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**What are the Effects of Cultural Traditions  
on the  
Education of women? (The Study of the  
Tumbuka People of Zambia)**

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A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF  
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REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR  
OF PHILOSOPHY

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## **Dedication**

To my husband and my friend

I owe it all to you

To my lovely children

Mwelwa, Kangwa, Muyeko and Sankhuleni

This far my effort has come to inspire you to greater  
heights in your academic endeavours.

Soar higher my children and never allow anyone to  
bring you down. The power to achieve greater  
heights lies in you!

**You can do it!**

To my daddy

You have been my inspiration

**To God Be The Glory!**

***Psalm 28:7..... The Lord is my strength and my shield;  
my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps  
for joy and I will give thanks to him in song!***

## **Abstract**

This study is an investigation of how cultural traditions can militate against the education of women in Zambia with a focus on the Tumbuka tribe. Ethnographic methods were employed over a period of three months in a village in the Eastern Province of the country. Data were collected through participant observation, focus group and in-depth interviews, narratives, and documents. A total of 47 participants comprised the sample. This research cuts through multidisciplinary fields such as social sciences, education and anthropology. Through thematic analysis data were analysed.

Evidence in this research demonstrates that patrilineal groupings are strongholds of the patriarchal predisposition and that patriarchal attitudes and cultural traditions do not recognize women as equal partners with men. The Tumbuka women's experiences and beliefs reflect socio-cultural traditional norms that tend to limit gender equality, and compel women to accept and justify male domination at the expense of their own status and to regard consequent inequalities as normal. Evidence demonstrates that the initiation rites, an active institution for girls of pubescent age, interfere more with the school-based education of girls. The women are active social agents as well as passive learners who will not allow the girls they are coaching to question the reason or purpose for some traditional practices that are oppressive and directly cause them to fail to complete their schooling successfully.

The strong hold that the cultural traditions has on the locals has further resulted in conflicts with modern schooling, which is viewed as disseminating 'white' man's culture and values. Established in this research is the fear and suspicion that the locals have on the outcome of their children learning these values that they see as alien to their own. The modern education provided in school is perceived as a force that undermines cultural values. It is viewed as presenting an inherent challenge to the cultural traditional control measures that are in place.

Arguably, while ethnic traditions should be respected and sustained because they define one's identity, aspects of culture which are discriminatory, restrictive and tend to devalue women's physical, emotional and psychological development should be eliminated because they are retrogressive. Therefore the argument that deep seated socio-cultural traditions play a significant role in encumbering female education is proven.

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## Acronyms

<b>AIDS</b>	<b>Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome</b>
<b>AU</b>	<b>African Union</b>
<b>BPFA</b>	<b>Beijing Platform For Action</b>
<b>BPW</b>	<b>Business and Professional Women</b>
<b>BSAC</b>	<b>British South Africa Company</b>
<b>CAMFED</b>	<b>Campaign For Female Education</b>
<b>CEDAW</b>	<b>Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination</b>
<b>CSO</b>	<b>Central Statistics Office</b>
<b>DFID</b>	<b>Department For International Development</b>
<b>DRC</b>	<b>Democratic Republic of Congo</b>
<b>EFA</b>	<b>Education For All</b>
<b>FAWE</b>	<b>Forum for African Women Educationalist</b>
<b>FAWEZA</b>	<b>Forum for African Women Educationalist of Zambia</b>
<b>FGM</b>	<b>Female Genital Mutilations</b>
<b>FLMZ</b>	<b>Family Life Movement of Zambia</b>
<b>FNDP</b>	<b>Firth National Development Plan</b>
<b>FWCW</b>	<b>Fourth World Conference on Women</b>
<b>GER</b>	<b>Gross Enrolment Ratio</b>
<b>HCT</b>	<b>Human Capital Theory</b>
<b>HIV</b>	<b>Human Immunodeficiency Virus</b>
<b>IMF</b>	<b>International Monetary Fund</b>
<b>MDG</b>	<b>Millennium Development Goals</b>
<b>MOE</b>	<b>Ministry of Education</b>
<b>NER</b>	<b>Net Enrolment Ratio</b>
<b>NGO</b>	<b>Non Governmental Organisation</b>
<b>NGOCC</b>	<b>Non Governmental Organisations Coordinating Committee</b>
<b>PAGE</b>	<b>Program for the Advancement of Girls' Education</b>
<b>PTA</b>	<b>Parent Teachers' Association</b>
<b>SADC</b>	<b>Southern African Development Community</b>
<b>UN</b>	<b>United Nations</b>
<b>UND</b>	<b>United Nations Decade</b>
<b>UNESCO</b>	<b>United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization</b>
<b>UNFPA</b>	<b>United Nations Fund for Population Activities</b>
<b>UNICEF</b>	<b>United Nations International Children's Education Fund</b>



<b>WAV</b>	<b>Women Against Violence</b>
<b>WB</b>	<b>World Bank</b>
<b>WEF</b>	<b>World Education Forum</b>
<b>WFC</b>	<b>Women for Change</b>
<b>WHO</b>	<b>World Health Organisation</b>
<b>WL</b>	<b>Women's League</b>
<b>WM</b>	<b>Women in the Media</b>
<b>ZARD</b>	<b>Zambia Association for Research and Development</b>
<b>ZAUIW</b>	<b>Zambia Association of University Women</b>
<b>ZAW</b>	<b>Zambia Alliance of Women</b>
<b>ZDEGC</b>	<b>Zambia Declaration on the Education of the Girl Child</b>
<b>ZNWAD</b>	<b>Zambia National Women Artists Documentation Project</b>
<b>ZNWL</b>	<b>Zambia National Women's Lobby</b>

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*“The neglected education of  
my fellow-creatures is the  
grand source of the misery I  
deplore.”*

*(Mary Wollstonecraft)*

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Introduction**

The underlying purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of Zambian cultural traditions on the education of women. It focuses on the Tumbuka a patrilineal tribe in the Eastern Province of Zambia. The study will examine the processes through which cultural traditions are inculcated in the children especially the girls. This will be guided by different theoretical frameworks that will explain the underlying cause for the status of women among the Tumbuka.

This chapter is an introduction to the whole study therefore I will start by giving reason for undertaking this study and its particular interest on the choice of tribe. This will be followed by a brief historical account of the Tumbuka which will throw up a number of issues about the tribe and the different traditions practiced. A brief overview of the objectives of this study and the methodology employed in the investigation will be given. This chapter will also include a brief discussion of the definition of concepts that are used throughout the study to provide a clear understanding. The layout of the whole study is then set out.

### **1.1 Inspiration for the Research**

The Tumbuka tribe is found in the Eastern Province of Zambia which is home to several districts; the Lundazi district being one. The 2003 Eastern Province annual report identified the Lundazi district as one where early marriages were still rampant

(Zulu et al., 2003). The reasons for this have been attributed to a wide range of causes amongst which distance from schools, lack of teaching and learning resources, cultural traditions and poverty are identified. It is important to investigate these causes in order to ascertain their impact on female education.

The current research has targeted the rural areas because they are the locus of cultural traditions. Much more, women in rural areas are the most affected by the traditions because the cultural requirements could be strictly demanded by society. The detailed reasons why the Tumbuka tribe has been given preference for study include the following:

#### *I. Female Cultural Traditional Education*

Chondoka and Bota (2007) argue that traditional education is of most importance among the Tumbuka because it was meant to be for life. Over seventy years earlier Young (1931) argued to the effect that the Tumbuka women are rigorously bound to traditions and were the most difficult to persuade into any modernisation within the women's sphere. The fear that Tumbuka culture might be eroded is another interesting aspect that could be a reason for the dereliction of the education of the girl (Tembo, 2003; Chondoka and Bota, 2007). Rasing (2001) further argues that the Easterners<sup>1</sup> have a tendency of teaching young girls of pubescent age explicit marital information. Kelly et al claim that while in some parts of the Eastern Province it is prohibited to withdraw a female student from school for the purpose of undergoing an initiation rite, in Lundazi, among the Tumbuka, girls are still withdrawn from school for the "purpose of seclusion and initiation rites" (Kelly et al., 1999, p.112). I

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It's a general term used to describe all the tribes found in the Eastern Province of Zambia: this includes the Tumbuka tribe.

therefore see the Tumbuka tribe as an extreme case where the cultural traditions are still strong.

## *II. Patrilineal Status*

The low position accorded to women in patrilineal systems is another reason why the Tumbuka have been considered for study. The existence of patriarchy and the patrilineal system suggest that men have the most dominant social status (Tembo, 2003) and have ownership of the land (Munthali, 2008). Such a position may have negative implications on the women and their participation in education.

## *III. Polygamy*

The Tumbuka tribe like many other patrilineal tribes in the country, Such as the Namwanga and Mambwe of Northern Province practice polygamy (Himonga, 1989). Chondoka and Bota (2007) claim that the practice of polygamy among the Tumbuka is intended to deal with the problem of the barren wife. There seem to be more emphasis on the biological capacity of the women which may render women mere vessels of child production. Polygamous families could be too big and too many children may not be easy to educate and hence the girls may be discriminated against on basis of lack of resources or as care givers to other siblings.

#### IV. The Lobola<sup>2</sup> System

Authors such as Chondoka have argued there is little accuracy or justification in calling the *lobola* custom ‘purchasing’ or ‘buying’ of a wife. He claims it is a payment for the marriage. However, by virtue of the payment the woman may have no rights over her children and herself. Such an arrangement could deprive the woman of any authority and of the right to make decisions, and may in turn affect the education of female children (Chondoka, 2001; Tembo, 2003; Chondoka and Bota, 2007; and Munthali, 2008).

#### V. Personal Interest

I am from the Chewa tribe, matrilineal by descent and my father lived and worked as a teacher in Lundazi district where I was born and lived for the first five years of my life. At 11 years old, when I reached puberty, I was traditionally taught during an initiation rite by the Tumbuka women. I was confined for two weeks in my own bedroom and was not able to go to school for two weeks. When I was ready to get married at the age of 22 years, I again went through a marital initiation rite for a week. Again I was taught by the Tumbuka women. The topics taught at both initiation rites had a particular emphasis on male supremacy, appreciating and respecting men, and keeping my distance from men. Such teachings meant severing my relationship with my father; put a check on how I related to my brothers, especially my older brother, and all my male teachers. The process of teaching was aggressive, humiliating, demeaning and confusing, leaving me traumatised for a long time. Since

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<sup>2</sup> *Lobola* is the payment that a man makes to seal the marriage contract. It is the transfer of cattle or money as marriage payment that a man makes to a girl's/woman's family. In this study *lobola* will be used interchangeably with bride wealth to mean the same thing. OMCT states that the number of marriages requiring the payment of *lobola* has increased in Zambia to such an extent that even “tribes that never used to, have adopted the custom” (OMCT, 2002, p.13). This has equally pushed the cost up with more parents demanding more money or cows for their daughters.



then, I have attended initiation rites for young girls over the years and I have noted with sadness the same lessons I received in 1976 and 1986 are still taught with the same emphasis today. Having had been taught by the Tumbuka women, I wanted to revisit the lessons and understand from the Tumbukas' point of view the purposes for the topics taught and the rationale behind the whole process.

In summary as noted above I see the Tumbuka tribe as an extreme case where the cultural traditions are still strong. By choosing an extreme example, with a strong standing for cultural traditions, the findings of the research could presumably be related to similar situations in the country. I believe the findings will have implications for the Zambian education system. The current global pursuit of Education For All (EFA) and the need to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) is a case in point here.

## **1.2 The Tumbuka Tribe**

There are six major tribal groups in the Eastern Province of which Tumbuka is one. While each tribal grouping has its own dialect, chiChewa<sup>3</sup> is commonly spoken by all groups: the language of the Tumbuka is chiTumbuka. The groupings have a rich array of cultural beliefs, customs and practices with slight variations (Tew, 1950; Kelly et al., 1999). Handelman defines 'tribe' as a description of a sub national grouping which share a "collective identity and language" (Handelman, 2003, p.86). Such a grouping may hold a common lineage. In this research I have adopted this definition to define the Tumbuka tribe.

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<sup>3</sup> The prefix 'chi' means the language of the Chewa or the Tumbuka

Literature on the history of the Tumbuka is relatively limited. This is acknowledged by Chondoka and Bota (2007) who point out that their book is the first to give a correct historical account of the Tumbuka speaking people. They argue that the book contains valid historical information, which was collected from reliable sources (with Tumbuka elders) through in-depth interviews in a number of relevant settings in Malawi and Zambia. Before then, parts of the Tumbuka history were recorded in part in a number of books written by missionaries who did not give an accurate historical account (Chondoka and Bota, 2007). Chondoka and Bota argue that a common practice by the early writers was that of collecting data from one source, “writing the history of a country with reference to the acts of only one of the groups of people making up the country” (Chondoka and Bota, 2007, p.1).

The Tumbuka are part of the many and earliest waves of the Bantu immigrants from Pro-Bantu centre in Kola region of the DRC. Like many other tribes in Zambia such as the Bemba, the Chewa, and the Nsenga, the Tumbuka left the Luba Kingdom, although for different reasons. The Tumbuka broke away in the early 1400s because they did not like the embarrassing menial work they were expected to perform by their leaders. They settled in Malawi but due to population growth, there was need for more land for the purposes of agriculture and settlement, therefore one group left for Zambia and later settled in present day Lundazi and Chama Districts of the country (Young, 1931; Tew, 1950; Brelsford, 1965; Chondoka and Bota, 2007). According to Chondoka and Bota, the Tumbuka co-existed with the Saan who slowly left the area, settling in Namib and Kalahari Desert of present day Namibia and Botswana. The present study focuses on the group that settled in Lundazi.

As earlier indicated, the Tumbuka are a distinct ethnic group that are found in Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia. They are a part of the collection of peoples that include the Kamanga, Henga, Tonga and other smaller units. They were once an important tribe and had occupied the whole of Luangwa valley but were raided and broken up by tribal wars (Tew, 1950; Brelsford, 1965). Brelsford further claims that through the raids and tribal wars, the Tumbuka assumed customs and traditions of other tribes. However, Chondoka and Bota (2007) deny the claim of tribal wars stating that oral history has not captured such history. They consider the Tumbuka as a peaceful tribe that put up no resistance to any tribe that subdued them except the Ngoni.

The Ngonis are described as fierce and inhuman warriors whose destruction of property and life was ruinous wherever they passed (Ogot, 1999). The Ngoni came raiding other tribes for food, men, women and cattle. The Tumbuka were conquered and their chiefs reduced to positions of headmen forcibly usurping their authority (Ogot, 1999; Chondoka and Bota, 2007). One sub-chief appointed to administer the conquered Tumbuka was Phikamalaza. Currently chief Phikamalaza is still under paramount chief Mpezeni of the Ngoni speaking people. Chief Phikamalaza is traditionally known as Nkosi<sup>4</sup>.

The impact of the Ngoni colonisation of the Tumbuka brought new aspects of culture that exist to date. This agrees with Freire's comment on cultural invasion:

Those invaded come to see their reality with the outlook of the invaders rather than their own: for the more they mimic the invaders the more stable the position of the latter become, [...] those invaded become convinced of their inferiority (*Freire, 1987, p.153*).

---

<sup>4</sup> Nkosi is the respective title used to identify Ngoni chiefs. It means King.

The Tumbuka were previously matrilineal but as a result of the Ngoni they took up the Ngoni patrilineal system. Young (1930) and Munthali (2008) argue that the coming and interaction with the Ngoni tribe changed the social organisation of the Tumbuka. These included the centralised form of chieftainship, the system of descent and payment of the bride wealth. Although Chondoka and Bota (2007) insist the Tumbuka are still matrilineal, the men still retain the most dominant social status and power, unlike the matrilineal groupings where authority lie in the hands of women. However, Cutrufelli (1983) has argued to the effect that matrilineal groupings do not imply a real social power of the woman.

Rogers (1980) states that in anthropological terms, patrilineal systems represent families where the children belong to their fathers' line. Munthali (2008) has argued that patrilineal systems disadvantage women because they do not have access to land or other forms of property. Schneider and Gough, commenting on the position of women in these groupings, state that women are viewed as, "nothing more than a favourable medium for the development of the foetus" (Schneider and Gough, 1962, p.25). The position of women in patrilineal groupings seems to lay more emphasis on their reproductive system. There is more to a woman than just her reproductive system, emphasising the woman's reproductive functions may deprive her of the power to stand for herself or her children, especially in a situation where her demeanour is dictated upon by those in authority. This may reduce a woman to a mere object. Such a position may be reason for expecting a woman to put on an unresponsive deportment, speak quietly and clearly but with downcast eyes in any public sphere could easily result in a woman losing her confidence and self esteem and hence she can only be represented by her father, brother, or son in any public sphere (Cutrufelli, 1983; Kelly, 1998). Kwesiga (2002) and Munthali (2008) have

indicated that in patrilineal groupings, boys are considered of more significance than girls; therefore, the education of boys could be more valued than that of the girl.

The Tumbuka assumed the Ngoni patrilineal marriages as a means of identifying themselves with the new rulers. Hence, from 1898, *lobola* (dowry) was intensified by the Tumbuka. With the coming of the missionaries the term dowry was used in the place of *lobola* for lack of a better word. While dowry passes from the kin of the bride to those of the groom, *lobola* passes from the kin of the groom to those of the bride. The difference lies in the recipient. The Tumbuka called *lobola* payment *Kuombola* (redemption payment). This was because the payment gave a man rights over the marriage and the children from the girl's family to the husband's family. Chondoka claims that, "the children were by tradition owned by the husband after paying *lobola*" (Chondoka, 2001, p.198). Such a payment was in form of cows which because the Tumbuka are cattle keepers. The number of cows to be paid is determined by the woman's family. The World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) (2002) has argued that women tend to be victims of *lobola*. For the Tumbuka tribe, the women are of value because the number of cows the man's family is expected to pay is later used by the men in the family to pay for their wives. *Lobola* does not benefit the woman. It benefits the men in her family; brothers, father, and uncles. *Lobola* is paid for a woman's reproductive capacity and hence could condemn the woman to marital enslavement and deny her control over decision-making (OMCT, 2002; Munthali, 2008). For this study, the implication of *lobola* could have an adverse impact on the education of girl especially if her reproductive capacity and her '*lobola* worth' are considered of more value.

Chondoka rejects the notion that *lobola* represents ownership of a wife. Chondoka argues that *lobola* is a 'marriage payment' that "constitutes a seal of a marriage contract that the wife becomes the mother of the man's children" (Chondoka, 2001, p.15). The man has ownership rights to his wife and the status of 'wife' has relevance to the domestic sphere. However Munthali (2008) argues that by virtue of paying the bride wealth, the wife and the children become a vital part of the husband's ancestry: if the bride wealth is not paid the marriage is not considered legitimate. Lobola has become so prevalent in Zambia that in urban areas some members of tribal groups where lobola was not traditionally paid have now taken up the custom

Repaying the *lobola* would not be easy; making divorce an impossibility because the total amount of the *lobola* initially paid had to be repaid by the bride's family. Traditionally for the Tumbuka tribe, divorce was primarily an option for the husband. However, in the 1990s it was a right claimed by women and often accorded to them by local courts. However, in the rural areas, it may not be easy for a woman to divorce the husband because of the cultural implications (Rogers, 1980; Tembo, 2003).

Polygamy, which Tembo (2003) describes as legal marriage of one man to two or more women, is widely practiced by the Tumbuka, who may have taken up the culture from the Ngoni. Chondoka and Bota (2007) claim polygamy may have solved the problem of barrenness in the woman, because the man could still marry another woman to bear him children. Such a reason is assumed as why the Tumbuka men marry more than one wife. Polygamous marriages result in the production of many children because each wife may be under pressure to produce children for the husband to remain in the marriage (Cutrufelli, 1983; Chondoka, 2001).

Like all the tribes in Zambia, the Tumbuka maintain extended family links. Hofstede (2005) refers to such societies as 'collectivist.' In such societies the interest of the group prevails over that of the individual. Therefore:

One owes lifelong loyalty to one's group, breaking this loyalty is one of the worst things a person can do. Between the person and the in-group dependence relationship develops which is both practical and psychological (*Hofstede, 1991, p.50*).

Unlike the individualistic society, the aim of education in the collectivist society is to enable the members of the group to benefit from the individual's achievements. In the Tumbuka society the boy could be most preferred because of his place in the family.

Generally speaking, the Tumbuka traditions could have a negative impact on the education of girls because of the deeply ingrained cultural attitudes and practices. The patrilineal system does not help much because of its interest vested in the male children. Young (1931) argued that Tumbuka women tend to be bound in traditions making it difficult to change their circumstances. The position of girls in society may cultivate negative attitudes about educating girls: parents may believe there are lower monetary returns for the education of girls because they are of more worth to the family they may marry in rather than their fathers'.

The Tumbuka traditions, like any other traditions in Zambia, centre on productivity, new life, harvest and the commemoration of heroic deeds. All such celebrations are held throughout the year irrespective of the school calendar (involvement includes school children). Of these various ceremonies, the initiation ceremonies are of interest to this research because they represent the peak of traditional teaching for the female child and could impact negatively on the education of the girl (Rasing, 2001; Chondoka, 2001).

### 1.3 Defining the Concepts

#### *I. The Concept Of 'Education'*

The concept of education<sup>5</sup> has been given a number of meanings by different scholars such as Bartlett et al who state that “education in its broadest sense means the acquisition of knowledge and the ability to use the knowledge and develop skills” (Bartlett et al., 2001, p.3). Skills and knowledge are important elements in this definition but without understanding and being able to develop such skills, an individual would be ineffective. Bartlett et al (2001) further argue that education should enable an individual to link concepts for the purpose of gaining understanding of the world. Thus, education should involve the mind, reasoning and the mental processes. Clifford described education as “the deliberate, systematic and sustained effort to transmit or evoke knowledge, attitudes, values, skills and sensibilities” (Clifford 1985, p.6). The term ‘evoke’ is of particular interest here because it seems to indicate the process of stimulating already existing knowledge in the learner to cause them to reason critically.

The methodical process noted by Clifford brings in the function of the school system which deliberately informs and shapes learners through its designated curriculum. Cush (2004) insists that education should promote the development of the individual. Culture could influence individuals in a number of ways, restricting them to their own long held established customs, values and beliefs hence preventing them from meaningful changes.

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<sup>5</sup> In this research, I will use school education to represent academic and modern and to differentiate it from traditional education. Therefore, school education, academic and modern education will be used interchangeably to mean one and the same thing.



## II. The Concept Of 'Culture'

Like education, culture is a contested word. Cush defines it as: “The learned aspects of a human that include languages, customs and beliefs and is passed on from generation to generation by means of socialisation and education” (Cush, 2004, p.8). This definition highlights the process of acquiring knowledge, and how it is handed down. It is the totality of everyday life that includes knowledge, norms, beliefs, values, customs, language, habits and skills that enable an individual to relate to others in the society. Put simply, culture could be defined as the personality and the heartbeat of a society, which gives an individual his/her cultural identity. Kwesiga quoting from Ermy’s essay on *The Child and His Environment in Black Africa: Traditional Education*, 1972, states that:

Custom proceeds man; it is a pre-established order from which it is impossible to break loose. To conform to it is to make oneself acceptable to the community at every level, and to benefit from its favours; to turn away from the established order is almost to exclude oneself, to excommunicate oneself (Kwesiga, 2002, p.57, citing Amy, 1972).

As cautioned by Kwesiga (2002), understanding this implication will help in assessing the factors that affect the education of women because it provides a basis for the explanations that are generally termed as ‘cultural,’ where customs demand adherence.

## III. The Concept Of 'Initiation'

In this study the initiate will refer to a female who has had her first menarche and is undergoing an initiation rite.<sup>6</sup> An initiation is a process, a ritual of transition, through which a new identity of a girl is constructed. It is a process through which the basis of adult life is laid down for an individual. According to Arnold Van Gennep (1909) in

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<sup>6</sup> Although a more modern practice is to allow the girls to go to school and return to the house after school to continue their period of confinement, this only takes place if the father insists.

his classic book titled *Les rites de passage*, there are three stages, these are: first, separation; when an individual is separated from others and confined to a house of initiation. Secondly, the marginalisation stage, which demonstrates the insignificance of the initiate. It is during this stage that the initiate is taught and equipped with an extensive body of societal traits that a woman is expected to have understood and used in order to know how to live her newly attained phase of life. Thirdly, the aggregation stage; it is during this stage that an initiate is incorporated into the new state (adulthood). This stage signifies the end of the whole initiation process and the exit is a public spectacle where the initiate is introduced to the rest of the community as an adult (Richards, 1956; Turner, 1969; Rasing, 1995; and Rasing, 2001).

There are two types of initiation rites that will be mentioned in this study, that is the pre-menarche and the pre-marital rites. Of particular interest is the pre-menarche rite which will simply be referred to as an initiation rite or ceremony. Reason to focus on the pre-menarche rite is because it is conducted on young girls who are in formal school. The concern here is the information the young girls receive during the initiation process and the significance for and possible effect it could have on her educational aspirations.

#### IV. The Concept Of 'Tradition'

Tradition is another controversial concept. In defining the concept, Rasing (2001) notes that 'tradition' is a construction of the interaction of individuals through language and experiences which in turn form its complex identity mark. While traditions are a construction of the members of a given society there could be an element of the corpus of inherited culture characteristics that continues despite changes taking place. It is this 'core' of inherited culture that the tribe under study

calls *miambo* (traditions) and in this study I will refer to ‘*miambo*’ traditions as cultural traditions.

#### V. *The Concept Of ‘Patrilineal’ Lineage*

Segall et al point out that in a given society there are rules of descent, which are “ways in which persons in a society trace their ancestry” (Segall et al., 1990, p.7). Two of these are patrilineal and matrilineal descent. Members in matrilineal descent groupings trace their origin to the mother’s side while those in patrilineal descent groupings trace their origin to the father’s side.

A number of studies such as Young, (1930), Brelsford, (1965), Ogot, (1999), Munthali (2008) identify the Tumbuka tribe as patrilineal, a position they assumed after the invasion of the Ngoni, itself patrilineal. In patrilineal groupings, authority is vested in men by birth and the recruitment of new members is through the males. The role of women is to give birth to the descent group’s heir. While in matrilineal descent, group placement is through the women, the positions of highest authority still lie vested in men. A woman in authority will have to consult with the men to make an important decision (Schneider and Gough, 1962). It is important to understand here that the standing of these groupings has strong attachments to the members of a particular society and the implications could affect the members in different ways: for example the importance placed on the education of a child.

#### **1. 4 The Structure of this Study**

The structure of this study will be as follows. Chapter 1 has given a background to the Tumbuka tribe, where they are located in the country and reasons for the focus on this particular tribe. Inspiration for this study and my particular interest on the tribe has

also been given. Chapter 2 will provide the statement of the problem to this investigation showing a number of statistics on the education of women in the country. The statistics provided are intended to show the number of girls in school in comparison to the boys. Although the statistics may not explain the reasons for the disparities among the number of girls and boys in school in the province, they are able to paint a picture of the low turn-out of girls participating in school education. Such information is valuable to this study and reason for the investigation. Background information to Zambia has been provided in the chapter in order to give the reader background for understanding the study. The discussion will include the location of Zambia in the region, its population and the education system. Information on education in the rural areas will be given, which is intended to show how disadvantaged Lundazi district is because it is predominantly rural. The chapter will end with an examination of Zambia's global standpoint in relation to the education of women. This will be done in light of its commitment made towards the education of women in the country.

Chapter 3 outlines and discusses the different theories of gender inequalities and Human Capital Theory (HCT), which are expected to explain the problem being studied. A number of theories have been used to provide critical understanding and explanations to the factors that affect the education of women. Reference to the relationship between African feminisms and Western feminisms has been done with a focus on the criticisms of the Western feminists made by the African feminists.

Chapter 4 examines the nature of Zambian cultural traditions with a focus on the Tumbuka and gives background on some of the influential practices prevalent in the tribe that affect the education of women. Examples from the literatures will be used in discussion to establish the need to investigate the phenomenon. Chapter 5 will

discuss, argue and justify the methodological case used to collect the data for this study. A number of issues such as the procedures used for collecting data, sampling strategy, reliability and validity of the investigation, research ethics and the method of analysis used to translate raw data into findings will be discussed. Chapters 6 and 7 cover the discussions on the findings and analysis of the study and Chapter 8 concludes with a summary of some of the broad themes of this study. The recommendations this study will raise will also be part of Chapter 8.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

The importance of the education of women has topped many agendas both locally and internationally for decades. However the factors that affect access and participation of women in education are many with social cultural implications being one. The reality of social cultural implications as cause for the low participation of women in education can no longer be ignored. Choosing to focus on other factors may explain the continued state of women in many developing countries. Chapter 1 has explained the purpose for this investigation and in this chapter, the statement of problem will throw up a number of issues such as education in the rural areas and the impact cultural traditions could have on female education and the current state of the education of girls in the country. The education system of Zambia and its implications on the education of girls will be given attention. The analysis of the problem will serve to argue and justify the purpose of the research; a number of statistics will be used as evidence of the number of girls that are not in school. The discussion will include background information to Zambia, its location in Africa, population, its economy. Information on Eastern Province and in particular Lundazi district, which is home to the Tumbuka tribe, will be provided. This will further give the reader a clear understanding of the place where the data were collected. A brief discussion of the objectives and the methodological case used to collect the data will be done. This will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 5.

The landlocked position of Zambia does not have a direct impact on its education system. However, the number of refugees in the country has impacted on its population, security and economy. The population and economic standing of the country has its own implications on the education system such as overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teaching and learning resources and the like. The Zambian education system remains a copy of its former colonial masters (Britain) with slight changes made over the years. The colonial impact on the local people continues to impact on their attitude towards the education of their children much more than that of the female child. The pedagogy in use is predominantly teacher centred which could cultivate rote learning rather than critical investigation skills in the learners.

A discussion on education in the rural area, of which Lundazi is, will be done as part of the statement of the problem because the rural areas have their own effect on the education of girls. The lack of resources can easily exacerbate the factors that negatively impact on female education. For example the lack of learning resources such as books could reinforce absenteeism in both boys and girls however for the girl it could create opportunities to engage in house hold chores.

Zambia's participation in international and regional conferences on the education of women is discussed. This background is important because Zambia's commitment to the education agenda worldwide impacts its approach to the education of all its citizens in both rural and urban areas. Further the pursuit to achieve the goals set out, such as the MDGs can guide and inform any research or advocacy on the education of women. The government has a moral responsibility to ensure that the commitments made are honoured in practice not only in principle. Zambia is not exempted from the many regional and international instruments towards the education of women, hence,

the need to minimise or eliminate the factors that militate against the education of girls deserve attention. This brings up the discussion on the statement of the problem to this investigation which is the focus of the section that follows.

## **2.1 Statement of the Problem**

### **I. The Location Of Zambia**

Located in the southern part of Africa, Zambia lies between the equator and the tropical of Capricorn. It has a total surface area of 753, 000sq km of which about 12,000sq km is water and 741,000sq km is land and covers 2.5 percent of Africa (Zambia, 2000; CSO, 2003; Zambia, 2005; and CSO, 2006). It is a landlocked country, which shares boundaries with 8 countries; Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Angola, Tanzania, and Namibia. Despite being neighbour to some warring nations, such as DRC, Zambia remains one of the peaceful nations in the region and hence provides sanctuary to hundreds of thousands of refugees (CSO, 2003). While Zambia has been able to provide sanctuary to refugees, this has put strain on the struggling economy. Eastern Province remains home to a number of refugees from Mozambique who have not been able to return back.

Zambia is divided into nine administrative provinces and 72 districts. The Copperbelt and Lusaka Province are predominantly urban with the rest being rural: about four out of ten Zambians live in urban areas (CSO, 2003). The Eastern Province is fairly narrow and shares boundaries with Malawi and Mozambique. See the map of Zambia below:



Figure 1 ~ Map of Zambia showing its Neighbours, Provinces and Districts



Source: Maps of the World (2009). Accessed on 08/01/09

\*The pointer shows Lundazi district, which is home to the Tumbuka tribe under study.

Eastern Province is divided into eight districts of which Lundazi is one and is home to the Tumbuka tribe with a population of 236,833 according to the year 2000 census results. The province is home to the Luangwa National Park that is divided into two; Northern and Southern Parks. The Northern Park lies near Lundazi district and is about 4,600sq km of the valley of the Luangwa River. The park is not developed and is not open to the public except guided walking safaris (CSO, 2003; Zambia, 2003; Tembo, 2003). However, the district does not benefit much from any revenue. Mvula (2000) writing on fair trade in tourism in Southern Luangwa National Park, argued that despite the notable rewards of tourism development, the benefits are rarely distributed equitably with the local people. Mvula identifies the unequal

discrimination in the employment practice as one area where the indigenous people have been discriminated against.

## II. *The Population And The People*

The current population of Zambia is estimated at 11.7million of which 51.5 percent are women and 48.5 percent are men (Zambia, 2005; CSO, 2006; and Zambia, 2009). Zambia has about 73 ethnic linguistic Bantu speaking groups or tribes dispersed in its 9 provinces. The main languages are Bemba, Nyanja, Tonga, Lozi, Kaonde, Luvale, and Lunda with each having a cluster of dialects. English remains the nation's official language, a situation that is as a result of the British colonization (Zambia, 2000; Zambia, 2009). Wright (2003) has argued that colonizing states introduced their languages to the local people targeting the children. Consequently, English became the official language of instruction in schools.

Previously known as Northern Rhodesia, Zambia gained political independence from its colonial master (Britain), on the 24<sup>th</sup> of October 1964 and adopted the multiparty system of governance, which lasted until December 1972 when the one party system based on the socialist ideology was introduced. In 1991, Zambia peacefully re-introduced the multiparty system currently in place. This change saw an improvement in the country's economy attracting donor support and much of the rundown basic infrastructure such as schools and roads were rehabilitated. Liberalization of the country's economy also saw the growth of privately owned schools that provided competition to government owned schools hence improving the fallen standards of teaching and learning (Zambia, 2000; CSO, 2003; McPherson, 2004; and Zambia, 2005).

### III. The Education System

Despite Zambia obtaining independence from Britain, the education system was one of the most poorly developed in the region, poor in quantity and quality, targeting a few Zambians (Achola, 1990; Silanda et al., 1999). Authors such as Achola, (1990), Kelly (1999), and Carmody (1999) have argued that the colonial system of education did not benefit the majority of Zambians. Wright, commenting on the development of education, states that the colonizers considered the colonized people as “inferior, degenerate, savage and in need of improvement” (Wright, 2003, p.219). He argues that if the colonizers held the colonized people with such a low view, as ‘backward heathens’, how could they have enabled them to appreciate the ‘truth’ except through education.

However, what is questionable is the nature of knowledge that was imposed upon the colonized people through the education system: It tended to benefit the colonizing states by creating useful ‘servants’ out of the indigenous people for the colonizing nation. Therefore the indigenous people were equipped with restricted knowledge and skills to undertake clerical/serviceable duties on behalf of the colonizing nation. Such type of education did not benefit the majority of Zambians let alone the female population. The pedagogy used was rote learning rather than the discovery learning, a system that remains in operation up until now (Achola, 1990; Wright 2003). Carmody (1999) and Kelly (1999) insist that the colonial master showed little interest in promoting local schooling; Carmody (1999) commenting on the history of education in Zambia, indicates that the British South African Company (BSAC) which administered the territory then made it impossible for the local people, especially the women, to gain access to education provision in order to keep them ignorant. Such a situation left Zambia with a limited pool of educated resources at independence

(Carmody, 1999; Kelly, 1999; and Machinshi, 2004). Further still, Ewen states that “the philosophy, aims and type of colonial education were only designed to permit a small fraction of African children to enter school” (Ewen, 2000, p.6).

The small fraction cited by Ewen attended primary school, and a few attained secondary levels, while tertiary education was neglected. The resources amassed by the colonial master in the country were instead pumped into Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia) which was the colony’s headquarters. Carmody (1999) and Kelly (1999) state that as at independence on the 24<sup>th</sup> of October 1964, Zambia only had one university with a few colleges offering tertiary education. The majority of the students in these institutions were male, for example the only university in the country then had 107 students of which only four were female (Kasonde, 2003).

Zambia has a three-tiered educational system consisting of nine years of basic education<sup>7</sup>, three years of high school and the last stage of four years plus for the post secondary education. Progression from one level to another is through an external national examination. Such a system tends to restrict entrance of the majority of students to the next level, especially the secondary level, creating a huge bank of drop-outs with limited potential of employable skills. This stands as a case for the Tumbukas and the rest of the country, where a number of girls may fail to progress to secondary level due to failure to meet the grade expected. This could be due to lack of time to study as a result of chores expected of them at home (Kelly et al., 199).

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<sup>7</sup> In Zambia, the notion ‘basic education’ refers to the first 9 years of compulsory education. This includes 7 years of primary education and 2 years of secondary schooling. The appropriate age cohort is 7-14 years.

Table 1 ~ Different levels of the Zambian Education System

Level	Age	Grade <sup>8</sup>	Free/Fee paying
Pre-Schooling	From 2-6 years		Virtually in private hands
Basic Education	From 7-15 years	1 – 9	Currently free from grade1 to grade 7
High School.	From 16-18 years	9 -12	Fee paying
Tertiary level	From 19-22 years	College University	Fee paying

The Zambian educational system comprises a multi structure that includes the Early Childhood Care, Development and Education (ECCDE), basic education, high education, literacy education, and tertiary education illustrated in Ministry of Education is in charge and responsible for the operation of primary and secondary education, training and universities. Despite pre-schooling having been given so many advocacies by the Ministry, the greater number of pre-schools is in private hands making it an expensive level of education. The Ministry is also responsible for the formulation of education polices. The recent major education policies stated in the Strategic Plan and The Fifth National Development Plan (FNDP) are broad operational frameworks, which are intended to guide the attainment of the goals and objectives of education in the country (Educating Our Future, 1996; Silanda et al., 1999; and MOE, 2005).

The policy document, *Educating Our Future 1996*, is the most recent document formulated by the Ministry of Education. The policy of the Ministry is to provide quality education to all its citizens. This policy is guided by strategic polices that form the guiding principles within which education is delivered. These strategic policies include:

- The Ministry of Education will ensure that every child has access to nine years of good quality education. As the first step to the attainment of the goal of universal basic education the Ministry of Education will ensure that every child will have

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<sup>8</sup> Grade represent a year a child spends in school or the level at which one is at school

access to a minimum of seven years of good quality schooling in a school of parental choice (MOE, 1996, p.22).

- The overall goal of basic education is to provide each pupil with a solid intellectual, practical and moral foundation that will serve as a basis to a fulfilling life. Hence it will seek to provide a comprehensive programme of study and school activities that will:
  - Promote the full and harmonious development of every pupil
  - Give some preparation for adult working life
  - Serve as a basis for further training; and
  - Lead to the level of competence necessary for proceeding to high school (MOE, 1996, p.44).

The factors impacting on the implementation of educational policies in Zambia are many some of which, poor economy, inadequate supply of teachers, curriculum relevance, pedagogy (rote learning rather than discovery learning), high rates of unemployment especially after primary and secondary school (Achola, 1990, MOE, 1996; and FNDP 2006-2010, 2006).

*Figure 2 ~ Limitations of the Education System*

Irrelevant school curricula to the cultural or socio-economic environments which do not provide the school leavers with employability power or ability for self employment.

“Curricula and curriculum materials have tended to confine boys and girls to classical roles and models, thus psychologically limiting knowledge and skill avenues” (Ewen, 2000, p7).

The practical skills offered in schools/training schools do not match the needs and requirements of local industry nor relate to self-employment

“There is extensive rote learning geared mainly to the memorization of theories purely for the passing of examinations, rather than the development of analytic ability” (Ewen, 2000, p.6).

The lack of both learning and teaching material is demoralizing to both the teacher and the learner. In some cases the available reading materials are not motivating enough nor do they encourage learners to learn hence the learners easily relapse into illiteracy (Ewen, 2000, pp. 6-7).

This study insists that education is one means of empowering the women to take control of their lives and those of their children however, the Zambian education system is a case in point. Ewen (2000) has rightly suggested that Zambian formal education has not helped much in terms of providing mass skilling for the nation. He lists a number of points to show the limitations of the education system. See Figure 2. Such an education system that exhibits little or has no significance to the cultural or socio-economic environments may not be appreciated, much more when compared with the traditional education system, which is rigorous and involves experiential learning.

#### IV. *The State Of Girl's Education In Zambia*

The importance of education is a well known fact: Zambia's policy on education states that education is a right of every child (Educating Our Future, 1996). Swain, (2005) citing Aristotle (1967), explains that the fundamental intention of education is the realization of a 'good life'. Kaziba (1997) declares that it is only through education that the female population of Africa can be empowered. However, despite the importance of the education of girls being advocated for decades in many forums and conferences, Zambia still registers disturbing statistics in this matter. Zambia's population of 51.5 percent women and 48.5 percent men has the "illiteracy rate of women at 40 percent while that of men is 19 percent" (Zambia, 2009, p.1). This research recognizes government's effort in attempting to provide quality education, 100 percent enrolment of all children, high retention levels for all and gender parity.

Access to basic education grades 1–7 has improved, which is attributed to free education provided for that level. The Gross Enrolment Ratio<sup>9</sup> (GER) for grade 1 – 9 has increased from 71.1 percent in 2002 to 89.8 percent in 2004, while the Net Enrolment Ratio<sup>10</sup> (NER) has increased from 68.1 percent in 2002 to 79.4 percent in 2004 (FNDP, 2006, p.150). However, despite such improved statistics, significant disparity between male and female pupils still exist and should be cause for worry and a key concern by all concerned. Girls represented a GER of 86.4 percent in 2004 against 93.2 percent that of boys and a completion rate of 65.8 percent and 78.3 percent respectively (FNDP, 2006, p.150).

Enrolment rates have improved greatly showing more girls than boys enrolling in grade 1. For example in 2005, 444,300 pupils enrolled in grade 1 of which 225, 231 were female and 219,069 were male (MOE, 2005, p.23). Table 2 below shows gender disparity in basic school enrolment, with the girls trailing behind the boys despite improvement at primary level. These statistics could suggest poor female progressing to further education.

*Table 2 ~ Enrolment in Basic Schools by gender in Zambia*

	<b><u>2002</u></b>	<b><u>2003</u></b>	<b><u>2004</u></b>	<b><u>2005</u></b>	<b><u>2006</u></b>
<b>Female</b>	1,023,400	1,102,000	1,219,000	1,392,000	1,462,500
<b>Male</b>	1,105,000	1,185,000	1,300,530	1,460,400	1,520,400
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,128,038</b>	<b>2,287,000</b>	<b>2,519,141</b>	<b>2,852,400</b>	<b>2,983,000</b>

(MOE, 2008, p.2)

<sup>9</sup> GER is the “number of primary school pupils as a percentage of the population of the official primary school age” (MOE, 2005, p.8). The official primary school entrance age is 7 years.

<sup>10</sup> NER represents “the number of primary school pupils who are 7 to 13 years old as a percentage the population of the official primary school age” (MOE, 2005, p.8).



The table below (table 3) shows the low enrolment level in all provinces in Zambia except for Lusaka and Copperbelt, which are highly urban. While the statistics may suggest a number of reasons such as poor infrastructure, poor teaching and learning resources in the rural areas, the statistics do not show the actual populations of the individual provinces which could be higher in the highly urbanised provinces. However, Central Statistics Office (2003) states that more than 50 percent of Zambians live in the rural area. Note the total numbers for both girls and boys nationally showing the low enrolment for the girls.

*Table 3 ~ Enrolment In Basic Schools By Gender And Province*

	<u>Lusaka</u>	<u>C/belt</u>	<u>Southern</u>	<u>Central</u>	<u>Luapula</u>	<u>Northern</u>	<u>Eastern</u>	<u>Western</u>	<u>N/western</u>	<u>National</u>
<b>Girls</b>	169.167	275.076	193.695	155.430	104.767	185.176	<b>149.286</b>	91.912	85.482	1,391,988
<b>Boys</b>	162.840	251.167	204.783	163.719	116.090	210.381	<b>158.546</b>	98.900	93.966	1,460,382

(MOE, 2005, p.24)

Zambia has three entrance levels into education. These are: grade 1, grade 10 entrances and entry into tertiary institutions that include colleges and university. For the purpose of this document, ‘access’ will refer to the right of entry into education at any level at which one is admitted or enrolled. 7 years is the nationally recognized enrolment age in the country. Currently this has been relaxed to enable as many children as possible to enrol in line with EFA commitment (FAWE, 2004). The move has improved the enrolment rate.

*Table 4 ~ GER High Schools 16 – 18 (Grade 10 – 12) By Gender And Province*

	<u>Lusaka</u>	<u>C/belt</u>	<u>Southern</u>	<u>Central</u>	<u>Luapula</u>	<u>Northern</u>	<u>Eastern</u>	<u>Western</u>	<u>N/western</u>	<u>National</u>
<b>Female</b>	26.83%	40.33%	16.79%	20.68%	13.90%	13.69%	<b>12.09%</b>	16.92%	21.61%	17.92%
<b>Male</b>	31.44%	44.50%	23.01%	25.12%	18.60%	20.53%	<b>19.94%</b>	21.57%	32.66%	21.58%

(MOE, 2005, p.31)

Table 4 shows the GER in high school by gender and province. The outstanding disparities with more boys enrolled than girls in high schools are noteworthy. Interestingly, Eastern Province (in bold) ranks as the worst in the female enrolment ratio, indicating how few females progress to high school in the province. An interesting observation can be noted between Eastern and Northern Provinces. The two are neighbours but Northern Province seems to be doing better than Eastern Province as observed in Tables 4 and 5 a situation that may require further research. While the statistics show Northern Province ahead of Eastern Province, the statistics do not show the population of pupils enrolled in the particular year or the population of the two different provinces.

*Table 5 ~ Shows the Survival Rate to grade 5 by Province (2005)*

	<u>Lusaka</u>	<u>C/belt</u>	<u>Southern</u>	<u>Central</u>	<u>Luapula</u>	<u>Northern</u>	<u>Eastern</u>	<u>Western</u>	<u>N/western</u>
<b>Girls</b>	92.1	81.9	76.3	74.5	64.1	63.7	<b>60.9</b>	60.9	56.1
<b>Boys</b>	93.2	84.7	81.8	79.5	75.7	75.2	<b>69.8</b>	66.1	65.3

(MOE, 2005, p.41)

In 2005, up to 8,856 girls against 14,365 boys completed grade 12 with school certificates. In 2006, 10,773 girls and 17,017 boys completed grade 12 with school certificates. In 2006, 150,000 boys and 250,000 girls aged between 16 and 18 years were out of school (Kasonde et al., 2007, p.23). Of significant note in these statistics

is the huge margin between the girls and the boys out of school and completing secondary school with school certificates.

The dropout rates in both basic and high schools in the country are still significant. While more girls are able to access education easily, the retention and completion rates are still low. The question worth asking is “where is the girl who enrolled in grade 1 seven years ago or 12 years ago?” Ministry of Education (2005) claims that fewer girls than boys will reach grade 5 indicating that boys are more likely to reach grade 5. Eastern Province seems to be among the worst provinces in the country with a low survival rate. The survival rate<sup>11</sup> in table 4 shows this activity. CAMFED Zambia, (2007) argues that the transition of girls from grade 4 to grade 5 (those enrolled at 7 years would be 10 or 11 years and the late entries could be 13 to 14 years) is particularly difficult because of a number of factors, such as early or forced marriages, pregnancies and due to traditional teachings that they receive during initiation rites when they reach puberty.

Tables 6 and 7, show the dropout rate for both basic and high schools and the disparity across provinces and by gender. The statistics seem to indicate the disproportion with more girls dropping out than boys.

<i>Table 6 ~ Dropout rate for Basic Schools by Gender and Province 2005</i>									
	<u>Lusaka</u>	<u>C/belt</u>	<u>Southern</u>	<u>Central</u>	<u>Luapula</u>	<u>Northern</u>	<u>Eastern</u>	<u>Western</u>	<u>N/western</u>
<b>Girls</b>	1.50%	2.12%	2.52%	2.71%	4.24%	3.95%	<b>3.56%</b>	3.69%	4.61%
<b>Boys</b>	1.12%	1.69%	1.39%	1.94%	3.08%	2.76%	<b>2.46%</b>	2.53%	2.86%

(MOE, 2005, p.41).

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<sup>11</sup> Survival rate explains the percentage of a pupil cohort actually reaching grade 5

The difference between genders is quite alarming in some cases raising concern on the state of the girls. For example, table 7 for North Western Province (7.02 girls and 2.16 boys). Although statistics show Eastern Province faring better on the dropout rates in comparison with Northern and North-Western Provinces, more girls than boys could have dropped out of school. Further still, the enrolment percentages for Eastern, Northern and North-Western Province could be different hence producing the noted disparity. The statistics given are inconclusive and may not give full information regarding the drop out rates. For example, the statistics do not show the total numbers enrolled in each province. The statistics suggest an investigation into the reasons for the number of dropouts.

<i>Table 7 ~ Dropout rates for High School students by Gender and Province (2005)</i>									
	<u>Lusaka</u>	<u>C/belt</u>	<u>Southern</u>	<u>Central</u>	<u>Luapula</u>	<u>Northern</u>	<u>Eastern</u>	<u>Western</u>	<u>N/western</u>
<b>Girls</b>	1.59%	1.32%	1.79%	2.86%	4.38%	6.61%	4.84%	3.78%	7.02%
<b>Boys</b>	0.89%	0.76%	0.51%	0.66%	2.01%	2.93%	1.91%	1.03%	2.16%

(MOE, 2005, p.41)

Among the reasons that have been raised as contributing to such a phenomenon include pregnancies, early or forced marriages and poverty. Such factors could contribute to the high dropout rate (Gachukia, 2004). Gachukia further attributes the multiple roles that girls tend to play in society as contributing to their late enrolment, absenteeism and consequently dropout tendencies. However, recent statistics still show that female participation in education is low in comparison with their male counterparts. For example statistics reveal that 48 percent of women aged 15-49 and 75 percent of men aged 15-59 can read and write while 79 percent of women and 90 percent of men of the same age group in the urban area can read and write (MOE, 2005).

*Table 8 ~ 15 to 24 year olds literacy Rate by Province (2000)*

	<u>C/belt</u>	<u>Lusaka</u>	<u>Southern</u>	<u>Central</u>	<u>Western</u>	<u>Luapula</u>	<u>Northern</u>	<u>N/Western</u>	<u><b>Eastern</b></u>
<b>Female</b>	82.3	78.8	70.8	67.2	63.2	55.1	54.3	52.2	<b>42.6</b>
<b>Male</b>	87.2	85.7	76.3	75.4	70.8	70.9	71.7	67.1	<b>57.8</b>

**(MOE, 2005, p.46)**

Table 8 shows the discrepancy in the literacy<sup>12</sup> rate between male and female population and between the rural and urban settings. Eastern Province had the lowest rate at 42.6 percent and the rate for women remains low in all provinces. The Ministry of Education indicates that a high adult literacy rate may suggest the existence of an effective primary education system and/or adult literacy programmes which have enabled a large proportion of the population to acquire the ability of using the written word and to do “simple arithmetic calculations in daily life” (MOE, 2005, p.46). However, Ewen (2000) has argued that many of the primary school students drop out without attaining functional literacy and hence may simply slip back into ignorance. Commenting on illiteracy rates FNDP (2006), points out that rates are higher among women (75 percent) than men (65 percent). This has been attributed to “high dropout rates and lower completion rates (75.1 percent for girls and 95.4 percent) for boys in primary schools” (FNDP, 2006, p.313). Remarking on the same matter, Muranga (1997) revealed that drop outs tend to have a low academic aspiration, which she stressed, could be as a result of upholding a traditional attitude to cultural norms and practices.

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<sup>12</sup> Literacy could be defined as the ability of one to read and write, while functional literacy applies to one with skills in reading and writing sufficient enough for daily ordinary practical needs. This may relate to community development and the teaching of useful life skills (Todaro and Smith, 2003).

Commenting on the retention rates, CAMFED Zambia claims that “between 2000 and 2002, the retention rate for girls in grade 1 to grade 7 was 56 percent compared to 69 percent for boys” (CAMFED Zambia, 2007, p.10). In 2004, the retention rates were 78 percent for boys and 66 percent for girls. The statistics show a staggering improvement for girls and boys but the gap between the two sexes remains the same. Further still, ZDEGC (1995) affirms that the lowest girls’ enrolment and completion rates were found in districts with the highest rates of adult illiteracy of which Eastern Province is part of.

#### V. Zambia’s Economy

Zambia has boasted an improved economic growth of 5.5 percent per annum after the external debt cancellation of \$7.16 billion to \$0.5 billion by World Bank (WB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) at the G8 summit in Gleneagles, Scotland in 2008. Such an outcome should enable the government to redirect resources that have been freed from the debt cancellation to the education sector in order to make education free of direct cost for the underprivileged. The country’s economy depends heavily on copper that remains the major economic activity. The opening of new mines and the expansion of old ones since 2006 has unfortunately not produced any marked improvement in the lives of most Zambians as millions of them continue to live below the World Bank poverty threshold of \$1 a day. However, there has been growth in the construction, and transport sectors. Agriculture, a sector the country hopes to depend upon rather than copper, seems to face major setbacks due to erratic rain patterns and persistent drought (McPherson, 2004; CAMFED Global Campaign for Education, 2004; Zambia, 2007; and DFID, 2008). USAIDS (2008) indicate that the education system in Zambia has suffered a decline over the past two decades as a

result of a drop in national revenue linked to the low copper prices and substantial increase in fuel cost.

The recent ‘credit crunch’ has not spared the country due to the fact that mines that are run by international companies have either closed down, releasing thousands of workers into the unemployment category or have simply laid off workers. The Copperbelt, the main mining province of the country, is the worst hit. The BBC News Channel, on the 16 June 2009 estimated that since 2008, 8,200 jobs were lost in Zambia’s biggest Copper Mining Company due to the global economic downturn (BBC News Channel, 2009). Cramer et al (2009) equally affirm the shutting down of copper mines in Zambia, a situation that has resulted in loss of jobs. Meanwhile, 68 percent of Zambians still live in poverty and the country remains one of the poorest countries in the world. It is estimated that two – thirds of Zambia’s population live on less than \$1 a day, which is an estimate of 7.5 million people (DHS, 2002; Zambia, 2003; McPherson, 2004; NGOCC, 2006; and CAMFED Zambia, 2007).

#### VI. *The Implications of Poverty*

A number of literature such as DHS (2002), Zambia (2003), McPherson (2004), NGOCC (2006) and CAMFED Zambia (2007) estimate that 68 percent of Zambians still live in poverty and the country remains one of the poorest countries in the world. It is further estimated that two – thirds of Zambia’s population live on less than \$1 a day, which is an estimate of 7.5 million.

The 2004 living conditions monitoring survey report identified the province as having a high incidence of poverty. The report suggests that 70 percent of the population in the province are extremely poor, which could be attributed to persistent droughts and

floods (CSO, 2004). Ndonyo (2005) pointed out that poverty is also exacerbated by low education; a situation Kapungwe (2004) explains narrows the options for the acquisition of resources to satisfy basic needs. Todaro and Smith define poverty as a low level of living, which is characterised by “inadequate housing, poor health, limited education, high infant mortality, low life and work expectancies” (Todaro and Smith 2003, p.47). This suggests the extent to which the people are unable to command adequate resources to gratify their essential needs.

The MOE (2006) agrees that a literate nation is more likely to develop than an illiterate one, because the citizens are more knowledgeable about the realities of life and would have better skills. The low levels of education and skills can make it hard for developing nations to expand new industry and make the people less adaptable and agreeable to change (Thirlwall, 2003). Poverty can be pervasive and its outcomes incapacitating and unfortunately women seem to be the most vulnerable to poverty which could be attributed to their low education achievement (World Bank, 2005).

## VII. *The Implications Of HIV/AIDS In Zambia*

According to UNAIDS (2008) Sub Saharan Africa accounts for more than two thirds (68 percent) of people living with HIV. It is claimed UNAIDS (2008) that Zambia has one of the world’s most devastating HIV and AIDS epidemics. The first AIDS case was reported in 1984 and since the HIV epidemic has spread to all parts of its society. In Zambia, a total of 1200 000 adults are living with HIV. Of this total, 610 000 are women, which could demonstrate that women are more likely to be infected with HIV than men (UNAIDS, 2008; WHO, 2008). The young women and girls seem to be at higher risk and vulnerable of contracting HIV/AIDS because of lack of knowledge and skills to protect themselves from infection, lack of empowerment: hence they remain completely dependent on the man and fail to leave a relationship



that threatens them with infection. Societal factors such as cultural norms impose lopsided and more passive roles for women in sexual decisions and traditional instructions teach the woman not to refuse the husband sex, tolerate his infidelity and not to insist the use of a condom (Ndonyo, 2005; UNAIDS, 2008).

If women are 51.5 percent of Zambia's 11.7 million population, then a lower proportion of men are infected than women on these figures. The UNAIDS (2008) suggests that girls are four times more likely to be infected with HIV than the boys, a situation, which could be exacerbated by gender norms, poverty and a lack of education. Studies such as Barnighausen et al (2007) and Hargreaves et al (2008) have shown that education is an excellent tool that could aid the reduction of HIV risk and vulnerability. Further still, the authors claim that each added year of educational achievement could lessen the risk of HIV infection by seven percent in girls. Unfortunately the Ministry of Education in Zambia has not done much in terms of AIDS education because HIV/AIDS has been viewed as a health issue (MOE, 2000). Unfortunately, there remains a lack of HIV/AIDS education and support services for students and teachers. Teachers are just beginning to come forward for HIV counseling and testing (USAID, 2010). There are currently a number of programs being run by the Ministry through health education programmes, the development of life-skills, sexuality and personal relationship programmes to disseminate information on formation of attitudes in relation to HIV/AIDS. Further still, the curriculum for both primary and secondary schools has been revised to include HIV and its implications (MOE, 2000; USAID, 2010).

