22¹⁶, Amos 4¹) The *qal* means 'to be downcast' 'afflicted' or 'humbled' (Isa. 49¹³, Ps. 10²) The cognate in Arabic, Syriac and Ethiopian means to 'be lowly' or 'submissive'. In the Old Testament the word refers to those dispossessed of their landed property and in a technical sense it is used to describe the meek. According to W.A. VanGemeren,

The '*ani* was on the same level as the resident alien, the widow, and the orphan, all of whom were disadvantaged because of their social standing and who lived from day to day, dependent on others for their welfare and livelihood. They constituted a third economic class positioned somewhere between the free man and the slave, threatened socially and probably excluded from normal communal life.¹⁶⁷

The occurrences of the term in the Deuteronomic texts and in the prophets convey the same concern about their social status. They are to be protected and their rights to fair wages from their labour are not to be denied. (Deut.24¹⁴⁻¹⁵) They are not to be oppressed; rather they are to receive a concessionary treatment even in the laws of loan repayment. Significantly, against the poor always lie the shadows of the highly placed in Israelite society who care less about them. This draws our attention repeatedly to the Deuteronomic interest in the welfare of the less privileged of society.

III. The root **ql,xe'** *hlq* in Hebrew syntax occurs in several places with two different meanings. First it means 'to be smooth' and is used to describe the words of a

¹⁶⁷ See: VanGemeren *Op cit.* p.1113.

seductive woman. (Prov 2.¹⁶, Ps. 55.²). The second meaning emphasizes allocating or apportioning land by lot. (Num.26^{53,55}) To share inheritance. Prov.17.²), To assign, distribute the Levites to the duties in the Temple (2Chron.23¹⁸, cf. 1Chron.24⁴⁵) It can refer to the act of sharing food as in festival (2 Sam.6.¹⁹) The phrase, *‘And the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, who are within your towns,* (Deut.14.²⁹) which is employed *et passim* can be regarded as a leitmotif employed by the Deuteronomist for drawing attention to the social status of the Levites and the disadvantaged groups. This is a case of employing an Old *lemma* from an older source to convey a new meaning in a new context¹⁶⁸. The tithing regulation in Israel suggests that the Levites were in a precarious condition. As VanGemeren observes,

The general principle in Num.18 is that since neither the Priests nor the Levites (ie all from the tribe of Levi) had a regular inheritance like that of the other tribes, therefore they needed support through the tribal system of tithes (focused on the provision for the Levites Num.18²¹⁻²⁴) and offerings (focused on provision for the Priests 18⁸⁻²⁰)

In the light of the above, the provision of forty-eight cities (Num.35.¹⁻⁸) meant to be occupied by the Levites in contrast with the Deuteronomic regulations concerning the welfare of the Levites puts the above mentioned provisions into question. Secondly that

¹⁶⁸ The verb *ql,xē* *hlq* means ‘to possess a portion’ or ‘to measure’. The cognate in Assyria *‘eklu*’ means possession or field. From the root is derived *hl’x]n*: which is translated ‘Class’, ‘Social status’ or ‘Inheritance’ . The Qal means divide, obtain one’s share, allot, ‘give share to’ This usage connects its meaning to ownership of material possession (Deut.4¹⁹, Josh.28²) See: F.B.Brown, S.R.Driver, and C.A.Briggs (BDB) 1958. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon*, Oxford: At the Clarendon press. p.324. See also G.N.Knopper. 2001. Rethinking the Relationship between Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History: The case of Kings. *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*. Vol. 3. July. pp. 393-415.

the Deuteronomists do not use the cultic lexeme *maneh* ם'חנ"מ'l. which means the Priests' assigned portion of sacrifices (Ex.29²⁶, Lev.7³, 8²⁹, IIChron.31¹⁹) but rather the terms *Portion* and *Inheritance* חל'פ'x]n:w> q'l,x'e which symbolize status, supports the argument that the phrase is social definition of the Levites.

IV. The word ח'קט *takan* (*tkn*) which means to measure or to estimate is closely linked with the idea of social inequality. The *qal* occurs several times in biblical texts but with different nuances. The root's basic meaning is to measure. (ISam.2⁻³, Ezek. 18^{25,29} 33¹⁷, Isa.40¹², Prov.16^{2,21} Ps.75⁴) In the figurative sense it is used of weighing the spirit/heart, (Prov.16⁻², 21², 24¹²) It describes the correct way of behaviour. (Ezek. 18²⁵, 29, 33^{17,20})

3.5. The 7th Century Date in support of the Deuteronomic Response to Social Inequality

It has been argued that the historical situation that stands behind the chosen texts is the 7th Century BC. According to the classic theory, (the Documentary theory) popularized by Wellhausen in 1878, there are four main sources in the Pentateuch. These are: J from the 10th century BC, E from the 9th, D from the 7th and P the late 6th century.¹⁶⁹ Deuteronomy, which is traditionally regarded as the work of Moses which should be dated in the Mosaic era, has however received a large variety of hypothesis regarding the dates and authorship of the work¹⁷⁰. It is therefore necessary that in arguing for the 7th century BC, evidences in support of this should be considered.

The Treaty covenant formula

¹⁶⁹ G. Wenham. 1985. *The date of Deuteronomy Linch-pin of Old Testament criticism*. p.1.

¹⁷⁰ P.C Craigie. 1976. *The book of Deuteronomy*. Grand Rapids; Eerdmanns Publishing Company. p.24.

There are two positions here; one, that Deuteronomy belongs to the Mosaic era¹⁷¹ and argues for the Mosaic origin. The second view is that the book belongs to the 7th century which is championed by the liberals. The first position emerges out of the recognition given to the relationship between the overall structure of the book and the form of the ancient Near Eastern Vassal Treaty. G. Mendenhall, M.G Kline, K.A Kitchen¹⁷² and others who argue for the mosaic age of the book hold that the treaty-covenant structure of Deuteronomy suggests that it must be dated in the Mosaic age¹⁷³. This argument is based on the fact that Deuteronomy reflects the pattern of the Hittite Suzerainty treaties in its total structure which represents the classical legal form of the suzerainty treaties of the mosaic age¹⁷⁴.

On the other hand, there are those who argue for the 7th century BCE date. The argument here is that Deuteronomy exhibits Vassal Treaty Pattern of the 7th Century. M.Weinfeld, F.R Franker, and others who argue in favour of the 7th Century hold that the form and phraseologies in Deuteronomy have their closest affinities in substance with the 7th Century Assyrian State Treaties of Esarhaddon.¹⁷⁵ Thus while the second millennium Hittite Treaties Pattern in Deuteronomy puts the date of the book in the mosaic age the Vassal Treaty pattern of the first millennium suggests the 7th century. The absence of the prologue in the first millennium treaty has often been put up as argument against its 7th Century date. The reason for the absence of the prologue according to Craigie, may be attributed to its being mutilated. On the other hand, in defence of the absence of the

¹⁷¹ By the term *mosaic age* is meant by the pre-7th century BC era in ancient Israel or more specifically historical accounts that reflect the pre-canaanite settlement.

¹⁷² See: M.G.kline. *The structure of the biblical Authourity*. K..A. Kitchen *Ancient Orient and O.T*

¹⁷³ P.C Craigie. 1976, p.4.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid*, p. 75.

¹⁷⁵ See: F.C.Fensham. 1962, *Maledictions and Benedictions in Ancient Near Eastern Vassal-Treaties and the Old Testament* ZAW. p.74.

Historical prologue in the first millennium Treaty, it is argued that the Assyrian kings out of arrogance, do not include the historical prologue because they did not feel the need to provide any justification for their actions which were promulgated in the treaties.¹⁷⁶ From the above analysis, two schools of thought about the date of Deuteronomy emerge, namely; those who identify the structure of the book with the second millennium Hittite treaty and those who identify the book with the 7th century Assyrian Treaty Pattern. Weinfeld's work proceeds from the parallels between the Assyrian treaty curses and those in Deuteronomy as evidence of the late date.¹⁷⁷

3.6 Textual Evidences in Support of the 7th Century.

In support of the 7th century there are several textual evidences in Deuteronomy (=Dt) which support the Deuteronomic Response to social inequality which differ from the P source. With regards to the regulations stating the use of the tithes and the allocation of 48 cities to the Levites the P source (Num. 18²¹⁻²⁴) assigns the tithe entirely to the Priest whereas in Dt the Levites share the Tithe with the Marginal groups. In Num. 35¹⁻⁸ (cf Jos. 24) mention is made of the 48 cities for Levites whereas Deut. 18⁶ implies that the Levites had no settled residence but is like a `Sojourner` in one of the cities of Israel. The possible explanation that has been given is that;

While the P- Regulations made provision for the institution which encompasses the Levites, it was imperfectly put in force such that the Levites from the country side are destitute of adequate maintenance and were placed in the same category with the Stranger, the Fatherless and the Widow (Deut 12^{13, 18, 19, 14}^{27,29,16}^{11,14,26}^{11,12}).¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ P.C. Craigie. 1976. *Op.cit.*

¹⁷⁷ G.Wenham, p. 4 of 13.

¹⁷⁸ C.A Briggs, S.R Driver. *et al* "Eds." 1906. *A Critical and Exegetical commentary on Deuteronomy*. New York: Charles Scribner's sons. p. xxxix. Several arguments surround the authenticity of the Levitical

The assertion that the Levites from the country side were neglected and became destitute can be attributed to the reforms that occurred under Josiah in which some Levites were displaced as a result of the Cult centralization. In order to account for the discrepancies between Dt and P-Source, C.A Briggs *et al* observe that these can only be explained by the supposition that the two systems of law reflect the usage of two distinct periods of the national life. It is probable that while the P-Source represents the earliest practice in ancient Israel, Dt represents the social changes in national life especially in the 7th Century which led to reinterpretation of the tithe law to accommodate the social status of the marginal groups. It has further been argued that while one is intended chiefly for the guidance of the Priests, the other is addressed to the people. One represents the Priestly point of view, the other the prophets. The inclusion of the Levites along the strangers, orphans, and the widows could be regarded as the Deuteronomic creation to address the social situation of the 7th Century.¹⁷⁹

Regarding the place of sacrifice, Dt legislates the offering of sacrifice in one single sanctuary. This is an argument in support of the 7th century date of Deuteronomy as the law of cult centralisation is traced to Josiah's reform 621 BC. Contrary to the law of sacrifice in Exo. 20²⁴ which permits altars to be built and sacrifice offered without

cities as they occur in Josh.21, IChron.6¹⁻⁴⁹ and Num.35¹⁻⁸. The argument is that the lists of the Levitical cities were programmatic and represent the period of the monarchy under David and not at the time of the allotment as Josh 21 suggests. See T.Bill, H.G.M.Williamson.2005. *Dictionary of the Old Testament Historical Books*. England: Inter-Varsity Press.pp.652-657

¹⁷⁹ On the date of Deuteronomy W.Eichrodt makes the following observes, 'In its present form it is a product of the later monarchy, to be exact of the seventh century'. W.Eichrodt. *Theology of the Old Testament*. Philadelphia: The Westminster press. p.73.

restrictions,¹⁸⁰ Deuteronomy legislates one single sanctuary. According to G.Wenham, the most important historical reason for holding that Deuteronomy is a seventh-century work is therefore its attitude to the central sanctuary.

Until the time of King Josiah people worshipped, whether legally or not, at the temple in Jerusalem and at high places in village shrines scattered all over the land. But then Josiah, perhaps following the earlier attempt of Hezekiah abolished all the local high places and insisted that sacrifice be offered only in the Jerusalem temple.¹⁸¹

3.7. Literary style of Deuteronomy in support of the 7th century date

The language and style of Deuteronomy has also been put forth as argument in support of the 7th century date of the book. According to S.R Driver *et al* the literary style of Dt is markedly individual. In vocabulary it presents comparatively few exceptional words; but particular words which give a distinctive colouring to every part of the work. Among such words and phrases are:

- (a) **In thy gates** (of the cities of Israel). This phrase occurs frequently in Deut (Dt. 12^{12,15,17,18},14²⁷⁻²⁹,15⁷⁻²²,16^{5,11},17²⁻⁸,18⁶,23¹⁶,24¹⁴,26¹²,28^{52,55},31¹².) It is translated variously as *in thy gates*, *in the gates of thy cities*, or *in your settlements*. This phrase is used in Deuteronomy mostly in reference to the social status of the marginal groups. Elsewhere the phrase describes the community of Israel (II Chron 6²⁻⁸) as a settled agricultural community. The phrase in Exo.20¹⁰ though is mosaic can only be regarded as anachronic as the legislation would more appropriately belong to Canaanite context. The regulation

¹⁸⁰ A. Van Hoonacker argues that Ex.20²⁴ concerns private altars and that the laws of Ex. 21-23 recognise only one legitimate public sanctuary so that the law of Dt 12 is not the innovation that is commonly supposed to be. (see C.A Briggs. *Op. cit.* p. liv.)

¹⁸¹ G. Wenham. 1985. *The Date of Deuteronomy; Linch pin of Old Testament criticism*. Retrieved Dec., 13, 2011. p.5.

'but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the lord your God, In it you shall not do any work, you, your son, or your daughter your manservant or your maidservant or your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates, could not belong but to a Canaanite setting. The reference to the Sojourner within your gates is rather an anachronism and as such does not describe a people in transitory mode of existence.

(b) The phrase, 'the Stranger, the Fatherless (Orphan), and the Widow', (Deut.10^{18,24},17,19,20,21,27¹⁹,cf, Exo.22²¹,Jer.7^{6,22}³, Ezek.22²⁷, Deut.14²⁹,16¹¹⁻¹⁴,26^{12,13}) which occurs repeatedly in Deuteronomy as well as in the prophetic literature, legislates care for the orphans, widows and aliens principally to illustrate the character of God and the implications of that character for the life of man.¹⁸² That this phrase is also prominently emphasized in the 7th and 8th century prophets (Isaiah and Micah) could be argued to support the 7th Century date of Deuteronomy. The prophet's protest against social ills of the society were directed against social inequality as reflected in the status of the stranger, the orphans and the widows which were always the focus of the prophetic messages (Isa.1¹⁷,Jer.7²¹,Malachi.3⁵)

(c) *You shall remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt.* (Deut.5¹⁵,16¹²,24^{18,22}). This phrase which appears in several contexts in Dt is used by the Deuteronomist in reference to the status of the marginal groups.¹⁸³ According to P.C Criagie, the call 'to remember' was not simply in order to evoke pity or sympathy for the slave, which would lead to generosity, rather they were to remember that, when they were slaves, God loved them, freed them, and made ample provision for them; as sons of

¹⁸²N.J.McEleney.1960. *The law given through Moses: Introduction to the Pentateuch*. New York: Paulist Press.

¹⁸³The Stranger, the fatherless, and the widow (Deut.10^{18,24},17,19,20,21, 27¹⁹, Cf Ex22^{21f}, Jer7^{6,22}²³, Ezek22⁷ are grouped together with the Levites Deut.14²⁹, 16^{11,14}, 26^{12,13})

God (14¹) therefore they should do no less to the manumitted slaves in the seventh year.¹⁸⁴ When a slave is manumitted (ie set free) he is no longer in bondage and could now own land.

There appears to be no evidence of this phrase in the other Pentateuchal books except Deuteronomy. We are therefore not surprised to find references to this phrase in Deuteronomy especially in view of the 7th century social setting. It has been observed that the development and use of writing is closely associated with the rise of the state and urbanization.¹⁸⁵ According to W.M.Schniedewind, the flourishing of writing and spread of literacy took place in the eight and seventh century BC in Israel. These also are reflections of the social changes in Israel that resulted in the writing down of early Hebrew tradition.¹⁸⁶ One of such is the phrase under consideration that links the traditions of the sojourning in Egypt with social conditions of the 7th Century. The 7th century BC Israel was characterized by urbanization and prosperity and which emphasized socio-economic inequality. The phrase, 'you shall remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt' focuses on the egalitarian principles of the nomadic, pastoral community.

3.8 The Status of the Marginal Groups in Ancient Israel (The Widows, Orphans, Sojourners)

The status of the marginal groups in ancient Israel constitutes literary, theological and sociological interest in the Old Testament contemporary biblical studies. This concern has become increasingly relevant in the context of cultural similarities and social

¹⁸⁴ P.C Criagie. *Op cit* p.239. Studies in slavery and manumission both in the OT and in the ancient Near East are in the works of E F Campbell and D.N Freeman. *The Biblical Archaeologist Reader*..

