

**THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE PROMOTION
OF GIRLS' EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS IN PERI-URBAN SCHOOLS:**

A CASE STUDY OF CHINGOLA DISTRICT IN ZAMBIA

By

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DECLARATION

I declare that 'The role of Religious Education in the promotion of girls' educational rights in peri-urban schools: A case study of Chingola district in Zambia' is my own work and that all the sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this piece of work to God whose grace has been sufficient to see me through. I also dedicate this work to my children, Mwitwa, Mwango, Yande and Kapampa for their support and encouragement.

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the role of Religious Education in the promotion of girls' educational rights in peri-urban schools in Chingola district, Zambia. Fifteen schools were involved in the study and are all in the outskirts of Chingola town.

Data was collected through oral interviews, questionnaires and observations. Questionnaires were given to 260 girls ranging from grade 5 to 9. Five questionnaires were distributed to each class. Besides the school girls, six instructresses were interviewed on cultural beliefs and practices that hinder girls' progress in education. In addition, 15 teachers were also interviewed specifically to identify topics in Religious Education and their relevance in the promotion of self-confidence and self-esteem among girls as well as various teaching methods which promote learner-centredness.

The Religious Education curriculum at primary, secondary and college levels of education was evaluated to assess its relevance to the promotion of girls' education. Furthermore, contributions by some Non-Governmental Organisations and Religious Education towards gender equity in education and the Zambian government policy on gender were highlighted.

The findings of the study were in four categories namely: cultural beliefs and practices that hinder girls' progress in education, other problems affecting girl-child education besides cultural norms, freedom to enable girls to make their own constructive decisions, and topics in Religious Education which have the potential to promote self-confidence and self-esteem among the girls.

The cultural beliefs and practices highlighted were the initiation ceremonies, early pregnancies and early marriages. The other problems hindering girls' progress and advancement which came out vividly were long distances from home to school, poverty, boys jeering at girls when they got wrong answers and household chores.

Further findings identified topics in Religious Education and their relevance towards the promotion of girls' educational rights despite the influence of cultural beliefs and practices in the peri-urban schools. Some of the topics were 'Advantages of having a friend' taught in grade 1, 'Growing in responsibility' taught in grade 2, 'Bravery and courage' taught in grade 4, 'Happiness' taught in grade 5, 'Development and co-operation' taught in grade 6, 'Marriage and family life' taught in grade 7, 'How people make choices' taught in grade 8, 'The talents people have' taught in grade 8, 'How people develop' and 'How religion helps people' taught in grade 8, 'Freedom and community' as well as 'Ambitions and hopes' taught in grade 9.

In conclusion, the research study has revealed that Religious Education as a subject has the potential to promote the girls' educational rights and advancement in the peri-urban schools. Other subjects taught like Mathematics, Science and Technology are experimental subjects. They were rigid and cannot be bent while Religious Education leaves room for freedom in making concrete decisions. It deals also with emotions, values, and feelings. Mathematics imposes the facts without query.

ACRONYMS AND TERMS

ATR	-	African Traditional Religion
BDPFA	-	Beijing Declaration and Platform For Action
CCZ	-	Christian Council of Zambia
CDC	-	Curriculum Development Centre
CEDAW	-	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CWM	-	Council for World Mission
DFID	-	Department of International Development in Zambia
DSA	-	District Situation Analysis
EFA	-	Education For All
EOF	-	Educating Our Future
FAWE	-	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FAWEZA	-	Forum for African Women Educationalists in Zambia
MOE	-	Ministry Of Education
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organization
PAGE	-	Programme for the Advancement of Girls' Education
RE	-	Religious Education
RI	-	Religious Instruction
STD	-	Sexually Transmitted Disease
UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

- UNICEF - United Nations Children Fund
- ZATEC - Zambia Teacher Education Course
- ZNWL - Zambia National Women's Lobby

DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS AND TERMS

The definition of concepts and terms is in the context of the study entitled, 'The role of Religious Education in the promotion of girls' educational rights in peri-urban schools.'

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| ASSERTIVENES | - | Knowing what you want and why, and being able to take the necessary steps to achieve what you want within specific contexts. It can cover a wide variety of different situations, from a girl rejecting sexual advances of a fellow student or an older man to children convincing their parents that they need to continue with their education. |
| CODES | - | Refer to a life situation which is presented in an engaging way so as to focus attention on some problem or difficulty. |
| EARLY MARRIAGES | - | Getting married before attaining the right age of 18. |
| EDUCATING OUR FUTURE | - | This is the 1996 national policy document on Education which rightly identifies the problems in Zambian schools and recommends strategies to correct and improve the teaching and learning in the future. |
| GENDER EQUITY IN EDUCATION | - | Equality in education between girls and boys. |
| INITIATION RITES | - | Refer to the teachings given to girls at puberty stage, between 12 and 15 years of age. |

- LIFE-SKILLS
- These are the psychological and social skills that would enable one to cope with life and its stresses. They are part of the curriculum to prepare pupils for real living and to be more self-assured and self-reliant.
- PERI-URBAN
- A place that is out of the urban area but not far from town and not completely rural.
- PERI-URBAN SCHOOL
- A school that is different from a rural school in the sense that it might even be along the line of rail or near the main road, not very far from town, whereas a rural school is located far from town, in the remote area or inaccessible place where vehicles struggle to reach.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation discusses the role of Religious Education in the promotion of girls' educational rights in the peri-urban schools where there is no equity for girls in terms of access, retention and performance.

Religious Education is a compulsory school subject in Zambia from Grade one to nine at basic education level. However, at senior secondary school level, it is an optional subject. Zambian Religious Education (RE) syllabi have been revised in line with current educational reforms. Religious Education does not bring something new from outside which does not fit in with everyday experience. Religious Education is about making pupils, both girls and boys, aware of and sensitive to what is already going on in their lives. It is a process of understanding the religious dimension, which is implicit in the whole of human experience. As Karl Rahner has written, our teaching "is not really indoctrination with something alien from outside but the awakening of something within, as yet not fully understood but nevertheless really present" (Rahner, 2003: 4).

The main aim of this study is to assess the role Religious Education as a subject could play in promoting girl-child education and advancement in the peri-urban schools. Girls' education is a major human rights issue, and providing education to girls is the best investment a developing country can make. However, more than four decades after the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights was adopted, many countries, including Zambia, are still a long way from achieving education for all, including that of girls. The overarching aim of school education in Zambia is to promote the full and well-rounded development of the physical, intellectual, social, affective, moral and spiritual qualities of all pupils so that each can develop into a complete person for his or her own personal fulfillment and the good of

society (MOE, 1996: 5). This is how important education is. However, in the peri-urban schools, pupils, especially girls, still require a lot of sensitisation for them to reach a stage where they can value and appreciate education.

I was prompted to carry out this research after visiting many peri-urban schools and assessing the performance of pupils especially between Grade five and Grade seven. It was discovered that the number of girls usually started dwindling as they moved to higher grades mostly due to inferiority complex, traditional beliefs and practices, poverty, long distances covered to and from school, and early marriages. Therefore, I decided to explore this further to ascertain how possible Religious Education could help to improve girl-child education in the peri-urban schools.

As a curriculum subject, Religious Education has a special role in the development of the whole person. It helps pupils to explore their experiences at depth and come to understand the deeper factors at work in their lives (CDC, 1983: 4). The subject deals with real life situations. Its main aim in Zambia is to enable pupils to appreciate spiritual, moral and religious values. This appreciation is drawn from the four main religious traditions in Zambia namely: Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and Indigenous Zambian beliefs (Ibid: 3). The study therefore is aimed at finding out how Religious Education could help to promote girls' education and advancement in the peri-urban schools of Chingola district.

The main religious traditions in Zambia have a lot in common, especially regarding moral values, which instill self-discipline, confidence and assertiveness. Unlike other subjects, like Mathematics which deals only with figures, Science that deals with experiments and English which just teaches language and construction of sentences, Religious Education seems to encompass all aspects of life.

1.1 RESEARCH PROBLEM

The problem that the study investigated was: What role does Religious Education play in the promotion of girls' educational rights in the peri-urban schools in Chingola district?

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To trace the inequalities in education between boys and girls from the colonial and post independence eras to date.
- To find out the programmes instituted by the government through the Ministry of Education to solve the problem of inequality between boys and girls in the Zambian Education system.
- To find out what other organisations have done towards the promotion of girls' education and advancement.
- To assess the relevance of Religious Education syllabi at Primary, Junior and Senior Secondary School levels in the promotion of girls' educational rights.
- To assess whether Religious Education addresses cultural practices that hinder girls from making informed and objective decisions about their future.
- To assess the attitude of Religious Education trained teachers towards the subject and their contribution towards the girls' acquisition of self-confidence and self-esteem.
- To identify topics in Religious Education which have the potential to promote self-confidence and self-esteem among girls.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- a) Were there inequalities in education between boys and girls in the colonial era and after independence (when Religious Instruction was being taught) in schools?
- b) What programmes has the government instituted through the Ministry of Education to alleviate the problem of inequality in the Zambian education system?
- c) Are the contributions of some Non-Governmental Organisations towards the promotion and advancement of girls' education in line with Religious Education?
- d) What role does the teaching of modern Religious Education play in the promotion and advancement of girls' educational rights?
- e) Which topics in Religious Education could be of great help in solving the problem of gender inequality in Zambian schools, especially in the peri-urban areas?
- f) To what extent does the teaching of Religious Education counteract some cultural beliefs and practices that hinder girls from making constructive decisions about their future?
- g) What impact has Religious Education got on the girls' moral behavior?
- h) What help do the Religious Education trained teachers offer to the girls with an inferiority complex?

1.4 RESEARCH METHODS

There are many possible ways of gathering information directly from participants. In this research, I used oral interviews and questionnaires.

1.4.1 Interviews

An interview of whatever type involves direct personal contact with the participant who is asked to answer questions. In this research, non-scheduled interview was used. The advantage of this type of interview is that those interviewed are free to expand on a topic, to focus on some of its aspects, and to relate their own experiences. The interviewer only intervenes to ask for clarification or further explanation, but not to give a directive or confront the interviewee with probing questions.

No time limit is fixed to complete an interview. In this research, the interviewer had sufficient time to get as much information as possible. There were face-to-face encounters which enabled the researcher to evaluate the respondents as an informant since in such cases it is possible to observe an individual's reactions to particular questions, which can provide clues to the veracity of responses, which cannot be done when using a questionnaire. Sidhu (1984: 145) states that an interview is a two-way method that permits an exchange of ideas and information.

The interviews in this research were conducted in local languages (Kaonde and Icibemba) and this enabled me to collect more information because people were able to answer and express their views freely, especially on traditional beliefs and practices that hinder girls from advancing in their education.

Bell (1987: 91) observes that a major advantage of the interview is its adaptability. She says a skillful interviewer can follow up ideas, probe responses and investigate motives and feelings, which the questionnaire can never do. The way in which a response is made (the tone of voice, facial expression, hesitation, etc) can provide information that a written response would conceal.

Moser and Kalton (1971: 271) describe the survey interview as a conversation between interviewer and respondent with the purpose of eliciting certain information from the respondent. Sometimes, an interview subject would bring up a relevant idea that the researcher had not considered or had discounted. The ability to pursue this line of reasoning with the subject while maintaining academic rigor is an important skill to have. Indeed, in my interviews, the girls in the peri-urban schools of Chingola were able to expose what they were taught during the initiation period, which contributed to their dropping out of school. In addition, the interviews also helped me to assess the girls' attitude towards the teachings they were given at seclusion time.

I made follow-ups in instances where, after running through the interview guide, I needed further clarifications vis-à-vis new developments, and the respondents were very co-operative. For example, I had to go back to Muchinshi to consult the instructresses about the teachings given to the girls when they sat under the *mwidi* tree, and I was given some more information without any problems.

1.4.2 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were also used in this study. Questionnaires are the main tool used in survey research. One of the advantages with questionnaires is that they save time because individuals can complete them without any intervention from the researcher. They are self-administered and cheaper than one-on-one interviews. All the questionnaires can be distributed at the same time and collected at the same time.

Another advantage is that people may be more willing to be truthful because their anonymity is virtually guaranteed. Some types of questions, which might require reflection or consultation before answering, will be more appropriately dealt with

when the respondent has more time for an answer and is not waiting for the interviewer to cause a hasty response.

I used questionnaires in this research to seek factual information and also to determine opinions, attitudes and interests from the respondents on the topic of study. This helped me to acquire more knowledge of girls' attitudes, feelings or preferences.

Furthermore, I wanted to find out how responsible the girls were in the boarding house, away from their parents. I therefore had to observe them for a week and through these observations, I discovered that half of the girls did not have enough food and could not therefore concentrate on schoolwork. They needed counseling and encouragement if they were to persevere in their education. The two matrons narrated how they conducted counseling sessions mostly in the evenings and commended how well disciplined some girls were.

My conclusion was that girls needed guidance from childhood so that as they grow up, they would develop skills, like decision-making, for survival and Religious Education emphasizes learning and developing these same life skills.

1.5 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

It is important to discuss the district under study and then focus on the selected schools within the district. Therefore, this part of study and chapter discusses the history of Chingola district with special attention to its location, size, physical features, type of population, its socio-economic status, marketing and trade, social and cultural

activities. The information discussed in the district profile was obtained from the District Situation Analysis (DSA: 2005) document.

Location

Chingola district is situated in the Copperbelt province of Zambia in Southern Central Africa. The district lies approximately 450 kilometers North West of Lusaka, the capital city of Zambia and 51 kilometres west of Kitwe, the central city of the Copperbelt province.

Topography (physical features)

Chingola district is divided into three physical features, namely:

The Eastern part of the Northwest of Chingola which has a lot of hilly and steep slopes along the Kafue River has sandy loams in Muntimpa. This area accommodates the underground and open pit copper mines.

The second area covers the South to West part and is relatively flat and covers the commercial farming and ranching schemes.

The third feature is that of artificial mining dumps which have transformed the originally flat land into hilly landscapes. This lies in the Northeast and Northwest parts of the town. The overburden dumps and open pits are as a result of historical mining activities left by Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines (ZCCM) and are now a liability to the district.

Vegetation

The Savannah woodlands type of vegetation is predominant in Chingola district with tree species such as Brachystegia, Julbernardia, Isoberlinia and Albizia. Other tree species include the pines and eucalyptus, which form the plantations of Chingola. Between these various species of trees, there are different types of grass. There are a number of dambos along some rivers and streams, which are dominated by grass and mostly used for vegetable gardening.

General District Administration

Administratively, Chingola district has a dual system: an administration system comprising the Central government and the Local authority or Council. There are no chiefs in the district. The central government includes all government departments and is headed by the District Commissioner (DC). Under this system, a technical committee, the District Development Coordinating Committee (DDCC) chaired by the DC comprises all heads of government departments, the Council, NGOs, the Church and the private sector and coordinates all governmental activities in the district. Its role is to help improve the basic social services in communities.

Under the District Council, the Chief Executive is the Town Clerk. Directors who head various departments assist him to manage the Council. The municipal departments include Engineering, Legal, Administration, Finance and Development Planning. The municipal council is made up of 25 elected councilors and two Members of Parliament for Nchanga and Chingola constituencies. The councilors are elected from their respective wards.

Population distribution

Chingola has a total area of 167,000 hectares (1678 km squared) with a population of approximately 179,219 people and a growth rate of 0.5% per annum. Of the total population, 49.89% are females, while 50.11% are males. In comparison to other districts on the Copperbelt Province, Chingola ranks third in terms of population after Ndola and Kitwe with approximately 393,793 and 388,648 people, respectively.

The peri-urban parts of Chingola are sparsely populated and dominated by peasant farmers while the urban area is densely populated and dominated by miners. Of the total population of the district, about 91,599 are males while 87,620 are females. This high male number could be attributed to the adult male migration into the district in search of job opportunities in the mines, which seem to attract more males than females due to the nature of work.

The socio-economic status of the population in the district

Chingola district is populated with people doing different kinds of jobs. There are civil servants working for the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Local Government and Housing, Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Home Affairs. Other people work for parastatal organisations like Zambia Telecommunications department (ZAMTEL), Zambia News Agency, Zambia State Insurance Corporation, banks like Zambia National Commercial Bank, Barclays Bank, Standard Chartered Bank, and Finance Bank. In addition, the district has got business men and women. Some women own boutiques and hair salons. They trade in locally made goods as well as imported goods. Most of the business men own hardware shops while the unemployed youth are mostly street vendors. The majority of the street vendors are grade seven and grade nine drop outs. There are many youth who are unemployed and struggle to earn a living.

However, the district has a Roman Catholic sponsored centre which has been making an effort to accommodate some young Zambians in schools with a view of transforming them into better citizens that could be self-reliant. This centre is known as Don Bosco. The institution primarily looks at the plight of the youth and the less privileged in the community. Don Bosco offers courses in Information Technology, tailoring and designing, metal fabrication, carpentry and joinery, bricklaying and plastering and agriculture. Most of these courses help to pave way for the youth to become self-reliant.

As earlier stated, miners dominate the urban area. They work underground and at the open pit copper mines. The mining company which was previously known as Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines (ZCCM) is now called Konkola Copper Mines (KCM) owned by London-listed Vedanta Resources.

Besides mining, there are also people involved in farming. The district has three farming systems, which are: -

- Commercial farming: with farmers owning more than 10 hectares.
- Emergent farming: with farmers owning between 2 and 10 hectares.
- Small scale farming: with farmers owning less than 2 hectares.

Commercial farmers:

The district has about 40 commercial farmers who mainly grow coffee, wheat, horticultural crops, and are also involved in poultry rearing and ranching. These are mostly found in Mimbula, Mutenda, Ngosa, Mushishima and Nchanga farming blocks.

Emergent farmers:

This group includes those that were retired, pruned or pensioned off from the mines and government. The main crops they grow are maize, beans, sorghum, cassava, sweet potatoes, vegetables, soya-beans, coffee and they keep small livestock like goats.

Small-scale farmers:

These form the majority of the farmers in the district. They grow a variety of crops such as maize, beans, sorghum, cassava, sweet potatoes, vegetables, soya-beans, coffee and keep small livestock like goats.

Tourist attractions

Chingola district has some tourist attractions. There is Nchanga Open Pit mine, which is one of the largest open pit mines in the world, as one of the tourist attractions. There is also Chimfunshi Chimpanzee Orphanage, which is located about 60km northwest of Chingola. It is privately owned. In addition, there is Kapisha Hot Spring, which is about 6km north of the town.

Marketing and Trade

With the signing of an agreement between the government, Konkola Copper Mines Plc and new strategic Partners Vedanta (Starlite), the district saw some hope for improved sales and trade in flows in and out of the district. The jobs of most miners were not lost and hence the buying capacity was not eroded.

The district has storage facilities for agro-produce and other inputs and satellite depots in the peri-urban areas for input and produce storage. The transport situation in the district is quite good with a number of companies owning trucks for mining products haulage and other uses. Transit trucks to Northwestern Province and DR Congo also pass through the district on daily basis.

In addition, there are several business centres in the district where people are involved in different activities like buying and selling at markets. Many own shops but mainly women deal in perishables and run hair salons.

Financial Institutions

There are a number of credit organizations in the district and these are Zambia National Building Society, Zambia State Insurance Corporation, National Pension Scheme Authority, Pride Zambia, Workers Compensation Fund Control Board, Bayport and Microfin Zambia Limited. The district has a good number of banks, namely; Zambia National Commercial Bank, Standard Chartered Bank, Barclays Bank, Stanbic Bank, Indo-Zambia Bank and Finance Bank. Most of the people in employment get their salaries through these banks.

Social and cultural aspects

Chingola urban area comprises people who belong to different tribes such as the Kikaonde, Luvale, Kachokwe, Lamba, Tumbuka, Kalunda, Lozi, Tonga, Mambwe, Namwanga and Bemba. However, the dominant language in the peri-urban area where my study is based is Kikaonde.

Socially, people in the urban areas are involved in different activities. There are social clubs like, Rugby, Bowling, Cricket, Golf and Hockey where many people, especially men go to socialise. However, in the peri-urban areas, such facilities are not available and as a result, many people are involved in brewing and drinking traditional beer (*kachasu* or *lutuku*) for both financial gain and entertainment. This kind of entertainment seems to promote prostitution, and probably that is why culturally parents in the peri-urban areas prefer to marry off their daughters at a tender age.

1.5.1 The selected schools in Chingola district were:

- Shimulala
- Luansobe
- Muchinshi
- Jackson Phiri
- Mambili
- Mato
- Chamakubi
- Kafue River Middle Basic
- Mutenda
- Munsenga
- Luano 'B'
- Kalilo
- Ipafu
- New Mushishima
- Luankole

All the fifteen schools are in the outskirts of Chingola town. The findings of the research from these fifteen schools were likely to be applicable to girls' education in other peri-urban schools throughout the country.