Sexual abuse has progressively increased in Zambia with a belief of what is called "virgin cure,"<sup>13</sup> It is an act that fuels much of the abuse connected with HIV transmission involving the sexual abuse of children. Men are targeting increasingly younger sexual partners whom they assume to be HIV-negative (Jere, 2003). Jere (2003) claims that an increased proportion of the abusers are HIV-positive and many transmit their infection to their victims. While AIDS Care (2008) claim that HIV is prevalent in cities rather than in poor rural areas, there are a number of viable strategies of disseminating information such as television, and radios which may not be possible in poor areas. According to AIDS Care (2008) the spread of HIV in rural areas is mostly through seasonal agricultural workers who travel to big cities to sell their produce. The lack of education and prevalent cultural traditions could worsen the situation in rural areas as noted above. Kelly (2000) claims that some rural areas have accused teachers of being responsible for the introduction and spread of HIV/AIDS. Such a claim deserves attention because according to ILO (2002) one of the roles of the teachers is to counsel their pupils in relation to AIDS issues. Finally while poverty in itself may not inevitably risk infectivity, the combination of gender and poverty presents risk and vulnerability hence the need to education empowerment that could drastically change gender norms.

#### *VIII. Education In The Rural Area*

As already been discussed at the beginning of this section, Lundazi district is predominately rural and the discussion of this section shows how education in the rural set-up is disadvantaged. The government is very much aware of the fact that the female child living in a poor illiterate rural environment and in a remote part of the country is most severely disadvantaged educationally. Such political recognition calls

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<sup>13</sup> A belief which wrongly claims that sex with a virgin can cure AIDS.

for an in-depth analytical research in order to understand factors militating against and undermining the education of girls (ZDEGC, 1995; FAWE, 2006).

Shabaya and Agwemang (2004) point out that, women in rural areas are more affected by customs and beliefs than those in the urban areas, which they attribute to a social pressure to conform to the expected rules and values. This could be precipitated effectively by the agents and institutions, which transmit beliefs and customs and which sanction deviant behaviour. Nyirenda (2008) argued that the community is a powerful force and members are under pressure to adhere to its expectations. Members tend to be under pressure to conform and therefore, such pressure to conform and other forces could exert influence on their thinking, feelings and choices made. Akuffo (2007) further claims that a lot of women are not educated in rural areas as a result of prejudice and beliefs that insist that women are only meant to take care of homes. While there could be nothing wrong with women taking care of homes, it should not be seen as the only institution or speciality that they are meant for.

Education in a rural environment continues to lag behind the education in the urban environment because there the shortcomings that may militate against female education abound such as the lack of resources. The tables earlier shown in the chapter arguably show clearly the number of girls in schools especially in Eastern Province. This could affect both the girls and boys however the girls seem to be the most affected (Kelly et al., 1999; CAMFED Zambia, 2007). Gachukia (2004) claims that schools and families tend to target boys rather than girls due to traditional attitudes that assume that girls' education is a poor investment in terms of returns. Additionally, rural areas may stand to benefit if most of the community was to

acquire education, because they may be capable of improving their environment in similar line with their way of life. The improved environmental conditions may attract the urban dwellers and in turn this would gradually improve the infrastructure such as roads and better-constructed houses (Akuffo, 2007). Thirlwall (2003) indicates that good and adequate infrastructure could improve productivity, diversify productivity and further reduce the cost of production.

The government initiative<sup>14</sup> to build many schools throughout the nation has been commended because the government claim it could improve the enrolment of children into schools. This is one of government's initiatives aimed at achieving the MDGs. But while schools can be built in every corner of the country, without workable strategies to remove the factors affecting girls and women, not much may be done to improve their education. The accelerated government programmes to produce many teachers to cater for rural environments and replace those dying from HIV/AIDS has created teachers who are unproductive due to a rudimentary stock of general and professional knowledge (Kelly, 1999). The subject of HIV/AIDS has been discussed above.

The disadvantages of an uninspired, moribund education system and the negative impact it could have on its pupils cannot be underestimated as shown by UNESCO who claims that such a school system would offer:

Lifeless education that deprives the child of all initiative stifles his personality and does not develop any useful aptitudes for when he leaves school; he forgets rapidly everything he has learned, and more often than he slips back into illiteracy. Moreover, this arid teaching is stultifying for the mind because

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<sup>14</sup> . During a press conference on the 16/10/2007, the former president of Zambia, the late Dr L. Mwanawasa, informed the nation that the government intends to build 125 new primary schools, 88 new high schools and 12 technical high schools in the next five years (Phiri, 2007).

it is sterile and of no interest either to the teacher or his pupil (*UNESCO, 1974, pp.22-23*).

Although this document was written over 33 years ago, such a reality still exists in Zambian schools. The urban schools might be better, but the situation could be in its worst state in rural environments where, despite attaining basic education, pupils simply slip back into illiteracy. Ewen (2000) cited earlier in the chapter alluded to this outcome. Such a classroom environment as described above is even more harmful, suppressive and incapacitating. For example the Global Campaign for Education (2004) pointed out that Zambian school children receive 630 hours of instruction per year, which is equivalent to two hours contact time with the teacher because of the shortage of teachers. Such contact only allows a part of the curriculum to be covered and hence reinforce the teacher centred pedagogy which further stultifies both the learner and the teacher. Therefore, such an environment; poor infrastructure that needs urgent rehabilitation, little equipment, inadequate supplies of textbooks and learning materials, with soaring pupil teacher ratios and unmanageable class sizes, one wonders how difficult learning and teaching can be. The acclaimed advantages and benefits of school could be minimal or non-existent in such environments.

The Strategic Plan 2007 – 2010, MOE (2007) draft stated that the problem in rural areas was not about lack of places, but about the lack of teachers and the deplorable conditions of the existing classrooms. It was identified that 25 percent of the existing classrooms were in poor condition, making effective learning and teaching an impossibility. To alleviate this problem the Strategic Plan suggested the training of more teachers and redeployment of the existing teachers to rural areas. However, this remedy may not help to keep girls in schools. One factor that the Strategic Plan, unfortunately does not identify is the negative impact of the cultural traditions, which

could be the real hold-up of rural education. Parents seem to have the capacity to pull girls out of school and the law does not seem to stand its ground (MOE, 2003).

The Government's initiative of offering free education for grades 1 to 9 (although currently it is free only from 1 to 7 due to lack of resources) should be commended, however, other school requirements such as school uniforms, books, and shoes have defeated their effort especially in rural areas where parents without any source of income are unable to afford these things: with such requirements it is not free education (MOE, 2005; CAMFED Zambia, 2007).

The pregnancy-re-admission policy<sup>15</sup>, an initiative of Forum for African Women Educationist of Zambia (FAWEZA), was one of the many projects that aimed at eliminating gender disparities in order to achieve gender equality in education. It has not benefited the young women significantly in the rural area, where the environment may further encourage the factors militating against the education of girls (NGOCC, 2005; FNDP, 2006). Further still it has been established by Sifuniso (2004) that re-admission in rural areas start in grade 1 indicating that the girls could be enrolled late into school or it could be due to prevalence of early marriages.

For example, in 2006 statistics reveal that of 1,291 girls who left school due to pregnancy in Eastern Province, only 419 were re-admitted into school, in Lusaka, 860 girls left pregnant and only 411 were re-admitted (Kasonde et al., 2007, p.26). While a small number of girls managed to be re-admitted into school, a bigger number did not. It is not clear if the initiative includes care for the babies because that could be a

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<sup>15</sup> The re-admission policy was launched in 1997, by the then Minister of Education Mr Syamukayumbu Syamjay. The policy allows any schoolgirls who became pregnant to return to fulltime education after giving birth.

reason the girls' failure to return to school if they are expected to persuade relatives to take care of the babies. There is need to investigate the factors that affect the education of women and this call for more research.

## **2.2 Research Objectives and Methodology**

This section briefly discusses the objectives of the possible research approaches. The application of the approaches is fully discussed in the methodology chapter. The following overall research aims guide this research.

In the case of the Tumbuka tribe:

1. What are traditional teachings?
2. Is school education important to women?
3. What link exists between traditional teachings and the high illiteracy rates of women?
4. What implications do the findings have for the Zambian education system?

The mode employed to find the answers to the above research questions is a naturalistic approach, chosen because it is unstructured and hence flexible, and appropriate to an enquiry whose objectives have descriptive, explanatory and exploratory elements.

The methodological design used in this study is chiefly ethnography, however it cuts through other designs such as anthropology and case study. Ethnography assumes an anthropological stance here because of its focus on a particular society and its culture. This approach is believed to have been originally developed by anthropologists who studied different cultures by immersing themselves in them for a long period of time. In the same way, ethnography requires a complete or at least partial integration in a particular society for the purpose of collecting the needed information in situ. This is

done through sharing the experiences of those studied, understanding the reasons for their action and viewing the world from their point of view (Denscombe, 2007).

The case study design on the other hand concentrates on a specific situation such as a study of one or more local communities. It is concerned with the interactions of events or actions shaped by the meanings of the participants in order to give a full picture of the interactions (Verma and Marlick, 1999; Pring 2000; and Bell, 2005). Robson states that a case study involves the description and analysis of “patterns of and relations between main aspects of community life” (Robson, 2000, p.181). In this research I concentrated on a local community used this approach in order to understand the effect that Tumbuka cultural traditions could have on the education of girls. The voices of the participants are included in the report of the findings in order to give the reader enough information to understand the outcomes and validate the possible applicability of the findings to other communities (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994).

To collect the necessary data the following methods have been used throughout: unstructured interviews including in-depth and focus group interviews; narratives and participant observations; and secondary sources. The secondary sources comprised government documents such as Programme for the Advancement of Girl’s Education (PAGE) reports, Non Governmental Organisations' (NGOs) annual reports, statistics registrations, school register, and reports published in newspapers. This research takes into account ethical requirements and factors such as bias, reliability, maintenance of objectivity, ethics of the process of collecting, analysing and interpreting (Robson, 2000; Kumar, 2005).



### **2. 3. The Global Context of Educating a Woman**

Zambia's position in relation to the education of women in line with its involvement in world conferences is significant to this study because the agenda of ensuring that women are given the opportunity of the education they need concerns the women under investigation. How Zambia translates the commitment aligned with such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and Education For All (EFA), has implications for this study. This is because the implementation of effective policies the nation makes in relation to the education of women stand to affect the whole nation and much more any effort one can make to improve the education of women in the country.

The education of women is among the chief challenges that most developing countries confront today because its "implications go beyond education-specific issues" as noted by Kwesiga (2002, p.5). Education is probably the most powerful route by which a woman can be empowered to take more control of her life and that of her children. Kofi Annan argues that:

Eliminating gender discrimination and empowering women are among the paramount challenges facing the world today. When women are....educated and free to take the opportunities life affords them, children thrive and countries flourish, reaping a double dividend for women and children (*UNICEF, 2007, p.vi*).

Such claims stress the importance of educating the female population of the human race and the benefits that the children, the community and the country at large stand to gain. Dr James Emmanuel Kwegyir (1877-1927) strongly argued that:

No race or people can rise half-slave, half free. The surest way to keep a people down is to educate the men and neglect the women. If you educate a man you simply educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a family (*Kwesiga, 2002, p.2, citing Dr James Emmanuel Kwegyir, 1877-1927*).

The significant contributions that education makes to the social well-being of an individual have long been recognised. For example Adam Smith's book on the *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* in 1776 and Mary Wollstonecraft in her book on *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, 1792 highlight such concerns (Smith, 1776; Wollstonecraft, 1792). Their main interest in this regard is the education of women which is less than equal to that of their male counterparts making it difficult for them to make valuable contributions in many spheres of life. However, the factors that militate against the education of girls/women are many including; inequality, poverty, parental influence, cultural factors and expensive school requirements. While there is need to critically consider each factor, this research will focus on the salient cultural factors in the particular case of Zambia.

Figure 3 ~ Showing the Millennium Development Goals

#### Millennium Development Goals

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Achieve universal primary education
- Promote gender equality and empower women
- Reduce child mortality
- Improve maternal health
- Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Develop a Global Partnership for Development (UNICEF, 2003; Thirlwall, 2003; and UNICEF, 2006).

According to United Nations International Children's Education Fund (UNICEF), of the "121 million children of the world who are out of school 65 million are girls, 56 million are boys," (UNICEF, 2004, p.7), and Gachukia states that of the "100 million children that drop out of primary school" before completing the first four years, two thirds are girls (Gachukia, 2004, p.4). This sort of statistic has contributed to the formulation of the MDG. During the United Nation (UN) Summit in September

2000, 192 countries adopted 8 international development goals to be achieved by 2015. The MDGs aim to encourage development by improving social and economic conditions in the world's poorest countries. Drawn from the actions and targets contained in the Millennium declarations, heads of state and governments of 147 nations signed up to a commitment to these goals. See figure 3 above of the MDGs.

The year 2005 was deemed as an important milestone towards the 2015 target. Of particular interest to this study are MDG 2; (Achieve universal primary education) and 3; (Promote gender equality and empower women) which were identified together as the most crucial, urgent and first step towards achieving the 2015 target. The two were targeted for achievement by 2005, 10 years earlier than the rest of the goals (UNICEF, 2003; MOE, 2004; and UNICEF, 2006). Zambia appended its signature in commitment to this challenge. Current statistics show substantial evidence of progress made towards the enrolment of girls in some Zambian schools, a situation the country is proud to display because it presents encouraging evidence of the possibility of achieving the MDGs by 2015.

This is not the only commitment that Zambia has attempted to align itself with. History records the country's attendance, participation and commitment to the following World Conferences: The World Conference on EFA in Jomtien, Thailand, March 1990, where the year 2000 was set for countries to achieve universal primary education and to massively reduce illiteracy before the end of the decade. A number of countries such as, Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Zambia did not achieve the goal. Hence, at the World Education Forum (WEF), Dakar, Senegal, April, in the year 2000, among other countries, Zambia re-committed itself to achieving girls' full and

equal access to education and achievement of quality basic education by the year 2015 (FAWE, 2004).

The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (FWCW) in 1995 was yet another world conference that Zambia attended with the aim of encouraging female education. The Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) which was developed at the FWCW aimed at removing all obstacles militating against women's equal participation in all spheres of life; that is economic, social, cultural and political (NGOCC, 2006). All such world conferences stand as evidence of the perceived need to improve the education of women and remove all obstacles hindering their progress.

Zambia should be commended for its commitment to these educational ideals. However, implementation still falls short of stated commitments. Glaring gaps and obstacles still prevail that prevent gender equality in education from becoming a reality. For example, Zambia's Strategic Plan 2007–2010 identified the fact that a number of schools in rural areas are still in a deplorable condition lacking the very basic teaching and learning materials. The dropout rates in basic schools in the country are still high. They also indicate continued gender inequality: for example in Eastern Province, home to the tribe under investigation, a dropout rate of 3.56% of girls against 2.46% boys is enough evidence to demonstrate gender inequality in education (MOE, 2005; MOE, 2007).

Additionally, at the World Education Forum in Dakar in April 2000 Zambia joined the commitment to eliminate gender disparities in enrolment in primary and secondary education by 2005 but failed to achieve this (NGOCC, 2006). The concern here is how genuinely committed is Zambia to the stated commitments? The

commitment of Zambia to the international calls for the education of women should be evident in the nation.

The improvement in female enrolment into primary school, progression to further education, involvement in decision making positions could stand as proof of the achievement of the stated commitments. This position affects the women in this study because they are a part of the citizens of Zambia who are represented in these conferences. This can be noted in the claims of Non-Governmental Organisations Coordinating Committee (NGOCC), which claims that Zambia has failed to convert any “international and regional instruments on gender into law” (NGOCC, 2005, p. 53). There seems to be a lack of commitment in practice by the government to improve the status of women and girls. Additionally, NGOCC indicates that issues of gender equality and the education of girls seem to be items “governments put on paper for the sake of pronouncements” while they fail to undertake concrete action in order to improve the identified situation (NGOCC, 2005, pp.53-54). There has been 25% improvement on budget allocation to the educational sector (McPherson, 2004; Phiri, 2007). However, NGOCC (2005) and NGOCC, (2006) argue that national budgets have continued to be gender-blind.

The implications of such a budget may explain the level of commitment the government has on gender issues and how it could affect the women in this study. If a budget of a nation fails to align itself with the commitments made, it is unlikely to be able to meet those commitments. Implementation of important policies will be slowed down and this could have negative and irreversible repercussions that may be grave and costly to national development and the population concerned (NGOCC, 2006). Implementation of effective policies to achieve the commitments could have

implications on the education system of Zambia and hence the Ministry of Education has a responsibility to ensure that the instruments and legislations are effective.

While Durrant and Sathar (2000) in their research on *Greater Investment in Children through Women's Empowerment* conducted in Pakistan agree that “maternal education is a valuable asset to the education of girls,” although they argue that it should not be the only measure used as a proxy for women's status (Durrant and Sathar, 2000, p.8). The multidimensional status of women raises the questions of whether education is sufficient as a unit of measure. While this may be true, the association of maternal education with high probability of children's education should not be ignored. The cultural status of women may be a strong point of consideration.

Jump (1994), citing Mary Wollstonecraft<sup>16</sup>, insists education would enable a woman to contribute in fundamental ways to her children's physical and mental well-being from the very beginning of life. Swain (2005) argues that education is a means through which critical competencies, skills and dispositions can be developed. He further states that:

Education broadens and develops assurance and self-determination that enables a person to interact and compete with others. It brings discovery of other cultures, lands, languages and peoples, which in turn promotes understanding of different viewpoints and facilitates coordination (Swain, 2005, p.1).

Such education should not target the male population alone but should be inclusive of the women. Todaro and Smith (2003) equally point out that female education is not a matter of equity; it is an asset and is economically desirable to the family, the

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<sup>16</sup> Despite her publications being old (200 years ago), Mary Wollstonecraft will be referred to in this research because of the relevance of her conceptions in relation to the situation of women in Zambia.

community and the whole country. Todaro and Smith argue that the continued educational discrimination against women reinforces social inequality.

A number of studies such as Chitsike (1995), Muranga, (1997), Todaro and Smith, (2003), Kwesiga, (2004), and FAWE, (2006) have indicated that the benefits of educating a woman have a spill over effect onto her family, community and the nation. The World Bank has expressed wretchedness at the lack of progress in terms of improving education despite nations knowing its relevance by stating that: "...despite repeated rhetorical commitments to universal enrolment even the modest goal of universal primary school completion has not been realised" (World Bank, 2003, p111-112). If studies such as Muranga (1997), Kelly et al (1999), UNICEF (2003), WB, (2003), WB, (2005), and FAWE, (2006), have revealed the fact that educating and empowering women are effective tools for development, why do nations seem disinclined to implement legislation that would ensure this?

#### **2. 4. Conclusion**

The role of education system should be to conserve and teach what is best of the Zambian tradition and do away with whatever has become insignificant. A number of issues have been raised in the statement of the problem, justifying the reason for research. The Tumbuka, the focus of the study, have an interesting history that has had a remarkable impact on their way of life making them an interesting tribe for this study. The Ngoni colonisation of the Tumbuka tribe resulted in a change of some of their cultural beliefs: their newly assumed status of patrilineity meant that authority was wholly invested in the men. The position the woman holds is that of a receptacle through which new members are added to the group: the tribe's assumed patrilineity came with the *lobola* system. The married woman is a wife and by virtue of the paid

*lobola* in form of cattle, the man has full rights and ownership of her and the offspring.

The Tumbuka's polygamous practices tend to result in huge families and the large number of children reduces the chance of educating them all. The man who is the breadwinner fails to provide all the necessary school requirements of the children, and precipitated by the cultural beliefs, the girls tend to be affected more: the children from the man are of most importance as they are added to the family.

The statistics given show the disparities that exist between the boy and the girl in education, particularly in rural areas. Though, there has been remarkable improvement on enrolment, there is still glaring gaps in the retention rates of the female students. This calls for analysis to ascertain the factors that could be militating against girls' education. While a number of the factors raised interact and reinforce each other, there is a need to assess the cultural traditional factor. Its potential to negate, and/or destroy the process of education should not be underestimated. The rural area should not be side-lined in any way, because most of Zambia's population lives there. Improving the infrastructure in the areas can stimulate production and attract businesses that would further offer employment opportunities to school leavers.



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THE THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE AND SOME RELEVANT FEMINIST CONCEPTS**

#### **3. 0. Introduction**

This study has set out to investigate how the effects of cultural traditions ingrained in women have affected their inclusion and level of participation in education. Included in the previous chapter was a discussion of the statement of the problem underscoring the purpose of this study. Since the underlying barriers militating against the education of women relate to the focus of most feminist theories, this research will use different types of feminist theories. This is done with full knowledge that in the majority of cases these theories are cast in the western moulds for the Western context and may not be consistent with the African needs. With that in view, I have included a discussion on the relationships between African feminisms and Western feminisms and will focus on the criticisms of the Western feminists theories made by African feminists.

The chapter is structured as follows: first I will briefly discuss the concept of “feminism” and the adjective “feminist” in relation to the current research. Given that the data is being collected from Africa, I will then consider the thought processes of the African Women; their theoretical thought in relation to Western feminist theories and their applicability to the African realities will be given. The definition and brief discussion of the theory will be done, in order to provide an understanding to the use of multiple theories used in this study. A number of feminist theories with particular

relevance to the theories of gender inequalities will be considered as well as their suitability to the problem under investigation will be pointed out. These include liberal feminism, radical feminism, and Marxist-socialist feminism.

Human Capital Theory (HCT) is of interest to the current study as it attempts to explain why less attention is paid to the education of girls (Kwesiga, 2002; Todaro and Smith, 2003). The education of girls/women is crucial to this research, therefore, understanding the reasons or factors that militate against their education are of importance. A brief discussion of women's movements is given with a view to showing their effort in attenuating the barriers to women's access to education and the many other negative aspects affecting women.

### **3. 1. The Concept of Feminism**

The term 'feminism' assumes the politics of equal rights, which stand for the belief in sexual equality and a determination to eliminate male domination and to bring about change (Pilcher and Whelehan, 2004). Walter simply states that "feminism is about finding equality between men and women in all areas of society" (Walter, 2000, p.1). On the contrary, Best (2003) argues that feminism is not just about equal rights but about one seeking to raise "consciousness about a diverse range of issues in relation to identity and hierarchy" (Best, 2003, p.147). The term 'feminism' could simply denote a political stance of someone committed to changing the social position of women which would include raising consciousness about different issues that concern the standpoint of women in all spheres of life.

Feminism is an internationally recognized movement whose political aims have been championed worldwide: in the United Nations Decade (UND) for Women 1985-95, at

the International Nairobi conference with a representation of 151 UN countries, and in many more instances (Humm, 1992; Pilcher and Whelehan, 2004). The writings of Mary Wollstonecraft in her books entitled *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*, 1797, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, 1792,” and those of John Stuart Mill entitled “*On The Subjection of Women*, 1869,” are believed to have formed a bedrock of early feminist pursuit for equality (Hughes, 2003) although at that time such a term would not have been used (Pilcher and Whelehan, 2004). However, the early arguments in relation to the plight of women still stand and hence the connection with the modern feminists. Further still, Oyewumi states that the term ‘feminist’ can be used as an adjective to describe a “range of behaviours indicating female agency and self-determination” (Oyewumi, 2003, p.1).

Generally speaking, feminism is often depicted in the popular press as a source of unacceptable behaviour conjuring up lively acrimonious debate and evoking deceptive images of angry insensitive women demanding the abandonment of the family or the desertion of husbands. However, over the years, feminists have pursued credible goals that have seen the establishment of mechanisms that still serve to stop the perpetuation of the subordination of women, have exposed the patriarchal structure with its hierarchy of values, and have seen the enacting of laws and policies such as gender equality, equal opportunities and equal pay for equal work (Acker, 1994; Beasley, 1999; Marysia, 2000; and Kwesiga, 2002). In this study, feminism will be used as a term to denote the liberation of women from any form of oppression that hinders them from realising their potential as individuals.

The many forms of feminism are often categorized according to their ideological source as a result there are different strands of feminism with different focuses.

These different theoretical frameworks can adopt contradictory positions that could be seen as a weakness in feminism as a whole. Nonetheless, that should not outweigh the irrefutable strengths of feminism and its egalitarian pursuit. It has played a major role in questioning canonical knowledge and standards in society (Acker, 1994; Weiner, 1997; Beasley, 1999; and Pilcher and Whelehan, 2004).

### **3. 2. Western Feminisms vs. African Feminisms**

There seems to be an ideological war between the Western feminists and African feminists. Arnfred cited Amina Mama's introductory speech at a national workshop in Nigeria where basic concepts such as 'woman,' 'gender,' and 'feminism' were being discussed:

The experience of African women across the region indicates that we cannot just passively import terms and concepts that have been developed elsewhere, under different social and political conditions. [...] The task we face as African intellectuals is that of developing our own applications of given theories, and more radically, of taking our own realities as the starting point for articulating perspectives, or even entirely new theories that emanate organically from our particular conditions and concerns (*Mama, 1997, pp. 4-5 cited in Arnfred, 2002, p.10*).

This extract illustrates some of the views of the African feminists on the tendency of importing theories that do not apply to the African continent. Oyewumi further insists that interpreting African realities out of context results in "distortions, obfuscations in language and often a total lack of comprehension" (Oyewumi, 2002, p.5). This is because such interpretations are not the reality of the social categories and institutions in African societies and hence may interpret African realities out of context. This has further been necessitated by the supposed tendency of the West to represent itself as the source of knowledge and to impose concepts and theories coined in their own context on the African realities.

Commenting on the same subject, Okome argues that the mainstream feminist writings on African women are inaccurate, suggesting that the “works tend to portray the African woman as confused, powerless and unable to determine for themselves both the changes needed in their lives and the means to construct these changes” (Okome, 1999, p.3). Further still Kuma (2000) adds that African women are portrayed as “ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, domestic and family oriented” (Kuma, 2000, p.5). Such patronising and exploitative conceptions of the African situation have resulted in most African feminists rising up with such a passion and impetus to challenge Western feminists. Okome (1999) claims that the Western feminists portray themselves as “superiors, who hand down valuable knowledge, define the relevant issues for African women, and how these issues ought to be promoted and pursued” (Okome, 1999. p.3). Oyewumi (2002) agreeing with Okome’s argument on western superiority complex, pointed out that “Europe is represented as the source of knowledge and Europeans as knowers.” The arguments that have been put across by the African feminists cannot be ignored; they have ontological and epistemological value because Africa should not be considered as an inferior and unintelligible continent incapable of determining what is best for themselves.

Notable African feminists such as Kuma (2000) in *West Africa Review*, the work of Okome (1999) on *Listening to Africa, Misunderstanding and Misinterpreting Africa* and Oyewumi’s (2002) work entitled *Conceptualising Gender: The Eurocentric foundations of Feminist Concepts and the Challenge of African Epistemologies* are part of the work that has been written about African feminisms and the African woman in critique of what has been presented about the African situation through the eyes and realities of Western feminists. Although the reading reveals thoughtful and

challenging reflections worth considering, the tone is sometimes angry at the inaccurate representations made by the Western feminists.

The call made by Arnfred (1999) above for the African feminists to coin their own theories that will explain the African realities is one good suggestion that should be considered. However, the African continent as noted by Bakare-Yusuf (2003) is a “diverse continent, with thousands of cultural traditions and linguistic groupings that dwarf all the different European cultural traditions and languages combined” (Bakare-Yusuf, 2003, p.8). Taiwo (2003) argues that the theories advanced by the Western feminists are poverty-stricken in the sense that they are incorrect or inadequate, meaning ‘not good enough’ and inappropriate for Africa’s rich diverse societies. Okome (1999) and Taiwo (2003) equally note that Africa’s bewildering diversity evident in its history, its culture and its people is a case in point that makes universalisation problematic. With such an observation, it will equally be difficult for the African feminists to generalise the realities of one particular culture with the rest of the continent.

However, at the centre of this feminist ideological war are concepts such as patriarchy, patrilineality, family, mother, gender, and woman. Such concepts might not imply the same thing in all societies hence applying them universally may raise problems. Oyewumi rejects what she calls the “universalisation of gender” and argues that Western feminists use gender as “the explanatory model to account for women’s subordination and oppression worldwide” (Oyewumi 2002, p.2). Arnfred (2002) commenting on Oyewumi’s (2002) explanation of gender as the key organising principle of the family in the West and alien in African societies, notes that man and woman are essentialised, stating that “these gender identities in western cultures

attach all social arrangements” (Arnfred, 2002, p.10). Oyewumi (2002) gives the example of her own tribe Yoruba to justify her claims, which she calls non-gendered. This issue will be discussed further below. For Oyewumi (2002), the nuclear family remains the source of hierarchy and oppression, a view shared by the radical feminists. However, she claims that the nuclear family system is not universal. Such a position is debatable because while it could be true that the family can be the source of hierarchy and oppression, the nuclear family unit is not alien to African societies, probably to some Nigerian tribes.

Another thorny subject raised by the African feminists is the issue of ‘sisterhood.’ The pursuit of ‘sisterhood’ advanced by the Western feminists is not readily accepted by the African feminists who view it as an extended arm of a controlling attitude of the Western feminists on the so called African ‘sisters.’ Okome (1999) summarizes what the African feminists’ claim of the Western sisterhood responsibility to the African sisters: “African women are oppressed by male domination and patriarchy,” and “the Western big sisters are capable of setting the ‘powerless’ and ‘voiceless’ African sisters free” (Okome, 1999, p.9). If the pursuit of feminism is based on addressing the plight of women, there is need for all concerned, whether Western or African feminists to agree on how best to deal with the problem rather than engage in an ideological warfare. Johnson-Odim (1991) firmly agrees with this stance by insisting that there is a broad base on which First and Third World Feminism should agree. There may be the issue of different contexts but there are also common themes that should be put into consideration.

All such assumptions may not be a true position of the Western feminists. However, the African feminists in establishing their point on the disadvantaged African

feminists and the advantaged Western feminists' syndrome have noted these points. While I agree and appreciate the position that my fellow African feminists have taken in relation to the Western feminists, I am of the opinion that the subject could have been over sensationalised. This is because there could be a number of underlying problems from which such arguments stem from. For example Kuma (2000) argues that feminist theory is a Western phenomenon, not African. If this is the case, African feminists are not restricted to formulating their own theories that best inform the African situation. Okome (1999), Oyewumi (2002), and Arnfred (2002) have been able to point the following out: The 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century invaders who perceived Africans as uncivilised and the enlightened Westerners attempting to reform the 'backward' Africans; and the colonialist domination of the African nations in an effort to interpret its indigenous cultures imposed their conception of human civilisation which was exclusively Western.

On the contrary, Buiten (2009) in her thesis on *Gender Transformation* argued that "the backlash has invoked the idea that African feminists have betrayed, violated or contaminated 'culture'" (Buiten, 2009, p.44). Buiten argues that "contemporarily myths scripts and discourses of 'culture' in Africa, built around fictions of undiluted African culture" is responsible for informing the rest of the world about the centrality of masculinity in African societies, that "support patriarchal goals and interests" (Buiten, 2009, p.44-45). Buiten states that "anti-feminist backlashes in Africa are a manifestation of mounting anxieties surrounding the preservation of identities forged and strengthened as a part of the anti-colonial project" (Buiten 2009, p.36). Kwesiga (2002) equally notes that patriarchy in Africa existed prior to colonialism and hence cannot be blamed entirely on colonialism or capitalism. The concern of the African feminists about universalisation of theories and concepts that inaccurately represent



the African context is a point worthy noting however, it cannot be used as basis for rejecting theories coined outside the continent.

This research recognizes with respect and admiration (though not condoning the claimed debasing tendencies of Western feminists) the effort that feminist theories have made in an attempt to explain the causes and remedies for the different western ways in which women are treated in society. These theories have been valuable avenues and tools that have been used to inform policy makers and governments of the issues surrounding women, which have been impacting adversely on their lives. African women could learn from these theories. Abena Busia (1990) while acknowledging the variances that exist among the African and Western women suggests that complete dissociation from feminism could be counterproductive, a position that I agree with because, theory should be wisely and critically considered before application. This study is appreciative of and takes into consideration the arguments of the African feminists. However, while some African realities may have been misrepresented by the Western theories resulting in distorted conclusions, this should not be the basis for refusal to recognize the achievements of these theories all together. Such an attitude could easily result in a total rejection of even the very most crucial issues that feminism aims to tackle.

Bakare-Yusuf argued that an African woman shares “certain experiences with women across the world,” such as infertility, the menopause and having the potential to give birth (Bakare-Yusuf, 2003, p.8). Further still, Manuh (2007) expostulates that African scholars should desist from criticising theory on grounds of it being western but should assess the extent of its misrepresentation of the African realities and how this obscures analysis. A point to note here is raised by Pilcher and Whelehan, who

firmly state that “we do not need to share common oppression to fight equality to end oppression” (Pilcher and Whelehan, 2004, p.75).

### **3. 3. Choice of Theory**

The concept of ‘theory’ could mean different things to different people as noted by Robson (2002). Theory could simply be defined as a set of interconnected explanatory occurrences that presents a methodical contemplation of the problem.

Kerlinger cited by Cohen et al similarly defines theory as:

A set of interrelated concepts, definitions and propositions that presents a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomena (*Kerlinger, 1970 cited by Cohen et al., 2000, p.11*).

The body of knowledge, which encompasses interrelated concepts, definitions and the propositions, enables one to explain the phenomena being investigated. Easton citing Jackie Stacey’s definition of feminist theories explains this better by stating that theories:

Attempt to generally suggest a body of knowledge, which offers critical explanations of women’s subordination. By ‘critical’ I mean that which undermines, exposes or challenges, women’s subordination (*Stacey, 1993 cited by Easton, 1996, p.5*).

This definition is supported by Finch (1996) who equally considers feminist theories as a body of theories that offers a critical rationalisation of the state of women. While feminist theories attempt to undermine and expose or challenge women’s subordination, theory should be open to critique and further development. The critical process should expose its flaws, its strengths and allow for advanced development. The framework of interconnected beliefs of the human beings and their values could be expressed propositionally. Hence subjecting them to critical analysis is vital (Pring, 2000).

Further still, the critical process enables one to ascertain whether the theory is applicable to the phenomenon under investigation. This is because in the case of this investigation, most of the theories may be generated outside the African context and may fall under critique from the African feminists as imposing Western theories on African realities (Kabeer, 1994). My decision to use the Western theories is not an intention to misrepresent the realities of the phenomena. The feminist theories chosen will be used to point out the factors that affect female education and explain the consistent lower status of women. Therefore, I have considered critically the theories I have chosen in light of the suggestions of Kourany et al (1992), on whether the theories are able to explain the problem; whether the evidence they provide is sound and complete; and whether they are useful and able to provide concrete strategies for dealing with the concerns of the phenomena under investigation. Further still, Jackson and Jones state that: “theory is of little use if it has no relationship to the activities of life as it is lived” (Jackson and Jones 1998, p.2). It is therefore, imperative upon every researcher to critically analyse a/the theory in order to determine its relevance to the phenomena under investigation, irrespective of whether such a theory were coined by an African feminist or Western feminist. Applicability and relevance to the situation should be of paramount consideration and a determining factor.

This research will use multiple theories in investigating the identified problem. This stand is recommended by Griffiths:

The basic idea is that all problems cannot be studied fruitfully using a single theory. Some problems are large and complex and no single theory is capable of encompassing them, while others, although seemingly simple and straight forward, can be better understood through the use of multiple theories. Particular theories are appropriate to certain problems, but not others (Griffiths, 1997, p.72).

The following major frameworks of feminist theory will be used in this study in order to offer critical explanations and understanding of issues preventing women from accessing educational opportunities.

*I.      Theories Of Gender Inequalities Commonly Referred To As Feminist Theories*

Liberal feminism

Radical feminism

Marxist-Socialist feminism

(Acker, 1994; Kwesiga, 2002; and Best, 2003).

*II.     Human Capital Theory (HCT)*

Human Capital Theory will be used to explain the underlying belief that investment in the education gives better returns (Schultz, 1993; Kwesiga, 2002).

**3. 4.   Theories of Gender Inequalities**

*I.       The Impact of Gender*

This section starts by explaining some concepts such as sex, gender, identity and woman, which are at the centre of feminist discourses and can be problematic. The concept ‘gender’ needs to be clearly understood in view of the different theorists and their position. Kwesiga, (2002) and others including Oyewumi, (2002), contest that gender is a social construction. Kwesiga further states that “‘gender’ has come to refer to the culturally and socially shaped cluster of expectations, attributes, and behaviours assigned to each one of us by the society into which we are born” (Kwesiga, 2002, p.20). Such an understanding is echoed by Andersen and Taylor (2006). From Kwesiga’s explanation, this social and cultural construction has potential to be changed. On the other hand, there is the term ‘sex’ which is problematic because of its many meanings. Andersen and Taylor state that ‘sex refers

to the biological identity male or female” (Andersen and Taylor, 2006, p.302). Kwesiga simply states that sex is “what is biological, inborn and natural and cannot be changed” (Kwesiga, 2002, p.20). While Oakley (1981) argues that gender is a construction of society she states that:

....gender performs an invaluable function in analysing how women and men are made rather than born; these differences cannot be understood in terms of sex and sexuality as attributes of the natural body [.....].The distinction between sex and gender does not call into question how society constructs the natural body itself. Ultimately, sex is no more natural than gender... (*Oakley, 1981, p. 81*).

Therefore, the dividing line between these two terms is thin and the similarity and difference can only be presented in context of the investigation. Arguing on the difference between sex and gender, Kwesiga (2002) insists that the difference between these two terms as natural or social need to be viewed in context to avoid the error of applying the meaning on societies that may have different social structures. Hughes commenting on the same concern of whether gender is social and sex is natural states that:

The view that gender is performative sought to show that what we take to be internal essence of gender is manufactured through a sustained set of acts, posited through the gendered stylization of the body. In this way it showed that what we take to be an ‘internal’ feature of ourselves is one that we anticipate and produce through certain bodily acts (*Hughes, 2002, p.69*).

Hughes’s argument seems to suggest the thin distinction that may exist between gender and sex. Kraus clearly states that gender:

Is the social construction of masculinity and femininity that shapes the body, defines how the body is perceived, forms the body’s habits and possibilities for expression and thus determines the individual’s identity-via the body-as masculine or feminine? (*Kraus, 2006, p.121*).

This study will refer to gender as a social construction while sex as a biological division into female and male. This is with the view that the sex of an individual is extremely important in shaping the gender-differentiated behaviour. I am however, concerned with what the cultural context makes of the biological body, of which

inequality is one. This is because in Zambia, despite a society being matrilineal or patrilineal, the sex of a child is very important. Immediately a child is born, all eyes go between the legs to check the sex. This could be true of all cultures but the implications could be different.

In the Tumbuka tradition, at the birth of a child, the traditional mid-wives would ululate once to mean a boy or twice to mean a girl and right away word goes to the father announcing *nimwanalume!* (It is a boy!) Or *nimwanakazi!* (It is a girl!). If the bearer of the message announces that '*balinamwana*'! (You have a baby!), the father will ask, "mwanawachi?" (What sex is the baby?). Equally the mother is shown the sex as proof of the sex of the baby, which will automatically determine the socio-cultural mould to within which the newly born will be placed. This could be true of all the tribes in Zambia and much more the tribe under investigation. This information is supported by Young (1931), and Chondoka and Bota, (2007). Williams and Stein (2002) note that human beings are born female or male because the biological category that defines one's status is attached to the body from birth. Whether one wishes to remain neuter, it would not matter much because what defines the state comes along with the birth.

Oyewumi states that Western feminists have used "gender" as an explanation of some occurrences such as subordination and oppression of women worldwide by presupposing that "woman" and her subordination are universal (Oyewumi 2002, p.2). Oyewumi further claims that the west present "gender categories as inherent in nature (of bodies) and operate on a dichotomous, binarily opposed male/female, man/woman duality in which the male is assumed to be superior" (Oyewumi 2002, p.5). She argues that this is alien to African cultures, a point that can be debatable

because her assertions cannot be applicable to all African cultures. African feminists such as Oyewumi, (2002), Nzegwu, (2004) and Bakare-Yusuf (2003) have rejected universalising of gender and have argued and tried to prove that some African cultures are non-gendered. Oyewumi in particular has argued this through her study of the Yoruba society of south-western Nigeria which she claims is a non-gendered society (Oyewumi, 2002). Drawing from her study of this tribe, she presents how the family is organised claiming that it is non-gendered because:

Kinship roles and categories are not gender-differentiated. Significantly then, power centres within the family are diffused and are not gender-specific. Because the fundamental organising principle within the family is seniority based on relative age, and not gender, kinship categories encode seniority not gender (Oyewumi, 2002, p.4).

Generally speaking, in Zambian societies, much more within the Tumbuka tribe, the position a man holds can automatically assume superiority over the woman and much emphasis on the importance of male authority can be observed in the social norms be it a matrilineal or patrilineal society (Nyirenda, 2008).

Pilcher and Whelehan claim that such a mind-set is “imbued in our culture with the mythology of supremacy, of being the human ‘norm’” (Pilcher and Whelehan, 2004, p.58). This view is further classified as ‘masculinity’ and hence represents the degree to which society reinforces the traditional masculine role model of male attainment, control and supremacy and may reflect the division of roles between genders (Hofstede, 2001). Such a theory explains the situation in Zambian societies and much more the community under investigation where the model man is held in high esteem. This may suggest a high level of gender discrimination. While there is a biological difference between men and women, Torres et al (1999) argue that the biological difference between a man and woman should not automatically assume men as being more superior and /or potent than women.

Jackson and Jones emphasise that one theory may not explain the “world for all women at all times, in all places” (Jackson and Jones, 1998, p.9). While in the case of the Yoruba society some words used are neutral, that may not make the society non-gendered all together. It would be wrong to make a sweeping generalisation that gender categories are alien to African cultures on grounds of one or two tribes in West Africa. Therefore, it is difficult to apply the situation of the Yoruba society and other examples advanced by Oyewumi (2002) to the Zambian situation specifically the Tumbuka society.

The term ‘sexuality,’ like ‘gender’ and ‘sex’ has a multiplicity of definitions. Williams and Stein (2002) note that the sexuality and gender are related but they are not the same. Both terms assume a socially constructed position. William and Stein state that “sexuality is socially constructed through the sex/gender system on both the personal level of individual consciousness and interpersonal relationships and the social structural level of social institutions” (Williams and Stein, 2002, p.194). Bruess and Greenberg view sexuality as an “integral part of everyone’s personality” which includes the “cultural, psychological, ethical, and biological dimensions” (Bruess and Greenberg, 2009, p.4).

The definition given by Bruess and Greenberg establishes ‘sexuality’ as a broadly encompassing term. It describes the aspect of being and sexual feelings. All the aspects included in the definition impact upon sexuality producing both behaviour and desire. Bruess and Greenberg (2009) indicate that sexuality can be influenced by cultural and moral concerns. For example, among the Tumbuka and probably many other tribes in Zambia, sexual roles are emphasised during socialisation (sexualisation) and initiation rites. The individuals’ sexual characteristics such as



elongation of labia minora,<sup>17</sup> and exotic dances are geared towards constructing an individual's sexuality. Artchison (2003) has argued that according to feminists, sexuality and gender are an outcome of sexual roles. Adherence to the traditional gender roles could compel the women to accept and justify any inequality and their low status as normal.

Equality is another term that is synonymous with feminists especially the liberal whose agenda seeks to ensure equality for women in all spheres of life. The concept of 'equality' could be defined as a condition of being the same especially in terms of social status or legal/political rights (Hughes, 2002). Therefore, one would need to specify the particular respect in which women would have to be treated as being an equal to man: in nature or social treatment. In the case of this study, it is in both, although the aspect of treatment will have to be considered because equal treatment can be contested. Equal treatment may not denote identical or same treatment because same treatment may not always produce the same results. There could be other shortcomings that may impede on input and might be reason enough for producing different outcomes.

For example, in Zambia, while equal access to education seems to have received considerable attention as a significant factor in improving the education of girls, the drop out and completion rates show that equality for the offered education has not been achieved (MOE, 2005). The question would be, were the girls treated differently after accessing education? Or, are there other factors, external and internal that impact on the availed opportunity? However, as argued by Hughes, it is not about "equal

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<sup>17</sup> This topic will be discussed in the next chapter.

‘amounts’ of treatment” because equal treatment may not always produce equal results (Hughes, 2002, p.37). Hughes states that “equality in opportunities is primarily concerned with enabling all individuals in society to have equal access to the same life chances such as education” (Hughes, 2002, p.38). Now, ‘sameness’ is an issue that is arguable. Men and women may share a common humanity but they are biologically different in nature and thus may be treated differently on the same grounds (Kabeer, 1994; Hughes, 2002; and Frawley, 2005). Wollstonecraft (1995) has argued to this effect that the sexual difference of a woman and her reproductive capacities should not automatically relegate her to an inferior status or a lesser form of existence.

Nzegwu claims “women and men are equivalent, namely equal, in terms of what they do in the maintenance and survival of the community” (Nzegwu, 2001, p.19). While in principle the maintenance and survival of the community seems to be the responsibility of both men and women as observed by Nzegwu above, in practice women may be overburdened with the laborious work and side-lined in the important aspects like the decision making processes.

Another topic of contention is the identity of women. The term ‘woman’ is considered not stable in its array of meanings but slippery and culturally and historically diverse, a thought shared by the African women (Oyewumi, 2003; Pilcher and Whelehan, 2004). The multiple identities of a woman have long been that of wife, mother, and housekeeper. While for some women, such forms of identity may not be welcomed, in Africa, much more in Zambia (despite the negative connotation they may come with), such identities may be proudly accepted, well sought after and appreciated because they command some sort of respect and recognition in the

society. One is proud to be identified as a woman and a mother (Oyewumi, 2004). She argues that “motherhood is not a reification of biology or biological motherhood but recognition that mothers in raising their children create and sustain the future” (Oyewumi, 2004, p.2).

Taylor (2006) argues that marriage is an important part of gender relations and represents an important aspect of womanhood. Ollenburger and Moore (1998) have argued that feminists view motherhood as a thorny issue because women are socialised to value motherhood. They argue that motherhood oppresses women. Jump (1994), states that if motherhood is the lot of most women, then all the more reason why comprehensive education should be given to them, to enable them contribute in fundamental ways to their children’s physical and mental well-being from their very onset of life. Mary Wollstonecraft, over 200 years ago, challenged the men on the significance of educating the female population and not to neglect their education (Stokes, 2003). Neglect assumes that the subject is aware of the concern or problem but deliberately decides not to do anything about it.

Wangari Maathai, the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize winner, sees nothing wrong with women serving because service, she claims, demonstrates an ideal means of giving oneself to the community in order to better the lot of all. (Maathai cited by Oyewumi, 2003). Such a point is appreciated as long as women do not end up burdened with service in the name of giving themselves to the community at their own expense. If “motherhood by definition is visionary” as claimed by Oyewumi, (2004, p.2), then she is better off educated in order to realise this potential. Wollstonecraft argued that women should be educated because they are significant to the nation and they “educate its children” (Wollstonecraft, 2008, p.vii).

## II. Liberal Feminism

It has been argued that this strand of feminism has been the most accepted of all feminisms as noted by Weiner (1997) because its aims are more moderate and its views do not pose so much of a challenge to the existing values. Commenting on the same, Pilcher and Whelehan state:

The liberal position is broadly held to be the dominant, 'common-sense' stance on feminism, applicable to the majority of women who identify as 'feminist' in some way, but don't want to overturn the status quo in order to achieve better social conditions for women (*Pilcher and Whelehan, 2004, p.49*).

This approach seeks to achieve a state of equality through gradual democratic reforms as opposed to other strands of feminisms such as the radical feminists who tend to want to tackle patriarchy from the root. Liberal feminists do not see the need for a revolutionary change say in an economic, social or political sphere. Although the approach sees gender inequality as a factor that affects both genders however it endeavours to explain the position of women in society in terms of unequal rights or barriers to women's participation in the public sphere. It also asserts that women should have the freedom to determine their roles in the political and educational arena. The main aim of liberal feminism is the creation of equal opportunities in the public sphere beyond the family and household, particularly in education on the premise of preventing discrimination (Acker, 1994; Weiner, 1997; Beasley, 1999; and Marysia, 2000).

It is upon these factors that this study has opted to use liberal feminism to explain the situation of the Tumbuka women; the inequality of women and the need to create equal opportunities in all spheres of life and the need to offer women autonomy and freedom to determine their roles in the educational arena. While both men and women can suffer the consequences of inequality, the focus of this study is women who

should not be side-lined because of their sex or gender. Kabeer contests that women and men share the “fundamental human capacity for reason” and therefore should be given the same opportunity to exercise their rationality and to be availed equal education opportunities (Kabeer 1994, p.38).

Wollstonecraft, though an old publication, argued that women should be “rational and independent beings whose sense of worthiness came....from their inner perception of their self-control” (Wollstonecraft, 1995, p.xxvi). Wollstonecraft further argued that education for women should be focused on cultivating their understanding and development of their reasoning abilities. This would empower the women, enable them to have self-control and have the right to make choices. She disputed Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s assertions of women’s education when he claimed that:

The education of women should always be relative to men. To please, to be useful to us, to make us love and esteem them, to educate us when young, and take care of us when grown up, to advice us, to console us, to render our lives easy and agreeable; these are the duties of women at all times, and what they should be taught in their infancy (*Rousseau, 1955; 328 in Marysia, 2000, p.6*).

Such thoughts may not be alien to the Zambian situation nor probably to other countries despite having been written more than 200 years ago. This may demonstrate the attitude of most men who may see women as mere servants required to make their living comfortable. Men and women may be different by nature, in mind and body, but this should not be taken to mean that women are only to be recognised as acquiescent and suited to a home life, even after receiving an education (Moore, 1999). Access to education is a fundamental right that liberal feminists have pursued over the centuries.

As earlier noted in chapter 1, culture of a society is the way of life of its members. The members are able to learn their culture through a process called ‘socialisation’.

Haralambos states that “without socialisation, an individual would bear little resemblance to any human being defined as normal by the standards of his society” (Haralambos and Heald, 1980, p.5). The outcome of socialisation may differ from society to society. Liberal feminists, view socialisation as an on-going interaction process in society that helps define one’s gender. Further still, liberal feminists argue that the socialisation of children into gender roles tend to produce rigid and inflexible expectations that can lead to tendencies of discrimination.

Akin to socialisation is Bourdieu’s concept of ‘habitus,’ which is considered as a product “of conditioning that one acquires through implicit or explicit learning, which when deposited in an individual generates thoughts and beliefs that shape ones practice” (Kariuki, 2005, p.2). Bourdieu argues that “‘habitus’ is the practical operator, the principle that generates.....social practice” (Bourdieu, 1980, p.53). Pandey has argued that “norms, values and roles are culturally determined and socially transmitted” and that gender roles are a “product of culture rather than biology” (Pandey, 1989, p.106). Pandey argues that the sexual division of labour is supported by the belief and value system that justify gender roles as normal, natural right and proper (Pandey, 1989).

It is important to note that African societies have their own inequalities and stratifications which could be different from those of western societies, for the simple reason that those societies are different and are a ‘design for living’ of the people within them (Bakare-Yusuf, 2003). While such a position could be true, liberal feminism will be used in this study.

Akin to the social-learning theory, socialization enables a child to attain knowledge and mental baggage of gender behaviour (Kwesiga, 2002; Best, 2003). Socialization could be deliberate; through giving instructions about expected roles or unintentional; through observation, in events or situations. This could be through observing parents, teachers and other children and through the use of language to stress what is observed or what is to be learnt (Kwesiga, 2002; Best, 2003). The subject of socialisation will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Liberal feminism attempts to alter socialization practices in order to end discrimination tendencies and attitudes through the introduction of legislations in the in the existing social set up (Best, 2003; Kabeer, 1994). However, other strands of feminism such as the radical feminists, heavily criticise such a stance because working for an attainable social change with the existing social set up may take a long time to yield the urgently sought for change (Kourany et al., 1992). Plumwood calls such an attempt ‘fitting women into masculine patterns of life’ (Plumwood, 1993). Such an argument could be valid bearing in mind the patriarchal power that seems to be embedded in institutions and the systematic subordination of women by men (Pilcher and Whelehan, 2004). Bryson (1999) claims that liberal feminists are unable to see that “‘private’ areas of life as the family may be the site of sexual politics and that domestic violence.....are not simply unfortunate personal experiences that are related to the power structures of society” but could be the real root cause of women’s oppression (Bryson, 1999, p.217). Commenting on the change, Chitsike argues that attitudes ingrained for a long period may take time to correct (Chitsike, 1995). It may be important therefore, to infiltrate into the system and work from within it to bring about change as opposed to a radical change.

### *III.     Radical Feminism*

Marysia introduces radical feminists as “the ones the media love to hate” (Marysia, 2000, p.11). This could be because of their extremist views vis-a-vis the drastic/revolutionary change in an economic, political and cultural life. For the radical feminist, society is viewed as patriarchal with men as the ruling class while the women are the dominated subjects. All forms of domination are rooted in patriarchy. These feminists are disenchanted with male domination in all institutions and accept the theoretical frameworks and political practice of liberalism. They strongly deny that the liberation of women could come about through assimilating women into male dominated and controlled arenas. They instead call for the dismantling of the patriarchal system, which, as far as they are concerned, is the fundamental barrier to the advancement of women (Marysia, 2000; Best, 2003; and Andersen and Taylor, 2006).

Radical feminists see the family as the key institution that oppresses women. Bryson (1999) further notes that it is within the family that patriarchy is embedded. Bryson observes that family is a social institution within which, “oppressive gender identities and modes of behaviour are learned (Bryson, 1999, p.219). This brings in the subject of socialisation. It is within the family that the patriarchal power of men is maintained and probably reinforced. Radical feminists view the term ‘patriarchy’ as denoting the control that men have over women (Pilcher and Whelehan, 2004). Bryson (1999) further argues that patriarchal power is not embodied in the biological males but that it is a social-cultural construction. Bakare-Yusuf defines patriarchy as “the organisation of social life and institutional structures in which men have ultimate control over most aspects of women’s lives and actions” a position she herself does not entirely agree with (Bakare-Yusuf, 2003, p.2). The definition is careful in stating



that men have control over *most* aspects of women's lives and actions. 'Most' may signify the bulk of the women's lives. The term 'patriarchy' in the current research will be used to describe the authority of men over women, which is characterised by their control over most aspects of their lives and actions. The explanation of patriarchal structure shows why women are consistently disadvantaged in comparison to men. This explanation stands as the main reason for the choice of this theory in this study. The theory will be used as a pointer to the pervasiveness of the subordination of women among the Tumbuka. As claimed by Marysia, the concept "captures the depth, pervasiveness and interconnectedness of different aspects of women's subordination," and can be developed in such a way as to take account of the different forms of gender inequality over time and ethnic group (Marysia, 2000, p.12).

Weiner claims that the original meaning of the term patriarchy denotes "the rule of the father" but it has been altered to mean the domination of men over women Weiner (1997, p.146). Western feminists use the term to describe the social position of women and as a theoretical explanation for such a position. This is because male dominance is within societal structures where the hierarchical values are deeply embedded. Keetley (2002) refers to the Redstockings' Manifesto, a 1969 classic early feminist document, which claimed that male superiority is an ancient form of domination from which other forms of "exploitation and oppressions stem" (Keetley, 2002, p.20). It should be clearly understood that male supremacy should not automatically be assumed to mean oppression. Society stands to share the blame for perpetuating and maintaining cultural practices that encourage the continuation of oppressive tendencies. Male supremacy is one such practice that can be encouraged through socialisation within the family unit (Renzetti and Curran, 1992; Jump, 1994). Hooks (2000) has argued "family is an important kingship structure" and within it

“individuals learn to accept as ‘natural,’” the domination of men (Hooks, 2000, pp. 37&40).

Knowledge and awareness of male dominance, control and its effect is an important process in radical feminism. This brings about the issue of women sharing information about their various experiences resulting from the effect of male dominance. These experiences have been used to create a knowledge base which has then been used as a basis for action (Kourany et al., 1992; Weiner, 1997; Beasley, 1999; and Marysia, 2000).

In education, radical feminists argue that schools shape female identity and encourage the subordinate roles for women. It is claimed that men control the knowledge through a hidden curriculum, with the help of teaching methods and through verbal harassment (Kourany et al., 1992). Tembo (1984) in his survey on *Men and Women in School Textbooks* raised such a concern, stating that learning materials exaggerate, perpetuate and depict unrealistic ideas that the woman’s role is that of a wife, a mother and if in employment, doing feminine jobs such as nursing or acting as personal assistants to men. His research exposed gender stereotyping in textbooks. Frawley states that “children’s perceptions of gender roles are affected not only by overt forms of gender bias such as being told they can or cannot do a task but also by the ‘hidden curriculum’- the subtle lessons that children encounter everyday through teacher’s behaviour, feedback and instructional materials” (Frawley, 2005, p.1). Such an argument falls in line with the thoughts of this research, which seeks to understand the role of the schools in educating women. Could it be another avenue through which men continue to shape women into inferior subjects or objectify them?

Objectification or instrumentalism as a process may have its origin in the home and be perpetuated in society. Following the argument of Plumwood (1993) on Dualism, she claims that the instruments (women) are part of the dominators' (men) network of purpose that they are able to harness to meet his purposes and needs. The inferiors (women) may have to put down their humanity; that is their interests or rights to make decisions in favour of the dominator. Therefore, the women are seen as instruments (Plumwood, 1993; Hughes, 2002). This research similarly assumes that it is within the family; through the traditional practices and education that women's oppression is perpetuated. He further claims that "knowledge and reason are controlled by those with power/in position of power" in this case man (Pring, 2000, p.110). This could impact negatively on the woman thus tarnishing her perspective of education or development.

Criticising the views of radical feminists, Bryson (1999), has been able to suggest that the theory is heavily biased towards women by portraying them as good and men as potentially bad. Such an "inaccurate and unworkable" position could render men as the "enemy" not to be trusted as the father, friend or sexual partners (Bryson, 1999, p.218). Another critique argues that the theory is descriptive and a-historical, describing the position of women without adequate explanation. The variation of women's experiences of oppression from different ethnic backgrounds tends to be overlooked. Further still, radical feminists are criticised for encouraging women to focus more on bad experiences in their marriages rather than the positive experiences (Bryson, 1999; Marysia, 2000). Such criticisms will be used as a caution in this study to ensure that I do not overemphasize the position of women among the Tumbukas. The theory is a pointer to underlying issues that could be responsible to impacting on the education of women.

The dominating role of men in the phenomena under investigation may have oppressive elements on women denying them the right to make their own decisions about their education. Women should not be viewed as objects, inferior beings whose purpose in life seems to be only to enhance the man's life. Marxist-socialist feminists have raised such a concern that forms part of our next discussion.