¹⁸⁵ William M. Schniedewind, *How the bible became a book: The Textualization of Ancient Israel*

¹⁸⁶ Othmar Veel, Christopher Uehlinger . gods goddesses, and images of God in ancient Israel.

challenges facing the marginal groups and as a result of social inequality, communal crises and the problem of refugees in the global community.

(i) **The Social Status of Widows.** Although the canonical prescriptions concerning widows in the Old Testament tend to focus on the question of remarriage (Levirate marriage), Deuteronomy however shows enormous concern about their social condition. The name widow connotes in some respects their plights. In the view of T.D.Alexander, ‘Whereas in modern parlance the term widow refers simply to a woman whose husband has died, in the OT and in the ancient Near East the label had more specific social, economic and legal connotations. In societies characterised by a patrilineal¹⁸⁷ and patrilocal framework, the loss of the head of a home left the widow in a precarious and vulnerable situation¹⁸⁸. The Hebrew for widow is *almanah* **חַנְּנִיָּא**; . Wilhem A.VanGemen says, ‘the etymology is uncertain although there have been several attempts to trace its root from the Semitic background. It probably has link with the Arab. *alima*, which means to feel pain; from Hebr *illem*, mute (ie., widow as obliged to be silent; from Arab. *armal/murmil* helpless) (perhaps from the Semitic root. *almar-tu*, without husband)¹⁸⁹ According to VanGemen, the OT word ‘widow’ not only evokes the notion of bereavement from having lost a husband (2 Sam.14¹⁵) but at the same time the loss of economic and social protection and security.¹⁹⁰ This can be considered as the *raison d’etre* for the references *et passim* in the text segments. The Levirate marriage tradition provides that if a man dies without children, his widow was obliged by Israelite

¹⁸⁷ Patrilineal – The practice of establishing family membership by considering only male relations.

¹⁸⁸ T.D.Alexander, D.W.Baker. 2003. *Dictionary of the Old Testament Pentateuch*. England: Intervarsity Press.p.890.

¹⁸⁹ W.VanGemen. *Gen. ed.* 1997. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, Vol.I, UK: Paternoster Press. p.530.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*.

law to marry her deceased husband's brother, and if the latter refuses to take her to wife he was put to shame before the people (Deut 25⁵⁻¹⁰). This practice of the Levirate marriage in Ancient Israel was aimed at not only perpetuating the family lineage but safeguarding the widow against possible humiliation and economic embarrassment. This practice became more and more checkered by the growing social challenges and social changes particularly in the 7th century Israel. This has been observed by VanGemeren:

As long as the Israelites lived as semi-nomads in their tribes and clans and the family ties were still strong, the lot of the widow was not yet a problem. She returned to her parental home where she shared in the protection and care of the clan and kept the possibility of a levirate marriage (Gen.38¹¹, Deut.25⁵⁻¹⁰; Ruth¹⁸⁻¹¹; cf Matt.22²⁴) Later on when, after the settlement in Canaan, the tribalism gave way to the life in cities and villages, the widows became victims of the development of growing social contrasts.

The semantic field associated with the word for the widow also conveys the sympathy which the Deuteronomic texts portray. These terms include, 'oppression', 'violence', 'affliction', 'siege', 'submit', 'constrain', deal tyrannically etc¹⁹¹. These expressions connote the social conditions of the Widow to which they were exposed to, not in the nomadic existence, but in the agricultural and commercial economy of the 7th century which has been greatly influenced by the Canaanite setting. The Israelite widow had no right of succession or the inheritance of her late husband's property. Under the heirs of dead man, in the following sequence: son(s) daughter(s) brothers, father's

¹⁹¹ See: F.C.Fensham. 1962. Widow, 'Orphan and the Poor in Ancient Near Eastern Legal and Wisdom Literature. *JNES*, 21: 129-39, D. Gowan. 1987. *Wealth and Poverty in the OT*.41.p.341-53

brothers, nearest relative, the widow was not mentioned (Num.27⁸⁻¹¹)¹⁹² The regulation presume a complete ignorance of the wife or widow. ...*And you shall say to the people of Israel, 'If a man dies, and has no son, then you shall cause his inheritance to pass to his daughter. And if he has no daughter, then you shall give his inheritance to his brother. And if he has no brother, then you shall give his inheritance to his father's brothers. And if his father has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to his kinsman that is next to him of his family, and he shall possess it.....*The conspicuous absence of the right of the widow to the inheritance of a husband in Israel's society is a socio-cultural defect not peculiar to Israelite society but occurs in different socio-cultural setting which the Deuteronomic text addresses. As part of cultic regulation in Ancient Israel, the High Priest was not allowed to marry a widow (Lev. 21¹⁴). Deuteronomy unlike the P-Source's view on the status of the widow is consistently concerned with the protection of the widows.

J.G. Frazer, who argues in support of the Hebrew root of the widow as 'a silent woman' identifies some cultural practices in Africa which imposes silence on a widow. Among the sihanaka in Madagascar the period of silence imposed on a widow is as long as eight months or even year. J.G.Frazer observes;

During the whole time, the widow is stripped of all her ornaments and covered up with a coarse mat, and she is given only a broken spoon and a broken dish to eat out of. She may not wash her face or her hands but only the tip of her fingers.¹⁹³

¹⁹² W.VanGemenen. p. 530.

¹⁹³J.G.Frazer.1918. *Folk-lore in the Old Testament studies in comparative Religion, Legend and law.* London: Macmillan and Co Ltd. p.72.

Such practices are becoming obsolete. What constitute the plight of widows in more general terms are their social and economic conditions. The Akkadian '*almatta*,' which is the Hebrew equivalent for '*almanah*,' refers to the women whose husbands have died but who had no male support. This means, according to G.R. Driver, that a woman became an '*almattu*' only when there is no one with the duty to support her.¹⁹⁴ Jane I. Guyer¹⁹⁵ discussing the economic position of Beti widows; highlights the social status of widow in most African settings especially the social and economic status of the widow as guided by customary laws. What the customary laws and cultural requirements put on the widow is that the death of the man means a transfer of the widow to an inheritor. This Levirate marriage practice usually limits the freedom of the widow and contentious. Whether she has right to her deceased husband's property e.g. the house or farm to which both of them contributed their labour is often a contended issue. For this reason a widow whose sons and daughters were already social adults generally went to live with her children where she was respected and looked after by her son's wives.¹⁹⁶ The childless widows are certainly the most vulnerable section of the population orphans inclusive. Where the widow is a young woman but has sons or daughters who are minors, she is required by custom to live in her matrimonial home with the children. These are the more vulnerable groups as they often receive less attention especially when there is no willing kinsman to shoulder the financial responsibilities.

¹⁹⁴ *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Vol. 16, Ur-Z, 1973 Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House Ltd. p. 488.

¹⁹⁵ J.I. Guyer. 1986. *Beti Widow Inheritance and Marriage Law: A Social History*. In Betty Potash (Ed) *Widows in African Societies Choices and Contracts*.

¹⁹⁶ The African cultural practice where a widow stays with her children is common and cherished, particularly if the children are well to do. It is one reason why African marriages appreciate the gift of children.

Often, in most African setting, property passes from father to son. It only passes literally from a man to his younger brother under two circumstances. First if there are no sons, and second, temporarily, if the sons are still children. Very often the widow struggles to retain her right over husband's property. Guyer observes that during a husband's lifetime, he may have laboured to acquire properties that are supposed, after his death, be used by the trustee or inheritor of the properties (such as cocoa farm) to take over the expenses for his dependants. In many cases the demands of the widow on this income and the demands of the trustee are in conflict.¹⁹⁷ She says, 'One hardly ever meets a woman whose situation would make her a merry widow'. The above scenario is reflected in most communities making the Deuteronomic response an imperative question. The occurrences of the term *almanah* in the Pentateuchal narratives tell the stories of ancient customs that are similar to that described in the African context. The precarious situation is also implied in the speeches of widows (2 Sam 14⁵, 2 Kgs 4¹⁻⁷) Several times we meet speeches of widows in the Bible that indicate their precarious social status or conditions. Thus the lament of the Zarephat widow (IKgs 17⁸⁻¹⁶) implies the pains experienced by the vulnerable group. A replica is found in the encounter of Elijah and the wife of one of the prophets (2 Kgs 4¹⁻⁷) The vulnerable state of the widows in Israel would have become more pronounced with the emergence of new socio-economic system under the monarchical system that gives premium to wealth creation and acquisition. Although the social status of widows were not at all time precarious as some were independent and had means of livelihood such as the Shunemite widow who

¹⁹⁷ J.I. Guyer.1986. *Beti Widow Inheritance and Marriage Law: A Social History*. In Betty Potash (Ed) *Widows in African Societies Choices and Contracts*.

represents a category and class in Israel and so do not belong to the *miserabile personae* in Israel. (2 Kgs 4¹³)

(ii) **The Sojourner:** The social status of the sojourner in ancient Israel is encapsulated by various Hebrew terms. These include **רְגֵעַ**; *The ger*, **רֵז"ז** *zar*, (pl. **יְרִיזִים**), **יְרִיבֵי כְּנָעַן** *nokri* and **בְּיָתוֹ** *tosab*. They are derived from the roots *gwr*, *zwr*, *nkr* and *tsb* and translated variously as ‘alien’ ‘sojourner’, ‘stranger’, ‘foreigner’ ‘non-Israelite’ ‘temporary resident’ ‘resident alien’, ‘protected citizen’ or ‘client’.¹⁹⁸ Thus they define the various shades of meaning given to the sojourner in ancient Israel. It has been observed that ancient Israel was acquainted with two classes of strangers divided into two broad categories namely the resident alien and the foreigners. The *Ger* describes more appropriately the resident alien. It is derived from root *gwr* which means to sojourn or tarry as a sojourner. The term **רְגֵעַ** translates a place of sojourning. In many legal contexts the *ger* was used as a technical term for a particular social status to distinguish between the native (*ezrah*) and brother (*ah*) on the one hand and the foreigner (*nokri*) The relationship between these terms is often complex as the term *ger* is used for both Israelites and non-Israelite in different contexts. For example the term *ger* and its cognates were applied on occasion to the Patriarchs. E.g., Abraham (Gen.17⁷⁻⁸,20¹,21³⁴,23⁴) Lot (Gen.19⁹) Isaac (Gen.35²⁷,37¹) Jacob (Gen.28⁴,32⁴) It was used to describe both the collective or individual temporary stay on other places e.g., Gerar(Gen.20¹,26³) Haran (Gen.32³⁻⁴) and Egypt (Gen.12¹⁰) The other related terms to the concept are *nokri*,

¹⁹⁸ T. Desmond Alexander, D.W. Baker. 2003. *Dictionary of the Old Testament Pentateuch*. Illinois: Intervarsity Press. p.27.

zar, and tosab. The *nokri* yrIḅk.N"ḥ, and the *zarim* ~yriz" reside less temporarily on the land. They entered the land for the pursuit of trade and other commercial ventures. These also retained their ties to their original home lands. In this regard they are actually considered as strangers but not 'resident aliens'. According to W.R. Farmer *et al* the foreigner spoken of in Deut. 15³ is not a resident alien who is somewhat integrated into the Israelite economic and agricultural system but the travelling merchant or craftman who is not affected by the fallow year.¹⁹⁹ The text reads, fGO=Ti ḥd<)y" jmeiv.T; ^yxiPa'-ta, ^±l. hy<ih.yI rv,'a]w: yrIḅk.N"ḥ;-ta, 'Of a foreigner you may exact it; but whatever of yours is with your brother your hand shall release.' The Heb. word yrIḅk.N" ; *nokri* refers to a foreigner; one who is outside the land of Israel. (see Deut.32¹², Mal.2¹¹, Ps 81¹⁰). The term is often used in a descriptive and peculiar sense to differentiate Yahweh from other gods (rk"+nE yheäl{a/ Gen.35²¹, Jos.24^{20,23}) Distinction is often made between the native Israelite and the foreigner regarding the cult. Concerning the ritual laws the foreigner is barred from the cult (Exo.12⁴³) It was permissible to sell to the foreigner the animals that died a natural death but which was not applicable to the Israelite (Deut.14²¹). In the view of T.D.Alexander *et al* the terms *nokri* and *zar* (stranger and foreigner) overlap with *ger* and are occasionally found in poetic parallel with it but they more clearly address the ethnic foreigner as non-Israelite. The term *Zar*

¹⁹⁹ W.R.Farmer. "Ed." 1998. *The International Bible commentary*, A Catholic and Ecumenical commentary for the Twenty-first century. Minnesota: The Liturgical Press. p.504.

(pl. *zarim* ~ *yriz*") is also translated stranger. It means 'to turn aside', or 'to visit' Sometimes it translates alien in a negative sense (Hos.5⁷ Job 19³, Exo. 30³³) The word *tosab* **bv'îAT** is sometimes considered as identical with the *ger* **bv'îAtw>-rGE** (Gen.23⁴) but sometimes distinguished from him (Num. 35¹⁵) The difference between both was based on the level of assimilation within Israel's community. The *tosab* **bv'îAT** was less assimilated in Israel's society (Exo.12⁴⁵)²⁰⁰

The term profoundly employed by the redactors in the text segments is **rGE** *Ger*. The root (*Gur*) means 'to tarry' or 'to sojourn' in a place (Gen.35²⁷.21²³, Isa11⁶, Ps.120⁵,Exo.6⁴12⁴⁸, 2Kgs8²) Unlike the *nokri* and the *zar* the *Ger* stay more permanently in the land. The *Ger* however were not full members of Israelite society but were considered different and of lower status who depended on a patron for protection. The *ger* were landless and by virtue of their status were economically poor, although some were wealthy²⁰¹. It is obvious that the *ger* was not given equal recognition in every sphere of Israel's socio-cultural life. These group were often economically poor and were said to have been engaged by David and Solomon to be stone-cutters and burden bearers (I Chron.22², 2 Chron. 2¹⁶⁻¹⁸)²⁰² It is probable therefore that the consistent use of the term *Ger* for the sojourner in the text segments was deliberate to reflect their plight and social condition and draw attention to the need to accommodate them in the main stream of the society. This philanthropic disposition advocated by the Deuteronomic School was

²⁰⁰ See Commentary in Bible Works.

²⁰¹ There were exceptional cases of *Ger* who were rich, e.g, 2 Sam.19³¹⁻³⁴.

²⁰² See T. Desmond Alexander, David W. Baker. 2003. *Dictionary of the Old Testament Pentateuch*. Illinois: Intervarsity Press. p.29.

inspired by the act of deliverance of Israel from the Egyptian bondage from which the lesson of fairness and justice must be drawn.

(iii) The Levites and their Social Status in Ancient Israel: Given the theoretical nature of Ancient Israel, it is evident that the Levites were among the most influential groups within the nation of Israel²⁰³. The assignments of the Levites in the cultic setting of Israel were quite numerous and significant. These functions which were principally those within the Temple included singing Psalms during Temple services, performing construction and maintenance of the Temple, serving as guards and performing other services sometimes as teachers and judges²⁰⁴. This assertion considers the status of the Levites from Israel's point of view of cultic life. But this also witnessed a paradigm shift in Israel's history. The biblical account asserts that at first the Levites were a secular tribe like the others and descended from Levi. In the course of Israel's history, the tribe became separated and became the priestly lineage. It is believed that when the Israelites left Egypt the ancient manner of worship in which the eldest son of each house inherited the priestly office was still being practiced. It was at Sinai however that the first change took place. Following this tradition it is believed a hereditary priesthood in the family of Aaron was instituted (Ex.28¹) According to a different tradition it was in the course of Israel's experience at Sinai, with incidence of the terrible sin connected with the sin of the golden calf the tribe of Levi stood apart and began to occupy a distinct position. The zeal for God demonstrated by the Levites conferred on them the religious primogeniture and henceforth was devoted to the service of the sanctuary (Exo.32²⁵⁻²⁹ cf.Num. 3^{1ff}) This made the tribe of Levi the spiritual first born of Israel. The Levitical order consisted of

²⁰³ D. L. Jeffrey. *A Dictionary of biblical tradition in English Literature*. p.450.