1.6 EDUCATION FOR GIRLS DURING THE COLONIAL ERA

The early Christian missionaries spearheaded education in Zambia. The Pioneer Brethren missionary, Frederick Arnot, opened the first school in the country in 1883. By 1925, when the government established a sub-department of Native Education, there were roughly 100,000 pupils attending nearly 2,000 schools run by fifteen different Missionary Societies throughout Zambia, by then Northern Rhodesia. Later, the British South African Company (BSAC) took over the running of some schools. One of the factors to be noted in the study of colonial education in Northern Rhodesia, as elsewhere, is that there was gender imbalance. Parents remained generally unconvinced of the value of education for their daughters. The girls themselves often saw little point in going to school, and preferred to stay at home helping their mothers and preparing themselves for marriage.

These attitudes were reflected in the enrolment returns of the aided schools. Girls made up only 5,350 of the 16,700 pupils in aided schools in 1931 (Snelson, 1974: 214). Of the 1,000 children who passed the Standard IV Examination between 1933 and 1936, only 27 were girls. From 1934 to 1936, 350 boys were presented for the Standard VI Examination. The girls numbered only 4. The difference was too big. Some parents and grandparents genuinely feared that education would spoil their daughters' chances of marriage. First, there was the danger that the teachers might seduce them. Secondly, they might no longer be willing to accept women's traditional place in society, and prove to be a disruptive influence.

However, Mabel Shaw, a female missionary of Mbereshi, tried hard to encourage girls to value education and established a boarding school there. Later, other mission boarding schools for girls were opened like Chikuni, Chilubula, Chipembi, Chitambo, Kaenga, Kasisi, Kawimbe, Macha, Madzimoyo, Minga, Mwenzo, Nyanje and Rusangu. During the 1930s foundations were laid at Chipembi, which enabled the

first secondary school for girls to be opened there in 1946. It was Chipembi where the Headmistress was Helen Dugdale, which in 1931 produced the first two women in Northern Rhodesia to qualify as teachers. Three years later, another Chipembi girl, Mary Kalulu, became the first girl in the country to pass the Standard VI Examination. She too became a teacher (Ibid: 215).

As parents began to see that education could lead to useful and remunerative avenues of employment for their daughters, the number of girls applying for places in mission boarding schools multiplied. By 1939, there were 27 such schools in the country, providing a practical as well as an academic education for 2,200 girls. However, the traditional perceptions of the role of women in society had a major part in the slow appearance of girls in the higher grades. By 1964, there were 154,061 girls or 43% of the total enrolled in non-fee paying aided primary schools and 4,105 or 42% of all students in secondary schools (Carmody, 2004:18).

From such figures, it could be concluded that there were gender disparities in the Zambian education system even during colonial days. What was being taught in the earliest schools was Religious Instruction (RI). Since the schools in each area belonged to the Christian denomination which predominated there, Religious Instruction was taught according to the doctrine of that particular mission or church (Masterton, 1987: 5). The essence of teaching Religious Instruction was to enable people understand the Gospel message and eventually help them in evangelization and in nurturing Christian leadership. In mission schools, Religious Instruction was time-tabled while in government schools it was taught after classes by catechists or preachers from different churches. Therefore, Religious Instruction was a process of indoctrination in the teachings, beliefs, values and practices of different denominations.

Religious Instruction was of little help to the girl child as it promoted women inferiority and submissiveness to men as in 1Peter 3:1, 5 and 6 of the Bible which says: 'Wives should be submissive to their husbands like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master'. The Religious Education, which is taught in schools nowadays, is supposed to eradicate the feeling of inferiority complex in girls. It should make them become critical thinkers and innovators. The modern state-controlled Religious Education is usually pupil-centred. It starts from the learner's experience of religion, aims at religious literacy, or 'an open, critical and rational understanding of various religions' (Hull, 1992), and therefore, facilitates discovery, awareness, originality and freedom in the pupil or learner. When a girl discovers her potential, she would appreciate and value education and change her way of thinking. She would be filled with the attitude of rising to new heights and break out of her traditional (cultural) beliefs and practices. However, if one fosters an image of defeat and failure, then such a person would end up living that kind of life. Religious Education has the potential to help pupils interact and discuss any given topic freely especially through role-plays and group discussions.

Therefore, modern Religious Education has helped to improve girl-child education as compared to colonial Religious Instruction where everything was to be accepted without any query. Colonial Religious Instruction was traditional, cultural and instructional which put the girl-child in the background.

1.7 EDUCATION FOR GIRLS AFTER INDEPENDENCE TO- DATE

Statistics indicate that there is almost equal enrollment of boys and girls in grade 1, but as the level of education progresses, there are fewer girls than boys. According to the Education Statistics Bulletin of 1994 (MOE, 1994), there were 57% boys compared to 43% girls at grade five level and 56% boys compared to 44% girls at grade seven level. At secondary school level, there were 59% boys compared to 41%

girls; 60% in grade nine to 40% female while in grade twelve there were 67% males compared to only 33% females. At tertiary levels, the gender gap is even wider. Women constituted 23% of enrollment at higher institutions of learning, at vocational and technical training colleges and the universities. Women are least represented in the technical fields, as they constitute less than 20% of total enrollment.

As the proportion of children in schools decrease, the likelihood is that gender gaps would also widen, as boys were favoured in the increasing competition for school places. Girls were always in the majority among school dropouts, especially in rural schools.

In 1994, the total enrollment at the upper basic level was 130,775, of whom 78,003 (59.6%) were boys and 52,772 (40.4%) were girls. Slightly more than one-third of the eligible population (those aged 14 and 15) were enrolled in Grades 8 and 9, but there were significant gender differences and differences between rural and urban areas. The census showed that 39.2% of the eligible boys were enrolled in these grades in 1990 and 29.4% were girls. In rural areas, 20.9% of the eligible population was enrolled, compared with 52.8% in urban areas. The lowest enrollment ratio at this level was that for rural girls, only 16.7% of these were recorded as participating in upper basic education (MOE, 1996: 16).

The problem of inequality has persisted and yet the overarching aim of school education is to promote the full and well-rounded development of the physical, intellectual, social, affective, moral and spiritual qualities of all students so that each can develop into a complete person, for his or her own personal fulfillment and the good of society (MOE, 1996:29). The social, moral and spiritual qualities could be learnt in Religious Education. Man is a physical, mental, social, emotional and spiritual being. Any educational system which neglects the spiritual part is

unbalanced. The spiritual and moral development of pupils is essential to their total development. Therefore, we have Religious Education for educational reasons and not for reasons of evangelism or history (Henze, 2000: 32).

1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review is a critical analysis of the existing written work connected to the research topic being done. Therefore, this part of my dissertation will discuss other authors' or written findings and their relevance to my study.

1.8.1 Article 26 of the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights states

that:

Education is a human right. This is also stated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; Article 28. Education is a right that is also guaranteed by the policy of Education for All (EFA), the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), The United Nations Platform for Action, the Beijing Declaration, the Millennium Development Goals and other International Conventions (UNESCO, 1998:1).

Zambia is a signatory to all the above mentioned conventions because education is a basic human right. Every school must teach as well as practice human rights and mutual respect. Awareness of human rights implies treating pupils, teachers and other school staff with respect and dignity, irrespective of their gender, religion, ethnic origin, profession or any other discriminatory characteristics (MOE, 2001: 58).

The United Nations Convention emphasizes the elimination of discrimination against women and the Ministry of Education supports that. My study too looks at how best

Religious Education could promote girls' educational rights through self-awareness, which leads to self-esteem, and self-confidence in all that an individual does. Self-awareness is the key to all other life skills because once you know yourself; you will be able to adjust in any given situation in order to get the best out of life. A person who has developed the skill of self-awareness is likely to have assertiveness.

In 1990 the World Conference on Education For All was held in Jomtien, Thailand. This conference galvanized global consensus that education is the single most vital element in combating poverty, empowering women, promoting human rights and democracy, protecting the environment and controlling population growth. It also made the education of girls a major priority. New goals and targets were set and new partnerships identified at all levels, aimed at making Education For All a reality.

The new EFA goals were as follows:

1. Expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
2. Ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, those in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.
3. Ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programs.
4. Achieve a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
5. Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieve gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

6. Improve all aspects of the quality of education and ensure excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills. (www.unesco.org/education)

In 1991, a National Conference was held at Mulungushi International Conference Centre in Zambia to discuss Education for All (EFA). This was a follow up of the 1990 Education for All Conference held in Jomtien-Thailand. A task force was set up during the Mulungushi Conference to come up with proposals and work out strategies on how best education in Zambia could be improved (MOE 1992: i).

Working out strategies on how best education can be improved in Zambia fits well with my study topic. Religious Education is one of the strategies that could be used as a tool in improving Zambian education especially in the peri-urban areas. *Focus on Learning* document (MOE, 1992: 5), suggests that the education system should promote the integral, harmonious development of the physical, affective, moral and spiritual endowments of all students so that they can develop into complete persons, for their personal fulfillment, and for the common good of society in which they are members and whose responsibilities they will share as adults. This is what this research work is concerned with. When boys and girls develop physically, morally, socially and spiritually, they would be able to assess situations and make decisive decisions in life.

J Henze in 1994 published his work on Creative Tension (Copperbelt RE Development Unit: Mission Press). In this publication, he states that the most important reason for teaching Religious Education in schools is that a human being is physical, mental, social, emotional and spiritual by nature. Moreover, these being essential parts of our makeup entails that if any of one of them is neglected in schools, then education is unbalanced, even defective. No one could be counted as properly educated unless he or she has been made aware of the existence of a

religious interpretation of life. His opinion helped me to anticipate the impact of religious interpretation of life. Religious interpretation of life can enable girls to understand themselves, their position in life and society as well as their strengths and weaknesses.

The Ministry of Education in 1996 published a national policy document on education entitled *Educating our Future* (Lusaka: Educational Publishing House). In this publication, the MOE has set for itself goals of producing a learner capable of:

- i. Being animated by a personally held set of civic, moral and spiritual values,
- ii. Developing an analytical, innovative, creative and constructive mind,
- iii. Appreciating the relationship between scientific thought, action and technology on the one hand, and sustenance of the quality of life on the other,
- iv. Demonstrating free expression of one's own ideas and exercising tolerance for other people's views,
- v. Cherishing and safeguarding individual liberties and human rights,
- vi. Appreciating Zambia's ethnic cultures, customs and traditions, and upholding *national* pride, sovereignty, peace, freedom and independence,
- vii. Participating in the preservation of the ecosystems in one's immediate and distant environments,
- viii. Maintaining and observing discipline and hard work as the cornerstones of personal and national development (MOE, 1996: 5).

Most of these goals touch Religious Education either directly or indirectly, and they underline the fact that good education goes hand in hand with good religion (Henze, 2002: ii). Being animated by a personally held set of civic, moral and spiritual values cannot be detached from the main aim of Zambian Religious Education, which is to enable pupils appreciate spiritual, moral and religious values and behaviour based on them. This appreciation is drawn from the four main religious traditions in Zambia: Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Indigenous Zambian Beliefs (CDC, 1983: 3).

However, in order to establish the relationship between the goals of the Ministry of Education and those of Religious Education, I will marry the two in a table form:

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION GOALS	GENERAL OUTCOMES IN RE/SDS
Producing a learner capable of being animated by a personally held set of civic, moral and spiritual values	Develop moral and ethical qualities rooted in a spiritual dimension
Developing an analytical, innovative, creative and constructive mind	Acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to understand and make informed decisions
Demonstrating free expression of one's own ideas and exercising tolerance for other people's views	Create an awareness of the interaction of human beings with the social, economic and biophysical environment
Cherishing and safeguarding individual liberties and human rights	Develop an understanding of their rights and responsibilities as citizens of the local, national, regional and global communities and of the need to eliminate all forms of discrimination and other threats to human rights and democracy
Maintaining and observing discipline and hard work as the cornerstones of personal and national development	Develop an understanding of the functions of social institutions and roles of the individuals and groups of different cultural settings in both the past and the present
Appreciating the relationship between scientific thought , action and technology	Acquire and apply basic social and developmental skills, methods and

on the one hand, and sustenance of the quality of life on the other	techniques
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(MOE, 1996: 5 and CDC, 2003:103)

The goals of education and Religious Education outcomes should give pupils a growing awareness of religious outlook and values. This awareness would enable boys and girls to make moral decisions based on religious values and remove inferiority complex among the girls. In religious values, there is no discrimination. When this is imparted in the girls, they would learn to value their existence and strive to achieve self-confidence, which would in turn enable them to excel in their education. Most of the girls in peri-urban schools lack self-confidence and self-esteem. They underrate themselves and limit their ambitions, resulting in high illiteracy rates among women in Zambia. Gender biased cultural beliefs, myths, negative traditional practices and stereotypes discourage and prevent girls from going far in education. They strongly believe that their role is to remain quiet, be in the background and prepare themselves for marriage.

Developing an analytical, innovative, creative and constructive mind is also encouraged in Religious Education. The subject has challenging topics like: 'How people develop' and 'How people make choices'. For any girl to make wise decisions, she is supposed to analyze issues critically rather than make hasty and regrettable decisions. Furthermore, demonstrating free expression is encouraged in Religious Education, mainly through group work and discussions. This could help the shy girls to express their views freely and, later in life, to make decisions without necessarily following negative traditional beliefs and values. This would help them to grow and become more mature and more responsible. The lack of confidence, assertiveness and passivity often impact negatively on girls' academic performance.

The fifth goal, which is cherishing and safeguarding individual liberties and human rights, deals with self-dignity and the right to self-expression. In traditional society, there are some proverbs and sayings which are used to signify the low position of women such as: *Abasunda ubwikele besosapo* (Bemba), which means 'those who urinate while seated should not speak'; *Umwaume tacepa* (Bemba), meaning 'a young man is more recognizable than an elderly woman'; *Abanakashi mafi ya mpombo: tutola fye* (Bemba), meaning 'a woman is of no value', Due to such sayings most of the men folk have no regard for women. Religious Education, however, does not disregard women in this way. It is a gender-neutral subject.

In keeping with recent developments and needs in Zambian society, the Ministry of Education (2000: 11) has now added two more goals of education to the above. These are: Developing a positive attitude towards self-employment and a basic knowledge in entrepreneurship related issues and safeguarding personal health and that of others, particularly in relation to reproductive health issues, HIV and AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

Imparting moral and spiritual values in the girls through Religious Education would help them to refrain from bad behaviour like getting involved in unnecessary love affairs which usually lead to sexually transmitted diseases, early pregnancies and stopping school at a tender age. Religious Education promotes the pupils' ability to formulate and solve problems, self-reliance and flexibility, personal pride and self-identity as well as a sense of responsibility for oneself, others and the world.

J Mudalitsa in 1995 submitted his dissertation on *An Evaluation of the Zambian Secondary School Religious Education Syllabi in which he discussed Twelve dimensional model of Religious Education* which according to him, seem to integrate the best of education and religion. He observes that Religious Education is integral

rather than just academic. It promotes pupils' full and well-rounded development. It is liberating as opposed to indoctrinating as it promotes pupils' rational and moral autonomy. It is experiential rather than doctrinal; it exposes pupils to worthwhile experiences on which they can reflect. It is broad based as opposed to narrowly based; it probes shared human experiences, great religious and individual beliefs and values. It is process based rather than just content based; it stresses links between life and religion, one's beliefs and behaviour. The subject is also balanced as opposed to being one-sided; it explores both life's depths and religion's multi-faceted whole.

J Mudalitsa looks at Religious Education from a wider perspective. From his work it has been revealed that Religious Education exposes pupils to worthwhile experiences on which they can reflect. This is what my study is trying to explore. Religious Education is not one sided but covers every aspect of life and hence helps to shape one's character for life. It broadens one's thinking capacity, encourages the acquisition of skills, attitudes and values necessary to understand and make informed decisions as pupils face different challenges in life. Such kind of knowledge would empower girls who are looked upon as inferior to boys to fend off the various forms of gender discrimination they might be exposed to in the school system and life in general.

M Grimmit in 1987 published his work on *Religious Education and Human Development* (Great Wakering: Mc Crimmons). In this publication he states that Religious Education advances human development through the teaching and learning of religion. He observes that to learn from religion is to learn about oneself; to become more self-aware; to become critically conscious of one's own questions, one's own values and priorities, one's own sense of meaning in one's life, to become more aware of the shaping influence of beliefs on one's life and one's own identity. Religion becomes the lens through which one could examine one self. The fact that

the author stresses critical self-evaluation assisted me to intensify my research in order to find out how best Religious Education can help the girl-child to evaluate and value herself upon realizing that her life has a purpose which should be accomplished. This could be discovered through religion, which is a person's way of life. Religion is taught in Religious Education, which is the main focus of my study. Through self-identification and self-evaluation, girls would realize how valuable they are in life and compete with boys favourably at school. Most of the girls in the peri-urban areas are inclined to their traditional cultural beliefs and attitudes that favour the boy child. They are often withdrawn from school without any resistance and married off at an early age.

Lai Ming Wyers who was brought up in Menglembu, a small town in Malaysia, tells of her struggle to be educated. She was brought up in an environment where women were not encouraged to reach their full potential. Her own mother thought that to educate a woman was a waste of money as they had no place in society and were just married off. Whatever skills they had only benefited the family of another. She had to do the house work including fetching water from the well daily, to discourage her from going to school. She contemplated suicide twice. She was saved by one of her teachers who used to encourage her to be courageous, firm and think critically. She suggested that she should apply for a scholarship in order to continue with her education, which she won. With determination, and hard work, she managed to excel and she is now Council for World Mission Chief Accountant (CWM Assembly, June 2006: 9).

Although the story does not state whether the girl was taking Religious Education or not, the encouragement she was given by her teacher tallies well with the encouragement girls get from some topics taught in Religious Education such as 'Leaving School' (in grade 7) and 'Ambitions and Hopes' (in grade 9). In addition, the story touches on what hinders most girls from going far in their education, similar

to what this study is exploring. However, the story also clearly shows how women are discriminated against in most societies of the world. Therefore, the role of Religious Education in the promotion of girls' education is very important and should not be underrated as it could help to narrow the gender disparities.

J Henze in 2000 published his work on *Readings for Religious Education teachers* (Ndola: Mission Press) in which he quotes Paulo Freire, the Brazilian philosopher who described education as a process of liberation. For liberation to take place, there should be critical consciousness, which tries to judge the situation realistically by analyzing facts and problems in the light of fundamental human values. Being rational and critical in orientation leads to a concrete response. Freire advocates education for critical consciousness which operates at the rational and responsible levels and which leads to cultural action of freedom. He says learners need to be 'conscientised', become aware of the socio-cultural realities which shape and often oppress their lives and of their capacity to transform those realities.

Learning, according to Freire (1996: 29), means becoming aware of the concrete situation, understanding how that situation could be changed, and acting to change the situation. He says, "To surmount the situation of oppression, people must first critically recognize its causes, so that through transforming action they can create a new situation, one which makes possible the pursuit of a fuller humanity" (Ibid).

The author's sentiments assisted me to emphasize the three steps to consider when making constructive decisions in life. These are seeing how things are and the options that one has in a particular situation, choosing one of the options according to an individual's judgment and thirdly, acting according to that judgment by doing what one has decided is best (see, judge and act). These three steps are taught in Religious Education under the topic 'Choosing and talents' (grade 8).

This emancipatory approach to education is called 'problem-posing' or liberating. Only this type of education is capable of bringing about real personal and social transformation especially to girls in the peri-urban schools.

Quoting Nyerere, the former President of Tanzania, Henze (2000: 25), also stresses the importance of human consciousness or awareness when he states that if one wants to be liberated, one must be aware of his/her own manhood/womanhood and the power to use circumstances rather than be used by them. He adds very significantly that it is the task of education to affect this liberation, or at least to begin it.

Girls in peri-urban schools need this liberation and freedom to come out from their traditional bondage and decide what they want to do in their life. Religious Education could help them to achieve this freedom especially through the use of methods like role-plays and group discussions as pupils are able to demonstrate free expression of one's own ideas. This free expression results in freedom of speech and liberation. Once girls are liberated, the gap of inequality between boys and girls would be narrowed because they would be able to make their own independent decisions instead of relying on men.

Ruth Kavuma, a Member of Parliament in Uganda, presented a paper on "Girl's Education/Primary Education in rural areas based on FAWE'S work and experiences" (www.un.org). She observes that there are many countries where because of poverty in the homes, the parents would rather send a boy to school and let a girl stay at home to help with household work or even marry her off to get fees for the boys.

From Kavuma's work, I realized that it was not only in Zambia and Chingola district in particular where because of poverty in the homes, the parents would rather send a boy to school and let a girl stay at home and help with household work. This was happening in most of the African countries and therefore it was imperative to identify measures that could help to alleviate this problem. Hence the importance of this research study and advancement. The majority of the parents with daughters in the peri-urban areas do not see any value in sending their daughters to school. They would rather marry them off and enjoy the bride price or "Lobola," especially when they marry them off as virgins.