#### *IV. Marxist-Socialist Feminism*

Unlike the radical feminists, Marxist-socialist feminists view women's oppression as an outcome of a class society and not entirely a man's. Karl Marx (1818-1883) founder of Marxism, viewed society as divided into two parts. These are the economic base or infrastructure and the superstructure, which included the political, legal and educational system, beliefs and ideas. He believed that the economic system shapes the rest of society. A good example is that of education; the education system in modern industrial society is believed to have been shaped by the requirements of a capitalist economy for a literate and well-disciplined workforce. The two divisions bring in the relationship between the dominance and subordination of the ruling class (dominated by the men) and the subject class (the woman). Marxist feminists use this ideology on the same premise to expose social inequalities and like the radical feminists; they agree that women are an exploited group. This is to show how men use their power to maintain their rewards and privileges and how major decisions are largely made by men. The social division between women and men is of most interest. A good example being labour based gender that includes status/prestige, in terms of authority, and pay. Men's jobs tend to be highly rewarded even when they have similar jobs with women (Bryson, 1999; Marysia, 2000; and Pilcher and Whelehan, 2004).

The place of the woman in the labour market, her reproductive role, and sexuality are issues of interest in this strand of feminism whose argument claim that women are second class citizens despite their crucial role in the home. Although woman's work in the home is crucial to the functioning of capitalism (they bear, rear and care for the labour force) this work was not considered as real work (of low status, different from 'real' work) because it was not part of the market economy (Ashton and Whitting, 1987; Kwesiga, 2002; and Best, 2003). Oakley (1974) arguing on similar grounds, insisted that patriarchy is the means through which housework and childcare are excluded from the formal economy. She argued that without them (house work and childcare) the economy would simply collapse because men directly benefited from them. For example they had clean clothes, a clean house, and had cooked food on the table. Marxist-socialists see the oppression of women and gender inequalities as an inevitable outcome of the capitalist and patriarchal systems, with men acting like the ruling class and the women as the subordinate class (Bryson, 1999).

Marxist feminists claim that by contrast gender inequalities could completely be eradicated in a socialist state by removing all forms of oppression. To do this would require the removal of male dominance (Bryson, 1999; Kwesiga, 2002). Marxist feminists advocate for a revolutionary change and an establishment of a communist society where it is assumed gender inequalities will be non existence. While this research agrees with some concerns raised by this strand of feminism, the process of correcting the situation could be problematic as already been agued above. Radical change may just result in reactions that may misinterpret the action for change altogether. Bryson (1999) and Kwesiga (2002), in criticising this strand of feminism note that despite Marxist states expanding opportunities for women in the public sphere such as increasing public services to ease domestic work and childcare, equal

opportunities for women and removing women out of the home environment into the economy, the lot for women has remained at the base overburdened at the domestic level, oppressed and under subordination. Molyneux, (2001) identifies two factors that tried to explain the continuation of female subordination despite the drawing in of a programme that was the foundation of policy on women throughout the period of the communist system. These she states are:

The inadequacies of Marxist theory-seen as the formative influence on state attitudes and policy concerning women and the existence of various institutionalized forms of male dominance in the state and society as a whole-in a word, 'patriarchy' (*Molyneux, 2001, pp.108-109*).

Such inadequacies prove that gender inequality is beyond an ideology. Despite the egalitarian pursuit and public educational programmes being a priority, there was minimal change on the status of women (Kwesiga (2002). As for communism, despite boasting about women attaining greater equality with men than in capitalism it has not brought about a classless society and neither can capitalism claim to have done so. The majority of women have continued to lag behind their male counterparts under both systems. Such a situation should raise the question, 'why'?

Molyneux, (2001) and Kwesiga (2002) have noted that the critics of this theory view it as a masculine theory which fails to explain the oppression of women in non-capitalist states. The theories' emphasis on inequality and economic factors has tended to overlook other sources of gender inequality such as culture and sexuality. However as pointed out by Kwesiga (2002), the even before capitalism were victims of subordination.

This study will use this theory to explain the causes for the consistent lower state of the women among the Tumbuka. A point of strength here lies in issues discussed.

That is; the theories view of capitalism rather than patriarchy as the cause of women's oppression, and sexuality with its focus on women as sexual beings and sex objects. This study does not suggest that the tribe under study is capitalist in nature rather that the class structure may explain women's inequality. Further still, Schneider and Gough (1962) noted that the Tumbuka women are considered as sexual objects that produce children for the continuity of the clan. This state of affairs may compel parents to assess the returns of assessing a girl who may only end up as wife and mother in another family.

### **3. 5. Human Capital Theory (HCT)**

The HCTs assert that investment in human beings through education and training could be capable of obtaining returns which could be reflected in the earnings of the educated people. Kwesiga states that:

Its underlying belief is that education creates assets in the form of knowledge and skills, which in turn increases the productivity of educated workers (*Kwesiga, 2002, p.8*).

The result of such a stand point is that the more educated one is, the better the earnings while those with less or no education have lower returns. Kwesiga (2002) notes that education is not the only investment, it includes health, nutrition, fertility and the general welfare of the people. Articulated first by Adam Smith in 1776, the concept of the human capital concept has exerted considerable influence in explaining the value of investment in people (Schultz, 1993: Kwesiga, 2002).

To differentiate between investment and consumption, HCT explains that investment implies the acquisition of assets that bring benefits over a long time while consumption implies the procurement and use of the final goods and services that would bring about instant aid: short lived benefits (Schultz, 1993; Kwesiga, 2002).

This distinction shows how education could be used as an investment, and consumption or both. In this study, HCT will be used because it clearly explains the link between investment in education and the factors that affect the education of women in Zambia. As indicated early in chapter one, Gachukia (2004) argued that the traditional attitudes that target boys rather than girls due to the traditional beliefs that assume girls' education as a poor investment could affect her education. This traditional attitude encourages parents to prefer educating boys on the assumption that they have better returns and benefits than girls.

Schultz (1993) and Kwesiga (2002) explain that in education, the rate of return could be calculated by comparing the cost to the individual or with the cost to society. The latter would be in terms of the cost of schooling and training measured against the expected returns. Kwesiga points out that "costs and benefits are defined and measured on the basis of who bears the costs or enjoys the benefits" (Kwesiga, 2002, p.10). The private returns denote the earnings that the student could be expected to receive as a result of having been educated - the benefits that an individual would accrue. The social returns are those that would accumulate to others involved or society at large, in the case of the tribe under study, the extended family and the community. The externalities are the unquantifiable spill-over benefits that are equally important but difficult to measure. The spill-over benefits are believed to improve the well being of the wider society (Hill and King, 1993; Schultz, 1993; Osuman, 1997).

Although parents per se do not sit and actually calculate the rates of return, they however perceive the benefits. In the case of Zambia, some parents would weigh and assess the benefits of educating a female child against those of a male child. The



process of selecting who best to get enrolled in school or who to continue to educate, may be made necessary by many factors. These are limited resources in the family, distance from school, benefits after school, the so called 'traditional benefits' to the girl (help the mother with household chores in order to prepare her for marriage) and the girl's low levels of achievement if already in school or just a mere assumption that the girl will not do well in school, much less succeed in finding a remunerative job after school. In most cases the education of boys would be perceived as having better returns to the family and hence the decision for enrolment or continuing with school is made in their favour (Schultz, 1993; Kwesiga, 2002).

Such a scenario shows how little value individuals within society could place on women. It further reveals how deeply rooted inequality tendencies are in society. It may even be worse in situations, where the mother has no formal school education and hence may not see anything wrong in the selective process that favours the male child. If the mother were educated she could come to the rescue of the girl and may demand that both children receive the education. Her uneducated position however, may render her powerless in making any decision in favour of the girl. Her rich traditional knowledge may impede or militate against her choice in favour of school education.

Generally in Zambia, education is unfortunately widely viewed as a route to a waged formal employment. Few may use the benefits of having been educated to get into self-employment. This echoes Ewen's comments in the previous chapter – p34 on the limitations of the Zambian education system. There are other economic reasons that could be advanced to justify such a situation. However, this has resulted in a lot of unemployed educated people competing unsuccessfully for few jobs (Hill, 2004;

McPherson, 2004). Hence, the benefits or returns of education may be quite minimal to those who assume that formal education leads to a waged employment. Hughes (2002) argues that education may increase the opportunities for very few individual. Such an argument cannot be ignored as observed above. He further states that the educated may be socially constructed as undereducated probably due to the fact that without a form of employment they are as good as the less educated or the illiterate (Hughes, 2002). Such an outcome could be common in developing countries where economies are poor. Social benefits of education such as better nutrition, reduced infant mortality, and improved capacity to tackle the challenges posed by poverty may be overlooked in preference for waged employment as noted by Muranga (1997).

The explanations of the theories of gender inequalities used in this study explain the queried gender sensitive cultural traditions that could be reason for the status of the women in the Zambia culture. These are later related to the Human Capital Theory that gives insight into the value placed on both female and male children hence perpetuating the discriminatory practices of whom best to send to school.

### **3. 6. Women's Movements**

This section will discuss different women's movements in Zambia because of their particular focus on the emancipation of women from class exploitation, male domination and subordination. The different feminist theories form the basis of their pursuits. Molyneux (2001) identifies four features of a movement. These are leadership, membership, a broader following and a political programme.

According to Molyneux (2001) women's movements may imply a social or political act of some significance that has capacity to affect legal, cultural, social or political change. Sheila Rowbotham's definition explains that a movement is a process of women acting together in a quest for a common end (Rowbotham, 1992 cited in Molyneux, 2001). The two definitions show the aspect of acting together with a common ideology. However, there are a variety of female mobilizations with a common aim, for various reasons such as income-generating projects or adult literacy clubs, which may not be considered as women's movements.

In this study women's movement will refer to organisations, associations, forums and lobbies whose cause for the movement is with a focus on the women. However, reference will be made to those movements that have relevance to this research. Zambia has a fairly strong women's movement and a number of Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) with women's or gender interest as their main focus. Their programmes are designed for the advancement of women's development, empowerment and their equality. The Non Governmental Organisations Coordinating Committee (NGOCC) acts as an umbrella organization for all other NGOs that target gender and development issues (NGOCC, 2003; Choongo, 2007). Its remit is to network among the organizations and institutions within and outside the country for the purpose of sharing information. Below are some of the different organisations:

- Zambia National Women's Lobby (ZNWL)
- Women For Change (WFC)
- Women's League (WL)
- Campaign For Female Education (CAMFED)
- Forum for African Educationalist of Zambia (FAWEZA)

(Organizations, 2007)

The list above is not exhaustive, however, there are a few groupings whose aim is to advocate for the education of girls. These include FAWEZA and CAMFED. The issue of concern about these groupings is their concentration in the urban area neglecting the women and girls in the rural area (FAWE, 2006; Choongo, 2007).

Professionals in their various disciplines have formed organizations to foster the rights of women. Nonetheless their goals are not different from those explained above. Examples of such organizations include:

- Zambia Association of University Women (ZAUW)
  - Zambia Alliance of Women (ZAW)
  - Zambia National Women Artists Documentation Project (ZNWADP)
  - Women in the Media (WM)
  - Business and Professional Women (BPW)
  - Medical Women's Association of Zambia (ZWAM)
- (Organisations, 2007).

With such a bank of groupings, one could assume that the position of women in Zambia is better placed; however, there remains much that should be done to advance the education of women in the country. Assessing the impact that these groupings may have on the women may require additional research but the effort they may make to better the plight of women should not be ignored no matter how minimal. These organisations are best considered to be manifestations of liberal feminism because of their aims and processes of change advocated for which is of a liberal stance rather than revolutionary (Organisations, 2007).

### **3.7. Conclusion**

The analysis of the theoretical frameworks relating to this investigation is intended to help explain the problem under study and to provide the strategy for dealing with the

problem. The choice of the appropriate theory or set of theories to help this study has been critically considered with theories of gender inequalities that includes the liberal, radical, and Marxist-socialist feminists and Human Capital Theory emerging as relevant to the study. The theories discussed in this chapter are certainly not exhaustive. There are many other feminist theories that could have been considered. However, the ones discussed suffice. A number of concepts have been discussed in this chapter that include 'gender', 'sex', and 'sexuality'.

Gender has been described as a social culture construction of a given society and its implications to the education of women has been established. Sex and gender distinctions are thin and can only be justified as a tool of analysis. While it has been established that sex is natural, inborn and biological, a state that cannot change while such a state can through socialisation establish roles and behaviours of one in conformity to the culture and society one is born into. Patriarchy explains the subordination of women and the domination of men and therefore will be able to help establish whether the male dominated families are the reason for the inequalities that exist between the sexes. Other concepts such as equality and identity have been part of the discussion.

The assumptions and explanations of the theories of gender inequalities used in this chapter can explain the questions of educational access, under-representation of women in the society, male control and dominance in the home and the education institutions, oppression and subordination of women in society, and gender explainable issues such as gender roles and division of labour. The underlying interest of these theories is to remove the inequalities against women in all social, economic

and political spheres of life. The difference existing among them is in the approach each theory seeks to use to eliminate the inequalities.

The discussion of the African feminists provided a contrasting view of the Western feminists. The African feminists have contested against the Western feminists' perspective of African societies and cultures and their tendencies of universalising their theories on the continent. The ideological war between the Western and African feminists is not worth falling into. However, being an African based study, I have included this discussion in order to incorporate the African understanding and explanation of the problem of this study. While generalisation is a research requirement it can play a role in misrepresenting the realities of a society. Despite the different views taken by the Western feminists and African feminists, both agree that there is considerable inequality between men and women that should be fought against and be eliminated. These inequalities have contributed greatly to women's lack of education in a number of countries, in this case Zambia.

Human Capital Theory has enumerated reasons that some parents may advance for providing educational opportunities for the male child. The traditional benefits may play a pivotal role in affecting the education of the female child. Unfortunately, such reasoning may still be rife in some Zambian societies where the education of the female child is not valued.

The effort to minimize and eradicate the inequalities and the oppressive tendencies occurring in our societies could be reason for women's lack of education and a total lack of interest in education. The education of women should not be compromised. Although it is not the only factor that could improve the plight of women, it is an

important factor with benefits that could accord the women an important position in all spheres of life. Equality should be one of the fundamental rights for human/women, although equality may not produce the same results every time. Hence, all barriers; that is the laws, constrictive/oppressive traditions or activities that obstruct equal rights and equal opportunities should be removed.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **THE ZAMBIAN CULTURAL TRADITIONS**

#### **4. 0. Introduction**

The different feminist concepts discussed in the previous chapter underpinned the theoretical framework underlying the phenomenon under investigation in this study. This theoretical framework is important to this study because of its critical explanation of the issues that prevent women from accessing educational opportunities. While the barriers to female education may be many, UNICEF (2003) has pointed out that cultural resistance could be contributing to national and international policy makers' failure to make the education of girls a priority. In view of this, this chapter will examine Zambia's cultural traditions and particularly those that relate to the Tumbuka tribe, in order to assess the impact that they have on female education.

This chapter will be structured as follows: The first section will move through previous publications based on similar investigations to examine the nature of traditions and give basic background to some of the influential cultural traditions. The section that follows discusses the origin of the traditional teachings in Zambia. This historical background is important because it shows the connection that the past has with the present.

Following this historical background is a discussion on the cultural traditions and the process of the socialization of girls into their gender roles from a traditional context as practiced in Zambia; this is intended to show how the remnant of earlier life ways



could still persist regardless of change taking place. The topic on initiation rites is crucial because this study considers the initiation rite as a means through which a woman could be caught up within a web of oppressive rules and representations that construct her into a subservient being to a man. The initiation rite is another means through which gender and sex roles are emphasised. The discussion in this section will show the relevance of the use of the theories of gender inequalities in this study. Following the section on initiation rites will be a discussion of the Tumbuka traditions and what implications they could have on the education of women. Reference to the Northern Province's Bemba rite of passage (see map of Zambia in chapter 1), matrilineal in nature, will be made to serve as a comparison with the patrilineal grouping under investigation in this study.

While discussing the Zambian cultural traditions, it is important to bear in mind the significance of female education and the need to remove any barriers. In 2000, at the World Education Forum (WEF) in Dakar, Senegal, the education of girls received the most attention with all participants recognising that: "The most urgent priority is to ensure access to and improve the quality of education for girls and women, and remove every obstacle that hampers their active participation" (UNICEF, 2003, p.4). The NGOCC (2004) commenting on the same concern, noted that even with such a commitment made in 2000, little seems to have been done to have this goal translated into reality. The NGOCC insist that there is a lack of government commitment to improve the status of women. So far any attempt to voice this negative aspect of some of these cultural traditions is met with resistance with simple statements such as, 'these are our traditions.' As a result this remains an uncomfortable zone to politicians, administrators, policy makers and aid workers and could be one reason for failure of achieving a commitment to girl's education (NGOCC, 2004). Kwesiga

equally states that the centrality of customs serve as an “excuse for perpetuating any practice through the simple statement, ‘it is our custom’” (Kwesiga, 2002, p.57).

Zambia has a variety of social and cultural traditions which are dynamic, changing, internally diverse and influenced by and influencing other cultures. The new customs and characteristics arise as a result of exposure and interaction with different groups and customs. This is most evident in the urban areas where television, fashion, music, travel, Western influence and varying intra-Zambian norms have contributed to the mutation and modification of some customs and beliefs. Inter-tribal marriages have also encouraged this trend, which in some cases has seen the development of totally new customs.

The rural area, however, remains the location of most cultural traditions and seems to remain unaffected by the development described above. While these cultural traditions are also practised in urban areas, they are a very common feature in rural areas and despite some level of change taking place, the call to change some of the cultural traditions that have outlived their time may not be easily accepted. Even though customs and beliefs vary considerably among the 73 ethnic groupings that exist in the country, the position of women can be seen as similar in all these groupings. The men have an upper hand over the women and their status commands respect from their female counterparts. This falls in line with the feminist theories of gender inequalities’ argument that patriarchal powers and the systematic subordination of women by men are embedded in all institutions such as the family. It is necessary to examine the nature of these traditions in order to illuminate their impact on women. This study seeks to establish by field investigation whether

cultural traditions could have a negative impact on the academic education of women in Zambia.

The discussion of this chapter will focus on the cultural traditions practiced in Zambia. This is intended to show that these cultural traditions can be similar among all the tribes in the country. The difference may lay in the methods of dissemination or emphasis. The discussion will be narrowed down to the Tumbuka tribe because they are the focal point of the study. Implications of the information received during the process of socialisation and initiation will be pointed out. This will be done with a purpose to demonstrate the impact that these cultural traditions could have on the education of women.

#### **4. 1. Review Of Previous Research Publications**

The purpose of this review is to gain insight into the different concepts advanced by the various authors and contemporary concerns relating to the current investigation. References to these publications will be made throughout this chapter.

The subject of the current research has attracted much previous study. Most of the writings on the Zambian women are unfortunately cast in a western mould and such examples include the works of writers such as Young (1931), Young (1932), Richards (1956), La Fontaine (1986), and Kelly (1998). The interest of such publications is specifically on initiation rites for girls. Although these publications date back to as early as the 1930's, the knowledge contributed is still valid for reference; there may be a few changes to some practices but they remain essentially the same. These publications have revealed the processes involved in these practices in detail as they were performed then, laying emphasis on initiation rites and their distinct symbols.

This was probably done for the purposes of exposing ‘this’ African tradition to the western world. They have however, not discussed the effect that the learnt skills and knowledge may have on the recipients.

Other writers who have contributed to Zambian women’s education include Rasing (1995), Rude (1999), Rasing (2001), Kashiwa (2004) and Chondoka and Bota (2007). Equally, these authors have focused on cultural traditions with specific attention on initiations rites and their relevance in the current world. However they do not point out the negative impact these traditional practices could have on the girl’s aspiration for academic education. Maigenet’s (1982) PhD thesis (unpublished) takes different approach from the others above. She demonstrates how cultural traditional practices could find their way into the school system and adversely affect the participation of girls. This information is important to this study because it contributes to identifying the factors that stand as a barrier to female education. This chapter will review the literature from these authors to assess its contribution to the body of knowledge and reference will be made to them because of the information they have provided in their publications which is relevant to this research.

Chondoka and Bota’s (2007) publication is quite recent and has focused on the Tumbuka tribe; the tribe under focus in this study. Chondoka and Bota have attempted to ‘correct’ the Tumbuka history and provide an authentic true picture of who the Tumbuka are, where they come from and the traditions they practice. Such information is timely and valuable to this study, especially the data on the traditions practiced by the Tumbuka. As Tumbuka, the authors have tried to present their information as consistently as possible to rule out any tendencies of biases. However this can be evident in the defence they put up for some practices. One example is the

insistence on the tribe being matrilineal when a number of literatures identify the tribe as patrilineal. The *lobola* practice is another instance which is practiced among the Tumbuka to such an extent that the woman is tied to the man's family even after the death of the husband, a case in point that the authors do not associate themselves with (Tew, 1950; La Fontaine, 1986; Chondoka, 2001; Chondoka and Bota; and Munthali, 2008).

Maigenet's (1982) PhD thesis is yet another piece of research that has been considered for reference because of the relevant information presented. Her research on the *Educational Policy and Practices affecting Females in Zambian Secondary Schools* evaluated the plight of secondary school girls and how government policies and practices within the school environment impact on the secondary school female child. Although her research was able to identify cultural factors that find their way into the school environment as one factor affecting the development and progress of the education of girls in Zambia, her main theme was to assess the policies and practices and how they were contributing to slowing down the progress of female education. Her contributions affirm earlier concerns in the introduction, where NGOCC argued that the subject of cultural tradition could be uncomfortable zone to politicians, administrators, policy makers and aid workers because of the importance they attach to them (NGOCC, 2004).

Further still, the liberal feminist theory argues to this effect that the curriculum in some subjects is still gender biased and hence encourages inequality. Sanders (2003) and Frawley (2005) have argued that the reactions by teachers (their behaviour and feedback) towards girls could be with or without intent yet could be a powerful means through which damaging and influential messages can be disseminated to them.

Marysia equally argues that educationalists should oppose the proclivity to channel girls into “‘typically female’ jobs” Marysia, (2000, p.7). Maigenet (1982) has argued that with policies and practices that do not favour nor encourage the academic education of girls in place, developing girls’ academic education would be difficult. She attributes this development to many factors of which cultural biases is one. Such a claim is based on the assumption that cultural biases imbedded in the minds of some policy makers could dictate the formulation of policies that may only favour and encourage the education of boys.

Rasing’s (1995) research on *Passing on the rites of passage: girl’s initiation rites in the context of an urban Roman Catholic* on the Zambian Copperbelt Province has its focus on the Bemba tribe. Her study has so much similarity with the studies of Richards (1958) whose work she refers to due to context of the initiation rites. This is another piece of research that has placed much emphasis on the initiation rites as practised in the urban area mainly by Catholic women. It attempts to show how the amalgamation of the traditional rites and the Catholic tenets is functioning despite attempts by the early Catholic missionaries to completely eradicate the indigenous people’s traditional practices such as initiation rites. For example authors such as Wright (2003) and Taylor (2006) have argued that missionaries saw European invasions as providential for the purpose of evangelism however they considered the religious practices of the Africans as immoral; such as the ‘lewd’ dancing during traditional ceremonies. Some of the missionaries prohibited the teaching of African music because they thought it was a form of paganism (Wright, 2003; Taylor, 2006).

Interestingly, Rasing (1995) despite writing in favour of the initiation rites, agrees that the initiation rites have a tendency of upholding the fundamental difference

between male and female. While the difference between male and female is not an issue here, it is the oppressive gendered roles that are of concern. La Fontaine (1986) and Kelly (1998) equally maintain that the initiation rites place much emphasis on sex identity with the allocation of social roles. Despite being aware of this information these writers still insist that the traditions taught during the initiation rites are beneficial.

While emphasis on the difference between male and female may not be wrong at face value, this research argues that it is important to understand the content of what is taught to the girls. This is because issues of sex identity and social roles could be taught with the intention of cementing in the women the importance of recognizing male authority in their lives and the acceptance of their roles as supplementary as opposed to complementary and equal. In line with this view, it has been argued that the socialization associated with womanliness prescribes roles and tasks for the girls that are different from the boys (Gwaba and Namalambo, 2005). For example, Oakley (1983) maintains that women are in affective roles while the men are given the instrumental roles. It is further argued by liberal feminists that socialisation into gender roles tends to produce rigid and inflexible expectations of men and women and discrimination can easily prevent women from having equal opportunities (Walter, 1999). These gender positions disadvantage the female child and later may affect their decision-making process. Further still, cultural traditions are capable of encouraging social exclusion and discrimination, a point noted by Kelly et al (1999) and UNICEF (2006).

However, although Rasing exposes how inequity is emphasised in cultural traditional teachings, her research fails to show the effect this emphasis may have on the females

and their academic education aspiration. Neither does she agree with the fact that such emphasis has contributed to the outcome and perpetuation of male supremacy while relegating the woman to an inferior status. Rasing further denies that Zambian women are “submissive victims of male dominance” insisting that the women are powerful and that “through initiation rites women have considerable control over their sexual lives” (Rasing, 1995, p.11). Such an argument sounds misplaced because a number of research projects and reports have been written to suggest otherwise. Of particular interest here is the research project by Joanna Barke-Martignoni, which was presented to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) convention outlining that the “Zambian society is characterised by deeply-embedded patriarchal cultural values, widespread discrimination against women and a virtual absence of women in positions of power” (OMCT, 2002, p.10). The radical feminist theory affirms that patriarchy denotes the control of men over women. Drawing on Plumwood’s (1993) notions of objectification or instrumentalism, the home emerges as the basis of patriarchy with men (objects) dominating the women (instruments). The feminists further insist that we live in a patriarchal society where men have authority over women and “what gets associated with men and masculinity is generally given value than things associated with women and femininity” (Marysia, 2000, p.12).

The theme of Rasing’s (2001) second research project, titled *The bush burnt, the stones remain: female initiation rites in urban Zambia* was conducted on a much larger scale but echoes the findings of her first project discussed above. Besides elaborating precisely and in detail each and every process of the initiation rite as practised by the Bemba tribe, Rasing attempted to establish and prove the importance of the initiation rite and why it should continue to be practised. Rasing states that



initiation rites are significant in the “construction of female identity, pride, autonomy and meaning” (Rasing, 2001, p.23). Such a claim could be true, however, the concern lies in the identity constructed and what the girls make of it.

This study will assess the impact the constructed identity could have on the education of the girl. For the women and girls, who perform and experience the rites respectively, the rites remain relevant and important to them; the profound meaning with which they are held in high esteem, especially in the rural areas at the expense of modern education is a matter of concern to this study. Rasing further argues against what she calls Western stereotyping of the initiation rites as “expressions of internalised oppression of women,” (Rasing, 2001, p.23) a subject that African feminists would agree with because of the assumed Western perception of the African woman. This subject will be discussed further in the next chapter. However, of essence here is the effect that the initiation rite could have on the initiated.

The regulatory type of teachings transmitted through the initiation rites are all the more reason why in-depth research should be conducted in order to assess the rigid and retrogressive nature that such traditional practices may have on the girl’s aspiration for academic education. Further still the institutions of initiation tend to encourage and pass on norms and values concerning gender, a state of affairs that Rasing (2001) agrees with. The liberal feminist theory explains such a situation as a cultural matter that involves manipulation and canalisation of children into gender roles.

Kashiwa’s (2004) research titled *Marriage and Traditions from a Christian Perspective* is similar in some aspects to both of Rasing’s researches (1991; 2001), in

that he also places great emphasis on the initiation rites for the Bemba tribe. His attention is however, focussed on establishing the relevance of cultural traditions and much more those surrounding the female initiation rites to the evangelical Christians. He describes each process in detail to show this and leaves it to the Christian reader, who is his target, to judge and assess the importance and relevance of the rites and whether a Christian could practise the initiation ceremony without compromising his/her Christian faith. Kashiwa conducted his research in defence of the initiation rites because the evangelical Christians were disassociating themselves from the initiation rites, perceiving them as unchristian. He further challenges the traditional counsellors whose responsibility it is to instruct the initiates in the traditional knowledge to assess the content in light of the western values and the nation's indigenous cultural traditions. However, he does not identify the impact these traditions may have in militating against the girls' aspiration for academic education.

Rude's (1999) research on *Reasonable Men and Provocative Women* is of interest here because of its considerable underlying factors leading to gender-based homicide in 150 cases she considered in Zambia. She attributes the violence to the desire of some men to have power and control over women. She further shows how far the men could go to acquire control and power over women. This is through abuse, violence and to an extent, murder while the woman gives in and tolerates in obedience: action that may be deemed as disobedient to man's authority is met with retribution. Further still, Rude's research shows how societal norms and systems disadvantage women and allow men to violate them because the woman could internalize the societal image of herself and suffer its consequences. Similarly, the radical feminists insist that as a result of patriarchy, women are subjugated and subjected to violence in the home (Marysia, 2000).

All such contributions and the body of knowledge offered above are useful for referencing and counterchecking with the findings of this study. The cultural identity is case in point that comes along with the practice of these traditions. Cultural identity can be measured in terms of the visible cultural characteristics such as language and/or the invisible culturally-specific attitudes, norms, beliefs and values to which a member has allegiance as a result of having been socialised into the culture (Hamer and Blanc 1989). Much more, Hamer and Blanc insist that cultural identity as a consequence of the process of socialisation is a “dynamic mechanism” (Hamer and Blanc, 1989, p.121).

Although the aims of each contribution cited above could be different, the underlying factor of this study remains; to advocate the emancipation of women from the ills that are believed to silence their voice, marginalise them and suppress them by according all power to men only. In-depth analytical research has been recommended to be undertaken in order to provide a clearer understanding to the obstacles to girls’ academic education.

#### **4. 2. The Origins Of Traditional Teachings In Zambia**

History has a way of asserting its values in the present and therefore knowing the elements of value, what was accomplished and how much of it still remains of relevance to this time is important. Culture is dynamic and it is inevitable that new ways of practising our culture and traditions are assessed in line with the contemporary world hence it would be unwise to regard the past as extraneous to the needs of the present and cast it off as ill fitting. The present is connected to the past while the future could be shaped by the present. The origin of traditions in Zambia is difficult to trace because of a lack of written documentation. However, in Southern

Africa, some traditional practices can easily be traced back to the San and the Khoi-Khoi peoples who are believed to have come into contact with the Bantu-speaking people (Kashiwa, 2004).

Traces of paintings of the San people on rocks could be similar to the paintings some tribes have been using in Zambia during the initiation teachings. These teachings are in schematic or naturalistic form and the schematic forms of paintings are the most interesting because of the similarities that they share with the paintings some tribes use currently. However, some of the paintings were drawn with hidden meanings that were difficult to interpret unless someone explained them. Some of the drawings that include dots and stripes are worked in three colours, red, black and white (Kashiwa 2004). This information is shared by Richards (1956).

According to Richards (1956), Rasing (1995) and Kashiwa (2004) red represents the menstrual blood, which symbolise danger. It is a warning and couples were and are still not supposed to have any sexual relations when the wife is menstruating. The wife would have to put up a symbol of red beads in the bedroom for the husband to know that she was menstruating. Following on, the colour black represents death and sickness in the family when again couples were to abstain from sex for fear of death. Black could also represent the hair and the pubic hair which should not be disposed off carelessly if shaven. Finally, the colour white symbolises purity and fertility. It represented the cervix and safe periods, when couples could enjoy the matrimonial gift of sex, which resulted in offspring. These colours summarize what is taught during the initiation ceremony. The colours are depicted in different symbols and different ways depending upon the tribe (Richards, 1956; Corbeil, 1982; Rasing, 1995; and Kashiwa, 2004). Rasing (1995) further maintains that blood, sex and fire

may symbolize constant danger because failure to comply with the societal warnings and norms is believed to cause diseases.

The Bemba speaking people of the Northern part of Zambia use schematic forms of drawings during the initiation ceremonies. The common drawings of pictures and models called the *imbusa*; an artistic array of a variety of symbols, models and drawings using the three colours can never be understood until an initiator explains the meaning. The Tumbuka and many other tribes in the Eastern Province use the three colours during the initiation ceremonies to aid teaching about the menstrual cycle and about the dangers associated with menstruation (Rasing, 1995; Kashiwa, 2004; Rasing, 2001; and Taylor, 2006). This subject will be discussed later in the chapter.

The naturalistic forms on the other hand are easily understood because the picture of the real object is clearly discernible. This form is equally used during initiations to aid teachings (Kashiwa, 2004). Rasing, (1995) Kashiwa, (2004) and Taylor, (2006) claim the practice of the traditions were discontinued by the arrival of missionaries in 1891 and this brought a conflict among the locals who valued the practices. The missionaries considered the practices as evil, obscene, barbaric, useless and uncivilised and in turn, the missionaries advocated for western ways of life thereby extirpating the indigenous culture of the local people. This resulted in the people, especially those that converted to the faith, giving up a wide range of their practices that included the “initiation rites of girls, divination and worship of family and ancestral spirits” (Rasing, 1995, p.18).

Nonetheless, these practices were not extirpated because to date initiation rites and other ceremonies are still practised. The approach the missionaries took to change the traditions of the locals may not have been the best; for example, expecting the local people to replace their dearly-held traditional practices with western values. Even now some individuals are quite apprehensive and sceptical about persons advocating for a mutation of some of the practices especially those practises that are considered as *miambo* because of the value the society attaches to them (Chondoka, 2001). The understanding of traditional culture should not be viewed as a representation of inferiority. Rasing points out that “traditional does not denote inferiority as represented by some analysts to mean before the introduction of Christianity into Zambia” (Rasing, 1995, p.15).

There is also a general sense of fear that the contemporary life styles of the educated people may threaten the continuance of the cultural traditional teachings and customs. Taylor argues that the Zambian customs, which he sees as both valuable and esoteric are under threat of loss from the “juggernaut of western cultural expansionism” (Taylor, 2006, p.109). Chitsike argues that eroding deeply rooted traditional knowledge would require a “many-sided, explosive force to shake individuals to change their attitude and to inspire women” (Chitsike, 1995, p.22). The social codes could slowly be changed because they do not necessarily mean change of attitude (Mill, 1970).

#### **4. 3. Implications Of The Cultural Traditions**

The traditions of a given society are well guarded and the processes through which the traditions are transmitted or handed down are so many. These include initiation

rites and socialisation through the parents especially the mother, ‘aunt,’<sup>18</sup> the grandmother and the traditional teachers. This is mainly orally done although it may include simulations, imitations, and the use of symbols, singing and dancing. The established customs of a given society govern the social behaviour of the people hence one would be saved much mortification, pain and ill repute by upholding them (Draisma and Kruzinga, 2004). This section will discuss the process through which the Tumbuka tribe transfer information to their young ones: the main focus being the initiation ceremony and the process of socialisation. A discussion on the Zambian culture will be done to show how that similarities do exist in the culture practiced by many tribes in the country with slight variations which distinctly identify one tribe from another. This will start with a brief discussion of cultural traditions in order to give clear understanding of the terminology. A brief discussion on this subject may be found in chapter 1. This will equally introduce the process of socialisation.

### *I. Zambian Cultural Traditions*

In this research, cultural traditions will include customs, beliefs and values of the Tumbuka speaking people that shape each member’s life from birth. The category of culture referred to in this research will include both societal and tribal culture. Grunlan and Mayers define culture as “That complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Grunlan and Mayers, 1988, p.39).

Culture could simply be defined as the personality of a given society; it shapes, informs, defines and describes the people and their learned and shared attitudes,

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<sup>18</sup> The aunt, the sister of the father (in Tumbuka is called Ankhazi) is an important figure in the life of the girl/boy. She commands so much respect among the brother’s children and ensures that they respect their father at all cost.

values, and behaviours. Anthropologists call the learning process ‘enculturation.’ Segall et al state that “enculturation denotes the engagement of persons in their culture; the term also serves well as a generic label for all human learning, encompassing socialization as well” (Segall et al., 1990, p.25).

Although enculturation or socialisation may differ from society to society, the shared norms, values and practices constitute the culture, which in turn forms the basis of interaction. People belonging to the same culture may interpret the world in roughly the same ways; express themselves, their thoughts and feelings about the world in ways which would be understood by each other (Barker, 2003). There is an issue of identity here which, Appel and Muyskin (1992) interpret that cultural identity as one’s loyalty to the legacy of collectivity which is inherited from earlier generations. Each cultural grouping has its own prominent features and diverse culturally-specific aspects that give members their distinct characteristics as they access the elements of their ethnic group. In place is the social control system that guides the enforcement of all the norms. The norms which are the “shared standards of the conduct” of the members control their behaviours (Segall et al., 1990, p.6).

Individual members have roles which are expected of them depending upon the position held. These expectations can be compelling or obligatory to the point of controlling an individual’s behaviour. The “‘folkways’ are conventional practices while the ‘mores’ are obligatory” as they are necessary for the maintenance of the social order and these can be deeply significant to the members (Segall et al., 1990, p.7).



Stephen (1998), in much the same way as Grunlan and Mayers (1988), expresses culture as knowledge. Culture is a system of shared accumulated facts by members of a given society, which are conceptions, regulations and meanings articulated in much the same way by the members (Stephen 1998). Thwaites et al and Cush suggest that culture is the collection of shared practices whose significance is fashioned, disseminated, reinforced and encouraged among the members. It is constantly changing, internally diverse and challenged, influenced by and influencing other cultures (Cush, 2004; Thwaites et al., 1994). This could be true of the Tumbuka culture which could be changed with time. This can be observed in the urban areas where due to interactions with other ethnic groupings some tribes have changed their customs.

Generally speaking, throughout Zambia, and in all its ethnic groupings, cultural traditions continue to relegate women to inferior roles. Such traditions tend to be obligatory for the women expecting them to strictly follow the traditions if she is to live happily in the society. Although cultural traditions that apply to women may take different forms within the different ethnic groupings, by and large, there exist a lot of similarities. Long-standing customs, beliefs and values are mainly handed down orally from one generation to another through the process of socialisation. These beliefs can be described as how reality and events are explained by members of a given society, and what is regarded as true and what is not, while values distinguish one society from another. The behaviour of the members is the visible part that betrays the things that are believed or felt that others do not see (Garforth, 1985; Taylor, 2006). Of particular interest to this research are the following values in figure 4 that could be regarded as important in Zambia:

*Figure 4 ~ Values regarded as important in Zambia*

#### **Some Common Zambian Values**

- Lying is considered as better than giving offence particularly to those higher up in the hierarchy.
- Respect is often expressed in a number of ways such as gestures which include kneeling or genuflection or through forms of address such as 'ba' 'anya' especially to those older than you.
- Keeping distance from in-laws. Avoiding eye or physical contact, eating together or touching.
- People oriented rather than event oriented. An uncle, sister or anyone can take up or waste your time because of this value and that of respect.
- Good manners: bad manners can earn the family a bad name and even make it difficult for one to find a wife or husband.
- Modesty: this entails decent dressing. Explicit dressing can be met by instant punishment from the general public. Modesty in language may lead to the use of euphemism for sexual matters.
- Hospitality is obligatory and nothing is too much trouble for the host (Nyirenda, 2008, pp. 8 – 9).

In Zambia the social structures and hierarchy are strictly adhered to because they are believed to give society shape. Nyirenda, (2008) and Taylor, (2006) identify the following:

Age: Older people are higher up.

Sex: Males are higher up.

Royalty: The chief is higher up.

Wealthy: The richer are more important.

This hierarchy is culturally supported. Much of the traditional behaviour is governed by the need to avoid implications of disobedience that include unexplained sickness; misfortune and humiliation. The community and family solidarity are other forces that demand loyalty and this agrees with Hofstede's discussion of dimensions of culture of Individualism-Collectivism (Hofstede, 1991; Hofstede, 2005). The family expectations of an individual have great power to overrule the wishes and choices of a member and as a result there is much pressure to conform and that could influence one to make wrong choices (Taylor, 2006; Nyirenda, 2008). Kwesiga has argued that

“to turn away from the established order is almost to exclude oneself, to excommunicate oneself” (Kwesiga, 2002, p.57).

The power of the taboo, yet another force that could influence one's choices, is appreciated in the society. Much of the traditional behaviour is governed by the need to avoid offending the spirit being, which if not obeyed could result into sickness or misfortune. This is stated without argument and any action or behaviour considered as taboo has horrid consequences for an individual (Nyirenda, 2008). For example a pubescent girl is not expected to sleep in the same bed or room with the father nor is she expected to discuss sexual matters with him or the mother. Therefore the choices that are made by an individual are set by the unquestionable regulations and taboo.

The similarities that exist in the Zambian societies start with the socialisation of the children in their distinct gender roles. For the majority of Zambians, the family unit (nuclear and extended) remains a significant establishment of influence, direction and socialisation, again with reference to Hofstede, could be due to the collectivist nature of the communities. Hofstede, (1991) (2005) claims that many African societies can strongly be considered as collectivist because emphasis is on group responsibility rather than that of an individual and therefore, everyone in the community has the task of guiding the children in order for them to develop morals, beliefs and customs accepted in society for the benefit of the whole group. Consequently, the knowledge, attitudes and the practices within the kin tend to affect decisions concerning education of the children. The traditions and customs permeate the socialisation of young girls producing a traditional mind-set that may further have influence on their educational aspiration (Chitsike, 2001; NGOCC, 2004; and Gwaba and Namalambo, 2005).

## *II. Gender Socialisation*

Like enculturation, defined earlier, socialisation involves the inculcation of information to both girls and boys about their place in the society (Hofstede, 2005). While there may be no harm in dissemination of this information, the concern raised by Hofstede is that once the boys and girls have learnt their place in society they may not want it to change. The point here is ‘wanting it that way’ because from the moment a child is born she/he would have learnt the way things are supposed to be and may always assume that is how things should be. Formal school may not have the capacity to alter such a mind-set. Murphy (1989) has argued that school has limited ability to alter a child’s personality, values and expectations. This may explain how the personality and behaviour of individuals is culturally influenced and as argued by Segall et al it is “rare and even impossible for any human being ever to behave without responding to the aspects of their culture” (Segall et al., 1990, p.5). Therefore, it is within any given society that expected behaviour is prescribed in line with one’s gender. Gillen agreeing with Segall et al states that:

Once we are born, we learn from our family how to adapt; there is significant evidence that what you are now is a result of what you have learned in your early formative years from those around you. Parents usually filled their children’s brain with necessary and unnecessary things (Gillen, 1992, p.36).

The sex roles become well defined as early as age 3 as the children begin to emulate the same sex and get involved in the daily activities around the house and in the field. Taylor states that “one’s sex defines one’s role” therefore limitations are imposed on an individual (Taylor, 2006, p.95). The end product justifies the means as the children turn out to be what they would have learnt from the family. It is on such basis that Oakley (1972) argues that children are steered towards gender roles and identities by their parents. This, she insists could be done manipulatively by encouraging different types of activities and behaviours to the children. Ann Oakley a feminist argues that

the gender roles are not a natural occurrence but a social construction. She argues that gender socialisation involves “canalisation, manipulation, verbal appellations and different activities” (Oakley, 1981, cited by Best, 2003, p.144).

Hofstede equally contests that the process of socialisation establishes gender patterns however; he argues that only a small part of gender role differentiation is biologically determined (Hofstede, 2005). This could be because these roles can be as compelling and obligatory as to virtually control one’s behaviour. The purpose of socialisation may further be intended for the wellbeing and maintenance of society. Muranga (1997) asserts that sex roles tend to be quite oppressive and hence may result in exploitation or low self-esteem of women. Moreover, the well-defined societal roles that may not require school education are rooted in traditional practices (Shabaya and Agwemang 2004).

While socialisation is an on-going process to incorporate members into the life of the society, education also takes place, either separately or alongside socialisation. Chondoka and Bota (2007) do not make a distinction between socialisation and education. They call the whole process of teaching the children from a young age to adulthood as ‘general education.’ Chondoka and Bota further suggest that there exists a gender sensitive curriculum, which is not documented and that both sexes are taught separately. The traditional education<sup>19</sup> is a long process that climaxes at the onset of puberty for both children. The children whether male or female remain in the shadow of women up to the age of 5 to 8 at which point the boys begin to spend more time with the men while the girls remain with their mothers (Chondoka and Bota, 2007).

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<sup>19</sup> Traditional education will be used interchangeably with socialisation to mean the same thing.

Therefore, as the children grow, the process of integrating them into society by developing morals, beliefs and customs accepted in society is a major concern of everyone in the community (Mbikusita-Lewanika, 1979; Chondoka and Bota, 2007). The beliefs are further translated into practice spelling out the distinct roles of the children; male or female.

Alongside the roles the girls are taught, values and good manners such as courtesy, respecting the elders, and kneeling down are emphasised (Shabaya and Agwemang, 2004). While the construction of such an identity is appreciated in the community, Therborn (2004) claims that gender differences tend to provide the earliest model of social inequality. Although such a claim may not be conclusive, such a situation cannot be completely ignored in light of the current study because the feminist theories of inequality insists that disparities exist between men and women across societies and these could be encouraged by the process of socialisation (Kwesiga, 2002).

### *III. Effects Of Socialisation*

Nevertheless, some of these traditions are significant and may not have a negative impact on those that observe them, for example kneeling down. It would be wrong to completely classify such a custom as a form of abuse (Rude, 1999). This is because while kneeling tends to reinforce and emphasize the inferior position of women, (especially when the act is forced upon the woman), it is also used as a form of respect. For example, men are expected to kneel down to elderly people or to parents-in-law. This can be an equivalent to men standing up for the old in the west as a sign of respect. Therefore, kneeling is a form of respect that is encouraged by parents for all the children; male or female, although with more emphasis on the female child.

The traditional education may further instruct the girls to adopt a coy presence; not to look straight in the eyes of the opposite sex and to respect the boys, to have no familiarity or intimacy with the father while the boys are expected to be courageous and strong (Rasing, 1995; Rasing, 2001; and Kashiwa, 2004). Feminists have long argued that the female expressive role and the male instrumental role is a result of socialisation (Haralambos and Heald, 1980). The NGOCC points out that:

The traditional and culturally accepted image of the Zambian girl child is that of a passive and submissive character who remains in the background, the first to serve and last to speak (*NGOCC, 2004, p.35*).

Such a predisposition constructs an acquiescent image of a female child who remains in the background afraid to speak out (Kelly, 1998). Further still, such a disposition may not help the girl in school at all, although it would be appreciated by the traditional society. When and if the girl internalises such an image of herself, it could possibly dictate to her choices and purpose for her future. This was also observed in a research conducted on experiences of young people on issues such as gender, sexuality and life skills. The young girls argued that the lessons they learnt at home were a means through which the traditional female gender roles were constructed and encouraged them to look forward to marriage. Consequently the girls construct themselves as caregivers, cleaners of the house and hold the boys in high esteem. The boys on the other hand construct themselves as strong, providers of homes and office workers because they would have been made to believe so by society (Youth Researchers, 2006). Shabaya and Agwemang have argued to the effect that giving “priority to teaching girls future roles as mother and caregiver could have a strong negative bearing on their educational opportunity” (Shabaya and Agwemang, 2004, p.413).

While there could be nothing wrong with some of these identified roles or skills such as respect for the elders or good eating habits, others such as shy looks, respect for the boys or not looking straight into the boys' eyes, are taught with a crafty intention; to train the girls to consider the opposite sex as superior subjects upon whom they can depend and themselves as inferior objects. Hence a subordinate temperament in the girls can be developed that respects the opposite sex with veneration. Such a development could lead to inequality and lack of productive freedom for the woman (Posner, 1992). Further still impressing such lessons on the tender minds of the young girls may well be calculative intended as claimed by Gillen "...there is significant evidence that what you are now is a result of what you have learned in your early formative years from those around you" (Gillen 1992, p.36). The lessons may not easily be erased or modified especially without a strong alternative such as formal education that could inform them of their important position and capabilities.

Mary Wollstonecraft in her book the *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) scoffed at Rousseau's<sup>20</sup> comments that "obedience is the grand lesson which ought to be impressed with unrelenting rigour" on the woman (Wollstonecraft, 1792, p. 27). She presumably was of the opinion that allowing such a trend was a calculative move to keep women under the subjection of the superior faculties of the man. The women are not inherently inferior intelligence wise but society tends to encourage them to conform to this assumption and hence they suppress their intellectual curiosity through the process of socialisation (Moore, 1999). Maigenet argues that like men, women could do with opportunities that would develop "their intellectual potentialities" to the maximum (Maigenet, 1982, p.1). Such an assumption falls in

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<sup>20</sup> Jean -Jacques Rousseau was a philosopher, writer and composer of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (1712 -1778). Some of his works include: The Social Contract; Emile; and The Confessions of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.



line with the thoughts of feminists such as the liberal and radical feminists. Liberal feminists, for example, would argue that girls should be encouraged to develop into “assertive independent human beings” (Marysia, 2000, p.7).

Commenting on the negative impact that domestic concerns have on women by restricting their opportunities for developing their intellectual potentialities Maigenet cited the writings of Lenin Krupskaya who claimed that:

In most cases housework is the most savage and most arduous work a woman can do. It is exceptionally petty and does not include anything that would in any way promote development of women (*Maigenet, 1982, p.1*).

While domestic concerns, as argued above, are one of the identified factors that may constrain the education of women, the claims made in the citation are too strong to go without a comment. Housework may be onerous but classifying it as trivial may not be appreciated by most African women, as argued by Wangari Maathai who consider the female gender roles as a means of service to their families, and hence do not consider “serving burdensome but as an ideal means of giving oneself” (Oyewumi, 2004, p.1). Such a statement seems to suggest that African women gladly give themselves to serving, which may not be true for everyone. For example young girls are socialised into the role of care givers very early in life. Such a situation could even be forced upon them to an extent whereby a girl could abstain from school to help look after a sick sibling. With time the girl may internalise this role as a service she is called to give. However, Shabaya and Agwemang disputes that the well-defined societal roles are “deep-rooted in the traditional practices” (Shabaya and Agwemang, 2004, p.413). Mbiti commenting on how immune to change a traditional mind-set could be, states that traditions may on the surface be “disrupted but beneath lie the subconscious” mind of the tradition which may lay quiescent but not dead

(Mbiti, 1990, p.22). This could explain the inflexible and calculated process of embedding the traditions into the tender minds of the girls.

Academic education may not be central in some traditional societies with their focus on producing traditionally competent women whose values are still culturally oriented. Much more, formal education may not even be appreciated by the society because of the image and the values that seem to be attained by those who successfully go through the school system. Traditional society tends to conclude that educated girls have less chances of marriage and that they do not turn out as good wives (Hill and King, 1993). Such a conclusion could be due to the fact the educated girls may not live up to the traditions and hence may lack the skill of perseverance which is presumed to be acquired through the traditional knowledge. For this reason, the significance of the content of what is taught and learnt and its suitability to the learner is of paramount importance. The relevance of the curriculum may not relate only to the learner but to a nation as a whole with its need to 'catch up' with the rest of the world. The nation's intention to 'catch up' tends to exert pressure on the curriculum for learners to acquire knowledge in order to participate on the global stage. Wright (2003) explains that for any nation to involve itself in world trade and industry there is need for its education system to prepare its citizens for participation. While the acquisition of such knowledge for this reason is not wrong, Wright then argues that learners should not be restricted to such knowledge alone: knowledge of their environment, skills and other local subjects should be considered.

Empowerment of the people; it enables people to have the tools to consider choices and to guide, challenge, judge and then promote or reject those decisions which affect their lives and the lives of others (*Wright, 2003, p.234*).

Such an education, as described by Wright, could enable an individual to recognise the restrictions and subjugation of the culture within which they live.

One practice that girls are expected to engage in as part of the preparation for their future role of wife is called *ukuna*. *Ukuna* involves the pulling of the labia minora in order to extend them to a certain expected length. It is a painful exercise introduced to the girls between the ages of 7 to 12 years. It is a slow process that can take some years for some girls to attain the right acceptable length while for others it could take a few days. This would only be possible with the use of some traditional herbs. It is believed that the extended labia provide the husband with something to fondle and stimulate him during sexual intercourse. In this study the act of elongating the labia will be called the cultural labia (Rasing, 1995; Kashiwa, 2004; and Tamale, 2005).

As one of the pre-pubertal vaginal preparations a pubescent girl is supposed to undergo, the girls are warned that the exercise is mandatory for every woman hence, leaving the girls with no option to refuse (Rasing, 1995). The pubescent girls' genitals are prepared for future sex and their failure to comply may result in them not getting married at all or suffer the shame of being sent back to their parent's home by their husband. A girl/woman with well-elongated cultural labia is considered as a real woman and no longer a girl (child). Tamale explains that:

A (Muganda) woman who did not elongate the labia minora is traditionally despised and regarded as having a 'pit.' If a bride were found not to have elongated her labia minora, she would be returned to her parents with disgrace (Tamale, 2005, p.12).

According to World Health Organisation (WHO), UNICEF, and United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) in a joint statement categorized female mutilation into four types. Type four is identified as "all other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes, for example: pricking, piercing, incising, scraping and cauterization" (WHO, 2008, p.4).

The elongation of the cultural labia has been included in this type, a move that has been contended by the African feminist such as Okome (1999) and Tamale (2005). They argue against such a move and insist that it does not qualify as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) because as far as they are concerned the practice boosts sexual enjoyment for women and increases their acuity of themselves as active sexual beings (Tamale, 2005; Okome, 1999). However, the procedure could qualify as a harmful procedure to the female genitalia and the question of whether their sexual pleasure is enhanced or the man's, requires much research.

While as Africans we have our own way of doing things, this research maintains that such early teachings on marriage, though good, according to the traditional society, they could have a negative impact on the attitude of the female child towards her academic education. Taylor has argued that in some Zambian cultures, "girls are expected to marry at a young age" (Taylor, 2006, p.97). Commenting on the disadvantages of early marriages, Moore states that early marriages could bring to a standstill any potentialities of female improvement and arrests the girl's/women's "intellectual and moral development" (Moore, 1999, p.12). Cultural factors on girls' education could be far-reaching and could affect their performance and persistence in continuing formal education (Shabaya and Agwemang, 2004). It may well be possible for the girl to begin to consider herself as just a wife in waiting and the importance of school eroded from her mind. Worse still, if the mother has no form of education the situation for the girl could presumably be hopeless.

Mothers who are illiterate and have had little formal education may find it difficult to encourage their daughters to attend school regularly and to progress through to higher

education. An educated mother could encourage, motivate and influence her daughter to opt for education rather than early marriage. Hofstede describes motivation as:

A force operating inside an individual, inducing him or her to choose one action over another... as a collective programming of the mind plays an obvious role in motivation; it influences our behaviour and the explanations we give for our behaviour (*Hofstede, 2005, p.264*).

In similar manner, I argue in this research that the demands of cultural traditions have heavy implications for the woman and the girl and could be responsible for their low academic aspiration. As indicated by Hofstede, culture as a collective programming of the mind could influence the girls' and mothers' choices. In collectivist groupings motivating factors are either extrinsic or intrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is illustrated by the concept of learning for learning's sake: this could be driven by the self-determination in the task one is engaged in. External motivation on the other hand is illustrated by engaging in the task for the sake of rewards after the task (Pervin, 2003; Feist and Feist, 2006; and Feist and Feist 2009). Such reinforcement should not be overlooked, as it may contribute to the choices the women may make.

#### *IV.     The Initiation Rites For Girls*

An important stage in the life of a pubescent girl is when she 'becomes of age'<sup>21</sup>, because that marks the onset of an initiation rite. The lessons the girls learn during this period of time are ambiguous and Chondoka (2001) and Chondoka and Bota, (2007) state that a common element in the teachings stresses sexual rituals, caring for the husband and his family members, lessons in childbearing and childcare due to the fact it was a requirement to marry and to have children. The subject of initiation rites is discussed further in the section that follows.

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<sup>21</sup> When a girl 'becomes of age' it means that she has had her first menstruation and is in the process of becoming a woman. An initiation rite can be conducted right away or can be postponed especially if the traditional women would like to conduct an initiation for more girls. Some parents can even opt to conduct the initiation during holidays to allow the girl to go to school. However, this is not happening in to a majority of girls in the locality.

In Zambia, puberty marks an important stage in the life of both girls and boys. It is a key moment in the life of a young girl because it marks the onset of an initiation rite. The initiation rite has a great traditional educational purpose in that it is a period of awakening for the young girl to many things that she may not understand. The initiation rite is an ideology-based set of practices whose aim is to reproduce young women who are well established in the customs of their forefathers and who would later on pass these customs down to their children (Young, 1931; Rasing, 1995; and Gwaba et al., 2005). Taylor (2006) has argued in favour of the initiations claiming that the initiation ceremonies give Zambia its identity and uniqueness.

As earlier noted, the cultural forms within which these initiation rites are cast may differ according to each ethnic group; this also applies to how long the exclusion period takes. The significance of the initiation rites is therefore to introduce the young girl to adult life or womanhood, although the full status of real womanhood would only be acquired after one had given birth (Mbiti, 1990; Rasing, 1995). Further still, the initiation ceremonies are a control system of sanctions, prohibitions, anxieties, obligations and privileges. This role or function of the initiation rites emphasize and preserve the normal order of societal life (Rasing, 1995; Rude, 1999).

Dollard (2004), citing the work of Helen Lang (1848-1930), states that the initiation rites are mere obedience training and hence convince and manipulate the girls to the extent that the girls set aside their natural desires for freedom and become servile and submissive. The girls may further take on an inferior status proudly and enjoy the recognition that comes with it; accepting the role as their natural prerogative. Such an expectation may come in the way of any attempt by the girls to participate in male

privileges for the purpose of acquiring knowledge (Apter, 1985; Chitsike, 1995; and Barngetuny, 1999). Mill states that:

All the moralities tell, that it is their (women) duty [...] their nature, to live for others; to make complete abnegation of themselves, and to have no life but in their affection (*Mill, 1970, p.16*).

Therefore, social disapproval, limited opportunities and biased home education may contribute to keeping women at home in a servile and submissive role.