²⁰⁴ Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, Retrieved Feb., 26, 2001, from <http://en.wikipedia.org>.

the descendants of Levi's (Aaron) three sons namely Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. The Kohathites (i.e. the priests) having the special role as the priests in the Tabernacle in the wilderness. (The Levites which are divided into three groups namely the descendants of Gershon, the Gershonites, the descendants of Kohath, the Kohathites and the descendants of Merari, the Merarites constitute the various groups within the Levitical order)

The social status of the Levites in Israel's society and religious life in the priestly code suggests that they held an influential position. Considering their entitlement to the tithes of all Israel and assignment of forty-eight cities with the best of the pasture lands, and a certain proportion of the sacrifices as their allotted perquisites (Num.35⁷) the inclusion of the Levites along with the Sojourners, Widows and Orphans suggests that the social status of the Levites had become precarious. As they had no inheritance because of their sacred roles in ancient Israel and as a result of the disruption in the cultic system in Israel, it is not unlikely that the social security offered by their entitlement to the offerings was also disrupted as such became part of the *personae miserabile*. According to Mane Leuchter, the attention given to the Levites in the Book of Deuteronomy has always prompted scholars to question the motives of the authors responsible for the book. He argues, 'No other work, save Chronicle, so constitutently returns to the question of the social status of the Levites as a central pillar of its discourse. But whereas 1 and 2 Chronicles define the status of the Levites in the Zadokite cult and political realm, the Levite in Deuteronomy appears rather distant from the cult...' Repeatedly, the phrase, 'the Levites in your gates ($\text{^{\wedge}yr<P['v.Bi-rv,a] ywIiLeh;w>}$) is used to depict the social status of the Levite in the Book of Deuteronomy. According to Leuchter, 'the

phrase speaks decisively to the traditional locus of regional jurisprudence taking place at the village gates.

What is noteworthy is that, although the gates saw the regular assembly of clan elders convening for juridical purposes, there is little to suggest that this was ever the traditional locus of regional Levitical orders²⁰⁵

What is true of the gates in Ancient Israel is that the village gates were not reserved solely for judicial process but served as the locale for public meals and gathering (Deut 12¹⁵). The above observations suggest that the motive of the authors was different from early juridical traditions associated with the Levitical order in Ancient Israel. It has been argued that the Levites are part of the official echelon that promulgated the Deuteronomic legislation which specifies that due justice shall not be denied to the stranger, the orphans, or the widow (Deut 24¹⁷, 16¹¹⁻¹²). The exclusion of the Levites in some of the text segments under consideration suggests according to Leuchter that the Levite is on the other side of the equation, that is, the figure who administers law and is involved with the preservation of the legitimate justice that is due these other marginal characters, while the inclusion of the Levites to the marginal groups (orphans, widows, stranger) would mean identifying with their poor social condition. The Deuteronomic articulation of earlier laws in the new social setting which draws the Levites away from the cultic function but rather lay emphasis on the magical group and thereby including the Levites was a literary ploy to address the problem of social inequality. Social inequality has become more pronounced with the institution of the monarchy. The deplorable

²⁰⁵ Xa Vier Leon-Dufour. 1997. *Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Wellington House. 125 Strand London: Geoffery Chapman, p. 607.

situation of Israel could only be corrected by the earlier customs hence the Deuteronomists' legislations.

3.9 Conclusion

In this chapter efforts have been made to determine the meaning which the text segments convey in the light of the social context of their emergence. The laws and regulations receive new meaning in the new social conditions of Israel of the 7th century Israel. The textual variants that the critical apparatus presented provide support for the argument for the Deuteronomic response to social inequality in the text segments. The evidences presented by the textual critical analysis which reflected in the social status of the marginal groups were also examined in the chapter. The evidences of the phenomenon of social inequality and how this affects the status of the marginal groups in the Urhobo society will be focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

URHOBOSOCIAL STRUCTURES AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter enquiry has been made into the concept of social inequality and its Hebrew semantic field and its evidences in Israel's society. The result there is that the social economic conditions of the 7th century Israel, through the harsh social system, aggravated the plight of the marginal group, giving rise to the Deuteronomic response to the phenomenon of social inequality. The textual variants in the text segments were investigated to understand the motive for the variations in tandem with the philosophy and ideology of the Deuteronomic School. This chapter therefore investigates the meaning of social inequality in Urhobo context and the nature of the social structure in the Urhobo society and the social status of the marginal group so as to provide a premise for a comparative analysis. Social structure is defined as the social systems in a community and their relationship. It is those patterned social relations – those regular and repetitive aspects of the interactions between the members of a given social entity.²⁰⁶

4.2 The Urhobo People

The Urhobo people are one of the major Nigerian ethnic groups in the tropical Niger Delta, located in the present Delta state of Nigeria. The major economic activities are farming, fishing and trading. Farming once was the most popular occupation and employer of labour with the main food crops produced comprising Cassava (*manihot esculenta*) yam (*Dioscore Spp*) maize (*Zea mays*) vegetables and plantain (*Musa Spp*).

²⁰⁶ "Social structure," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Student and Home Edition. Chicago: *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 2010, p.1.

Apart from the farming occupation, fishing, lumbering, Hunting, mining and trading have been important part of economic pursuits among the Urhobo people. Trading is mostly concentrated in the urban centres such as Warri, Sapele, Ughelli and Effurun. While farming once occupied the primary place in the rural areas there has been a changing trend in the society with the advent of Oil industry. With regard to the Urhobo population and settlement, available statistics shows that the population of the Urhobo people is about 2.5 million. The overall population in the 2002 census was put at more than 2 million people. The variation in statistics is influenced by the migratory tendency of the Urhobo people. According to O. Otite the Urhobo people are permanent or semi-permanent settlers outside their homeland. This is true with statistics from places like Okitipupa, Ibadan, and Lagos etc. It is important to note that population growth has also been rapid, due to early marriages and polygamous marriage practice which has remained a trend. The Urhobo people, according to Otite, live mainly in *nucleated* settlements. Some of these are large urban centres such as Warri, Effurun, Sapele and Ughelli which are of considerable commercial, industrial, educational and administrative importance.

4.3. Urhobo Social Structure

Social structure has been defined as those patterned social relations – those regular and repetitive aspects of the interactions between the members of a given social entity²⁰⁷. It concerns the social activities and relationships that exist among members of a

²⁰⁷ “Social structure,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Student and Home Edition, Chicago: *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 2010, p.1. Increasingly, it is the rich and most militant individuals who capture political power in Urhobo land. Thus, the *Iwraghwa* and *Otuorere* are increasingly displacing the ‘*Ekpako*’ in some communities which is far from the ideal which Urhobo culture entails. The impact of the emerging political changes is twofold; namely a disruption in the traditional political system obtained under the gerontocracy structure, and secondly impact on economic development. The term economic development means ‘progress towards prosperity’ or improvement in well being’, The question which begs for answers is whether the changes in the political institution brought about by the triumph of plutocracy with emphasis on wealth has a lasting effect on the general well-being of the people or the enriching of a few individuals. Rather than socio-economic equity the growing disparity between the political class and the proletariat shows evidence of social inequality in the Urhobo social structure.

given society. For example the social structure of a small group is generally more closely knitted to the daily activities of its individual members. Herbert Spencer and other social theorist of the 19th and 20th century who popularized the concept of structure society see society as an organism comprising interdependent parts that form a structure similar to the anatomy of a living body. Thus the social structure of any given society deals with the existence of social entities, groups and their interrelatedness. It has also been observed that studies of social structure attempt to explain such matters as integration and trends in inequality.²⁰⁸ In the light of the above definitions, the social structure of Urhobo society simply means the components of the society, social entities groups and the institutions within the community and the nature of interactions between them. Institution refers to those relationships which are strategic to the structure and functions of a society. According to O. Otite institutions denote distinct ways of behaving and of interacting with reference to the achievements of individual and group goals and interests in such important areas of life as politics, marriage, religion, economy and the judiciary. Structurally the Urhobo society is organized into *Gerontocratic* and *plutocratic* political system. The Gerontocracies is the government by elders. It is also based on the age-grade organization. Men and women are organised separately among the Urhobo. Men have four age-grades as well as the women. The *Ekpako* (or elders) consists of men of 60years and above. These traditionally are in charge of the government of the communities. They are known or act as custodians of the culture of the Urhobo people. The other sub-groups or age-grades are the *Ivwraghwa* (Young men age between 30 and 60years) who form the main working force. The *Otuorere*, or *Ighele* (The youth, 15 to 30years) who defend the

²⁰⁸ *Encyclopaedia Britannica, Op.cit.* p.1.

society, do heavy work in the wards and towns and clear the bushes in the village setting; and lastly the *Imitete* (the Children 6-15years) who clean the roads and run errands.

The women have an equivalent age-grade structure. The *Ekwokweya* (*Ekpakoeya*), the Elderly women consist of those above 50 years. The *Eyauku* (i.e. widows), or divorcees (*Emetogbe*) or very old women who return to their villages to live the last part of their lives in their natal homes often constitute a group within the community. They play significant roles in the communities such as mediating in time of crises in communities and championing the courses of the general welfare of the communities. Other age-grades include *Eghweya* (i.e. the women who are married) age between 14 and 20, and 40 to 50years, while the *Emete* (Girls) consists of the yet to be married and generally uncircumcised girls.

Apart from the *Gerontocratic* system there is the *Plutocratic* government i.e. government by the rich and wealthy. While retaining gerontocracy in her political system the Urhobo society equally embrace the *Plutocratic* form of government and thus produce a parallel institution of governance in the Urhobo society. On the economic and social significance of both political systems and the institutions in Urhobo it has been observed that money politics has led to the denudation of *gerontocracy* and triumph of *plutocracy cum militancy*

Increasingly, it is the rich and most militant individuals who capture political power in Urhobo land. Thus, the '*Ivwraghwa*' and '*Otuorere*' (The youth) are increasingly displacing the '*Ekpako*.' (The elders)²⁰⁹

²⁰⁹ E.Ojameruaye , *Culture and Economic Development in Urhoboland*.

The impact of the emerging social political changes is twofold namely; a disruption in the traditional political system obtained under the *gerontocracy* structure and secondly crisis-prone impact on the social life and economic development in society. The changes in the political system with emphasis on wealth have not only positive impact on the general well being of the people but also negative effects. The system has rather ensured the growing disparity in the social equation in the society today. Rather than socio-economic equity, there is a growing disequilibrium in the social life of the society, ie between the political group and the proletariat thus growing social inequality in the society.

4.4 Nature and Evidences of Social Inequality

By the nature of social inequality in Urhobo society is meant the pattern of recognised social status in the society, privileges, variation in wealth status, restrictions (such as, discriminations against the female gender) and cultural practices that define relationships in the society. This is evident in a number of ways. The hierarchical structure of the society by way of the political institutions made up of the King, Chiefs, the *Otota* (spokesman) and the Age grade all inform the nature of social structure of the Urhobo society. Evidences of social inequality also occur in cultural practices. Among such cultural practices are those that restrict women from breaking kolanut in social gatherings. Women are also restricted from serving themselves from the plate as it is considered a taboo²¹⁰. In the same vein certain chieftaincy titles are reserved for men and for the rich. These go to show the phenomenon of social inequality. Apart from these cultural practices there is the consciousness of social inequality in the indigenous names.

²¹⁰ The cultural practice which forbids women from taking kolanut from the plate is widespread among the Urhobo people. This practice is one that points to the patriarchal nature of the Urhobo society. It also depicts the form of social inequality that is inherent in the culture.

A look at some of the names testifies to this.

S/N	NAME	SEX	MEANING/CONNOTATION
1	<i>Achojah</i>	M	Rise up to challenge
2	<i>Edojah</i>	M	Day of challenge
3	<i>Efimini</i>	M	Let's see how wealthy you can be
4	<i>Efetobore</i>	Unisex	Wealth is achieved
5	<i>Ighomuedafe</i>	M	Money intoxicates the wealthy
6	<i>Mivwodere</i>	Unisex	I now have a name
7	<i>Oboganriemu</i>	M	Be strong to survive
	<i>Ogbariemu</i>	M	It takes strength to achieve
8	<i>Ojakovotu</i>	M	This is a group challenge
9	<i>Ojanomare</i>	Unisex	I have met the challenge
10	<i>Onanojah</i>	M	This is a challenge
11	<i>Onajite</i>	Unisex	This is sufficient
12	<i>Onogaganmue</i>	Unisex	Who is intoxicated with power
13	<i>Onoharhese</i>	Unisex	Who blames or rejects good deed

Several names with the term *Akpo* (meaning world or life as in human life) also suggest the people's conception of the phenomenon of social inequality. eg *Akpokurhievwen* (A person lives his life according to how he predestined himself) *Akpomudiare* ('life has become steady now', or 'I have become steady in life') etc are also reflections of the people's belief and attitude to social inequality. As can be observed from the frequency of the term *challenge* in the above table, it simply points to the consciousness of the people of confronting what seems to constitute hindrance to individual or group progress. The names express the desire of the people to attain enviable status in life. The philosophy behind these names is that social inequality exists in the society, and that, although it is a phenomenon inherent in society, it is accepted

with a mixed feeling by the people. On the other hand, however, it is expedient that achievers should not be intoxicated by their achievements and so ill-treat the less privileged.

4.5 Social Inequality and Reflections in Songs and Proverbs

Names, songs and proverbs are important indices for understanding a people's culture.²¹¹ Such names have been examined in the previous section. Songs are important. Prominent among the Urhobo people is the *Udje* dance songs. *Udje* is a unique type of dance in Urhobo in which rival quarters from the same village or different towns perform songs composed from often exaggerated materials about the other group on an appointed day. Among the clans where *Udje* is most popular are EWU, OKPARABE, OLOMU, UDU, and UGHIEVWEN. It is believed to have begun in the nineteenth century, reaching its peak²¹² in the 1920s and 30s. Interestingly the *Udje* dance has both political and social significance. It aims at sanitizing society. As the name means 'Udje' is also interpreted *Ofovwi ile* meaning 'war of songs'. Darah calls it 'Udje: Battle of songs'²¹³. What this was intended to do was to praise virtue and condemn vice. Apart from its aesthetic importance it has social significance. According to T. Ojaide

The songs are very relevant today as societies everywhere continue to fashion means of dealing with their lesser crimes and protecting their ethical and moral values. Their relevance transcends cultural and historical contexts. In fact, these songs serve as a lesson to today's journalists and publishers of tabloids. In the *udje* dance song tradition, excesses are checked since there are sanctions against falsehoods as well as lampoons against natural

²¹¹ E. Taylor defines 'Culture' as that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, moral, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as member of society.

²¹² Darah G.G. 2005. *Battles of Songs: Udje Traditions of the Urhobo*. Lagos: Malthouse Press Limited.

²¹³ *Ibid.*

defects. The songs maintain a delicate balance between the general good of the society whose ethos must be upheld and respect for the law-abiding individual.²¹⁴

The songs address social issues relating to the people's perception of social inequality. Several themes feature in the *Udje* dance songs that make them relevant in understanding social inequality among the Urhobo people. These themes include marriage, sterility, sickness, poverty etc. For example as importance is attached to children among the Urhobo people, a man who is not able to marry and raise children is often disrespected in the society. This is a form of inequality. He is disrespected and regarded as impotent. He does not belong to the married men. Wealth is also important among the Urhobo people and defines people's social status. A story is told of a man *Mono* in a village called *Iwhrekan*, who had only one piece of cloth, which he uses to the farm and takes to social functions. One day when he washed it and spread it in the Sun to dry, the Falcon snatched it. He is said to have cried, asking the bird to return his cloth. This may not be a true story, but is simply a satiric painting of the social status of the man. Though poetic and imaginary, it is a reflection of the view about socio-economic inequality in the society. Status features prominently in the *Udje* dance songs. It might be observed that whether consciously or unconsciously the people's philosophy about social inequality is reflected in their songs. A song composed to shame *Oloya* says;

Oloya the celebrated charm-maker was
forced into exile by police harassment. Court
letters were at least seven. And summons was

²¹⁴ Tanure Ojaide comments on the social relevance of the Urhobo song poetry in 'Poetry, Performance, and Art: Udje Dance Songs of Urhobo People.'

legion. These troubles made him flee to foreign land.

