

CONTRIBUTIONS of WOMEN in RURAL CHURCHES

Korovou Village, Tavua, Fiji Islands

Women in rural communities continues to play vital roles in the development and sustainable of local or rural churches in Fiji. This is common in many denominations serving in most communities across the country.

Our contribution from the Pacific (to this e-News) focus on the women of Navauvau, the village of Korovou, in the Tavua district within the province of BA. In this particular village they have 2 churches operating from within the village boundary – the Methodist Church in Fiji (largest church in the country) and the Sugar Pentecostal Church. Other members of the village either attended other Pentecostal or Para-Churches namely: the Assemblies of God, the United Pentecostal Church, the All Nations Christian Fellowship and the Christian Mission Fellowship International.

From all the churches mentioned it is evident that women contribute immensely to the growth and the sustainable of their home church with their contributions not only in time through prayers, volunteerism, mission and ministry (house to house visitation) most importantly through their financial contributions.

Most of the women within the Korovou Methodist Church are farmers or fisher-folks. These 5-6 days in a week daily task of visiting their farm or collecting crabs, prawns and fish from nearby rivers and swamps allow them

to provide for their families and also to contribute to the work of church in their community.



Women of the Korovou Methodist Church in Tavua in one of their women's fellowship services held every Tuesday from 10am to mid-day – each week

“Women in Korovou village are givers and they give gladly to the work of the church – says Temalesi DABEA, leaders of the Methodist women's fellowship. “We love to give and share what we have in abundance for the blessings of those who have less, or nothing” added DABEA. Every week, when we come together for fellowship and prayer, we also bring our financial contributions and also groceries so we can visit a family in need –

within the village, or someone who is sick, an elderly or a couple with a new born – that is what we do, and we believe that GOD's blessings is extended to us so we can reach out to others – that is the foundation of our faith – to love GOD and to love and care for others around us”.

DABEA added that apart from weekly activities, as many across the globe – women are excellent finance managers within their homes. Apart from farming and fishing to cater for daily needs – they also manage family contributions to the work of the church annually through the giving of tithe and levied contributions for the work of the church



Women of Korovou Methodist Church, with their photo taken after a fellowship outside the church

including stipends for church workers, visitation and ministry, financial needs of the children and the youth ministry, hosting of church meetings, contributions of rural parishes to the work of the church at the national level, ecumenical or inter-denominational work and partnerships at the grassroots in rural communities, financial contributions to the work of women in the church at the divisional and national level, and so forth.

Fisherwomen in Korovou Village, would collect around 20 – 40 Fijian dollars, and in a good day would collect around 80 – 100 Fijian dollar, from their catch. Individual women with their financial budgets and allocations decided, around 10 to 30 percent of their weekly income would be directed to their local churches, a personal commitment and conviction to the work and sustainable (administration work) of their home church.

Motto of the Methodist Women's Fellowship in Fiji – "To know Christ and to make him known".



Methodist church building at Korovou Village, within the Tavua Division of the Methodist Church in Fiji

Manasa Vatanitawake, March 2020