The initiation rites are a practice that according to Rasing (1995) has 3 phases; the separation, the liminal and the aggregation. This information was introduced in chapter 1 in section 1.4. The separation phase is a physical symbolic behaviour that signifies that the initiate is moving from one phase or structure into another and the initiate is separated from the community. The liminal phase is the most crucial and could be considered as the main phase. As cited above, it is during this period that the girl is refashioned into a new person. It is ambiguous because the initiate (hidden and invisible-due to the separation) has to pass through a network of classifications that defines her status and position (Richards, 1956; Turner, 1969; and Rasing, 1995). Tamale also claims that the initiations are fraught with inconsistency and inconclusiveness whose main theme includes subservience, “manipulation and the control by women” (Tamale 2005, p.6). The third and last phase referred to as the consummation, marks the end of the initiation process when the initiate comes out into the open confirming her new status. She would have been accepted as a woman and is therefore expected to behave in line with the customary norms and ethical standards (Richards, 1956; Turner, 1969; and Rasing 1995). This study will focus on the liminal phase because of its significance to this study; a mode through which some cultural traditions that obviate the education of girls are taught.

V. *The Liminal Phase*

During this stage the initiate is linked to death or being in the womb because of the exclusion and she remains hidden in the house the whole period. She is barely dressed up to her waist leaving the breast exposed, sat in the corner, legs stretched out in front of her, her hands resting on her legs and her head bowed down. She is not supposed to look up and see the people who come to see her. Some of the characteristics expected of the initiate are, submissiveness, to learn in silence, to be passive and humble and obey the instructors without question. Such characteristics are the features of an ideal traditionally taught woman (Mbikusita-Lewanika, 1979; Rasing, 1995; Kashiwa, 2004; Tamale, 2005; and Chondoka and Bota, 2007). Rasing states that:

The girl in liminality must be a *tabula rasa*, a blank slate on which is inscribed the knowledge and wisdom of the group or society in those respects that pertain to the new status (*Rasing, 1995, p.36*).

The whole process of inscribing knowledge and wisdom on the ‘*tabula rasa*,’ could be rigorous. Shabaya and Agwemang pointed out that harassment can take a verbal form such as “teasing” or ridicule and may take the form of behaviour aimed at “belittling or embarrassing the girl” (Shabaya and Agwemang, 2004, p.414). The humiliating ordeal accompanied with frequent scolding and or beatings could have a mental or emotional and physical effect on the initiate.

As a blank slate the girl is expected to come out as a new person with wisdom that the traditional pundits would have inscribed on it under rigorous and manipulative instructions. The wisdom and knowledge taught is not a mere collection of words as indicated above, it has an ontological value because of the new status that the initiate gains; a woman. Interestingly, the initiation rites has hidden and concealed secrets that are well guarded by the women and hence ensure the reproduction of their own



suppression and reinforcement of male superiority (Mbikusita-Lewanika 1979; Draisma and Kruizinga, 2004; and Tamale, 2005). This mysterious knowledge is secret and exclusive to the initiate and she is not to share it with anyone let alone the uninitiated. Divulging of such information would be met with severe punishment.

Authors such as Rasing (1995) agree with Mbikusita-Lewanika's claims, indicating that the ordeals and humiliations have a physical and emotional nature, but on the contrary she justifies the process as significant to the obliteration of the previous position of the girl. As a result, the whole ceremony could be accompanied by fear, hope, and the inevitable disillusionment and uncertainty. It can be a system to keep the women under control. If such a humiliating ordeal is meant to be a destruction of the previous status, it is worth assessing the psychological and physiological effect the initiate emerges with. Cutrufelli, agreeing with this thought, describes the initiation rites as a process of:

Instilling an attitude of submission to man into women's hearts by making them accustomed to the notion that they were born to take second place in society. During the ceremony, the girls are told that from now onwards their task is to procreate and attend to their husbands and their homes, and any other task is forbidden to them. These initiatory rites, surrounded as they are by an aura of mystery and religious solemnity, have such a devastating psychological impact on the girls that they are mesmerized into a blind acceptance of the indoctrination through a traumatic experience bound to affect them for the rest of their lives (*Cutrufelli, 1983, p.155*).

Cutrufelli's description of the initiation rite is a true picture of what goes on in initiation rites in the Tumbuka tribe. The whole process may have a psychological impact on the girl. As claimed by Cutrufelli, the women blindly accept the lessons taught and hence the dominance of men is accepted as the right thing, despite its oppressive nature. The Marxist-socialist feminist theory draws attention to the fact that such control reinforces male dominance. Although some girls may emerge unaltered, there are those who may be affected a great deal and hence the need to

assess the impact such teachings may have on the girls in relation to the attainment of academic education.

Tamale's (2005) analysis of the Ssenga institution of the Bunganda of Uganda is equivalent to the initiation ceremony of the Tumbuka and the two tribes also share patrilineal grouping status. Like the Tumbuka, the position of the man's sister is of great importance because she has a role to prepare her nieces into submissive wives. She commands much respect even among the nephews and others in the family: she can even cause the dismissal of the brother's wife and the men have more trust and respect in their sisters than their wives (Chondoka, 2001; Tamale, 2005).

During initiation, the initial step is to prepare the girl in matters of sex life, marriage, and procreation and family responsibilities (Mbiti 1990). Mbiti insists that if one died without "getting married and without children" it would mean to be completely cut off from human society (Mbiti, 1990, p.104). Second, the ceremony aims to reinforce male supremacy that should be recognised by the female. This conveys the feminist argument of male supremacy being perpetuated in families. Marxist-socialist feminists further insist on the abolition of the hegemonic position of men, because it reinforces the unequal power relations, especially the one of traditional suppression and the repression of women by men (Chondoka, 2001). Tamale (2005, p.2) has argued that the initiations reinforce "patriarchal power" (Tamale, 2005, p.2). This is done by women on behalf of men for the benefit of men. Thirdly it aims to produce a traditionally competent woman who would exhibit 'appropriate' behaviour in society with such characteristics as being hardworking, obedient, courteous, humble and soft-spoken (Mbikusita-Lewanika 1979; Rasing 1995 and Rasing 2001). During initiation,

sex instructions are given in full detail including instructions on erotic skills, and how to take care of a husband and children.

Rasing's analysis of her study indicates that male dominance imagined by western feminists stems from their preconceived ideas that non-western women are more oppressed than western women (Rasing 1995). Rasing concludes from her observation of the initiation rites, that Zambian women are more powerful than men. On the contrary Rude (1999) concluded in her research that patriarchy existed in the Zambian societies and was perpetuated by the societal norms that subjugate a woman to a subservient role and accept man's authority without question. Additionally, she concluded that male dominance in Zambia is prevalent and a cause of violence in many marriages.

Arguably male supremacy tends to employ a particular approach of exerting domination over women such as violence (Krais, 2006). Such an argument could easily be classified as a sweeping generalisation and may not be true of all men. But, in the context of the tribe under study; this could be true as alluded to by Rude (1999), therefore, while women may have some form of authority of their own, that would not be expected to be exerted on the man. For example, the traditional pundits<sup>22</sup> command a lot of respect and authority in their capacity that men may recognize and be grateful for, but that authority would not be appreciated if exercised in their own home and exerted on the men. In actual fact, these traditional pundits are expected to be examples of a traditionally taught woman in all spheres of life; subservient, and respectful. Men tend to appeal to tradition in order to ensure their

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<sup>22</sup> These are traditional instructors who are chosen for their expertise in traditional issues.

control of women through the initiations because the girls' initiations are determined by the needs of men and their wishes only (Grinker, 1997; Rasing, 2001). The feminist would argue to the effect that the suppression of women in society is due to the unjust discrimination which could be perpetuated through the initiation rites.

It is without doubt that the cultural framework in which the girls receive these teachings may have a negative impact on their ability to make use of any knowledge they could receive in formal education. Arguing on the same lines FAWE states that "negative traditional views and practical skills" that emphasise the importance of marriage, subordinate roles and bearing children could be responsible for keeping girls out of school (FAWE, 2006, p.13).

The initiation rites are not accompanied by exposure to "correct information" relating to formal education (FAWE, 2006, p.13). Commenting on the nature of information given to the initiate, Mbikusita-Lewanika points out that much of the advice given to the girl is on how to preserve her husband's affections without which the husband has the right to discipline her or send her back to her relatives for additional lessons (Mbikusita-Lewanika, 1979, p.63). The process aims at refashioning the initiate for her next phase of life as an adult. Marysia states that one of the aims of liberal feminism has been to reveal "old-fashioned ideas about what women are and should do..." (Marysia, 2000, p.6). However this is part of the information that the initiate receives during initiation. Rasing states that "The wisdom imparted in liminality is not just an aggregation of words but has an ontological value; it refashions the being of the initiate" (Rasing, 1995, p.36).

Consequently men are under pressure from their relatives to marry a girl who has been initiated rather than uninitiated one, with the rationale that as a refashioned being, she would take care of him holistically and unquestioningly because she would accept, tolerate and appreciate his domineering tendencies (Tamale, 2005). While all this may be appreciated within the culture as normal and acceptable, it is the emphasis given to issues surrounding the man that is a source of worry. This is because such emphasis tends to aid maintenance of patriarchy and the subsequent discriminatory tendencies that may later impinge on the girls' aspiration for academic education.

#### **4. 4. The Tumbuka Initiation Rite (The *Uzamba* Ceremony)**

For the Tumbukas like any other tribe in Zambia, the onset of a menarche is a significant symbol in the life of a young girl and that of the family. The first drops of the flow are considered as a 'show' that the girls are firmly instructed to look out for. The other signs of puberty such as pimples, development of pubic hair, enlargement of breasts, and change in complexion will enable the grandmother or the aunties to know the right time to alert the girl of this one important sign. The girl is further instructed to notify either of the two or any elderly women recognised as responsible by the aunt; the fathers' sister or the grandmother (Tamale, 2005; Chondoka and Bota, 2007).

When the 'show' occurs, the girl would notify any identified elderly woman who after confirming the occurrence would confine the girl to the *uzamba* house (house of confinement). It then became the duty of the grandmother or aunt to find a reliable traditional teacher called *mpungu* (a mentrix). The *mpungu* is in charge of the girl and will give special instructions expected of the initiate throughout the initiation rite

explaining the meaning of the esoteric language that would be used by the *bazamba*<sup>23</sup> (Chondoka and Bota, 2007).

The *bazamba* would assist the *mpungu* in her task. These women are cautiously selected; they should be women whose way of life effectively lives up to and broadcasts the rules of womanhood as demanded by the traditions. None of these women are supposed to be close relatives with the initiate, because of the nature of the lessons, which could be explicit: they may take a distant and unsociable attitude to help emphasize the importance of the whole practice. The *bazamba* are responsible for teaching the young girl, they have considerable knowledge of the customs and beliefs relating to the initiation ceremony. They have a responsibility of passing on to the girls their internalised traditions and characteristics of female modesty and male supremacy and are considered to be custodians of these traditions. Further still, the *bazamba* ensure that the correct and morally right pattern and procedure of the ritual is followed throughout the initiation ceremony correcting and checking each other during the process of teaching (Rasing, 1995; Rasing, 2001; Kashiwa, 2004; Taylor, 2006; and Chondoka and Bota, 2007). Rasing states that “African women have at times appeared as the custodians of ‘traditions’ and thus agents of their own subordination” (Rasing, 2001, p.13).

The mother in particular is not allowed during the teaching process because the nature of the information; explicit and sexual in nature. However, some family members, especially the aunt, are present to check on the quality of the lessons. The aunt, who is the father’s sister, is an important individual in the life of the girl especially during

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<sup>23</sup> The *bazamba* are initiators or cultural experts, (pundits) who work alongside the *mpungu*.

this period of time: she has more authority over the girl than the mother (Young, 1931; Tamale, 2005; and Chondoka and Bota, 2007).

An initiation rite could be organised and performed individually for each girl or for a group. Exclusion is a common feature during the period of *uzamba* ceremony and could last several weeks or a number of days, during which period the initiate receives many teachings and instructions. Previously, as observed by Tew, the girl would be “excluded for a month” (Tew, 1950, p.59). For the Tumbukas, excluding the initiate is intended to separate them from the social environment due to the general beliefs and fears with which the menstruation flow is associated; that is life, death, and fertility. This view is shared by the Bembas of the Northern Province of Zambia (Richards, 1956; Turner, 1969; Rasing 1995; and Kashiwa, 2004). The *Mwali wa Lisumba*<sup>24</sup> is decorated with coloured clay all over her body with coloured beads. A beautiful circle of red, black and white colours of soils called *chikuse* is made in the *uzamba* house, which aids the training process. Note that these colours can be linked back to the ancient colours earlier mentioned in the chapter in the section on ‘The origins of Traditions’. The *mwali* is made to jump across the *chikuse* during training and on the last day she is made to demolish it while dancing on it in a sitting position holding her legs. The song that goes with it is called *chisindilizi*, which is a form of warning to the *mwali* not to ignore the teachings she had received during the period of the *uzamba* ceremony (Chondoka, 2001; Chondoka and Bota, 2007).

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<sup>24</sup> The phrase describes the girl who has become of age that she is as innocent as an egg. *Mwali* will also be used to identify the initiate.

The training during the *uzamba* ceremony includes lessons on hygiene during the subsequent menstrual flows and the associated taboos. For example, not to add salt to food during menstruation as it is believed to adversely affect the men in a mysterious way.<sup>25</sup> See *mdulo* below. Other lessons may include respect for elders and men, how to be hospitable to strangers and the *uzamba* dance<sup>26</sup>. Teachings involve much singing, dancing and beating of drums and the use of metaphors and emblematic symbols; during the whole period of initiation, initiated women and girls visit the *uzamba* house to take part in the teachings. The ‘uninitiated’<sup>27</sup> are not allowed into the *uzamba* house: if they are allowed, they would have to pay a huge amount of money. The girl is expected to take part in the activities especially the *uzamba* dance which is intended to help her acquire erotic skills. The *mpungu* explains and interprets the metaphors, the emblematic symbols and the esoteric language used by the initiators to the *mwali* (Young, 1931; Chondoka, 2001; and Chondoka and Bota, 2007).

The last day of the initiation is the most demanding; the *bazamba* and all those who would have come to teach spend the whole night teaching the *mwali*. The women would be drinking the local brew and by midnight, they would have become drunk, thus making the language and dancing more explicit. In some cases the women may become abusive towards the initiate (Mbikusita-Lewanika, 1979; Chondoka and Bota, 2007).

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<sup>25</sup> It is generally believed among the Tumbuka and other tribes in Zambia which do not allow women to add salt to the food during menstruation that a man would suffer from a mysterious disease if he ate food where salt was added by women who are menstruating.

<sup>26</sup> The *uzamba* dance is an exotic dance of the waist, which includes explicit directions that are related to sex in marriage life.

<sup>27</sup> The initiated women are under strict instruction not to share the knowledge learnt during initiation with the uninitiated women. Doing so attracts reprimand and loss of integrity. The uninitiated are not allowed in the *uzamba* house for fear of them acquiring this ‘expensive’ traditional knowledge. If the uninitiated are allowed in the *uzamba* house, they have to pay the *bazamba* for acquiring the knowledge. This can be in form of cash, wrappers or a chicken. While this can be allowed, it is at the discretion of the *bazamba*, otherwise it is not encouraged. This is intended to ensure that all the girls/women undergo the initiation rite.



By morning, while it is still dark and the girl is tired due to the activities of the previous night, she is taken out in the cold, to go round the village; another symbol signifying the coming to an end of the *uzamba* teachings. The *mwali* is shaved (pubic hair and the head), the entire body is washed, oiled and dressed for the last part of the ceremony, where she is to be brought out in the public. After the *buzamba* ceremony the girl is not expected to talk to anyone until after whoever would like to talk to her presented her with a gift. This move was intended to announce or show to the rest of the community and those who would not be aware of the event that the girl had ‘become of age’ (Chondoka and Bota, 2007).

Throughout the exclusion, the initiate eats cold food, without any seasoning but with medication<sup>28</sup> because eating food with salt is considered as a taboo which it believed could cause an illness called *mdulo*; a strange illness. The girl would only eat hot food after the initiation ceremony (Young, 1931; Mbiti, 1979; Chondoka, 2001; Tamale, 2005; and Chondoka and Bota, 2007). For the Tumbuka men, menstruation is a dreaded occurrence because of the belief that they can be defiled; therefore, the man will take extraordinary precautions to guard himself from any slightest contact with the woman that has a flow. If contact is made, it is met by the fiercest punishment such as a mysterious disease; *mdulo*. With such a state of affairs the girl is sternly cautioned and is taught how to take preventive measures during any period of menstruation (Young, 1931; Chondoka and Bota, 2007).

The process of traditionally educating a young girl described above could be similar in most of the ethnic groupings that practice initiation rites; patrilineal or matrilineal.

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<sup>28</sup> The medication added is a herbal concoction that is meant to protect the initiate from the strange illness. The medication may differ from tribe to tribe

For example the Bemba tribe of Northern Province are matrilineal unlike the Tumbuka, who are patrilineal and yet many of aspects about the initiation are similar.

Rasing insists that the people of Eastern Province, the Tumbuka inclusive, are more “elaborate with the initiate being taught about sexuality and married life” while the Bemba “postpone such instructions until the wedding day” (Rasing, 1995, p.131). However, the initiations are imbued with issues of marriage. For example the wriggling of the waist is a skill the girl is supposed to learn for sexual purposes. The superior position of the man is another issue that is given much attention. Kashiwa further indicates that “traditional teachings put much emphasis on how someone was going to behave once in marriage” (Kashiwa, 2004, p.55).

Rasing herself (1995) also points out that the overt emphasis of the initiation is on marriage, the woman’s responsibilities, subservience to her husband and to women and all others in authority. She also explains that during the initiation, as women explain the symbols, issues such as suffering, violence and obedience, which are part of male discourse, are used. She however underplays this by arguing that it is not significant enough to affect the initiate; a case this present research insists could have a significant effect on the initiate and her aspiration for academic education. Such a mindset could be retrogressive and cause for concern (Rasing, 1995).

In light of the current state of the education of girls in the country, factors that militate against their school education should be dealt with seriously no matter how insignificant. The report on the *State of the World’s Children 2004* claimed that “‘traditional culture’ is often used as an excuse to explain why expected results in girls’ education have not been achieved” (UNICEF, 2004, p.26). Such a claim cannot

go without comment. Deeply embedded cultural beliefs cannot be easily put aside. Chitsike rightly put it by stating that removing the deeply rooted teachings would require “a multifaceted, explosive force that can shake individuals to change their attitude” (Chitsike, 1995, p.22). The cultural context in which the girls receive their formal education has an impact on their ability to make use of the knowledge acquired. The former executive director of UNICEF, Carol Bellamy, argues that a better future is achievable for all if every girl is given the right as well as the means to get school education in order to realise her aspiration (UNICEF 2001; UNICEF 2006). Further still, Jump claimed that a properly educated woman was capable of contributing in “fundamental ways to her children’s physical and mental well being from the very onset of their life” (Jump, 1994, p.6).

NGOCC (2004) cited earlier in the chapter pointed out how that the Zambian girl’s image is that of a passive and submissive character who prefers to remain in the background. Such claims show how the female child could internalize this image of herself, which could further contribute to her determination of choices and prospect for the future hence costing her education and future prospects of development. The young people in the research on *Children and Young People Voice their experiences on Gender, Sexuality HIV/AIDS and Life Skills*, confirmed that the girls assume a “passive characteristic especially after the initiation rite” (Youth Researchers, 2006, p.19). In the same research the girls stated that such a position, even at the age of 14 to 18 years, constructed themselves as having no decision-making skills and displayed total dependence on the men. The boys on the other hand viewed girls as a “vulnerable group of people in the society” (Youth Researchers, 2006, p.19).

The education of women is one important tool that could liberate the women and instil in them a sense of agency to better their state of affairs. This could enable them to “develop a noble, mentally and morally independent personality,” as argued by Dollard (2004, p.454). Educating women may further instil in them an awareness of their oppression, suppression and the many other restrictions that some of the traditions have and hence empower them with authority to say ‘No’ when they have to. Chitsike (1995) suggests that it would take women themselves to challenge these injustices. Much more, Carson cites Eleanor Roosevelt who claims that no one can make “women feel inferior without their permission” (Carson, 1992, p.178).

#### **4. 5. Conclusion**

The discussions of this chapter demonstrate how that in the traditional context, marriage is considered as an important phase in the life of a girl. This calls for comprehensive preparation of a female child at an early stage. The construction of gender and the existence of patriarchy in society are important aspects observed in this chapter that show the role the feminist theories have in guiding this study. In comparison the Bemba tribe may be different from the Tumbuka tribe in terms of lineage, however there are a number of similarities in the initiation ceremonies and what is taught: emphasis on marital lessons may be the only difference.

Arguably, socialisation is a rigorous process through which the child, especially the girl, is trained in the traditions and customs of the society from a young age. The initiation ceremony, another event intended to cement the many lessons the young girl would have learnt until her pubescent stage is an important event. The young girl passing through the rite emerges as a woman. The skills the girls acquire through life and experience at home seem to be easily and deeply embedded, this enables the girl

to gain a sense of responsibility, maturity and a far better orientation of womanhood and motherhood. The experiences are real and under real conditions: the girl is heavily involved in the real experience and attains the expected character.

The women play an active role in the socialization of girls into the gender and sex roles. The teachings are conducted, directed and monitored by the women and they are the ones exerting influence on the girls to act in accordance with the traditional teachings. Traditionally speaking, men expect the women to ensure that the girls are groomed into traditionally competent women ready to accept the authority and rule of the man. Therefore, women contribute directly to the continuance of and upholding of the authoritative status of men over them. Johnson-Odim has argued that “rather than seeing men as the universal oppressor, women will also be seen as partners in oppression and as having the potential of becoming primary oppressors themselves” (Johnson-Odim, 1991, p.321). Although Johnson-Odim may have used such an argument in a different context, it could be applicable to the argument of this research. Women use the traditions to sustain patriarchy. Radical feminists insist that the root of the problem is patriarchy, which should be dismantled altogether in order to solve the problem. However as noted in this paragraph the women are directly involved in maintaining patriarchy.

On the other hand, school education offers little of real life experiences that may be relevant to cultural or socio-economic environments, hence making it impossible to gain employment or self employment. Learning is limited to rote memorisation of theory specific to passing examinations, rather than widening their investigative skills. This situation is not encouraging enough for the girls who may easily relapse into illiteracy.

While the traditional knowledge is held in high esteem by the members of a given society, because of its acclaimed benefits to the girls; assurance of marriage, full acceptance in society and respect, the world is changing and all the more reason why modern school should be encouraged. In as much as the cultural traditions may have value worth of keeping, it is important to assess the repercussions they may have on the girls' academic and developmental aspirations. The World Bank pointed out that "meeting the education goal (MDG 2) requires addressing the conditions specific to girls.....that prevent them from attending or completing primary school" (WB 2005, p.2). Such a concern is at the heart of this study. Sticking too hard to those cultural traditions in this time and age may not help much. Therefore, instead of ensuring that the girls are traditionally well taught, why not prepare them for formal education? Why not imprint on their tender minds (the tabular rasa) the importance of academic education and its benefits rather than emphasising the girl's subordinate and inferior status?

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **5. 0. Introduction**

The previous chapter discussed at length the different literature that describes and explains the different cultural traditions that concern women and the implications that such traditions could have on their educational aspirations and how they impact on educational disparities. In this chapter I will discuss, argue and justify the methodological case for the selection and use of specific procedures in carrying out the research.

Research is an activity of finding information through chosen procedure/procedures that describe, explain and report the findings with a purpose of adding knowledge to the already existing body of knowledge. The definition of research may vary from scholar to scholar however in this study the definition of McMillan and Schumacher has been adopted which simply and generally defines research as “a systematic process of collecting and logically analysing data for some purpose” (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006, p.9). The research methodology that this study used is a phenomenological inquiry called ethnography, an approach that is naturalistic, descriptive, and qualitative in nature. Naturalistic because, I had to live in the setting among the participants in order to understand the phenomena in context-specific to the setting where data was collected for a period of time to enable me gain a greater understanding and insight into actions, attitude, behaviours, values and culture of the participants. The findings produced are not arrived at “by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantifications” as explained by Strauss and Corbin

(1990, p.9) but will produce qualitative findings that seek to understand the perceptions of the individuals that will include quotations of the informants in order to illustrate and substantiate the findings and such data is descriptive.

Data produced through unstructured questioning techniques has been interpreted by the use of thematic analysis. The procedures to be used during the investigation include interviews (focus group and in-depth interviews), documentary evidence from school reports, and annual reports from NGO such as FAWEZA and field notes produced through participant observation. Other research issues will be discussed in this chapter such as ethical concerns which have been carefully considered to prevent encroachment on privacy and confidentiality. The ethical issues included such as informed consent are intended to protect both the researcher and the researched.

This chapter will be structured in the following manner: the initial discussion will elucidate my philosophical position in the research and the implications that it could have on the research procedures and the findings. This will include issues such as my identity, values and beliefs in relation to the research in order to minimize or eliminate any preconceptions and bias that I could have on the investigation as a whole. This will be followed by the discussion of the paradigm that explains the framework within which the research took place. Following this discussion will be a discussion on the procedures used in the collection and analysis of the data. Other issues of discussion will include sampling strategies, ethics, and reliability and validity. A conclusion will then be given.



### 5. 1. Working With The Research Assistant

Carrying out a research of this nature would not have been possible without the support of a research assistant. Being based in the United Kingdom (UK), I was not able to make practical preparations in Zambia, where the collection of data was carried out. Therefore, my research assistant ensured on my behalf that arrangements such as:

- Connecting with the village of choice and informing them about our intentions to stay in the village was done.
- Accommodation for the period of stay in the village was arranged.
- The host family was informed of the purpose of the visit and period of stay
- All the necessary requirements I could not get or travel with from the UK were bought such as wrappers<sup>29</sup> (*chitenge*), manila papers, kerosene lamps and dry food (fish, beans, sugar, and salt). The wrappers were to be given out as gifts to participants. The manila papers were used during coding of data and food was given to our host as a gift to supplement her provisions during our stay.

My research assistant was chosen for her expertise in fieldwork. She is an HIV/AIDs researcher working with an NGO in Zambia. She has worked as research assistant before and had extensive skills in interviewing women. She also had connections with the locality I was going to and knew the language very well, which was an added advantage. However, she had no knowledge of the topic of the study. I had to spend a month with her before leaving for the research field to explain her role as a research assistant, research objectives and the aim of the research. At the end of our month together we conducted the pilot stage which helped both of us to practice working together. I was also able to check how well she had understood the research objectives, and the questioning techniques. Living together also helped us to bond very well.

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<sup>29</sup> A wrapper is usually a 2 meters piece of fabric worn by women as a form of modest dressing. It is a formal requirement for all women. It is a piece of fabric that can be likened to a sarong. It is traditionally known as *chitenge*.

My research assistant was uninitiated which was a disadvantage because the women always raised queries during interviews why she had not been. I did not envisage the extent to which the uninitiated status of my research assistant would affect the data collection process until where in the field. On account of this status, we failed to collect some information we needed at times because some women were not comfortable to reveal some information in her presence. Hence to collect this important information, I conducted the in-depth interviews and any follow ups that needed such sensitive information were done by me. I had to do a lot of explanation to justify the reasons for her not being initiated. We finally agreed that during focus group interviews she would have to give a preamble of her background explaining the reasons for her status. This was appreciated although not by all the women and her status as a widow and mother did not help because she had not been initiated. To enable her attend the initiation rite we had to pay some money. This procedure continued throughout the ceremony especially when she was asked to participate and could not. However, I benefited much from her because she helped me juggle between my two roles of researcher and participant observer, which was not easy. She constantly reminded me of my role as a researcher each time my emotions seemed to take over, she corrected my use of the language on account of her fluency with it and further edited the transcripts. Together we compared notes and contrasted them. She was also a participant observer throughout the period of data collection and her field notes were valuable (Jorgensen, 1989; Seale, 1999; and Denscombe, 2003).

## **5. 2. Researcher Positionality as a Field Worker**

Jorgensen (1989), Seale (1999), Denscombe (2003), Sikes (2004) and Denscombe (2007), have advised on the importance of the researcher declaring her/his standpoint and philosophical position within the research because of its potential influence on

the research procedures and the findings. In any research the researcher is the key instrument whose potential to affect the research could be high. Therefore the researcher should have skill and competence in the instruments to be used. Further still, the researcher should inject rigor in the whole research process to improve the credibility of the research (Wellington, 2000). Baszanger and Dodier argue that the person of the researcher is critical to the “quality of scientific knowledge and soundness of ethical decisions” (Baszanger and Dodier, 2004, p.117). Therefore, my ontological and epistemological beliefs were declared in an attempt to ‘distance’ myself from the studied normal everyday beliefs and suspend my judgements on social issues for the period of the research in order to improve the external validity of the research and as already been noted, to reduce biases (Denscombe, 2007). I did not distance myself completely to the extreme end of the continuum for the very reasons that Lofland et al (2006) warns against. He states that extreme distance may result in failure to collect rich data. The topic of investigation is culturally oriented and its centre of attention is women therefore, a big percentage of the population was of women with only a small percentage of men (18% of men and 82% women). My gender (female), and initiated status played an important role in accessing the nature of information. My age (early 40’s) marital status (married) and motherhood were also important in building trust and rapport among those studied.

My past experience and prior knowledge of the topic under investigation were relevant to the research as pointed out by Wellington (2000). I received traditional teachings at 11 years and marital instruction at 21 years old. At both ceremonies, Tumbuka women taught me. This is because I had lived the first 5 years of my life in Lundazi where my father had worked as a teacher. As a result, my parents made close relations with many people in the area whose connections still exist. This facilitated

me with 'connections' to enter the locality with no difficulties. Lofland et al (2006) encourage the use of 'connections' to facilitate easy entrance into a setting.

The traditional teachings I received and the impact they have had on my life and educational aspiration are part of the driving force and passion behind this study. As an initiated woman I have attended a number of other initiations and marital ceremonies over the years where again and again the lessons I received are repeated to the initiates with emphasis on the inferior position of the woman in marriage and male superiority. I understand that such prior knowledge and experience could contaminate the data collected however that raises the question of whether my philosophical bias underpins the 'theory laden' nature of how I make sense of what was observed, heard, and what I included in the transcription. However, the following checks were put in place to minimise as much as possible any influence my identity, values, beliefs, knowledge, motivation and prejudices could have on the whole research process (Symon and Casell, 1998; Wellington, 2000; and Denscombe, 2007).

*Figure 5 ~ A summary of minimising researcher influence*

#### **Minimising Researcher Influence**

- I had a research assistant who was also a participant observer. She was able to check and advise whenever my emotions or beliefs seemed to surface during the process of collecting data. She compared my transcriptions with the recorded information and we further compared and crosschecked our field notes (Jorgensen, 1989; Seale, 1999; and Denscombe, 2003).
- Self-check: as a researcher, I had to be reflective and reflexive, a process, which has been an on-going activity throughout the research process as recommended by Seale (1999) and Wellington (2000). Wellington calls this 'auto-critique', meaning self-analysis.
- Cross-checking information: Miles and Huberman (1994) recommended the use of a contact summary sheet with a purpose of reviewing field contacts. I adopted their example and this was filled in with the assistance of the research assistant each night. This enabled us to assess, compare, contrast and analyse information collected, what needed confirmation and consequent follow up.
- I had to exercise sufficient self-control over my normal attitude and I had to suspend my personal values and beliefs as earlier observed by Denscombe (2007).
- I have had to consider negative data and rival explanations as important data as well (Denscombe, 2007).

Injecting rigor into the research helped establish truth because that is the very reason for research - the "pursuit of truth" (Pring, 2000, p.145). Pring indicates that telling the "truth or behaving justly emphasises basic rules of conduct-values that could guide how one behaves in different circumstances" (Pring, 2000, p.144).

This research aims at collecting rich, holistic and real data from the individuals studied and therefore I have used qualitative procedures with a focus on individuals. Such a stand is concerned with understanding personal constructs hence perceive knowledge as created in the mind of the individual (Sikes, 2004). The next section discusses the paradigm that this research has chosen to use: - a social science field study interpretive, naturalistic, subjective and qualitative in nature – ethnography.

### **5.3. Ethnography**

This research aims at establishing whether cultural traditions could be militating against the education of women in Zambia. To investigate this problem an

ethnographical method has been employed as a philosophical paradigm because of its suitability and usefulness to the investigation as well as due to the fact that it is a cultural study with a holistic perspective that includes features such as all social, cultural and psychological aspects of the community. Pole and Morrison state that ethnography is:

An approach to social research based on the first-hand experiences of social action within a discrete location, in which the objective is to collect data which will convey the subjective reality of the lived experience of those who inhabit that location (*Pole and Morrison, 2003, p.16*).

While ethnography is being used as a methodological design, it cuts through other approaches such as anthropology and case study. Ethnography assumes an anthropological stance because of its focus on a particular society and its culture. Authors like Wellington (2000) consider it as a branch of anthropology, Denscombe, (2007) claims that it has its roots in anthropology while Patton (2002) refers to it as a primary method of anthropology. Denscombe further traces ethnography's origins in the works of early social anthropologists such as Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942) and Margaret Mead (1901-1978), who studied different cultures by integrating in the society for a long period of time. Their works are assumed as the starting point of ethnography hence the association with which this research shares by virtue of its use of ethnography (Malinowski, B., 1884-1942, 1978; Mead, M., 1901-1978, 1961). In like manner ethnography requires a complete or partial integration in a particular society for the purpose of collecting the needed information in situ. This is done through sharing their experiences, understanding the reasons for their action and viewing the world from the point of view of those under study (Mead, 1901-1978, 1961; Malinowski, 1884-1942, 1978; and Denscombe, 2007).

The association with the case study design is due to its concentration on a specific situation such as a study of one or more local communities (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). It is concerned with the interactions of events or actions shaped by the meanings of the participants in order to give a full picture of the interactions (Verma and Marlick, 1999; Pring 2000; and Bell, 2005). Cottrell states that case study enables the investigation of “small detail as they present ‘real life’ like a magnifying glass enabling one to see the depth of problems” (Cottrell, 2003, p.218). In this research this involved getting close to the people, observing the actual, ‘natural’ situations in which the people live, their interactions and how they interpret the meaning of life (Roberts, 2002). Robson also states that a case study involves the description and analysis of “patterns of and relations between main aspects of community life” (Robson, 2000, p.181). In this research I concentrated on a local community and analysed the events and actions shaped by the meanings of the participants in order to understand the effects that the cultural traditions could have on the education of the girls.

Bernard, commenting on the appropriateness of the use of phenomenology in studying physical phenomena, argues that “social reality can be understood through the meanings that people give to that reality” (Bernard, 2000, p.20). He further cites Husserl 1859 -1938 (1964), who states that scientific methods are inappropriate for the study of human thought and action. Using ethnography meant spending an extended amount of time with the people in their setting, interacting and participating in their way of life. Data were collected from ‘real life’ situations (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994; Have, 2000).

Observing activities in situ is an important aspect of ethnography because it enables one to collect first-hand data directly in the setting in a systematic, critical and controlled manner (Cohen et al., 2000; Lofland et al., 2006). This further enables one to understand the social reality of the group under study and, as claimed by Pring (2000), to appreciate the rules that build their relationships which enable them understand the behaviours, gesticulations and verbal expressions of others. Understanding their reality requires insight into their world, which is real and as objective as the physical world (Nason and Golding, 1998).

The viewpoint and the interactions observed emerging from among the members of the social groups are important as they enable a constant comparing, contrasting and confirming to establish credible information (Pring, 2000). Such an emergent characteristic enabled me to collect rich data. However, that raised a problem of too much data; there seemed to be data everywhere waiting to be collected. The identified potential problem of ethnographic studies is too much data that could be everywhere and attempting to collect it all could result in one gathering nothing at all (Charmaz and Mitchell, 2001).

To capture the naturally occurring meanings and activities of the people in their setting requires appropriate procedures that could enable the collection of the well sought for information in a systematic manner. The following discussion focuses on piloting of the procedures that were used in the research. This activity was carried out for the purpose of testing the questions for wording, validity and clarity.



#### **5. 4. The Pilot Stage**

The pilot stage has the advantage of getting the designed questions refined, modified and enhanced in preparation for the real research. The findings obtained from the data further helped to unearth important answers to the research (Robson, 2002).

Oppenheim arguing on the importance of piloting states that:

A poorly designed survey will fail to provide accurate answers to questions under investigation; it will leave too many loopholes in the conclusions; it will permit little generalisation; it will produce much irrelevant information, thereby wasting case material and resources (*Oppenheim 1992, p.8*).

The weaknesses of a poor design identified above could be avoided by a pilot, and hence this research undertook to pilot the questions of the interviews with five women. The sample used was purposely selected. One woman was selected for her knowledge of the Tumbuka traditions. When the purpose of the interview was related to her, she introduced four other women who together formed a group for interview. All the respondents were Tumbuka speaking and ranged from 18 to 45 years old who were young mothers who left school to get married for a number of reasons and lived in one of the densely populated shanty compounds in Lusaka. The interview was conducted in Tumbuka language, and the recorder was used to capture the responses; notes were also taken and consequently the responses were analysed. The process of coding was an exercise that provided practice in preparation for the real research. The whole pilot process assisted me in checking my interviewing skills and those of my research assistant and I was able to assess the progress I had made in re-learning the Tumbuka language. It was done in line with the recommendation of Oppenheim who indicates that piloting should include every “question, every sequence, every inventory and every scale in your study” (Oppenheim, 1992, p.65).

## 5. 5. Procedures

Collecting data from ‘real life’ situations that are undistorted by a researcher, calls for the use of appropriate procedures that should not be obtrusive nor should they create artificial situations. The procedures used to collect data in this research are participant observation, unstructured interviews which included focus group and in-depth interviews, narratives and documents. This section will discuss and justify the use of each of these procedures in this study. The terms ‘methods’ and ‘procedures’ will be used interchangeably to mean the same thing in this study.

### *1. Participant Observation*

Pring (2000) points out that the presence of the researcher has potential of negatively impacting upon the interactions of the participants and altering the circumstances to something else. Therefore it is the responsibility of the researcher to minimise such an outcome by ensuring proper integration into the setting and adhere to the settings norms to enable the collection of credible data through this method. Participant observation can be described as a conscious piece of work on the part of the researcher because the researcher is viewed as capable enough of controlling her/his emotional reaction to what is observed (Baszanger and Dodier, 2004). Baszanger and Dodier argue that:

Understanding the cultural whole is achieved through this reciprocating notion of the observer and the phenomena being observed or processed, by which a participant observer gradually makes organised sense out of what he sees, hears and becomes part of it (*Baszanger and Dodier, 2004, p.15*).

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) summarise what seems to be involved in participant observation, a recommendation I took on board as it encompassed several important aspects. They state that a participant observer should:

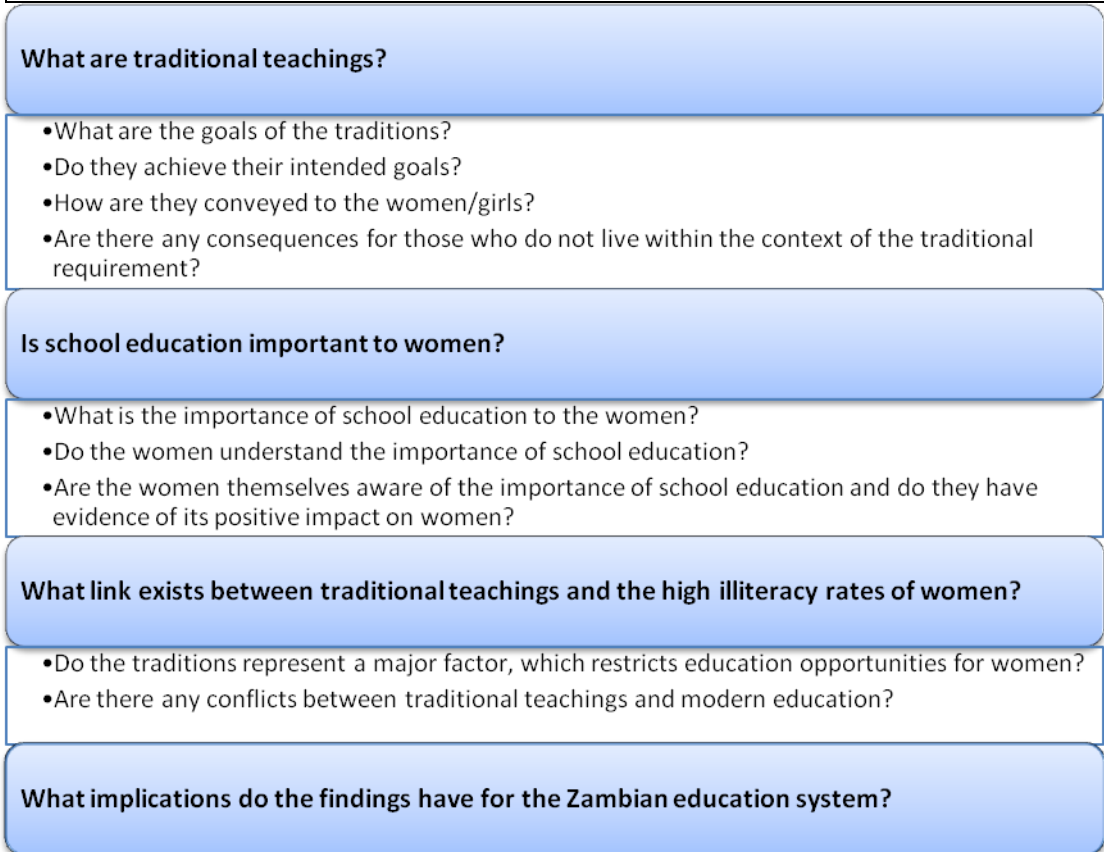
Look, listen, ask questions, take part, learn the language, learn and record any specialised kind of language or argot, make inferences from what people say, locate informants, develop relationships, become friend and experience different ways of life (*Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995, p.120*).

By the use of participant observation I was able to observe, see, feel, hear and experience life along with the participants. I had to learn the routines, the locale's proper and relaxed rules, and the boundaries to be observed. Further still, I had to re-learn the language, locate the relevant informants, develop relationships and build rapport. This required intensive fieldwork, as I had to immerse myself in the culture (Morse 1998; Lofland et al., 2006).

I entered the field without fixed categories except the research questions, which were used as a guide. (See figure 6 below). Such an action added flexibility to the process of collecting data allowing the observable details to naturally unfurl. This further enabled me to collect detailed data and minimized researcher manipulation and bias (Patton, 2002).

The role of participant observer is not easy because it is demanding and time consuming requiring promptitude and vigilance (Robson, 2002). However, despite all this, participant observation proved an interesting venture. It also has the advantage of yielding in-depth data, which are based on facts, expressive and precise which can only be captured if done skilfully (Patton, 2002). That is the reason for the choice of the method in the current research and also because of its appropriateness for the paradigm in use. Additionally, its flexibility allows the phenomena to unfold naturally.

*Figure 6 ~ Research Objectives*



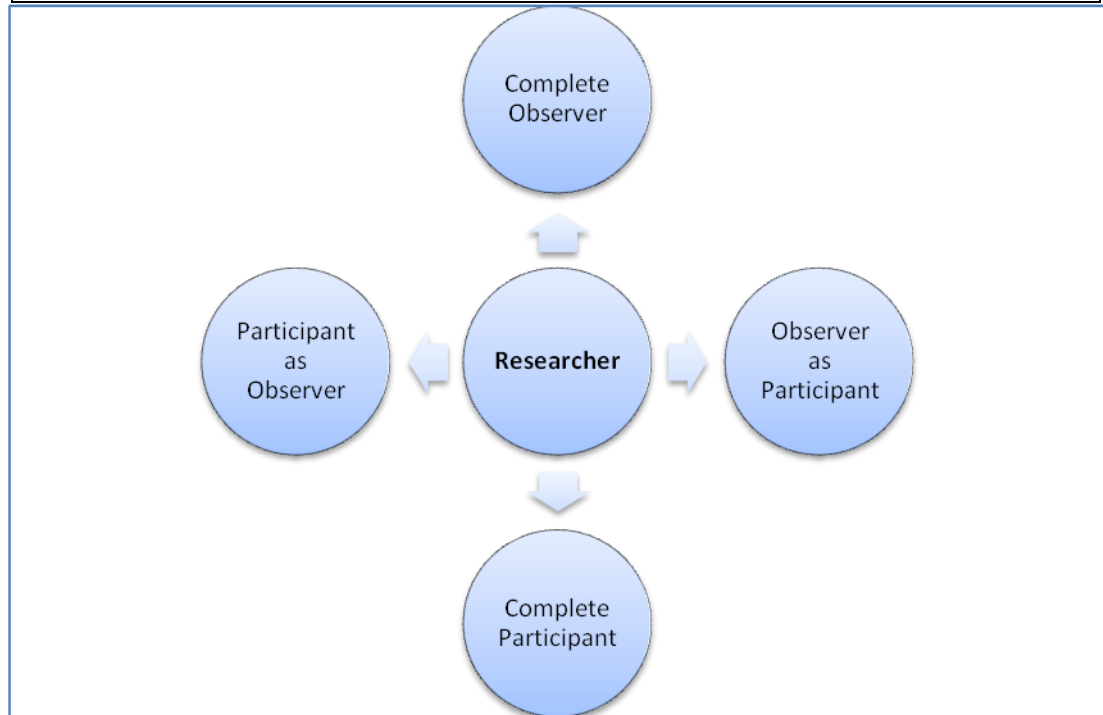
Questions of subjectivity are bound to be raised because of the philosophical methodology used. Subjectivity could mean partial, undependable and illogical, the sort of knowledge that belongs to an individual as a result of one's consciousness and thoughts. This may in turn produce biased facts that are based on personal views as opposed to specifics, instincts as opposed to logic, and inklings as opposed to substantiated data (Patton, 2002; Opie, 2004). However, as indicated by Baszanger and Dodier, the researcher as the key instrument in the research, very much conscious, is therefore capable of controlling her "emotional reactions to what is observed," for the purpose of collecting data that is not contaminated (Baszanger and Dodier, 2004, p.15). Integrity and honesty are important qualities in the part of the researcher who has responsibility for establishing and presenting truthful findings

(Opie, 2004; Baszanger and Dodier, 2004). Equally, Laine (2000) calls for a research that demonstrates accuracy and dependability.

Additionally, subjectivity should not be assumed to be a weakness as it allows people's experiences and deeper meanings to life to be captured. Arguably subjectivity enables the researcher to get close to the people studied and to collect objective data; first hand data from actual participants (Jorgensen, 1989). As suggested by Cohen and Manion, "life can only be known by a living being, by 'inner' experience [...] it cannot be weighed and measured on a physical scale" (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p.22). The setting under study whose occupants are real people cannot be referred to as an object therefore, agreeing with Cohen and Manion "subjectivity and concreteness" of truth are together the light that cannot be underestimated (Cohen and Manion, 1994, p.24). Numbers, as accurate as they may present the findings may mask biases (Patton, 2002). Nonetheless, to minimise contaminating the data with subjectivity I employed reflexivity and reflection on a continuous basis, comparing and contrasting the data and examining my position in light of what was collected. Therefore, being subjective cannot be eliminated because of the nature of the paradigm being used in this research.

Jorgensen (1989), Nason and Golding (1998) and Pole and Morrison (2003), have cited Gold's (1958) typology of the different levels of participation that one can assume in a research process. (See figure 7) It is the responsibility of the researcher to choose the best level of participation bearing in mind the advantages and disadvantages of each.

Figure 7 ~ 4 different levels of participation



In this research I opted for the participant as observer role which involves an overt relationship between the observer and the observed. That calls for both sides to be aware of the presence and purpose of the observer. Meanwhile, it has been argued that the four levels are crosscutting (Nason and Golding, 1998). This was evident in this research: there were instances when I assumed the complete observer role, when I was the observer and participant and to a larger degree a participant as observer. Jorgensen (1989) discourages complete participation because the level of observation hence has a threat to objectivity. Therefore, I avoided it completely. Participant observation on the other hand could be problematic. It requires to be applied in a balanced manner therefore, a researcher should skilfully manage between participating and observing (full observer and full participant) a role I admit was at times difficult to balance (Schensul et al., 1999). Albas and Albas (1998) argue that participating while observing renders the researcher unobtrusive and such a low profile enables the collection of uncontaminated data. As indicated earlier, as a

participant observer, I had to sharpen my observation skills: I had to probe and prompt as one would in any normal conversation to obtain answers; I had to be alert to avoid missing any important information; and I had to be vigilant. Much more, I constantly asked myself, ‘why am I here?’ Such a question is about reflexivity, which as earlier indicated was constantly applied so that I did not forget the purpose of my being in the community.

Wellington identifies two issues that could affect participant observation and these are right of “entry and observer effect” (Wellington 2000, p.44). The former, right of entry, was not a problem because of the connections I had. However, I still had to consider the politics of the setting. I made my consultations with the headmen on the protocols to be observed when meeting with the chief without which entrance might not have been allowed (Jorgensen, 1989). Schensul et al (1999) insist on obtaining formal permission from the gatekeepers because the exercise facilitates the researchers’ direct involvement in the setting. I had an opportunity to interview the chief who insisted and directed the headmen from the community I was living in to be interviewed as well because he considered the topic of investigation crucial. The headmen were further instructed to inform their subjects about my presence in the village and the purpose of the stay.

The second concern raised by Wellington (2000), observer effect, is crucial to this study because of the nature of the research, and because the researcher is a key instrument. Effort to minimize this effect was put in place:

- I had to learn the routines, the proper and relaxed rules of the setting, and the boundaries to be observed, which included the dress code and speaking the participant’s language, in line with the suggestion of Morse (1998) and from my

experience in the field: researcher attitude towards household and field tasks. In order to settle well in the locality, I allowed myself two weeks before getting completely involved (Schensul et al., 1999).

- My participative role was appreciated by the women who claimed it was not normal for educated women who come from town to get involved in the tasks of the village. They would rather sit and be served. This further enabled me to build relationships and trust among the women. As proposed by Opie (2004), relationships built were not a basis of manipulating the respondents but to make it easy to collect information based on trustworthy relationships and work relationships
- Again being reflective and reflexive was ensured constantly (Wellington, 2000; Denscombe, 2007).
- I had a positive attitude to any type of work, ate any food I was offered without raising negative questions and engaged in the village lifestyles.

My unconcealed stance was equally important although a continuous reminder of why I was in the village was obtrusive on some occasions because the women did not welcome it. Authors such as Jorgensen (1989), Bryman (2004), and Denscombe (2007) do not recommend the use of covert research because it violates the rights of the researched; particularly their right to know what is going on. However, Jorgensen argues that both overt and covert roles could be employed in a research. Pole and Morrison (2003) call it an ‘it all depends’ stance.

For example I went to the river to wash clothes with two other women from the same village. At the river, we found about 10 other women, 8 of whom did not belong to our village therefore, did not know the reasons of my stay in the village. The usual greeting of; ‘*monile, monile*’ went on (hallo, hallo). We started our task of washing amidst talking and laughing. Meanwhile, the following conversation started:



**1<sup>st</sup> woman:** *Have you heard that the daughter of Anya Mwale, this one mm Melisa? [She paused and the others responded]: She eloped<sup>30</sup> last night?*

**2<sup>nd</sup> woman:** *ah Melisa?*

**1<sup>st</sup> woman:** *Yes*

[We all stopped washing and were looking at her, surprised. I too knew Melisa from the school where I was volunteering.]

**3<sup>rd</sup> woman:** *Who is the man?*

**1<sup>st</sup> woman:** *The son of Lameck, he lives a village further off from the school.*

[Then I joined in the conversation]

Jorgensen calls such questions asked in the field during observation as “supplementary questions” that are another means of collecting data (Jorgensen, 1989, p.90). He argues that such questions could be used to confirm, check and classify information collected. (C= represents the researcher)

**C:** *But Melisa is at school, how can that be?*

**4<sup>th</sup> woman:** *Anya Phiri, Melisa became of age last year*

[Everyone agreed with her, and they were all laughing, continuing, she states],  
*‘I hear the man is good.’*

Two days later we were coming from collecting firewood with another lady from the village, two of her small daughters and my research assistant when we met a friend of hers from another village. After greeting her she commented, *‘You have visitors Anya Mpande?’* My friend responded, *‘Yes, they are staying in the village for a while to learn about women.’* Then the following conversation commenced:

**The woman:** *Ahm, ahm, this girl from Mwase<sup>31</sup> village, Melisa, have you heard that she was eloped?*

**My friend:** *Yes I have heard, she is lucky though because she became of age last year.*

**The woman:** *Yes but I hear she will be the second wife*

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<sup>30</sup> The word to ‘elope’ is used here to describe the act of a man taking the girl secretly, in the night, from her parent’s home for the purpose of marriage. He leaves an amount of money on the parent’s doorstep to inform them of the action. In the morning, when the parents see the money, they know what has taken place and gladly begin to prepare for a ceremony in order to ceremonies the marriage.

<sup>31</sup> The real name of the village has been withheld.

*My friend: I did not know that. Who is the first wife?*

*The woman: do I know?*

Then my research assistant (RA) joined in the conversation confirming that we had also heard about the occurrence at the river two days ago.

*RA: But couldn't the girl be allowed to finish school?*

[Both women started laughing].

From the first example given above, my role as a researcher was not known completely by some women at the river and I did not see it right to obstruct the conversation in order to introduce myself and the purpose of stay. In the second example my friend is able to show that she was aware of the purpose of my stay in the village, at least, and gave a brief explanation to her friend. The examples demonstrate two situations in which I was able neither declare my position as a researcher overtly to the women nor get their permission to ask them questions. The second example however shows that the woman I was staying and living with had knowledge of the purpose of my stay and was able to relay it to others. However, Jorgensen (1998) and Pole and Morrison (2003) still warn against assuming the complete covert role because it raises ethical issues. Nonetheless, despite the examples given above the overt role was used as much as possible.

Participant observation produces data in the form of field notes. Pole and Morrison (2003) maintained that field notes are the main fundamentals for participant observation. Recording of the notes, observed or heard, is an urgent matter because the memory can be 'frail' and 'selective.' This is true because there were times I thought I had lost valuable data that I thought I would remember but did not manage to. Therefore, I had to record data frequently whether negative or positive in order to

capture the range of facts (Adler and Adler, 1994; Albas and Albas, 1995; Denscombe, 1998; and Pole and Morrison, 2003).

In order not to be obtrusive, note taking was done out of the sight of the respondents. That meant taking regular visits to the toilet (even when not needed) where the recording of the notes in a small notebook was done. This notebook was kept in a small bag strapped to my waist and hidden by the *chitenge* (wrapper) worn around the waist. As a participant observer this was practical. I could not be seen walking around with a small book or bag everywhere I went and the bag would be in my way preventing me from participating effectively. This also went for the audio recorder, so it was therefore not possible for me to record conversation in the field. When attempted, the women were not amused as they thought it was affecting my participation. Besides, the recorded conversations were distorted by background noise (because of the nature of activities the women were engaged in, for example pounding maize grain).

Taking breaks from the fieldwork in order to record information and reflect on the occurrences observed is an important exercise that I considered (Schensul et al., 1999). However, this did not work well in my case, taking breaks took me away from the people I was trying to live alongside and they also considered it as a sign of laziness. I had to make use of the night as much as possible. Together with my assistant, we went through the field notes, recorded them properly and made comparisons with our field notes. Then I had to ask the questions ‘how did I fare?’ This was in terms of my emotions, attitude and behaviour. I constantly had to remember that by listening to women I had to do so “thoughtfully, analytically and critically as well as respectfully...” (Finch, 1996, p.4).

Interviewing fellow women was challenging in terms of experiences that were similar to what I had gone through. The whole process was two way involving the researcher and the participants. I was not a dispassionate “data gatherer” as observed by Oakley (1991, p.47). Oakley (2004) further claims that women tend to ask a lot of questions that may not completely be avoided. Answering some of the questions raised enabled me to collect more information. I followed the ethical obligations of respecting the participants regardless of who they were and their dignity was upheld. While eliciting was employed now and then in order to elude detailed information, following Schensul et al’s (1999) suggestion, that did not render the process as exploitative. During the initial observation process, I was able to build relationships and made contacts that enabled me to prepare for the next phase of collecting data; the use of interviews, which will be my next focus.

## *II. Interviews*

There are different types of interviews that can be used in a research process for the purpose of collecting data. Interviews have been used in conjunction with participant observation in this research. The triangulation of methods strengthens the reliability of the data collected. It also helps to eliminate biases and detect inaccuracies or any irregularities (Kvale, 1996; Anderson and Arsenault, 1998; and Cohen et al., 2000). Interviews require skill because they have potential of being intrusive, unpleasant, raise suspicion or may altogether fail to produce the expected rich and valuable data (Robson, 2002; Opie, 2004).

This research used in-depth interviews and focus group interviews. The key point in both methods is the type of question asked. Construction of questions is an important aspect because that would determine what type of data would be collected. A poorly

constructed question may not yield good information (Kvale, 1996; Munn and Drever, 1999). Munn and Drever further indicate that questions should be carefully worded to avoid any potentially provocative or offensive questions. The nature of study involved the collection of sensitive information hence to collect this data without provoking or causing offence meant avoiding leading questions. In an effort to collect detailed data, I also had to avoid long worded, double barred and double negative questions (Kvale, 1996; Cohen et al., 2000; and Robson, 2002).

*i. Focus Group and In-depth Interviews*

The term ‘group interview’ will be used interchangeably with ‘focus group interview’ in this research. Kitzinger defines focus groups as: “Group discussions organised to explore a specific set of issues such as people’s views and experiences of contraception” (Kitzinger, 2004, p.269).

The focus of the group is debating the set of questions provided by the interviewer. Jorgensen states that focus group interviews are “supplementary means of gathering data during participant observation” (Jorgensen, 1989, p.90). The interviews could be used to confirm what has been observed, check or clarify certain aspects of the information. The relations and rapport created during participant observation enabled me to select informants. The process of selecting informants will be discussed later in the chapter under sampling.

The participants were purposely selected for their knowledge of the information regarding the study. The community under study was divided into three small villages each with a headman. For recognition’s sake, I called them Village 1, 2, and 3. Open ended and semi-structured questions were used that enabled the informants to provide

their own meanings. The questions were flexibly applied through in-depth interviews. Jorgensen argues that in-depth interviews seek to “explore particular interest elaborately and comprehensively” (Jorgensen, 1989, p.91). With a sample that had been selected for their knowledge about the topic, the respondents were able to participate willingly, by talking intensively about their own ideas, insights, expectations and attitudes (Jorgensen, 1989; Opie, 2004). This was only possible through the use of the research questions.