In this song, though *Oloya* is the chief character through whom the opponent attacks his group in the *Udje* Battle song, the main theme provided is the social inequality of *Oloya*.²¹⁵ The factor responsible for his fleeing is his financial predicament of poverty in which his social status has become proverbial.

Closely related to the *Udje* dance songs are proverbs through which we can articulate the Urhobo perspectives of social inequality. According to F.Ohwovoriolè proverbs are used on different occasions. It is a literal expression of wisdom which offers the speaker a medium for the projection and fulfillment of a variety of socially desired goals. It is an instrument of cultural transmission and its study can give a penetrating picture of the people's way of life, their philosophy, their criticism of life, moral truths and social values. They also address the theme of social inequality just as we find in the songs. Some of these with social status connotations are;

- I. The steps that are taken forward do not go backward. This is an aspiration and prayer for the successful individual as a form of rejection of low status of life. (*Itchihi kparò kpukò-o*).
- II. That a man wears knickers doesn't mean that he carries half thought.
- III. *Osevwe r' Omotete f' Okpako-o* (The fashion of the young doesn't fit an old man).

²¹⁵ G.G.Darah's comment is that throughout the song the domineering image of *Oloya* is vividly established. Being a giant among others in the art of songs and dance he constitutes the weakest point from which the family could be attacked.

IV. All fingers are not equal (*Irhian bo eje ria ukuku-u*) In this, the people acknowledge the differences in society particularly with reference to financial capacity.

The Proverbs express the moral and social values held by the People of Urhobo society as regards social status and social inequality among the communities.

4.6 The Marginal Groups in Urhobo Society: The Widow, Orphans, Strangers and their Social Status

4.6.1 The Widow in Urhobo Society. The Widows, Orphans and Strangers constitute components of the Urhobo society that draw attention to social inequality. The Widow in Urhobo is called ‘*Ayuku*’ (Heb. *hn"m'l.a;*; pl. *tAnm'l.a;*, sf.) a word which has a connotative meaning. It refers to a woman whose husband has died and is required by the traditional custom to be inherited or part of what is shared among members of the family. The inheritance of widow among the Urhobo people is meant to protect them from the harsh socio-economic conditions which might arise as a result of the death of the husband who happens to be the bread winner. This cultural practice among the Urhobo people is similar to the widow inheritance among the Israelites in ancient Israel. (Deut. 25⁴⁻¹⁰). In recent times, however, this practice has virtually waned and this may not be unconnected with economic reasons. M.Odje observes, ‘the Urhobo practice of widow inheritance whereby the deceased’s rights over his widows are taken over by his male relative is not popular with the educated Urhobo elements who, among other things, resent the widow as a second hand wife’.²¹⁶ This attitude to widows is not limited to the educated individuals alone but an economic reason, ie, the financial implications is responsible for

²¹⁶ O.Otite “Ed” 2003. *The Urhobo People*. Ibadan: Shaneson Ltd. p. 414.

this attitude. Thus the widow could suffer neglect in Urhobo society. Although there are some striking similarities in purpose for the institution of the widow inheritance among the Urhobo and Israelites, there are seemingly different cultural goals for the practice. The *Levir*, ie, the brother in the Jewish tradition, is meant to raise children for the late brother (Gen.38) an obligation which was in biblical text at first mandatory though without any consequence and was often evaded.²¹⁷ The reason for evading the responsibility in ancient Israel was that children raised by the widow were for the late husband. However widows among Urhobo community do not raise children in the name of the late husband whose responsibility would be to care for the children. The Hebrew word for widow ‘*hn"m'l.a;* (*almanâ*) in the substantive denotes a woman whose husband has died and who has no means of financial support and therefore is in need of special legal protection.²¹⁸ Since the social security of the widow in both communities could not be guaranteed by the culture of widow inheritance the situation has given rise to alternative approach which the Deuteronomists advocate in the legal texts. A programme which taggets the welfare of the widows in the society emerges from the Deuteronomic texts under consideration which can address their social conditions.

4.6.2 Orphans and their Social Status in Urhobo Society

The social status of the Orphan in Urhobo is significant in the debate on social inequality in Urhobo social setting. Although the Old Testament has been seen as a part of a broader and intricately interrelated cultural milieu whose customs, institutions and linguistic and literary pattern are shared in large measure throughout the Fertile Crescent, it could be said that similarities also exist between the Urhobo people and Israelite

²¹⁷ J.D.Douglas, N. Hillyer *et al* “Eds” 1994. *New Bible Dictionary*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press. p.735.

²¹⁸ *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Vol.16 Ur-Z, Jerusalem.

society with regard to the social status of the Orphan. It is evident in the extant literature that oppression and discrimination against the Orphan (~AtÜY""h;) was strictly prohibited.

Rob not the poor, because he is poor
Neither oppress the afflicted in the gate
For the Lord will plead their cause
And spoil the soul of those that spoil them

Remove not the old landmark
And enter not into the fields of the fatherless
For their redeemer is mighty
He shall plead their cause with thee (Prov.
22¹⁶, 24^{22,28})

The orphan among the Urhobo people is considered for special care because the Urhobo social system is communal. The orphan is not abandoned but recommended for protection and provision. For the Urhobo people, a man's continued existence is believed to be perpetuated through the gift of children hence a high premium is placed on the child. In the case of the loss of one or both parents the orphan automatically comes under the care of the members of the extended family. However, contemporary evidences show that this is often more complicated and more of the rule than the practice. The common plights of the orphan in Urhobo include negligence, lack of access to education and sometimes health services. This calls for the interpretation and application of the Deuteronomic response to social inequality in the context of the Urhobo society to include care for the Orphans in the society. There is need for a purposeful attempt to bring this group into social schemes that can adequately take care of the plight from which they suffer.

4.6.3 Sojourners and their Social Status in Urhobo Society

Social inequality is said to describe a situation where groups in a given society do not have equal status. This applies to the social status of the stranger among the Urhobo people. Evidence of social inequality exists in Urhobo social structure in view of the status accorded the stranger or sojourner. The Urhobo society, like ancient Israel, is acquainted with two types of sojourners. These are the stranger who pays a temporary visit from a nearby community or one that stays among the community but hails from another tribe altogether. Although this distinction is made between the two groups; a stranger might just be a member of the extended family or neighbouring community that visits a family probably to discuss social issues such as marriage, land issues or economic and financial transactions. Both are identified under the same terminology ie *Orharha* (Orhorha) The difference between the use of the terms *yrIêk.n"* and *rGEh;w>* for the sojourner is not so distinct among the Urhobo people. The sojourner, whose stay is more permanently conceived as obtained in ancient Israel, is also given protection among the Urhobo people. The communal nature of the Urhobo society does not encourage discrimination against the sojourner among the Urhobo, communities rather strangers and sojourners are protected. This however does not nullify the existence of the phenomenon of social inequality. The sojourner cannot rise to acquire the title of the King. This can be compared to the Dt injunction in Deut. 17¹⁵ which instructs Israelites from appointing one who is a foreigner as king. He may obtain some degree of social status by being given a chieftaincy title of the land. It is important to note here that the Deuteronomic conception about the social status of the marginal groups is completely captured by the Urhobo culture. The attitude of the Deuteronomist as conveyed in the Deuteronomic code about social inequality compares with the Urhobo society. The

culture of the Urhobo people does not encourage alienation of the sojourner or strangers, thus showing the close relationship between the Urhobo people and Ancient Israel. The alienation which the marginal groups may suffer as a result of influence of modernization common to both Urhobo and Israelite communities hence the Deuteronomic legislations are relevant in contemporary times (Num.15¹⁴).

4.7 Causes of Social Inequality, Effects and Solutions

Social inequality as a phenomenon perpetuated in society has been justified by the theory of social Darwinism. This theory argues that nature is all about the *survival of the fittest*. According to this ideology the strong rises to the top on their natural ability while the weak settles into some kind of meagre, average existence. While this *dictum* applies in the natural world, social inequality in human society is not entirely or strictly so. Thus societies hierarchically structured gives premium of place to some than others. In this wise social inequality is human creation. The hierarchical nature of the political organization of the Urhobo society thus gives recognition to those in position of authority and influence. Social inequality also exists in Urhobo according to the theory of social Darwinism. This comes by way of material acquisition and positive socio-economic contribution to the development of the society. This is not unconnected with the belief in the dual nature of the Urhobo world view. It is also a prominent conception among the Urhobo people namely that there is a visible and an invisible world. The cosmogony is one in which all forces of the spiritual world interact and as such whatever social status a person is able to achieve is also attributed to his or her destiny or predestination. While this belief is strong and plays a prominent role in the social and religious life of the people, one would be strongly opposed to it in its entirety. This is because rather than see

social inequality as human factor, it makes society to be blinded to the reality of the negative effect of social inequality, created by social conventions which perpetuate marginalization, disparity and suppression of the weak in society. Secondly social inequality among the marginal groups particularly the orphan and widow is caused by natural factors. The loss of parents or husbands as the case may be often exposes those involved to social and economic imbalance, and more often than not in precarious conditions. This is made worse where there are sharp traditional practices or where the widow is forcefully ejected from the home built by both husband and wife.²¹⁹

The effects of social inequality in Urhobo society are both negative and positive. While inequality urges the drive for self determination and pursuit of excellence, there are certain negative consequences. These include social unrest, disharmony, disruption in acclaimed communal solidarity and egalitarian principles traditionally attributed to the Urhobo people. The standard of living of the marginal groups among the Urhobo people has no advocacy as in ancient Israel. While the social cultural values claim to be egalitarian the practice is far from real. The disruption in the communal solidarity caused by social inequality contradicts the vital and uniting force of a people. This situation has aptly been described as follows:

We regard our living together not as an Unfortunate mishap warranting endless competition among us but as a deliberate art of God to us as a community of brothers and sisters jointly involved in the quest for a composite answer to the varied problems of life. Hence, in all we do, we always place man first and hence all

²¹⁹ This was not a common pattern in Urhobo culture. However such cases are not uncommon in contemporary times due to new socioeconomic circumstances.

our action is usually joint community oriented
action rather than the individualism²²⁰

The effects of social inequality are therefore evident in a number of ways in the society. The lack of social security, communal harmony, disruption in the vital unifying force, loose family traditions all threaten the peaceful co-existence, which once pervaded the earlier ages of development. The ideology of survival of the fittest in social Darwinism, while becoming the trend, the marginal groups continue to suffer as the most vulnerable. This continues to make the Deuteronomic response to social inequality relevant in the society.

The Deuteronomic response, properly put, is an application of the principles of empowerment and intervention. The empowerment and intervention policies are sufficiently articulated in the chosen text segments. These include: (i) The tithe law and its interpretation in the Deuteronomic perspective (Deut.14²²⁻²⁹). This regulation lays emphasis on the inclusion of the marginal groups in the dispensation of the tithes.(ii)The celebration of the feast of the weeks or Harvest²²¹ with the aim of liberating the marginal group from economic woe suggests that the purpose for celebrating the feast was not only as an observance of cultic regulation but also having a social function in Israelite society. (Deut.16^{9-12,13-15}). (iii) Justice for the resident alien, the orphan and the widow (Deut. 24^{17-18,19-22}). This regulation lays emphasis on justices for the marginal groups which is the Deuteronomist's concern for inequality in Israel's society.

²²⁰G.O. Idjakpo. 2011. The Administrative, legislative and Judicial Aspects of the Urhobo consensus system of Government *Journal of social science*. This reference is directed at the Urhobo consensus approach to administration which forges unity in the Urhobo social life of the community. This practice paints an egalitarian society, it does not prevent the existence of social inequality in the society.

²²¹ This feast goes by various names. It is called feast of Harvest (Exo.23¹⁶) or the Day of Firstfruits (Num.28²⁶) For the various names given to the feast see, Kurtz. *Sacrificial worship of the Old Testament*, p.376, R. de Vaux. *Ancient Israel*. pp.493-495.

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4.8 Conclusion

In this chapter enquiry was made into the presence of the phenomenon of social inequality as reflected in the social structure of the Urhobo society, the proverbs, songs and names in the Urhobo setting. The social status of the marginal groups, the Orphans, Widows, and Strangers in the Urhobo society compares with the experience in Israelite society which suggests the cross cultural similarities that exist between the two societies. The causes and effects of social inequality were examined with the compelling need to address the effects of social inequality in the Urhobo society. This need was identified and championed by the Deuteronomic School which was prosecuted through the advocacy for the marginal groups. The Deuteronomic response is considered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE DEUTERONOMIC RESPONSE TO SOCIAL INEQUALITY

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the concern is to enquire into the rise and impact of social inequality in Israel's national life. N.K.Gottwald whose study into the form and function of Israel's religion sees Israel as a social complex describes the pre-monarchical Israel's society as a form of synthetic egalitarianism. He observes that the meaning of the term 'Canaanites' as descriptive of the people of the land carries in some instances, if not a specifically mercantile reference, at least an upper-class overtone alluding to royalty or aristocracy.²²² The sociopolitical egalitarianism consists of a common territory, language, and simple means of production.²²³ This socioeconomic organisation which portrays the egalitarian nature of Israelite society before the monarchical system according to Gottwald is one in which

ownership of the basic means of production (lands, herds and flocks) was vested in extended families (the primary residential and production units) that were sub-clustered into protective associations, backed by tribes, and charged with implementing measures to inhibit social stratification: prohibition against sales of land outside the family, prohibition of interest on loans, limitation on debtor servitude, periodic redistribution of land holdings, and obligations of mutual economic aid to prevent the destitution or demise of extended family etc.²²⁴

²²² N.K.Gottwald. 1979. *The Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel 1250-1050 BCE*. New York: Orbis Books. p.499.

²²³ The social system described here is also sometimes called the manorial system. This is a type of economic social administrative organization based on land tenure which bound together in a nexus of interdependent relationships the landowning class and the land tilling peasants. See A.L.Kroebe, J. Dewey, *et al*, (eds) *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* .97. This system may not have described Israel's social system at the earliest stage.

²²⁴ N.K.Gottwald. 1979. *The Tribes of Yahweh: A Sociology of the Religion of Liberated Israel 1250-1050 BCE*. New York: Orbis Books. p.613.

It is against this egalitarian background that Israel coming into contact with the Canaanite²²⁵ stratified society the phenomenon of social inequality emerged.

5.2 The Rise and Impact of Social Inequality in Ancient Israel

Social inequality in Ancient Israel rose to its prominence in the 7th century BC. Prior to the monarchical system, Israel had practiced the Tribal system and had the social structure made up of variously sized units which were related to one another by blood, and all claimed descent from the same patriarchal ancestor and shared a religious cultic tradition.²²⁶ The monarchical system that emerged however was seen as an antithesis to the tribal system. By its very nature, the monarchy acted as a catalyst upon certain social processes of which some were ancient and others new.²²⁷ The patriarchal system prior to the monarchy had a nomadic and sometimes semi nomadic life style. According to N.K Gottwald, Israel in the earliest times practiced the structural functional system. He further observes that the social classes visible in the biblical societies may be phrased in such a way as to take account of Israel's history in all periods. Hence he says, we can identify shifts in the class configuration that were integral to changing economic, political and ideological developments'.²²⁸ Thus over a period of time Israel's social and political structure developed from its earliest egalitarian communal form to the classified society of the 7th century. The 7th century produced two social classes namely the dominant-tribute-imposing class which consisted of the political *elite* (native and foreign), military retainers, together with landholding merchants and small manufacturing *elite* who

²²⁵ In the J-Stratum the term 'Canaanites' is the preferred term for all the inhabitants of Palestine West of the Jordan River, while the Amorites is preferred to those in East Jordan.

²²⁶ *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 8. 1972. Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House. p.612.

²²⁷ *Encyclopedia Judaica Op. cit.* The monarchy introduced new socio-economic policies which encouraged social inequalities.

²²⁸ N.K. Gottwald. 1993. Social Class as an Analytical and Hermeneutical category in Biblical studies. *Journal of Biblical Literature (JBL)* .112:1.

benefited from state power. On the other hand there were the dominant- tributes- bearing class which consisted of peasants, pastoralists, artisans, slaves and unskilled workers.²²⁹ Though the various groups existed side by side there was a constant tension in Israel's society especially between those who belonged to the royal class and benefitted from that social system and those who were impoverished by it. This tension is mostly spoken against in the prophetic tradition. They criticised the social system that perpetuated discrimination, impoverishment and oppression. Persistently the prophetic circle called attention to the evil of the society, most of which are linked to social inequality.