Henze (ibid) again emphasizes the importance of teaching Religious Education in schools and the acquisition of various skills by the pupils. He argues that education should be total and balanced by educating not only the intellectual, physical, social and emotional dimensions, but also the spiritual and moral dimensions too. All aspects have to be helped to grow to maturity. Through Religious Education pupils have the potential to learn skills such as exploration of religions, human experience, and one's personal search through observing, investigating, questioning, researching, enquiring, listening and synthesizing. The learners apply what they learn through responding, developing self-awareness, expressing and communication.

The author's emphasis on the skills encouraged me to identify the much needed life-skills and test them against the curriculum contents of Religious Education as well as other subjects in the Zambian approved curriculum. Religious Education highlights the skills that are needed in different situations and makes it easy for the learners to make appropriate decisions in life. Through investigation and questioning, girls are likely to discover more on their own concerning their traditional beliefs and practices and the impact they have on their education.

J Henze in his same work (*Reading for RE teachers*) quotes Bunwaree and Heward who observed that the history of girls' education in Mauritius was one of exclusion. It was not a priority under colonial rule. Women were considered a subordinate group, and they were excluded from positions of power in the administration of the colony. Their education was regarded as insignificant to the economic development of the colony, and they were kept at home to learn domestic skills. When schools for girls were established, the curriculum was heavily sex-stereotyped, socializing girls for roles regarded as 'feminine'. They were taught how to look more graceful and agreeable to their companions.

This is similar to how education for girls was taken during the colonial era in Zambia and is therefore relevant to my study topic because it enables me to compare and contrast education in Zambia with education in other countries. Girls and women need to be rescued from unfair treatment. This could be done when girls themselves realize how important they are in the eyes of God and understand their rights. Through Religious Education both boys and girls learn a lot. They learn skills, which usually help them to acquire and develop the concepts and attitudes which are the focal points of the subject and which contribute to their development as persons.

M Kelly in 1994 published his work on *Below the poverty line in Education in Zambia* (Lusaka: UNICEF). In this publication he describes how the girl-child is perceived and treated. He says the girl's principle pre-occupations are household chores and child minding. The girl is not viewed as an independent person in her own right, but she is seen as one who leaves the initiative to others. She is expected to show the non-assertive qualities of docility, compliance and deference, especially to elders and males. She should avoid competition with others, above all with boys. When jobs have to be done, she should be the first to come forward, but when opinions have to be expressed, she should be last to speak. Kelly observes that the situation in which the girl child finds herself is biased, inhibitive, quite pathetic and precarious.

The fact that the author stresses the unfair treatment of the girl-child influenced me to research on how the girl-child can come out of this shell or bondage. The information I gathered through the people that I interviewed in the peri-urban communities confirmed that the culturally accepted image of the Zambian girl child is of a passive, submissive person who remains quiet in the background, is the first to serve, and the last to speak. She is submissive, a mother's assistant, a baby-sitter, and is expected not to have her own mind and not to value school.

M Simuchimba in 2000 published an article entitled *Religious Education in Zambia; Syllabuses, Approaches and Contentious Issues* in ZANGO Zambia Journal of Contemporary Issues (Lusaka: University of Zambia press). In this publication he quotes Hull (1992) and points out that unlike church-controlled Religious Education, modern state-controlled Religious Education is pupil-centred. It starts from the learner's experience of religion, aims at religious literacy or 'an open, critical and rational understanding of various religions' and so facilitates discovery, awareness, originality and freedom in the pupil or learner. Simuchimba's observations encouraged me to find out more about the advantages of modern state-controlled Religious Education compared with the church-controlled Religious Education which was indoctrinating.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (ZARD, 2004: 15) states that the empowerment of women is the empowerment of all humanity. Women and men are partners towards the common goal of gender equality. An educated girl is more likely to become a more competent mother, a knowledgeable family planner, a more productive and better-paid worker, an informed citizen, a skillful decision maker and a self-confident individual. Her individual development and personal fulfillment should not be denied. Her right to education comes with the overall recognition of the basic human rights of every individual, boy or girl. Equality of opportunity for women and men is essential to the construction of just and democratic society. The thrust of my

study is that Religious Education has the potential to greatly contribute to the vision of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

M Simuchimba (Ibid) states that Religious Education does contribute to the realization of the goals and aims of the Zambian education system by being contextual and broadly based rather than narrowly-based, democratic and open rather than authoritarian, and critical and evaluative rather than simply appreciative of religious beliefs and values. As such Religious Education comes out clearly in positioning itself as a subject that could help to address personal development issues of all pupils regardless of their religious and cultural background.

M Simuchimba points out that broadly based Religious Education is not restrictive. It gives room to the learner to assess issues widely and critically. His observations motivated me to find out more about how broadly based Religious Education could help girls in the peri-urban schools to evaluate their traditional beliefs and practices and make their own decisions regarding formal education and their future.

G Muleya in 2007 submitted his dissertation on *The Teaching of Religious Education in Zambian Schools and the role it plays in HIV/AIDS prevention*. He emphasizes the importance of Religious Education as a school subject. In his view Religious Education is not just a question of getting or acquiring fragmented and unconnected facts; rather it is a process that engages pupils in getting relevant information which could help them to see connections and have a deep-seated understanding of issues surrounding them. Muleya (Ibid) further points out that Religious Education as a subject has the potential to allow the learners to come face to face with personal and social issues, it also highlights the skills that are needed in dealing with such issues and this makes it easy for the learners to make appropriate decisions in life. His

views motivated me to evaluate the Religious Education syllabus and assess the relevance of its contents towards girl-child education in the peri-urban schools.

J Henze quotes Watson (1992) who asserts that Religious Education engages pupils in areas of self-education and this is very important as it helps them to carry out their own self-examination and analysis each time they want to make decisions. The author stresses self-education and this assisted me to analyse the effects of self-education especially among the girls in the peri-urban schools.

This is the literature that I have used to review what other authors have published with regard to girl-child education and the relevance of Religious Education content towards the promotion of girl-child education.

DISSERTATION ORGANISATION

The outline of this dissertation is as explained below. There are seven chapters altogether. The foregoing chapter (one) traces inequalities in education between boys and girls from the colonial and post independence eras to date. Literature about the subject at hand has also been reviewed. Chapter two identifies the contributions by some non-governmental organisations towards the promotion of education for girls and also explores the government policy on gender in education. It also covers social realities in Zambia. Culturally, the accepted image of the Zambian girl child is being passive, submissive, a child-bearer and child-rearer as well as a wife-in-waiting. This will be assessed citing different tribes and their practices to find out how this has affected girl-child education. Then chapter three discusses the effectiveness of Religious Education towards narrowing the gap between boys and girls education. The aims, objectives and principles of Religious Education will be highlighted and

Religious Education syllabi will be analyzed to assess the relevance of the curriculum.

Chapter four discusses the training of Religious Education teachers at Secondary colleges of education, namely Nkrumah, Copperbelt College, Chalimbana and the Primary colleges of education to assess the effectiveness of the Religious Education content towards girls' education and advancement. Then, chapter five will deal with the findings or data collected through oral interviews, questionnaires and general observations. Chapter six will then discuss the findings. Finally, the dissertation will be concluded in chapter seven and recommendations will be made. This is the outline of this dissertation.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 CONTRIBUTIONS BY NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TOWARDS GENDER EQUITY IN EDUCATION:

The Non-Governmental Organisations have contributed in one way or the other towards girls' education in African countries. They have tried to assist the countries in the development of national capabilities to evolve, try out and improve strategies that have the potential to accelerate female participation in education, and move toward the achievement of Education For All (EFA). The sighted Non-Governmental Organisations in this chapter include Forum for African Educationalists of Zambia (FAWEZA), Development for International Development in Zambia (DFID), Programme for the Advancement of Girls' Education (PAGE) and the Zambia National Women's Lobby (ZNWL).

The Forum for African Women Educationalists of Zambia (FAWEZA) was established on 8th March, 1996 and registered under the laws of Zambia. FAWEZA's concern is the equitable participation of females in all spheres and at all levels of national development. FAWEZA's vision is based on a seemingly simple notion: Education For All is both a human right and a development necessity (FAWEZA, 2003: 1).

FAWEZA's objectives are as follows:

- i. To invigorate political commitment to the goal of education for all.
- ii. To stimulate government, donors, communities, parents, and NGOs.
- iii. To increase their investments in education especially girl-child education.
- iv. To create public awareness on the importance of female education.
- v. To use existing data to design high impact programmes that take into account the special needs of girls and women in education.

- vi. To build and strengthen networks with and among other civil society organisations in the promotion of female education.
- vii. To promote women's leadership, policy-making and research skills within the education sector through targeted capacity-building programmes.
- viii. To advocate for increased participation of females in education management (FAWEZA, 2003: 1).

The Department for International Development in Zambia (DFID) is also committed to the advancement of girls' education through support to its partners. DFID aims to achieve its goal through support to FAWEZA and the MOE's Strategic Plan whose priority is improved access and gender equity in education (FAWEZA, 2003: 8).

Another active organisation is the Programme for the Advancement of Girls' Education (PAGE). It reveals that the culturally accepted image of the Zambian girl child, especially in the peri-urban areas, is that of a passive, submissive person who remains quiet in the background, is the first to serve and the last to speak.

In order to address this situation, the immediate objectives of PAGE are:

- i. To improve the access, retention and progression in education by girls in schools;
- ii. To increase teacher and parent support for the education of girls;
- iii. To build up self-confidence and self-esteem in girls (FAWEZA 2003: 5).

PAGE further holds that parents and traditional leaders have a crucial role to play in the fight for the enrollment and progression of girls in education, (FAWEZA 2003: 8). PAGE was built on the success of the girl child education initiative which supported research studies from late 1994 to early 1996 (not published) and started a national advocacy campaign to promote the education of girls in the context of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Education For All initiative.

At national level, PAGE promoted policy development for improvement of primary education, with special reference to girls and provided overall guidance for the implementation of the programme and supported advocacy, sensitization, and mobilization of resources in support of girls' education. At the provincial and district levels, PAGE aimed at increasing capacities for development, implementation and monitoring of PAGE goals and objectives. Specific interventions such as pre-service and in-service teacher training on gender, family Pac for parents and community action to mobilize community support for girls' education were implemented to increase girls' participation. PAGE has been identifying and encouraging vulnerable brilliant girls to excel in education. The organization provides financial assistance to such girls and many, including those from rural areas, have benefited.

As part of the global strategy for Eastern and Southern Africa, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has adopted an enhanced approach to the advancement of girls' education aimed at accelerating the progression of girls' education.

The Zambia National Women's Lobby (ZNWL) is another NGO which commits itself to the empowerment of women in both rural and urban areas of Zambia, so that they can occupy their equal place as decision makers in society (Kabanda, 2004: 6). ZNWL advocates and lobbies for equal representation of women and men in decision making at all levels. It also advocates and lobbies government to implement human rights conventions. In 1991 about 100 women from different Non-Governmental Organizations came together to fight the oppressive regime at that time. These women were motivated by the fact that there was discrimination against women and gender imbalances in government, and other public and private institutions including schools. They found this to be unacceptable and contrary to human rights principles, democracy, good governance and sustainable development. Their vision was a

Zambia in which there was no gender discrimination and where women and men equally participated in and benefited from decisions on national development.

Indeed the non-governmental organisations are doing a commendable job. They should be appreciated and supported by the community. The aims and objectives of many non-governmental organisations are in line with the objectives of Religious Education, one of which is to promote critical thinking. Critical thinking leads to the exercise of one's own authority and power against any discrimination. This claim that the aims and objectives of many non-governmental organizations are in line with the objectives of Religious Education can be substantiated by comparing the objectives of NGOs with the objectives of Religious Education. For example, one of the objectives of FAWEZA is to create public awareness on the importance of female education and to promote women's leadership, policy-making and research skills within the education sector through targeted capacity-building programmes. Similarly, in Religious Education, the objective for the topics 'Growing in responsibility' (Grade 2) and 'Development and co-operation' (Grade 6) is to help identify the roles of girls and women and their importance in the community. This would enable girls to realize that they are as important as boys and men. Hence the inferiority complex syndrome would slowly start diminishing and the girl-child would start imagining how she would feel to become a leader some day and participate in decision-making. She would choose to work hard and achieve her goals in future. She would be determined to study hard and compete with boys.

Furthermore, PAGE aims at building self-confidence and self-esteem. These are life-skills which are also emphasized in Religious Education. In group discussions, brainstorming and role-play methods, girls are encouraged to participate freely without fear of society or intimidation and through their participation they would slowly start getting to know themselves, which is self-awareness. Topics like 'Rural life and urban life' (Grade 4), 'Growing up and learning' (Grade 5), and 'How people develop' (Grade 8)

are quite revealing and have the potential to instill self-esteem in a girl-child. The girl-child would be able to compare rural life and urban life, the advantages and disadvantages of rural and urban life, the challenges one was likely to encounter and how she would react to them. Then one would choose either to continue living in the rural area or work hard at school and end up living comfortably in the urban area. As girls continue growing up and learning, they acquire new ideas which might contribute to them leading a successful life and having a bright future.

Furthermore, the Zambia National Women's Lobby (ZNWL) advocates and lobbies for equal representation of women and men in decision making at all levels while in Religious Education, topics like 'How people develop', 'How people make choices', 'The talents people have', 'Male and female' and 'Ambitions and hopes' equally encourage both boys and girls to strive and achieve what they hope for. ZNWL encourages girls and women to be critical-thinkers and in the same vein the methods used when teaching Religious Education involve critical thinking such as brainstorming, group discussion and field trips. Pupils are given provoking questions to discuss and present. For example, pupils in groups might be asked to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of competition in class. This is derived from the topic 'Competition and co-operation'. Through their discussions, pupils would discover that competition encourages them to work hard in class, to be focused and never to give up but to have a positive attitude towards any given work or task. Girls are not exempted from competing with others; they are supposed to participate freely like any other pupil.

What has been stated above clearly substantiates the close tie between the work being done by the non-governmental organizations and the teaching of Religious Education. However, the Zambian government has been making an effort to address the issue of gender. Therefore, the next part of this work will discuss the Zambian policy on gender.

2.2 THE ZAMBIAN GOVERNMENT POLICY ON GENDER

In line with International and national policy declarations, the government through the Ministry of Education is trying hard to address the problem of gender imbalance in education. The issue of gender balance has been enshrined in different government documents such as *Educating Our Future* (MOE, 1996) and the *Basic School Curriculum Framework* (MOE, 2000).

Educating Our Future, the national education policy document, states that the Ministry of Education is committed to achieving gender balance in educational institutions and within the educational system. The Ministry aims at ensuring that female students were integrated with males as equal beneficiaries and participants at all levels of education. The Ministry would seek to eliminate factors that hinder the access, progression and accomplishment of girls in schools and colleges (MOE, 1996: 65).

To implement this policy, the government has adopted the following strategies:

- a) The Ministry, and Education Boards, will ensure that there are female teachers on the staff of every school, to provide appropriate role models for girls.
- b) The Ministry will review the school curriculum so as to ensure that both it and the associated teaching materials are gender-sensitive.
- c) Gender issues and the development of gender-sensitive teaching methodologies will be integral to the pre-service and in-service training of teachers.
- d) The Ministry will provide an equal number of school places for girls and boys at all school levels.
- e) To enhance the performance of girls at secondary level, the Ministry will create more girls' boarding places and establish more schools for girls only.

- f) In co-operation with other agencies, the Ministry will sensitize parents and communities on gender issues in development, and in particular will sensitize families on the need to release girls from domestic chores so that they can have more time for study.
- g) In co-operation with other agencies, the Ministry will strengthen and re-orientate guidance and counseling programmes to address socio-cultural problems which may hinder the progress of girls in education.
- h) The Ministry will ensure that none of its regulations discriminate against the participation progression or performance of girls in schools and colleges.
- i) The Ministry will ensure that all management positions in the system are equitably shared between deserving men and women.
- j) The Ministry will review and enforce penalties against school pupils, teachers and other educational personnel engaging in sexual harassment of pupils or education employees or making a schoolgirl pregnant.
- k) The Ministry will cause legislation to be effected, which will make it a punishable offence for parents or guardians to withdraw children from school before the completion of basic education (MOE, 1996: 65-66).

The Zambian government, through the Ministry of Education, has been posting female teachers all over the country or to areas where their services are required to provide appropriate role models for girls. Moreover, the construction of more basic and high schools is on course in all the provinces to cater for both girls and boys. For example, in May 2008, a girls' technical high school was opened in Ndola rural. It is a boarding school which is well equipped. This school has motivated many girls who are eager to work hard and meet very high academic standards.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Education has increased the number of female students at the highest institution of learning, the University of Zambia. 30% of the total number of places is given to female students, while the remaining 70% places are competed for on an equal basis by both boys and girls each academic year. This is a

big achievement towards gender balance in education. Furthermore, management positions in the education system are equitably shared between deserving men and women. For example, the current Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education is a woman by the name of Kapulu Lillian. We also have many high and basic schools headed by women with relevant qualifications. This is both challenging and encouraging to girls and women.

The government, through the Ministry of Education, has also introduced the re-entry policy from 1997 (MOE, 2004: 2). This policy mandates schools to allow pregnant girls back into the school system after delivery and nursing of their baby for one year. The Ministry has taken this move because education is a right, regardless of a girl's situation. Teenage pregnancy is a major factor contributing to high dropout rates for girls.

The Basic School Curriculum Framework (MOE, 2000) is a supplementary policy document of the Ministry of Education. It states that the right of every child to basic education must be protected and defended at all times. In this regard, the school must be allowed to intervene if this right is threatened, such as by the excessive weight of household chores put on the girl or boy by parents/guardians, or in the case where a girl is forced to drop out of school in favour of early marriage.

The Ministry has introduced a number of policy measures in order to reduce the gender bias in schools. These are based on the following points stated on pages 9-10 of the above named document:

- a) Girls tend to perform better in single-sex classes. Schools are therefore encouraged to divide some classes according to sex in order to promote a conducive learning environment for the female pupils.

- b) The parents and the home environment also play a major role in helping to create a stimulating learning setting for girls. The home attitude to girls' access to education, and the extent to which they are encouraged to continue learning, are decisive for girls' chances to benefit from equal access and equal quality of education. The school has a responsibility to maintain a dialogue with parents and guardians on this issue. The Parents Teachers Association (PTA) and Education Boards are important platforms for such a dialogue.
- c) Teachers should consistently encourage girls to perform well and to express themselves in class, listening attentively to their comments and demonstrating that the teachers respect girls' views, ideas and knowledge (MOE, 2000: 9-10).

All this shows how concerned the government is towards achieving Education for All in Zambia.

2.3 TRADITIONAL CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES AND GIRL-CHILD EDUCATION

This chapter discusses some traditional cultural beliefs and practices that interfere with the progress of girls' education and advancement, especially in the peri-urban schools. These include the initiation ceremonies, early marriages and household chores.

The culturally accepted image of the Zambian girl child is a passive, submissive person who remains quiet in the background, is the first to serve and the last to speak. The girl is socialised to look after others especially through the care of children and service to adults. The major burden of household chores and responsibilities fall on the girl. The socialisation process transmits values and

attitudes that cast women and girls in subordinate roles, defining them primarily as child-bearers and child-rearers, thereby forcing them to marry early.

2.3.1 EARLY MARRIAGES

On 22nd November 2006, there was a provoking article in one of the local newspapers, *The Post*. The article was entitled, '20 school girls forced into marriage in Kasenengwa'. It was reported that:

More than 20 young girls among them grade three pupils had been married off at Chiparamba Basic School in Kasenengwa constituency. The girls were married off between March and November 2006. The school headteacher, Aaron Nkhata appealed to stake holders and chiefs to help reduce early marriages in the area. He further emphasized that it was an offence for a person to marry a girl who was under sixteen years (2006: 7).

Similarly, on 15th May 2005, *The Post* reported that Chief Mwansakombe of Samfya district had banned early marriages in his kingdom. The ban followed a case in which a 15-year-old girl had problems in giving birth at a hospital. The chief said he personally had to take the girl to the hospital. He requested to see the girl's parents and told his subjects that anyone who would marry off a girl below 21 years old should be reported to him. He instructed all subjects to stop practicing early marriages and those girls and boys involved in such vices should be sent back to school (2005:10).

Although education activists have emphasized the need to educate the girl-child, it seems the message continues to fall on deaf ears, more so in rural areas where both parents and children seem to care less about the importance of education. There was another article in *The Times of Zambia* news paper (08.11.2005) on early marriages affecting girls' education. It was about a 14-year-old girl, Maria, of Serenje district in

Central Province, who felt she could not go to school then because she had passed that stage and just wanted to get married and start a family. "Most of my age-mates have married and some have children which I greatly admire. They have homes and are taking care of their husbands, and their parents have enough food because their in-laws help them cultivate the fields," she said. Sadly, Maria's parents were in the forefront negotiating for her marriage sometime in 2004.