While Baszanger and Dodier (2004) applaud group dynamics as an advantage for focus group interviews, that proved difficult because the groups included the traditional teachers who were opposed to revealing certain information about traditions and they were equally feared by some women. Some women were talkative and wanted to respond to all questions but some participated only when directly referred to, prompted and probed. Wellington (2000) and Opie (2004) warn against such an outcome, pointing out that some respondents may lack the confidence to express their feelings and views. I had to be skilful in prompting sensitively, rephrasing the questions where necessary, and repeating what had been said. This called for control because some respondents seemed to want to assume control of the whole interview (Oppenheim, 1992). Jorgensen encourages the technique of replicating “descriptions and experiences” because that helps to set right the wrong ideas and ensure the reliability of the facts given (Jorgensen, 1989, p.87).

Despite the cited weaknesses, the group interviews did have the advantage of the respondents probing at each other’s memories or thoughts about the topic. Some responses emerged from the data, which were not expected. The focus groups also allowed me to collect more data relatively quickly than from a large number of people

on one by one. The presence of my research assistant was an added advantage because we asked questions alternately. Although the interviews were recorded, we both took notes that we compared with the recorded information. This is recommended by Wellington as a means of collecting valuable data. This further helped to eliminate biases and strengthened the data (Wellington, 2000; Baszanger and Dodier, 2004). Much more, I had to “switch off” my personality and attitude by allowing the respondents to freely talk uninterrupted in an effort to eliminate biases and minimize leading the respondents as recommended by Oppenheim (1992).

After each focus group interview, I made one-to one follow-ups for an in-depth interview with some individuals depending upon their responses where I had to re-play the tape to help them remember what they had said. This enabled me to correct, reinforce, interpret and clarify information. Much more, narratives of experiences were more coherent in one-to-one interaction without interjections as in focus group interviews the respondents are able to speak from their experiences in narratives providing important information (Schensul et al., 1999). In the current research the respondents were able to narrate their experiences as initiates, and the lessons learnt.

The tape was also re-played immediately after the focus group interview to the group. This technique helped me confirm and validate what had been said (Jorgensen, 1989). There were times when during re-playing the tape that a participant would either disagree with what had been said or confirmed by adding more information to what had been said. To avoid issues of bias I had key informants in total. These included 1 female teacher, 1 traditional teacher, 1 female student, and 2 women. The total number of single interviews was 17 and I had 6 focus group interviews. Further still, I

had 5 respondents providing narratives of their experiences. The total number of participants was 47 of which 8 were men and 39 women.

More respondents could have been interviewed in order to collect more detailed data but I took the advice of Wellington (2000) who warns against the pitfall of ‘over-collecting’ data from so many people so that data collected is under-analysed. Secondly, this research sought to collect detailed data that described the phenomena under study. So I chose to use a small, manageable population to collect this data from over a relatively prolonged period of time. Thirdly the capacity and resources could not have allowed me to study more people; there were only two of us (my research assistant and myself).

I conducted the interviews in various places in order to accommodate the respondents and provide a private quiet and relaxed setting (Oppenheim, 1992). It was difficult though to get a completely noise free place in the village. This affected the quality of the recorded information (Schensul et al., 1999) but note taking by my research assistant and I complemented this. Some interviews took place in the respondent’s homes, in the school storeroom, at the *dimba* (allotment), in the bush, in the classroom, and in the head teacher’s office.

Key informants were chosen for their knowledge of the topic and the society. Key informants are critical gatekeepers to other informants because they can open avenues to others or restrict them altogether making it difficult to collect information (Cohen et al., 2000). However having built good relations with the individuals during the initial phase of participant observation I was able to choose credible informants. Secondly, during the focus group I was able to assess the level of the respondent’s



knowledge on the topic. That enabled me to follow up the individuals who demonstrated knowledge of the topic for further interviews to establish my assumptions and what they had said during the focus group interview. Such a move enabled me to capture accurate information and accurate representation of what was observed. This enabled me not to fall into the danger of “superficial coding, decontextualisation, missing what came before and after the respondents account and missing what the larger conversation was about” (Gibbs, 2007, p.11). This was taken in account throughout the process of collecting data.

These key informants were valuable to the research because they helped me to check and verify information. One of them (a female teacher) even became an advisor who further agreed to read through the transcripts that had been translated into English from Tumbuka in order to check any loss of meaning. Citing Richardson et al, Wellington states that the key informant is:

More sophisticated than his fellow informants, befriends the investigator, and provides him with insights as well as detailed information, acts generally as his mentor and guide for the duration of the study (*Wellington 2000, p.73 cited Richardson et al., 1965, p.114*).

Another informant (traditional teacher) enabled us (with my research assistant) to attend the initiation ceremonies as both researcher and participant. Access as a researcher into an initiation ceremony was not going to be possible despite my status as an initiated woman. Therefore no camera and video was allowed. I was asked to participate to prove my claimed status of an initiated woman. The recorder was allowed after my informant negotiated and we agreed to the conditions; hide it as much as possible.

### *III. Documents*

Documents contain valuable data which may augment the collected data through other procedures. They can be used in two ways, one of which is as part of the literature review where the different documents referred to act as an introduction to research. Knowledge obtained from such literatures enabled me to identify theories and principles underscoring the topic of discussion. As a source of information, documents have acted as material of investigation and have been used carefully after assessing their quality of information and its relevance to the study (Denscombe, 2003). This involved establishing their credibility, and genuineness.

I had to establish whether these documents represented what they portrayed. For example the PAGE reports collected at school were verified with the copies at the Ministry of Education Headquarters in Lusaka and proved to be true government publications. This verification ensured that such documents provided authoritative, objective and factual information (Jorgensen, 1989; Oliver, 1997; Denscombe, 2003; Denscombe, 2007). The following documents were used in this study:

- Newspaper cuttings
- Register
- PAGE reports
- Annual Reports
- Parent Teachers' Association (PTA) minutes
- Government statistics

These documents were collected and have been used in this study. These documents were collected during interviews at the basic school. Combined with the other identified procedures for collecting data, credibility and reliability has been increased (Oliver, 1997).

In addition, the documents have proved useful in the verification of data from the interviews. One example is the newspaper cutting that reveals the extent to which the traditional teachers can abuse fellow women in an effort to instil a submissive character in them (check appendix 7).

## **5. 6. The Research Population**

This research set out to select the sample from the wider population of the village. A sample was chosen purposely to include negative instances as much as possible in order to level the playing field and improve the validity and credibility of the research. The sampling strategy used was not an easy exercise because of several reasons including identifying the sample that would be of interest to the research. Identifying the sample of interest may still prove a problem even after entering a setting because it is not everyone, everywhere doing everything that requires to be studied (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Miles and Huberman further stated that:

Your choices – whom to look at or talk with, where, when, about what, and why – all place limits on conclusions you can draw, and on how confident you and others feel about them (*Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.27*).

This calls for critical thinking about the limitation of the population if credible data are to be collected. This research set out to employ a small sample of informants in order to investigate the phenomena in depth. The people selected for the sample had characteristics and knowledge that were of particular interest to the investigation (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Morse, 1998; and Silverman, 2001). The use of already existing contacts in the setting (Wellington, 2000) was an added advantage because those contacts were aware of the type of participants I was looking for.

From the initial sample, informants who demonstrated authority and experience in the cultural traditions were selected because they would provide the research with

relevant information. The identified informants further identified and introduced other informants to the researcher whom they were aware of being knowledgeable about the topic. This kind of sampling is known as 'snowballing' (Cohen et al., 2000; Robson, 2002; and Crang and Cook, 2007). Although snowballing and purposive sampling fall under the same category combining the two enabled me to validate, confirm negative issues, compare, and collect more information relating to the investigation. This kind of flexibility was an added advantage to the research as it added rigour. Through the identified actions, the question of bias, which has been noted as a weakness in purposive sampling, was therefore checked (Cohen et al., 2000; Silverman, 2001). Therefore, all together, a total number of 47 participants comprised the sample used in the research whose age group ranged from 14 to 78 years old. Male respondents were used in this research in order to collect different conception of the phenomena under investigation from that of women. This further added rigor to the investigation as information was compared and contrasted to establish truthful information. The validity and reliability of the information was equally improved.

### **5. 7. The Ethical Obligation**

The informants are an important part of any research, how they are treated during the processing of data is crucial. Ethical issues will be discussed in this section to establish their importance and the ethical obligation a researcher has to the participants during and after the whole research process. This research involves close contact with participants under study who have feelings and rights, which should be guarded to prevent violation. Their dignity, privacy and safety must be assured. This calls for ethical guidelines that should guide, inform and protect the researcher as well as protect the participants. The principal responsibility of a researcher should be to

the participants. Ethical concerns are the cutting edge of social research that has been adhered to throughout the research process. The close contact that the researcher has with the participants calls for good management of anonymity, confidentiality and moral thinking (Nachimias and Nachimias, 1996; Wellington, 2000; Laine, 2000; and Madison, 2005).

The researcher is not under obligation to inform participants or even shield them from any potential harmful repercussion (Jorgensen, 1989). Such a stand is questionable and dangerous because participants should not be deceived nor their rights violated. The data collected under such circumstances would neither be reliable nor valid (Laine, 2000; Oliver, 2003). On the other hand, and in line with the principles underlying the current research, Madison argues that the researcher has a duty to the participants:

Doing no harm or wrong, providing full disclosure and informed consent, offering warnings of possible outcomes (good or bad) of the research for the people involved, and weighing carefully the risks and the benefits of the study for the people being studied (*Madison, 2005, p.113*).

Ethics can be described as the “philosophical enquiry into the basis of morals or moral judgement” (Pring, 2000, p.142). Pring further cites Simons whose definition of ethics is considered as comprising rules of conduct that allows one to function justifiably in the environment in which she/he would be carrying out the research (Pring, 2000 cited Simons, 1995).

I obtained an official approval from the University of Huddersfield to the gatekeepers (the chief) to enable me to collect the data in the setting. I had to learn and adhere to the moral codes of the village in order to settle in. Customs such as dress code and close relationships with men had to be observed constantly. I had to interview the 3

headmen together with my research assistant in the house of one of the headmen. Although the number did not fall into the category that Cohen et al (2000) suggest make up an optimum size of a group; group of six or seven. Every interview, whether group or one to one, included a preamble with details of the research and an assurance to the participants on issues of anonymity and confidentiality. Knowing that the participants understood the preamble was another important issue that turned out to be problematic especially when it came to observation. The participants did not consider observation as a necessary part of the research.

Anonymity can be defined as the guarantee that the researcher gives to participants that their names or identities would not be attached to any rejoinder in any publication including this research (Bell, 2005). Therefore all names used in this research are pseudonyms. The chief preferred to be called Nkhosi and the head teacher just as the head. Therefore all participants that had been interviewed were aware of my position and were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. They were fully informed of the basics of the research as simply as possible to enable them understand and they consented verbally and made a decision to participate. They were also informed of their rights to stop or leave altogether during the research if they wanted to. They were not under any obligation. Such an informed consent process was carried out on a continuous basis. Oliver states that informed consent should include “any information, which a participant conceivably needs in order to make a decision about whether or not to participate” (Oliver, 2003 p.28). Participants were promised and assured confidentiality throughout the research process, as part of their informed consent.

The ethical obligation of the research also includes moral issues such as respectful, being fair and giving entitlement. Entitlement includes concerns of their prerogative to gain from participating in the research process. The participants are integral to this research and had to benefit in a way for their contribution of information just as I was able to gain knowledge for the purpose of acquiring a qualification (Opie, 2004). Opie further warns against “rape research” that is getting information without giving back (Opie, 2004, p.25). All participants involved in the interviews were given wrappers and washing soap in return. Other forms of appreciation included money, some dry foodstuffs, and groceries. This was cautiously done to avoid creating an impression of bribing the participants. Such well-intentioned forms of appreciation may raise questions, (Madison (2005), hence, I gave the material rewards informally weeks after the interview or contact with the participants. A verbal ‘thank you’ was also appreciated by many participants who felt valued by having been involved in the process (Oliver, 2003). I also had to pay my research assistant for the work and assistance provided as recommended by Madison (2005). Others valued my participative role in various tasks such as pounding maize, collecting firewood and water. They refused to accept a ‘thank you’ from me even after explaining that I was benefiting from them.

### **5. 8. Reliability and Validity**

Accurate and truthful findings are vital in any research. Assuming total validity and reliability in social research may be too optimistic (Denscombe, 2003). However, Jorgensen defines reliability as “the extent to which a procedure, especially measurement, produces the same results with repeated usage” (Jorgensen, 1989, p.36).

This calls for consistency that is producing the same results when a procedure is repeated at different times and by different users, presuming that the occurrence under measurement should not have changed (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995; Denscombe 2007). Reliability may not be comprehensively demonstrated in this research because of the nature of the research design used. The human instrument and methods used to collect data may raise questions of how reliable they have been in the process of collecting the information. Human behaviour, opinions, and qualities are elements that may not remain constant because they could change with time or due to unforeseen circumstances (Cohen et al., 2000; Wellington, 2000). Establishing reliability can be exceptionally difficult in social research because the unit for analysis is words and these words are collected from human actions which have a potential to change with time or unforeseen circumstances (Jorgensen, 1989; Denscombe, 2003). However, I made effort to improve the reliability of this research by applying the following:

- Not depending on one single form of evidence. I used multiple procedures such as participant observation (direct experience), interviews (focus group and one to one interviews that enabled me to confirm and check information) and documents. I also used multiple sources (married women, a divorced woman, school girls, men, teachers and former pupils who had been withdrawn from school and married off). This increased the accuracy rate and the dependability of the findings.
- Testing concepts observing their actual usage of everyday life.
- Working with a dependable research assistant who was more fluent in the local language than I was which provided a second perspective that helped improve the quality of the data collected.
- Being reflective and reflexive to ensure a check on the data collected and my position, this minimised researcher effect.



- Declaring my position, experience and knowledge of the topic including my beliefs and values. This further contributed to improving the credibility of the findings and minimised the issues of bias. The researcher is expected to declare his/her position, explain rival explanations and outline any biases at the onset of the investigation to minimise contaminating the data as much as possible (Burton and Bartlett, 2005).
- Following the moral duty that I have taken, I have a duty to tell the truth despite any consequence. Morally, telling the truth is desirable because of the general ethical responsibility to tell the truth irrespective of the consequences. I am aware that all knowledge and truth is relative. (Jorgensen, 1989; Pring, 2000; and Oliver, 2003). For example, I tried not to allow my emotions to take over and contaminate the findings.
- Explicitly declaring my positionality, I have thus provided the means and criteria for another researcher to undertake the same research under the same conditions.
- Burton and Bartlett describe validity as “faithfulness, correctness, or accuracy” of research data (Burton and Bartlett, 2005, p.105). I had direct access to the insiders’ world and captured their experiences directly. The list given above for improving the reliability of this research equally applies in proving the validity of the data. Triangulating the methods and sources has minimised the errors, minimised the biases and provided a crosscheck of the data to establish their validity (Lincoln and Guba, 1987).

## **5. 9. Analysis of Collected Data**

Strauss and Corbin describe analysis as “science and an art” that entails interaction between the researcher and the data (Strauss and Corbin 1998, p.60). Analysis is a process that transforms raw data into findings (Lofland et al., 2006). It is the process through which the collected raw data are sorted out into bits, reduced, displayed, verified and given meaning (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

The approach that has been used in this research presupposes a certain worldview that has influenced the whole research process to the point of data analysis; this is the anti-positivist view. Hence choosing an appropriate and compatible approach to the flexible design in use was crucial. The data that have been collected in this research is in textual form. This included the transcripts, which were transformed from the taped interviews and narratives, the field notes recorded from the observed occurrences and documents. Therefore the unit of analysis in this research is words (Silverman, 2000; Silverman, 2004). Textual data can be analysed through various means such as thematic analysis. I choose thematic analysis for the following reasons; it is flexible, and it is less prescriptive (King, 1998).

The term ‘template’ analysis will be used interchangeably with thematic analysis because they are one and the same thing. In describing thematic analysis, Boyatzis states that it is a process for translating qualitative information into codes while a theme is described as:

A pattern found in the information that at minimum describes and organises the possible observation and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon (*Boyatzis, 1998, p.4*).

On the other hand codes are defined as “labels or tags for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.56). The codes used in this research relate to the themes that emerged in the data, which I had identified as important for interpretation. The codes used are words and phrases related to the emerging data. These are further connected to the objectives of the research (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Seidel and Kelle, 1995; King, 1998; and Crabtree and Miller, 1999). The researcher has the ability of sensing themes in the data (Boyatzis, 1998). This ability was a challenge to me but once grasped, worked very well. This enabled me to develop codes and recognised the

coding moment consistently and reliably. Simpson and Tuson state that analysis should be able to generate explanations by “searching through the data, generating categories which account for the interpretations and repeatedly reviewing the data, seeking both confirmatory and contradictory evidence” (Simpson and Tuson, 1995, p.80). While critics of qualitative research are of the view that ‘everything goes’ the use of thematic analysis has provided rigor to this research through the process of searching through data (Simpson and Tuson, 1995; Braun and Clarke, 2006).

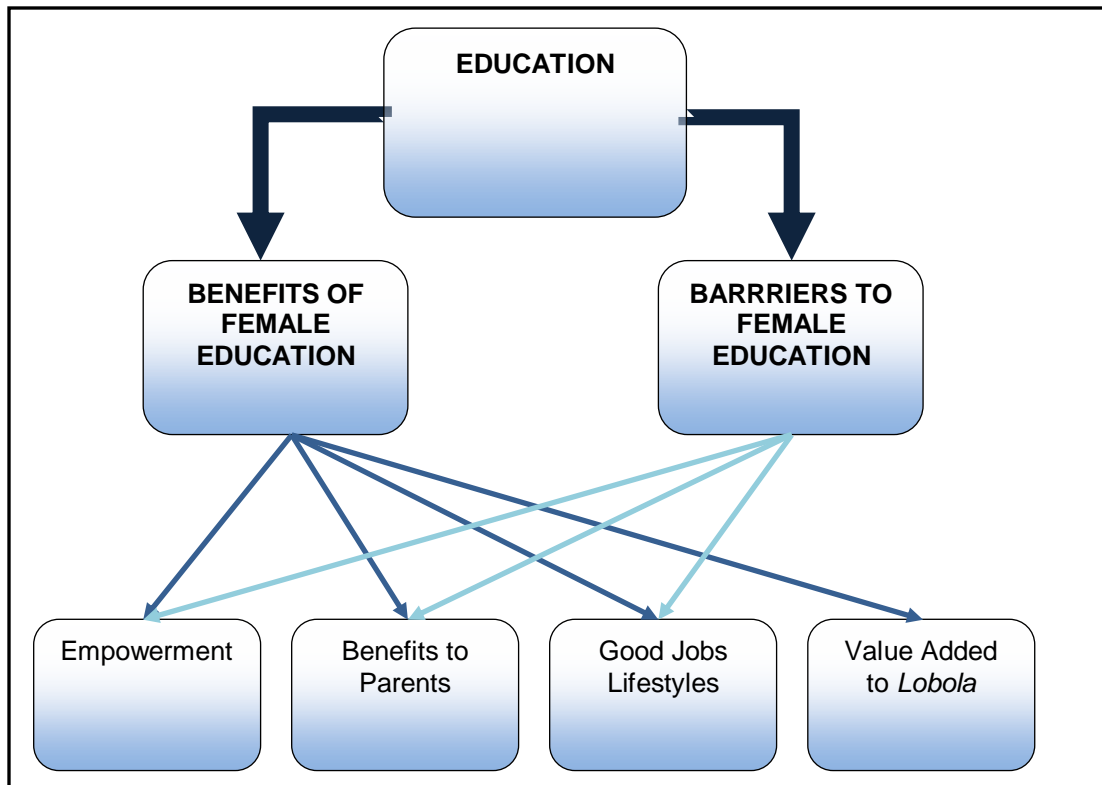
I started the process of analysing as soon as data started accumulating in order to avoid late analysis. Late analysis could potentially weaken the analysis (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006). This meant immersing myself in the data, looking at it from multiple perspectives, reflecting upon it and noting the familiar and recurring features, identifying the emerging themes and tagging chunks with codes. These themes were altered or improved as collection continued (Wellington, 2000; Denscombe, 2003). Coding can be described as a process of analysis and it has potential to steer the ongoing collection of data because of the interaction that goes on between the researcher and the data (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Early coding helped me check and clarify incomplete or equivocal data (Seidel and Kelle, 1995; Crabtree and Miller, 1999) and to look for recurring data before leaving the field.

Transcribing the recorded interviews was carried out parallel with the research whilst in Zambia. This was done through the night due to lack of time during the day, comparing and contrasting with any notes that had been taken by both my research assistant and myself. The field notes were reconstructed as well and codes were attached to familiar chunks. This process would take 5 to 6 hours depending upon the number of interviews conducted that day. Analysis took place during such periods as

I interacted with the data and coded familiar chunks manually (Silverman, 2000; Silverman, 2004; and Walker and Myrick, 2007). Walker and Myrick state that “coding is an interactive, inductive yet reductive process that organises data” and it is from coding that the researcher is able to “construct themes, descriptions and theories” (Walker and Myrick, 2007, p.49).

Coding was done with different coloured pencils. Later with the help of the research assistant we cut the pieces of coloured paper up and attached the pieces with the same colours on the same chart. The chart was identified by the colours of the pieces of paper pasted on them. I called each chart category red or green and so on. As I neared the end of data collection, the colour codes were replaced by familiar words and phrases in the data. The system was selected due to being low-tech in the absence of power. (See below for further discussion).

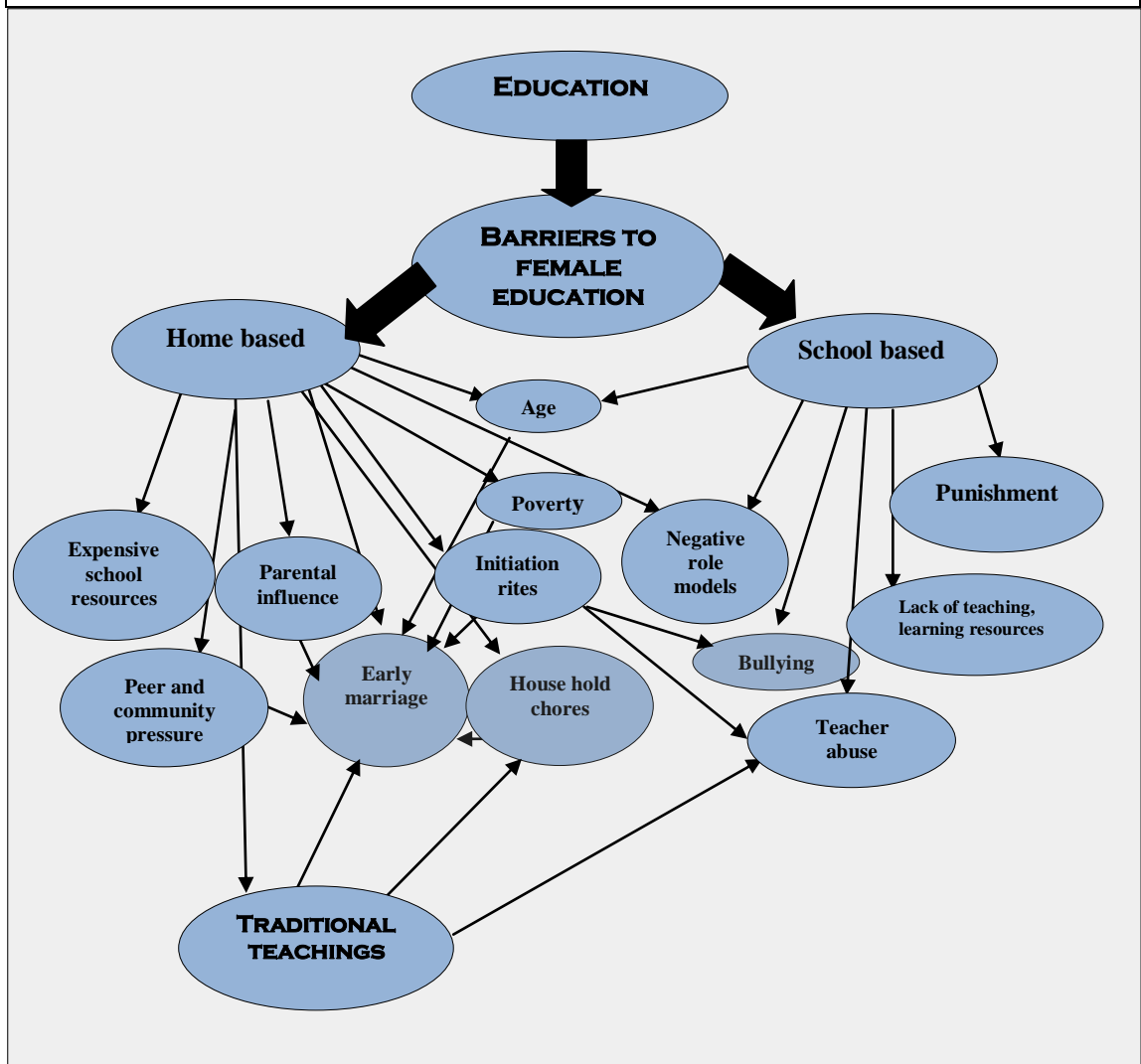
Figure 8 ~ An Example Of Category, Themes And Codes Used



This whole process helped me to avoid biases because I was able to discover names from the data and categorized the phenomena (Denscombe, 2003). Comments I made during coding and categorizing were attached to the small pieces of paper and that made me connect, change pieces of paper around the charts and those falling in the same categories were connected with a different code. During this process, I was able to identify emerging data, which I had to recheck and confirm later. The chunks that needed confirming went on a separate chart I called colourless. Examples of this whole process are diagrammatically displayed above in figure 8 and below in figure 9. Figure 8 is an example of one theme; **education**. The identified codes were categorised under benefits of education and barriers to education. Some of these codes overlapped as shown in both figures 8 and 9. For example in figure 8, while the benefit of educating a girl was considered as value added to a girl in terms of

attracting more cows as dowry (*lobola*), it was also viewed as a barrier to girl's education because some parents stopped the girl from completing school in order to get her married for the purpose of obtaining *lobola*. Figure 9 shows the category **barriers to female education**, which had two emerging themes; some based and school based with different sub-themes. Some of the codes went on to form new themes such as traditional teachings. See figure 9 below

Figure 9 ~ Figure 9 Another example of category, themes and codes used



As my time in the field came to an end (3 months) most of the analysis had been done, and information requiring confirmation had been confirmed. As indicated earlier I analysed the data manually despite the fact that there are a number of computer programmes and software available on the market to provide a researcher with minimum work. These include NUD\*IST, NVIVO, CAQDAS and ETHNOGRAPH (Kelle, 1995; Kelle and Laurie Richards, 1999; Bringer et al., 2007; and Denscombe, 2007). It is argued that using computers may not be appropriate in analysing qualitative data because the process could transform qualitative research into rigid automated analysis of text which requires interpretation (Richards and

Richards, 1995). Wetzman argues that the computer programmes tend to “offer false expectations,” (Wetzman, 2000, p.66), but tend to increase rigor. However, computers do not analyse qualitative data, they do not make a study more scientific and “cannot replace the researcher’s own analysis, intuition and craftsmanship” (Wellington, 2000, p.147). They are only tools that aid analysis and they are undeniably able to effectively manage and organise data. This is true because I had a hard time because the process of highlighting proved challenging. This included cutting, pasting, un-pasting, and re-pasting. I ran out of colours so I had to use traditionally produced colours which were difficult to use however they were worthwhile alternative. Storing the pieces of papers, and the charts has not been easy. Much more, I could not travel from Africa with some of the papers I accumulated during the whole process, such as charts.

However, despite the advantages of the computer program and software, I decided to analyse the data manually for the following reason; having started the analysis manually in the village where I could not use a computer I had to continue manually. There was no electricity in the village and hence I could not use the computer. As I had already spent much time transcribing, coding, finding themes and recording manually, and had done most of the work I decided to finish off manually using my intellectual skill, craftsmanship and intuition.

## **5. 10. Conclusion**

This section sums up the discussions of this chapter the focus of which was the methodology employed in the study. A qualitative approach, specifically ethnography was adopted for its appropriateness to the study of the phenomenon under investigation. It was selected for its appropriateness to collect in-depth information.



This is because of its naturalistic characteristics that enable one to collect data from participants in their natural environment in close proximity. To collect such data the following methods were employed; participant observation, interviews (focus group and in-depth interviews), and documents. Collecting the data through these methods called for a consideration of different measures to ensure their validity and reliability.

The instrument used in this research process is human and hence issues regarding researcher positionality have been discussed. This is important in order to minimise contaminating data. Therefore, my identity, beliefs, values, previous experiences related to the investigation, and motivation were declared in an effort to raise the reliability and validity of the findings.

Collecting information from human participants in their natural settings raised ethical concerns. Effort was made to ensure that research ethics were adhered to throughout the study in order to faithfully represent the respondents fairly. Although the aim of my stay in the village was overt to the members of the village and other participants who did not belong to the village, I still made an effort to ensure that they all understood why I was there hence the ethical concerns such as confidentiality, informed consent, and anonymity were considered. Educational research must not be unethical.

Collecting data can be an interesting activity however, if they are not given meaning, they will not mean anything to a reader. It is an important phase in the process of research that needs to be handled well. To give meaning to data thematic analysis was used. This process included coding, categorising and noting the emerging themes.

This was possible through interacting with the data, assessing the responses, and being able to identify the emerging themes.

The next chapter will present the analysis of the collected data and present the interpretations meaningfully to the reader. This will include giving the studied a voice while adhering to the ethical concerns.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF FEMALE EDUCATION**

#### **Findings and Discussion: Part One**

##### **6. 0. Introduction**

The discussion of the previous chapter was centred on the different methodological issues underpinning the current research. This included the rationale and choice of the relevant processes and strategies used in conducting ethnography. Included in the discussion was the subject of analysis; an important topic without which data collected would be worthless. This is so because it involves the translation of raw data into a plain and understandable state. This chapter will focus on analysing the findings from the data, which were gathered for a period of three months through multiple techniques.

Thematic analysis has been used to interpret the data. The process involved sorting out the raw data into parts, verifying and giving it meaning. Codes were attached to familiar chunks and the patterns found in the data were identified and the interpretation of the phenomena commenced. The category 'Education' stands as the main focus of discussion in this chapter. The themes recounted and discussed emerged from the information which was collected from participant observation, key informants and the focus group interviews (Check appendix 2 for the coding template). The emerging themes have been used as subheadings to the discussion and these include:

- The importance of education,
- The benefits of educating a girl,
- How girls encouraged in their education,

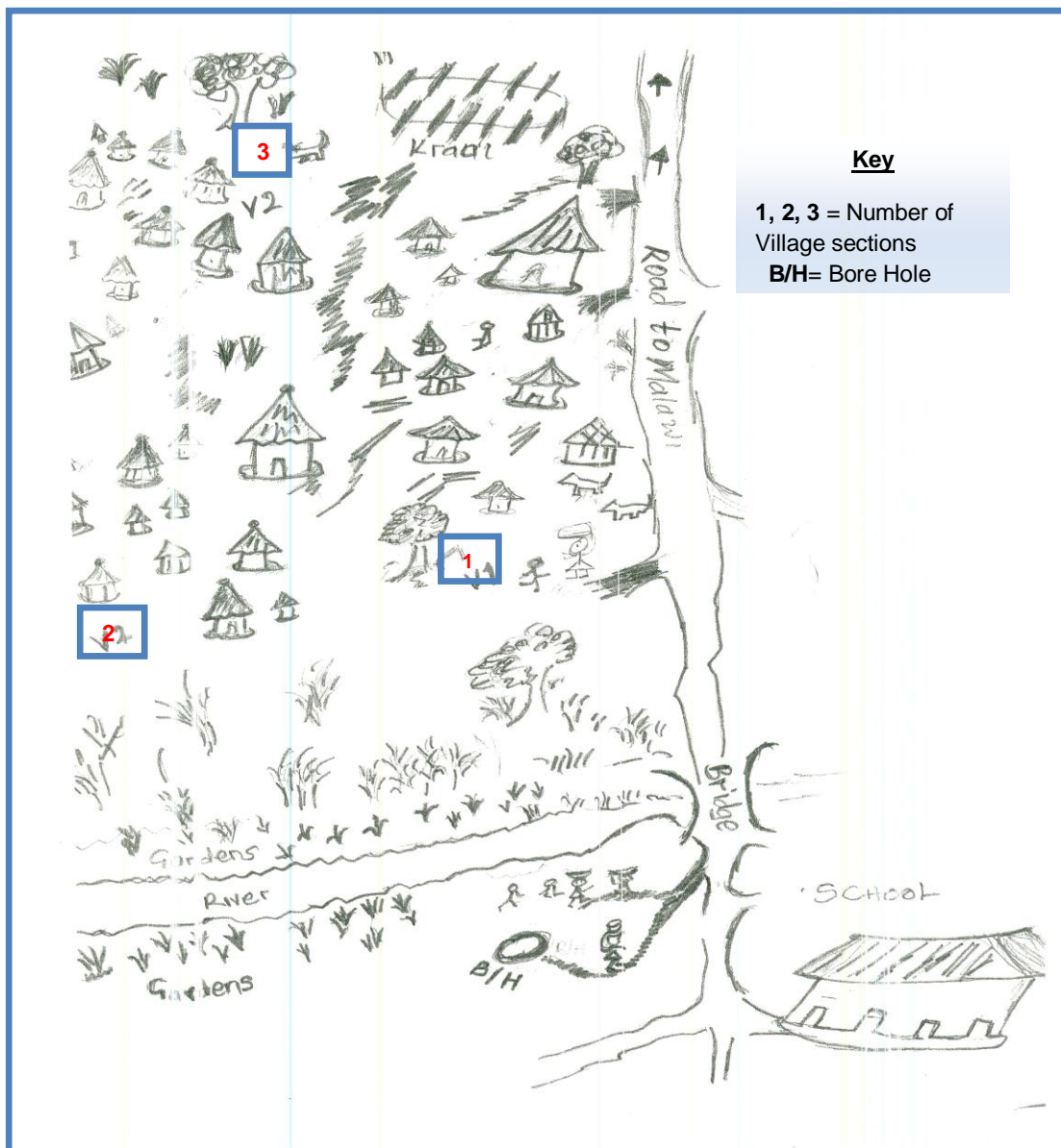
- Decision making,
- Negative views of educating girls,
- Barriers to female education: home based factors and school based factors.

All interviews were recorded on an audio recorder and conducted in the homes of some of the informants, outside, in the *dimba* (allotment), classrooms, the chiefs' palace, offices and storerooms. The interviews were all conducted in the Tumbuka language. This research set out to investigate how the cultural traditions of the Tumbuka speaking people could affect the education of women in Zambia. Keeping this aim in focus is of utmost importance to the whole research process because it steers and gives direction to the whole procedure. The theoretical framework chosen to help critically explain the occurrences of this investigation will be used in this chapter to show its relevance for the study.

Following this introduction is a discussion of the setting where the collection of the data took place which has been given in order to paint a picture of the place. A sketch map of the area has been provided to give the reader a rough idea of the setting in line with the recommendation of Schensul et al (1999). This will be followed by a brief explanation of what would be included in the observation process. Included are data (table 9) showing participant identification codes which will be useful for identifying the position of the respondents and the type of data collecting technique they were involved in. The identification codes are accompanied by a pseudonym. The discussion of the findings will then follow under the different themes that emerged from the collected data. The emerging data is interrelated as will be noted in the discussions.

## 6. 1. Description of the Setting

Figure 10 ~ A Rough Sketch Map Of The Main Village And The 3 Section



Based on the initial information I had received during the planning stage, the village comprised 30 women in total. However, it turned out that there was one community<sup>32</sup> divided into three sections each under the authority of a headman with a total of 35 women. For identification purposes, this study called the sections, village 1, village 2, and village 3. The three headmen were under the authority of the Chief<sup>33</sup> locally known as Nkhosi who fell under the authority of the paramount Chief Mpezeni of the Ngoni tribe due to the early wars (this has been explained in chapter 1).

Two hundred metres (200m) to the west of the community was a river, which provided water for their animals. It also provided water for laundry and a place where a number of women from the same community would be found doing their washing. Again, this was another important place to mingle with the women and the girls and observe them as I participated in the activities. To access any water from the river, one had to cross a bridge. The bore-hole supplying safe drinking water to the community was across the river about 10 metres away. A number of *dimbas* belonging to members of the community lined up along the river. A main gravel road, leading to the east towards the Malawian border, divided the community under study from another community.

The basic school nearer to the village was two kilometres (2km) across the river. It had a population of 620 pupils. The pupils did not only come from the village under investigation. Of this number 262 were girls while 358 were boys. The age range of the pupils was from 7 to 16 years (School Record, 2007; School Register, 2001-2007).

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<sup>32</sup> In this research the word 'community' will refer to the main village and the 'sections' simply as villages. Terms such as 'locality' and 'setting' will also refer to the community.

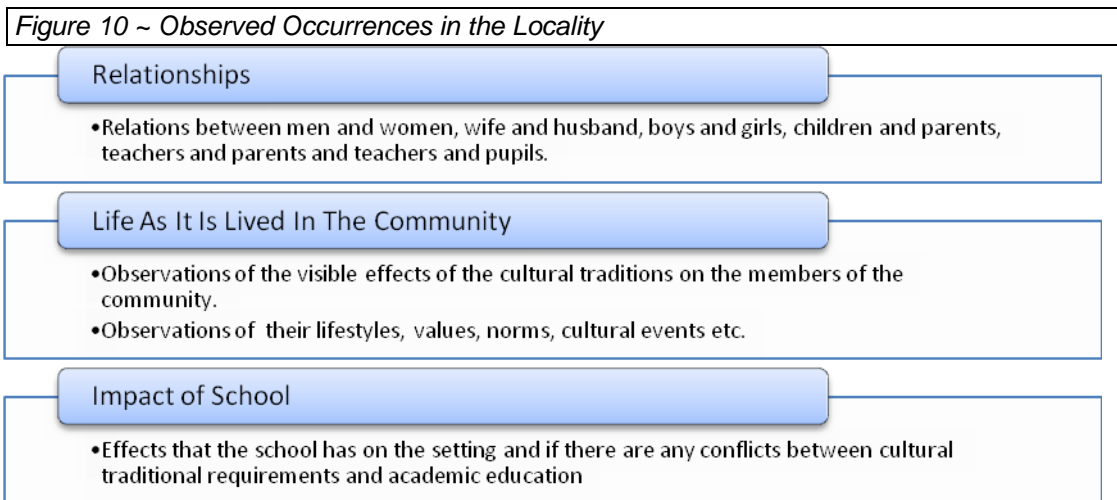
<sup>33</sup> The name of the chief has been withheld therefore, in this study he will be known as Nkhosi.

Village 1, where I lived, had 10 big huts with small ones that served as kitchens built about 5 metres from the main house. The houses that had the luxury of pit latrines were built about 50 metres away. Bathrooms were in most cases a structure of grass or an old reed mat erected in a circle. The floor was roughly covered with stones of all sizes. This made my bath times dreadful, as there was not much privacy or comfort. Each house had a granary (storehouse for maize, the staple food). These were built further from the kitchens to avoid dangers of fire. There were three small huts 30 metres away from the main huts that were called '*tanganane*.' These huts housed adolescent boys or girls who were no longer allowed to sleep in the main huts. About 30 metres away from the main huts were wooden pens housing goats and sheep. This scene was not different from the other two villages. Households that had cows shared the kraal, which was made 50 metres from the community. This kraal was shared by the whole main village (village 1, 2, and 3). See sketch map of the whole community above.

Their way of life agreed very well with the claims of Hofstede (2005) about collectivist societies where the interest of the group was of more importance than that of an individual. The members of the community lived together as one big family sharing jobs, food, working implements, kitchen utensils and spent time together. For example if a woman of village 1 announced that she would be pounding maize the following day, volunteers would turn up in the morning to help with the pounding. This was an added advantage to the research because it brought the women together making it easier for observation while participating in the activity of the day.

## 6. 2. Observed Occurrences

Observing the participants while participating in their day-to-day activities calls for promptitude and vigilance without which little or nothing would be collected. The first week of entry was not easy, while entering the setting was not difficult, being new in the locality proved knotty. As recommended by Morse (1998), I decided to use the first 2 weeks to familiarise myself with the participants and the environment. This was very helpful as it enabled me to learn the routines, the settings' proper and relaxed rules, and the boundaries to be observed (Morse, 1998).



However, observation was a continuous activity throughout the process of collecting data. The above list was not exhaustive, any interesting occurrences whether negative or positive were noted all the same as long as it was of interest to the research. The list was based on the objective questions related to the aim of the research.

## 6. 3. Discussion and Findings

This section is a discussion of the various findings from the data collected. The main focus as noted in the main introduction of the chapter is on the information related to



education. The themes that were raised will be the headings to the various sections. The discussions are accompanied by the voices of the participants which have been used as much as possible to allow them to speak for themselves. The names of the respondents are captured by different codes that identify them. To help identify the respondents see table 9 for the codes that will be used:

<i>Table 9 ~ Participant Identification Codes</i>		
<b>Code</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Pseudonyms</b>
<b>WFG</b>	<b>Women's Focus Group Village</b>	<b>V1:</b> Enelesi, Tionge, Eleni, Tasila, Susan, Beauty, Mwizilachi, Vulachi, Betty and Enala. <b>V2:</b> Maria, Site, Monica, Zondiwe, Jenny, Aggie and Joy. <b>V3:</b> Temwani, Khumbu, Fumbani, Suzyo, Taonga, Tiza and Mwenecho.
<b>FIW</b>	<b>Follow-up Interview Women</b>	<b>V1:</b> Vulachi <b>V2:</b> Zondiwe <b>V3:</b> Mwenecho
<b>KIWR</b>	<b>Key Informant Woman</b>	<b>V1:</b> Mwizilachi, <b>V2:</b> Aggie, <b>V3:</b> Temwani
<b>KITTR</b>	<b>Key Informant Traditional Teacher</b>	Tione
<b>FGSG</b>	<b>Focus Group School Girls</b>	Mikiwe, Temwachi, Elina, Likiwe, Chimwemwe, Dalitso, and Muzo
<b>FISG</b>	<b>Follow-up Interview School Girl</b>	Temwachi
<b>KISG</b>	<b>Key Informant School Girl</b>	Dalitso
<b>SIYM</b>	<b>Single Interview Young Mothers</b>	Lucy and Misozi
<b>FGT</b>	<b>Focus Group Teachers</b>	Edisa, Grace, Julie, Khodowe, Kalinkhu and Ganizani
<b>KITR</b>	<b>Key Informant Teacher Respondent</b>	Edisa
<b>FGH</b>	<b>Focus Group Headmen</b>	<b>V1:</b> Nkhumbatuwemi, <b>V2:</b> Chilinda, <b>V3:</b> Zaninge
<b>SIR</b>	<b>Single Interview Respondent:</b>	Head teacher Chief: Nkhosi
<b>FN</b>	<b>Field Notes</b>	
<b>Key: V = Village</b>		

For example, Vulachi, WFG.V1, (see meaning of acronym in the table above) will represent a response from Vulachi, a woman of village 1, whose response was from a focus group interview. Other respondents will appear under 2 different codes. For example, Vulachi, FIW, V1. (See meaning of acronym in the table above). This will represent Vulachi's response, of village 1, from a follow-up interview with her. Other responses will be followed by a code, FN (see meaning of acronym in the table above) which means that the response was captured during observation in the field. For example, Tasila, FN.

### *I. Importance of Female Education*

This study has already indicated in chapter 1 that education is an important tool that could empower and liberate the women to take control of their lives. Many commentators such as Chitsike, (2001), Kwesiga (2002), NGOCC (2004), FAWE (2004), UNICEF (2006), and CAMFED Zambia (2007), have advocated the education of girls. Therefore, if education is an important tool that can empower women, I wanted to know what the locals thought of it, how they conceptualized education, and whether they also considered it as an important tool. To do this I started by looking at the school records. From the school records I wanted to see how many girls accessed education and how many progressed into high school.

Having volunteered my services at the only basic school in the village, I was given an opportunity to look at the school records by the head teacher. I was particularly interested in the registers that covered the period from 2001 to 2007 because that covered a period a particular cohort spent in primary school. I wanted to assess the enrolment, retention, and progression of the female pupils belonging to one intake. These were my findings: in the year 2000, 25 boys and 23 girls were enrolled in

grade 1. As of 2007, there were 16 boys and 7 girls altogether of the same cohort. That means between 2001 and 2007, 9 boys and 16 girls had dropped out of school for various reasons. With interest in the female pupils these findings showed the gender gap in progression to grade 7, with more girls dropping out than boys. As shown, the number of boys in grade 7 is as high as almost double that of girls that had dropped out by 2007 from the total number enrolled in 2001. The difference between the number of girls and boys is a source of concern. More girls than boys are leaving school. From the findings, of the 23 girls that were enrolled 2001 only 7 girls made it to grade seven. Such an outcome raised questions on the importance attached to academic education in the locality under investigation.

The village, as shown in the sketch map above, was within walking distance to the only school in the locality. The proximity of the school to the village was appreciated by the members of the village, which was one of the targeted catchment areas. When the respondents were asked if all the children in the village went to school, the response was;

*It also depends on the parents and what they want [Maria, WFG.V2].*

Suzyo thought their community was better than the other communities further away from the school.

*[Reluctantly] ---No but our village is much better. Go beyond our village you will find that not even one child goes to school [Suzyo, WFG.V3].*

*Here, it depends upon parents. Some parents don't take their children to school [Tiza, WFG.V3].*

A number of studies such as Muranga (1997), Kelly et al (1999), NGOCC (2006) and FAWE (2006) have indicated that distance from school has a negative effect on the girls' school attendance; however despite the proximity of the school in this setting, the reluctance in the responses seem to suggest that this is not helping much.

The other village referred to was farther off from the school. Probably the poor attendance of pupils from that village could have been affected by the remoteness. Much more, the role the parents play in the education of the children is important in this case because they are the determining factor in whether the children go to school or not. The respondents such as Maria and Tiza have indicated that it is the role of the parents to send their children to school for the purpose of accessing education. Wolfendale (1996) pointed out that parents are the most important force in the education of the children. Cullingford (1996) identifies parents as principal educators; hence making their decision as regards their children's involvement in school is crucial. Maria's response above shows that parents are prime determiners of their children's involvement in education.

When asked if academic education was important to them, almost all the respondents said it was.

*Enya [yes] njiwemi sikulu anyithu [school is good my friend] [Khumbu, WFG. V3].*

*School is important [looks around] everyone here will tell you that. That is why the government has given us the school here. [Tionge, WFG. V1].*

*Madam school is important, who does not know that it is important [Likiwe, FGSG].*

*Speaking for myself, and my village, yes school is important. That is why we are happy that the government has built a school in our village. We are very proud [Nkhumbatuwemi, FGH. V1].*

*School is good; it makes you to be respected by those who are not educated. You become important and you live well. It makes you do what you want. I would have finished school but I became of 'age'. So my father and auntie [the father's sister] said I was big, so they decided to marry me off. I was in grade 9 and I could read and write. I loved school [Jenny, WFG.V2].*

From the responses it is clear that academic education was considered to be important by the locals. Jenny's response shows that she understood the importance of

education and was aware of the fact that if she had been educated, her lot would have been better. Her response further shows the fact that education could empower her and give her some independence and freedom to do what she wanted. She appreciates the fact that the basic education she had attained enabled her to read and write. These responses were connected to the benefits that educating the girl would have on the family and the girl herself.

## *II. Benefits of Educating a Girl*

The women in the study were fully aware of the many benefits of academic education as shown in the findings when they were asked about the benefits of academic education.

*To work after finishing school, being able to keep the parents, save them from poverty and also good living [Tionge, WFG. V1].*

*Good jobs and living well not in the village, but in town [Beauty, WFG. V1].*

As noted from the responses the women seem to have seen some effects of academic education such as better life styles in an urban set up. Good living emerged in most responses indicating that academic education is associated with changed life styles. However, the motivation that such knowledge offers does not seem that effective in keeping the girls in school. This will be observed in their responses later because all the women involved in the interviews had dropped out of school for various reasons.

There were still others whose response demonstrated ignorance of the benefits of academic education. For example Zondiwe said:

*I do not know, mmm?*

*[She paused, hesitated and continued], better ways of life and many others [She laughs: Zondiwe, WFG, V2].*

Although the response may show that there was some element of knowledge there is evidence of not being sure. When asked to name the ‘many more,’ her response was the same. The respondents who seemed not to be totally aware of the benefits nor the importance of academic education came from poor backgrounds where none of their relatives or siblings had ever gone into school. Further still, none of Zondiwe’s children were in school. History seems to be repeating itself.

*Not one of them [her children] goes to school. The oldest girl got married last year when she became of ‘age’. What could she have been doing? Nothing. My parents were poor. There was not enough food and I thought if I got married; things would become better. So I got married just after becoming of ‘age’. I don’t know any of my relatives who went to school. Unfortunately my husband did not have cows. He came from another poor family, which did not have cows [Zondiwe, FIW, V2].*

*I had a father who was of no use. We were so poor so the only way out for me was to marry. No one in my family is educated. Unfortunately we are still poor and my children can’t go to school. We have no money [Vulachi, FIW. V1].*

This response suggests the possibility of poverty continuing in a family probably because there is no form of education. As noted by Kwesiga (2002) the education of the mother is important. She claims that children would have a better chance of receiving an education and succeeding at school if the mother were educated. Kelly (1999) equally points out that mothers who are illiterate find it difficult to encourage their daughters to attend school regularly and progress. The following responses are from the headmen in reply to the benefits of educating a girl.

*For the benefits, well the girl is the best to educate. They are kind hearted and are mindful of their families. Naturally girls have a helping heart. If the girl is educated, you know that everyone will get help now [Nkhumbatuwemi, FGH. V1].*

*Mmm, most girls think more than boys. Very few of them will express tendencies of drinking and smoking. The boys will. The girls are a bank of wealth. Even lobola will go up [he laughs]. Instead of 2 cows, I’ll demand 5 cows. There is value added to the girl. She becomes expensive [Chilinda FGH. V2].*

The responses from Chilinda and Nkhumbatuwemi show that they are equally aware of the benefits of educating a girl. There is also a sense of appreciation of the girls' education. It is interesting that the girl is seen as a 'bank of wealth' from which the community stand to benefit. The reason being that there is a likelihood that she would share her resources with others other than spending them on reckless living in contrast with the boys. Concerning the boys, the responses suggests that they had tendencies of drinking and smoking presumably spending and wasting money on such practices instead of supporting their families.

Nkhumbatuwemi's claims for educating a female child are in line with the views of FAWE in Zambia, which claim that educating a girl entails educating the whole nation. This is so because there is an assumption that the whole community would benefit from her education (FAWE, 2004).

Further still, Chilinda considered the education of the girl as a means through which her marital value would be enhanced. This meant that the father would demand more cows for his daughter's hand in marriage. Chilinda of village 2 laughs after indicating that education raises the cost of marrying off a daughter suggesting how much they value the practise of *lobola*. Chilinda's response falls in line with the Human Capital Theory explanation that proves that investment in an individual can produce good returns. In this case Chilinda sees investing in educating a girl would enhance her marital value. Jump states that education for girls should not be seen or considered as a catalyst or "a matter of cultivating the virtues that society considered feminine; compassion, charity, truthfulness and government of the temper" (Jump 1994, p.3). Dollard also states that a mother should be educated as a person because according to her, this would "develop a noble, mentally and morally independent personality"

(Dollard, 2004, p.434). This should be the best reason for educating a woman. FAWE states that “Education brings increased opportunities for improving earnings, using and preserving resources and increasing the capacity to tackle the challenges posed by poverty and a variety of environmental risks” (FAWE, 2006, p.8).

The responses of the women were slightly different in terms of emphasis as noted in the following responses.

*To be able to read and write for myself, have a good life and living well in town and eating well [Suzyo, WFG, V3].*

*To have a good life and a good job in town [Dalitso, FGSG].*

*To work after finishing school, a good job and then I can keep my parents and help them with the other children [Likiwe, FGSG].*

The emphasis from the responses above of the woman and the school girls is on empowering themselves. As already indicated earlier on in the section, they expected education to enable them to live a good life, probably better than what their parents were offering them in the village. The desire to live in town suggests that good life is perceived to be town: the village does not seem to provide it. When the girls were probed about what they meant by ‘good life,’ their response was; a good house, eating good food every day, living in town and having good clothes. The girl’s responses or the women’s do not emphasise the cultivation of their intrinsic nature. Although they raise issues of supporting the parents, it is something that comes as a result of having been empowered, and hence being able to make decisions on their own. Likiwe is able to state, ‘and then,’ to show that it was something she was going to do after she had been educated.

However, characteristics of the collectivist culture still emerge as important as the need to help parents is included in the responses.



*I want to be a journalist, and have a good life in town [Temwachi, FGSG].*

*I want to be a nurse and help the parents [Mikiwe, FGSG].*

Another interesting subject that emerged from the responses of the girls is the type of jobs they would like to do. Of the 7 girls in the focus group, 4 wanted to be journalists after finishing school despite the lack of televisions and newspapers in the area. However the girls had information about journalism from school text books for civics education. Their responses about the type of jobs seem to show a shift away from the girls opting for feminine stereotyped jobs such as nursing. Two of the girls wanted to be nurses, probably because of the nurses at the village clinic. Only 1 wanted to be a teacher.

### *III. Girls Encouraged With Education*

Observed from the responses above; indications are that the participants recognize the importance of education and some of its benefits. However, with the importance of education being crucial to the research, the respondents were probed further, on whether the girls are encouraged to go to school. Figs claims that “to allow a child to learn is only the half-way mark in all cases, most children have to be actively encouraged” and this should be a concerted effort and responsibility of both parents (Figs, 1970, p.24). However, headman Chilinda was of the opinion that it was not his responsibility to encourage the female child to go to school but that of women.

*Yes, for me I say that as men, we are not around the house most of the time. The girls are always with their mothers. The mothers fail to control the girls so that they can go to school. They send the girls about with housework. So, women spoil the girls themselves. [Laughing and others join him. He continues]. And it is the women who tell the girls, ‘Can you go to bathe so that you look attractive for men to see you.’ So the women bring themselves down. Boys get educated because they hear what we the men tell them. Mmm? [Chilinda, FGH. V2].*

In the response Chilinda insisted that the girls spent more time with their mothers, therefore failure of girls to go to school was the mothers' fault who instead occupied the girl with household chores. This further point to the process of socialisation of which, Andersen and Taylor argue that parents are "one fundamental source" (Andersen and Taylor, 2006, p. 305). The liberal feminists "contend that socialisation contributes to women's inequality because it is the learned customs that perpetuates inequality" (Andersen and Taylor, 2006, p. 327). In the response above, Chilinda seems to indicate that women determine what image the girls should project and what behaviours they should exhibit. Zaninge's response to the question on whether girls are encouraged to attend school regularly was:

*Yes we do, but for the girls it is not easy. Visible things to show them are rare. For boys we say 'go to school, look at the son of so and so or look at the head teacher, you can become like him' [Zaninge, FGH. V3].*

While respondents like Zaninge agreed that girls are encouraged to go school, the 'but' used in the response seems to indicate that it was not true. He however gives reason for girls not progressing in school as a lack of role models. The claims made by the men are important to note because some of the early responses of the women such as Jenny in section 1 of this chapter, stated that her father removed her from school and gave her away in marriage. From the observed occurrences, in line with the claims of the men, the girls were always with their mothers doing household chores. The behaviour of the girls is culturally learned through the process of socialisation (Andersen and Taylor, 2006).

This research has argued that educating a mother is important because it gives her the higher inspiration for her children. This significant point has been observed by Barng'etumy (1999) who argued that when women are educated, they could attach some level of importance to the education of their daughter. The time that the mother

and the daughter spend together is important and should be used as an opportunity to encourage the girls with school as noted by the men. Gluman (1994) comments that mothers find it difficult to encourage their daughters with education due to lack of education and further still the mothers may lack confidence and support from their partners who may not see the need to educate the girl.

However, when the men were probed further on the subject of encouraging the girls with school, the issue of traditions emerged.

[He is laughing] *It is true. THIS is how we live, that is why we said, and will still say that the women spoil the girls themselves. But the woman directly talks and teaches the girl, and spends more time with her. Do you see the point? Traditionally the mother should teach the girl because she is the one who talks with her. It is not the role of man. This is how we live!* [Nkhumbatuwemi, FGH. V1].

Headman Nkhumbatuwemi seem to reveal why Zaninge in his response above could have used the word 'but.' During my stay in the village, I observed that the relationship between the father and daughter was restrictive in that the girl of pubescent age was not supposed to talk to the father directly but through her siblings. In some cases, for example, the girl would kneel some distance from the father and say, 'you are being called.' It was the mother who easily relates with the daughter. The father does not seem to communicate verbally with the daughter as one of the norms. This is the reason why, in line with their responses above, the man would not encourage the girl. Nkhumbatuwemi lays a lot of emphasis on this point and from the expression and the tone of his voice it was not right for the man to be involved in feminine roles. Marxist-socialist theory explains that the class system creates divisions between men and women and gives rise to male domination (Beasley, 1999; Andersen and Taylor, 2006). This can be noted in the response above.

*The girls and women have a problem. Even now if you go in the village and ask some women to do some work requiring reading and writing, they won't*

*come forth, even those who have been to school up to grade 8. They always bring themselves down. Even issues to do with gender, you literally have to push them. Traditions are in their minds. Hey?* [Beckoning his friends, who both agree with him. He continues]. *Some women who have been to school don't even want to show themselves. May be because our traditions don't allow them to lead men, they won't even want to do anything. Kamutima aka kaku suzya kuti ka fumeko-KAMWAMBO.* [This mind set is difficult to change-TRADITIONAL MINDSET! Chilinda, FGH. V2].

The men were quick to insist that the women were the ones bound to traditions while at the same time stating that it was a traditional requirement for women to deal directly with the female child. They identify the weaknesses of the women and blame traditions for their state of mind. This shows that patriarchy could be understated and is being downplayed to such an extent that to an unsuspecting eye it seems non-existent. Liberal feminists have argued that girls should not be brought up to be passive and lacking in confidence instead they should be pushed to develop into self-confident independent beings (Marysia, 2000).