The Lord enters into judgment with the elders and princes of his people: "It is you who have devoured the vineyard, the spoil of the poor is in your houses.

What do you mean by crushing my people, by grinding the face of the poor?" says the Lord of hosts. (Isa.3¹⁴⁻¹⁵)

aAbêy" jP'äv.miB. 'hw"hy>
 ~T,är>[:Bi('~T,a;w> wyr" _f'w>
 AMà[: ynEiq.zI~[i
 `~k,(yTeb'B. ynIß[h,(tl;îzEG>
 ~r<K,êh;
 (Isa.3¹⁴)

WaaK.d:T. Î'~k,L'-hm;Ð ç~k,L'm;À
 hwIßhy> yn"ïdoa]-~aun> Wnx'_j.Ti
 ~yYIßnI[] ynEip.W yMiê[:
 `tAa)b'c.
 (Isa.3¹⁵)

The concept of class is reflected in the use of the term AMà[: ynEiq.zI which translated means elders, old men, as a representative of a particular social class. The same

²²⁹N.K.Gottwald .1993. p. 3.

applies with the term *wyr" _f'w>* which means ruler, chief or officer. The class is accused of social discrimination against the less privileged of the society. Deuteronomy, which belongs to the same prophetic tradition, was critical of the social system. On Deuteronomy M. Weinfeld observes, 'with the elimination of the provincial cultus, Israelite religious life was completely wrested from the control of Priest and Temple. The Deuteronomic conception of the cult is vastly different from that reflected in the other Pentateuchal sources; it represents a turning point in the evolution of religious faith of Israel.²³⁰ Deuteronomy's concern unlike the other Pentateuchal literature was to impact on the social life of Israel. M. Weinfeld observes further:

The book of Deuteronomy does, indeed, mark the transition from the narrow casuistic and statutory law corpus to the humanistic law-codes. Laws concerning civil damages, which make up almost the entire bulk of the casuistic section of the Book of the covenant (Ex. 21¹⁸, 22¹⁶) and which figure prominently in ancient Near-Eastern law corpora are entirely lacking in the book of Deuteronomy.²³¹

According to Weinfeld, the purpose of Deuteronomy was not to produce a civil law book like that of the covenant code, treating of pecuniary²³² matters, but to set forth a code of laws securing the protection of the individual and particularly of those persons who are most in need of it.²³³ The entire laws of Deuteronomy were couched to respond to the social need of the time. The consistent reminder to care for the less privileged in the Deuteronomic code points to the fact of realization by the Deuteronomic editor of the

²³⁰ M. Weinfeld. 1972. *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic school*. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press. p.190.

²³¹ M. Weinfeld. *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic school*. p.283.

²³² These are regulations that stipulate monetary or financial values e.g, Ex. 22¹⁶.

²³³ M. Weinfeld. *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic school*. p.284.

necessity of addressing the phenomenon of social inequality in Israel. Although the Deuteronomic School²³⁴ did not belong to the group who held public offices they were members of a new movement with a new vision that held to the spirit of the mosaic tradition. Their aim for the constant appeal to uphold the ethics of the older mosaic tradition was to show in essence that the Davidic royal tradition has the same obligation as the mosaic tradition and that both do not conflict on the theme of social inequality and welfare of the citizens. F.C. Fensham in his discourse on the theology of the covenant sees the history of the Old Testament as essentially a history of covenants. He holds that the Davidic covenant complements rather than conflicts with the older ones.²³⁵ Yet on the theme of social status and the care for the less privileged the two traditions differs. The operators of the royal tradition did not measure up to the demands of the covenant. The failure to meet the demands of the mosaic and the Davidic covenants by the successive leaders in Israel brought about two negative effects namely; social upheavals which led to the division of the kingdom and subsequently the Exile which brought an end to the Northern kingdom the same fate which befell Judah.

The Deuteronomistic Historian constantly draws attention to this fact, namely; the impact of the phenomenon of social inequality on the social life of the nation. Thus in spite of the positive contributions of the Omride dynasty, the dynasty is criticized for the syncretism and policies that were detrimental policies. Indeed the division of the Kingdom was caused by the policies that cared less for the people. (IKg12¹²⁻¹⁷). The

²³⁴ According to M. Weinfeld, The authors of Deuteronomy and the deuteronomic school must be sought for among circles which held public office, among persons who had at their command a vast reservoir of literary material, who had developed and were capable of developing a literary technique of their own, those experienced in literary composition and skilled with the pen and the book; these authors must consequently have been the *soferim-hakamin* (M.Weinfeld, p. 178).

²³⁵ D.J.McCarthy. 1972. *Old Testament Covenant. A survey of current opinion*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell. p. 86.

experience of Israel in her historical development has been repeated in the global scene in recent times. It is not far from the truth to say that upheavals and civil unrests are mostly connected with social inequality.²³⁶

5.3 Israel's Traditions and Social Inequality (The Mosaic and Davidic traditions)

The evidences of traditions complex as they are reflected in Israel's historical narrative have been well attested in Pentateuchal studies.²³⁷ Tradition is common to all human societies and transmits the values and customs of any community. It means the continuity of ideas, customs etc that are consistently transmitted from one generation to another.²³⁸ It refers to a belief, principle or way of acting which people in a particular society or group of people have continued to follow for a long time, or all of these beliefs, etc. The two major traditions in ancient Israel were the Mosaic and the Davidic-Zion traditions. These traditions are believed to be rooted in historical events. While the Mosaic traditions takes its historical roots from the covenant at Sinai, the Davidic-Zion tradition derives its theological articulations from the covenant relationship entered by the prophetic declaration by Nathan; the Oracle which promises to establish the Davidic Dynasty (2Sam. 7⁸⁻¹⁶). This so called oracle of Nathan (2 Sam.7⁸⁻¹⁶) is considered the Charter of the Davidic Covenant. In spite of M. Noth's radical historical skepticism about the Mosaic tradition, he is firm in his insistence that the rootage of the evolving tradition is in concrete events and relationships.²³⁹ He believes that the core of the Pentateuchal

²³⁶ The most recent of this experience is the case of the ex-Libyan leader Moammar Gaddafi who ruled Libya for 42 yrs. The Punch Newspaper Friday October 21, 2011, Vol.17. No. 20994 p.2 reports: A despot dies an era ends.

²³⁷ For the Davidic Tradition and other traditions in Israel, see Douglas Knight. 1973. *The Traditions of Israel* in SBLDS a Missoula scholar press. Dennis McCarthy. 1972. *Old Testament covenant*, Richmond: John Venox Press. T Ischid. 1977. *The Royal Dynastic in Ancient Israel* BZAW 142, M. Noth. 1973. *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions*. Englewood, N.J prince-Hall INC.

²³⁸ Xaxier Leon- Dufour. 1997. *Dictionary of biblical Theology*. London: Geoffreychapman. p.607.

²³⁹ M. Noth. 1972. *A History of Pentateuchal traditions*. Englewood cliff N.J: Prentice-Hall Inc. p.XXII.

narrative was at first formulated and transmitted in the Israelite Cult. This was because it was meant to have a determinative and controlling effect on the social life of the people.

M. Noth observes;

.....The tradition was not handed down as a dead chronicle of the past, a kind of historical mummy, but a living and dynamic story in whose drama the people participated in their present situation. Even the accretions from daily life or from Universal human experience are important in the reappropriation of the meaning and power of the tradition.²⁴⁰

The two traditions, namely the mosaic tradition and the Davidic tradition, though suggests continuity and the fact that one derives from the other, however recent investigations show that both came from very different centers of power and different processes of tradition building.²⁴¹ According to Murray Newman the provenance of the Abraham-David tradition is derived from the south while the Mosaic tradition comes from the North. For Brueggemann, the difference is more cultural and sociological than geographical. Although it is possible to trace the continuities in the literature shaped and energized either by the Mosaic or the Davidic covenants, there is to a large extent, a difference in the social vision of both traditions. This difference has been explicitly expressed as follows;

While the Mosaic tradition tends to be a movement of protest which is situated among the disinherited and which articulates its theological vision in terms of a God who decisively intrudes, even against seemingly impenetrable institutions and orderings,

²⁴⁰ M. Noth.1972. *A History of Pentateuchal traditions*. Englewood cliff N.J: Prentice-Hall Inc:XXII

²⁴¹ W. Brueggemann. 1979. Trajectories in Old Testament literature and the sociology of Ancient Israel. *Journal of Biblical Literature (JBL)* June. 98 .2. 9:161-185.

the Davidic tradition, on the other hand, tends to be a movement of consolidation which is situated among the established and secure, and which articulates its theological vision in terms of a God who faithfully abides and sustains on behalf of the present ordering.²⁴²

The Mosaic tradition traces its beginning to the Sinai event where Israel enters into a covenant relationship with Yahweh which involves two but complementary obligations.²⁴³ In the view of D. Noel Freedman and G.H Heron (*et al*) these dimensions of relationships that are involved in the covenant, are the vertical relationship with Yahweh and a horizontal relationship with the neighbour. Freedman observes;

The second area of new covenant life involves the horizontal relationship with others. In saving Israel from the Egyptians Yahweh was involved in social behaviour; the covenant at Sinai revealed an intrinsic connection between the nature of Yahweh and the demands of social justice. How Israel treated each other would be a sign of how seriously they were devoted to Yahweh. A special area of concern here is the treatment of the poor, the oppressed, the alien. A motive frequently found in covenant law (e.g. Ex. 22²¹, 23⁹ Lev. 19³⁴ Deut 15¹⁻¹¹) for not oppressing the weak is because you were once strangers (aliens) in the land of Egypt. It would be a contradiction for Israel, freed from oppression by Yahweh, to become themselves oppressors of the weak.²⁴⁴

Thus the Mosaic tradition articulates its social and theological visions in terms of a God who acts on behalf of the down trodden and the voiceless of the society. This is quite evident in the Exodus tradition which incorporates the protection of the marginal group

²⁴² W. Brueggemann. p.162.

²⁴³ E. Kutch proposes that the word '*berit*' which means covenant should actually be translated as '*Obligation*'.

²⁴⁴ D. Noel Freedman, G.A. Herion *et al* "Eds." 1992. *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Vol .4, London; Doubleday, p.907.

(Ex. 22²¹) in the act of telling of the salvation history. According to D. Noel Freedman *et al*, the morality embodied in the Mosaic covenant is that of responding to the mandates of the covenant. Israel is called to respond to the blessings of the gift of Salvation, by obedience to the commandments, a theme which occurs as a *leitmotif* in Deuteronomy (Deut. 7¹², 8^{1, 11}, 9^{1ff}, 11^{1ff}).

The Davidic tradition, on the other hand, hangs its theology on the institution of the monarchy. By the prophetic declaration i.e. the Nathan Oracle, Yahweh establishes the Davidic dynasty in the promise in which God will build a house for David. Yahweh here chooses himself to set up the kingship (2 Sam. 7⁸⁻¹²).... *And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name like the name of the great ones of the earth* (2 Sam 7⁹) The father-son imagery common in the ancient near east (ANE) is re-echoed here (see Pss. 89²⁷⁻²⁸, 2⁷⁻⁸). The king is not considered divine as in the ANE but he is raised above the common person in his relationship with God. The king is a vice-regent. This theological persuasion gave rise to the entrenchment of the doctrine of inviolability of Zion. Failure of the king will bring punishment (Ps. 89³¹) but it will not terminate the covenant (Ps. 89³⁻⁴, 20-24) This persuasion did not come without its negative impact on Israel's social life. It gave rise to the abuse of the theocratic powers invested on the King; A situation that resulted into a tension between the king and the people. It is this dividing line that parts the Mosaic tradition from the Davidic. According to D. Noel Freedman, Deuteronomy with its overriding Mosaic concerns admits kingship but stresses that the king is simply one of the people. The king is one of your kinsmen (Deut. 17¹⁴⁻²⁰). He must not multiply horses for himself. This rejection of absolute power in the Deuteronomy comes from the mosaic

tradition whose center of tradition building process ideology is inclined to an egalitarian humane society. It must be realized that though Israel's emerging social and political structure copied the Canaanite socio-political system, Israel was constantly reminded to remember their covenant status and their peculiarity.

Both the Davidic and Mosaic traditions find significance in the Israelite cult. According to Xavier Leon-Dufour²⁴⁵ the traditions in order to transmit themselves, the sacred deposit necessarily takes a literary form such as laws, maxims, hymns, rituals etc. While the literary form of the Mosaic tradition is expressed mainly in the laws and cultic rituals, the Davidic tradition expresses its theology in the Hymns and Psalms (see Ps. 59²⁰⁻²¹, 22-29, 32-37). In the legal texts under consideration the Deuteronomist consistently remind Israel of the social obligations which Israel has towards the marginal groups as a covenant community. S.R Driver observes, 'Nowhere else in the OT do we breathe such an atmosphere of generous devotion to God, and of large-hearted benevolence towards man; and nowhere else is it shown with the same fullness of detail how these principles may be made to permeate the entire life of the community.'²⁴⁶ The contemporary relevance of the Deuteronomic response to social inequality has been observed in Blenkinsopp's argument. He says, 'The way Deuteronomy interprets the Old law of leaving the crops ungathered every seventh year so that the poor could help themselves shows its concern for social action and collective responsibility.'²⁴⁷ He observes further,

We find a great concern to legislate
for the deprived classes which we
have learnt to realize is still very

²⁴⁵ Xavier Leon-Dufour. 1997. *Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Wellington House. 125 Strand London: Geoffrey Chapman.

²⁴⁶ S.R Driver. 1956. *An Introduction to the Literature of Old Testament*. New York: Meridian Books. p.79.

²⁴⁷ J. Blenkinsopp and J. Challenor. 1971. *Pentateuch* London: William Clowes & Sons Ltd. p. 225.

much necessary in our affluence western society.

In the light of the above arguments Deuteronomy is held to be a response addressed primarily to the rather well-off bound classes who were behind the conservative reform of Josiah. Both traditions tend to have their cultural orientations. By culture here is meant the total ways of a people's life. While the Mosaic tradition is more disposed to the culture of equity and social egalitarianism, the Davidic-royal tradition is dominated by class and social stratification.

5.4 The Deuteronomic Response to Social Inequality

The Deuteronomic Response to the phenomenon of social inequality can be discussed in the context of the two dominant traditions in ancient Israel analysed above, namely the Mosaic tradition and the Davidic-Zion tradition. The Mosaic tradition refers to the religious beliefs and legal stipulations which traces its roots to the laws given at Sinai as the basis of the covenant. This legal and fundamental assertion to obedience to the will of Yahweh in the law was characteristic of the mosaic tradition. These various legal codes are traced to Moses, the law giver, but are re-interpreted in the Deuteronomic code in the light of the 7th century BC in Israel to address the social conditions of the time. The Davidic royal tradition, on the other hand articulates its theological vision in terms of a God who faithfully abides and sustains on behalf of the present. Unlike the Mosaic tradition, the Davidic tradition is situated among the established (i.e. the political leaders and plutocrats). Hence it is also called the royal theology. Although the theme of inviolability of Zion is entrenched in the Davidic tradition which failure to obey will bring punishment, this does not necessarily terminate the covenant with Israel. In the

view of Xaxier L. Dufour the traditions transmit themselves in literary forms. While the Mosaic tradition is expressed mainly in the laws and cultic rites the Davidic theology expresses itself in poetry, ie, the Hymns and Psalms. (See Ps. 89^{20-21, 22-29}). From the Deuteronomic texts investigated it is evident that both theological and sociological interests of the editors were at play. These sociological interests are what might properly be described as the Deuteronomic response to the phenomena of social inequalities. These include:

(1) Advocacy for intervention on behalf of the marginal groups. (Transfer of the use of the tithe from that of being solely priestly controlled to communal use) The programme advocated for by the Deuteronomic regulations in the text segments is one that transfers the use of the tithe from that of being solely priestly controlled to communal use in which the marginal groups were consistently included. As a programme which finds its roots in the ideology of the prophetic tradition and from which the Deuteronomist draws its inspiration the use of the Tithe was taken from the cultic to sociological function.