In an interview, Maria disclosed that her parents negotiated for her marriage in December 2004 and had since taken *Ichisekelela busonge* (food and beer taken by the girls' family in approving the daughter's husband to-be). Asked as to whether she was comfortable with the arrangement, Maria said her parents' decision had to prevail; especially that she had grown to love the man. Maria represents a growing number of young girls in several Zambian rural communities who were ending up in early marriages at the expense of going to school.

Traditionally, the role of a woman is a subservient one: to meet the physical, psychological, economic and sexual needs of a man, to be obedient to him and to show him unquestioning loyalty, to bear and rear his children and to arrange for his comfort. In relation to the girl child, this belief leads to the attitude that essentially she is a wife-in-waiting. Therefore, her most important task during childhood is to learn what is needed to be a good wife and a good mother. Mostly elderly women, mothers and members of the age group impart this type of attitude into the girls at a tender age. The same belief and attitude is transmitted from one generation to another.

D Garvey in 2004 published his work on *Cultural practices in Zambia* (London: Heinemann). In his publication he stated that girls had a particular importance in the Bemba village and could be retained in school only with difficulty. Not only were they useful to their mothers for work around the house and in the fields, but also their

marriages brought the advantage of lobola (bride price). Hence, early marriages were greatly favoured. Lobola (a number of cattle, goats or their cash equivalent) is something that is highly treasured in a village set up but many people forget that it has some negative consequences. A good example is Belita's case in Mpika district. Belita, a girl of eleven years was married off by her grandfather for 10,000 Zambian kwacha (US \$2). She had to marry an old man who has been very aggressive to her, so much so that all her front teeth have been knocked out. Belita is now seventeen years old and has four children. She has no front teeth, and she leads a miserable life (*Times*, 12.03.08). One might wonder what Belita has benefited from her marriage apart from misery.

Ocitti carried out a systematic study of traditional education among the Acholi people of Northern Uganda in 1971. He outlined the tasks which the children were taught at different age-levels. The traditional teachers involved here were parents, brothers, sisters, relatives and members of the same age group. Ocitti's duty sheet shows that for the Acholi, the period of active participation started at the age of eight and continued throughout life. For the girls of 8-12 years of age, Ocitti states:

Some of the duties that girls of these ages performed included accompanying mother or other siblings to fetch water, firewood or opuyu (black soil), sweeping and smearing houses; putting cooking utensils in their proper places and washing or cleaning household containers; running more important and large domestic errands; taking food and water to the field where father and brother might be digging; taking care of younger children, especially during playtime, scaring birds from millet fields; taking out and leading an old blind paternal grandmother or any elder; assisting mother in grinding millet grains; working hand in hand with the mother in pulling up weeds, or harvesting crops like simsim, millet, groundnuts; chipping and preparing logs for fuel and collecting vegetables (Tiberondwa, 1978: 2-3).

Similarly, in Zambian traditional society, girls are taught similar roles in preparation for early marriage. This undermines their progress in education.

2.3.2 INITIATION RITES

Initiation rites refer to the teachings given to girls at puberty stage (between 12 and 15 years). Mwewa (1997: 14) emphasizes that there are three significant phases in the puberty rites according to traditional Zambian life. The first is the withdrawal from the community into seclusion. This symbolizes death. The initiate is dead, she is in the world of shades, and therefore she may not speak loud. Speaking is discouraged. The second phase is characterized by intensive instructions about life, rights and duties or responsibilities of a mature lady in her society. The third phase is presenting the initiated girl to the public, which is marked by a public dance. She is brought back to life. She is integrated into the life of the grownups. After the celebrations, very few girls look forward to going back to school as they feel they are mature enough to get into marriage and put into practice what they have been taught.

Mbiti (1969: 135) observes that the educational purpose of initiation rites is to introduce young people especially girls to matters of sex, marriage, procreation and family life. Mostly, when a girl has reached puberty, she is entrusted to a wise and experienced instructress or instructresses known as *nacimbusa/banacimbusa* (Icibemba). The girl is secluded from public life. In the past, this withdrawal from community used to last about half a year. Now, due to change in social structures and patterns of education, this period has been shortened considerably. The period might last for a month or two. During all this period the girl does not attend lessons at school. She is completely withdrawn while boys continue learning and gaining more knowledge. Kelly (1994: 6) points out that, 'the period of seclusion at puberty may deprive the girl of valuable learning time. What is learnt during this period orients the maturing girl very strongly to early marriage and the termination of schooling.'

When girls drop out of school to get married, there is a drawback effect for the community as a whole, and for future generations. Girls, who marry young, inevitably

have children early, and have many children, because their knowledge of contraception is poor and their power to negotiate its use is weak. Evidence suggests that children of young, uneducated mothers are less likely to have a good start to their education, do well in class or continue beyond the minimum schooling. Their daughters especially are likely to drop out, marry young and begin the cycle again. Early marriage can, therefore, be a significant barrier for communities seeking to raise education levels and break the cycle of poverty.

Prisca Mutale, a Chinsali resident in Zambia's Northern Province sold her two daughters aged 10 and 12 for marriage to help her to feed the other six children in her care. She says it was her last resort, since her husband abandoned her and the children. The two girls stopped going to school as hunger deprived them of the energy to walk ten kilometers to get there. They were doing grades 7 and 9 respectively. The girls were given away for K900, 000 (about US \$257) each to interested suitors (*Times of Zambia* 08.11.2005).

There is no doubt that many economic hardships exist, yet parents, guardians and others perpetuating early marriages ought to be reminded that this practice can lead to early graves, not only for the young mother but for her new born child as well. The high rate of child mortality is often due to complications during labour as was the case with the girl in chief Mwansakombe's area (page 45). The young mother's body is not mature enough to endure the physical trauma of childbirth.

The World Health Organisation estimates that the risk of death following pregnancy is twice as great for women between 15 and 19 years than for those between the ages of 20 and 24. The maternal mortality rate could be up to five times higher for girls aged between 10 and 14 than for women of about 20 years of age. When the babies

do survive, their young child-parents could be overwhelmed with the responsibility of the parenting role (www.citizenjournalismafrica.org/node/681).

Many parents in Sub-Saharan Africa believe that early marriages shield their adolescent daughters from the HIV and AIDS epidemic. So, they support the practice without realizing that it is a violation of human rights. Girls should be given chance to excel in education. Through education, girls would even have an opportunity to learn more about HIV and AIDS and its consequences.

Some girls as young as 12 years of age are married to men old enough to be their grandfathers. This distortion of the natural order of things leads to a situation where these unfortunate children leapfrog their own adolescent years, jumping directly into adulthood.

2.4 WAYS IN WHICH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CAN HELP GIRLS TO OVERCOME THE ABOVE STATED CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

The girl child could partly be rescued from such beliefs and practices through Religious Education which has the potential to instill in a learner a sense of confidence in her own identity. Self-identity would encourage girls to discover their potential and ability to do a lot of things on their own, become independent and make constructive decisions instead of conforming to all their traditional norms. They would be able to assess situations critically and speak out, contrary to the traditional teachings and beliefs.

Religious Education aims at developing an understanding of the learners' rights and responsibilities as citizens of the local, national, regional and global communities and

of the need to eliminate all forms of discrimination and other threats to human rights and democracy (MOE, 2003: 103). One of the goals of the education system set by the Ministry of Education is to produce a learner capable of developing an analytical, innovative, creative and constructive mind (MOE, 1996: 5). This suits well with Religious Education which aims at producing a learner capable of demonstrating free expression of one's own ideas especially through group discussions without any interference. This free expression would encourage girls to ask themselves whether they would benefit more from following their cultural beliefs and practices or from concentrating on their education. One of the objectives of Religious Education is to establish an environment that would cater for the psychosocial needs of pupils which would facilitate their growth to maturity as moral and responsible individuals.

Therefore, equipped with the foregoing knowledge and skills, girls in the peri-urban schools would seriously address those aspects of culture, attitudes and practices that continue to hinder the advancement of girls and women.

However, Religious Education is not the only subject offered within the Zambian school curriculum but there are other subjects as well. I will present the full range of subjects and their aims and assess the subjects that could be utilized to promote the life skills which include decision-making, problem-solving, critical-thinking, self-awareness, coping with pressures, self-esteem and self-confidence. The subjects are as follows:

1. At Middle Basic school level (Grade 1-7) there is:

- a) **Literacy and Languages** –that is English and Zambian languages

This subject aims at developing the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. It also aims at developing

awareness of Zambian culture and of similarities between Zambian languages.

b) Integrated Science

This subject aims at developing knowledge and attitudes that enhance creativity, analysis, problem solving and an investigative approach to everyday life challenges.

c) Creative and Technology Studies

The subject aims at developing the power of observation, attention to detail, creativity, imagination and endurance. The syllabus for this subject reflects a learning area where the following subjects have been integrated: Industrial Arts, Art and Design, Home Economics, Physical Education and Music.

d) Mathematics

It aims at equipping learners with numeracy and mathematical skills for further education and to enable them solve everyday mathematical problems.

e) Social and Developmental Studies

It aims at developing the ability to understand and appreciate the social and cultural values as well as to interpret positively the civic and economic issues as they relate to everyday life. Religious Education falls under this learning area. The personal and social development of the learner is the primary focus of this syllabus. It provides the learner with an opportunity to examine and explore issues at local, national and international levels. The understanding and appreciation of socio-cultural values in the

community would further his/her understanding of the complex social, economic, political, geographic and international issues.

f) Community Studies

It aims at providing an opportunity for learners to appreciate their immediate environment and economic, social and cultural activities in their local communities. It is expected that through this learning area, learners would appreciate the value of their traditional culture and acquire knowledge and skills which would help them to participate in traditional ways of life in their community in terms of both its economic and socio-cultural activities. By acquiring local skills, learners would be able to contribute to sustainable development in the locality through interaction with local people and participation in community activities (MOE, 2003: vii-viii).

2) The Upper Basic level (grade 8-9)

Under this level the subjects are not integrated but segmented. The subjects are: English, Mathematics, History, Science, Civics, and Geography, Religious Education, Office Practice, Book keeping, Home Economics and Zambian languages.

English deals mostly with communication. One is able to use English both in written and spoken form. Reading and writing skills are developed and the ability to speak English fluently and confidently is acquired. Then through Science, pupils are able to acquire problem-solving and critical-thinking skills especially through experiments. In Mathematics there is also acquisition of problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. Pupils are given sums to work out on their own and this requires critical thinking. Then in History, pupils learn about the past and this helps pupils to learn about the

mistakes made by other people and how they could avoid making similar mistakes. This promotes self-awareness. Geography deals mostly with the environment which refers to our surroundings and things found in these surroundings both physical and cultural which may differ from place to place. Then Civics gives pupils an opportunity to study the social, cultural, economic and political structure of their country. In addition, Civics provides social skills which might encourage a girl-child to participate fully in decision making as a responsible citizen. Then Home Economics deals with management of a home and also involves a bit of science.

Basing the assessment on the above subjects, only Religious Education has the potential to promote the acquisition of life-skills such as decision-making, problem-solving, critical-thinking, self-awareness, coping with pressures, self-esteem and self-confidence. Other subjects only promote partial potentiality. For example, English promotes communication; Mathematics promotes problem-solving and critical-thinking while Geography promotes problem solving, to mention but a few. Religious Education covers the development of many skills. Some of these are common across the curriculum. Such as skills of listening, talking, speaking and writing, but others are more specialized, making a particular contribution to learning in Religious Education. These might include skills of observing other people, asking questions, reflecting on experience, interpreting behaviour, analyzing concepts and evaluating their own learning, including their development of beliefs, views and opinions.

The skill of asking questions involves critical-thinking. For example the topic 'Marriage and family life' (grade 7) excites many pupils especially girls. The teacher would ask the pupils to be in groups and discuss the qualities of a good wife or husband. Each girl-child would start imagining what sort of a husband she might wish to have, someone who would be loving, caring, hard-working and trust worthy. This would help a wise girl to think critically when approached for marriage instead of going into marriage quietly without questioning.

Furthermore, decision-making skill is also emphasized in Religious Education. Decision-making is the making up of one's mind and choosing what to do in a given situation. For example, a girl-child could be found in a situation where she has to decide whether to stop school in grade 4 and marry or continue school. It might not be easy to make a decision because of some traditional beliefs and practices she is attached to. However, in Religious Education the topic 'How people make choices' would help many girls to take their time when making decisions. They would be taught about the principles of decision-making which should be applied in making decisions. These are seeing, judging and acting. Seeing the different things which could be chosen; judging which would be the best according to one's interests and beliefs; acting according to that judgment by doing what she has decided is the best. The girl-child sees the possibilities in front of her, she decides or makes up her mind and she puts into action what she has decided. Such steps are clearly outlined in Religious Education, not in any other subject.

In addition, it is important to mention that the methods used in the teaching of Religious Education help a lot to broaden one's thinking capacity. Methods such as drama, role-plays, group discussion, brain storming, debates, field trips and use of codes make boys and girls participate in lessons with an alert mind. Full participation would result into self-esteem. Girls would become aware of their own capabilities and place in their community. For example a topic 'Ambitions and Hopes' is motivating. The teacher might invite someone to give a talk on how to choose a career in life and later ask the class to be in groups and prepare short plays on someone working as a doctor at the hospital, a teacher teaching a noisy class and someone working in the bank as a teller. Through their participation each pupil would be helped to discover what they are good at. Through such activities girls would be helped to develop self-driven spirit and work harder to achieve their goals and fulfill their dreams.

Self-esteem would help girls to develop self-confidence which is another life-skill. When a girl-child has self-confidence she would work hard and look forward to achieving what she wants in life despite being considered by the community to belong to a weaker sex. Self-confidence could easily be identified during group discussions where there is usually free expression. Girls who have self-confidence are able to make wise decisions in life. They speak boldly without fear. Therefore girls in peri-urban schools require this skill if they are to come out of their entangled traditional beliefs and practices.

Life skills, by definition, are the requisite skills for survival, living with others and succeeding in a complex society. The main components of life skills include four parts. These are cognitive development and achievement, social competence, decision-making and problem-solving, and social support. The foundation work for higher order thinking skills should be laid in youth of school-going ages starting at 10 years and going through to 16. In the school, this could be done by a curriculum that is centred on the discovery method as a learning tool. In Religious Education, discovery method is used through role plays, drama and group discussions. For example in the topic 'The talents people have' (taught in Grade 8), both boys and girls would be asked to discuss their hobbies. From such an activity, the girl-child would be able to identify what she likes and is capable of doing well. She would have discovered her talent or talents. When one is out of school, the discovery method works well. In planning, implementing and examining their experiences, reasoning and analytical skills need to be developed.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 HISTORY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN ZAMBIA

Before focusing on the aims, objectives and principles of Religious Education, it is important to first examine how Religious Education started in Zambia. In traditional, pre-colonial Zambian society, Religious Education was mostly informal. The young people learnt about religion informally from elders through stories, riddles, proverbs, traditions and customs of their tribe. These stories were passed on from one generation to another. This was before the coming of Christian missionaries. The form of this traditional education varied from one tribe or society to another, depending on the environment and custom, but many elements were common to almost all tribes (Simuchimba, 2001).

The growth and development of Religious Education in colonial and Independent Zambia can be divided into three stages namely, the denominational, the interdenominational and the educational. The denominational stage covered the period between 1886 and 1971. The first and earliest schools in Northern Rhodesia were mission schools. The schools in each area then belonged to the Christian denomination, which predominated there, and the Religious Instruction (as Religious Education was called then) taught in each school was according to the doctrine of that particular mission church (Masterton, 1987: 5).

There were two motives for the missionaries' zeal to educate the local people. In order that they might receive and understand the gospel message, the people had to be able to read the Bible. Secondly, in order for the Good News to spread to those whom the missionaries themselves were unable to reach, some local people needed to read and understand the Bible. Education was an essential element in evangelization and in nurturing Christian leadership. (Snelson, 1974: 11). After Independence, Religious Instruction was timetabled in mission schools while in

government schools it was usually taught after classes by Catechists or preachers from different churches in the area.

Religious Instruction was, therefore, a process of indoctrination in the teachings, beliefs, values and practices of different denominations. It was not educational and therefore did not help the girl child. Girls were taught to be submissive and men did most of the teaching. Each denomination had its own Religious Instruction syllabus at primary school level. At Junior Secondary level, there were two syllabi: Syllabus 'A' was for Catholic schools and Catholic groups in government schools, while Syllabus 'B' was for all Protestants. At senior secondary level, Cambridge Bible Knowledge syllabi were accepted and used by all denominations (Simuchimba, 2001).

Following Independence in 1964, most churches handed over the responsibility of administering their primary schools to the Ministry of Education and Culture. They retained a say in school management and the right of entry to give Religious Instruction. This resulted in an 'Interdenominational Era'. According to Simuchimba (2005: 125), there was no educational Religious Education syllabus for the new Ministry of Education to inherit and control at Independence. Therefore, Religious Education as a subject continued to be denominational in its content and methods as the case were during the colonial period. This might have also contributed to low figures of education among girls during that period because no encouragement or motivation was given to the girl child.

In 1971, the church bodies, the Christian Council of Zambia (which is now called Council of Churches in Zambia) and the Zambia Episcopal Conference came up with an agreed Religious Education syllabus for primary schools in October 1971 and it was later approved by the Ministry of Education (Henze, 1994: 13). Henze further states that Zambia was the first country in Eastern and Central Africa to have an

agreed syllabus and all the handbooks. The new syllabus emphasized the fact that 'the main task in Religious Education was to lead the pupils to the point where they would be able to make free and responsible choices on their own concerning matters of faith and behaviour (Masterton, 1985: 9). This clearly meant that the new Religious Education had a new dimension. Enabling pupils to make free and responsible choices meant removal of indoctrination and giving learners freedom to critically analyze issues in life rather than accepting whatever was imposed on them.

In August, 1972, the Religious Education syllabus for secondary schools was equally approved. In 1973, a two-year East African Syllabus called 'Developing in Christ' and a locally written one-year syllabus called 'Zambian Supplement' were accepted by the three church bodies (ZEC, CCZ & EFZ) to become the joint syllabus for Junior Secondary School, Forms 1-3. Later, a modified joint version was prepared by the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC).

In 1975, the Ministry of Education introduced 'Christian Living Today' as an alternative Religious Education syllabus to the two Cambridge Bible Knowledge syllabi at Senior Secondary or School Certificate level. This syllabus was a continuation of the Developing in Christ syllabus and was taken mainly in Catholic administered schools and some government schools. The interdenominational approach to Zambian Religious Education continued until 1984. Meanwhile, discussions for a more educational approach were already going on as part of wider proposals for educational reforms published in 1977 (Simuchimba, 2005).

In 1977, the Zambian government came up with a new education policy document known as *Educational Reform* whose aim was to create a system of education which was properly attuned to, and more fully meets the needs and aspirations of Zambians' (MOE, 1977: v). In line with this, Religious Education as a school subject

was made more educational and Zambian in approach from 1984/85. At junior secondary school level, a 'Zambianised' version of the 'Developing in Christ' syllabus was introduced in 1984.

At senior secondary school level, two new syllabi were introduced: 'Christian Living Today' called Religious Education Syllabus 2044 and a modified version of 'Cambridge Bible Knowledge' called Religious Education Syllabus 2046 (CDC, 1984). Syllabus 2044 comprises life-themes relevant to the learner's life. The syllabus is divided into five major themes, each of which is divided into three sub-themes. Each of the sub-themes is thoroughly analyzed from four perspectives namely, Present situation; African tradition; Church history and Bible teaching before 'pupils are challenged to come up with a conclusion.... relevant to their lives' (CDC, 1984: 4). The themes and sub-themes will be discussed in detail under Religious Education at high school level.

The second, syllabus 2046, is divided into two parts. Part one comprises the Life of Christ based on Luke's Gospel, which has twenty units. Part two consists of Christian Witness and Behaviour partly based on the Acts, which has ten units. Each of the units has four learning stages namely: recall of the Bible content; statement of the spiritual and moral values deduced from the Bible, relating these spiritual and moral values to Zambia today, and comparing these spiritual and moral values with related values from non-Christian religious traditions in Zambia (MOE, 1984: 1). The topics will also be discussed in detail under Religious Education in high schools.

All the three new syllabi became pluralistic by including aspects of other religious traditions in Zambia namely: Hinduism, Indigenous Zambian religious beliefs, Islam and religious aspects of the then national philosophy called 'Zambian Humanism'. In Zambian humanistic society, the aim of national education was to develop the

potential of each citizen to the full for his own well-being as well as that of society and for selfless service to his fellow men. (MOE, 1977: 5). Despite the introduction of this philosophy, there was no improvement regarding girl child education, especially in the peri-urban areas.

The name of the subject was also officially changed from Religious Education to Spiritual and Moral Education (SAME). The main aim of the subject was formulated and stated as follows:

To enable pupils to appreciate spiritual, moral and religious values and behaviour based on them. This appreciation is drawn from four religious traditions in Zambia, (namely: Christianity, Hinduism, Indigenous Zambian Beliefs and Islam), and from the religious elements of the Zambian philosophy of Humanism (CDC, 1984: 4).