The effect of traditions on the women is emphasised however, Chilinda's response seem to further suggest that they too are bound by traditions especially for insisting that it was the women's role to encourage the girls with school. Further still, Chilinda seems to show how ineffective little education can be for women. Such a minimal level of education does not seem to empower the women to act as individuals or to make decisions to support their daughters. This further indicates why little education could equally be dangerous for women as claimed by Dollard "partial education makes one narrow minded ...." (Dollard, 2004, p.454). Such a situation could prevent the women from broadening their intellectual faculties and leave them unprepared for consequential undertakings like Chilinda stated above. Interestingly, he considers it as a traditional mind set within which women are bound: this tradition mind set according to him would be difficult to change. The subject of change is an issue that

this research considers hard to pin down due its sensitivity. The liberal feminists argue to the effect that revolutionary change in any sphere would not be the right move to bring change about, but that the women should be given the freedom to determine their roles and the opportunity to exercise their rationality (Acker, 1994; Weiner, 1997). The radical and Marxist-socialists theories advocate a revolutionary approach insisting that change cannot come through the existing system because the system is controlled and dominated by the men (Beasley, 1999; Andersen and Taylor, 2006).

Earlier in this section, Zaninge brought about the topic of role models. He insisted that there were no role models that could be used in the community to encourage the girls with. This subject was also identified by the women who were of the opinion that the lack of role models makes it difficult for the women to encourage the girls with school.

*If a girl reaches grade 7 it is good. She can marry after that. She is big and at least she can read and write. Encouraging a girl to continue school in this village is difficult. With you around, we are telling the girls about you and it is easy for them to see. We need more women around who are educated and living well. We only have nurses and teachers. They are just like us; there is no difference in their life. And can all the children become nurses and teachers? Is that all there is? Mmm? [She questions those around] [Tiza, WFG. V3].*

My being in the village proved valuable to some women and the school girls. They were able to see in me the effective benefit of education. However, despite their knowledge of the importance of education they seem to be comfortable with a girl only going as far as grade 7 in her education.

Knowing how to read and write seems to be recommendable and sufficient for the girls. Much more, the impact of the nurses and teachers in the village was not

effective enough because they seemed to have assumed the same way of life as the locals.

*Like I already said, marriage looks very attractive to the girls. May be it is the way people talk about it. 'Are you ever going to marry with this habit, what husband will want a woman who can't cook, look at your friend, she has her own home now'. It is; look this one; look she has a baby, look she has a husband, look! Look! Look. Mmm. The educated, where are they? We don't see them to encourage the girls. They all live in town and the girls don't even go to town. If you say get educated and go to live in town. It is nothing; they have never been there. They are comfortable in the village [Monica, WFG. V2].*

Monica argued that even encouraging the girl with the good life in town was not significant because it was absurd. It was an abstract especially for the girls who had never been to town. And so the visible role models in the village (the married girls with babies) seem to be a motivating factor for girls to get married early other than finishing school.

Rice (1995) argued that motivation was critical to successful learning. When the girls cannot recognize the relevance of learning and fail to perceive positive outcomes it may not be easy to encourage them as indicated by Monica. The other girls who have stopped school to get married give the impression they have done the right thing and the other girls admire them. These girls seem to be strong role models, a force capable of controlling the behaviour of other girls. This view is observed by Feist and Feist (2006) and Feist and Feist, (2009) in their discussion of theories of personalities. They argue that forces outside oneself, such as change or the behaviour of others are capable of compelling one's behaviour or decision making process. This force should not be underestimated because the respondents are able to indicate its potential of control. Mikiwe asserts:

*Yes madam, our friends who are married look happy. I admire them, [She laughs]. They have babies and many things [Mikiwe, FGSG].*

Despite these claims there were some girls who emerged as determined to complete school despite the force that the external factors had.

*Me, I want to get educated. I don't want to marry* [Chimwemwe, FGSG].

*Even me. So I just don't accept what the women said* [Elina, FGSG].

Responding to the claims of her friends, Dalitso argued warning them that the right suitor had not yet brought the cows; otherwise, once that happened, it would be difficult for them to insist on continuing with school. Although she also wanted to complete school she did not want to be insistent about it, knowing the trend in the village.

*Mmm, [she cautions her friend] there is no man yet for you! You think your father will look at the cows and say let her get educated? 3 cows? Mmm?* [She asks her friend indicating the importance of the 3 cows]. *Me, I don't know but I also want to finish school and see how it is like to finish school* [Dalitso, FGSG].

Dalitso's determination to get educated seems to be hindered by her knowledge of the cultural traditions surrounding her. There seems to be a feeling of hopelessness and helplessness effect; not able to do anything because the father's word is final and he should be obeyed. The father's authority is important and Hooks notes that "domination usually presents within the family." (Hooks, 2000, p.40). She further states that it is within the family structure that "individuals learn to accept sexist oppression as 'natural'" (Hooks, 2000, p.37). Commenting on self-determination, Pervin points out that "The movement towards self-determination is expressed in intrinsic motivation, or the motive to engage in a task because of an interest in the task itself" (Pervin, 2003, p.133).

In line with Pervin's point, Aggie identified such an aspect.

*It is not easy here. It is the strong girls who finish school. With the pressure around it is difficult. Don't get me wrong, not everyone in this village, men or women want their daughters to get married. Only that it is too much. Those*

*who marry their children off are many. You know what I am saying. So, the few are nothing to force others. The girls also want school. You see them in school don't you? But go find out what their priority is; marriage or nothing [Aggie, KIWR, V2].*

Aggie for example, pointed out that only the strong girls who are capable of withstanding the traditional pressure could manage to complete school. Besides the interest in the tasks as explained by Pervin, the right priority as argued by Aggie is important. It is the question of why are the girls going to school. Is their priority and that of their parents only to enable them to read and write? Aggie also confirmed the earlier claims of the importance of role models.

Some girls pointed out that they appreciated the help some teachers have offered them especially those who encourage them with the importance of school. But as observed from the responses above, the pressure may be too much for them to bear or they may not be strong enough to stand up against the parental influence; to get them married.

#### *IV.     The Role of Decision Making*

The decision making process is an important tool for women as well because it is the means through which deciding and conducting a decision is made. Gamage and Pang state that decision-making is the “process through which individuals and groups... choose courses of action to be acted upon. It includes not only the decision, but also the implementation of that decision to take a particular course of action” Gamage and Pang (2003, p.139). If women can make decisions and are involved in the decision making process they could be empowered to effect the decision to act in a particular course of action that could improve their way of life. When the men were asked about women making decisions, Nkhumbatuwemi responded:



[He is smiling] *you know a man does not like being challenged by women. The man makes decisions not the woman. If women made decisions that would bring confusion. The respect of a woman is important* [Nkhumbatuwemi, FGH. V1].

Observed from this response is that men will not easily share their authority with women, assuming that doing so would bring about confusion. They could not allow the women to make decisions due to fear of loss of respect. Radical feminists insist that women “...are considered inferior beings whose only purpose is to enhance men’s lives....” (Marysia, 2000, p.11). The man emerges as more important and no woman should challenge him. Radical feminists argue that male domination over the women tend to produce “hierarchical social relations” that are built on inequality (Beasley, 1999, p.60). Further still, Andersen and Taylor (2006) emphasise that the origins of women’s oppression lie in men’s control. Radical feminists further insist that men seem to be “at the centre of things and controlling” (Marysia, 2000, p.11). Radical feminists insisted that patriarchy as male domination was not only prevalent in the home over women but “structural domination” which is a “system of hierarchical values embedded in society” (Marysia, 2000, p.11). This is noted by Beasley (1999) and Andersen and Taylor (2006).

The response of Nkhumbatuwemi shows how difficult it would be to change the attitudes of the men. This may show why the liberal feminists insist on correcting this concern through reforming society rather than radically. Figes (1970) argues that change would be slow to accept particularly if it involves men diminishing their absolute supremacy. Figes further insists that the last stronghold that a man will concede to is the idea of his own superiority.

[‘Imwe ndimwe banakazi, mungayoye vichi’]. *‘You, you are just women, what can you say.’* [Khalani waka imwe, ivi lekelani banalume’]. *You sit down; these leave things for men* [Aba banakaz!] *These women!* [He pauses and looks around at his friends and continues]. *These words are so discrediting. If a woman told me that who are you? Do you think you are a man?* [The others

start to laugh while shaking their heads, he continues]. *I can BEAT her. You know, [he turns to look at his friends again and said:] she has insulted me, completely discrediting me. She actually is saying I AM not a MAN. Do you know what I am saying? It is serious. So let us think about them sometimes* [Zaninge, FGH. V3].

Zaninge in contrast with the others stated that men contributed a great deal to destroying the self-esteem of women and hence making it difficult for them to make good decisions. His response appears to be suggesting that the women should be treated in the same way as men and not to destroy their self-esteem. Liberal feminists have argued that women should be treated equally and allowed to exercise rationality. Creating equal opportunities in all spheres of life is the main goal of liberal feminists (Beasley, 1999; Marysia, 2000). Liberal feminist approach explains that “individual ‘autonomy’ and freedom from unwarranted restrictions by others” is of critical concern (Beasley, 1999, p.50). As noted by Zaninge above, women should be treated equally. In line with liberal feminism, inequality tendencies can pose as barriers to the advancement of women (Andersen and Taylor, 2006). Applying the Human Capital Theory, such inequality tendencies could further be cause for the unfair option to educate a boy rather than a girl. Patriarchal dispositions may restrict women’s autonomy and freedom to act as individuals.

Zaninge calls men to be considerate of the state of women ‘sometimes’, not every time, which still shows how difficult it can be for men to consider women as their equals. If men deserve respect so do the women. Liberal feminism insists on exposing the “old-fashioned ideas about what women are and should do, and to allow, even encourage, women to do the same things as men” (Marysia, 2000, p.6).

In response to the same question on men allowing women to make decisions, the women were of a different view to Zaninge:

*A woman? No you can't do that. A man is a man. He deserves respect. You can't stand up to him [Eleni, WFG, V1].*

*A woman is taught to respect a man at all costs. If not then even marriage can end or your husband could take you back to your mother to be re-taught [Mwizilachi, KIWR, V1].*

The response of Eleni and Mwizilachi establishes the point raised by Chilinda in section 3, that women exhibit a traditional mind set as a result of the teachings. The emphasis accompanying Eleni and Mwizilachi's response is indicative of this traditional mind set. They point out that it was not even right to stand up to a man. Probably this could be as a result of the fear of the accompanying consequences for disobedience that will be discussed later in the chapter. However, the assertions of Stockday (1981) are vital because the actions of the women in the response seem to establish the fact that they may not be springing from an independent mind that is unrestricted by convention or docility. The women seem to be imbued with fear. Chitsike (1995) claimed that women agree to the fact that it is 'cultural' for them to be subordinate to men. Hooks notes that individuals learn to accept as 'natural,' "sexist oppression, male supremacy," [.....] "Super-ordination-subordination" and of "superior-inferior" in the family (Hooks, 2000, pp.37 & 40).

#### V. Negative Views of Educating Girls

Emerging from the data were responses that demonstrated a negative view about education, despite identifying its importance. Such views could be impacting on the education of girls. Commenting on the negative impact that education could have on the girls, Muranga (1997) was of the view that some educated girls and women tend to alienate themselves from their roots or take up jobs that are not acceptable socially. Some parents may be uncomfortable with girls that take up such jobs. Vulachi angrily expressed this point addressing me:

[Interjects the ongoing discussion, and pointing a finger at me, raised her voice and said,] *'Imwe bantu bo punzila munanga miaambo.'* [You learned people are destroying customs! Vulachi, WFG. V1].

From the tone of her voice, Vulachi was obviously not happy with the attitude of the educated women. By 'destroying,' she meant annulling the traditions. I could not respond to her accusations for fear of sparking off an argument. I chose to remain silent and my silence was broken by Tione who reinforced the claims of Vulachi:

*Yes, others, like you who come here, educated women, looking nice and we admire them, are not even married. Sometimes the more one gets educated means no marriage. How can a girl live without getting married? Mm? And like Vulachi has said, you educated people pretend to forget your traditions. You begin to imitate the white people. It is the white women who think a woman can live alone. That is not good. Our traditions are important. You forget them, you forget yourself!* [The other women in agreement, respond harmoniously with mmm, at the same time: Tione, CITTR, V1].

The claims of the women here could either be a fear for the loss of their long held traditions or failure to appreciate a changed approach to the traditions that instil a submissive temperament in a woman. The educated women may have a liberated attitude that Jenny, WFG, V2 in section 1 above noted when she said education gives one some form of freedom to do what they wanted. Vulachi's claims are observed by Chitsike (1995) also claimed that educated black women are viewed as confused because they had lost their knowledge and cultural practices and were equally ignorant of the practices of the other culture they had assumed. Tione further insisted that the educated women tend to assume the values of the 'white' people such as living as a single woman. For Tione, who is also a traditional expert and teacher, a loss of traditions meant a loss of one's identity.

Tione introduced another subject. She argued that the more educated one becomes the less chances of marriage. For her, most of the women, like me, who had been to the village, were not married. For her to remain single was not expected of any woman.

This topic was pointed out by one female student who claimed that the mother told her that the women who get educated are not married. She was a strong and self determined girl and yet the mother was negative about education.

*Anyway the traditions are very bad here in the village. You just have to be strong. Me, I will remain strong and one day come driving in the village like you madam [Pretends to be driving; she pauses], madam my mother was saying you are not even married. She was saying when you get educated; no one wants to marry you. Is it true? [Mikiwe, FGSG].*

To the school girls focus group I defended myself with the picture of my family. Mikiwe's response shows the confusion this could cause in the school girls because of conflicting views from their parents who hold their traditional practices in high esteem. By asking whether the mother's claims were true may indicate such a disposition or confirm the internalisation of the belief that marriage was more important than education. Muranga identified this attitude by stating that "undue emphasis on the need to conform to certain accepted code of practice result in regimentation and suppression which sap initiative and cause indifference" (Muranga, 1997, p.1). This topic will be discussed later under barriers to education.

*What for? Too much school is not good at times; look at some of the girls and the way they are dressing. They are just walking about naked [Monica, WFG. V2].*

This attitude to education emerged in village 2 as Monica argued that modern education could be contributing to the immoral dressing. FAWE (2006) argued that modern schools are viewed as institutions that are conveying a bad influence on the children by encouraging them to embrace foreign styles of behaviour and modes of dressing. This development is feared to lead to a loss of traditional values and modesty codes by the locals. In summary, below are the points that emerged from the discussions with the women as a negative impact of education:

- With more education the girls may not get married
- The educated girls do not respect their traditions

- The educated girls tend to lose their traditions and identity
- The educated girls take on western culture and this erodes the moral fibre of society.

Women with such views may find it difficult to encourage their daughters to get educated. Some of these points will be raised below as factors that are influencing the education of girls.

#### VI. Barriers to Female Education

The responses above have raised crucial issues in the investigation of factors that hinder the education of girls/women. Respondents above such as Jenny, Zondiwe and Vulachi, in section 2, gave reasons that could have barred them from progressing and completing school even after accessing it. The reasons include amongst others poverty, marriage, especially after ‘coming of age,’ and household chores. However, the list could be longer because the factors that affect the education of girls are many and overlap each other. Lee and Scott (2005) have argued that barriers to female education continue to impede women’s careers and public life despite advocacy. Liberal feminists insist on the removal of all barriers to women’s advancement such as inequality. The theories of gender inequality such as liberal, radical and Marxist-socialist feminists’ will continue to be used in this section to help discover the roots of what could be militating against the female education. This section will focus on identifying these factors from the responses of the participants. The emerging themes were divided into two sub themes; home based factors and the school based factors. Therefore, the discussion of this section (Barriers to female education) will be done under these two sub themes.

#### *VI (a) Home Based Factors*

This section focuses on the factors affecting female education which seemed to have their origin in the home. The home here will include the nuclear household, extended family and the rest of the village who seem to all be in control of the life of an individual. As noted above earlier responses in this chapter pre-empted this discussion. Reference to these responses will be made. In this section a number of cultural and non cultural impacts that posed a threat directly or indirectly to girl's educational aspirations are included. These are lack of user fees and school requirements, poverty, selective tendencies of some parents, cultural traditional requirements such as marriage, age at start of school, lack of role models, household chores. Below are the findings and discussion.

The lack of tuition fees and lack of other school requirements such as uniform and books was associated with poverty by many respondents.

*I passed to go to grade 8 but there was no money for school fees, books and uniform, so I got married. Where was I going to write or write with? I did not even have a uniform [Tione, KITTR].*

*For me madam, poverty also is a problem. If you are poor you can't pay fees, buy uniforms or books. If you don't have a nice uniform it is not nice to go to school and without books where can you write [Chimwemwe, FGSG].*

From earlier responses above such as Vulachi in section 1 indicated that they could not continue school due to the fact that they could not afford the school requirements or school fees. This is equally noted by Chimwemwe a school girl who insists the lack of school fees and other school requirement is as a result of poverty. While education can be obtained 'free' from grade 1 to grade 7 in Zambia, the other required school provisions such as school uniforms and books that parents are supposed to provide are expensive to obtain. Free basic education was announced in February 2002 in Zambia in an effort to make school accessible to all the children in the

country. This, however, applies to the primary level only. Basic and high school is only accessible when the 'user fee' is paid by the parents (MOE, 2005). Tione's experience above makes sad reading because she qualified to progress to secondary school but could not go because of lack of school fees and other learning resources such as books. The issue of uniform did not emerge from many respondents but poverty has its own implications which could include the lack of learning resources. Observed during the collection of data, were a number of pupils who came to school in proper school uniform with the majority coming without shoes. There were a few that came in their own clothes especially those in grade 1. This could still be because of poverty.

*Poverty is another problem here. If the girl does not have a good uniform and does not have nice things then the boys provide them in exchange for sex or marriage and the girls accept. So marriage is like a comfort from home. And sometimes parents have a lot of children and how can you afford to help or support 8 children and if it is a polygamous marriage there can even be 14 children. That is too much. The girls are the most affected [Aggie, KIWR, V2].*

Aggie's claims agree with those of Chimwemwe above but emerging from her account are other issues such as a big family that becomes difficult to provide for especially when in poverty. Polygamy previously discussed in chapter 1 is common in this setting with men marrying more than 3 wives. For example my host had 2 wives and was in the process of marrying the third one.

The teachers, despite agreeing that school requirements, such as those identified above, were a problem for poor parents, especially, argued that some parents could just be using that as a 'red herring.' Below is one such case of a particularly clever girl.

*Allow me to continue madam; another good example is of a girl who claimed she could not finish school because of poverty. These teachers [pointing at Mr Khodowe and Mr Ganizani] and I, we bought uniform, shoes and paid her*



*school fees. The head teacher bought her books. She was in grade 8. But this girl went all the same and was married. Imagine after we spent our money helping her [Edisa, FGT].*

While the account above is a true account, evidence of poverty in the village in some cases was there. However, when probed why poverty seemed to have more pronounced negative effects on the female child than the boy; why the girl had to be the one to stop school; the respondents were of the opinion that a girl has marriage as an alternative to poverty and it seems to act as a form of refuge for the girls. For example accounts of Vulachi and Zondiwe in section 3 suggest this. Ganizani's response was:

*You are right. If there is poverty both sexes should be affected. But you know, for the girl, parents think she will get married, she is a waste of money but the boy can get educated. The boy has more hope than the girl [Ganizani, FGT].*

Further still, respondents such as Maria below stated that as a result of poverty, the girls assumed the role of the mother, joining forces with the mother in searching for food for the whole family. Her motherly intuition is taken for granted.

*Some girls begin to act as mothers looking for food instead of going to school. She is a woman and has a heart of the mother [Maria, WFG. V2].*

The accounts above further reveal that parents may be taking advantage of the situation of poverty by opting for the girl to be out of school while allowing the boy to continue. The girl is presumed to be a waste of money as noted by Ganizani because the chances are she will be married soon. Such a tendency can be considered as a form of inequality with the girl being discriminated against on grounds of her sex and the liberal feminists note that such inequalities exist in all spheres of life (Marysia, 2000).

One of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) under consideration is the eradication of poverty, in recognition of its effect on the female population and their

participation in the process of development. This has emerged as one of the important focal points in the fight to meet the MDG as observed in most of the contributions towards female education such as NGOCC (2005), Imboela and Ammassari (2006), and FAWE (2006). The FNDP (2006) has identified the vulnerability of women to poverty. The limited resources in the family tend to benefit the boys' education. This could explain why the girls seem to be more affected by poverty than boys. Kelly et al (1999), analysing the education of girls in Zambia, were able to establish that parental poverty contributed to the school dropout rate as has been pointed out by the respondents in this research.

*Some parents are judges between the two children and they think they waste money on the girl but the boy can easily get educated without disturbances like marriage [Grace, FGT].*

*That is true. You know the locality here places a lot of emphasis on EARLY marriage for the girls; there is a prestige in marriage for parents having cows as wealth. It seems like there are few girls around and as already said they are at home doing the household chores. Then madam, girls are withdrawn from school to be married off by parents. Imagine that. First priority for school is given to the boy because the girl is believed to bring in the wealth in terms of money or cows which the boy later uses to pay for his marriage. There is a girl, as had been many others VERY intelligent indeed, who have been forced into marriage. We have talked to the parent but they don't understand because of the belief and customs of this locality. Parents even say that it is a waste of money to educate a girl. It is better to educate a boy. All this affects the education of girls seriously. [Shakes his head and continues]. Others can agree with me, it is bad [Khodowe, FGT].*

Selective parents (those who choose which child in the family is to be educated) are an issue here. Such a tendency emerges as another form of barrier to female education as observed in the responses above from Ganizani and Khodowe above. For example Maria and Tiza in section 1 indicated that *it depends upon the parents*. The decision to marry off a girl is still evidence of being selective because some reasons advanced are that the girl could be a waste of resources.

*I was intelligent. [The other women start to laugh; what? She questions why they are laughing]. I know I was; at least I can read and write. Anyway my oldest brother wanted to marry but my father's cows had all died. He needed*

*cows to marry. So my father said I was going to fail grade 7 any way and so he got me to marry. He got 4 cows and my brother used two cows to marry. The two that remained have multiplied. Since my brother had finished school, he now lives in town. I could have finished as well and gone to live in town [Fumbani, WFG. V3].*

Fumbani's reason for not getting educated reveals how the tendency of selecting who to educate could affect the female child. The brother for whom her education was sacrificed for is living a far better life. The father's economic position appears to have improved because of the cows that have multiplied: both the father's life and the son's are much better than the girl's. There seem to be a lack of regard for the future of the girl whose hope they place in marriage. This scenario is typical of patrilineal groupings who regard women as vessels for reproduction. Such a view is heavily contested by feminists who insist that women should not be viewed as objects (Schneider and Gough, 1962; Kourany et al, 1992; Plumwood, 1993). Plumwood's discussion on Dualism is further evidenced here when she states that the instruments (women) are part of the dominators' (men's) network of purpose that he is able to harness to meet his purposes and needs. In this case the need is wealth and cows for the sons to use later as lobola.

This is also evident that not all the girls who are withdrawn from school are unintelligent as shown in Fumbani's account above. In her father's view, she was considered as unintelligent hence he had her removed from school. However, Khodowe and Edisa have also shown above that intelligent girls are still withdrawn from school. This shows that intelligence cannot be a basis or reason for withdrawing a child from school. Evidence emerging from the data, point to the cultural need to marry the girl off as an underlying factor. Referring to the feminist theories Kwesiga argued that the core of radical feminists was the concern of the "exploitative nature of patriarchy," which assumes the superiority of men in all aspects of culture (Kwesiga,

2002, p.17). Radical feminism points out why the women are constantly underprivileged in contrast to men stating that “the concept and theory of patriarchy is essential to capture the depth, pervasiveness and interconnectedness of different aspects of women’s subordination...” (Marysia, 2000, p.12). Liberal feminists explain that the inequality of women has its origins in the traditions of the past and these pose barriers to the advancement of women in the public sphere (Hooks, 2000; Andersen and Taylor, 2006). Although liberal feminists’ explanation of the position of women in society is in terms of their unequal rights in the public sphere, radical feminists’ explanation of hierarchy and coercive authoritarian control in the family structure shows how inequality can still be perpetuated within the private sphere. This can be observed in Fumbani’s story above.

FAWE (2004) suggested that a girl’s poor performance at school is used as an excuse by parents to withdraw a female child from school justifying that she would be a waste of money. Muranga (1997) argues that weighing education against economic returns could be contributing to the girls’ failure to continue with education and preventing them from reaching their full potential. In line with the critical explanation of Human Capital Theory (HCT), the assumed low returns of the girls’ education is not justified because in section 2 Nkhumbatuwemi the headman of village 1 and Chilinda headman of village 2 both indicated that the returns of educating a girl were even better than the boys’.

*I was not good in school. I did not understand anything so I got married. [Laughs and others join in]. It’s true. I could not even read or write and up till now I can’t read or write [Enelesi, WFG. V1].*

While in some accounts, cause for dropping out of school was parental preference, Enelesi decided to drop out on her own accord because of her poor performance in class.

Marriage, a subject that seems to be captured in almost all the responses, does not turn out to be 'all roses' in some cases. A point to note in Fumbani's account above is the disenchantment that still weighs her down. This can also be observed in the following accounts:

*I stopped school in grade 3 [laughing]. I got married. If I did not, I would have a good job [Monica, WFG. V2].*

*When they go for the initiation ceremony, they are told what is expected of them but they chose to marry, but speaking for myself, when you get into marriage you feel stuck. Like in a small hole with no outlet. Yes, then the children come, you get even more stuck. [She is laughing]. There is nothing for us in marriage but a name that we are married and the respect you get when you get married [Every one laughs: Site, WFG. V2].*

*[Crying] I would like to go back to my mother and then go back to school. My mother knew better that is why she wanted me out of it in the first place. [Snivelling] I am in a horrible marriage not what I was promised. I already hear he wants another wife. He paid 2cows for me, which I know my father can't pay back. I want my mother [She was still crying: Lucy, SIYM].*

Despite Monica stating that she gladly stopped school to marry, there is a sense of regret. What had appeared attractive and promising is regretted. Lucy was able to state that life as a married young girl was difficult and would prefer going back to school than continuing with marriage. Site stresses that marriage was not offering them the expected hopes. The feeling of being trapped could indicate their hopelessness and helplessness. Site further complains that there was nothing for them in marriage except the name and respect it offers. This further agrees with Taylor (2006) who explains that in Zambia, marriage is an important part of gender relations and identity. Lucy, a young mother and wife, dropped out of school to marry and from her narration, there is evidence that the mother had tried to advise her against the decision.

Ganizani, in response to what the barriers of female education could be, stated that:

*I am not going to beat about the bush, madam the main problem in this village is that girls are coached on issues concerning marriage in the initiation ceremonies. They prepare the girl child for marriage instead of telling them the importance of school. The other thing is the roles for the girl at home emphasize marriage, how a real woman should be like. Others can say something [Ganizani, FGT].*

By coaching, Ganizani was referring to the process of teaching that emphasised marriage during initiation rites. The lessons learnt seem to prepare the girls for marriage. Anderson and Taylor (2006) have noted that gender socialisation is an effective means through which behaviour associated with gender is culturally learned. As noted by Ganizani, the roles the girl learns at home emphasis marriage. Cosslet et al (1996) further argue that marriage is an important aspect of womanhood because of its role of childbearing and the importance of children. Unfortunately as shown in the account of the chief, Nkosi, the girls who are withdrawn from school are too young for marriage.

*In this area, I will say marriage. You know cows are very important here. The parents will withdraw their daughters in order to marry them off. Parents produce children in terms of cows. Girls are a source of income here. This custom is difficult to let go. Some parents especially the fathers, even source for men for their daughters to get married to. Some girls are very young, as young as 12 years. They can't even give birth. However the girls also think marriage is so important. So the school has so many cases of this nature. [Of girls being withdrawn from school for marriage]. The girls also are a problem. When they 'come of age' they think they are ready for marriage. The traditional roles of women equally occupy some space in the women's minds hence affecting their aspiration for school. Women never even mention school or its benefit to their daughters. So, cemented in the girl's minds is just the traditions expected of her and her future role [Nkosi, SIR].*

Moore (1999), states that early marriage has the potential of impeding the girl's progression in education. This may further affect her educational aspirations. Nkosi further emphasises the preference of withdrawing girls from school as being dictated by the customs which he states are difficult to give up. The father's role seem to be more pronounced while in some cases respondents only said, 'parents', which could mean both are responsible for withdrawing the girls from school. Wolfendale (1996)

pointed out that parental involvement in the education of the children could raise the self esteem of the children and improve their educational achievement. As earlier noted gender socialisation is effective and cannot be underestimated. The roles the girls are socialised into contribute to women's inequality because it is the learned cultural traditions that perpetuate inequality tendencies (Andersen and Taylor, 2006). Hooks states that individuals "experience the practice of sexist domination in the family settings" and "learn to accept any sexist oppression" that comes with it as normal (Hooks, 2002, pp.37 &40).

The other subject that was raised as contributing towards the reasons why girls opted for marriage other than school was that of role models. This subject has been discussed early in the chapter under section 3; therefore a brief discussion will be given here.

*There are very few women that are educated, so there are few examples for the girls to see. Women should lead by example but here it is just marriage. For the men there are many that are working and are in good positions while women are just wives. So girls only know that women are housewives. [Looking at others] Am sure you agree with me. Yes the things around that motivate the boys are so many. The boys have inspirations and visions not girls [lowers his voice and says and says] but, girls its marriage [Nkhumbatuwemi, FGH, V1].*

*In this village, it is difficult to prove the old women wrong. We don't see a lot of girls' finishing school and doing nice jobs. If we saw them that can help and also help us to just know that we can also do it. We can also finish school. But here, mmm, everywhere you go it is [laughing, and imitating the old women], 'when are you getting married? You are not growing young. You are wasting time'. [Everybody is laughing, she continues], or 'school will not marry you; leave school for the boys' [Chimwemwe, FGSG].*

*Yes, because we go through a lot of things as we grow up as girls. Some of our friends have been married and stopped school. We see them in the villages and sometimes we think it is good [Muzo, FGSG].*

The position of housewife seems to be attractive to Muzo and an inspiration for them to get married. Much more, the girls as explained by Chimwemwe appear to be under pressure from the elderly women to get married. The women who usually enquire

when the girls are getting married instead of when they would be finishing school seem to affirm that what is most important is marriage and not school. Strinati (2004), claims that the roles of wife, mother and housewife appear to be the natural prerogative for women and hence the reason why the girls could be pressured into it. The women as noted by Chimwemwe argue that school is not meant for the girls but for the boys. Probably because there are not many educated girls around for them to look to hence the elderly women use it as a basis to argue from.

Emerging from a number of respondents above are words such as ‘the locality’, ‘in this village,’ and ‘in this area,’ this could be evidence that the environment was another contributing factor to the barriers of female education. The UNESCO (1974) document on the *Education in a Rural Environment* has argued that education in a rural environment falls short of many things such as best teachers, teaching resources and high quality infrastructure. Murphy (1989) points out the need to raise the standards of schools in deprived environments because of the impact that they could have on the learner.

Schools in deprived areas should be given priority in many aspects. The first step must be to raise the standards to the national average; the second quite deliberately to make them better. The justification is that the homes and neighbourhoods from which many of the children come, provide little support and stimulus for learning (*Murphy, 1989, p. 23*).

While the environment has such an impact on the learner, Murphy was able to state that homes in these environments may provide little support and stimulus for learning. As observed in the responses marriage assumes an important position.

Something that is still emerging as a barrier to female education is the household chores, a factor that seems to put mothers under pressure because they prepare the girls for their future roles as mothers and housewives. This has already been observed



in the responses above such as Maria, Khodowe, and Ganizani. Marysia, states that the girls are progressively “‘engendered’ from a very young age and as a result developed the desire to be ‘mother’ and to be ‘feminine’” at an early age (Marysia, 2000 p.19). Further still, Marxist-socialist feminists argue that women are overburdened at the domestic level where the gender roles are so pronounced.

Observing the women in their daily activities, the engendering of roles was a common scene with girls being taught with emphasis to perform their tasks meticulously. See appendix 4 for transcribed field notes. In this account the importance of school is trivialised by the mother as she tries to prepare the girl for her important role at home. The observed scene involves an 8 year old girl, daughter of one respondent, Gwane in Village 2. The mother did not care whether the girl went late to school. For her, school would always be there even if the girl was late. School appears like just a building structure that would always be there, immovable. It was not necessarily the content or knowledge the girl would attain from there that was important. When I offered to do the cleaning of the plates to relieve the girl for school, this was the response of the mother:

*Anya Phiri [that is how I was called], the girl has to learn her roles. How will she cook for her husband? School does not teach them that. Does it? It is just punishment, punishment, and punishment. Teachers just like punishing pupils also. They have nothing to do [Gwane, FN].*

Such a scene was common in the whole village. The activities involving a girl started in the morning when she would wake up to sweep the surroundings to the house and would end up with her piling all the dishes used that day in the kitchen in readiness for washing the following day.

The day for the women and girls started at about 4:30am or 5am and continued until 9pm. The men would be out of bed from 5:30am or 6am until 8pm. There were instances however, when the men would not return early enough from their drinking sprees. If the man returned at 10:00pm, the woman would wait to give him his food. Then she would go to sleep at 10:30pm or 11:00pm. The young boys were the last to wake up starting the day with playing.

Table 10 below shows roles and who performed them. This was observed throughout the period of data collection in the village. Note that the period of data collection coincided with the period of preparing the fields in readiness for growing crops (September, October and November). This is just before the onset of the rainy season (November to April). Some people would plant their seeds right away and begin to wait for the rain season.

<i>Table 10 ~ Division of Roles</i>	
<b>Task Performer</b>	<b>Tasks To Be Performed</b>
<b>Women and Girls</b>	Maintenance and upkeep of house and surroundings Collecting clay for polishing the floors Drawing water for all purposes Sourcing, preparing and cooking food General up keep and feeding of the children and babies Pounding maize for maize meal Collecting the firewood Laundry Painting and decorating the huts Brewing beer
<b>Men and Boys</b>	Re-thatching the huts Making reed mats Taking care of domestic animals (sheep, goats and cattle) Sharpening and getting the hoes and axes ready for farm work
<b>Both Male and Female</b>	Preparing and watering the <i>dimba</i> Preparing the fields and planting

It is evident from the table that the number of roles that the girls and the mothers were expected to perform were more than those of the men and the boys. The amount of time the men and boys take on each task could be questioned and considered more significant than the range of tasks however some tasks like re-thatching huts are performed once a year and women are always there to help by providing food. The girl work alongside the mother imitating her: the mother corrects the girl constantly and administers discipline accordingly. The men on the other hand seem to have a lot of time on their hands a matter that Nkhumbatuwemi agrees with.

*You know with the boy you see him making things when in grade 1-4. You are able to see from the things he makes and does that he is interested in school. But the female child, everything is about sweeping, cooking, drawing water, putting babies on the back. They have no time to even play or even look at books. You know the boy has time to rest, the girl it is work continuously. So in the end the girl loses interest in school. So when she becomes of age she just wants to get married. This needs to change. But how, because this is what has been going on for a long time? [Pauses and then continues] To help the girls is difficult because as fathers we don't talk with the girls. It's the mother [Nkhumbatuwemi, FGH. V1].*

The response from Nkhumbatuwemi shows how that the men have so much more time than the women. He equally observes that the girl is denied time to play or later study by herself because work is continuously expected of her until she goes to bed. Rest for the girl would be guaranteed when requested to put the baby on her back and move out of the sight of the mother to prevent the baby from crying for the mother. However, helping look after her siblings is another task altogether that the girl is expected to learn. Hooks states that “the family is an important kingship structure: a common ground for people who are linked by blood ties, heredity, or emotive bonds: an environment of care and affirmation” (Hooks, 2002, p.37). However as pointed out by radical and Marxist-socialists feminists’ theories, it is within the family structure that individuals are socialised to accept the unequal distribution of work, sexist

oppression and accept male supremacy. It is within the family that the girls learn that it is the female's role to provide (Hooks, 2002).

Speaking to some girls who came late to school on the day that I was on duty revealed that pressure to complete household chores was one such a reason.

*I was helping mother with the baby* [FN. Girl 1].

*I was drawing water for washing plates* [FN. Girl. 2, 3, 4].

*I was cooking nshima*<sup>34</sup> [FN. Girl. 5].

*I was sent to [village B] to return the sieve mother borrowed*  
[FN. Girl. 6].

The boys on the hand said:

*We were playing on the way* [FN. Boy. 1 and 2].

*Nshima was cooked late* [FN. Boy. 3].

*Mother did not remind me of the time* [FN. Boy 4 and 5].

*I woke up late* [FN. Boy. 6].

The reasons are so different; the quotations speak for themselves. Tembo (1984) pointed out that in most Zambian homes, division of labour based on sex commences early in life, with the girls being taught their future roles. Commenting on the same, FAWE (2004) argued that household chores could direct the attention of girls away from learning. From the responses of the girls above household tasks can affect girls from accessing academic education efficiently. Although both the girls and boys who were late were punished, for the girls it was a continuation of work: one wonders how actively they participated in class. Liberal feminists have insisted that gender inequality is partly a result of gender role socialisation and this can be observed in the responses above. The inequality originates from the home environment and is further perpetuated and tolerated in school.

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<sup>34</sup> Nshima is Zambia's staple food made from the maize flour. Others call it hard porridge or pulp.

The traditional teachings emerged as another obstruction to female education. The teachings seem to assume their peak when the girl ‘came of age.’ Other respondents like Jenny and Zondiwe above pointed out that when they ‘became of age’ they got married. Zondiwe further married her daughter off when she ‘became of age’. Ganizani above explained this scenario. The phase seems to be an important stage in the life of the girl, mother, father and the community. The response from Edisa, a teacher and key informant was able to explain this.

*Marriage is valued here. They wait for the girls’ puberty like vultures to bail them from poverty. So if she can bring in 2 cows they will let her marry. And when they have the cows in the kraal they even say, ‘ don’t spoil our child with school’ and yet some parents even use the money [if they get money equivalent to the cows] they get for drinking beer while their daughters are suffering in these marriages [shakes her head in anger]. More than that, the girls feel getting married will save them from the poverty at their parents’ home [Edisa, KITR].*

The activities that surround this phase are quite complex for a girl because they involve a lot of rigorous teaching and training. As explained in chapter 3, the phase marks the onset of another stage in the life of the girl. From the responses already quoted and Edisa’s above, the phase seem to indicate readiness for marriage. Nkhosi raised this point above in this section stating that girls were to blame for the state of affairs because they tend to assume readiness for marriage when they ‘come of age.’ The topics the girls are taught can be explicit as narrated by Temwachi a 15 year old girl who was in grade 7. Her account from a follow-up interview, narrated an experience she went through at 14 years of age during her initiation ceremony that took 2 weeks.

*Um then... sex is the other thing. The women dancing and even put up an act like they are you know (sex act) they even show you the position you take as a woman. Ah! Then they taught me what they called tyola. [Tyola is a simulation activity depicting how to shave a husband’s pubic hair]. There is a lot of dancing; you know you wriggle the waist slowly, enticingly and invitingly. Then you slowly go down and up, you shave the man holding ‘him’ [meaning the penis] tenderly in a provocative manner. MM madam it is hard that is why it is called tyola it breaks you. It took me a lot of time to learn*

*but I learnt. Do you know madam? I can teach you* [She was asking me. Temwachi, FISG].

The narration below is from Mikiwe who was 13 years old and had just undergone the initiation ceremony. She was in grade 6 during the time of the interview.

*I was told that a woman is not supposed to deny her husband sex. Give him what he wants. Then the waist, this is important.* [She is holding the waist to show me]. *You should wriggle your waist well to make him enjoy the sex and be satisfied. So the waist should be flexible. So I was taught how to wriggle my waist very well.* [She warns me]. *You know we are warned not to tell anyone about this. If they found out they will put me back in the house and even beat me. I have to learn to keep things instead of telling everyone. You know when I get married am not to tell anyone what happens even if it is bad. He will be my husband and no one's. And then I was taught to respect the elders, the men and women and to kneel down. The others were how to take care of the menstrual cloth. No one should see it and no man should know that you are having periods. There are many things madam* [Mikiwe, FISG].

The subject of the initiation rites and what is taught is the discussion of the next chapter however the narrations given show how far the traditional teachers can go to pass on information to girls no matter how explicit and how old the girl is as long as she has 'become of age.' Steria was 15 years old and in grade 4. She was introduced to me by a teacher who was aware of the research I was doing. She provided me with good information that confirmed some of the questions I had about the unprofessional behaviour of male teachers. Steria was able to say this when asked if she were going to finish school:

*I don't know, I am big, there are 4 of us in class who are big and the rest are young. They laugh at us and call us mothers. Even the teachers, the men are also a problem. When I came out of the house* [that is the house of confinement] *I was shaved. One male teacher called me aside and later in the night I met him and he* [she pauses and then continues] *ah ah I mean, he* [pause, mm: I prompt her] *ah, mm, ah* [smiles and looks down] *slept me.* [Silence] *He told me that he was teaching me and checking if I was ready for sex.* [For what? I probe her] *you know* [what? I prompted further: smiling and looking down, more silence and then quietly she said] *chikwati* [Steria, FISG].

From Steria's account, age was contributing to her being bullied. The young ones were bullying the older ones probably because they looked too old for the grade.

However, according to Steria, the male teachers took advantage of the older girls especially after undergoing initiation. The shaving done during initiation seemed to sell off the girls signifying competence in sex skills and hence the teachers seemed to monopolise on that and were demanding sex from the girls. (This subject will be discussed further in the section that will follow). The expression ‘*chikwati*’ used by Steria is used here to mean sex but the actual meaning of the word is marriage. To avoid the use of the word sex which is assumed as an explicit word in the local language ‘*chikwati*’ is used.

Contributing to the subject of age as one of the factors that has contributed to the prevention of girls from completing school, Zaninge blamed the government:

*The government’s decision to enrol children at any age in grade one is good and bad. You see that? Most girls who start at 10 years old are disadvantaged. You know these girls [he is smiling] they are looking big with big breast and they even reach puberty in grade 3 or 4. The next thing is marriage [Zaninge, FGH. V3].*

In a bid to get as many children as possible into school the government instructed schools throughout the country to enrol children of any age group in grade 1. This was also intended to capture those who had missed out on accessing school at the right age due to various circumstances such as finances and poverty (MOE, 2002). Further still, while enrolment has improved, the problem of retention, especially for the girls, is still crucial. The girls start school at a pubescent stage, a crucial stage in the locality and in the life of the girls. It is at this stage, as shown from the response, when the girls ‘come of age’ and are easily withdrawn from school. The teacher’s abusive conduct brings us to the second category of factors that were noted as affecting the education of girls.

VI (b) School Based

This section will analyse the factors that affect the education of girls that are school based. Though they have been identified as school based a number of the factors are connected to the home environment. Hyde (1993), commenting on the factors influencing women's education, argues that they lie outside the education system. In contrast, the respondents cited a number of factors that lie within the school environment that are affecting women's education.

As already been observed in Steria's response above the conduct of teachers towards the female pupils is of concern. Following up on her response, the women in the village were in agreement and were able to cite their own experiences with male teachers. For example Mwizilachi describes the reason she stopped school.

*I went up to grade 8 but I was made to stop because the teacher impregnated one girl in the village. So all the other girls in the village were told that the teacher would impregnate us as well. So I was married off [Mwizilachi, WFG, V1].*

The actions of one teacher put in jeopardy the chances for a number of girls from getting educated. From Mwizilachi's account, the members of the village do not seem to trust all the male teachers as a result of one male teacher's actions. Demanding that all the girls in the village stop going to school, may insinuate that the girls are equally not trusted with the male teachers.

*Even school teachers, because they know we are matured so they do ask to sleep with us, they even become very difficult punishing you, chasing you from class or calling you all sorts of names until you agree.*

Agree to what?

*Madam you know.*

No, I want you tell me.

*It is sleeping with us. [Giggling, she then continues]. But when you get pregnant, you stop school [Muzo, FGSG].*



Muzo in her response acknowledged the tendency of male teachers taking advantage of female pupils especially when they are aware of their new status. The teachers seem to use punishment as a weapon to get the girls to agree to their indecent actions. Meanwhile, the girls end up pregnant and leave school. Temwachi raises the matter of touching, another factor related to the same subject. The teachers seem to have a habit of touching the girls an act that the girls may wrongly or rightly interpret as an attempt to bed them.

[She is giggling] *And you know like in our class some male teachers like touching girls so for me each time a male teacher touched me I felt like he wanted me so that I could try out you know what I mean* [She paused and then continues]. *I was no longer performing well in class, I was so confused* [Temwachi, FISG].

In line with Temwachi's response, I observed a similar scene during a grade 9 class observation before I started teaching. Each time the teacher got to a girl, he leaned his hand on the shoulder of the girl. This he did to 5 girls. It seemed like a habit which I was uncomfortable with. When I questioned this teacher later during break about this tendency, he did not see it as a problem. He was of the opinion that it helped him build a rapport with what he called 'my pupils.' Cullingford (1996) argued that teachers have a professional role with their pupils. The professional role should be maintained as much as possible. The worry is that it only involved the female pupils.

Temwachi continues from the above response:

*They [traditional teachers] should not shave us. If they don't shave us is that wrong? Mm? The boys laugh at us and that makes us look foolish. You can decide not to even come to school until the hair has grown. And you know* [She lowers her voice] *even the male teachers here, they ask us to sleep with them. I have a friend, I can't just mention her name,* [she lowers her voice further almost whispering and continues] *you know what, she sleeps with the teacher.* [Raises her voice again and says] *I can't talk about that now but it happens, you know these teachers say they like the young girls because they wriggle their waist well* [Temwachi, FISG].

In a further interview with Temwachi, she confirmed this subject again. Her claims of the actions of the male teachers further show that the teacher's professional

conducted was being compromised as the teachers took advantage of the young girls' new status: women.

Temwachi further identified bullying as one of the factors that barred the girls from continuing with school. Temwachi pointed out the boys as perpetrators of this act upon knowing that the girls had just undergone initiation. The bullying seems to also be triggered by a number of things one of which is shaving. During the initiation ceremony some girls are confined in the house for number of days during which period the girl may stay away from school and be shaved: when they returned to school the boys notice from the shaving why the girl had stayed away from school.

*Yes the girls are shaved that is the whole head. One experience I have had was with a grade 6 class. This girl just came back from the initiation ceremony. The boys were shouting, 'dende! dendel' [Cooked relish] When I insisted I wanted to share the joke, the boys explained that the shaven girl had just come out of initiation and so she was ready to be eaten by boys or men: sexual intercourse. I looked at the girl who just looking down. That girl did not continue to come to school. She stopped because the boys did not stop teasing her [Grace, FGT].*

'Dende', as indicated in the account is cooked relish, which in this case was being used to symbolise the readiness of the girl for sexual intercourse. The boys were literally stating that they could now have sex with her. She is traditionally learned. The bullying narrated in the response above resulted in the victim withdrawing herself from school altogether. The bullying in this case takes place in the school environment but was precipitated by the traditions in the home environment. Little is known whether the girl was bullied on her way to or from school or in the village but the evidence given was that it occurred in the school environment. The traditional requirement of confining girls to the house during initiation and shaving them at the end of the rite seems to advertise the girls' new status to the men. However, the negative impact it bears is evident in the experience of the girl cited in the response.

Her posture captured in Grace's narration could probably be that she felt intimidated and ashamed of herself and what she had just gone through. Intimidation can be another form of abuse and should not be overlooked.

The teachers equally blamed this situation on the traditions, particularly the knowledge that the girls seemed to acquire during confinement. Some girls seem to assume their new status of womanhood seriously and hence begin to look down on the teachers. Julie seems to put the blame further on the girls for advertising themselves to the teachers.

*Yes, the girl will not even ask any question in class. She suddenly becomes passive because she is under instructions and threats. But some girls become big headed and rude claiming that they are now matured and are capable of sexually handling male teachers. They don't even listen to the teachers. They have this air around them. You know what I mean? They want to practice what they are taught. This is ruining our girls. What they are taught in confinement! If they were taught in the right way emphasising school the majority of them would see the value of school. It is sad [Julie, FGT].*

However, Julie shows from her narration how the girl assumes a passive disposition right after her initiation. As a teacher Julie knew the girl well and was able to observe the change in the girls' temperament right after the initiation: "suddenly passive," which she attributes to the instructions of the traditional teachers. Julie seems to further indicate that the initiation gives the initiate what the African feminist would call "taking control of their sexuality" (Tamale, 2005, p.11). The sexual intercourse techniques and knowledge the girls may receive during initiation could be tempting enough to try out.

The results of the research on the *Children and Young People voice their experiences on Gender, Sexuality, HIV/AIDS and Life Skills* revealed that initiation ceremonies tend to tempt both girls and boys into putting into practice what the girls had learnt in

confinement. The young people further argued that initiation ceremonies cause men to get attracted to a girl who would have graduated from confinement. This was based on the fact that the girl was believed to have been taught how to 'handle men:' sexual intercourse techniques (Youth Researchers, 2006).

When the head teacher was probed about this state of affairs, (of male teachers having casual and sexual relationship with female pupils) this was his response:

*Well, I cannot deny that the teachers are sexually active. I have tried what I can do? I cannot follow them everywhere they go. When they impregnate a girl, the law is there, it will take its course* [Head teacher, SIR].

His response suggests that he was aware of the problem but it was beyond his control. He suggests the law as the only means through which this problem would be corrected. The next question was whether the law does take its course but he chose not to respond. After probing him it emerged that he was the one who needed to report such teachers to the authorities but he had not done that so far.

*[Reluctantly] Anyway, I am supposed to report the concerned teacher to the DEBSO, [District Education Board Secretary] who later ensures that the teacher is suspended pending investigation* [Head teacher, SIR].

(The other information given was requested to be off record, so it has not been included). The fact that the teachers concerned are not brought to book seems to be perpetuating the whole state of affairs. One of the teachers had even married a pupil he had impregnated. When the teachers were probed concerning the alleged actions their responses were defensive.

*You know the women in this village are funny. They can say anything. If one teacher impregnates a pupil then all of us have. This place is just difficult* [Kalinkhu, FGT].

He blames the women in the village for exaggerating the whole situation. He however acknowledges the action of the teacher but seems to play it down to just as a single case in point.

*This is very true madam. As teachers we have been told a lot of things just because we want to help. You know as a man I am not supposed to be standing alone along the road with a girl. Imagine I meet one of the pupils and I stop to talk to her. If I AM found, NEWS THAT WILL GO ROUND WOULD BE THAT I WAS FOUND IN AN ACT WITH HER* [Everyone is laughing: Ganizani, FGT].

Ganizani like Julie above seems to suggest that the allegation was not true despite the head teacher agreeing that it was true.

Khumbu, a woman from village 3, affirmed this development but raised an important point that the teachers sleep with the girls in exchange with help during their national examinations to progress to grade 8 or grade 10.

*The teachers sleep with girls to make them pass. We know they can't refuse this. The girls pass but they come back from secondary school with poor results* [Khumbu, WFG. V3].

Interestingly, the head teacher and his deputy head were subsequently arrested during the national examination after having been found guilty of opening the 12 packs of sealed examination papers in their custody before the examination. The packs had been opened and resealed (see appendix 5, a press cutting of this story). The actions of the two seem to confirm the claims of the villagers. Observations during data collection revealed poor relationships between teachers and some parents which could be due to lack of trust. Some parents were not comfortable sending their daughters to school.

Hamner (1996) argues that sexual abuse can take any form. Any sexual activity, be it touching or fondling, as long as it is against the wishes of the woman can qualify as sexual abuse. In line with Hamner's argument, the actions of the male teachers emerging from the response are a form of abuse.

The subject of punishment described by Muzo above in her account cannot be overlooked. It did not emerge as a major barrier but it was of interest to the investigation because of the manner in which the teachers used it. The girls seemed to be disadvantaged for the reason that punishment at school appeared to contribute to the continuous laborious activities they have at home. As observed during my stay in the village and the school, and as identified above, the girl works on task after task until she goes to school where she could turn up late; be punished for turning up late with sweeping or working in the school field; misses some lessons; returns home where her mother is waiting for her to rush to the bore hole to collect water after which she would begin helping the mother with the other household tasks. This is further narrated in the responses below:

*Mm madam, girls do so many things. We are always working like pounding maize before coming to school, and collecting water. Then you come to school; there is punishment or PM [preventive maintenance]. In class you are tired hey? [Asking her friends]. When you get home late, mother is annoyed because you are late [Likwe, FGSG].*

*Yes it is true, you get home there is a lot of work waiting. We have no time. School is a waste of time because of work at home [Chimwemwe, FGSG].*

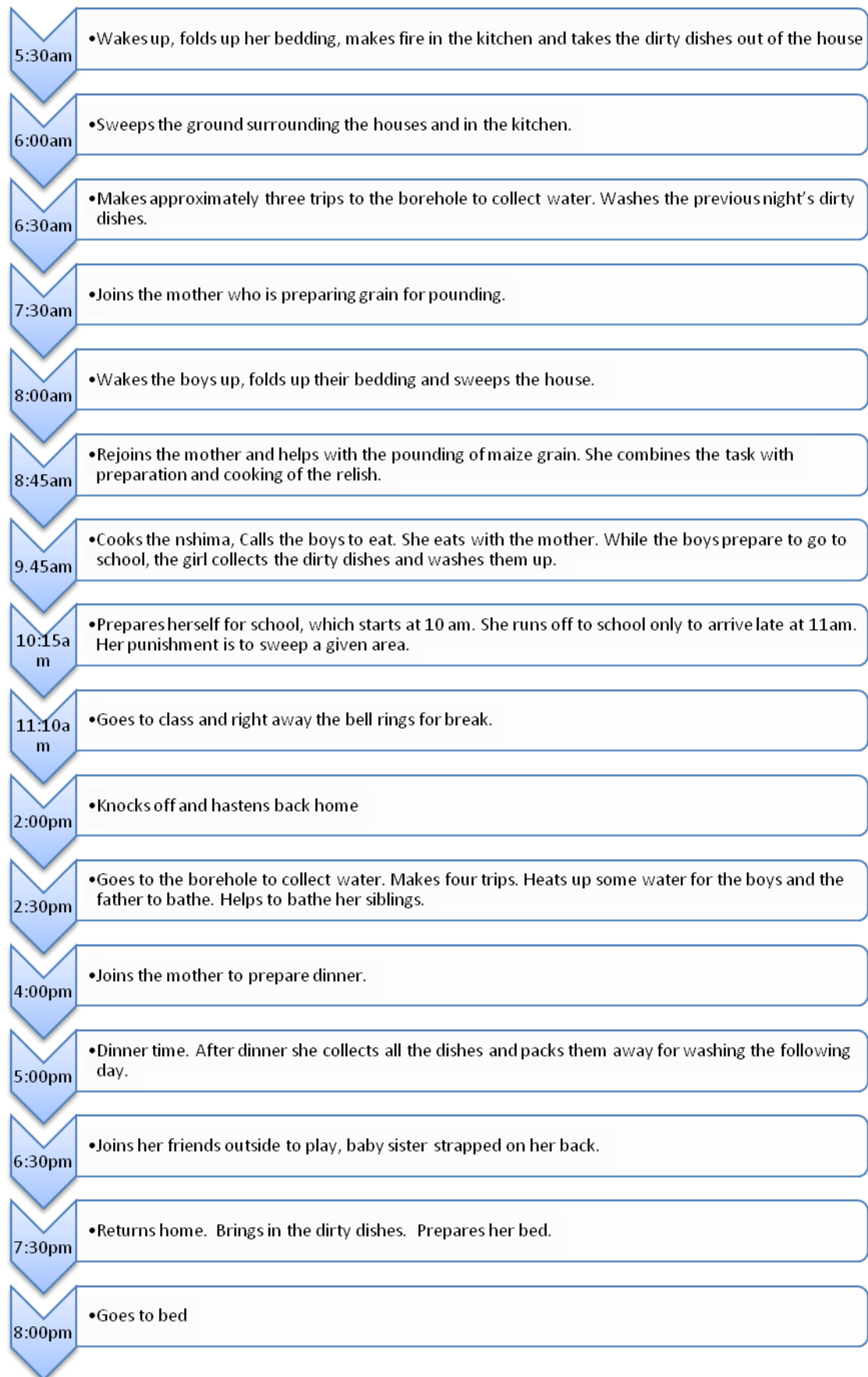
The narratives of these two girls further show the existence of inequality in the allocation of tasks at home. Again, it can be observed that the inequality from the home environment worms itself into the school environment, creating a conducive atmosphere for the domination and subjugation of the girls by the ruling class; the teachers. Rowbotham (1989) argues to this effect that patriarchy and gender roles thrive in families and later permeate into the society and into the institutions.

The patriarchal character can be seen in these narratives and as claimed by the feminist theories; liberal, radical and Marxist-socialist, patriarchy is a problem of capitalism and eliminating the oppression of women means eliminating male

domination. The hierarchy that exists in the home environment could be associated with the Marxist claims that individuals are shaped by class relations and this can further be observed in the school environment (Beasley, 1999; Marysia, 2000; Hughes, 2002; and Andersen and Taylor, 2006). The behaviour of the teachers seem to fall within the explanation of the radical feminists in that “male domination over women can produce a framework of hierarchical social relations in which class divisions arise,” which creates divisions between men and women (Beasley, 1999, p.60). In this instance the teachers take for granted their position to oppress the girls.

The observed events in the following figure 10 were over a period of two months. The activities were performed by a grade 2 female student of 10 year old girl. The times indicated are an approximation. These events confirmed the claims made by the girls in the responses above. As shown, the observed tasks were done under the watchful eye of the mother and were accompanied with much correction and reprimand. By the time the girl retires to bed, she would have been exhausted but together with the mother they were the first ones to get up in the morning starting off with more chores instead of the girl preparing herself for school.