(2) Policies of empowerment for the marginal groups through mutual aid system (i.e, the law of gleaning) The law of gleaning which allows the marginal groups to take what is purposely left in the field (farms) by the Israelites was meant to address the phenomenon of social inequality. Such similar cultural practices existed in the past among the Urhobo people in which individual may satisfy hunger by eating from the farm produce of others out of genuine need. This practice was not considered stealing as the individual was not meant to harvest other people's products enmass but to satisfy immediate hunger. This is an equivalence of the law of gleaning. This cultural practice in

today's Urhobo society has been completely forgotten as a result of changing economic and social values that emphasises wealth acquisition and differentials.

(3) Social justice for all, and

(4) Tradition building process.

The Deuteronomic Responses find expression in the following ways: The need of intervention for the marginal group was the deuteronomist purpose for the constant inclusion of the marginal groups in the tithe regulations and the celebrations of the major feasts in Israel with particular emphasis on material provisions for them. The recurring phrases, '*You shall not forsake the Levites who is within your town*' (Deut.14²⁷) '*And the Levite; because he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the sojourner the fatherless, and the widow who are within your towns, shall come and eat and be filled*' (Deut.14²⁹) are seen as indices of the Deuteronomic advocacy for intervention for the marginal groups in 7th century Israel. The aim of the call for intervention expressed in the law of gleaning belongs to ancient Israelite cultic tradition but became institutionalized by the Deuteronomic regulations as a means of empowering the marginal groups. Older materials are interpreted by the Deuteronomic editor to suit his motive.

Secondly, the advocacy for fair justice in Israel judicial system occupied a primary place in the Deuteronomic texts. This advocacy was directed at providing security for the marginal groups and in the general spectrum of the society. The phraseology associated with this was, '*You shall not pervert the justice due to the sojourner, or to the fatherless, or to take a widow's garment in pledge*' (Deut.24¹⁷) also occurring in Deut.16^{18ff} and soliciting for appointment of Judges in the cities were intended to address the emergence of social inequality in Israel's new social structure.

This was because these groups, ie, the marginal groups which consistute a larger segment of the population and powerless were often ignored by the nobility of the society. However, within Israel's society, the voices of these voiceless were not often heard but find their expression in the poetic literature and the prophetic tradition:

How long will you judge unjustly, and show partiality to the wicked. Give justice to the weak and the fatherless, maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute (Ps. 82²⁻³ cf Isa.12²⁻²⁴, Jer.7⁵⁻⁷)

The objections against injustice and oppression of the weak in the society constantly pointed to the response emerging from the Deuteronomic school.

The Deuteronomist also employs the Tradition building and Auditing process. For example the importance of the Exodus Tradition is taken from its purely historical dimension into theological and sociological perspectives. The phrase, *'but you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this'* (Deut.24¹⁸) is constantly incorporated in the text as concluding remarks without reference to its relationship to the theme of the pericope. This is an example of the tradition building process which the deuteronomist employs and interpretes for his didactic aim. Israel's society went through structural and functional social changes. Prior to the introduction of the monarchy, Israel has been organized in the tribal system.²⁴⁸ This social structure was predominantly egalitarian and the way of life was both nomadic and semi nomadic. However by the 7th century BC there had occured a shift. This shift in the social setting of Israelite society also gave rise to the shift in class configuration. Within Israelite society there emerged the landed property owners and the landless. According to Gottwald, there emerged in Israel the

²⁴⁸ *Encyclopedia Judaica* vol. 8. 1972. Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House. p.611.

dominant-tribute imposing class which consisted of the political elite, (native or foreign) the landholding merchants and small manufacturing elites who benefited from state power. On the other hand there was the dominated-tribute bearing class²⁴⁹ which consisted of peasants, pastoralists, artisans unskilled workers etc.

Although biblical texts are not all out to provide a historically chronological record of social change, the narratives as well as the legal codes were written to reflect the phenomenon and how the faith of Israel accommodated or rejected social inequality. Biblical accounts either praise or critique the new social system under the monarchical government.

5.5. Conclusion

The evidences provided in the investigation into the rise of social inequality suggest that the two traditions in Israel had different articulations towards the phenomenon. The Mosaic tradition to which the Deuteronomic School belongs considers advocacy on behalf of the marginal groups as a fundamental component of the faith of Israel established by the covenant. The Davidic Tradition unlike the Mosaic Tradition, on the other hand, does not protest status and power but acclaims kingship as divinely ordained. Wealth and power is from God. It does not also critique the social system which gives recognition to the position of the King or questions its excesses; matters which the Prophetic-Mosaic tradition practically opposed. This Tradition asserts the inviolability of Zion, the City of David making the position of the King secure. God inhabits Zion (Ps.65¹; 89³²⁻³⁷) and gives credibility to the King. This ideology of prosperity of the Kingship deriving from the divine, acclaimed by the operators of the

²⁴⁹ The phrase 'Dominated-Tribute Bearing' is an expression of the social status of the less privileged who work for the owners of capital of production, in the case of Israel which was mainly land'.

Davidic Tradition, often led to the negation of the covenant stipulations and neglect of the marginalised in the society consciously or unconsciously.

CHAPTER SIX

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data collected for this study. The analysis is presented in two parts: Part ‘A’ presents the analysis of the demographic data of the respondents while Part ‘B’ presents the analysis in the order of the research questions. It also examines the similarities that exist between the Urhobo society and ancient Israel of the 7th century B.C. The similarities include the social structure of the societies, the trajectory in the rise of affluence and a description of the social status of the marginal groups. The differences include the nature of the population and the form of transmission and preservation of legal documents in both societies.

6.2: Demographic Data Analysis

Table 1: Distribution of the Respondents based on Gender, Age and Marital Status

Variable		F	%
GENDER			
Respondents	Male	151	50.3
Respondents	Female	128	42.7
	No indication	21	7.0
	Total	300	100.0
AGE COHORT OF THE RESPONDENTS			
Less than	21	60	20.0
	21 – 35	118	39.3
36	-	45	20.0

46	-	55	24	8.0
56	-	65	17	5.7
66	-	70	1	0.3
71	and	above	9	3.0
No indication			11	3.7
Total			300	100.0
Marital Status				
Spinster			79	26.3
Bachelor			69	23.0
Married			120	40.0
Divorced			6	2.0
Divorced but remarried			3	1.0
Widow			2	0.7
Widower			2	0.7
No indication			19	6.3
Total			300	100.0

Source: Field survey 2009-2010

Table 1 reveals that 300 respondents were involved in this study, out of which (50.3%) were male and (42.7%) were female. Only (7%) of these respondents failed to disclose their gender. From this, it could be submitted that both male and female are well represented in this study, hence the result could not be said to be gender biased.

The table also shows the age distribution of the respondents: about (39%) of them were between 21 and 35 years of age. This age group forms the largest proportion of the respondents. (20%) of them were less than 21 years and (20%) were between 36 and 45 years of age. (8%) of them were between 46 and 55 years of age, (5.7%) were from 56 to 65 years, (3%) were 70 years or above. Only (3.7%) failed to indicate their age cohort.

The implication of this is that the respondents were distributed across different age groups; the adolescent, youth and old people were represented in the study.

It is also indicated in the table that the largest proportion of the respondents were married (40%); spinster is about (26%) while bachelor is (23%). There is (2%) divorced, (1%) divorced but re-married, about (1%) each for widow and widower. Some (6.3%) failed to indicate their marital status.

TABLE 2: Nature and Forms of Social Inequalities in Urhobo

S/N	STATEMENT	SD	D	A	SA	MEAN	STD. D
1	Social inequality exists as part of Urhobo culture	23 (7.7)	56 (18.7)	53 (17.7)	158 (52.7)	3.09	1.15
2	In Urhobo culture men are more highly respected than women	10 (3.3)	21 (7.0)	115 (38.3)	154 (51.3)	3.38	0.76
3	Family descent determines the social status of individual	9 (3.0)	57 (19.0)	70 (23.3)	159 (53.0)	3.23	1.0
4	There are privileges some people enjoy which others do not enjoy	10 (3.3)	6 (2.0)	118 (39.3)	164 (54.7)	3.44	.75
5	Social inequality has become more pronounced in recent times	11 (3.7)	38 (12.7)	68 (22.7)	167 (55.7)	3.20	1.13
6	Women do not enjoy equal privileges as men, gender brings with it unequal privileges in society	24 (8.0)	12 (4.0)	92 (30.7)	171 (57.0)	3.36	.91
7	There was a time when Urhobo society was egalitarian	66 22.0	70 23.3	50 16.7	94 31.3	2.44	1.31

Source: Field survey 2009-2010

Table 2 shows that the respondents agree with the following statements: that social inequality is part of Urhobo culture ($X = 3.09$); that in Urhobo culture men are

highly respected than women ($X = 3.38$); that family descent determines the social status of individual ($X = 3.23$); that there are some privileges some enjoy and others do not ($X = 3.44$); that social inequalities have been more pronounced in recent times ($X = 3.20$) and that women do not enjoy equal privileges as men ($X = 3.36$). The high percentage of those who disagree that the Urhobo society was once egalitarian suggests that the egalitarian values which once dominated the Urhobo society was becoming obsolete.

Therefore it could be concluded that in Urhobo, there are inequalities between men and women, some family are more equal than others and some individuals are placed higher than others.

Table 3: Evidences of Social Inequalities

S/N	STATEMENT	SD	D	A	SA	MEAN	STD. D
8	As a result of social inequality women do not break kolanut at social gathering	7 (2.3)	4 (1.3)	140 (46.7)	149 (49.7)	3.44	.64
9	As a result of social inequality certain chieftaincy titles are restricted to men	23 (7.7)	50 (16.7)	127 (42.3)	100 (33.3)	3.01	.90
10	There are no women who are traditional priestesses	97 (32.3)	88 (29.3)	52 (17.3)	51 (17.0)	2.11	1.15
11	There are religious taboos that forbid women's participation in certain religious ceremonies	31 (10.3)	30 (10.0)	106 (35.3)	133 (44.3)	3.14	.97
12	Chieftaincy titles are reserved for the rich	63 (21.0)	39 (13.0)	77 (25.7)	121 (40.3)	2.85	1.16

Source: Field survey 2009-2010

The respondents agree that: women do not break kolanut in social gathering in Urhobo ($X = 3.44$); certain chieftaincy titles are for men in Urhobo ($X = 3.01$); women

are forbidden from taking part in some religious ceremonies ($X = 3.14$) and chieftaincy title is reserved for the rich ($X = 2.85$). Though the respondents agree that there are women who are traditional priestesses ($X = 2.11$) the first three statements show clearly there are evidences that social inequalities exist in Urhobo society.

Table 4: Widows and Their Social Status in Urhobo

S/N	STATEMENT	SD	D	A	SA	ME AN	STD. D
13	Widows suffer neglect among the Urhobo (Udu) people	71 (23.7)	54 (18.0)	58 (19.3)	115 (38.3)	2.7 1	1.22
14	Family members deny the Widows right of inheritance	38 (12.7)	52 (17.3)	79 (26.3)	131 (43.7)	3.0 1	1.06
15	Some harsh form of treatment is still meted out to widows	18 (6.0)	52 (17.3)	82 (27.3)	148 (49.3)	3.2 0	.93
16	Urhobo inheritance system protects the widow	47 (15.7)	123 (41.0)	41 (13.7)	84 (28.0)	2.5 1	1.11
17	Urhobo culture of care giving is waning	19 (6.3)	80 (26.7)	59 (19.7)	137 (45.7)	3.0 1	1.06

Source: Field survey 2009-2010

Table 4 shows that the respondents agree that: widow suffer neglect among Udu people ($X = 2.71$); they are denied the right of inheritance ($X = 3.01$); some harsh form of treatment is meted on them ($X = 3.2$) and that culture of giving care is waning ($X = 3.01$). Many respondents disagreed that Urhobo inheritance system protects the widow (56.7%).

Table 5: Orphan and Their Social Status In Urhobo

S/N	STATEMENT	SD	D	A	SA	MEAN	STD. D
18	Urhobo family system protects the orphan	27 (9.0)	96 (32.0)	46 (15.3)	131 (43.7)	2.94	1.06
19	Despite the Urhobo family system orphans suffer neglect	14 (4.7)	60 (20.0)	74 (24.7)	151 (50.3)	3.20	.94
20	Care for orphans is not as it used to be	17 (5.7)	21 (7.0)	86 (28.7)	173 (57.7)	3.36	.91
21	Economic factors are responsible for plight of orphans	21 (7.0)	45 (15.0)	101 (33.7)	125 (41.7)	3.05	1.04
22	The Deuteronomic injunction to care for Orphans is not applicable to the Urhobo social structure	43 (14.3)	120 (40.0)	31 (10.3)	91 (30.3)	2.47	1.21

Table 5 reveals that the respondents agree that: Urhobo family system protects an orphan ($X = 2.94$), though many respondents disagree (41%); despite the Urhobo family system, orphan suffers neglect ($X = 3.2$); care for orphan is not as it used to be ($X = 3.36$); economic factors have contributed to the plights of orphans ($X = 3.05$) and that the Deuteronomic injunction to care for orphans is not applicable in Urhobo social structure ($X = 2.47$), though, many respondents disagree to this last statement (54.3%).

Table 6: Strangers and Their Social Status in Urhobo

S/N	STATEMENT	SD	D	A	SA	MEAN	STD. D
23	Strangers are highly discriminated against in Urhobo culture	112 (37.3)	64 (21.3)	34 (11.3)	90 (30.0)	2.34	1.26
24	Strangers are given protection in Urhobo culture	32 (10.7)	65 (21.7)	67 (22.3)	124 (41.3)	2.86	1.18
25	Difference between Strangers and indigenes is not pronounced in Urhobo	43 (14.3)	94 (31.3)	55 (18.3)	103 (34.3)	2.69	1.14
26	Strangers suffer from insecurity of life	102 (34.0)	84 (28.0)	38 (12.7)	63 (21.0)	2.12	1.21
27	Strangers can aspire to hold the highest title of the such as Ovie	189 (63.0)	53 (17.7)	25 (8.3)	27 (9.0)	1.59	1.00

Source: Field survey 2009-2010

Table 6 reveals that the respondents agree that strangers are given protection in Urhobo ($X = 2.86$) and that difference between strangers and indigenes is not pronounced in Urhobo ($X = 2.69$). but they disagreed with the following: that strangers are highly discriminated against in Urhobo ($X = 2.34$); that strangers suffer insecurity of life ($X = 2.12$) and that stranger can aspire to hold the highest title of king in Urhobo ($X = 1.59$).