This broadened the subject. The learners were able to compare and contrast the way of life in different religions critically and make constructive choices in life. This helps even girls to explore their experience at depth and come to understand the deeper factors at work in their lives.

However, with the recent introduction of the new national education policy, *Educating Our Future* (MOE, 1996), Religious Education has become more educational and relevant to the learners (both girls and boys) and to society. It covers many important aspects of life, which is good for the girl child in peri-urban areas who lacks a lot of useful information and knowledge.

3.1 THE AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN ZAMBIA

The aims, objectives and principles of Religious Education in Zambia will be discussed to assess the relevance of the subject towards girls' educational rights. The aims will be discussed first, followed by objectives and lastly, the principles.

3.1.1 Aims of Religious Education

As stated above, the main aim of Religious Education is to enable pupils to appreciate spiritual, moral and religious values and the behaviour based on them. This appreciation is drawn from the four main religious traditions in Zambia, which are: Christianity, Hinduism, Indigenous Zambian Beliefs and Islam. (CDC,1984: 4). Muleya (2007: 85) observes that the aim of Religious Education is essentially the same as that of education as a whole, as it enables the pupil (both girl and boy) to recognize and develop his particular gifts and aptitudes, to relate different bodies of knowledge to each other, and to consider some of the deeper aspects of the human situation.

Another aim of Religious Education is to develop willingness in learners to value diversity in religion and culture. This enables pupils to explore more about other people's religious and cultural beliefs and compare these with theirs rather than rigidly following one's own religious and cultural beliefs and practices. This broadens the learner's way of thinking and instills self-confidence, which is lacking in many girls, especially those in the peri-urban areas. Mujdrlica (1995), Henze (2000) and Simuchimba (2001, 2005) observe that today, Religious Education is pluralistic. It is inclusive rather than denominational and exclusive. The subject aims at contributing to the realization of the goals and aims of the Zambian education system by being contextual and broadly based, democratic and open rather than authoritarian. It is critical and evaluative rather than simply appreciative of religious beliefs and values.

As such, indoctrination is no longer acceptable. When the girl child is indoctrinated, her freedom and dignity are short-circuited, her autonomy denied, her control over her own life and ability to contribute to community life truncated, her mental life impoverished. Indoctrination makes someone believe in something without questioning or making his or her own decision on the matter. It causes brainwashing and lack of self-esteem. But Religious Education has the potential to provide opportunities for both girls and boys to develop the skills, knowledge, values and attitudes necessary for survival in society (MOE, 2003: 103). The skills that are emphasized in Religious Education correspond with the educational skills stressed in *Educating Our Future*, the national education policy document. These skills include decision-making, problem-solving, creative-thinking, critical-thinking, effective communication, inter-personal relationships, self-awareness, stress and anxiety management, coping with pressures, self-esteem and confidence (MOE, 1996: 43).

These life skills equip both girls and boys for positive social behaviour and for coping with negative pressures such as those which are driven by cultural beliefs and practices. For example, in a situation where a girl is forced by the parents to abandon school and go into marriage so that parents benefit through the receiving of the bride price, the girl would stand her grounds and refuse to adhere to her parents' advice. She would use her communicative skill to discuss her views and priorities openly and confidently with her parents. This ability can be acquired mainly through Religious Education.

3.1.2 Objectives of Religious Education

This section discusses objectives of Religious Education for grades one to nine (Basic Education). This is because the peri-urban schools under this study were under this category. Almost all the peri-urban schools in Chingola district do not cater

for senior grades. When pupils qualify for grade ten, they move to urban schools if they can afford the cost.

It is important again to note that the primary objective of Religious Education in Zambia is to give the pupils a growing awareness of a religious outlook and values, and behaviour based on the same values. This awareness, which is essentially Christian, includes the values of traditional religions, and includes aspects of other world religions. Further, Masterton (1985: 38) observes that pupils should be able to:

- i. express their uniqueness, which is derived from a sensitive awareness of the differences and similarities between themselves and others, and
- ii. make moral decisions based on religious values and justify them.

Religious Education has the potential to enable pupils express their uniqueness, especially through role-plays and group discussions. They are at liberty to discuss different aspects of life freely depending on the topic at hand and make moral decisions without any interference or intimidation.

However, it is important to mention at this point that currently there are two Religious Education syllabi at the basic school level, the old and the new syllabus. The old primary Religious Education syllabus is known as Social, Spiritual and Moral Education. It caters for grades one to nine. The other one is the new Social and Developmental Studies syllabus (SDS), which is integrated merging Religious Education with Social Studies and is from grades one to seven. Grade eight and nine work is still based on the old syllabus. Therefore, the topics and objectives of both the old and the new syllabi will be discussed.

(a) *The old Religious Education syllabus*

GRADE	TOPIC/THEME
1	New Friends; The Sun; The Wind; Water; Trees, Plants and Flowers; Animals and Birds; Our Bodies; Work and Play; Our Homes; Our School; Our Nation; Buildings and Visitors.
2	Friends; Strangers, Growing in responsibility; Punishment and Fear; Asking for Forgiveness and Traveling to Distant places.
3	Caring for other people; Water; Our Communities; Celebrations and Festivals.
4	Rural Life and Urban Life; Food and Drink; Bravery and Courage; Praying to God; Illness and Handicaps; Death and New Life; Sharing and Giving.
5	Growing up and learning; Light and Life; Teachers and teaching; Writing and the Bible; Worshipping together and Happiness.
6	Honesty and trust; laws and rules; Leaders and leadership; Fire; Development and Co-operation; Project of service; Religious groups and their background; Family and Christmas.
7	Marriage and Family life; Life and death; Health and sickness as well as Leaving school.
8	How people develop; How Religion helps people; Learning about religion; How people make choices; The talents people have; co-operation and trust; Friendship and love; Male and female; Division and hatred; Sin and forgiveness.
9	Learning and truth; Freedom and community; Authority and leadership; Ambitions and Hopes; Disappointments and suffering; Death and eternal life; Religion and prayer. (CDC, 1983: 5-6).

The objectives

Each grade has different topics and its own objectives. However, as will be observed, the objectives are inter-related. They are as follows:

Grade 1:

Pupils should be able to identify new friends and thank God for friends, the sun, wind, water and plants which are useful to mankind. They should also be able to discuss their homes, that is, the role of father, mother and children. Emphasis is on co-operation.

Grade 2:

Pupils should be able to state how they have changed and how their activities have changed as they grow in responsibility. They should also be able to illustrate through role-play situations in which children are justly punished and should teach them how to overcome fear.

Grade 3:

Pupils should be able to illustrate how they look after things which they value and how they mend them when they are broken. They should also be able to relate traditional Zambian proverbs and stories about helping people in need. Furthermore, pupils should be able to list occasions when their families celebrate some important events and illustrate what happens on such occasions (birthdays, naming of the baby, puberty rites, and weddings). They should also name occasions when traditional festivals are celebrated (Kuomboka, Mutomboko, Likumbi Lyamize, Ichibwela mushi and others), religious festivals such as Diwali (Hindu festival), end of Ramadan (Muslim festival) and Easter (Christian festival).

Grade 4:

Pupils should be able to compare life in a Zambian town with life in a Zambian village. They should describe the differences between rural and urban life. Under bravery and courage, the pupils should illustrate people's fear of being mocked or laughed at by other people. They should also act role-plays of people who have done what they believed in, even when other people were mocking them. They should tell stories of people who showed courage to overcome their poverty or physical handicaps to achieve their ambitions.

Grade 5:

Under the topic 'Growing up and Learning,' pupils should be able to outline the traditional procedures a Zambian girl/boy goes through when she/he reaches maturity. They should be able to describe how Muslim children are taught the Qu'ran and how a young member of a Hindu family learns Hindu beliefs and practices. Then under 'Light and Life' pupils should be able to explain how in Zambian tradition, light has been used as a sign of freedom from fear and from colonial rule.

Grade 6:

Under the topic 'Laws and Rules,' pupils should be able to show the importance of self-discipline and conscience in a person's life. Then under another topic 'Development and Co-operation', pupils should be able to identify some of their own talents, and explain how they have discovered and developed those talents.

Grade 7:

Under the topic 'Marriage and Family life,' pupils should be able to describe the traditional Zambian ceremonies performed when a girl becomes mature and explain the purpose of traditional Zambian initiation ceremonies. They should also be able to identify reasons for disagreements and misunderstandings between elders and the teenagers in Zambia today. Furthermore, under the topic 'Leaving School', pupils should be able to formulate appropriate advice for a person who has been selected for entry into grade eight (especially a girl-child).

Grade 8:

This grade starts with the topic 'How people Develop'. Pupils should be able to describe how a person develops from an infant who mainly receives to an adult who receives, shares and gives. Then, under the topic 'How people make choices', pupils should be able to classify statements about themselves into circumstances they have chosen and circumstances they have not chosen. They should try to implement the steps of seeing, judging and acting within the choices they make in a given situation. 'The Talents people have' is another topic. Pupils should be able to explain and illustrate how people discover their talents. They should also show that every person has talents, which should be developed.

In addition, at this stage pupils would also learn about 'Male and Female'. Pupils should be able to state and explain traditional Zambian proverbs, songs and dances about the roles and characteristics of women and of men. They should further compare the position of women in traditional Zambian society with the position of women in modern Zambian society. They should also illustrate how people learn to develop reason and will and to control their emotions and physical needs.

Grade 9:

The first topic in grade nine is 'Learning and Truth'. This involves guided and unguided learning. Pupils should be able to identify guided and unguided learning in their own experience, in their families and at school. The pupils also learn about 'Freedom and Community'. Under this topic, pupils should be able to illustrate obstacles to the freedom of an adolescent in modern Zambia, describe a community where the freedom of each member and of all the members is respected. And lastly, under the topic 'Ambitions and Hopes,' pupils should be able to explain what their own hopes are based on, show how and why their ambitions have changed during their lives and show how people's behaviour is motivated by their ambitions and hopes.

All the foregoing objectives are directed towards the development of an individual. Henze (2000: 43) observes that Religious Education is a process of discovery and change rather than simple conformity to traditions. As pupils start making friends in grade one, their attention will be diverted from the home environment to learning new things from their friends. New ideas will be acquired.

At grade two level, through role-play situations, the pupils would be able to detect when they are unjustly punished in life and learn how to overcome fear. This would help them to start developing life-skills like observing other people and asking questions from a tender age. At each level, the pupils would discover something important in life and slowly they would begin analyzing concepts and evaluating their own learning, including their development of beliefs, views and opinions.

In addition, through discussions, learners would develop free expression, which might enable girls to exercise their rights and make their own independent decisions in life

without being suppressed. And when they discover their talents, they would strive to work hard in order to develop them. They would develop reflective reasoning and logical thinking which would enable girls not just to follow blindly what everyone is doing but to think about the goals they intend to achieve in life. The girls would be motivated and become more ambitious.

The objectives would guide the teacher and the pupils to achieve their intended goals at the end of basic education and help to prepare them to face more challenges as they cross over to high school level. Generally these objectives are in line with the goals of the education system outlined in the national education policy document, *Educating Our Future*, already stated under literature review.

(b) *The new Social and Development Studies Syllabus*

Apart from religion, this syllabus attempts to cover a cross-section of social issues, which have come to the fore in the Zambian society in the last decade. The issues include HIV and AIDS, Human Rights, Democracy and Citizenship, Substance abuse, Life Skills, Education for Development and Environmental Issues.

The syllabus has five themes running through from Grades 1-7. These are: Living Together, Spiritual and Moral Education, Food, Environment and Communication and Transport (MOE, 2003: 102). In the early grades, more emphasis is put on the development of the child's understanding of his/her immediate environment. The understanding of cultural values and the behaviour of an individual and the community is important as it enables the child to appreciate and understand the importance of certain institutions in his/her community.

The personal and social development of the learner is the primary focus of this syllabus. It provides the learner with an opportunity to examine and explore issues at local, national and international levels. The understanding and appreciation of socio-cultural values in the community would further one's understanding of the complex social, economic, political, geographical and international issues.

Social and Development Studies syllabus aims at preparing the learner physically, socially, culturally, emotionally, economically and spiritually. The course also provides opportunities for the development of skill, knowledge, values and attitudes necessary for the survival of an individual in society. It has the following outcomes or objectives:

1. Develop an understanding of the economic, political, civic, cultural, geographical and historical factors, which influence social development.
2. Develop an understanding of their rights and responsibilities as citizens of the local, national, regional and global communities and of the need to eliminate all forms of discrimination and other threats to human rights and democracy.
3. Develop an understanding of the importance of ecological balance, effects of environmental destruction and the need to balance economic growth and conservation through a process of sustainable development.
4. Develop moral and ethical qualities rooted in a spiritual dimension.
5. Develop an understanding of the functions of social institutions and roles of the individuals and groups of different cultural settings in both the past and the present.
6. Create an awareness of the interaction of human beings with the social, economic and biophysical environment.
7. Create an awareness of the major prevalent diseases and harmful habits in the community and how to control and prevent them.

8. Acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to understand and make informed decisions;
9. Equip learners with the necessary understanding of contemporary issues such as HIV/AIDS, human rights, substance abuse, child abuse, water and sanitation, corruption and good governance.
10. Acquire and apply basic social and development skills, methods and techniques (MOE, 2003: 103).

Although this syllabus is integrated, most of the outcomes are in line with this study. For example, understanding the cultural factors which influence social development would enable the girl child to assess the cultural beliefs and practices and choose to follow only those which are constructive. She would be free to make her own choices and even gender discrimination would not be tolerated. She would realize that every human being has the right to choose what he/ she wants to do in life.

Apart from assessing their cultural beliefs and practices, girls would acquire good morals which would result in the reduction of early pregnancies while acquisition of life-skills might empower girls to exercise personal autonomy and independence. They would be able to think, reflect on issues, analyze them, make their own decisions, and hold on to them. Mudalitsa (2000: 31) cited a fable written by Saadi, a renowned Muslim thinker of the 13th century, which appears to contain a deep insight into the relationship between religion and education.

A man walking through the forest saw a fox that had lost its legs and wondered how it lived. Then he saw a tiger come with game in its mouth. The tiger had its fill and left the rest for the fox.

The next day too, God sent the tiger to feed the fox. The man began to wonder at God's greatness and thought, "I too shall lie in a corner trusting the Lord to give me all I need".

He did this for a month and was almost at death's door when he heard a voice that said, "Oh you who are on the path of error, open your eyes to the truth: imitate the tiger not the fox."

The tiger represents a fully educated person who is autonomous as well as other-centered, while the voice represents true religion that urges us to use all our God-given talents to improve the quality of life for others and ourselves. Therefore, girls in the peri-urban areas should not be docile, passive and modest but should be creative and innovative so that they fend for themselves.

A big responsibility and function of Religious Education is to help pupils to come to terms with questions about their own identity, their own values and life styles, their own priorities and commitments, and their own frame of reference for viewing life and giving it meaning.

A properly reflective Religious Education could create opportunities for pupils to engage in the following:

- i. Stopping, looking and seeing – encouraging pupils to open their eyes and give attention to the wonders all around and reflecting on what such wonders might be saying to us;
- ii. Listening with attention to inner selves through reflective exercises which put us in touch with our inner thoughts, feelings, beliefs and attitudes and enable us to unlock some of our inner potential;
- iii. Listening with attention to others, both directly (teachers, fellow-pupils, visitors) and indirectly (through the stories of faith communities) with a view to enlarging the experience of the individual and challenging narrow assumptions;

- iv. Exploring questions of meaning, purpose, morality and value of life in relation to the insights of African Tradition Religion and world faiths
- v. Understanding the ambiguities, tensions and doubts that are part of life, and learning to live with them (Henze, 2002: 4).

Reflection would enable girls not to take everything as plain truth but to compare and contrast issues in life before making any constructive decisions regarding what they need to achieve in life. It is important in life to be focused and to visualize what is expected of you. This kind of attitude would give someone the zeal to work hard and achieve what she wants in life.

In concluding this part of the chapter, I should emphasize that the Religious Education syllabus at basic school level is pupil-oriented and experimental; it exposes pupils to worthwhile experiences. If it is well taught, girls in the peri-urban schools might react to their experiences by reflecting and expressing their views and feelings. It is necessary for them to see, touch, explore, imagine, empathize, meditate, question, discuss, argue, act, sing and dance. Only in this way can the aim of Religious Education be achieved and girls develop their own beliefs and values and a consistent pattern of behaviour.

3.2 PRINCIPLES OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Principles act as guidelines in whatever we are doing, including the teaching and learning of Religious Education. Garth Read and others (1992: 3) outline the following as key principles of modern Religious Education:

- a) Children need to develop their own beliefs and values and a consistent pattern of behaviour.
- b) The role of a teacher is to educate and not to indoctrinate.
- c) The teaching of RE must be related to ages and abilities of pupils.

- d) Religious Education has a major contribution towards helping pupils or learners to develop a positive and understanding attitude towards diversity in a pluralistic society.
- e) Religious Education has a particular contribution to make to spiritual, moral and social development of pupils.
- f) Religious Education helps pupils to explore a range of religious beliefs and practices and related human experiences.
- g) Religious Education must have an impact upon the pupils' own lives.

Having beliefs and acting upon them is one of the most important humanizing factors. This is particularly true when people find themselves in a situation where they are forced to make a choice between two alternatives. Some may respond simply on the basis of their own self-interest and initial feelings. Others, however, may choose the less attractive alternative, at whatever personal cost, because it squares with their values and expresses their belief. By doing so, they rise above merely instinctive responses, and illustrate their capacity of being genuinely human. It is also part of being human that we take responsibility for our beliefs and actions and embrace them as our own. This element of responsibility is an important aspect of maturity. It follows that mature human beings would think responsibly about their beliefs and would act upon them in a responsible manner. A distinction could be drawn here. On the one hand there are people who simply adhere to beliefs and customs out of habit or because they have inherited them or have been indoctrinated into them. On the other hand, some people have reflected upon them, proved them on the test-bed of their own experiences and subjected them to the scrutiny of the beliefs and values of others. Religious Education has the potential, through reflection, to transform the thinking capacity of an individual.

Furthermore, Religious Education has a particularly important contribution to make to the spiritual, moral and social development of pupils. As children mature, it is important that they assume responsibility for themselves and for their own actions, that they act in a responsible way towards others and that they are given the

opportunity to reflect on the important spiritual and moral questions they would encounter. It is in this area that Religious Education has a large contribution to make. Religious Education would help pupils to explore a range of religious beliefs and practices and related human experiences. It encompasses its main areas of essential content, which distinguishes it from other subject areas. This is not to suggest that the only difference between Religious Education and other subjects is the content or area of knowledge it deals with, but it is rather to emphasize the importance of the exploration of the subject's content, or field of enquiry, as the means through which the subject's aim is realized.

Young children usually come to explore beliefs and values by observing the way people behave. Religious Education, however, is not merely a study of the outward forms of religion, it is concerned with exploring the feelings and attitudes that lie behind the behaviour, and helps children to appreciate the importance in religion of drama, music, story and symbol, and of the way in which language is used figuratively to express meaning.

Therefore, the aims, objectives and principles of Religious Education are inter-related. The main emphasis is on teaching and learning of Religious Education which is contextual and broadly based, democratic and open and which could help an individual to develop holistically. Ideally, Religious Education fits the growing personalities of children just like their clothes fit their growing bodies. Religious Education concepts have the cognitive and affective dimensions. There are three broad stages of learning development: first, children begin to form concepts through their experience of the world around them; later, they broaden their concepts through observation and by gathering and organizing information; and finally, they can use and apply concepts and general principles. That is why Religious Education begins with the observable features of religion and human experience and moves towards the abstract core of ultimate questions, beliefs and spirituality (Mujdrlica, 1995: 15).

3.3 THE RELEVANCE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SYLLABI

It is important to discuss the relevance of Religious Education syllabi at all levels in order to further establish the role the subject can play in promoting girl child educational advancement in the peri-urban areas right from the lower grades. Education in Zambia is intended to serve individual, social and economic well-being and to enhance the quality of life for all whether boy or girl, man or woman (MOE, 1996: 3). There is no room for segregation.

3.3.1 Basic school level

In grade five most of the girls in the peri-urban schools in Zambia are in the range of thirteen and fifteen years of age and the topic 'Growing up and Learning' is appropriate. Young people are taught correct behaviour and traditions of Zambian life, especially when they reach puberty stage. Muslim children are taught part of the Qu'ran and the young Hindus learn appropriate Hindu beliefs and practices (MOE, 1983: 14). Through such teachings pupils would acquire knowledge, values and attitudes necessary for the survival of an individual in society. A girl who is knowledgeable would be capable of making informed decisions even in the early stages of her life.

In grade six through to grade seven a lot of work is covered concerning real life situations such as marriage and family life; life and death; health and sickness. The girls would have an idea or an understanding of what is expected of them in marriage and family life. They would learn about advantages and disadvantages of early marriage and each one would ask herself whether she was ready to go into marriage or continue with school. Furthermore, when girls learn about health and sickness, they would be conscious of their behaviour and strive to lead morally upright lives and avoid contracting sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV and AIDS.