Figure 11 ~ Observed Days' Tasks Performed By a 10 Year Old Grade 2 School Girl





## **6. 5. Conclusion**

A number of factors that militate against the education of girls have emerged from the data. These include home based and school based factors. While the importance of education is appreciated by the participants, evidence seems to indicate a lip-service appreciation that does not match with the practice because the respondents gave a number of reasons as justification for failure to send their children to school, especially the girls. There is evidence that the parents have a determining role to enrol the child or to keep her/him in school and to provide the aspirations to influence the child's persistence and participation in school. While poverty has emerged as a feasible impact in the education of the children, notably the female child, affecting the provision of the needed tuition fees, school uniform and other learning resources, the traditional mind set and perception of low benefits or returns of educating a female child is outstanding. The home based factors do seem to worm their way into the school environment causing undue strain on the girls' participation in class.

The feminist theories have helped to identify issues of inequality in the home and school environment. The oppression of women does not exist in the home alone but is also found in the school environment. Inequality is further perpetuated by the cultural traditions. Patriarchy is a traditional system that allows the father dominion over the woman hence affecting her decision making role. The men do not consider women rational enough to make sound decisions. The Human Capital Theory has further shown how parents and much more the father, using his dominating positions discriminates against the girl by sending the boy to school. The underlying cause of the girl's low returns here is the counterproductive cultural attitudes of locals to female education that view the girls' main role as that of wife and mother. Hence, the alternative to educating a girl is marriage. The socialisation process, climaxing during

the initiation rite of the girl is a means through which patriarchal tendencies are reinforced and sustained in the locality.

Although this chapter's focus was on the importance of education, cultural traditional concerns have emerged that have been included in the discussions. That will be the focus of the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **THESE ARE OUR TRADITIONS!**

#### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: Part Two**

##### **7. 0. Introduction**

This chapter continues the discussion of the findings from the collected data and focuses on the following categories: the Importance of Traditions, Mode of Transmission, the Effect of Traditions, Traditions vs. Education, and Relationships.

Cultural traditions carry images and norms of the members of a given society and this may determine the types of roles considered appropriate for each member. Kwesiga argues that children “assimilate society’s values and norms, which help to shape their attitudes, preferences and behaviour and may engender certain expectations and beliefs....” (Kwesiga, 2002, p.55). In particular, Kwesiga states that a “society’s views about women reflect the values of that society and shape the attitudes, values and self image of its girls” (Kwesiga, 2002, p.55). The behaviours of the members are governed by the customs which tend to be difficult to break away from. The traditions are an established order and one benefit from living in compliance with them. Acceptability in a society depends on one's compliance to the established order hence the title of this chapter: These are Our Traditions! This phrase was used by a number of participants in defence of their traditions.

In this chapter the importance of traditions is discussed in order to make comparisons with the responses on the importance of education given in the previous chapter. This will lead to a discussion of some cultural beliefs and practices which can be major

barriers to girls' education. A discussion of the aims and benefits of the traditions will be included in this section, followed by an account of how the traditions (including the socialisation process and the initiation rites) are handed over to the children. A number of narrations by individuals of their experiences of the initiation rites will provide the evidence. An analysis of the effects that the cultural traditions appear to have on the women will be used to assess how these can militate against their educational aspirations. Many of the concerns surrounding the conflict between the traditions and education will be discussed in the section entitled 'Traditions vs. Education.' The views the members of the community have about academic education and the threat it poses to their values and customs can be found in the participants' responses. Understanding this outcome is important in analysing the factors that militate against the education of girls.

A discussion of relationships between the members of the community will follow which will analyse the different relationships and the further impact they may have on the women's aspirations for academic education. Finally, conclusions will be drawn.

It is important to mention here that the emerging themes overlap and hence the sub themes and lower level themes have been merged to avoid duplication of work. Reference to related information from the previous chapter will be made. To identify the respondents reference to the identification code used in the previous chapter can be done or see appendix 8.

### **7. 1. Importance of Traditions**

The theme for this section is the views of the participants on the importance placed on the traditions. References will be made to other themes that emerged that are linked to

this theme such as the goal of acquiring traditional knowledge and the benefits accrued for conforming and living in obedience to the traditions.

Issues surrounding traditions and how they are acquired were responded to with a lot of emphasis. All the respondents seem to have an attachment to the traditions they embrace and respect. The terminology and frameworks are not clear and are imbued with an aura of mystery. However the benefits accrued from this knowledge were enthusiastically identified with pride, defence and passion. The importance of the traditions is associated with the benefits a woman may accrue from compliance.

### **I. Goals and Benefits**

The use of the pronoun ‘**our**’ shows possessiveness and how much the respondents value their traditions. Note the answers from the women to the following question on the benefits of traditions:

*I don't know about you people who live in town but for us here in the village we respect our traditions because they are good. How do you know who you are and where you come from? It is these same traditions. When people come to our village and they behave in a certain way, we know they are not from here. [Site, WFG.V2].*

*Our traditions are good [she paused], it is you people who are educated who think they are not. They help us to know who we are and how to live together. Like Mwiza [short for Mwizilachi] has said, we can obey the husband and respect him in order to live well. [Tionge, WFG. V1].*

The response from Tionge set off with a firm assertion that the traditions are good. Site equally indicates that the traditions are valued because they are good. From the tone of their voices the response seemed defensive in favour of the traditions, which for Site and Tionge were endangered. Site and Tionge's accounts portray a lack of trust in the educated people who they feel neither consider the traditions important nor respect them. For them the educated people are the ones that deny the importance

of the traditions. For Tionge, the benefits of the traditions are that they enable her to obey and respect her husband. The traditions emerge as an established order that exists to maintain order in the society. Here she mentions living well with the husband, which could mean maintaining the patriarchal order, a system that a number of feminist theories (especially the radical ones) insist is the underlying cause of all other inequalities leading to the oppression of women.

*Our customs have been there for a long time. Customs are customs. They are there to be kept, so we need to keep them. They are good. We live well together because of them. For a woman these traditions help to prepare her for marriage. To know what to do when married and how to take care of a husband and a home. That is why those girls who are not taught are brought back to be re-taught. Mmm, because they fail to perform well as women [Tasila, WFG.V1]*

For Tasila the reasons for keeping the customs seem to stem from the fact that they have been there for a long time and the evidence of their benefits, such as security and harmony, is visible in the community. Interesting to note is Tasila's reference in relation to traditions where she particularly states that through the traditions women are prepared for marriage; to take care of the husband and the home. The role of the woman as a wife seems to be of importance here and if not performed satisfactorily could mean the woman would have to be re-taught. Marriage as observed from the data in the previous chapter is of great importance to this community. Therefore, preparing girls for marriage is equally vital. It is a benefit because the girl is equipped with relevant knowledge for her role as a wife, how to behave and what is expected of her beforehand. It probably gives the girl recognition in the community as a married woman.

Identity is an important feature that gives the respondents a distinguishing characteristic from other cultures. The pronoun 'our' continues to appear in the

responses cited above. The word may also suggest the unique identity these customs give the participants. This is valued and guarded to ensure its continuity.

Cullingford and Din (2006) suggest that identity could refer to a personal identity and Hall (1992) equally states that identity symbolises the character of an individual. The responses of the participants seem to demonstrate that their individuality is constructed by their culture within which they are 'imprisoned'. This can be complex and complicated especially when an individual has to make choices of their own because as claimed Hofstede (2005) in collective societies, the interest of the group prevails. Commenting on what culture is Spradley states that:

Whenever people learn a culture, they are to some extent imprisoned without knowing it. Anthropologists speak of this as being 'culture bound,' living inside a particular reality that is taken for granted as reality (Spradley, 1979, p.10).

Responding to the same question on benefits, the girls stated that they appreciated the traditions although in contrast with the elderly women they indicated that there were some aspects of traditions that they did not appreciate.

*Our traditions? Some are good and helpful. Some things we have learnt during the Initiation ceremonies are good; we would not have learnt them from school if they did not teach us; like dancing, working at home and respecting elders [Dalitso, KISG].*

Dalitso also uses the possessive pronoun 'our' probably for the same reasons the women above did. Interestingly, she agrees that the traditions are good and the things she learnt through traditions could not be learnt in schools. Probably the school curriculum does not identify them as important or necessary.

*These traditions have been with us for a long time. Our parents taught them to us and we teach them to our children. That is why our children should know them so that they can teach their children. We should not lose our customs, for anything. No we shouldn't [Monica, WFG. V2].*

The importance of the continuation of traditions to the locals is shown in Monica's response. The community seem to assume a traditional responsibility in line with

their parents. Teaching the children the traditional knowledge and roles is a responsibility that parents are expected to shoulder. Monica insists that the children need to know the traditions for the purpose of handing them down to the next generation just as the older generation did. The tone in her voice indicates the importance and the need to continue with the trend. It may further suggest unwillingness for any change of any sort when it comes to 'their' traditions. Their goal is to continue by handing them down to their children. The longevity characteristic of the traditions seems to be a condition for their continuity. Nkhosi mentioned this as well:

*We have been with these traditions from a long time. We are what we are because of our traditions. They have brought order in the village because they spell out how best to live with each other. You know when you are looking at these traditions there are different types. One, there are those which can be changed anyhow. Two, there are those that have to be kept and practiced. One has no choice they have to keep them whether they like it or not. Those I am afraid are difficult to change. They help the community to live together well. So the initiation ceremonies, there are teachings that can't be changed because they must be practiced [Nkhosi, SIR].*

Nkhosi on the other hand emphasised that the traditions brought order and peace in the village and he distinguished them from each other carefully. This is in line with the distinction that Segall et al (1990) advances concerning the practices. They describe "folkways" as sheer conventional practices while "mores" are obligatory and hence required for the maintenance of the social order. The mores as stressed in Nkhosi's account with the use of the word 'must' imply the obligatory requirement to be practised and adhered to. The mores have benefits (as has already been noted above) that are appreciated by the community. Draisma and Kruzinga (2004) observed that some customs practised in Zambian cultures were good because they govern behaviour and bring order to the community. The conduct of individuals in society is governed largely by the established customs which have passed down through generations. Nkhosi's response further raises the subject of roles. They are



clearly defined roles that are part and parcel of the mores, which when observed enhance peace and unity in the home and the community at large. Reference to the initiation ceremony introduces the topic of marriage discussed at length in the previous chapter.

In this section a number of aims have emerged as the benefits of adhering to the traditions of the society (identity, preparation for marriage, maintenance of the community and continuity of the traditions). The next section will look at the handing over of the traditions to the next generation as an important responsibility that is obligatory to the parents.

## **7. 2. Mode of Transmission**

In Zambia the traditions are transmitted through various means. Amongst these are socialisation and ceremonies such as initiation rites. The socialisation process is an on-going process which includes the mores and folkways of that particular society and culture. The initiation rite on the other hand is a time-limited process that pubescent girls go through at their first menstruation flow. This process is intense and can be explicit with an intention of producing a girl competent in the traditional knowledge and skills. The discussion in this section is based on the experiences of the participants which will reveal what is taught and for what purposes.

### *I. Socialization*

Already observed in the responses above, the process of socialization is a means through which the present generation hands down the traditional knowledge to the next generation for continuity. The agency to construct children that are

knowledgeable in their traditions could be a rigorous activity that parents engage in (Renzetti and Curran 1992). Barngetumy (1999) argues that socialization of children into their various roles starts at an early age. The mother in particular has a duty to socialize her daughter into services that would prepare her for her future roles. Reynolds claims that a woman's "duty is to bind her daughter into service in order to secure her future and therefore the mother controls the girl more firmly than the boy" (Reynolds 1991, p. 106). This shows that children are socialized into their respective gender roles.

However, Renzetti and Curran (1992) argue that it is wrong to socialize children into gender roles because that could have debilitating and destructive effects on them. This may also show how that society constructs the gendered behavioural patterns of an individual through socialisation. The process of socialization was observed throughout my stay in the setting. For example it was a usual sight to see men making reed mats with their sons. Most of the time I was working with the women, washing clothes at the river, pounding, shelling groundnuts, sweeping and decorating the huts or collecting firewood, I was surrounded by young girls while the boys were spectators. Performing these tasks with the girls did not appear laborious although it was hard work. There was a lot of excitement. The girls seemed to know their roles very well but the watchful eyes of the mothers was accompanied by caution, reprimand, encouragement, and a reminder of what kind of a wife or mother she was going to be in future. The quote below was from my field notes. I was working with Mwizilachi, preparing maize grain for pounding with two other women who had turned up to help. A daughter of one of the women aged 9 years joined in the task. Unfortunately she was not working as meticulously as expected so the mother called out to her at the top of her voice;

*Iwe ndiwemuzelezi, wamukhalauli pa nyumbayako?* [You, you are lazy, how will you manage your own home? FN].

The quoted statement shows the expectations of the mother for her daughter. She is supposed to work up to a certain standard because of the future role she is expected to assume therefore, she is not supposed to be lazy.

*Sometimes as parents we make mistakes, all we talk about to the girls is 'how will you cook for a husband if you don't know how to cook' and other things. We make marriage look like it is the most important thing for them to do. So the girls rush into it* [Aggie, KIWR. V2].

Aggie's response is in agreement with the observed events although she blames the mothers for idolising marriage to the young girls. The future role of wife and mother emerge as a benchmark for any skills the girl learns. Further still, as noted by Aggie, some parents use the process of socialisation to skilfully introduce the position of a man in the home as very important. Private patriarchy is introduced to the girl as normal at family level and it is the basis of inequality. The radical feminists' school of thought demonstrates that men dominate women within the household, and as a result of male supremacy women are oppressed (Giddens and Griffiths, 2006).

*But the female child, everything is about sweeping, cooking, drawing water, and putting babies on the back. They have no time to even play or even look at books. You know the boy has time to rest, the girl, and it is work continuously. So in the end the girl loses interest in school* [Nkhumbatuwemi, FGH. V1].

Nkhumbatuwemi, the headman of village 1, was able to stress that the different tasks the female child is involved in have an effect on her schoolwork. A tendency towards inequality can be observed in the way the gender roles are emphasised and expected of the children. Maintenance of the patriarchal system can also be observed from the way the girls are socialized into their roles; 'how will you cook for your husband?' Such emphasis has potential for withdrawing the girl's interest in school. Socialization, as suggested by Castle (1966) enables the children to learn to become members of the community through their involvement in daily activities such as

housework and ceremonies. Kwesiga, (2002) commenting on the same argued that socialization enabled one to attain a mental baggage of gender behaviour. Dollard (2004) stressed that socializing one into traditions would cramp and constrict minds resulting in a lack of interest in school education. However, while the tasks prepare the children to find their place in the community, the girl seems to be more affected than the boy as indicated by Nkhumbatuwemi above.

*Mm [she pauses] Yes all the children are taught from the time they are born. But the girls have got other times when they are taught. [She pauses and looks around] like during the chinamwali; [initiation ceremony] and before marriage. But they are not taught to stop school. Are they? [Looks around again. Khumbu, WFG. V3].*

Interestingly Khumbu has used the word ‘children’, suggesting that all the children are socialized into their various roles. A hard and fast rule is however maintained in the division of the tasks with a greater portion falling on the girl. Khumbu introduces other methods for passing on the traditions; that is through initiation rites and marital rites. She is however quick to point out in defence that the girls are not instructed to stop school during the initiating ceremony. She was expecting approval from other women because of the sensitive nature of the topic of initiation, a discussion of which will now follow.

## *II.     Initiation Rites*

The initiation rite is an important period for a girl and seems to be the major tradition, which Reynolds, (1991) identifies as peak of socialization. This can take place when the girl is about 11years old. It is considered as an important phase for the female child who is expected to be prepared with intensity traditionally for her future roles. Rasing (2001) indicates that initiations were intended to equip the girl with a vast body of social attributes that she is supposed to know and deal with throughout all her life. She claims that the initiation rites “contribute to the preservation of social

systems as norms and values concerning gender construction and reproduction, and cosmological ideas are passed down” (Rasing, 2001, p.2). Hence besides equipping the girls for marriage, the initiation is intended to contribute to the preservation of the societal structure. The Programme for the Advancement of Girls’ Education (PAGE) report from the Eastern Province identified Lundazi district as one where girls were withdrawn from school for the purpose of an initiation rite (Zulu, et al., 2003). CAMFED Zambia (2007) also noted that girls that undergo initiation rites tend to marry early. The points raised by Rasing can be observed in the responses although much emphasis seems to be on marriage.

*You are not considered as anybody in this village if you are not initiated. You are nothing. The uninitiated will not know the teachings. The initiation will prepare a girl for marriage because it is our custom, which we should follow. Anyway, sometimes it is hard [Dalitso, KISG].*

Here Dalitso is claiming that the girl needed to be initiated because it was their custom and also for status to avoid exclusion. Those that are not initiated are not considered worth anything in the community probably because they lacked the traditional knowledge and skills. When Dalitso says “Anyway, sometimes it is hard”, the tone in her voice seems to demonstrate a sense of resignation or uncertainty about what is best for them despite affirming and justifying the important role of the initiation rite. Taonga raises the importance of the biological difference between men and women as a reason for the initiation teachings.

*A girl is not like a boy [speaks with a serious tone] She goes through many phases of change as she grows up; phases a boy will never go through....mmm? [She asks others and they all agree with her] She is a special being different from a boy. Whether one likes it or not they are prepared and they are supposed be [Taonga, WFG. V3].*

The tone in Taonga’s response signifies the value attached to the girl and why she should be taught, the importance of initiating her and how that cannot be altered by anyone. The difference between the girl and the boy is emphasised. The biological

difference seems to be of most importance. This difference is further enhanced by the different gender roles that the boys and girls are socialised into (PAGE, 2002).

When the respondents were probed about what was taught during the initiation rite, a number of topics were cited, as in the following account from Temwachi:

*You know there is a lot of dancing. Some songs are about cleanliness, how to be clean during your period and how to hang the menstrual cloth out of anyone's sight especially the men. Then respecting the elderly is important. You have to have respect for them and kneel down when talking to them, asking for anything and for any other reason. The same with men they are supposed to be respected, listened to and obeyed. A male child is not small; he should be respected. [Mwana mwanalume nangaochepa, niwakupa ulemu, ee!] So I had to stop eating with my brothers and talking to them at the level I used to before I went into the house. I have to draw water for them to bath, heat it for them and ask them to go and bathe. In fact I was told to have a shy look as a woman and not to look into the eyes of a man. That is not good; it is like you are challenging him, which you can't do because a man can't be challenged. Then I was told not to be too familiar with my father, not to talk to him but to send a child to ask him for anything on my behalf. You know? [She pauses and then laughs: Temwachi, FISG].*

Temwachi recounts her experience vociferously as though it occurred yesterday. She emphasises respect by a woman for a man or boy, and explains how the relationship of the girl with the father is severed as a symbol of respect after initiation. She is not able to defend her position to man because 'he must not be challenged.' This further agrees with the Hofstede's theory of masculinity discussed in earlier chapters in which the masculinity of a man is highly regarded. Another of Hofstede's category 'Long Term Orientation' theory deals with 'virtue regardless of truth. Hofstede insists the opposite of the category 'Short Term Orientation' includes respect for tradition, satisfying societal obligation and saving face (Hofstede, 2001). This can be seen clearly in the narrative above. Men can use masculinity to treat women unfairly and as Temwachi has narrated, men do not like to be challenged.

Radical feminists have insisted on the fact that the domination of men is the key to the oppression of women. Through the initiation, it is evident that society is dominated and ruled by men. Although the men are not present during initiation, it is evident that the whole 'syllabus' seem to be dominated by how to maintain and reinforce his rule. The Marxist-socialist feminists equally agree with radical feminists that women are exploited and from the account above, it is evident through the low and acquiescent position a woman is expected to take. Like radical feminists, liberal feminists insist that gender inequalities exist in the family and society. From Temwachi's account above, it is clear that the girl is taught to accept the rule of man and not to challenge him. This could mean in the decision making process.

Tione's narration from the traditional teachers' point of view is no different from Temwachi's.

*Mm there is so much taught. Respecting men is very important; kneeling down, obeying him, listening to him and taking care of him [that is sexually and physically, she is laughing]. Then the dancing part of it; the girls have to learn how to dance using the waist to a number of songs with different meanings. It is very important. You know, you can't have sex with a man without wriggling your waist. It is how well you dance as a woman that the man can get the most satisfaction. You can't lay there like in bed a log. [By 'log' she meant being unresponsive during the act of sex] So there are a lot of songs. These songs are lessons. Some lessons are difficult for those who have never been initiated to know so mulangizi [a teacher], needs to know all this and explain to the initiate the meanings. So that is why the initiate is not supposed to tell anyone what she has been taught. These lessons are repeated before marriage except it becomes so intense but it is the same things. Mmm yes, then we also teach about the importance of the roles of the woman. That is pounding, collecting water, firewood, cleaning, washing clothes and many other roles expected of them. Then we also teach them about cleanliness during menses and cautions they need to be aware of [Tione, KITTR].*

When probed on why marital concerns were emphasised during the initiation rite, Tione did not agree. Emphasis placed on acquiring the marital skills; the dance of the waist, is evidence of the importance placed on marital issues. Satisfying a man both physically and sexually is of importance. Her denial may explain how secretive the

women can be about aspects of the traditions. Tione is a traditional teacher and makes her living from the initiation ceremonies. Families pay a lot of money, beer, wrappers, animals and crops to access her. She claimed knowledge was expensive and people needed to pay for it. Of the lessons taught to the girls, school does not seem to be part of the subject matter. Continuing with her narration when probed about school, she states:

*School? No that is not for us. Schools are there to teach something else. Not us. Schools are good but they are not part of our customs. They don't teach how we live but how to live like a foreigner. We are not whites who don't value marriage and have no customs. And we did not have schools in the old days. These initiations were part of our school. That is why we should not forget them [Tione, KITTR].*

The traditional ceremony is a medium for transmitting traditional knowledge and as far as the respondents are concerned, it cannot share the same platform with formal school education. Much more, the initiation ceremony is considered as school from Tione's narrative, which cannot be denied because from my observation, it is structured and has qualified teachers. As far as the members are concerned, 'real life learning' takes place in these traditional schools as opposed to school education which is viewed as a platform for teaching western life styles and a medium of foreign knowledge and not their traditions whose continuity is of significance. Tione indicated that the school education taught individuals how to live like foreigners, a situation that did not seem to please her probably because it was weakening and undermining her claims of the importance of traditional knowledge. However her claims cannot be overlooked because they represent the feelings of the other participants who viewed school education in the same way.

*I was kept in the house for 7 days. I was taught a lot of things. [She pauses] Mmm like respecting a man. Ya, I am not supposed to look into his eyes when talking to him. It could be interpreted as challenging him or showing interest in him. [Laughs and everyone agrees, laughing loudly] And there is a lot of dancing and singing. The 'chief alangizi' sit near you explaining things for*

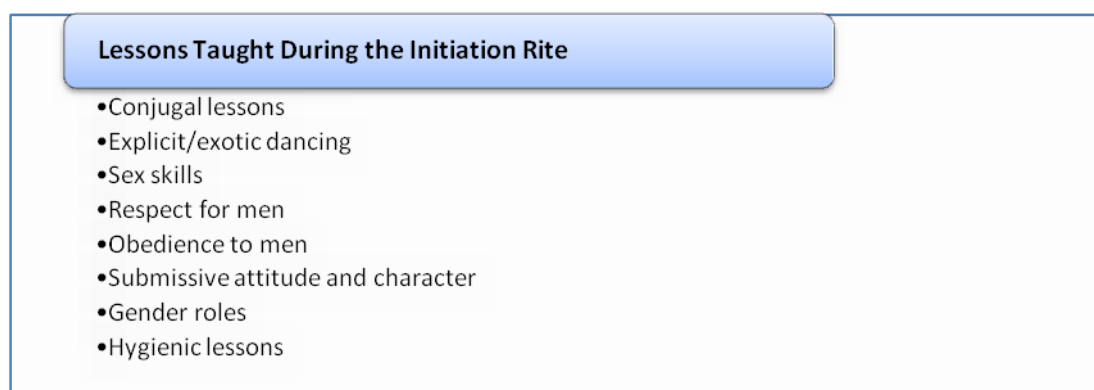


*you because some things are difficult to understand. What you think could be the meaning may not be [Muzo, FGSG].*

Muzo, a school girl, confirmed the list of topics taught as narrated by Tione but added an important comment on respecting the men and the period of confinement which seems too long for a school-going child. Respecting the men emerges as important in most responses including those of both women and men. The girls as indicated in Muzo's response are further taught to exhibit shy looks as evidence of their lowly position. Looking the man in the eye indicates challenging his position or suggestive of a sexual proposal. As a means of transferring the traditional knowledge to the young generation, this seems to signify the importance of upholding the authoritative nature of man. The process of initiation is an important *modus operandi* for doing this.

Torres et al (1999), arguing in the same vein as the feminists, insist that biological difference should not justify men to be considered as superior and powerful. The radical feminists do not accept that biological differences should be used as basis for classifying women as second class. The biological difference between men and women is an important aspect in the locality and is evident in their activities as gender roles are constructed in line with one's sex. Evidence of the patriarchy system and its maintenance is obvious from the narrations above in line with radical feminists' school of thought. The need to take care of the man seems to be the major issue here. The sexuality of the girl is constructed in line with the sexual needs of the man. A summary of the topics taught that have been included in the narrations above are shown in the following figure:

Figure 12 ~ Summary of Initiation Topics



To confirm these findings from the focus group and the in-depth interviews, I attended three initiation ceremonies. These were two initiation ceremonies and one marital ceremony for a young girl who was getting married. The marital initiation lasted only one night. It is a repetition of the initiation ceremony with more emphasis on conjugal relations, upkeep of the man, respecting and idolising him (how to avoid quarrelling with him, allowing him to make decisions and to accept the decisions he makes, not to publicize his weaknesses), the sexual skills the young woman is supposed to be equipped with and her role as a wife in the home, the extended family and the community. The sexuality of the initiate seems to be constructed on the basis of man's satisfaction. All the teachers are initiated and married women.

For the initiation rites I attended, the second one in particular, I had to stay for the last night because I was informed (by my traditional teacher chief informant) of its crucial significance. Many initiated women and girls taught the initiate and she also had to display her skills and knowledge learnt throughout the period of confinement. The women taught the girl in turns displaying their exotic dancing skills and traditional knowledge amidst much ululating. Teaching was conducted in turns, the teachers reinforcing and supporting each other amidst drinking, singing, acting and dancing. In

this case the girl had been in confinement for 7 days. To mark the end of the event, the teachings would take the whole night. In the morning it was a different occasion altogether; the coming out. The girl was now considered as a woman, her status had changed, from a girl to a woman. Rasing described this stage the “aggregation;” a consummation of the initiation rite (Rasing, 1995, p.35). She claims that during this phase the initiate is accepted as a woman and expected to behave according to the prescribed and taught customary norms and ethical codes. Symbolically, that morning, the initiate’s pubic hair, and hair on the head was shaved representing the shedding of her old status and assuming a new status.

The song that follows below is further example of how much emphasis is placed on marital lessons. A symbol depicting a penis had been made and was placed on a woman who was pretending she was a man. A dance accompanied by a simulation depicting a woman providing ‘care to her husband’ accompanied this song; to keep him clean by shaving his pubic hair. The girl had to idolise the penis. The whole process was rigorous and painstaking (performed in a squatting position) and demanding as the girl had to repeat the process several times until she demonstrated competency. This is what Edisa said about the same song:

*AAh I have! The girl was traumatized. One dance required her to dance on the stool. That would lead into a simulation of a sexual act with another woman showing her what to do who was to pretend that she were a man. She was also seated on the stool. That girl cried madam. She failed to do it. Instead she was humiliated. I felt so bad that I had to bail her out. I paid the alangizi K20, 000. [An equivalent of £16]. The song was called citi canga [Edisa, KITR].*

*Citi canga anamwali  
Co endaenda naco  
Citi canga ci khalasonga  
Cikauka nsingona tulo  
Citi, citi,  
Co endayenda naco*

*My penis you virgins  
I move about with it  
My penis remains erect  
When it wakes up, I don't sleep  
My penis  
I move about with it.*

The lesson in the song is a warning to women of man's sexual appetite which should not be denied at any cost. It further teaches man's infidelity (when it awakes it sends him wandering probably looking for a woman) which a wife is expected not to make a great deal of. Such information and knowledge demonstrates how explicit some lessons can be for a young girl of 11 years old. Although the simulation was part of the sex education that the girl is expected to learn, it could be too much for the girl. Following Bourdieu's concept of habitus, the traditions are capable of depositing in an individual, thoughts, and beliefs that shape one's practice (Kariuki, 2005). These practices impressed on the girls would make it difficult for them to opt for anything better than their traditions. Jump (1994) has suggested that children should be preserved from receiving wrong impressions that would militate against their educational aspirations.

Some pupils defended the initiation ceremony stating that they learnt important lessons from the teachings but they did not appreciate the prominence of marital lessons. Considering the fact that the uninitiated are looked down upon in this society and have limited or no chances of marriage, their concerns could be justifiable.

Undergoing an initiation rite raises their credentials for marriage.

*The initiation ceremony is good. We learn some good things like hygiene; they should just remove the bad things about marriage and the part where they ask us to practice things. The talk about marriage is bad; it is too much. And the way it is introduced, the women want us to begin to think about it seriously. It makes me think that is why we are initiated, to tell us about marriage. Aaa [pause] The initiation is good without marriage [Mikiwe, FISG].*

Although Mikiwe acknowledged that the initiations were good she was of the opinion that the topic of marriage could be dictating the whole process, she therefore, suggested removing the topic of marriage all together. She seems to suggest that the subject of marriage is shrewdly and calculatively introduced to the girls. The need to keep the traditional practices going is still emphasized despite the effect that Mikiwe pointed out. Blame is however, put on failure to practise the traditions, which are assumed as contributing to the moral degradation of the girls. Nkhosi cites explicit dressing as an example of this trend. It is interesting that the elderly women are equally blamed as contributing to this development. The older women are not doing their job of inculcating these teachings in the girls. Another interesting issue referred to in his recount is the fact that traditionally, all women are supposed to be married and those who do not marry are sceptically viewed.

*Our custom requires us to respect and obey the men. If you don't listen to his instructions you lose your marriage. Here single women are not readily accepted, they live with a lot of suspicion. If a husband does not go home in the night, the first suspect is the single woman. All you hear are insults 'marry your own husband!' [Mmm - others agree with her and others just laugh looking at each other] I am single now because I was divorced. So I have a lot of problems. There have been a lot of speculations of why am I divorced. I have children so they know I am not barren. They think I was not obedient nor respected my husband. [More laughter but Jenny does not stop] Marriage gives you respect and security, so men make their decisions and the women follow and keep them. At the moment I make my own decisions, go where I want and do what I want but it is just the way everybody thinks of me [Jenny, WFG. V2].*

As a single woman, Jenny narrates her story of the consequences of being single; suspicions of flirting with married men. In such an environment she claims, marriage gives respect and security. However, it is interesting to note how privileged and independent she is as a single woman. Despite the views that the rest of the village have about her, which she hates, she sounds so happy that she can make her own decisions and exercise her independence to do anything she wants. This establishes the fact that women would like to make their own decisions and have the

independence to do anything they want. There seems to be a fear of the traditional requirement; 'our customs require us.' As already been pointed out above and in the previous chapter, men do not like to be challenged and the women recognise this.

In similar view Nkhosi raised the following views:

*Like respecting a man, submitting and providing him with all his demands. A woman has no excuse for not meeting his demands [he is laughing]. Then marriage; traditionally everyone should get married. Those who are not married are viewed suspiciously. That is why there is a lot of emphasis on the marriage or preparation of girls for marriage. It is the responsibility of women to teach the girls. Like now, there are a lot of miniskirts, girls wearing trousers, leaving their navels out or showing their underwear. That is not our tradition. Some girls even bleach their faces. We look to the elderly women and ask them, 'what are you doing? What are you teaching the girls?' Is this what it means to be educated? To undress and walk about half naked? No! That is not the face of development. Undressing? No. We can maintain our good traditions and still develop [Nkhosi, SIR].*

He insisted that everyone should get married. The women are married and the men marry hence it is expected that every woman will be married. The woman has no excuse for not meeting the needs of the man as explained by the chief. The other issues the chief has mentioned will be discussed later.

*Yes. Just in case they marry they need to know these things. This time it is even much better. In the olden days the girls were completely taught about marriage. These practices should not be completely forgotten because of school. They are our customs otherwise these customs will die if we don't do them [Tione, KITTR].*

Tione was of the view that the emphasis on marriage was important just in case the girl got married soon after initiation. This assumption sounds intentional as noted earlier on. The girl is deliberately prepared for marriage because they want her to be married. Tione fears for the loss of the traditions due to school education.

There is a general view emerging from the responses that insist on the fact that education is possible alongside the traditions. The respondents especially Nkhosi

insisted that to be educated does not mean forgoing the traditions. When they were probed on the possibility of the marital lesson affecting the girl's educational aspiration Jenny responded:

*I also agree, although that should not be the case but some girls may not be strong after they have been taught to continue learning [going to school]. You know it is a desire that grows in you that pushes you. I know like we have said, sometimes it is parents so what can the girl do? The only problem is that for the teachings, we cannot stop teaching the girls. They need to know these customs [Jenny, WFG. V2].*

The women were, however, of the opinion that the girls may not be strong enough to withstand the pressure of the traditions. Their external control of reinforcement, which may include the behaviour and advice from their peers and others, may be strong and hence affect their choice for education. This agrees with Feist and Feist's (2006) description of internal and external control of reinforcement (locus of control). Muranga (1997) also claims that the internal and external control of reinforcement refers to the propensity to view the control of an individual's life as intrinsic or extrinsic.

Tione indicated above that the lessons taught during the initiation were not any different from those taught immediately before marriage. The difference observed during the initiation rites I attended was in the emphasis of the woman's subservient position. The woman needs to know that that man is important, needs to be respected, needs to be taken care of; physically and sexually, and the man needs to be obeyed as much as possible. The shame that accompanies a woman who fails to assume her subservient position is avoided as much as possible. However, as illustrated, the women seem to be under pressure to obey the teachings despite the effect they could have on their lives and their educational aspiration. Liberal feminist views apply well here as Marysia states "girls stop being brought up to be passive and lacking in

confidence and should instead be encouraged to develop into assertive independent human beings” (Marysia, 2000, p.8). The lessons the girls are taught can easily produce a girl lacking in confidence and self esteem, and one who is totally dependent on the man. From the accounts given in this section it is evident that the patriarchal system is valued by the locals and maintained by the women for the men. The women are the teachers and the women ensure that the young girls maintain the system. Patriarchy is a structural domination as claimed by the radical feminists because the hierarchical values are established within society.

### **7. 3. Effects of traditional teachings**

Throughout the observed initiation rites, the initiate was warned to master the lessons otherwise punishment would be administered severely. Those who do not adhere to the traditional requirements also face retribution. Interestingly some of the negative effects were noted in government documents and the annual reports from NGOs. There was recognition that a number of the girls who undergo traditional teachings were likely to stop school (Zulu et al., 2003; NGOCC, 2005; and CAMFED Zambia, 2007). Edisa as a teacher was able to explain that the information the girls receive could act as barriers to their education.

*Further still after any girl has repeated her menstruation from the first; she is thinly shaved with razor blade just after her forehead. That is a symbol that she is now she is completely clean free and ready for marriage or sex and free from any diseases associated with menstruation. You know I have talked to some alangizi about these things and even parents to let them know the effect they have on the girls. But you know what, male parents have approached me saying “why are you concerned about my daughter’s education as if I had her with you, you have your own daughters to take care of. That girl is my child and I have rights over her” [Edisa, KITR].*

From Edisa’s point of view, the father seems to be more concerned about his role as a father but he is not concerned about the education of the daughter. The men seem to be more interested in what they think is right at the expense of the education of



female child. Nkhumbatuwemi insisted that the low position the girls are made to assume tends to affect the participation of women.

*Yes that is right. I attend most of these meetings at school. But it points back to our cultural norms. As we have already said, they are taught at initiations to take a low position. Especially here in the village the 'traditional police' are everywhere watching. So the women fear [Nkhumbatuwemi, FGH, V1].*

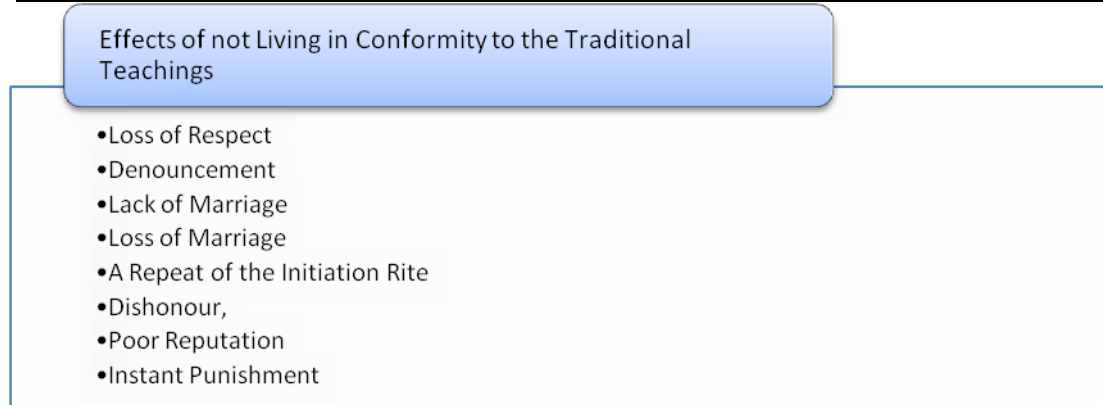
The 'traditional police' are the older women who seem to be watching the behaviour of women. The men themselves could be included in this category because they do not want to be challenged by the women. The men know that traditionally the women are supposed to take a low position as taught and as earlier discussed they cannot allow the women to assume the male position.

An initiated girl could also be under pressure to implement what she was taught, and failure to do so will mean she must face another initiation rite. Except this second time it would be more severe, and therefore it is dreaded. She is under the watchful eyes of the elderly women in the village who would be observing her to see if she had learnt her lessons. That is why Tiza was able to say that a girl needs to live like a taught girl.

*Yes, the girl is put back in the house and the alangizi are called back to re-teach. If the alangizi did not satisfy her mother she can call others to re-teach. The girl can be beaten, pinched or made to do difficult tasks. So the girl should live like a taught girl. She has the knowledge because she was taught. Isn't it? [Tiza, WFG. V3].*

The effect of not living according to the expected way of life could be terrible. The table below shows the possible effect a girl may experience as a result of failure to live within the confinement of the taught traditions:

Figure 13 ~ Summary of Effects of Not Keeping the Taught Traditions



The effect the traditions may have on an individual may take different forms. From the list above and the narrations, it is clear that the forms of punishment may act as a deterrent hence making the women obey the traditions as much as possible. The women are under obligation to acquire the traditional knowledge, live according to the requirements and be its custodian. Failure to do this will result in reprimand or punishment. Reynolds was able to say that “girls are more often punished for refusing to perform expected tasks than boys” Reynolds (1991, p 104). Such a situation could impact on the girl negatively inhibiting the development of her intellectual powers. Moore (1999) has argued that men’s activities in the world, allows their rational faculties to be developed while those of women may not be. This could be true of the women in the study whose activities could be limited for fear of defying the traditional expectations. Further still, other responses have indicated that the traditions are meant to bring order and security in the community. As earlier explained, mores have a deterrent characteristic, tending to dissuade individuals from bringing disorder into the community.

The other effect of traditions emerging from the data was that of a physical nature. The beatings, pinching, pulling of the labia and shaving of the hair could be well-

intended when applied but the physical effect that accompanies them was identified in many responses as negative. For example the girls talked about the pulling of the labia minora whose purpose Mikiwe identified:

*We are told that they are brakes. They are supposed to hold the 'man' [penis] when he goes in. So if they don't hold the 'man' we are told the man will send us back to the alangizi for discipline [everyone is laughing loudly]. Yes, they say they will put us on a dengele yakupya [a heated broken piece of an earthenware pot] if we don't do it. It is painful [everyone is laughing] yes, pulling them every night! Mmm? [Mikiwe, FGSG].*

The whole process is painful and the threat attached to it put the girls under an obligation to carry out the activity. Some girls were not informed of the purpose and hence engaged in the activity for fear of being punished. The girls in the research given in *Young people's experiences on gender, sexuality, HIV/AIDS and life skills* said that they did not like the beatings that accompanied the initiation rites although they appreciated it (Youth Researchers, 2006). Muranga (1997) states that the expected conformity to certain codes of practice, result in the regimentation and suppression of one's potentialities. This can be observed in the responses. Some men had different views about the subject of the labia minora. Kalinkhu argued:

*I insist that this practice of pulling the labia is a bad stimulant because as they pull, they stimulate themselves and the hormones are prematurely activated and it's possible to mature [reach puberty] early hence desiring for marriage. The girls even think they are ready to handle a man, you see? I hear the alangizi say the long labias differentiate a girl from a woman. So for a girl to be a woman she should have the long labia. [Everyone is laughing] **Women!** [He remarks: Kalinkhu, FGT].*

Kalinkhu argued that the process had a negative effect on the girls in that it stimulated their hormones prematurely for early puberty and marriage. This claim is difficult to validate. It requires further research to investigate the association that the pulling of the labia could have on the hormones of the girl. Khodowe agrees with Kalinkhu's claim that the long labia distinguished the girl from a woman, a difference the men seemed to appreciate most. This further establishes the reason the girls are directed to

perform the activity in light of the importance of marriage in the area, which was deemed as a must for every female. Khodowe further confirms that he was informed that his wife went to pains to prepare herself for his satisfaction and hence he had no option but to like her elongated labias. This shows how the importance of such practice continues to be carried out despite the effect they could have on the women. His remark '**women!**' may also signify his low opinion of women and what they can do, all for the sake of a man.

Other men claimed that they were under obligation to appreciate the extended labia on their wives because there was nothing they could do about them. The whole process is irreversible; any mistake made such as elongating them longer than normal, meant that one had to live with the effect. Note the following narration from Edisa who apparently lived in town with an uncle and became of age there. A holiday visit to the village, which could have been arranged by her mother, landed her in an initiation ceremony. The whole event radically changed her so much to the amazement of her guardian; from an outgoing person to a passive young girl. The passive characteristic is evident of most of the girls especially after the initiation ceremony (Youth Researchers, 2006). However, note the response from Edisa:

*My grandmother was so happy to see me and decided to make me go through an initiation ceremony because another girl in the village was going through it. Now the first thing they wanted to know was if I had pulled my labia minora. To check me, I was made to sit on a stool naked, in full view of the alangizi. I did not have, [had not elongated them] so they administered tattoos on my private parts near the labia about three sets of tattoos and smeared some medicine. [Don't ask me what the medicine was, I won't tell you. She was laughing] I was in pain and how could I sit down on the floor like that barely dressed. I regretted going to the village. We received a lot of teachings and we were made to dance [Edisa, KITR].*

When probed on what the medicine was she said:

*It was some herbs I can't remember but what I would not want to remember the most is what I always remember. [She is laughing] the flesh from the*

*wings of a bat was mixed with herbs! [She covered her face and said, “Oh my god!” You know when I see my labia I imagine the bat. Within days my labia grew. I have long ones and I am even ashamed of them. They inconvenience me so much [Edisa, KITR].*

While according to the traditions, the purpose of the labia may be good; the physical effect that Edisa has to live with is bad enough. The physical effect she went through accompanied by the other teachings was enough to change her as indicated in her response and many others:

*Now listen, when I went back to my uncle’s home I was completely a different person. I could not talk to him, laugh with him or sit in his presence and I could not even eat in his presence. He was so upset and insisted that it was not me. He loved me so much and he kept on talking to me but I could not reveal. I was warned not to. You know he travelled to the village and complained to my father that he was given the wrong person. My father took him to my grandmother and my grandmother insisted that it was tradition and I needed to go through it. He came back took me on his lap and said YOU ARE MY DAUGHTER AND I WANT MY DAUGHTER BACK. I was so affected and there was a conflict in me; do I obey him or the alangizi? [Edisa, KITR].*

Many respondents especially the girls pointed out the psychological effect of the traditions. But most of the older women felt it was a sign of weakness on the part of the girls. Note the account of Steria:

*So many things, like dancing with the waist. It is very important. It prepares you for marriage. I had a lot of problems I am bad with dancing. So I had to practice several times during the day. Each woman who came to see me made me dance. I think word went round that I could not dance. At one point I broke down and cried. I was scolded by the alangizi saying that growing up means being strong and being able to withstand such pressure. I was told that I could not marry and cannot have children if I could not dance. ‘What man will marry a girl whose whole body moves like a snake’ [Steria, FISG].*

Temwani was considered as intractable, incorrigible and naughty for a girl and as a result was not liked in the village. When she matured, her mother summoned strictest alangizi to correct her behaviour. Each woman who visited her in confinement warned her with ‘*wakula Temwani lelo, zanige mooned!*’ [Temwani has ‘come of age’ today, come and see!] When probed as to what that meant she narrated her account:

*It was a threat, [she smiles looking at me]. And not just a threat, I was pinched, pushed, and really humiliated. Some women would undress me completely to humiliate me. [Laughing she lowers her voice] You know what my labia minora was not even an inch long [she laughs even more, I join her] I never bothered you know so some women pulled them for me as part of the humiliation. You [she points at me] women can be bad. These alangizi you see! Anyway even the songs they sung and made me dance to were humiliating [Temwani, KIWR. V3].*

After her ordeal Temwani did not go back to school but decided to get married. She however claims that she changed for the better for fear of going through the same or even a much worse ordeal:

*Mmm I was sore in the thighs especially where I was being pinched. I vowed I would respect and obey everyone even young boys. I was going to be good. So I was bathed after 10 days and then shaved [Temwani, KIWR. V3].*

Temwachi's recount below further shows the psychological effect she went through after initiation and how her performance in school was affected.

*It did affect me. Especially after the initiation because I was not supposed to talk to the male teachers, respond to any question or even ask a question if I am not clear. I was even afraid of them. The female teachers, I was warned not to associate myself with them or even tell them what had happened because they could teach me wrong things. I was supposed to display shy looks as a woman. And you know, I was really shy thinking every man would ask me for [shrugging her shoulders] you know what I mean. [I shake my head indicating a no] [She laughs and says] Sleeping, mm [pauses] with them. And you know like in our class some male teachers like touching girls so for me each time a male teacher touched me I felt like he wanted me so that I could try out you know what I mean [laughs]. So I was no longer performing well in class. The teachers started complaining and Mrs. [the same female teacher] called me and told me a lot of things about the importance of getting educated. So I started changing. That is why I want to finish school. I am good in class [She smiles: Temwachi, FISG].*

In the previous chapter, this research showed how that shaving contributed to humiliating a girl after initiation. It exposed her to abuse from the teachers and bullying from boys and in turn the girls either stopped school or consented to the pressure from the male teachers to have sex with them.

When the girls were probed on what went through their minds during the initiation ceremony, Dalitso was able to state that:

*Ok you lose all your friends because I was told not to play with 'small children,' that is all those who are not initiated. When you come out of the house they shave you. I was going to lose all my hair. I was afraid I was not going to manage to keep all the teachings. How was I going to keep all these teachings because they were so many and difficult? I was afraid I was not going to talk to my father any more, and play with the uninitiated friends. I was also excited; I was looking forward to trying things mmm, ah [smiling, I probe her with a nod of my head and eyes] mm sleeping with boys. I heard many things from some of my initiated friends; they said it was for initiated girls only. I had mixed feelings, you know like happy, sad, and sorry for myself. I was also afraid I was going to stop school and get married like what others have done [Dalitso, KISG].*

Dalitso's experience raises the permissive characteristic nature of the traditions. She was looking forward to trying sex because she heard from her friends. Besides being aware of this information, the alangizi encouraged the girls to try out sex after initiation. Dalitso introduced me to a friend whom she claimed was good at a particular dance accompanied by the following song:

*Cisindilizi waikala*  
*Cisindilizi waikala (repeated twice)*  
*Sitting firmly down*  
*Sitting firmly down (repeated twice)*

When probed on the meaning of the song, she continued:

*Meanings to this song are confusing madam. I was told that when I am called by big people I should not just sit saying I am coming when I was not. Then it also means that whatever I was told during the initiation ceremony, I should not sit on it. I should try it out, practice it. [Looking down and making noise with her shoes]: having sex with the men [Steria, FISG].*

As already been referred to the initiation ceremonies tend to put pressure on both girls and boys to practice what the girls were taught while confined; a scenario which could predispose the young girls to early marriage. This has been noted by the Youth Researchers (2006). An interesting observation from Dalitso's recount and others above brings out the following aspects of how her experience during the initiation ceremony affected her:

Figure 14 ~ Effects Of Knowledge Obtained During Initiation Rite

Effects of Knowledge Acquired During Initiation Rite

- Fear of loss of important relations with their fathers, or uninitiated friends after initiations
- Fear of men knowing her new status and taking advantage of it
- Fear of failure to live up to the traditional requirements which comes with punishment
- Loss of hair
- Fear of being stopped school for marriage
- The experience of the whole process conjured mixed feelings
- Looked forward to trying out some lessons such as sex

This shows how psychological the whole process could affect the girls and that cannot be ignored. FAWE (2006) has been able to argue that the traditional initiation ceremonies are designed to bolster the traditional mind-set in the girls. Francis Bacon has said “Knowledge is powerful” (cited in Carson 1992, p.210). Carson further states that it is better to acquire knowledge that would make one valuable and significant other than knowledge that would confine one to a traditional mind set.

Further still many contributors to the education of girls have used the words “deeply embedded cultural beliefs,” and “deeply rooted teachings” Chitsike, (1995, p.22), “cement cultural bonds,” FAWE (2006, p.14), “deeply ingrained cultural attitudes,” and “roles rooted in traditional practices,” Shabaya and Agwemang (2004, p.413). The words ‘cement,’ ‘rooted,’ ‘deeply ingrained,’ and ‘embedded’ seem to suggest a rigorous process of imparting the traditions to the girls purposefully to produce a woman traditionally knowledgeable and capable of undertaking the traditional skills and who will keep the traditions and possibly withstand their erosion. Such a process could be psychological and physical. Julie’s narration explains how the girls could be affected and how their passive nature affects them in class.

*Madam the truth of the matter here is that when the girls become of age they are put in the house, what they are taught in the house is also responsible for the girls not continuing with school because when they come out of the house*



*and come to class they remain quiet. They will not raise their hand up even if they know the answer, they will not answer if they are talked to, and they will not look at the teacher especially the men. Am I cheating? [All answer together: It's true. She continues]. Yes, the girl will not even ask any question in class. She suddenly becomes passive because she is under instructions and threats [Julie, FGT].*

The discussions above have established that the traditions have negative effects on the girls and women. From the emerging data, it is clear that there is a conflict between the traditional knowledge and formal school. The knowledge the girls acquire during initiation does not give the girl aspiration for progressing in her academic education. While the traditional knowledge is good and appreciated by the locals, the teachers in particular have shown how ineffective and irresponsive a girl who had just been initiated can be in class. Her temperament seems to have changed all together. This will be the discussion of the next section.

The theories of gender inequalities in analysing the position of women in society and the role that patriarchy can play in perpetuating these inequalities. Embedded in the traditional social structure, patriarchy flourishes. Radical feminists have pointed out that the root cause of the oppression of the women is the patriarchal gender relations. The societal hierarchy emerges as a class system that reinforces gender inequality, a position the Marxist-socialist feminists would liken to the capitalist mode. Here the women serve the interest of the ruling class; the men in authority who want to be served, and looked after. Through the initiation rites, girls are instructed by elderly women to maintain and reinforce the very system that as radical feminists claim, is the cause for their oppression. Such a situation can suppress the women and unjustly discriminate against them.

#### 7. 4. Traditions vs. Education

It has been observed from the data above how the information acquired during initiation rites could conflict with the expectations of the formal school. For example, where the initiate has been taught to be docile and not to look a man in the face, the male teacher in class expects her to be active, alert and to look up. This section will examine the data in relation to the conflict that exist between the traditions and education. This will further show how the locals view education in relation to their traditions.

Mbikusita-Lewanika (1979) argued that the Zambian culture is undermined by the western educational ideas. The locals with a traditional mind set who seem to be suspicious of the intentions of education could hold the same view. Chondoka (2001) argues that culture has been lost by strong factors such as modernisation. With this he claims that that the important cultural traditions that distinguish the Zambians, much more the Tumbukas, from other cultures are slowly being eroded by modernisation. While appreciating the benefits of modernisation, Chondoka (2001) calls for an awakening to preserving the cultural traditions that are good.

Nkhosi was contradictory in his response when asked whether there was any clash between academic education and traditions.

*These are our traditions but they are threatening the education of the girls. The conflict is there and it is difficult to solve it, to balance things. I for example, represent the face of our traditions and if I stand up and say they are bad, I offend the people. I am educated so I know the importance of school. I need a lot of support to sensitize the parents [Nkhosi, SIR].*

Again note that the chief begins with an affirmation that ‘these are **our** traditions’ probably to emphasise the value that they have on the locals and the need to maintain them. He was of the opinion that education threatened the existence of traditions

despite his knowledge of the importance of education. He was able to state firmly that the traditions were threatening the education of the girls. He defended his view with his position, which represented the traditional aspect. He however acknowledged that it was difficult to balance the whole matter:

*They do. Sometimes the teachers tell us that school is important and we should get educated. We even laugh at the teachers because in the village they tell us to get married. That is simple. A man just comes with the cow and you go or he takes you, like it happened with me. But school, some subjects become difficult and then you agree with the women in the village that school is for boys so we get married just like that. I wish I had heard what Mrs. [Name withheld] had said [Lowers her voice and looks down: Lucy, SIYM].*

Lucy, a young mother who dropped out of school to get married, further confirmed the effort that the teachers make to inform the girls of the importance of school. However, their effort is watered down by the information they receive from the villagers who encourage them to marry instead of continuing at school. The conflicting information the girls receive is so confusing for them. The comparison she makes of school and marriage indicates why girls may simply drop out of school in favour of marriage. However she regrets not having followed the advice of the teacher.

*The traditions have a way in which they get to you and maybe it is the emphasis they are given that makes us accept them. But with school, on the other hand, it is easy to think the teacher may not be telling the truth. The teachers can tell you this is important, but then you get home they tell you marriage is important. In the end you believe what the parents are saying [Temwachi, FISG].*

Temwachi pointed out that the traditions had a way of affecting the girls, probably due to the emphasis attached to them. Temwachi agrees with Lucy's views above. This agrees with the Murphy who states that "the ability of the school to change a child's personality, values and expectation is severely limited....." (Murphy, 1989, p.26). This could be because of the amount of time a child may spend in school or the

practicality of the information received. It is without doubt that a child will believe what the parents say.

Edisa raised similar observations when she described an experience she had with a girl who had stopped school to be married. (This is in chapter 6, section VI (a) Home based factors). The narration showed the struggle the girl went through as she tried to choose between marriage and school. Retribution was further administered to deter the girl from opting for school. Much more, the threat on her mother's marriage was used to restrain the girl from opting for school. Edisa's account further demonstrates that the local women view the teachers' effort as deceptive intending to disrupt the established order in a community that seems to value marriage than academic education. In the same account in chapter 6, section VI (a), Edisa commented on the time that the girls have with the teachers, which is minimal in comparison to the time they have at home. Her point seems to suggest that the pressure the school may apply to the girls to get them to continue with school is not effective enough.

*Yes, that is there. I have just said that the local people here think school is there to reinforce the values of the white people so they want to hold on to the traditions. We have differed so much with the parents on this. They have evidence because they think we don't respect the customs. So that is a threat to their cherished customs [Edisa, KITR].*

The assumption or belief the locals have about the values that formal schools inculcate in the children is another case in point here. The locals trust and appreciate their values and would not like them to be substituted with the 'white man's values. Edisa states that school has been viewed as a tool that reinforces the values of the 'white man' and that seems to threaten the much-held customs.

*School does not encourage some of our customs and the people think the school is teaching the children western culture. So it is a war. [By 'war' she meant the severity of the clash between cultures]. It is difficult for the people here to stop our traditions. Their aim is to keep the customs, teach them to the children. We the Tumbukas are difficult! [Aggie, KIWR, V2].*

While establishing the fact that school was encouraging the western culture, Aggie further states that the Tumbuka tribe is particularly hard on the issue of children maintaining the traditions, a reason the local people strongly defended their traditions.

When the women were probed on whether school could reinforce the traditional cultural requirement, they insisted that such a trend would weaken their traditions. The women do not trust schools to promote the traditions nor trust it with the girls. Rather, they were of the opinion that the educated people had no respect for the traditions; an outcome, which did not seem to be appreciated because it was cited by many respondents.

*Anya Phiri, these are our customs. That would make our customs less important. The school promotes the white man's values not ours. [When probed further she said] It is promoting promiscuity among our children. The children don't listen to the elders anymore. Education can be good because those who are educated live well but you people [the educated] you don't respect the traditions of your parents. These customs will die [be replaced] if all the children get educated. If you don't want them, [the traditions], who will pass them down to the children? So others can get educated others will not to continue these traditions. Even you, don't live like white people. They don't have customs [Tione, KITTR].*

Tione like other respondents in chapter 5 is suspicious of the educated women whom they felt look down on the traditions. Fawe raised this concern by commenting that “modern schools are seen as institutions conveying bad influence on children, by embracing foreign styles of behaviour and modes of dressing” which the locals fear may lead to loss of traditional values (FAWE, 2006, p.15). Whenever the respondents called me by name, they were driving what they considered to be an important point home and wanted me to take note of it. These are their customs and yes there is need to appreciate them and to accept the fact the locals value their traditions. Oyewumi argues that African women need to know that “it's okay for them to be the way they are – to see the way they are as strength” (Oyewumi, 2004, p.1).

Another interesting point noted in the response above is the continued affirmation that the locals were aware of the importance of education and its benefits and yet still held their traditions highly and any threat to them was not welcome. Education is perceived as an avenue to westernised life, which is considered as alien to the traditional way of life (Barngetumy, 1999). Such a perception is demonstrated by the responses that indicate that school threatens the traditional way of life. Hill and King (1993) argued that if women were educated, that would influence modern attitudes, which seem to be lacking in most of the respondents whose view of education is negative. In a separate interview with Tione, note her response to the same question:

*Umm, that is difficult. Sometimes the schoolteachers want to tell us what to do. They even ask us not to teach some things to the girls. [Why? I probe further]. Because the schools know what they are supposed to teach. We know what we are supposed to teach. So why should they teach us what to teach and not to teach. There are times that we have differed with the school. But we warn these girls to choose who they want to listen to. These are our customs and they need to know about them. No one has died from them [Tione, KITTR].*

She does not appreciate the idea of teachers or the school dictating to the locals what to teach. The position of the school is distinguished from that of the tradition. She further affirms that the girls are warned about whom to obey. Her declaration that no one has died from traditions seems to suggest their assumed innocence and lack of negative impact on the girls. The importance of 'our' traditions and the need for the children to know them still emerges strongly in her response signifying the importance attached to them.