Table 7: Causes and Effects of Social Inequalities on Urhobo Society

S/N	STATEMENT	SD	D	A	SA	MEAN	STD. D
28	Social inequality is caused by the social hierarchical structure	32 (10.7)	31 (10.3)	51 (17.0)	176 (58.7)	3.17	1.18
29	Desire for fame is the cause of so much of social inequality	6 (2.0)	57 (19.0)	104 (34.7)	123 (41.0)	3.08	.99
30	There is belief in predestination as cause of social inequality	16 (5.3)	60 (20.0)	52 (17.3)	147 (49.0)	2.93	1.29
31	Social inequality is a major cause of social unrest in Urhobo society	59 (19.7)	66 (22.0)	71 (23.7)	89 (29.7)	2.53	1.24
32	As a result of social inequality the less privileged lack basic necessity such as food, clothing and housing	27 (9.0)	60 (20.0)	100 (33.3)	113 (37.7)	3.00	.97
33	Social inequality also results in disharmony in families	26 (8.7)	35 (11.7)	98 (32.7)	141 (47.0)	3.18	.95

Source: Field survey 2009-2010

Below is the graphic design of the results of the table on the causes and effects of social inequality on the Urhobo Society

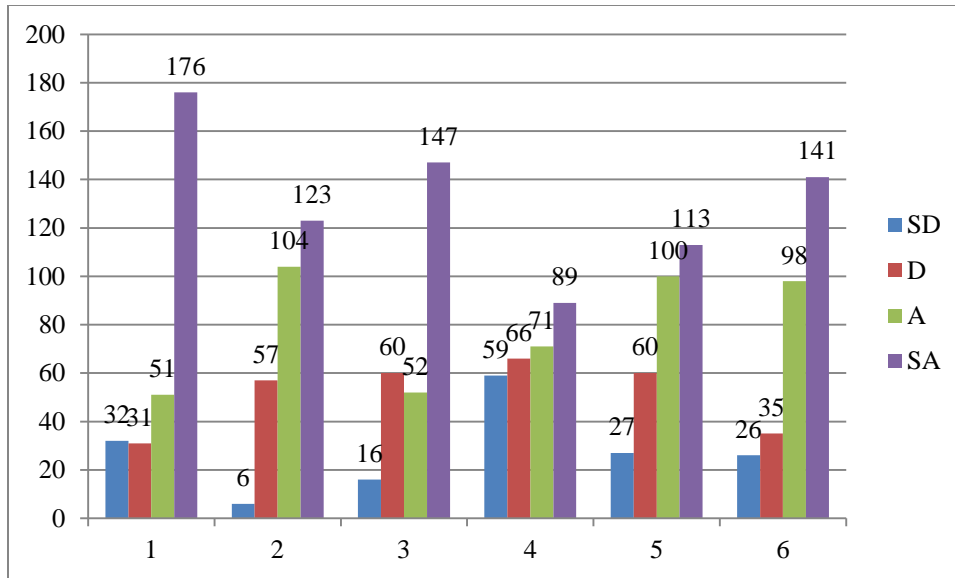


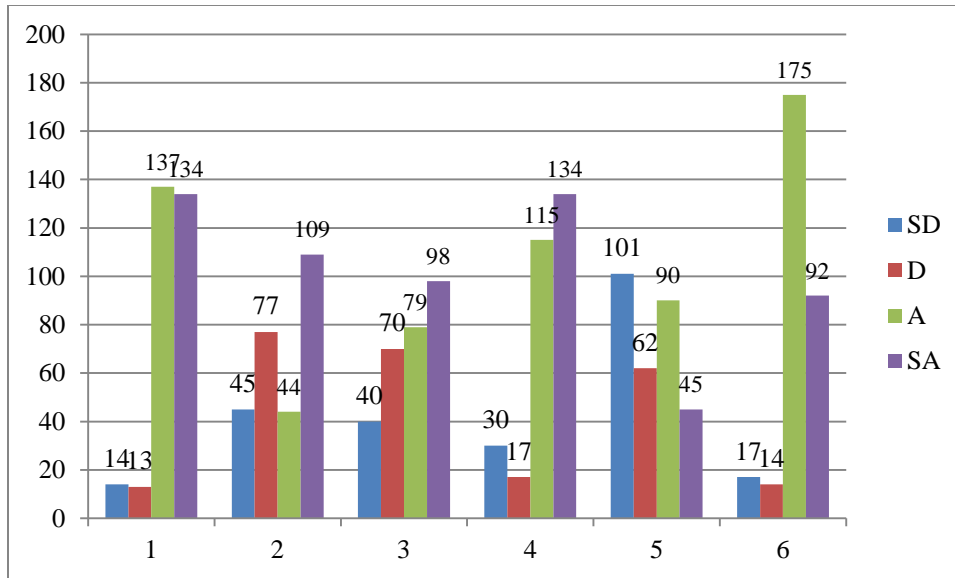
Table 7 shows that the respondents agree with the following statements: that hierarchical structure of the society is a cause of social inequalities ($X = 3.17$); that desire for fame is a major determining factor to social inequalities ($X = 3.08$); that predestination is believed among the Urhobo people to be the cause of social inequalities ($X = 2.93$); that social inequality is the major cause of unrest in Urhobo society ($X = 2.53$); that social inequalities made the less privileged lack basic necessities ($X = 3.0$) and that social inequalities lead to disharmony in the families ($X = 3.18$). Therefore while the social hierarchical structure of the society, desire for fame by individuals and predestination beliefs make social inequalities inevitable, social unrest, lack of basic necessities to the less privileged ones and disharmony of families are effects of social inequality.

Table 8: Solutions to Social Inequalities in Urhobo

S/N	STATEMENT	SD	D	A	SA	ME AN	STD. D
37	Biblical studies has a role to play in addressing problem of social inequality	14 (4.7)	13 (4.3)	137 (45.7)	134 (44.7)	3.2 9	.81
38	Alienation is against the teaching of Deuteronomy	45 (15.0)	77 (25.7)	44 (14.7)	109 (36.3)	2.5 6	1.33
39	Urhobo culture is similar to the practices of Ancient Israel	40 (13.3)	70 (23.3)	79 (26.3)	98 (32.7)	2.7 0	1.18
40	There are areas where the Bible can correct the Urhobo culture	30 (10.0)	17 (5.7)	115 (38.3)	134 (44.7)	3.1 5	1.00
41	It is the responsibility of Government alone to solve the problems emanating from social inequality	101 (33.7)	62 (20.7)	90 (30.0)	45 (15.0)	2.2 5	1.10
42	Christianity has a role to play in resolving the problems associated with social inequality	17 (5.7)	14 (4.7)	175 (58.3)	92 (30.7)	3.1 3	.79

Source: Field survey 2009-2010

Below is a graphic representation of responses to solutions to social inequality in Urhobo society, showing the relevance of the Deuteronomic texts to the phenomenon of social inequality.



Column 1 represents the respondents' view about the proposition that biblical studies have a significant role to play in addressing the phenomenon of social inequality.

Table 8 and the bar chart above show the relevance of the Deuteronomic Response in addressing the phenomenon of social inequality in the Urhobo society. From the data evidences, the respondents agree with the following statements: that biblical studies could address the problems associated with social inequalities ($X = 3.29$) in the society and that alienation is against the teaching of Deuteronomy ($X = 2.56$); that Urhobo culture is similar to that of ancient Israel ($X = 2.70$); biblical principles can correct some of the Urhobo culture ($X = 3.15$) and hence Christian religion has role to play in solving the problem of social inequalities ($X = 3.13$). The respondents disagree that it is the responsibilities of the government alone to solve the problems identified with the phenomenon of social inequality in the Urhobo society ($X = 2.25$).

Therefore, the following are the solutions to social inequalities among the Urhobo people: Studying and applying biblical injunctions such as identified in the Deuteronomic

response; avoid alienation of the marginal groups; Christians should play the roles expected of them in addressing the problems of social inequalities and that Government should not be left alone to solve the problems.

Table 9: Influence of Gender on The Responds of the Participants as Revealed by t-test

Variables	N	Mean	Std. D	T	Df	Sig.	Remark
RESPONDENTS							Not. Sig.
PERCEPTIONS: male	151	122.0	12.16	1.21	277	.226	
Female	128	120.31	10.97				

Table 9 reveals that there is no significant difference between male and female respondents in the general perceptions of social inequalities in Urhobo society ($t = 1.21$; $df = 277$; $P > 0.05$). Therefore, gender of the respondents has no influence on their perceptions.

Table 10a: Influence of Age of Respondents on their Perceptions about Social Inequalities in Urhobo as Revealed by Analysis of Variance

Age cohort (yrs)	N	Mean	Std. D
20 and below	60	118.75	13.99
21-35	118	121.06	10.67
36-45	60	123.00	10.11
46-55	24	124.29	10.85
56-65	17	120.06	12.85
66-70	1	121.00	0.0
70 and above	9	121.78	14.28
Missing	11	127.73	8.97
Total	300	121.45	11.56

Table 10b

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1260.875	7	180.125	1.360	.222
Within Groups	38677.472	292	132.457		
Total	39938.347	299			

Table 10a and b reveal that there is no significant difference among different age cohort in their general perceptions about social inequalities in Urhobo society ($F_{(7,292)} = 1.36$; $P > 0.05$). Therefore, age has no significant influence on the perceptions of the participants.

Summary of Demographic Data

Distribution of the Respondents based on frequency of Gender, Age, and Marital status

Variable	Freq	%	Age	Freq	%	Marital Status	Freq.	%
Gender								
Male Resp.	151	50.3	Less than 21	60	20.0	Spinsters	79	26.3
Female Resp.	128	42.7	21-35	118	39.3	Bachelors	69	23.0
None	21	7.0	36-45	60	20.0	Married	120	40.0
Total	300	100.0	45-55	24	8.0	Divorced	6	2.0
			56-65	17	5.7	Divorced but remarried	3	1.0
			66-70	1	6.3	Widows	2	0.7
			71 and above	9	3.0	Widower	2	0.7
			No indication	11	3.7	No indication	19	6.3
			Total	300	100.0	Total	300	100.0

6.3 Evidences of Social Inequality in Urhobo Society (Cultural and Social Evidences)

Social inequality has been observed as inherent in every society globally. This corroborates M.Haralambos assertion that the egalitarian society has remained a dream. This is also true of the view that the Urhobo society is egalitarian. This view has also changed in the course of the historical and social development of the people. G.G.Darah observes that in the Urhobo consciousness, the phenomenon of wretchedness, mortality, witchcraft and childlessness constitute four contradictions in Urhobo life. The essence of Urhobo common prayer embodies these four items. In all occasions for prayer, supplication to the gods and ancestors, as always includes a request for children, material prosperity, and long life, in that order. These contradictions, he says, are rooted in underdevelopment that exists in Urhoboland and traceable to the incursion of colonialism with its capitalist structures. Poverty and cultural practices continue to play a predominant role in the cause of the phenomenon of social inequality in the Urhobo society. Writing on the social status of women in the Urhobo society, R.E.Otite observes,

‘inspite of their rapid educational and economical attainments, Urhobo women are still generally perceived today as unequal to men in terms of power, authority wealth and prestige...Urhobo women still face many disabilities in their patriarchal social environment. Women disadvantages in areas of Urhobo life include restricted access to land or property or its ownership inheritance from a late husband....’²⁵⁰

Thus the social status of the woman in the Urhobo society has been defined by cultural factors. In rare cases they may take titles but they are usually not made the *Otota* (ie,

²⁵⁰ R.E.Otite. 2006. *The Urhobo Woman*. Ibadan: Gold Press Ltd.p.131

spokesperson) of the community. They cannot be head of the community either because of the patriarchal nature of the Urhobo society. In the Urhobo culture the woman does not break the *colanut* in the gathering of men and women. These little but subtle differences are evidences of social inequality in the Urhobo setting.

Aside the cultural and traditional practices which perpetuated inequality in the Urhobo society, the social structure and social institutions support social inequality. For example the Urhobo political structure of the Urhobo society is hierarchical. The *Ovie* (king) is the highest political head in his kingdom. He is obeyed just as he respects the culture of his people. He rules in council. Such a king in-council represents the highest organ of government in the kingdom.²⁵¹ Next are the members of the council or councilors comprising the *Otota* (spokesman) and the *Ohovworen* (chief or chiefs) The spokesman is chosen as a result of his wisdom, convincing and fearless arguments, alert mind, logical reasoning, influence and prestige. He presents matters on behalf of the kingdom.²⁵²

The Urhobo people's view about the phenomenon of social inequality is often expressed in their philosophical view about the world. This is expressed and reflected in the names of people and things, proverbs, songs, prayers and incantations. For example the name *Obukohwo* (which literarily means the support one has) points out that the strength of an individual resides in the support he or she gets from the family relations or friends. Such names are given as a reflection of an individual's social status or to state the need to acknowledge the role of family and friends in rising to position of influence in life. The people's perception of the phenomenon of social inequality is conceived not

²⁵¹ O.Otite "Ed." .2003. *The Urhobo people*. Ibadan: Shaneson C.I, Ltd. p.336.

²⁵² *Ibid.*

only in the idealist but also in metaphysical terms. There is predestination (Throne of creation) a belief that is strongly held among the Urhobo people. According to this belief, after one's image is moulded out of the clay by *Oghene*, the Supreme Deity, one kneels down before this throne to say with one's mouth what one wishes for *Urhoro* life. It is believed that what one confesses or desires at this point become his measure in life.²⁵³ This fatalism is expressed in proverbs and songs. For example this song states the social status of the wretched and the attitude of the people.

Gbogidi, you are warned when a pauper behaves with self-control he lives in peace. If he causes trouble he exposes himself to public censure. Temperance quells a fight when one lacks financial means. *Gbogidi* listen to this anecdote – whenever the poor goes to the rich for a loan I-have-just-completed-costly-project, is a favourite excuse of the rich. By which he deceive the poor even when no project has been undertaken. It is the stigma of a miser that the rich seek to evade by the excuse. He would say kinsmen never pay back loans. That he has learned a lesson from this. The poor is always misadvised to leave a house uncompleted during dry season. Even when rain threatens they tell him it will not fall....²⁵⁴

The thoughts expressed here are pertinent to the theme of social inequality.

6.4 Effects of Social Inequality in the Urhobo Society

Several effects of social inequality have become characteristic of the Urhobo society in recent times which makes the Deuteronomic response to the phenomenon relevant. While desire for fame is a common pursuit in life, the inordinate desire for fame has become an aggravated phenomenon in the social system in Urhobo society. This is impacted negatively by the consciousness of social inequality which tend to marginalise

²⁵³ See: O.Otite. *The Urhobo people*.

²⁵⁴ G.G.Darah. 2005. *Battle of Songs: Udje Tradition of the Urhobo*. Ibadan: Malthouse Press. Ltd. p.180.

the sector of the society. 23.7% and 29.7% of the respondents consequently affirm that the phenomenon of social inequality is a major cause of social unrest in the society today. The effects include disharmony in families and communities. Rather than the previous egalitarian less hostile communal life characteristic of the pre-colonial era of the Urhobo society, the incursion of the colonial capitalist structure brought social changes in the society aggravated social imbalance. This has negatively impacted on the values cherished by the society such as respect to elders, recognition and respect to the hierarchical order of society. The effect of social inequality is also socio-economic. The lack of access to basic necessities of life by the less privileged in the society to such needs as food, clothing, housing etc are common experience of the marginal group in the Urhobo society. This experience which is given a spiritual interpretation makes people resort to the theory of predestination. This is the belief that a person's destiny was determined before being born physically. While this is indisputably a strong belief among the Urhobo people, it denies the reality of the existence of socially and conventionally manipulated inequality which the Deuteronomic response draws attention. The Deuteronomic response draws attention to the need to employ both cultural and legal regulations in addressing the phenomenon which keep part of the society in anterior position. See the data evidences from the respondents:

6.5 Similarities between Israel and Urhobo Society

Similarities exist between the Urhobo society and Ancient Israel in the social structure of the societies. By the social structure of a given society reference is made to those regular and repetitive aspects of the interactions between members of the society. This interaction is determined by the culture and customs in the society, namely such that

encourages freedom of cross interpersonal relationship and those that restricts the relationships. The extent to which people interact in a society is determined by the class structure. Urhobo society is hierarchically structured. This hierarchy includes the King, the Chiefs, and the populace. Differences also exist in age groups which are divided into the elders, aged women and the youths. Leadership in Urhobo is divided into two types namely; gerontocracy (i.e. leadership by the elders) and the plutocracy (ie leadership by the wealthy) The latter, i.e. leadership by the wealthy became pronounced due to recent social and economic activities. G.G.Darah opines;

The sudden rise to affluence of many Urhobo merchants at the time was greatly facilitated by a programme of Nigerianisation of certain economic activities embarked upon by the military regime in the early seventies. This opportunity as well as a thriving smuggling trade during the war transformed smaller retailers to big speculators in real estate-branch of business made the more lucrative by the increased demand for housing at the time. The achievements of the Urhobo *nouveaux riches* provided ready material for the panegyric musicians. Presently, there is a kind of competition amongst the musicians for big name to proclaim in song.²⁵⁵

This rise in affluence created a dichotomy in Urhobo social structure which prior to this time did not draw attention of the song vocalists. With the pronounced effects of the phenomenon of social inequality created by the rise in affluence amongst which were disparity in standard of living, housing and education the response was the introduction of panegyric songs. These songs-praises however in most cases failed to give attention to the moral characters of those who were involved but significant in the songs is the lament of the social conditions of those not well established financially. Thus from an egalitarian

²⁵⁵ G.G.Darah. 1985. The Political-Economic factor in Urhobo song-poetry, in, Georg M.Gugelberger (ed) *Marxism & African Literature*. London: James Currey Ltd. pp.175-194.

social outlook the Urhobo society became a stratified social structure, a situation which G.G.Darah himself attests to²⁵⁶. This situation can be compared to the trajectory in rise of affluence in ancient Israel with the attendant problems. As A.R.Ceresko puts it:

One practice that particularly irked Amos was the accumulation of properties into large estates by wealthy individuals and families. One of the foundation stones of the socio-economic order under the tribal confederation had been the possession by each extended family of its own dwelling and plot of land sufficient to provide the basic necessities of life to its members. In addition to this were provisions for mutual aid and support among the extended families of a clan, among the tribes themselves within the larger confederation. Israel's foundational vision had been that of a people joined together in the common project of building a just and peaceful community guided by and animated by their covenant loyalty to their common God Yahweh.²⁵⁷

This change was brought about by the incursion of the monarchy and the commercial system that was characteristic of the settled life in the Canaanite cities and villages. The outcome was social discrimination, marginalization and exploitation. This has appositely been inferred in the view of A.R.Ceresko:

Motivated by greed and a lust for power, and intent on aping the elegant and arrogant trappings of the court and ruling classes of imperial powers like Assyria, the nobility and rich merchant classes of the northern kingdom ignored the covenant obligations towards their fellow Israelite. Instead of low or no-interest loans to help a family through a period of economic hardship brought on by drought,

²⁵⁶ This view was expressed by Prof. G.G.Darah during my personal interview held with him in the course of the research.