In grade eight through to grade nine, girls would acquire more knowledge in addition to what they would have learnt from their lower grades. Topics like 'How people make Choices', 'The talents people have', and 'Friendship and Love', 'Ambitions and Hopes' would help to open their eyes and promote their critical thinking. Unlike other subjects on the curriculum, Religious Education has a unique capacity to challenge pupils to strive towards what is true, right, noble and good; and in this way they have the potential to 'develop completely for their own personal fulfillment and good of society' (MOE, 1996: 29). Religious Education compared to other subjects helps to deal with issues of values, beliefs and attitudes in a more direct and detailed manner.

3.3.2 High school level

Although the focus of this study is on basic school education, it is imperative to touch high school level also because the two levels are interlinked. Building on the foundation laid in grade eight and nine, the broad aim of high school education is the integrated and comprehensive development of each pupil's potential (MOE, 1996: 51).

Unlike at the basic education level where Religious Education is compulsory, the subject is optional at high school level. There are two syllabi namely, Syllabus 2044 and Syllabus 2046. The two syllabi are outlined as follows:

Syllabus 2044

This syllabus consists of five major themes and each theme is divided into three sub-themes, all of which are analyzed from four perspectives namely: Present situation; African tradition; Church history and Bible teaching before 'pupils are challenged to come with a conclusion ... relevant to their lives' (CDC, 1984: 4). It is clear that this syllabus has all the features of the Life-Centred model of Religious Education with additional stress on Christian action. Its basic approach is: 'See (society, tradition, the churches), Judge (according to the Bible), and Act (like a Christian)' (Mujdrlica, 1995: 35-36). The following are the themes and sub-themes it covers:

Theme: Man in a changing society. Sub-themes are:

- Living in a changing society,
- Working in a changing society,
- Leisure in a changing society.

Theme: Order and freedom in society. Sub-themes are:

- Justice,
- Service,
- Loyalty.

Theme: Life. Sub-themes are:

- Happiness,
- Unending life,
- Success.

Theme: Man and woman. Sub-themes are:

- Family life,
- Sex differences and the person,
- Courtship and marriage.

Theme: Man's response to God through faith and love. Sub-themes are:

- Quest for God,
- Evasion of God,
- Involvement in the world (CDC, 1987: 3).

Care is taken to allow free response and in searching for a synthesis to avoid imposing a conclusion on pupils, so the syllabus is true to the principles of genuine education. 'Leisure in a changing society' as a topic helps pupils especially girls to be conscious with the way they spend their leisure time and not to be excited with life because excitement usually results in uncalled for behaviour and immature love affairs. Most of the teenagers think that the best way to spend their leisure time is by getting involved in beer drinking and going out with friends of the opposite sex. However, in Religious Education pupils are guided on how they can spend their leisure time more positively.

The other topic, 'Working in a changing society,' encourages pupils to work hard regardless of one's sex. Girls are free to compete with boys and even work harder to accomplish any given task in class or outside class. In Zambian traditional life, there are specific duties for girls and women and duties for boys and men. However, through this topic girls and boys would realize that there are no divisions as to who does what. Girls have the potential to do the same type of job that boys are capable of doing. This helps to eradicate inferiority complex among the girls.

The second major theme is 'Order and Freedom'. Freedom is supposed to help girls to defy some of the traditions which interfere with education and to choose what they want in life, especially advancement in their education. One of the topics under this theme is 'Justice in society.' Justice is a prerogative human right. When girls are

empowered with knowledge regarding justice, they would break the silence and with courage and integrity, they would be free to question some beliefs and practices imposed on them.

Furthermore, the theme 'Man and Woman' has topics such as 'Courtship and Marriage' which are challenging to both girls and boys. The pupils are availed an opportunity to learn about what to look for in a life partner and when it would be appropriate for them to go into marriage rather than being forced into it at a tender age.

As can be seen, these topics are educative as they touch on various aspects of life. Both girls and boys should bear in mind that the goal of education is the facilitation of change and learning. The only person who is educated is the one who has learned how to adapt and change, one who has realized that knowledge is secure, and that only the process of seeking knowledge gives a basis for security.

Syllabus 2046

This syllabus is divided into two parts: the Life of Christ based on the Gospels, and Christian Witness and Behaviour, partly based on the book of Acts. The syllabus has 31 Units and each unit has four learning stages as follows:

1. Recall the Bible content;
2. State the spiritual and moral values deduced from the content;
3. Relate those values to contemporary Zambia; and
4. Compare those values with similar values in non-Christian traditions (CDC, 1984: 29).

Part One has the following 20 units:

- Background to the Life of Christ,
- Infancy of John and Jesus,
- Ministry and death of John,
- Baptism,
- Temptations,
- Apostles and disciples,
- Power over disease and nature,
- Power over evil spirits,
- Parables,
- Kingdom of God,
- Judgment,
- The law,
- Prayer,
- Attitudes to people,
- Family life,
- Suffering for the kingdom of God,
- Jerusalem and the temple,
- Opposition to Jesus,
- The last supper and the crucifixion,
- Triumph over death. (CDC, 1984: 29-41).

Then Part Two has the following units:

- Background to the early church,
- Witnessing across racial and cultural barriers,
- Witnessing in the face of opposition,
- Witnessing through life together,
- Christian attitudes to work,
- Christian attitudes to leisure,

- Christian attitudes to money and possessions,
- Christian attitudes to people,
- Christian attitudes to the state,
- Christian attitudes to sex and marriage,
- Relationships between parents and children. (CDC, 1984: 41-46).

There are some topics from the two parts of the syllabus that are relevant to my study; and are also close to what I am concerned with. Topics like Temptations, Prayer, Family Life, Christian attitudes to Leisure, Christian attitudes to Money and Possessions, Christian attitudes to Sex and Marriage and Relationships between Parents and Children. These topics will be discussed to show their relevance to this study.

Temptations: Under this topic, girls could be enlightened on how to deal with tempting situations and challenges they are likely to encounter, as they grow up. They would learn something about how they should react to temptations. Temptations may come in various ways, for example, through our senses, our weaknesses, and our desires or through poverty. The Bible (Matthew 4: 3-11) clearly narrates how Jesus Christ was tempted and how he was able to overcome all the three temptations. Similarly, human beings also go through various temptations whether young or old, boy or girl. For example, since there is so much poverty in the peri-urban areas, girls may be tempted to get involved in prostitution in order to mitigate the impact of the economic hardships in their families and in the process contract sexually transmitted diseases and HIV and AIDS. The topic 'Temptations' would help them to resist such a temptation and persevere in their poverty.

Prayer: Under this topic, pupils are taught that prayer is talking and listening to God. They are taught why and how people should pray and the Christian attitudes to

prayer. They also discuss prayer in the four religious traditions taught in Zambia. Pupils learn that there is perseverance and faith in prayer. Jesus did not promise that people shall always receive what they ask for, but that they would never ask God in vain as he would eventually answer their prayers. An earthly father provides good things for his children's needs and so God will give his children what is good for them (Bible, Luke 11: 5-13). A girl-child experiences many challenges in life as she grows up. She cannot talk to her parents freely on some sensitive issues but she can freely channel her challenges and problems to God through prayer.

Family Life: This outlines the duties of family members. Therefore girls would learn about their responsibilities and what is expected of them. They would be encouraged to work hard at school so that they end up leading better and decent lives rather than following Zambian traditional beliefs which regard women as wives and mothers.

Christian attitudes to leisure: This topic is similar to 'Leisure in a changing society' in Syllabus 2044. Girls would learn about how to spend their leisure time positively in order to avoid negative consequences in life. Pupils are taught the importance of avoiding indecent activities, which may cause abuse of the body such as beer drinking and sexual immorality. They must be controlled by God's will and not human desires.

At adolescence stage, pupils get excited with life and the majority of them use their rights wrongly. For example, one might rather go to a disco than study as a way of spending leisure time. However, when they learn about the Christian attitudes to leisure, they would realize that during leisure one can rest, talk with friends, be involved in Christian activities like church services and helping the aged people and the sick, gardening and reading. Pupils would learn that God gives them time, and they are therefore accountable to God on how they use their time, including leisure

time. Such kind of learning would influence girls to change their attitudes towards leisure, they would be careful not to spend their leisure time carelessly. Some girls might even end up joining clubs like the Debate Society and Scripture Union which are educative.

Furthermore, under the same topic, pupils would learn about leisure in other religions like Islam, Hinduism and Zambian Tradition. In the Hindu religion, leisure activities include spending time with the family, visiting friends, watching or taking part in sport, communal meals and social gatherings, and attending temple services held routinely during the week. While under Islam, leisure activities include spending time with the family, visiting friends, participating in sport (good health and physical fitness are commended in the Quran), practicing hobbies, extra religious activities on Saturday and Sunday. Beer drinking and immoral cinema shows are forbidden in Islamic law.

Similarly, in Zambian Traditional life leisure is used for resting from work, chatting, visiting relatives, playing games, plaiting hair, dancing and having ceremonies, hunting and feasting (CDC, 1995: 34). This would help the girl-child to compare and contrast how leisure is spent in different religions and come up with positive ways of spending leisure time.

Another topic related to my study is 'Christian attitudes to money and possessions.' Under this topic, pupils learn about the right attitudes towards work and possession of wealth. With such teachings, girls would be motivated to work hard and become self-reliant rather than be dependent on a man or other people for survival. There are moral issues to consider about attitudes to wealth and possessions, in the four religions. Zambian Tradition has proverbs and meanings that help to reveal traditional attitudes to wealth as illustrated in the following table.

SOME ZAMBIAN PROVERBS AND THEIR MEANINGS.

Zambian Proverb	Meaning
<p><i>Tafimbwa lubilo</i> (Bemba)</p> <p>They are never dug hurriedly.(Literal translation)</p>	You cannot get rich overnight.
<p><i>Ifyakulya taficepa, akacepa kakufwala</i> (Bemba)</p> <p>Food is never little, only the clothes may be too small.(Literal translation)</p>	Receive everything gratefully without judging its quality, or, share everything generously without doubting its worth.
<p><i>Abana bankanshi balyakene ulubalala.</i>(Bemba)</p> <p>Two brothers shared one nut.(Literal translation)</p>	Sharing is vital, no matter how small the item might be.

Traditionally the following are basic attitudes to wealth:

- Riches come from hard work
- Gifts must be received gratefully, even though small.
- One must share with others
- Wealth is a means of prestige (CDC, 1995: 38).

From such teachings, pupils would realize that wealth does not come on a silver plate; despite one's sex, a person has to work hard in order to acquire wealth. This would encourage girls to work hard in class and look forward to acquiring wealth, which is a means of prestige. Sharing is encouraged in Zambian tradition as it promotes unity. Pupils would learn to share what they have with other people.

Other religious traditions too have related teachings regarding the acquisition of wealth. According to Islam, it is not a sin to be rich, as long as the wealth has been obtained honestly and through hard work. In Hinduism, acquired wealth should be carefully used, ill acquired wealth brings misfortune. In Christianity, cheating, bribery, corruption, and any form of dishonesty are forbidden but generosity and sharing are encouraged.

From such teachings, girls would be encouraged to work hard at school in order to live well later in life. They would learn that laziness does not pay. People have to earn a living. When the spirit of hard working is instilled in the girls, they would aim at achieving their goals and lead an independent life.

Christian attitudes to sex and marriage: Under this topic both boys and girls are able to openly discuss sex and marriage especially in groups. They learn a lot through interaction and sharing of ideas on sex and marriage. Their discussions cover tradition and modern marriage. This would encourage pupils to compare and contrast the two. They would learn about self-control, evils of casual sex and immorality. They would further learn that life without any control leads to sin and death and that promiscuity leads to the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV and AIDS.

The other topic is *Relationships between parents and children*. In Zambian family life, children generally respect and love their parents. This is more evident in rural areas and peri-urban areas. Compared with urban areas, parents in rural situations have a more direct influence over their children. Traditional customs and practices are more carefully followed in rural and peri-urban areas. In almost all the religions, children are to honour and obey their parents. Obedient children are usually self-disciplined and disciplined pupils cannot easily follow what everybody else is doing. They would

assess the advantages and disadvantages of whatever actions are to be taken. This would help to increase their chances of having a bright future.

As can be seen, these agreed syllabi, at different levels of the school education help to raise the pupils' understanding of Religious Education concepts of religion beyond those of a single religion or church denomination. Religious Education in Zambia helps the learners to mature in relation to their own patterns of belief and behaviour through exploring different religious beliefs and practices and related human experiences.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

This chapter will discuss the content of Religious Education syllabi in Primary and Secondary Colleges of Education. The content will then be analyzed to assess how it can help the teachers to teach Religious Education effectively or in a manner that is educational and liberating, especially for girls in the peri-urban schools. The chapter will first discuss the primary colleges of education syllabus before dealing with the secondary colleges of education syllabus.

4.1 PRIMARY COLLEGES OF EDUCATION:

The curriculum which is being followed in primary colleges of education is known as the Zambia Teacher Education Course (ZATEC). It was designed to meet contemporary needs at basic education level in Zambia.

Previously the curriculum offered in colleges was content-based and delivered through single or separate subjects. For example, Religious Education was a subject on its own. The new course, however, stresses the shift from content-based to competence-based education aimed at building skills and positive attitudes in the pupils.

Zambia Teacher Education Course represents a radical shift from the previous practice in teacher education and implies concomitant change in the basic education practice. It is based on the principle of integration of the many traditional subjects to produce a curriculum that is relevant and responsive to children's needs. It stresses the active participation of pupils in the learning process and encourages the development and appropriate use of a wide range of resources.

Active participation by learners results in achievement of liberation and freedom to make concrete, constructive suggestions and decisions in life. As already seen, the Zambian traditional norms do not encourage active participation in issues by girls and women but quietness and reservedness. This is retrogressive as it hinders progress and development; it brings about infringement of girls' educational rights. In view of this, the new approach of active participation emphasizes learner-centeredness and the holistic development of the learner.

Subjects are grouped into six study areas as follows:

Study Area	Contributory Subjects
Education studies	Aspects of Sociology and Psychology as they relate directly to classroom practice
Literacy & Languages	English and Zambian Languages
Mathematics & Science	Mathematics, Environmental & Agriculture Science
Expressive Arts	Art, Music & Physical Education
Social, Spiritual & Moral	
Education	Religious Education, History, Geography, Civics & Moral Education
Technology Studies	Home Economics, Woodwork & Metalwork

(MOE, 2001: 5)

However, our main focus is on Social, Spiritual and Moral Education (SSME) study area under which Religious Education falls. This study area highlights skills and competences that would enable teachers to help children. As the new trained

teachers go out to teach, they would help their learners to attain self-realization so that they may guard against some injustices in their society. This is also the foundation of democracy in education.

The educational skills emphasized in teacher education at college, including in Social Spiritual and Moral Education are the ability to:

1. use a range of media to express ideas,
2. use periods of silence/stillness for reflection,
3. use imagination to enter creatively into the motives, perceptions and attitudes of others,
4. use technical terms of religion appropriately and correctly,
5. acknowledge the basis of their own beliefs and values and write/speak objectively about the beliefs and values of others,
6. express their own thoughtful, personal responses to questions and issues about beliefs and values, using evidence and argument,
7. discern and raise questions about those experiences which prompt religious and ethical responses to life,
8. use empathy to understand why other people believe and behave as they do,
9. apply the results of their exploration of religion and life-experiences to their own beliefs and values, (Rudge,1993: 30).

According to Henze (2000: 46), the process of reflection helps people or students to learn about:

- Their capacity for openness. The quality of reflection is dependent on the degree of openness and honesty that student teachers contribute. Working in small groups to reflect on and review shared experiences creates a demand for openness. If support and understanding has been

developed in the classroom, it provides a safe arena for students to take the risk of being open.

- Their capacity for learning from experience. When students are actively engaged in reflecting as part of their course, they become aware of their habitual responses to experience, and the degree to which their responses may have previously promoted or hindered their development. Working with others, observing the way in which they engage with reflection provides the student with comparisons with which to review their own learning. Self-perceptions are checked out, and sometimes challenged; responses are queried or affirmed; experiments with new behaviour are encouraged and supported.
- Their capacity for independent learning. Students learn most effectively when they take responsibility for their own learning. The full meaning of this only becomes truly apparent to the student during the process of reflection, and particularly during the integration phase. It becomes clear, as students plan how to use what they have learnt; that whether they do so or not is entirely up to them. In planning what action to take, students become aware of their capacity for independent learning.

So, as the student teachers go out in the field to teach, especially in the peri-urban schools, the knowledge gained from college would be very helpful. They would help girls in their schools to discuss personal issues affecting their way of life openly with others and become more knowledgeable and able to defend their rights.

Furthermore, the use of empathy to understand other people's beliefs and behaviour, helps teachers when they go out in the field to be sensitive and helpful, especially to the girl child who is most of the time discriminated against by the community.

Teachers need to be sensitive and alert in order to identify their learners' individual needs so that they can help them accordingly.

The Social, Spiritual and Moral Education study area has a component of methodology of teaching. This involves learning about different teaching methods to be used such as group discussion, which has been alluded to. It provides each child with the opportunity to discover, explore and develop a number of skills like critical thinking, decision-making, problem-solving, effective communication, inter-personal relationships, self-esteem and confidence. Such skills are important in every individual's life, especially to girls in the peri-urban schools who are inclined to their traditional beliefs and practices.

Zambia is a liberal democratic society. This means that the democratic values of rational and moral autonomy, equality, fairness and liberty must guide the formulation of educational policies and their implementation right up to the classroom. The national policy document on education in Zambia, *Educating Our Future* of 1996 emphasizes the use of teaching methods that are participatory and based on the principles of learner-centredness. It also encourages teaching approaches that are practically oriented and which require enquiry and reflection.

Religious Education in Primary Colleges of Education is in line with the learner-centredness approach which is capable of encouraging peri-urban girls to participate actively, interact with others, share ideas and in the process acquire more knowledge which would not only end in the classroom but would be utilized outside the classroom as well.

The new learner-centred approach to teacher education can be contrasted with the old content or teacher-centred approach in the following manner:

**COMPARING LEARNER-CENTRED APPROACH WITH TEACHER
CENTRED APPROACH**

Teacher-centred approach	Learner-centred approach
Passive learning, which is restrictive	Active learning, which is open and encouraging,
Rote learning	Provokes critical thinking, reasoning, reflection and action
The syllabus is content-based and broken down into subjects	An integration of knowledge and learning relevant and connected to real life situations
Textbook/worksheet-bound and teacher-centred	Learner-centred, teacher is a facilitator. Teacher uses group work and team work to consolidate the new approach
Emphasis is on what the teacher hopes to achieve	Emphasis is on outcomes. What the learner becomes and understands
Curriculum development not open to public comment.	Comment and input from the wider community is encouraged.

(MOE, 2001: 17)

Learner-centred as used in teacher education and Social, Spiritual and Moral Education in particular shows how liberating Religious Education is. Acquiring an integration of knowledge, relevant and connected to real life situations would enable

girls in peri-urban schools to put into practice what they learn in class such as critical thinking before making any important decisions in life.

Other methods commonly used in teaching SSME/Religious Education include drama, role-play, debate, and use of picture codes as well as storytelling. The story telling or story line method uses a story as a springboard for learning and is based on the understanding that knowledge is complex and many layered; learning is guided by what one already knows through experience. The relevance of the story line is that it is child-centred. Therefore, it encourages pupils to express themselves freely and openly and to exercise inner autonomy. It also provides a forum for dealing with the more difficult 'extra' aspects of the curriculum. It emphasizes the importance of encouraging the learners to develop their own conceptual model first. As such, it is a very positive method and approach.

The lesson generated from the story line motivates pupils and also makes it possible to refine ideas in life after school. Furthermore, the use of codes in Religious Education is also important. A code can be a role-play, a drama, a poem or picture that represents a problem that people feel strongly about or that affects their lives to a certain degree. Good codes encourage discussion, analysis and judgment. This is another motivating method of teaching. It provokes critical-thinking and self-confidence. As the saying goes, 'if I hear, I forget, if I see, I remember, if I do, I understand'. The pupils develop the skill of problem solving as they interact and argue with other team members.

Pupils, especially girls, need to be exposed to worthwhile experiences so that they can reflect, react to them, and express their views and feelings. This can mainly be done in Religious Education as it is in line with the new policy document, *Educating Our Future*, which calls for a change in the classroom. It asks for emphasis on

learning skills. The pupils are to be encouraged to understand the problems, work things out for themselves, and suggest possible solutions.

When pupils are asked to find solutions to problems, the lesson becomes much more intrinsically interesting because it immediately becomes experiential, participatory and creative. When girls acquire problem solving skills it would be to their advantage as they would be able to use the same skills when they face challenges in life from an early stage, they would not just conform to the traditional beliefs and practices which are usually imposed on young people.

4.2 SECONDARY COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

In secondary colleges of education, the aim of teacher education includes teaching Religious Education in such a way that denominational and doctrinaire approaches are avoided. The syllabus includes the topics done in grades 8 and 9 of the basic education syllabus and in grades 10-12 of the Zambian School Certificate syllabus. The topics have been outlined in chapter three under syllabus 2044 and 2046.

The general syllabus aim is to provide students with a set of skills which would enable them to function effectively as teachers of Religious Education in grades 8-12. This requires that student teachers review school Religious Education from a mature perspective and continue their own personal study of the subject.

The methodology part is similar to the methodology used in primary colleges of education in a number of ways. Emphasis is on learner-centredness, which is participatory and democratic. Inquiry, guided-discovery, problem solving, analysis and application are some of the teaching techniques and skills used and promoted.

Inquiry would enable the girls to discover more information on a particular topic and then make their own assessment. People perish due to lack of knowledge. Therefore, knowledge is powerful as it enables one to come out of the shell of darkness and ignorance. As a teacher, one should believe (with reference to psychologists like Maslow and Piaget) that positive attention and approval are essential features in the interaction between teacher and learner. All the opportunities in the classroom to express feelings and formulation of thoughts are essential prerequisites for a positive and healthy mental development. Every learner (and certainly, the girl child) must be given ample opportunities to plan and execute ideas.

According to the Ministry of Education, the broad aim of secondary school education is the integrated and comprehensive development of each pupil's potential, the specific objectives of education at high school level are to:

1. develop desirable intellectual skills and qualities such as reflective reasoning, logical thinking, ability to concentrate, attentiveness to detail, and objectivity in appraisal of evidence.
2. foster creativity, imagination, resourcefulness, and innovativeness, and provide occasions for their exercise;
3. promote extensive knowledge, exact skills, and accurate understanding of chosen areas in languages, mathematics, science and technology, the social sciences, practical subjects, and the arts;
4. provide educational experiences that will nurture skills that will enable pupils to take charge of their own learning;
5. establish an environment that will cater for the psycho-social needs of pupils and that will facilitate their growth to maturity as moral and responsible individuals;
6. instill a spirit of self-discipline, integrity, accuracy and hard work;
7. awaken concern for the promotion of civil liberties and human rights, for the consolidation of the democratic character of Zambian society, for more equitable distribution of global and national wealth, and for sustainable human development in Zambia and elsewhere.

8. Develop desirable attitudes and qualities of personal, inter-personal, national and international peace and understanding (MOE, 1996: 51-52).

The content, structure and processes of teaching at this level, the range of extra-curricular activities undertaken, and the organization and ethos of the school should all be directed towards meeting the above stated objectives.

As can be observed, the girl-child is not discriminated against in the above stated objectives. Therefore, the acquired skills would help girls in both urban and the peri-urban schools to mature and act according to their reasoning without being intimidated.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 FINDINGS

In this chapter, I present the findings from the discussions with the pupils, instructresses or *Bana chimbusa* on girl-child education and the role of Religious Education in promoting girls' rights. Data was collected through oral interviews, questionnaires and observations. Questionnaires were given to grades 5,6,7,8, and 9 girls at random. Fourteen schools were visited and out of these schools, nine were middle basic (from grade 1-7), while five were upper basic schools (from grade 1-9). At middle basic schools, five questionnaires were given to each class (i.e. grade 5,6 and 7). Then at each upper basic school, five questionnaires were given to each grade 5,6,7,8, and 9 class. A total number of 260 questionnaires were distributed.

The findings will be presented and discussed under the following themes: cultural beliefs and practices that hinder girls' progress in education, other problems affecting girl-child education, freedom to enable girls to make their own constructive decisions, and Religious Education topics which have the potential to promote self-confidence and self-esteem among the girls. Detailed statistics with regard to the responses will also be given in table form.

AGE AND GRADE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

Question	Age	Grade	No. of pupils
How old are you?	12-13	5	70
	14 -15	6	90
	15 -16	7	40
	16 -17	8	30
	18 -20	9	30
	Total Number of pupils		260

Table 1

From the figures shown in table 1, I concluded that all the girls were in the adolescence stage. However, very few had crossed over to grade 8 and 9 and among these few, only ten girls were eager to proceed to grade 10. The majority of the girls were not willing to continue with school and they gave various reasons like being given a lot of work by mostly their guardians at home, being bullied by boys as they were considered to be a weaker sex as well as being sidelined by some male teachers. Their responses were tabulated as follows:

Question	Yes	No	Not sure
Do you stay with your parents?	90	170	
Are you given a lot of work at home?	220	15	25
Do you take Religious Education?	200	60	
Do you participate freely during group discussions in class?	120	100	40
Do boys laugh at you when you give wrong answers in class?	200	30	30
Does your teacher treat you equally with boys in class?	60	180	20

Table 2

From the findings summarized in table 2, I concluded that the majority of the girls were not living with their parents. Some were orphans while others were living with stepmothers or distant relatives. 220 girls revealed that they were given a lot of work at home, depriving them of time to go through their schoolwork. It is difficult for a learner to concentrate at school when he or she has problems at home. However, it was revealed that out of 260 girls, 200 were taking Religious Education and 198 girls highlighted how Religious Education had helped them to accept the situations they were passing through bearing in mind that life was in phases. The topics 'Bravery and Courage,' and 'Growing up and Learning' motivated the girls to endure the hardships they encountered. They were encouraged to work hard, not to underrate themselves, and to discover the potential they possessed as individuals.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that 120 out of 260 girls were able to participate fully in-group discussions, which promote thoughtful learning. The learners were actively involved in the learning process. Group discussions provide opportunities for pupils to apply thinking skills in conceptualization, problem solving and decision-making. This would enable girls to relate what they have learnt to real life situations. Religious Education encourages the use of group discussions as one of the methods in the teaching and learning process. Pupils share ideas and discover a lot of things on their own. The teacher is there as a facilitator.

However, it was also revealed that 180 girls out of 260 were not treated equally with boys by the teachers. This is common in peri-urban schools. The Zambia Human Rights Commission Chairperson, Pixie Yangailo, pointed out that whether a girl is born in Afghanistan or Zambia, the life of that child, from the womb to childhood and adolescence is marred with disadvantage. She explained that discrimination against girls was grounded in a series of traditions and norms, based on the assumption that biological differences between females and males justify that girls are denied access to rights, opportunity and voice (ZARD, 2004: 18).

5.1 CULTURAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES THAT HINDER GIRLS' PROGRESS IN EDUCATION:

When asked about cultural beliefs and practices that hinder girls' progress in education, the girls answered as follows:

Question	Yes	No	Not sure
Are initiation ceremonies practiced in your community?	215	45	
Have you gone through initiation yourself?	205	55	
Were you happy with the teachings you received during the initiation Period?	200	25	35
After going through the initiation teachings, did you see any value of going to school?	25	180	55
Do you intend to get married before completing school?	140	60	60

Table 3

From the responses in table 3, 215 girls out of 260 admitted that initiation ceremonies were practiced in their communities and 205 proudly agreed that they had gone through initiation, and perhaps due to the teachings they had received, about 180 did not see any value of school. Actually about 140 girls were even intending to go into early marriage. All the 60 girls who expressed willingness to continue with school were taking Religious Education. They listed down topics in Religious Education which had motivated them to continue with school despite going through the initiation teachings. Topics such as 'Growing in responsibility,' 'Caring for other people,' 'How people develop,' 'How people make choices,' and 'Ambitions and hopes.' The topics will be discussed later to assess their relevance to the advancement of girls' education.

In the peri-urban areas of Chingola district, a complex set of traditional practices that mark adolescence and the rites of passage of girls often affected their stay in schools.

5.1.1 Instructresses or *banachimbusa* or *ankogi*

In order to verify further whether the teachings that girls went through during their initiation period had a negative impact on their educational rights, I interviewed six instructresses on different days. The instructresses belonged to different tribes but held similar traditional cultural beliefs. Their responses are specified in the following tables:

Tribe	Kikaonde	Luvale	Kalunda	Lamba
Number of respondents	2	2	1	1

Table 4

QUESTION

PERIOD

	1 week	2 weeks	1 month	2 months
For how long is the girl-child in seclusion?	0	2	3	1

Table 5

The seclusion period varied because some girls were slow learners while others were able to learn and understand what they were taught within a short period of probably two weeks.

Question	Yes	No	Unsure
In your teachings, do you encourage girls to continue with school?		4	2
Do girls in your community have the right to choose what they want to do in life?		5	1
Are you in favour of early marriages?	6		
Are early marriages common in your culture?	4	0	2

Table 6

From the summary of responses tabulated in tables 4 to 6, the majority of the instructresses supported early marriages. This was a clear indication that even their teachings during initiation were along that line. They gave reasons for supporting early marriages, such as poverty, which forced many parents to marry off their daughters or nieces so that they were paid *lobola* (bride price). Girls had no right to make their own decisions regarding their future. In fact most of the marriages were arranged by their parents without their consent.

When the instructresses were asked about what they taught the girls during the seclusion period, their responses were:

- How to take care of themselves during menstruation period.
- How to avoid men.
- Respecting elderly people.
- Different styles of dancing: this is the part which takes many days and is done in the bush (away from people).

- How to take care of a home.
- How to be a good mother.
- How to be a good wife.

As stated earlier, although the six instructresses spoke different languages, their cultural beliefs and practices were similar. I further asked the instructresses about what happened when they were through with their teachings. They said that the initiated girl would be brought back to the village and be presented to the public. Then there would be celebrations to mark the girl's integration into the life of the grownups.

However, when pupils learn about 'Marriage and Family life' in grade 7, they would be able to discuss openly in groups the traditional Zambian initiation ceremonies. During such discussions they would explain the purpose of such ceremonies and the Christian Missionaries' attitude towards the traditional ceremonies. Such discussions would help the girls to become more knowledgeable, compare and contrast the activities involved in traditional ceremonies, make evaluations and decide on the correct attitude to adopt.

5.2 Other problems affecting girl-child education (besides cultural beliefs and practices)

I needed to get some more data from the girls regarding other problems that affected their education in the peri-urban areas apart from the above stated problems. So I asked them, "What other problems affect your education?" Their responses to my question were as shown in the following table:

Problem	Number of girls
Covering long distances from home to school	180
Pregnancies	80
Poverty: going to school without eating anything	170
Wearing torn clothes. Could not afford to buy clothes	98
Poor sanitation (inadequate water and poor toilet facilities)	150
Taking care of young siblings	50
Boys jeering at girls when they got wrong answers	75
Sitting arrangement not favouring the girls	60
Feeling out of place because of looking older than other classmates.	65

Table 7

From the statistics or figures in table 7, 180 girls out of 260 walked to and from school everyday covering long distances. Consequently, the majority displayed unwillingness to continue going to school. Pregnancies were also a drawback, though 80 girls had been called back to continue their education after giving birth. Of these, 25 were in grade 7, 20 in grade 6, 15 in grade 5, 10 in grade 8 and 10 in grade 9. The majority of these girls were not learning comfortably because their fellow pupils called them mothers. Boys, especially, jeered at them whenever they got wrong answers.

However, topics like 'Bravery and Courage,' 'Division and hatred' in Religious Education taught pupils to have courage despite different kinds of problems they might be going through. Each time discrimination was practiced, the girls would be reminded about the importance of relying and depending on each other through topics like 'Development and Co-operation' and 'Friendship and love,'

Findings further revealed that out of 260 girls, 170 were living in poverty. Poverty levels in the peri-urban areas were generally high. The majority of the people cannot afford three meals a day, not even one well- balanced meal. This forces many girls to stop school mid-way so that they can also join their mothers to look for food on a daily basis. For example, when it is time to go out in the bush and look for mushrooms, the girls have no choice but to go out as well and later sell some of the mushrooms by the roadside. They forget about school. However, the topic 'How people make choices' has the potential to transform one's thinking attitude. Girls would learn about the three steps to consider before making a choice in any given situation. These are see, judge and act. Seeing the different things which could be chosen; judging which is best according to one's interests and beliefs; acting according to that judgment by doing what one decides is best (CDC,2000: 21). These steps might help the girls to decide to continue with their education instead of stopping.

The research findings revealed that the sitting arrangement also worried some girls. 60 girls out of 260 were not in favour of the modern sitting arrangement of mixing boys and girls. When they were interviewed further for clarification, they said some boys were fond of passing bad comments such as bad smell coming from the girls, probably during their menstruation period as most of the girls in peri-urban areas were unable to use proper sanitary towels. They use pieces of cloth which most of the times were not even properly washed because the majority of the girls could not afford to buy washing soap. Nonetheless, through Religious Education topics like

'Health and sickness,' both boys and girls would be able to discuss in their groups with the guidance of the teacher the importance of cleanliness and the maintenance of good health.

5.3 Freedom to enable girls to make their own constructive decisions

I asked the girls whether they were aware of their human rights and if they had self-confidence that could enable them to make their own decisions regarding their future, like choosing a career. The girls gave different answers which were tabulated as follows:

Answer	Number of girls
I am shy	50
I am too young	70
I don't know where to start from	140
I am not a boy	100
My parents are still alive so why should I make my own decisions?	50
It is unheard of for a girl to decide what she wants in our community	75
Elderly people know a lot and have experience in life. We always run to them for help	90
Teachers help us a lot, especially our	120

grade Teachers	
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Table 8

Traditionally, girls are supposed to keep quiet most of the time, especially in the presence of elderly people. This silence is observed even when they are in class and this results into shyness. Usually girls who are shy find it difficult to interact and share ideas in group discussions. Furthermore, 70 girls thought they were too young to make their own decisions, but instead they relied on elderly people who had vast experience to make decisions for them. This is due to the influence of the environment in which they are brought up. The environment values decisions made by the male folk despite their age. They say '*umwaume tacepa*' (Icibemba), which means, no matter how young a man might be, his contributions would always be valuable. In addition, some teachers, especially the grade teachers, were commended for their good counsel.

To evaluate their responses, I decided to use a detailed statistics table and the information obtained was as shown below:

Question	Yes	No	Unsure
Do you know human rights?	40	145	75
Do you know your rights as a girl-child?	35	190	35
Are you free to ask your teacher for clarification when you are not sure of what to do?	60	200	
Do you have freedom to choose what you want to do in future?	30	150	80
Do you have the right to disagree with some bad traditional cultural beliefs and practices in your community?	10	180	70

Table 9

From the findings tabulated in table 9, it was clear that the majority of the girls in the peri-urban areas did not know their rights. They were not able to make their own decisions in life probably because in Zambian traditional culture, girls were supposed to remain quiet in the back ground and let their parents or elderly people decide what was best for them. They did not even know their rights and that was why they were mostly discriminated against. Out of 260 girls, only 35 knew their rights, 35 were not sure about their rights, while the rest expressed total ignorance. They were so shy that even when they knew very well that they were not being treated fairly, they would just remain quiet, follow, and do what they were told to do without questioning. However, Religious Education promotes group discussions through which girls would have the potential to discover who they are and their freedom to decide what is right for them to do. As stated in literature review, one of the goals of the education system in Zambia is to develop an analytical, innovative, creative and constructive mind.

Religious Education contributes to the realization of such goals and aims of the Zambian education system by being contextual and broadly based rather than narrowly based, democratic and open rather than authoritarian.

5.4 Topics in Religious Education which have the potential to promote self-confidence and self-esteem among girls

In order to find out whether Religious Education has had an impact on girls' self-confidence, I asked them to list down the topics which could have helped them to be pro-active. Their responses were as follows:

- New friends,
- Advantages of having a friend,
- Growing in responsibility,
- Rural life and Urban life,
- Bravery and Courage,
- Happiness,
- Development and Co-operation,
- Marriage and Family life,
- How people make Choices,
- The Talents people have,
- Laws and Rules,
- Leaving school,
- How people develop,

- How Religion helps people,
- Freedom and Community,
- Ambitions and Hopes.

I wanted to find out how helpful these topics had been to the girls so I made a follow-up question asking the respondents to state what they found helpful in the topics. 22 girls out of 85 girls in grade 5 said the topic 'Growing in Responsibility' had helped to instill self-discipline in them. They had realized that there were a lot of responsibilities ahead of them which required constructive decision-making. Then 33 girls out of 63 girls said that the topic 'Bravery and courage' taught in grade four had encouraged them to speak out at home when they were not happy with decisions made by elderly people especially concerning their future. They were encouraged to study hard and gain more knowledge so that they could be well equipped to face challenges of life. Furthermore, all the 30 girls doing grade 8 proudly said that they had been able to identify their talents through the topic 'The Talents People Have'. 12 girls out of these 30 girls had identified their talent of hair plaiting. They did their hair plaiting after school and were able to earn some money. With such a talent, a girl-child could easily open a hair salon which was quite profitable.

Another encouraging topic was 'Ambitions and Hopes' taught in grade 9. All the 19 girls doing grade 9 said that they had learnt a lot from this topic. The girls who earlier thought their place was in the kitchen looked at life from a different perspective. They were encouraged to work hard and compete with boys. They were more focused to achieve their intended goals in life despite being considered to belong to a weaker sex. 7 girls out of the 19 girls in grade 9 admired their female teachers who were considered to be role models. They were motivated and determined to work hard so that they too would become teachers or nurses some day.

In order to verify what the pupils said above, teachers were also asked to mention topics which they thought were helpful to pupils and explain why. The topics and explanations were as shown in the table below:

GRADE	TOPIC	ITS RELEVANCE
1	New Friends	Pupils are able to dance and play games with their classmates to express their togetherness. Through such activities pupils would be able to interact freely without any restrictions and shyness would slowly start disappearing.
2	Advantages of having a friend	This topic promotes trust between friends. Pupils would be able to advise each other; especially when one was doing wrong things. This would help girls to start gaining self-confidence bit by bit.
2	Growing in responsibility	Pupils are able to describe places where they would be allowed to go unaccompanied and describe what precautions they would take when they are out alone. This is a step towards self-control and self-confidence.
4	Rural life and urban life	Pupils are able to compare life in a Zambian town with that of a Zambian village. This could help girls to overcome their inferiority complex upon realizing that they are capable of doing what town girls do.
4	Bravery and courage	Pupils are made to do role-plays of people who have done what they believed in even when other people were mocking them. They are also able to tell stories of people who showed courage to overcome their poverty or physical handicaps to achieve their ambitions. This could strengthen girls as they face challenges in

		life.
5	Happiness	Pupils are able to show how people remain happy despite what they might be going through. This would also motivate the girls who might be experiencing social problems to remain positive and firm. This could also instill self-discipline in girls.
6	Development and Co-operation	Pupils in groups try to identify some of their talents and explain how they have discovered and developed those talents. Through such topics, girls would be able to identify their hidden talents and work hard or strive to develop them. Self-confidence would push them to do their best.
7	Marriage and family life	Pupils learn about the behaviour required of couples to resolve their misunderstandings and disagreements in courtship and marriage. This would promote critical thinking and decision-making skills on issues of love, sexual relationships and marriage.
8	How people make choices	Pupils are able to classify statements about themselves into circumstances they have chosen and those they have not chosen. They would also be able to identify the steps of seeing, judging and acting according to one's choice. Girls would fully participate in decision-making after analyzing issues or any problem at hand rather than keeping quiet.

8	The talents people have	Under such a topic, girls are able to explain and illustrate how people discover their talents. They would relate the story of the three servants from Matthew 25:14-30 and explain what it means. This would prompt girls to work hard and develop their talents. There is enthusiasm when one knows where she is heading to.
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Table 10 (CDC, 1983: 5-6)

In this chapter, I have presented the data or findings of my field research. I will, therefore, discuss most of the findings in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the research findings presented in the preceding chapter. The discussion is structured along the same themes or headings under which the findings are presented. These are cultural beliefs and practices that hinder girls' progress in education, other problems affecting girl-child education, girls' freedom to make their own decisions, and identification of topics in Religious Education which have the potential to promote self-confidence among the girls.

6.1 Cultural beliefs and practices

6.1.1 Household chores

The evidence seen in the findings is that traditionally people do not value girl-child education. The major burden of household chores and responsibilities fall on the girl. From 260 girls in the study, 220 admitted that they were given a lot of work at home. Most of the girls do a lot of household chores such as fetching firewood and water, sweeping the surroundings and cooking. They rarely find time to sit and do some school work at home. They are deprived of time to sit and think about schoolwork and even do some homework and slowly they start losing interest in school. Almost all the girls in the study complained of being over worked, especially those being looked after by stepmothers and relatives. They cannot argue with elderly people and are supposed to abide by and do what they are told to do.

Excessive household chores are a problem which girls cannot solve on their own without assistance, and this is where Religious Education comes in. In Religious Education lessons, pupils can act role plays of people not being afraid of other people who try to bully them and also tell stories of people who showed courage to overcome their poverty or physical handicaps to achieve their ambitions especially in

topics like 'Bravery and Courage' (grade 4), and 'Ambitions and Hopes' (grade 9). Slowly they would begin to follow what they learn at school in their various communities and that would mark the beginning of transformation of their way of life.