²⁵⁷ A.R.Ceresko. 2001. *The Old Testament: A Liberation Perspective*. Bangalore: St Paul's Academy. p.242.

for example, they charge exorbitant interest rates, often 50 percent or more.²⁵⁸

The situation described above did not escape the notice of the prophetic school in Israel. The sharp and questionable economic practices which led to outright, unjust, and extortionist tactics were often condemned by the prophets (see Amos 8⁴⁻⁶) Thus the social condition of the marginal groups were constantly a matter of contention in the prophetic literature. The literary response directed against the phenomenon of social inequality was championed by the prophetic school which reprimanded the society against oppression of the marginal groups. This position is articulated by the 5th century prophet;

Then I will draw near to you for judgment, I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts (Mal.3⁵)

A comparative analysis of the social structure of Israel and Urhobo society shows similarities in the hierarchy comprising of The King, The Elders, and the Populace in both societies. The various personalities in the Urhobo society are seen as performing similar functions as in Israel's society. There is also a similarity in the trajectory of the rise of affluence in both societies.

6.6 Implications of the Deuteronomic Response for the Urhobo Culture

Clifford Gerentz defines culture as a system of inherited conceptions expressed in a symbolic form by means of which human beings communicates, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and their attitude towards life. The Deuteronomic

²⁵⁸ A.R.Ceresko.2001. *The Old Testament: A Liberation Perspective*. Bangalore: St Paul's Academy, p.242.

response to social inequality is significant to the Urhobo culture in that it is meant to reinforce the positive values inherent in the Urhobo culture, particularly the culture of care giving, while it serves to discourage traditions that are at variance with the Deuteronomic legal texts that advocates support for the marginal groups. For example discrimination against women, neglect of widows, class stratification which are associated in affluent societies are consistently upbraided by the prophetic tradition from which the Deuteronomic school drew its theology. While social status of a person may be tied to metaphysical factors (expressed in the Urhobo people philosophical view) one cannot deny the social and cultural forces that are responsible for the experience of social inequality. The Deuteronomic response to social inequality seeks to address fatalism in the Urhobo society.

6.6 (a) Social Implication

Society can be compared to an organism having different parts each functioning separately to make up the whole. This structural functionalism consideration treats societies as self contained social systems in which all elements and processes of social reality are intergrated and obtain their meaning.²⁵⁹ The structural function theory legitimizes and defends the status quo in the society. This however differs from the Marxist conflicts-theory which believes in concrete class struggle in the society. The view, however, that the entrenched social order in the society will be overthrown by a revolutionary action by the exploited class but has not is to show that history presumably is at a stand still.²⁶⁰ This does not however take away the reality communal clashes associated with inequality. Recent communal clashes in communities in the South West

²⁵⁹ Ankie M.M Hoogvelt. 1978. *The sociology of developing societies*. London: The Macmillian Press limited p.4.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

Nigeria where the study is situated are associated with socio-economic factors. The symbolic interaction advocacy inherent in the Deuteronomic response to social inequality is targeted at harmonious and peaceful society which were the driving forces of the Deuteronomic school in ancient Israel. The legal stipulation urges protection of the marginal groups (Orphans, widows, sojourners) as a means of producing a society devoid of exploitation and discrimination. A healthy society is where the weakest is protected.

6.6(b) Religious Implication

The Deuteronomic Response to social inequality has implications for the religious institution in the socio-cultural setting of the Urhobo people. The aim is to encourage the church and Faith Based Organizations (FBO) to engage in a pragmatic application of faith with practice. Faith and *Praxis* are essential to Transformation and development of any society. The Deuteronomic response therefore can be considered as a Biblical template for Christian missions in the society. The religious implication of the Deuteronomic response to social inequality in the Urhobo context is for the church and religious institutions to engage in intervention programmes on behalf of the marginalized groups, initiate advocacy through informed instruction and teaching that focuses on transforming cultural traits that are detrimental to society and to encourage values that are intadem with the legal provisions in the Deuteronomic code.

6.7 Conclusion

In this chapter there is a correspondence between the evidences provided in the Data and the importance of the Deuteronomic response to the Urhobo society. The cultural social and religious implications for the Urhobo society were identified.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY AND GENERAL CONCLUSION

7.1. Summary of the Study

The research began on the premise of the Deuteronomist's oft repeated quest for care for the marginal group in the chosen text segments (Deut 14²²⁻²⁹, 16^{9-12, 13-15}, 24^{17-18, 19-22}, 26¹²⁻¹⁵) which led to the assertion that social inequality was the *raison d'être* for such literary appeal. Although earlier scholarly investigations had touched on the authorship of Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic history, the deuteronomic texts which draw on older sources and interpret them in a new light, informed the quest for this investigation. The result of this study is the discovery of the two interests namely; (i) Interests on the laws and prophetic traditions, which represent the mosaic tradition and (ii) The Davidic - royal tradition which represents the interest of the highly placed in Israel's society. The presence of the marginal groups in Urhobo society also considers the study of relevance in the Urhobo Society. The study reveals that the Deuteronomic code (Deut 12-26) to which the text segments belong originated in the 7th century. A time in which Israel experienced great prosperity yet was characterised by gross corruption, idolatry, wealth differential, social insecurity and social inequality to which the marginal group became the most vulnerable. Using the theory of symbolic interaction the Deuteronomic texts were seen as advocating for empowerment and protection for the marginal group. Social inequality emerged in ancient Israel out of a social context that was previously egalitarian and nomadic. Later developments in Ancient Israel in the 7th century brought social classification due to money economy. The desire for status and acquisition of status in Israel's society led to disintegration of the Old tribal system and

communal living. Power struggle also characterised leadership of Israel leaving the marginal groups at their own fate.

The Urhobo Society, by the findings of this research, shows similarities in the trajectory of the phenomenon of social inequality. This study is relevant as a biblical contribution for addressing the problem of social inequality. Cultural practices, which discriminate along class and wealth strata in the society, are considered in the Deuteronomic perspective as anti-mosaic. Conflicts between Traditional title holders and youth in the communities which constitute a current trend asserts social inequality. Lack of access to basic necessities of life and denial of persons in low class to their right to life portends danger for a peaceful global society. Except social inequality is addressed the global community is heading for crises. This study serves as a model for the present day efforts of Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) whose programmes are intadem with the Deuteronomic approach to alleviate the effects of social inequality in society. Deuteronomy was advocating equality or consideration for the weak at the national level. This study of Urhobo people based on the advocacy of Dt speaks to communities, religious organisations and National Governments on the plight of the voiceless.

7.2. Evaluation of the Study

The study finds the Deuteronomic Response to the Phenomenon of social inequality relevant to the Urhobo society as well as in addressing the phenomenon in different communities in the Global community.

Among the findings are:

1. That the Deuteronomic code was a theological response to the social system in Ancient Israel, particularly in the 7th Century that was at variance with the ancient Mosaic tradition.

2. That the marginal groups in Israel were the concern of the Deuteronomic School, and that this advocacy became necessary in the light of 7th Century social changes.
3. That the two traditions in Israel namely, the Davidic tradition and Mosaic traditions have different articulations about the phenomenon of social inequality. While the one is protest, the other is protection of status.
4. That the Deuteronomist applied various social and religious regulations to address the problem of social inequality.
5. That there is a need to recognise the marginal group in the general spectrum of the society.
6. That social inequality is a global phenomenon, and is the cause of global and communal upheavals.
7. That there are striking similarities between the Urhobo people and ancient Israel
8. That the marginal groups Orphans, Strangers, Widows have common experience in Urhobo and Israel.
9. That there is a need to give support to the marginal group, ie voice to the voiceless.

7.3. Recommendations

In view of the above findings this research therefore makes the following recommendations.

- i. That, social and cultural systems which perpetuate social inequality, should be discouraged.
- ii. That since social inequality is concomitant to hierarchical structure of every society; the marginal groups should be given attention in the society.
- iii. That Churches and the Government have a responsibility to empower the less privileged.
- iv. That the Deuteronomic response to social inequality provides a benchmark for religious instructions for social life in Urhobo and in other communities.
- v. That the Deuteronomic response provides both religious and socio-cultural templates for addressing the impacts of social inequality in the Urhobo society.

7.4. General Conclusion

The advancement made in this study has been in two perspectives. First, it is in moving the Deuteronomic discourse from the redactional levels to the sociological interests of the redactors identified with the Deuteronomic School. This sociological interest of the Deuteronomists identified in the study focuses on the phenomenon of social inequality which became prevalent in the 7th century BC. Although earlier studies have investigated the various levels of redactions and interests the thesis gives consideration to the sociological interest of the Deuteronomic School and its ideology.

This was done through the textual-critical and form-critical analysis of the chosen text segments. Consistent inclusion of the Orphans, Widow and the Strangers in the use of the Tithes along the Levites is strangely introduced in Dt. as against the P-Source which recognises the Levites as part of the official echelons of Israelite society. The textual variants identified in the use of the critical apparatus also confirm the ideological interests of the Deuteronomic redactors.

The second dimension of advancement of the study is the relevance of the Deuteronomic Response to the Urhobo socio-cultural context in view of the similarities in experience of the marginal groups and in the social structure of both societies. Differences however exist in the religious configuration. Although there are responses also identified in Urhobo similar to ancient Israel such as widow inheritance, the law of gleaning (which has become obsolete in Urhobo agrarian society) the predicaments suffered by the marginal groups suggests the inadequacy of the responses thus requiring a paradigm shift necessary to address the phenomenon of social inequality and its associated problems. Since social inequality relates to social justice the Deuteronomic response is considered as a response to disadvantages suffered by individuals in the community which are naturally created or as a result of conventional factors. The study therefore provides the template for addressing problem of neglect suffered by the marginal groups as well as crimes and violence that are related to the phenomenon of social inequality.

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APPENDIX. I

QUESTIONNAIRE Department of Religious Studies Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan, Ibadan

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is intended to obtain information on the Implication of the Deuteronomic Response to Israelite Social Inequality in the Urhobo Social-Cultural and Religious Context being a postgraduate studies being carried out in the Department of Religious Studies of the University of Ibadan, for a Ph.D degree. The information required is purely for academic purpose. I therefore solicit for your valued co-operation by giving honest answers to the questions.

Thanks for your anticipated co-operation.

Yours faithfully,

Ven. Matthew O. Iyede

SECTION A

Demographic and Socioeconomic Information

Instruction: Please tick as appropriate.

1. **Sex:** Male [], Female []
2. **Age:** 20 and below [], 21-35 [], 36 – 45 [], 46 – 55 [], 56 – 65 [], 66 – 70 [], 70 and above []
3. **Academic Qualification:** Primary School [], Secondary School [], NCE/OND [], HND/Degree [], Postgraduate []
4. **Marital Status:** Spinster [], Bachelor [], Married [], Divorce [], Divorced but remarried [], Widow [], Widower []
5. **Social Status:** Civil servant [], Trader [], Farmer [], Artisan [], Unemployed [], Politician [], Chieftaincy title holder [], Orphan [], Businessman []

SECTION B

KEY: The following stands for

A = Agree; D = Disagree; SA = Strongly Agree; SD = Strongly Disagree

(A) Nature and Form of Social Inequality in Urhobo Social Structure

S/N	STATEMENT	A	SA	D	SD
1.	Social Inequality is part of Urhobo culture				
2.	In Urhobo culture men are more highly respected than women				
3.	Family descent determines the social status on individual				
4.	There are priviledges some people enjoy others do not				
5.	Social Inequality has become more pronounced in recent times				
6.	Women do not enjoy equal privileges as men				
7.	There was a time when Urhobo society was egalitarian				

(B) Evidences of Social Inequality

S/N	STATEMENT	A	SA	D	SD
8.	As a result of social inequality, women do not break Kolanut in social gathering				
9.	As a result of social inequality certain chieftaincy titles are restricted to men				
10.	There are no women who are traditional priestesses				
11.	There are religious taboos that forbid women's participation in certain religious ceremonies.				
12.	Chieftaincy title is reserved for the rich.				

(C) Widows and their Social Status in Urhobo

S/N	STATEMENT	A	SA	D	SD
13.	Widows suffer neglect among the Udu (Urhobo) people				
14.	Family members deny them right of inheritance				
15.	Some harsh form of treatment is still meted to widows				
16.	Urhobo inheritance system protects the widow				
17.	Urhobo culture of care giving is waning				

(D) Orphans and their Social Status in Urhobo

S/N	STATEMENT	A	SA	D	SD
18.	Urhobo family system protects an orphan				
19.	Despite the Urhobo family system orphans suffer neglect				
20.	Care for orphans is not as it used to be.				
21.	Economic factors are responsible for plights of orphans				
22.	The Deureronomic injunction to care for orphans is not applicable in Urhobo socio structure				

(E) Strangers and their Social Status

S/N	STATEMENT	A	SA	D	SD
23.	Strangers are highly discriminated against in Urhobo culture				
24.	Strangers are given protection in Urhobo culture				
25.	Difference between strangers and indigenes is not pronounced in Urhobo				
26.	Strangers suffer from insecurity of life				
27.	Can non-indigenes in Urhobo aspire to hold the highest title of king (Ovie) in the land?				

(F) Causes and Effects of Social Inequality on Urhobo Society

S/N	STATEMENT	A	SA	D	SD
28.	Social inequality is caused by the social hierarchical structure.				
29.	Desire for fame is the cause of so much of socio-economic inequality.				
30.	There is belief in predestination as cause of social inequality				
31.	Social inequality is a major cause of social unrest in Urhobo society.				
32.	As a result of social inequality, the less privileged lack basic necessities such as food, clothing and housing				
33.	Social inequality also results in disharmony in families.				

(G) Dressing Code and Occupation.

S/N	STATEMENT	A	SA	D	SD
34.	The dressing pattern among men and women in Urhobo suggests social inequality.				
35.	The western pattern of dressing does not apply to the Urhobo culture on dressing.				
36.	Social inequality exists also along occupation (professional) differences between men and women.				

(H) Solutions to Social Inequality

S/N	STATEMENT	A	SA	D	SD
37.	Biblical studies has the function of addressing problem of social inequality				
38.	Alienation is against the teaching of Deuteronomy				
39.	Urhobo culture is similar to practices of Ancient Israel				
40.	There are areas where the Bible can correct the Urhobo culture				
41.	It is the responsibility of the Government alone to solve the problem of social inequality.				
42.	Religion (Christianity) has role to play in resolving the problem of social inequality.				

Appendix II

ORAL INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS.

1. Do the Urhobo people understand the concept of social inequality?
2. Do the Urhobos accept the concept of social inequality as part of society structure?
3. How does the culture of the Urhobo people accommodate the social status of widows, orphans and strangers?
4. Do the Urhobo people have songs and proverbs that reflect the Urhobo philosophy about social inequality?
5. Do all widows, orphans and strangers suffer neglect and deprivation in Urhobo socio-cultural setting?
6. What are the common experience of the marginal groups in Urhobo
7. Are there cultural provisions addressing the socio-economic status of the identified marginal groups.
8. Has the Church been adequately involved in addressing the problems associated with inequality?
9. In what ways does social status affect inter-personal relation in the communities.