One male teacher at Muchinshi basic school narrated how he motivated the girls in his grade 9 class during the presentation of the topic 'Ambitions and Hopes'. He gave examples of some women in Zambia who had excelled in their education despite coming from humble backgrounds. One good example is that of Dr. Mainga Mutumba Bull. She was the first female Cabinet Minister in Zambia, first female lecturer at University of Zambia, and the first Zambian female to acquire a PhD degree. She grew up at a time when an African woman lived a life of deprivation and suppression. However, out of determination, she struggled and realized some of her dreams (FAWEZA, 2003: 10).

Mutumba Bull's story fits well with the topic 'Ambitions and Hopes' in that she was able to achieve her set goals because of her ambition. She was hopeful that her dreams would be fulfilled and she worked hard. A girl-child can learn that it is important to persevere in life despite where one is coming from. Girls would be encouraged to work hard and emulate Mutumba Bull.

6.1.2 Initiation ceremonies

According to the findings, three quarters of the girls studied had undergone initiation ceremonies. The social status that a girl occupies has consequences in all areas of her life and in particular during her transition from girlhood into womanhood because this is a time of making the choices which would shape the remainder of her life.

My discussions with the instructresses revealed that the girl had to be silent throughout the teaching period. She was told to sit with her legs stretched in front of her, her hands on her legs and her head bowed. She was not allowed to do anything, and when she stood up, she was pulled up and put down afterwards. This enabled the girl to understand that she had to learn to obey and showed her that she was still a child, who could not do anything. She had to wear a cloth (*chitenge*) around her abdomen so that the rest of her body was bare. This was to show that she was different from the other women. It also served to humiliate her, to stress that she could be teased and treated badly in order to be made strong enough to bear all the disappointments and pains she was likely to experience in life.

After the indoor teachings, the girl would be taken to the bush so that she was secluded from the community. The instructresses would take an axe, two bags containing *chitenge* materials, a cup, pumpkin pips, groundnuts and maize, a drum and a jerry cane with traditional beer. While in the bush, they would look for a special tree/*mwidi* specifically meant for initiates. It should bear many fruits to symbolize fertility, meaning that the girl should bear many children. This female tree had herbal or medical qualities, particularly for cleansing and for menstrual periods. The women would dance around the tree, while the girl sat under it. Then they would put the girl away from the tree. A white bracelet would be hung in the tree and the girl was taught how to retrieve the bracelet with her toes while standing on her hands. The bracelet was the symbol of marriage, which should be forever and white was the colour of purity.

J Mbiti in 1969 published his work on *African religions and philosophy* (London: Heinemann). In this publication he described how initiation rites were perceived in many traditional cultural societies. He said initiation rites had many symbolic meanings, in addition to the physical drama and impact. The youth were ritually introduced to the art of communal living. This happened when they were withdrawn

from other people to live alone in the forest in specifically prepared huts away from the villages.

The girls would go through a period of withdrawal from society, absence from home, during which time they would receive secret instructions before they could be allowed to rejoin their relatives at home. This was a symbolic experience of the process of dying, living in the spirit world and being reborn (resurrected). The rebirth, that was the act of rejoicing with their families, emphasized and dramatized that the young people were now new, they had new personalities, they had lost the childhood, and in some societies they even received completely new names.

Another great significance of the rites was to introduce the girls to adult life: they were now allowed to share in the full privileges and duties of the community. They entered into the state of responsibility; new obligations were expected of them by society.

The initiation rites prepared the young people in matters of sexual life, marriage and family responsibilities. They learnt how to endure hardships, to obey and be submissive to their would-be-husbands. They learnt the secrets and mysteries of man and woman relationship. This was a clear indication that all the teachings during initiation period were related to marriage. Therefore, after going through such teachings, most of the girls would be ready to go into marriage at a tender age. Marriage would become a priority.

6.1.3 Early marriages

Early marriage is one of the barriers to achieving the equality in education for girls and boys. In December, 2006 it was discovered that twelve grade 7 girls at Muchinshi

Basic School were pregnant while writing final examinations. Surprisingly, all of them never showed any signs of worry. It was later discovered that immediately they finished writing their examinations, eight girls out of twelve got married. Due to poverty, marriage to most girls seems to be the key to success in life. They go into it without even thinking about the consequences.

There was a related case at Ipafu basic school where a brilliant girl suddenly stopped going to school. At first the grade teacher thought that she was sick but when she was absent from school for a month, the case was reported to the head teacher and the school decided to follow her up. They found that the girl had come of-age and traditional ceremonies regarding the rites of passage had taken place. When they requested that the child should return to school after the rites of passage, they noticed that the parents were reluctant to let the girl go back to school. On further investigation, the school authority discovered that the girl's father had arranged that she gets married. He had even received the bride price from a prospective husband who was eagerly waiting for the girl. The headteacher threatened to report the parents to police Victim Support Unit based in Muchinshi area for marrying off an under-age school girl against her will. The parents eventually allowed the girl to go back to school.

This example suggests that some parents and guardians inadvertently take advantage of their cultural beliefs and practices and prevent girls from enjoying the rights and freedom associated with education. However, the grade 9 girls who were talked to said Religious Education had helped them to face such challenges in life. The topics 'Learning and truth', 'Freedom and community', and 'Disappointments and suffering' had assisted them to develop the life-skills of decision-making, problem-solving, effective communication and self-esteem. They were able to face their parents and express their views regarding the challenge of arranged early marriages.

However, further discussions revealed that there were other problems which affected girl-child education besides cultural beliefs and practices. They will be discussed in the next paragraphs.

6.2 Other problems affecting girl-child education

Long distances to school

The findings revealed that long distances to school were a major problem for most of the girls. Some girls were even attacked on the way. Two girls at Mambili Basic School testified how unknown men raped them in turns on their way to school and one of the girls even contracted a sexually transmitted disease. Due to such problems, Muchinshi Basic School had offered boarding facilities specifically meant for girls. I interviewed five girls at the boarding house with a view to finding out how they were coping with school life on their own, away from their parents. Their response revealed that living on their own was challenging. They had to learn how to take care of themselves. All the girls in boarding were taking Religious Education. Four girls said that through Religious Education lessons, they had learnt to be responsible persons and had the potential to handle their responsibilities such as caring for each other, helping one another especially when one did not have sufficient food stuff, and deciding who should be a friend and why. They acquired knowledge regarding their responsibility from the topics: 'Growing up and learning' in grade 5, 'Honesty and trust' in grade 6 and 'How people develop' in grade 8. The girls were encouraged to work hard in order to achieve the set goals.

Pregnancies and sexual abuse

Another problem which was pointed out was pregnancies among the school girls. Most of the victims felt embarrassed to go back to school after giving birth for fear of

being victimized. However, the Zambian government has introduced the 'Re-entry Policy' which encourages girls to go back and complete their education after delivery. Many girls in the peri-urban schools were not aware of the new policy. There was need to sensitize them. Topics like 'Marriage and Family life', 'Friendship and Love' and 'Male and Female' in Religious Education syllabus could be of great help. As the girls discuss issues in such topics in class or small groups, they would begin to realize that it was possible to avoid pre-marital sex and pregnancies.

Through discussions, it was also revealed that some male teachers also contributed to the poor performance of girls and to girls abandoning school. They proposed love especially to grade six and seven girls. The girls who resisted or turned down such proposals were considered to be stubborn and disobedient and were treated harshly by the concerned teachers.

On 28th July 2008, there was an article in the *Times of Zambia* newspaper concerning a 15-year-old grade five pupil by the name of Kalenga who sobs uncontrollably each time she recalls the day her schoolteacher raped her and infected her with a sexually transmitted disease. She was thirteen years old when she was raped. The sad episode leading to Kalenga's defilement started with her innocent request for past examination papers from the teacher, who consistently pretended to be too forgetful whenever he went to class. Instead, he advised the young girl to go and collect the papers from his residence, within the school vicinity. When she went to his home, the man immediately asked her to pick the papers from the next room, which was only separated by a curtain. When she got inside, she realized it was the bedroom and when she turned to go back, the teacher was there. He blocked her from passing, pushed her onto the bed, covered her mouth and threatened her that she would be expelled from school if she told anyone. The innocent girl did not disclose what had transpired to anyone because she was scared but was later diagnosed with a sexually transmitted disease (STD).

In the context of today's human rights, the girl's case represents a large number of pupils whose rights continue to be severely violated by hundreds of schoolteachers. Some victims even contract HIV in the process, with many of such teacher-pupil defilement cases often going unreported. However, through Religious Education lessons, girls could be sensitized through topics like 'Growing up and Learning' (grade 5). It is at this growing up stage that children tend to be very inquisitive as it is a period of questioning, exploring and learning how to cope with personal problems. Questioning skills would help many girls to become more knowledgeable and learn how to overcome injustices in their communities.

In addition to that, in grade 7 there is a topic 'Marriage and family life'. Under this topic, the learners are supposed to compare Christianity, Muslim, Hindu and Traditional Zambian teachings about marriage as well as different roles played by family members. This topic provides pupils with information, values and skills necessary to make informed decisions about matters relating to sexual behaviour and self-control. The knowledge and skills acquired here might also help the girls to resist going into early marriages.

The untrained Religious Education teachers

The issue of allowing untrained teachers to teach Religious Education was also brought out during oral interviews. Due to shortage of teachers in the peri-urban schools, some people took advantage and volunteered to help teach Religious Education more especially those who were good at studying the Bible and never missed any church services. Two schools were discovered to have two untrained people who were helping to teach Religious Education. When interviewed, it was discovered that they were just Scripture Union patrons who could not even use recommended teaching methods in Religious Education. Their teaching was characterized by evangelism and preaching instead of teaching the subject in an

impartial, pupil-centred and activity-based manner. Henze (1994: 101) observes that there are a number of misconceptions regarding Religious Education. Some still do not distinguish between faith development of the pre-1970s and educational Religious Education of today. Many people make no distinction between preaching and professional teaching, and most fail to understand the educational nature of Religious Education in schools.

Today's Religious Education is different from Religious Instruction, which indoctrinated the pupils into beliefs and values of the particular church that ran the affairs of the mission school. The Bible was the main textbook. There was no variety of methods the teacher could select from. Instructions were given and pupils were to conform to these instructions. This is no longer the case. Henze (2000) quoting Martin Luther King, Jr, the American civil rights leader said, "The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically ...intelligence plus character is the goal of true education". Therefore, it is important that properly trained personnel teach the subject. Untrained Religious Education teachers cannot fully understand and appreciate the educational nature of the subject and so cannot help the girl-child to acquire the critical knowledge and skills needed to overcome the negative beliefs and practices that suppress them as girls/women.

6.3 IDENTIFICATION OF TOPICS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION WHICH HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO PROMOTE SELF-CONFIDENCE AND SELF-ESTEEM AMONG GIRLS

As alluded to in the previous section, Religious Education has topics which touch all aspects of life. It helps an individual to discover more about himself or herself. J Henze in 2000 published his work on *Readings for RE teachers* (Ndola: Mission press). In this publication he states that the Religious Education's prime responsibility and function is to help pupils to come to terms with questions about their own identity,

their own value and life-styles, their own priorities and commitments, and their own frame of reference for viewing life and giving it meaning.

A fundamental educational concern is to help pupils to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes which would enable them to participate consciously and critically in the processes by which they and their lives are shaped. Religious Education shares this concern. Almost at each stage, there are topics, which help to encourage girls to discover who they are, have self-confidence and self-esteem. Young people need to know and understand themselves first, their potential, their feelings and emotions, their position in life and in society and their strengths and weaknesses. Religious Education topics like 'Growing in responsibility', 'How people develop' and 'How people make choices' as stated in chapter five have the potential to enable girls attain self-awareness. Self-awareness leads to self-esteem which is awareness of good in oneself. The topics 'The Talents people have' and 'Ambitions and Hopes' in Religious Education help to encourage girls to work towards achieving the set goals. Girls were capable of developing a self-driven spirit to achieve what they base their hope on. They would be guided to become more ambitious and more hopeful for a bright future. This would motivate them to work hard towards the fulfillment of their ambition.

Furthermore, acting role plays of people who have done what they believed in even when other people were mocking them (Bravery and Courage in grade 4) would encourage girls to attain self-esteem, a life-skill which helps many people to achieve what they base their hope on. Girls would be motivated to focus their attention on school work. They would develop confidence in themselves and their attitude towards education would be positive. In addition, the topic 'The Talents people have' helps many girls to discover what they are capable of doing better. For example, the findings in chapter five revealed that 12 girls out of 30 in grade 8 had identified their talent of hair plaiting. Other topics like 'Competition, Co-operation and trust' (grade 9) would enable girls to develop the spirit of competing with boys without fear.

Competition is striving to do better than others. Competition helps people to fulfill their ambitions and one can only fulfill his or her ambitions when he or she works hard.

Most of the schools in the peri-urban areas go up to Grade 9. Therefore, between grade 3 and grade 9, girls should really be helped to overcome their inferiority complex syndrome to a level where they would have courage to make wise and constructive decisions. This is the stage where a strong foundation should be laid. Religious Education has the potential to contribute much towards laying such a good foundation. Muleya (2007: 124) says Religious Education should be conceived as a tool that transmits knowledge and values pertaining to all religious trends, in an inclusive way, so that individuals realize their being part of the same community and learn to create their own identity in harmony with identities different from their own.

This chapter has discussed the cultural beliefs and practices which hinder girls' educational progress like the teachings imparted into the girls during initiation period as well as arranged marriages. Other problems affecting girl-child education have also been highlighted and lastly some topics in Religious Education which have the potential to promote self-confidence and self-esteem among girls have been discussed. The next chapter will highlight and talk about the conclusion and recommendations of this research.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 CONCLUSION

This research study has revealed a lot of concerns regarding the role of Religious Education in the promotion of girls' educational rights in the peri-urban schools particularly in Chingola district.

During the colonial era, education in Northern Rhodesia or Zambia was spearheaded by the missionaries but unfortunately many people did not see the value of education especially girls' education. There was gender imbalance during the colonial era. Snelson (1974: 214) observes that of the 1000 children who passed the Standard IV Examination between 1933 and 1936, only 27 were girls. Some parents and grandparents as stated in chapter one feared that education would spoil their daughters' chances of marriage. They thought that the girl's place was in the kitchen and what was being taught during that time was Religious Instruction (RI) which was not educational but a process of indoctrination. Therefore, RI was of little help to the girl-child as it promoted women inferiority.

After independence, there was some slight improvement. According to the Education Statistics Bulletin of 1994 (MOE, 1994), there were 53 percent boys compared to 43 percent girls at grade 5 as already stated in chapter one. Between 1980 and 1994 there had been little progress in closing a persistent gap in secondary enrolment. However inequality is still there today, especially in the peri-urban schools. Nonetheless, the modern state-controlled Religious Education is not indoctrinating. It is learner-centred. As Simuchimba observes (see chapter one), modern state controlled Religious Education is pupil-centred. It starts from the learner's experience of religion, aims at religious literacy or 'an open, critical and rational understanding of

various religions' and facilitates discovery, awareness, originality and freedom in the learner. When girls discover who they are and the potential each one of them has, they will be able to stand with boldness and self-confidence to defend their rights; they will be critical of their traditional beliefs and practices.

The Zambian government through the Ministry of Education has been trying to address the problem of gender imbalance in education. The government has adopted strategies like providing an equal number of school places for girls and boys at all levels. In addition, the government has been trying to strengthen and re-orientate guidance and counseling programmes to address socio-cultural problems which may hinder the progress of girls in education. The Ministry of Education ensures that all management positions in the system are equitably shared between deserving men and women. Furthermore, the government has introduced the re-entry policy from 1997 (MOE, 2004: 2) to allow pregnant girls back into the school system after delivery and nursing of their baby for one year so that they do not lag behind.

The government is also being assisted by some Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) to create public awareness on the importance of female education such as Forum for African Women Educationalists of Zambia (FAWEZA), Programme for the Advancement of Girls' Education (PAGE) and Zambia National Women's Lobby (ZNWL) to mention but a few.

The research study has unveiled some hindrances to girl-child education and advancement. These are traditional cultural beliefs and practices like the initiation rites and early marriages. Religious Education as a subject has been assessed in order to establish its relevance and potential in the enhancement of girl-child education and its advancement. Religious Education topics which have the potential to promote self-confidence and self-esteem among girls were identified by the girls

and teachers such as 'Growing in responsibility', 'Bravery and Courage', 'Development and Co-operation', 'Marriage and Family life', 'How people make choices', 'The Talents people have', 'How people develop', 'Freedom and community' and 'Ambitions and hopes'.

Religious Education as a subject has the potential to correlate with the mission statement of education which is to guide the provision of education for all Zambians so that they are able to pursue knowledge and skills, manifest excellence in performance and moral uprightness, defend democratic ideals, and accept and value other persons on the basis of their personal worth and dignity, irrespective of gender, religion, ethnic, origin, or any other discriminatory characteristics (MOE, 1996: xi).

7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Religious Education can help to make a positive impact on girls' education if it is well taught. The skills, values, attitudes, morals and customs that form the general content of Religious Education, if properly exploited during the lesson, can help in addressing the problem of girl-child education. That is why it is important that the subject is taught by trained Religious Education teachers. The subject should not be left to volunteers or people who know the Bible very well but lack professional knowledge and skills. The subject should be given the seriousness that it deserves.

The principal aim of Religious Education is to help children mature in relation to their own pattern of belief and behaviour through exploring religious beliefs and practices and related human experiences (Read et al, 1992: 2). As girls mature, it is important that they assume responsibility for themselves and for their own actions, that they act in a responsible way towards each other and that they are given the opportunity to reflect on the important spiritual and moral questions they are likely to encounter. It is

in this area that Religious Education has a large contribution to make compared to other subjects. Therefore, the Ministry of Education, through the Curriculum Development Centre, should ensure that Religious Education teachers' handbooks and pupils' books are printed and distributed in the peri-urban schools of Chingola and other remote schools in the country so that the teaching of the subject can be enhanced. Some teachers especially in rural areas may have difficulties in teaching a subject that has no reference textbooks.

Secondly, tradition and culture in Zambia has amplified the silence of the girl child and boys tend to dominate the discussions in the classroom. During group work, boys will often take the lead and are reluctant to listen to arguments by the girls. This situation can change through well-planned actions and interventions by teachers. Teachers should teach Religious Education which is educational and liberating. Girls should be encouraged to participate fully in group discussions, role-plays, debates, storylines as well as field trips involving simple research topics that promote critical thinking and self-confidence. Although there are signs of this approach to teaching happening in the peri-urban schools of Chingola, there is still need for improvement.

Thirdly, early marriages are happening at an alarming frequency and are destructive of the nation's moral fabric. If nothing is done about it, this may become more mainstream than it already is and even more accepted, especially in rural areas. Therefore, teachers of Religious Education should not keep quiet and pretend that all is well. They should initiate gender sensitization of parents, headmen and chiefs through their head teachers. Parents Teachers Association meetings could also be used for such sensitization. Since perpetrators of early marriages claim to be fulfilling traditional beliefs and customs, there is need for traditional leaders in the peri-urban areas of Chingola district to be involved or sensitized so that they can play a leading role in stopping the marriage of young school girls.

A good example of what traditional leaders can do, if sensitized, is what was reported in the *Sunday Times of Zambia* News Paper (August 31st, 2008) that the Lungu Royal Establishment had arrested 40 parents under the customary law for marrying off their under age daughters and had managed to take 26 girls back into school to continue with their education. Chief Zombe of the Lungu people in Mbala district said the parents were arrested and given large portions of land to cultivate as punishment. The produce from the traditional land fed the elderly people and orphans. The chief has become unpopular among the tribesmen for the move taken but he believes that empowering the girl-child through education would reduce poverty in his area (www.times.co.zm). The school and the community should work together to alleviate the problem of early marriages. Once the problem is dealt with, girls will change their attitude towards education and become more serious with school work.

In 1996, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and cultural Organization (UNESCO) published a report on education for the 21st century. The document is called *Learning: The Treasure Within*. In this document, it is stated that education is at the heart of both personal and community development; its mission is to enable each person, without exception, to develop all his or her talents to the full and to realize our creative potential, including responsibility for our own lives and achievement of our personal aims. To achieve this, the process must begin with self-understanding through an inner voyage whose milestones are knowledge, meditation and the practice of self-criticism (UNESCO, 1998:19).

Religious Education attempts to promote the treasure located within the individual who is greatly affected by the aspirations and problems of the world of the 21st century. Living fully in this world requires a lot of reflection and hard work.

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APPENDICES

- Questionnaire for Grades 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 girls on the role of Religious Education in the promotion of girls' educational rights in the peri-urban schools.
- Interview guide questions on Zambian traditional cultural beliefs and practices with instructresses (bana chimbusa).
- The goals of the Education System as stated in the National Policy (Educating Our Future).
- The aims of Lower, Middle and Upper Basic Education in Zambia.
- The aims and objectives of High School Education in Zambia.
- Gender in Education.