The women appeared to be of the opinion that there was no conflict. However, the hesitation seems to suggest something else. She seems to be waiting for a confirmation from other women. Their reactions seems important to her.

*There is no conflict [She looks at others waiting for approval and then continues]. I wanted to say that, you know during the initiation ceremony,*

*girls can be excluded BUT they continue going to school. Previously yes but not now they are released* [Maria, WFG. V2].

[Jenny interjects] *but if the girls want to marry then that is affecting school* [Jenny, WFG. V2].

When Jenny interjects pointing out that the girls' option to marry was affecting their aspiration for school which was evidence enough of the existing conflict, she is met with a barrage of 'no.' The rest of the women echo and respond by arguing with her, insisting that the change had taken place allowing girls to even go to school instead of remaining in confinement. Maria's response shows that the women are not being truthful especially when she adds a 'but.' From the observed initiation rites that I attended and from the experiences of the girls interviewed, confining girls for a given number of days is still a common practice. This is equally echoed by Kelly et al (1999) who claimed that Lundazi was one of the provinces where girls were still being withdrawn from school for initiation rites.

The arguments above show that there is a clash between the values the girls learn at home and those learnt in formal school. The participants have again demonstrated the importance their traditions have and the need to maintain them. While this is important, the problem here is the female child who seems to be caught in the middle hence affecting her educational progression. The male child seems to be unaffected by all this. It is the girl who is affected in class as a result of the knowledge received.

Part of the discussion in this section has shown how the girl's relationship with the father is affected after the initiation rite; note Temwachi's response in section 7. 3. I return to this subject in more detail in the section that follows.

### 7. 5. Relationships

The focus of this section is on relationships that exist among the Tumbuka and how they are affected by the cultural traditions. According to my observations, the behaviours of the members of the community seemed to be controlled by the cultural traditions, and a hierarchy is strictly adhered to. As observed earlier in the chapter, mores are obligatory and individuals are under obligation to obey them for the maintenance of the community. The respondents such as men, women and girls, insisted on the importance of maintaining the social cultural traditions. Relationships seem to be traditionally controlled. Further, communication was controlled by the relationship that existed between individuals. Parents-in-laws will not talk casually to each other especially those of the opposite sex. The mother in-law and son-in-law will kneel down almost 5 to 10 meters apart to talk or even to just greet each other. The in-laws cannot eat in each other's presence. The same relationship exists between the father in-law and the daughter in-law. When the participants were asked to clarify the subject of relationships, this was what Edisa said in reference to the activities of a Parent Teachers Association meeting which was held in the school:

*The women did not want to eat in the presence of the men insisting that some men were their father-in-laws. Those who defied because I had told them they would not eat were reported to the alangizi. Others even reported me to the chief that I was not keeping the customs and I were forcing them to do what their customs did not expect. Imagine! The meeting was about empowering women. Most of the women did not talk throughout the meeting. They did not participate. They failed to participate in the presence of the men and more men than women came. You see now. The government has not identified that this is a problem and it needs to be addressed. This problem is serious [Edisa, KITR].*

Edisa complained about the effect of the restricted relationship that existed between the men and the women. From the account, such an outcome affected the women. They could not participate freely or eat in the presence of men. It is interesting that the women themselves reported Edisa to the chief on grounds that she was not



respecting the customs. This made me think whether the women in the village were really interested in improving their welfare and especially that which affected their education and that of their children.

*The girls are married as sex objects and for the production of children. They have no powers at all; they are mere workers and the men end up marrying a second wife. Some of the girls even wish they had continued with school. It is sad because some of these girls are intelligent. Really intelligent [Julie, FGT].*

Julie's account demonstrates how that the relationship between the girls and their older husbands could just be that of an object to produce children. The man has authority over the woman and can do anything. This agrees with the contentions of radical feminist who insist that men use societal structures and other methods of control to keep women dormant (Marysia, 2000). Julie also cited the relationship between the girls and their fathers, which tends to change immediately the girl became of age.

*We forgot to mention that there is also another cultural problem the girls learn during the initiation ceremony. It is about their relationship with the father. It ends right when a girl enters the house. Afterwards she is not allowed to talk to the father, be found standing about in his presence and there is no touching or eating with him. So there is no relationship between the father and daughter. The auntie the sister to the father has more powers over her. So even if the girl wanted books, she would have to send another small child to ask the father [Julie, FGT].*

The outcome of such a relationship may introduce to the girl the type of relationship that would exist between the husband and herself in future. In the responses cited earlier, in section 7. 4, the teachers indicated how their relationship with the female pupils was constrained after the initiation ceremony. This affected the effectiveness of the girl in class.

*Then I was told not to be familiar with my father, not to talk to him but to send a child to ask him for anything. You know? One time, [she pauses, laughs and continues], I had a sore in my eye and it was getting bad. My mother had gone to visit her relatives in a village far from her. At school the teacher kept asking me to tell my father to take me to the clinic. But I could not. And how was he going to see the sore. So when it became really bad, the madam, Mrs.... [Name withheld] called my father. She was very annoyed and she*

*asked him to touch me and see the sore in the eye. [Laughing even louder she said] I was afraid and my father was afraid to touch me. Finally he was forced, he stood up, and I knelt down and he touched me and looks into my eye. He was very sorry. The sore was bad. That is how he and Mrs took me to the clinic [Temwachi, FISG].*

Temwachi's ordeal shows how the relationship of a girl and father can be constrained by the traditions. The father had to be forced by the teacher to touch the daughter to assess the sore in her eye. Probably he may not have even known that she was ill until he was called at school and yet she was looking after him by preparing food and providing him with water to bath in the absence of her mother. The girls' experiences seem to further demonstrate how difficult changing the traditional mind set can be.

During the whole period of the research, I never noticed wives sharing a meal with their husbands. The girls had their meals outside the house with their mothers while the men shared their meals inside the house with the sons. The woman is expected to call the husband for a meal on her knees as a form of respect. I visited Zondiwe who was pregnant with twins and in her 8<sup>th</sup> month. She was big and looked tired. I found her preparing a meal. Her feet were swollen and the 2 meters wrapper around her waist could hardly go round because of the big tummy. She struggled to her feet to go and call her husband after she had put his food in the hut. When she got to the tree where the husband was, she knelt down and asked him in the hut. He never answered her nor looked at her. Then she struggled to get up. I rushed over to help her up. She laughed and said, '*Nili makola Anya Phiri.*' (I am alright Anya Phiri). Zondiwe had to carry a 20 litres container of water in her state as many times as possible during the day with no help from the husband.

Such behaviour was common among men in the community. It was a clear demonstration of the position of a man, his authority and how it operates through

social systems. The second wife of my host told me that a man who is not respected by his wife, in his own home cannot command respect outside the home.

*Anya Phiri, a man should be respected by his wife. I cannot speak ill of my husband to others. He is my husband. I can't expect others to respect him. Others will point fingers at him and say, 'a man who can't control his wife is a woman.' That is an insult [Tasila FN].*

From the explanation of Tasila, it is easy to note the exploitative nature of patriarchy rooted in the family. Radical feminist theories argue that the oppression of women can only be eradicated by abolishing patriarchy. In line with Marxist-socialist theory, the family supports and reinforces patriarchy. Through man's position in the family, he controls his wife who in turn respects him. However in an interview I had with Zondiwe, this was her request:

*Before we finish, talk to my husband, he may listen to you, he might agree to stop having children. He does not listen to me. Now the clinic wants me to provide 4 chitenges [wrappers] for the two babies and 2 knitted garments. We only have for one and we can't afford. How do I get the other baby out of the clinic or hospital after I deliver? Talk to him please [Zondiwe, FIW. V2].*

The relationship existing in this marriage was one sided with the man having an upper hand and making decisions that were affecting the wife. It was interesting to note that she was asking me, a fellow woman to speak to the husband on her behalf. I could have been viewed as empowered enough to challenge her husband.

Relationships seem to be constrained as well as controlled by the traditions and any action that is contrary to that expected is met with correction, reprimand or caution. The relationship between the fathers and the female children is important here because this could boost the girl's participation in education and could contribute considerably to the quality of her work. Wolfendale, firmly states that "the involvement of parents boosts and enhances pupil achievement" (Wolfendale 1996, p.22). He further suggests that "parental encouragement" may enable the pupil to

“produce better performance in school” (Wolfendale, 1996, p.23). Further still, in a case where the mother is not educated, she may not be able to make decisions readily for her daughter especially where the relationship with her husband is also restricted. Therefore, education for the women is important because it has potential to liberate them. Carson captures this importance by stating that, “when people are educated, you liberate them and encourage them to possibilize their lives and settle for nothing less than the pursuit of excellence” (Carson, 1992, p.210).

## **7. 6. Conclusion**

The importance of traditions to the participants reviewed in this chapter cannot be ignored or watered down. From the participants’ point of view, these traditions are part of their lives and the benefits they accrue from living in conformity are significant. The cultural traditions give them their identity which is distinctive from other cultures. The society is maintained by these long standing orders and breaking loose from them is not an easy thing, hence the emphasis on ‘these are our traditions.’ They define them, they make them and they shape them. While there has been a call to change some of the traditions, this will not come easily. Agreeing with Chitsike, change will need “a multifaceted, explosive force that can shake individuals to change their attitude and devise ways of living outside the bounds imposed by patriarchal system” (Chitsike, 1995, p.22).

The theories of gender inequalities have provided a valuable framework through which the causes for the inequalities in the community are perpetuated. The patriarchal system is evident in the locality and craftily operates through the traditions to the point where the women themselves have become the main players, ensuring that the system is maintained through the initiation rites and socialisation process.

The culturally produced characteristics of women are manipulated by men to restrict them from actively participating. The women seem to see no need for the education of the female child and are ready to settle for a mere primary education for them. The uneven consumption of education results from the patriarchal structure being held firmly by the demands of the cultural traditions. The cultural traditions, complex and ambiguous, have emerged as central among the locals serving as an excuse for perpetuating attitudes and practices that act as barriers to the education of the girl child.

The traditional knowledge the girls receive in initiation clashes with the requirement of the formal education system, acting as a barrier to her progression in education. The relationships between men and women in the locality are unhealthy and a hindrance to women's active participation in the education of their children. Lack of parental involvement in the children's education stifles any aspirations to progress in education. With the rigorous teachings received in initiation the girl's aspirations tend to be directed to marriage. Society expects her to take up the role of wife and mother rather than formal education because the more education a girl acquires, the less chances she will have to marry.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **8. 0. Introduction**

Established in this research are copious factors that weigh against female education. While each factor identified contributes to holding back female education, this research has demonstrated that cultural traditions are the power house behind this phenomenon. The underlying issue emerging from the results is the complex and ambiguous cultural attitudes and the conflict that exists between the cultural traditional values rooted in the respondents and the impact that cultural traditions have on the choices the women may make for themselves and their children.

The complexity of the cultural factors further compounded by the patrilineal affinity of the society that gives significant value to male children because through them lies the continuity of the family. This gives prominence and creates fertile ground for patriarchal attitudes to thrive; patriarchal views that have provided tacit acceptance to viewing girls and women as inferior subjects. The collected data demonstrated that women do not wish to rule men or even usurp their authority. They know their place very well as taught by their traditions. This research does not establish that patrilineal groupings are automatically patriarchal but that patrilineal groupings are strongholds of patriarchal predisposition. This study has shown how such proclivity can place constraint on women's academic success.

In summary, I argue that cultural traditional practices have an adverse impact on the education of women in Zambia. The underlying values that 'western education' teaches are where the conflict lies with the culture of the locals. This research has also established that there is a relationship between culture and how one contextualises information. Potentially information received can be assumed to be detached from one's culture that it becomes difficult to apply it or place it in context. Culture can dictate what information is considered useful or which will be absorbed. While culture is not stagnant, it is subject to change. The danger here is when the fundamentally good values of a society are eroded due to exposure to such an educational system.

However, this research has demonstrated that there are some harmful traditional practices that have a debasing effect on the women. This can neither be ignored nor accepted on the grounds that these traditions shape the identity of the locals. Ignoring these harmful traditions could result in the losing of the fight to educate the women. This will not be achieved in Zambia and those other African countries that share similar traditions and customs. While parity can be proudly achieved, and displayed on national statistics to prove pronouncement and commitments made, keeping the girl in school until she attains the highest form of education should be the most important goal to seek.

This chapter will give the summary, conclusion to, and recommendations arising from the research. The following objective questions were raised to help meet the goals and give direction to the process of the research.

Figure 15 ~ Research Objectives

**What are traditional teachings?**

- What are the goals of the traditions?
- Do they achieve their intended goals?
- How are they conveyed to the women/girls?
- Are there any consequences for those who do not live within the context of the traditional requirement?

**Is school education important to women?**

- What is the importance of school education to the women?
- Do the women understand the importance of school education?
- Are the women themselves aware of the importance of school education and do they have evidence of its positive impact on women?

**What link exists between traditional teachings and the high illiteracy rates of women?**

- Do the traditions represent a major factor, which restricts education opportunities for women?
- Are there any conflicts between traditional teachings and modern education?

**What implications do the findings have for the Zambian education system?**

The data were collected through ethnographic methods. These included participant observation, focus group and in depth interviews, narratives and secondary data. The local language, Tumbuka, was used throughout the process of collecting data. The interviews were carried out in places suitable and comfortable to the interviewees. Interviews were tape-recorded and later on re-played to the respondents so that they could confirm or modify what they had said. Both forms of interviews lasted between 30 to 45 minutes. The data were transcribed and translated into English. This was not easy because some words could not be easily translated without losing their rich meaning. To remedy this I used a number of people fluent in both Tumbuka and English to correct, verify and provide alternative words, clauses and phrases close enough to the actual meaning. Through this action, rigour was injected into the research process improving the validity and reliability of the findings.



Other checks to improve the validity of the research and to minimise researcher influence were put in place. These included a credible research assistant who was more fluent in the local language than I was, continuous self checks (being reflective and reflexive), and cross checking information collected with different informants. Ethical procedures have been considered throughout this research process ensuring that the rights, privacy and freedom of the participants are respected and protected (Wellington, 2000; Madison, 2005). For that reason, before each interview, participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. At the end of my time in the field I gave presents to all participants as an act of appreciation for the information collected.

This research has used a number of theories each offering a different dimension to the problem under investigation. Theories of gender inequalities commonly referred to as feminist theories: liberal, radical, and Marxist-socialist theories, have offered explanations of gender inequalities, women's subordination and oppression and other factors affecting women's education. Marxist-socialist theory argues that capitalism and patriarchal systems are responsible for the oppression and inequalities of women. Evident in the responses is a system of hierarchical values that are woven in the society. The man is on top of the hierarchy, ruling and controlling the family, and the village. This structural domination is maintained and reinforced by the girls/women at the bottom. Interestingly the girls/women tend to be discriminated against. For example, in line with Human Capital Theory (HCT) the selective tendency of some parents among the Tumbuka to educate the child they feel has more returns to the family is the case in point here. The explanation of (HCT) which argues that human beings, through education and training could be capable of obtaining returns is applicable. However, without education and training it will be difficult to obtain

returns from the women and girls. The structural discrimination which is maintained and reinforced by the girls/women discriminates against them.

Reference to African feminists has been made particularly in respect of their relationship with the Western feminists. Their concern about the tendency of scholars and Western feminists to misunderstand and misinterpret African women has played a valuable role in this research by serving as a check on my part to accurately represent and portray the reality of the tribe under study as accurately as possible. The theories used in this research, though coined by the west, have provided a good framework within which to carry out this research.

A total of 47 participants of which approximately 18% were men and 82% were women comprise the sample used the members of which were purposely selected for their knowledge of the subject under investigation. Snowballing ensured a gradual addition of the participants. I had 4 chief informants who were valuable 'friends' and were able to countercheck information collected. For example the teacher chief informant was able to proof read and edit the translated scripts because she was fluent in both English and Tumbuka.

Thematic analysis used to transform data into meaningful information commenced as soon as data started accumulating to avoid late analysis and 'weakening the analysis' (MacMillan and Schumacher, 2006). In the absence of a computer, because there was no electricity in the village, a manual coding system was used to explore the data. A number of themes emerged, which were explored further to establish the findings.

### **8. 1. Problems Encountered**

I cannot claim plain sailing throughout this research project for that would be inaccurate. The following problems were encountered:

- Settling down in a totally new environment was difficult. The process of the locals accepting me, trusting me enough to live among them and collecting information from them proved knotty. They had their own suspicions and I had to prove my genuineness. This was only made possible through participating in the various activities such as day to day chores and initiation activities.
- Deciding which data to incorporate into my account from the huge data collected has been a difficult task.
- Focus group interviews were interesting moments but as suggested by Silverman, it has not been easy to “give due weight to the specific context within which the material was collected, while retaining at least some sense of the group discussion as a whole” (Silverman, 2004, p.184).
- Being participant and observer demands a lot of skill. It was not always easy to perform the two roles simultaneously especially when I needed to take notes.
- Arranging for interviews in a quiet atmosphere without interruptions from unannounced visitors, noise from the animals, crying children and some husbands demanding attention from their wives, was not an easy thing to do. I did not want to get the women in trouble by arranging secret meetings without the husbands’ knowledge.
- Working with a Research Assistant who was not married and had not been initiated was a difficulty. In her presence sensitive information in relation to the initiation rites could not be collected. This is a situation I did not envisage when choosing her. I chose her specifically for her skills as a research assistant. Therefore, I had to conduct some interviews on my own to capture some valuable data, which was not easy.

In order to capture the opinions, claims, explanations and experiences distinct to the setting, the discussion and analysis of the findings has included the voices of the respondents. The ethnographic approach used is not intended to be an expedition in

search of facts; it is more of a conversation between the participants and the ethnographer in the research process to establish the truth (Barker, 2003).

## **8. 2. The Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical frameworks used in this study have made clear the barriers that impede women's education in the community under investigation. As already noted in chapter 3, these theories were cast in western moulds and their relevance and applicability to the African situation is heavily contested by African feminists who claim that the theories fail to explain the African situation adequately. But I have applied these Western theories and found that they addressed, and gave plausible explanations for the barriers to female education as described by the respondents.

The broad range of liberal feminists' theory involves the assumption that female subordination, rooted in customary constraints, restricts women's access into the public sphere (Kwesiga, 2002). This explanation fits in with the situation in the village under investigation which tend to result in negative impact on the value that is attached to women's education. Although liberal feminists theory is criticised by radical and Marxist-socialist theorists of first; emphasising the public life as opposed to the private life, and secondly; for its non-radical stance in advocating for changes that can free women from oppression, the theory has identified the inequalities that exist among the Tumbuka. Of significance here is the issue of subordination that has emerged in the data revealing that it is deeply rooted in cultural traditions. This has enabled the study to assess the gendered roles evident in the community which are reinforced through the process of socialisation and initiation rites. Liberal feminists' theory sheds light on the way that lack of equal participation of girls in the home environment can lead to unequal participation at school, even if the intention is equal

participation. The girls' participation in school education, despite easy access, will not be on equal grounds because of a number of factors such as impact of household chores on the girl, her role as a care giver and her lower status.

The liberal feminists' approach to correcting this concern about inequality has been useful to the study. The participants have insisted on the value of their culture, therefore correcting cultural attitudes could best be done gradually through legislation that forbids specific harmful cultural practices rather than by radically uprooting the values that underpin society.

Radical feminism has thrown light on women's oppression; as it exists in families and societies. The radical and Marxist-socialist feminist theories argue that patriarchal systems permeate through the cultural fibre and are deeply embedded in the social fabric. Radical feminism has identified the role that patriarchy plays in reinforcing and maintaining the subordination of women. The social or family structure of the Tumbuka tribe is patrilineal, in that one's line of descent is traced through the male members of the family. While this study does not conclude that such a structure automatically assumes the existence of patriarchy, but the findings establish that the combination of the patriarchal rule and the patrilineal structure can be a formidable structure which could sometimes be subtle and always pervasive.

The social cultural construction of gender has been linked to gendered divisions of labour in the family and the community through the socialisation process and initiation rites. Kwesiga (2002) argued that the subordination of the African woman cannot be blamed on colonialism and Western capitalism, it existed during pre-colonial Africa. The radical feminist theory has been a useful framework here and

important to note is the undeniable adverse impact on the value placed on women's education, the woman's social status, which is clearly reflected in her position in the family structure and her work load.

Marxist-socialist feminist theory has shown how the class system can exist in the family and in society by highlighting the jobs and roles of the men as important while devaluing those of the women whose role is to support the man. For example here is an observed scene from my field notes: 'The husband of my host returned home earlier than usual and found that the water for his bath was not ready. No excuse of 'I have been busy with other chores' was accepted. He scolded the wife as being lazy and that she liked spending time chatting and gossiping. That day, we had been to the fields to pick a local vegetable for dinner, collected firewood for cooking the dinner and heating his bathing water, we had been to the river to wash his clothes and collect water, and we had spent close to 3 hours preparing maize grain for pounding the following day. Other chores such as sweeping and cooking not included. It was task after task and we had hardly stopped when he walked in. He had gone to see his friend - a two hours walk from my host village. If it were possible to ask him, (which it was not), what he had been doing at the friend's village, I wondered how many of the tasks we had done would be equivalent to his.'

Notable in the lessons taught during the initiation rites and the socialisation process is the position and role of women in relation to that of men. For example, *taking care of the man, respecting the man, cooking for the man, sexually satisfying the man* and if the woman is considered to be incompetent by the husband, he can send her back to her parents' home or can marry another woman. Such a case demonstrates the domination of the man and the position of the woman in the family and in the society.

Human Capital Theory can explain why some parents choose to educate one child over the other. As has been noted above, the Tumbuka society is patrilineal with much value placed on the male child through whom the line of descent is traced. The male child is valued right from birth, and all through the processes of socialisation. The domination of the man is evident in the family and the community giving the man authority to make decisions for the family. Such a situation, as explained by HCT, shows the role that parental decisions can play in deciding who to educate. Investment in the children is assessed in the light of the expected benefits, job and lifestyle all of which seem to favour the boy. If the girl has to get a better job and yield better returns she has to remain in school and progress through to further education like the boys. However, if she is withdrawn and only allowed the minimum level of education, the outcome is likely to produce poor returns.

Therefore, cultural traditions operate on a discriminatory basis with girls/women given a low social status that supports, reinforces and maintains patriarchy as the norm and traditional requirement. Inequality tendencies as explained by the feminist theories flourish in this environment affecting and restricting women's access to and participation in education. The cultural traditional hierarchical system cannot be underestimated or ignored because of its potential to perpetuate tendencies of inequality, subordination, and oppression that perpetually restrict women to acquiescent roles and make them internalise such a structure as normal. Therefore, such a state of affairs has potential to inhibit women's participation in education.

### **8. 3. Summary of the emerging key issues**

The key issues that emerged from the data represent the evidence obtained and a summary of these is outlined here under the main themes.

### **8. 3. 1. School Education**

#### *I. Importance and Benefits of School Education*

Previous research has established the importance of education and shown that educating a woman has a positive impact on the children particularly that of the female child. In this research the respondents have similarly demonstrated that they know school education is important. The importance of school education is known and the benefits which represent the evidence of its importance are well articulated despite some of them being invisible. However the question is; do these benefits have a positive impact on the respondents? This research has demonstrated that these benefits are not sufficient to move or persuade the locals to send the female children to school. The lack of visible examples around them, such as women in working environments, in positions of authority and able to drive cars, becoming university graduates or with improved life styles as teachers or nurses, raises questions of how tangible the benefits of education can be to the villagers. Freire shows how education can lead to questioning fundamental things (Freire, 1974). If girls were educated in a way which raised consciousness rather than being something else which was done to them, they might start to question more.

### **8. 3. 2. The Barriers of School Education**

Previous research has identified a number of factors that are a barrier (home and school based) to female education. While there is evidence that all these factors contribute to deterring girls from school education in the locality, the following were the most frequently identified in the responses.



## *I. Poverty*

There is growing evidence in a number of researches that proves that poverty contributes greatly to a lack of female education. The cycle of poverty seems to continue in families without any form of school education. Previous research such as Fawe (2006); NGOCC, (2006); and CAMFED Zambia, (2007) has shown that education has been proved to break this cycle and widen opportunities for women. They have also shown that an educated mother stands a better chance of contributing significantly to the education of the children particularly that of the girls. However, there is evidence in this research that while poverty has heavy implications for the girls' education and perpetuates the selective tendency of parents to only allow a boy to be educated, poverty is not the strongest determinant—it is the social cultural requirement. The parents are guided and compelled by the cultural traditional requirement.

## *II. Parental Influence*

In this research parental influence has been established as a factor that affects the education of girls. As identified by Wolfendale (1996) parents are an important force in the education of girls. In the responses, the parents agreed that it was their duty to ensure that the children go to school although later, the responsibility of encouraging the girls with school was placed solely on the mothers. In this setting, the school was within a walkable distance and yet the majority of girls were still not in school. The parents determine whether the girl should go to school, continue with school or not, or whether the girl should get married. The father's word in particular is final. The mother is expected to accept the decision or she will put her marriage at risk. Evidence in this study indicates that culture plays a strong role. The social cultural

beliefs, views and practices that expect the woman to accept the husband's decision as final even if he is wrong play a strong effective role here.

### *III. Household Chores*

This research has established that household chores have the potential to affect the attendance and active participation of girls in school. The consequence can be that girls give up school education altogether. Evidence from this research shows that this situation is driven by the social cultural norms that expect girls to be competent in all such activities. There is pressure from the mother, extended family, the girl herself and other members of the village to ensure that the female child learns by participating actively in these chores before going to school each morning and after school. This experiential learning is involving, demanding and tends to rob the girl of time to prepare for school, or to do her homework or revision after school. This learning by doing has priority over anything that relates to formal school.

### *IV. Marriage*

Marriage is an institution that is highly respected in the locality as observed in the responses. The main role of the girl seems to be that of wife and mother, and hence achieving this role brings with it respect and recognition in the community. Although the importance of school education has been identified by the respondents in this research, marriage emerges as the most important, respected and looked forward to event. Such a tendency of emphasising marriage to the young girls should not be the case. The question is: 'Is marriage the destiny of women?' This should not be the case: however, if from their upbringing the girls learn from those around them that marriage is their identity, they may grow up to believe so. There is, unfortunately, evidence of a sense of disillusionment among the respondents. They discover that

what looked attractive and was promised to them as good is not always so. Some respondents indicated that they felt trapped in marriage while the husband had the power to marry as many wives as he liked according to their culture.

The unmarried, in the community, are looked upon with suspicion and are not respected. A father takes more pride in marrying off his daughter than in encouraging the girl to go to school. Failure of the girl to attain any form of education is blamed on the women. Any little education obtained by the girl is considered as sufficient enough to earn the father more cows when he marries the daughters off. Behind such actions is the powerful influence of cultural traditions that seem to direct the path of such decisions. Patriarchy runs in the family and the social structures and it is reinforced and maintained by the women. As observed from the interviews and observations in this research, the men and women accept that their actions were a cultural 'thing'.

#### V. Initiation Teachings

The initiation is an activity which this study has identified as a barrier that precludes the girls from attending and continuing with school education. It is well structured with professional teachers in the various areas of expertise and has a syllabus (not documented). From the interviews, this research has shown that this institution has its own aims and objectives which are well established – to prepare the female child as a mother and wife (marriage). The teachings the girls receive in this school are powerful and most of the topics, if not all, are centred on patriarchy. It is a powerful institution and rigorous in its process of disseminating information. The women in this research were able to show from their experiences the abuse they underwent with a purpose of cementing the lessons, correcting bad behaviour and attitude. Failure to

live by the standards set is met with various types of stringent punishment; humiliation, lack of respect, lack of recognition in community activities, and ceremonies. It is unfortunate that a number of publications on initiation rites cited in this research such as that of Rasing (1995), Rasing (200), Kashiwa (2004), and Richards (1956) do not oppose the abuse inherent in the system. The abuse is unfortunately viewed as a means of cementing the lessons into the initiate.

#### VI. Sexual Abuse by Teachers

The factors influencing the education of girls also lie within the school system. Although the respondents in this research cited a number of factors such as lack of teaching and learning materials, lack of teachers and poor infrastructure, the major factor that was consistently raised by the students and the parents was that of hostile environment. This involved sexual abuse by teachers, and humiliation and intimidation from the male teachers and boys. This research has evidence that the actions of the male teachers towards the female students are a deterrent to the education of girls. There is evidence from the respondents of the teachers sexually abusing the girls and the head teacher does not do anything much about it. This situation has affected the teacher-parent relationship in the community. This may not be the case throughout the country but was a factor that emerged in this community.

#### VII. The School Curriculum

The relevance of what is learnt in school does not seem to be appreciated by the parents in this locality. While they have agreed school education is important they have shown in their responses that they see the curriculum as 'western biased', meaning that the curriculum reflects the western type of life more than that of the locals. For example Tione in chapter 7, section 7.4 clearly stated that schools taught

western values rather than those of the local community. They see school education and its teachers as tools intended to change their way of life eventually. There is a fear of the loss of their cultural education which they value so much. This is problematic and threatens the traditional life.

From my observation notes collected during the time I volunteered my services in the school, the curriculum is a product curriculum, teacher controlled and examination bound. Though on paper it is aimed at instilling skills which will help the student gain employment, its lack of practical skills, and a lack of teaching and learning resources make it theory bound. Hence it adopts a superficial learning approach that may not be effective enough later in the life of the student. The respondents indicated that the educated people get good jobs and live good lifestyles in town. Herein was part of the cause for the conflict between traditional teachings and modern education: what was taught was not relevant to the needs of the local people. While it may not be all the subjects, the participants indicated that in general school was teaching the white man's customs and values, a situation which did not impress them. The westernised school curriculum doesn't prepare young people in Zambia for the range of possibilities and arguably serves to hold the country back. Enterprise and entrepreneurship need to be fostered.

### **8. 3. 3. Traditional knowledge**

#### *1. Importance and Benefits*

This research has captured the importance placed on traditional knowledge from responses and actions of the respondents. The use of the pronoun 'our' consistently by the respondents was noted, indicating possessiveness and high value placed on the traditions. The benefits are visible in the locality and are a strong extrinsic motivator

to the girls. Hofstede (2005) has pointed out that motivation is an assumed force operating inside (*and outside*) an individual, inducing him or her to choose one action over another. Evidence drawn together from the interviews show that the role models in the community such as young married girls of school age, with babies on their backs were a force that compelled the girls to see the visible benefits of living within the requirements of the traditions.

## *II. Effect of the Traditional Teachings*

The interviews demonstrated that the traditional teachings had a negative effect on the recipients. The young respondents and some older ones gave narratives of the ordeal, fear and humiliation they went through. The evidence shows both physical and psychological effects, and how some women have had to live with the effects for the rest of their lives. The others accept their ordeals as a normal cultural process of inculcating information into its recipients. Some parents even request the teachers to apply severe pain on their daughters during the process of instruction with a view to correcting behaviour that was not in line with the cultural requirement. Of interest in the evidence is how some forms of humiliation the girls went through follow them into the community and at school where they suffer more humiliation and abuse from the boys and the teachers. Some girls drop out of school for fear of the abuse, bullying and humiliation.

## *III. Failure to live within the confines of the Traditions*

This research has also shown how that failure to live within the confines of the traditions lead to various other forms of punishment that act as deterrents. The women would rather live in obedience to the traditions for fear of the repercussions. Both girls and women demonstrated their fear of some reprisal if they did not live

according to the traditional expectations. Such fears enable women to make decisions or accept responsibilities they would otherwise avoid. On the other hand, living within the traditional confines has its own rewards amongst which are respect and acceptance, as well as respect, recognition and a good name for the family one belongs to.

The school girls interviewed in this research exhibited some degree of helplessness. They claimed that they would love to complete school education but had no control over their lives. Obedience to their parents overrides their choice to remain in school. Though some displayed resentment and rejection of some derogatory traditional gendered teachings, they still appreciated the traditional teachings in general.

Relationships in this community are either controlled or restricted. For example the female child of pubescent age ceases to talk freely with her father, eat with him or touch him. For anything she wants from her father, she is supposed to send her younger sibling.

#### **8. 4. What is the Data saying in light of the Research Objectives?**

In this section I will discuss the findings in line with the objectives that were formulated to guide the research process.

##### **8. 4. 1. What are Traditional Teachings?**

The traditional teachings can be defined as lessons that girls and women receive during initiation into womanhood and before marriage. Initiation ceremonies and pre-marital counselling are modes through which the teachings are transmitted. Socialization was also identified as another mode used to teach and train the children

about their expected roles and responsibilities. The traditions in the locality demand a rigid separation of sexes and this was observed throughout the period of collecting data. The goals of these teachings are intended to prepare the female child to be a wife and mother who would be knowledgeable in the traditional knowledge and capable enough to hand down this information to the next generation. The lessons are well informed by the culture of the society.

The collected data clearly show that this knowledge is valued, well taught and stringently monitored to ensure it meets its intended goals. The high non-attendance rates of girls and the negative attitudes of most women towards school education stand as confirmation of their achieved aims. The desire of the locals to continue to live within the traditional context is further evidence of the achieved aims of traditional education. Despite having a school within the vicinity, a number of girls were either married or out of school. The school records showed a high rate of girls dropping out of school in comparison to the boys. Some of the girls who dropped out of school to marry were part of the sample used in this research.

Failure to live within the context of these teachings is met with stringent reprimand. Indication from some narratives about experiences of the initiation ceremonies show how psychological, physical and emotional the whole process can be. Some respondents still bear the marks of abuse received during the process of initiation. Fear of the process being repeated calls for total obedience to the traditions.

#### **8. 4. 2. Is School Education Important to Women?**

The evidence from the interviews has shown that women know that school education is important and are aware of its benefits. However, the lack of a detailed



understanding of the importance of school education to the participants emerged in the responses obscuring the level of importance attached to school education despite acknowledging it. While the participants demonstrated that they understood the importance of school education as a tool that can empower them and offer them better lifestyles by increasing their employability their limited level of understanding of school education as a tool that can liberate them, and evoke knowledge, attitudes, values and skills to promote individual development is a case in point here. This limited understanding of school education limits job opportunities, which can only be found in urban areas. For the locals the lack of jobs waters down the value of education hence, it is not appreciated much.

One factor diluting the importance of education was the lack of tangible evidence of the benefits of education. An improved life style was one outcome that the participants would see as evidence of having been educated and as a result the lack of improved lifestyles of the educated in the locality was a letdown. It was difficult to measure the impact in the light of the few educated people in the locality whose lifestyles were not any different from those without any form of education. The environment from where the students come does not present any support and stimulus for learning. Therefore, while education is important, issues such as that of a supportive environment, positive role models, and employment opportunities for those who just manage basic education are lacking in the community hence allowing the cultural traditional education to have ascendancy over modern education.

#### **8. 4. 3. What link exists between traditional teachings and the high illiteracy rates of women?**

This research has shown from the data gathered that there is a link between traditional teachings and the high illiteracy rates of women in the locality. The women and the men in this research have demonstrated that traditions represent a major factor that restricts educational opportunities for women because for the sake of their traditions a girl can be withdrawn from school for purposes of initiation ceremony, marriage or to help with the household chores. Of the population that took part in this study, a good number of the women indicated that they had attempted school education but were either withdrawn to be married or just stopped due other factors such as poverty. Of all the interviews conducted with the women, only two women agreed to sign the consent form. The rest insisted they could not read or write, hence agreed verbally. The two who agreed to sign did not sign because the others laughed at them. Therefore, the proxy measure for illiteracy used in this study is non-attendance at school and dropping out which are perpetuated by the cultural traditions.

Chilinda a headman of village 2 in chapter 6, part III on girls encouraged with education commented that despite having been to school tend to slip back into illiteracy after having been withdrawn or dropping out of school due to the traditions. If the parents, especially the mother, were literate, the children, much more the girl, would benefit. The Tumbukas, like other tribes in Zambia have male-dominated families and in this study, the participants have demonstrated how such a system, supported and maintained by the women, perpetuates inequalities between sexes in a number of aspects. The traditions have emerged as a major factor that restricts educational opportunities for the women. The main role of the girl in the community is that of wife and mother and hence the urgency to marry her off is encouraged by

many members of the community and the family. The rigorous process of disseminating information, the monitoring system and the feared stringent measures for failure to live within the context of the cultural traditions tend to help maintain the customs. This research has also established that the women are active social agents and custodians of the cultural traditions.

In addition, the locals view modern education as a tool through which western morals, traditions, and lifestyles are transmitted. Such a view revealed a clash between traditional teaching and modern education. The participants demonstrated how they would rather the girl acquire, as much as possible, a traditional mind set in order to preserve her from being spoiled by the western ideas. Further still, the attitude and morals of some educated people in the locality demonstrated an inclination to western ideas, values and morals that were in conflict with the traditions. The curriculum taught in schools does not help much because it does not reflect the values of the society. This concern could be another reason for the conflict. The participants were able to demonstrate through one subject, home economics, how the children are taught western ways of living. While this may not apply to all the subjects, it is a matter worth noting.

While educational problems can be assessed and evaluated readily, the social cultural traditions demand more attention. The social role and social interaction is based on the super-ordinate/subordinate positions. The lower status of women, and the unbalanced relationships with men based on super-ordinate/subordinate roles, can have an adverse effect on the education of women hence restricting their education opportunities.

#### **8. 4. 4. What implications do the findings have for the Zambian education system?**

There is much the Zambian education system needs to do to improve in light of these findings. By focusing on the Tumbuka tribe as an extreme example where cultural traditions are still strong, I will make recommendations that could be applied generally in the country by the Ministry of Education. The recommendations can be found below.

#### **8. 5. The Education of my Fellow ‘Creatures!’<sup>35</sup>**

Women need education and women deserve education as much as men do. The premise upon which the Zambian Education system is based is to promote equality of access, equal participation and benefit to everyone, be they male or female. The National Policy on Education clearly states that the Government is committed to eliminate any sources of educational disadvantage in order to augment equity where access, participation, and achievement in education are hindered by factors such as gender, economic or social disadvantage (Educating Our Future, 1996). One of the reasons Zambia may not pursue assiduously its commitment to universal education is because it was forced to make this commitment by the conditionality of aid in the first place. Its policy did not come from within its own ethos (McPherson, 2004). However, with increasing pressure from a number of advocates there is considerable improvement. But it is worth noting that some donor driven commitments may not yield the much needed change in the education of girls. Zambia as a nation needs to rise to the challenge of ensuring the education of all its citizens. Additionally, the

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<sup>35</sup> The use of the term ‘creatures’ is inspired by my admiration of the work of Mary Wollstonecraft and her desire to see her fellow women get the education they deserved.

Government should forge ahead at all costs with its commitment to such goals to ensure the elimination of all factors that hinder the education of girls.

This study set out to investigate through ethnographic methods how cultural traditions could militate against the education and development of girls. Although this is an ethnographic research it cuts through multidisciplinary fields such as social sciences, education and anthropology. Such a multidisciplinary characteristic has enabled me as a researcher to gain insight and knowledge in these fields.

It has been widely accepted and established by a number of researches such as UN and UNICEF, that women's low education levels result in their poor economic status which further lead to low confidence, and the tendency to continuously allow themselves to depend on men. Such a state of affairs results in women slipping back into illiteracy. This scenario makes it hard for women to stand on their own owing to lack of competence in leadership and other essential skills that education could equip them with.

This study has provided evidence that patriarchal attitudes and negative cultural traditions do not recognize women as equal partners with men in the private or public sphere. The men keep women under their control by using the same women to enforce and maintain the system. With little or no effective education at all, the women accept the roles as part of their culture. They are active social agents as well as passive learners who will not allow their students (the girls) to question the reasons or purpose of some traditional practices that are oppressive and cause for their failure to be educated. This shows how that the social status of one controlled and guided by the social cultural expectations demands more attention.

In agreement with the human capital theory, this research has demonstrated that the tribe under investigation still views female school education as a poor investment. As a patrilineal society, the value of women is appreciated in terms of the *lobola* in the form of animals or money they can bring at marriage. Part or all the animals brought as *lobola* is used by their brothers as payment for their marriages. The wives of the brothers are important because the line of descent runs through the children of the man. Therefore, from the understanding of the participants, educating a female child would only benefit and improve the life of the family into which the girl marries; hence her education is not given significant attention by her father. Despite the respondents indicating that educating a female child was a 'bank of wealth' because of her feminine instincts to support the family; their cultural traditional mind set drives them to withdraw the female child from school. The respondents insisted, '*this is how we live here!*'

Culture defines their identity and gives them distinguishing characteristics from other cultures. '*These are **our** traditions*' and '*this is **who** we are*' was strongly emphasised by the respondents. These declarations are justified in light of Chimissos' (2003) explanation of identity who pointed out that identity is what makes us who we are. While the locals are proud of who they are and what defines them, evidence from the experiences of the women demonstrates how much the women go through to maintain this identity. Psychological, physical and emotional consequences are some of the factors identified in this research that women have and continue to go through in the name of 'our cultural traditions.' This is affecting any initiatives to help the girls get educated, for example initiatives such as building schools within walking distance, ensuring that schools have adequate teaching and learning resources, enough teachers, equality of access and participation. Despite such an initiative girls continue

to drop out of school. This should show the policy makers that there is more affecting the education of the girls than simply providing educational requirements. There is need to interrogate the gendered culture, the gendered roles and the status of women in societies.

Gender, as observed and shown from the data, is one of the key factors affecting the education of girls. Sexual roles are emphasised and taught stringently to the children. The evidence in this study shows that gender operates in relation to other social variables, in this case the culture of the locality. The local culture exercise stringent traditions that have debilitating effect on the girls.

The stronghold that the cultural traditions have on the locals has further resulted in conflicts with school education, which is viewed as disseminating the white man's culture. Observed and established in the interviews and narratives is the fear and suspicion the locals have of school education. The cultural traditions are a means of control in the locality and hence there is a fear school education will break the controlling effect of the cultural traditions. School education emerges as an opposing force that challenges the cultural traditional control measures that are in place. However, as already been established, cultural traditions play a significant role in hindering female education and has robbed the locality of any potential to develop. Conserving the cultural traditions and values is basic to this society. The collectivist nature of the society puts pressure on the girl/women affecting their choice for their school education.

This also raises the issues of how reflective of the locality the school curriculum is, how effective the pedagogy used is and the quality and relevance of the education is

to the locals. This is true of the cultural traditions; they are a true reflection of the locality and hence their stronghold. Evidence that has emerged from the research reflects that the curriculum in this context has affected how the locals view the world and how it shapes the identities of the young people. The identities of the young people in school education are in contrast with the expectations of the locals. Intellectual freedom (a woman speaking up for herself and standing up to a man) is viewed as western and is not appreciated.

While the basic school curriculum should empower the students to question and resist oppressive cultural traditions, it should be inclusive of the local traditions. There must be that fluency and continuity between home and school. Herein lies the cause of the conflict between the traditional education and school education. The relevance of the curriculum taught to the needs of the society stands to be an effective tool to compel parents to send the girls to school. This will help remove the myths that surround the cultural traditions and its controlling power. The current stand of the participants, which views modern school as a medium to promote western values and customs, alien and in conflict with their own, has an adverse impact on the education of girls and hence greater understanding and strategies need to be employed to skilfully help change traditional mind sets that are not ready to accept change. This study calls for the cessation of the damaging cultural traditions that continue to relegate women to inferior positions, that continue to teach women to take the low position, that teach women that a man is more important than them. While this could be possible through school education, the education system alone cannot achieve any major changes in attitudes much more those that cut across the strongly enthralled traditional values, beliefs and customs. This calls for concerted effort from parents, the community, the school and the government.



Data collected indicate that women in the locality have no exigency to change their situation, which they have accepted as morally right and befitting. The same applies to individual agency of the women which is lacking in many of the respondents. This is as a result of women having internalised this traditional image of themselves through socialisation and traditional teachings and wanting it that way. While they accept the importance of school education, they do not seem to understand the power that lies in intellectual freedom.

In my view, the basic education currently on offer can be equated to the colonial type of education which aimed at educating a small fraction of Zambians, who attained primary level and little secondary school experience. The basic school leavers, leave with little or no practical and analytic skills; the country's market demand for unskilled labour is not massive and unskilled workers are unable to intelligibly and confidently communicate in written and spoken language hence slip back into ignorance. I do not call for the locals to attain formal education for the purpose of acquiring western civilization or lifestyles but that through it they would be able to liberate themselves from out-dated traditional practices and stand for themselves and their children; that it would raise their consciousness about their state and provide them with the right tools.

This being the case I urge my fellow 'creatures', women and girls, not to be comfortable with just a minimum level of school education, for then the powerful force of the cultural traditions will not be broken. No one has power to make us feel inferior and of no use except ourselves. We can do it, come on, we deserve better!

## **8. 6. The Recommendations**

I hope that the recommendations given in this thesis will have a positive impact on the education of women. The role of the school in educating the girls should be to equip them with an analytical mind that questions and challenges the out-dated, restrictive and debasing traditions. It should promote individual development and not encourage an acquiescent cultural mind set. This is the heart of this investigation. I am aware that some recommendations may require resources and as a result may take a long time to implement. However, there are some that are applicable in the short term and should be implemented.

1. Emerging from the data was the concern the locals had on schools focusing on western values that were alien to their own. This research recommends reviewing the curriculum in order to meet the needs of the learners (male and female) and to reflect the local needs more than the global context. If the current curriculum is unadjusted to suit the locals, and non inclusive of Zambian cultural values, then yes, there is a danger the inherent culture can be diluted altogether. Curriculum priorities should not be on the global context. It should focus more on the local environment and how to develop it. This will not encourage a dependence attitude and will allow attainment of skills that allow students to depend heavily on employment opportunities without which their academic success is doomed. This will enable the school leavers to gain employment or self-employment. I strongly recommend that the review of the curriculum should involve all the stake holders, parents inclusive. The parents from a rural setting should not be represented by parents from urban settings because they barely know nor understand the needs of the rural set up. This could be applicable in the long term because of resources.

2. The government should improve the living conditions of workers in rural areas. In line with the human capital concept, investment in human capital stands to produce benefits that can spill over to the rest of the community. While in place currently is the initiative to improve the wages of the teachers working in rural areas, this is not impacting on the community enough. Improving on the living conditions of the workers and the infrastructure could bring life to the environment. The workers will in turn invest in the environment. This will further attract others from the urban area to live in the rural areas and further development will be stimulated which will create windows of opportunities to school leavers. This is applicable in the long term.
3. This research recommends the production of motivating indigenous instructional and reading materials that depict local cultural customs that can be used in schools. The expertise of tradition teachers could be used here by getting them involved in the writing of the teaching materials. In line with the theories of gender inequalities, the reading material should be able to depict the inequality and patriarchy tendencies, how they impact on the education of girls and how to eradicate such inequality tendencies and improve the status of girls and women in the home and community. The books should be easy to read, in the form of supplementary readers written in both English and the local languages to enable even those that don't go to school to read them. These books can be effective tools that will communicate the impact of some social cultural attitudes in the area. I believe culture can play a role in informing curriculum and methods of teaching. Coupled with an analytic pedagogy, this will enable the students to appreciate and assess their cultural traditions. This will also help remove the myths that surround the cultural traditions. Further still, this will encourage

Zambian writers, many of whom may not have the means of publishing their work to write about their culture. This is applicable in the short and long term.

4. The parents should be involved in the education of the children as much as possible. The reading materials noted above could be one means through which parents can be included. If parents read with their children and report back the progress to the school, this will motivate the participation of the girls in schools. There should be a monitoring system in place to ensure the effectiveness of this strategy. Parents will read about the negative impact gender inequalities and patriarchy tendencies could have on the children. The parents and children will also read about the importance of investing education in both children whether female or male. This can be an avenue for communication between teachers and parents.
5. In line with Freire's recommendations, through "active dialogical, critical and critical stimulating methods" the traditional teachers could be targeted for change by awakening their conscious. (Freire, 1974, p40). Critical understanding would lead to critical action. This is a harder one to tackle but seems to be particularly problematic and hence needs attention. This can be applicable in the long term.
6. The unprofessional conduct of male teachers requires stringent measures. Dealing with issues that surround the education of girls should assume a radical stance in line with the recommendation of the radical feminists. While legislative reform, recommended by liberal feminists is important and should be carried out, dealing with those that are found wanting should be dealt with radically. By this I refer to the tendency of the government to transfer abusive teachers to a different school as a solution to misconduct. While the laws and policies are in place, implementation and monitoring strategies leaves much to be desired. This research recommends that offending and abusive teachers should be suspended

without pay pending investigation. If proven guilty, such teachers should not be allowed to work as teachers again. This recommendation is applicable in the short term.

7. Education For All (EFA) should not be defined as a mere easy entrance to education. It should be holistic; from basic education to higher education. The notion of universal, free, and compulsory academic education has never been a reality in Zambia in its practical terms since its pronouncement in the early 1960s except on paper. It is the governments' responsibility to ensure that every child, male or female should access school, remain in school, access quality education and complete their academic education. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure their child attends school. In line with the liberal feminists, this research recommends a law be put in place to ensure parents whose children are not in school should be prosecuted accordingly. Parents should know that they are committing an offence if they fail to ensure that their children attend school regularly. Parents should be aware that choosing one child over another to attend school is an offence. The monitoring strategies should be evaluated as often as possible to ensure implementation such as ensuring that there are no children in the streets during school times. This should be implemented in the rural areas as well. This can be applicable in the short and long term.
8. Sensitising parents on the importance of the education of the female child should be an on-going activity. This is in line with the liberal feminist's mode of correcting the problem of inequality in the society. This will gradually change the cultural mind set and see a new generation of parents that value the education of girls. In view of theories of gender inequalities, the sensitisation programmes should as much as possible educate people about the negative influences of cultural traditions, by demonstrating the impact of male domination, the status of

women and gendered roles and how these affect the education of women. The value of educating a girl is another important aspect that should be included due to the cultural mindset that assumes investment in a girl as valueless. Such programmes should not be confined to the urban areas. There is more work in the rural areas. Advocacy and sensitisation programmes can be through the school, the church, and families.

The Tumbuka tribe are an extreme case where the cultural traditions are still strong and the patrilineal system reinforces the patriarchal attitude. The findings of this study can be related to similar situations in the country. Cronbach states that “when we give proper weight to local conditions, any generalisation is working hypothesis, not a conclusion” (Cronbach 1975, p.125). Ignoring the reality of the social cultural implications and choosing to focus on other factors will not help the education of women. In the light of Zambia being multi ethnic with a variety of cultures this research recommends more research into cultural issues that directly affect the education of women. This will provide a better understanding of the male dominated traditions currently depriving many women the benefits of academic education.

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## APPENDICES

## **CONTACT SUMMARY FORM**

**Contact type:** FG with Teachers

**Researcher:** C. Mushibwe

**Research Ass:** Eunice Miti

**Site:** School

**Contact Date:** 13/09/07

**A) Main outstanding Issues or Themes raised in the Contact.**

1. Negative impact of traditional teachings
2. Early marriage
3. Initiation rites.
4. Selective education
5. Clash between traditions and education

**B) Summarized Collected Information On Each Target Questions With Contact.**

- ❖ Traditions emerged as one factor that affect the education of girls
- ❖ *Lobola* (dowry) identified as motivating factor for parents marrying off the girl child
- ❖ Initiation rites identified as dangerous by all the teachers because of the content of what is taught to the initiates.
- ❖ Parents blamed by teachers as being selective. Priority given to the male child other than the female.
- ❖ Teachers demonstrated their lack of interest in development initiatives taking place in the village
- ❖ Teachers firmly stated that there was a clash between school education, teachers and traditional teachings

**C) Anything Salient, Interesting, Illuminating, or Important In The Contact**

- ❖ Information on traditions emerged as important in the contact. The teachers do not seem to appreciate the traditions, much more the initiation rite, which they concluded affect the female pupil.

- ❖ The pulling of the labia minora raised issues of psychological effect on the girls. But is this affecting the education of girls?
- ❖ Poor relationship with the parents in the community.

**D) What New Or Remaining Target Questions Do You Have In Considering The Next Contact With Site?**

1. Find out more information on traditional teachings from the school girls
2. Find out also about the initiation rite and the content of what is taught from the school girls in separate interviews.

**Concerns**

- ❖ The conflict raised about the school education and traditions seem to suggest a clash between teachers and the locals.
- ❖ The teacher's response to claims of sexual abuse by the girls and parents was watered down. This needs further investigation.

**Follow Up On Concerns.**

- ❖ Follow up with in-depth interview with the chief informant Edisa and some female pupils on some concerns raised
- ❖ Follow up on the issue of labia minora with girls and women
- ❖ Follow up on claims of sexual abuse



## **CONTACT SUMMARY FORM**

Contact type:

Researcher:

Site:

Contact Date:

A) **Main Outstanding Issues Or Themes Raised In The Contact.**

B) **Summarized Collected Information On Each Target Questions With Contact.**

C) **Anything Salient, Interesting, Illuminating, or Important In the Contact**

D) **What New Or Remaining Target Questions Do You Have In Considering The Next Contact With Site?**

**Concerns**

**Follow Up On Concerns.**

## Appendix 2

### Coding Template

#### The Cultural Traditions (CUT) Study of the Tumbuka women of Zambia

Main Theme	Emerging Themes	Sub Themes	Lower Themes	Lower sub Themes
<b>Importance of Education</b>	Benefits of ed. Girls	1. read and write 2. good life styles 3. empowerment 4. family and wider community benefit 5. adds value to lobola		
<b>Barriers to female Education</b>	Home Based	1. Poverty 2. Traditional teachings 3. Negative role models 4. Household chores		
		5. Parental influence	Mother	Fear for her marriage
			Father	To get cows for lobola
	School Based	1. Teacher abuse 2. Lack of teaching and learning resources 3. Bullying 4. Punishment		
<b>Importance of Traditional Education</b>	Benefits	1. Preparatory for marriage 2. Instil values to fit well in society 3. Hand down knowledge 4. Acceptance in community		
	Mode of transmission	1. Socialisation	Household chores Habits Norms	
		2. Traditional rites	Marital	Traditional teachings
			Initiation rites	Traditional teachings
<b>Traditional Teachings</b>	Initiation rite	Effect of Traditional Teaching	1. Physical	Beating Pinching Pulling
			2. Psychological	Fear of offending Humiliation
			3. Emotional	
			4. Loss of relationships	Friends Brothers Fathers

#### THE CODING TEMPLATE

Main Themes	Emerging Themes	Sub Themes	Lower Themes	Lower Sub. Themes
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<b>Relationships</b>	<b>Traditionally determined</b>	1	Marital	Restricted Open	
		2	Family	Restricted Open	Children and the elders in the home. Girls and their brothers and fathers
		3	Home/school	Controlled Open	Women/girls and all males
		4	Community	Open until puberty stage Restricted Guarded and controlled	In-laws especially between parent in laws and the sons/daughters in laws
<b>Traditions vs. Education</b>	<b>Traditional perspective of Education</b>	1.	Socialises girls into western life styles		
		2.	Does not reflect local life		
		3.	The educated don't value local traditions		
		4.	Fear total loss of traditions		
		5.	School encourages promiscuity		
	<b>The local perspective about traditions vs. education</b>	1.	Traditions confusing girls		
		2.	Reduce women to servants	Inferiority complex Non-participative attitudes	
		3.	Teaching emphasize marriage other than school		
		4.	Traditional pressure heavy on women/girls	Pressure to obey traditional requirements not teachers Withdraw girls from school	
		5.	Slowing progress of education and development		
<b>Importance of Development</b>	<b>Benefits</b>	1.	Gives extra income		
		2.	Improves life		
		3.	Empowers women		
		1	Lack of support	From the husband From the community	
		2	Household chores		
		3	Lack of finances		
		4	No visible benefits		

## FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

### Initial Questions for the women

***Preamble:** The aim of this interview schedule is to investigate the factors that militate against the education and development of girls/women. Your responses are valuable to the completion of a thesis which is part of the PhD programme I am currently undertaking. You are therefore assured of confidentiality and anonymity for participating in this interview and none of your identities will be used for any other purposes other than the ones stated. .*

#### 1. Are you aware of the benefit of education?

**Probe:** What are they?

What does education mean to you?

#### 2. What in your opinion has been a major factor in restricting education opportunities for the girls in the village

**Probe** for more answers

**Prompt:** How do the identified factors affect the girls?

**Probe:** What motivates the girls' decisions for (a) School (b) Marriage?

**Probe** for suggestions that could change attitudes of girls, women, men and others from school

#### 3. What are the benefits of traditions to the women?

**Probe:** What are the benefits?

How are the traditions conveyed to the students? Prompt further on what is taught.

**Probe:** Who are the teachers?

Are there any consequences for those who do not live within the cultural context?

Does school pose a threat to the traditional teachings?

**Probe:** How?

Thank you so much for all the contributions. Please if you remember anything you could have said during the interview, you can see me anytime. I am around in the school for some time. Thank you again.

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

### Initial Questions for the Girls

*The aim of this interview schedule is to investigate the factors that militate against the education and development of girls/women. Your responses are valuable to the completion of my thesis which is part of the PhD programme I am currently undertaking. You are therefore assured of confidentiality and anonymity for participating in this interview and none of your identities will be used anywhere or shared with anyone.*

#### **4. Are you aware of the benefits of education?**

**Probe:** What are they?

What does education mean to you?

What inspires you to go to school? Probe for more answers

Why and how do the mentioned inspire you?

Are there any factors that affect your attendance, and completion of school?

**Probe:** What are they? How do they affect your attendance and completion of school?

Can this be prevented and how?

#### **5. What are your views about the traditional practices?**

**Probe:** importance and benefits of traditions

How are the traditions conveyed to the students? Prompt further on what is taught?

**Prompt:** How do you perceive education in light of the traditional teachings that are taught?

What is the relationship of education and traditions that are taught?

What in your opinion could improve the education of girls?

Probe: How?

#### **6. What consequences exist for those who do not live within the cultural context?**

**Probe:** How does this affect you?

Can these consequences be avoided? How?

Thank you so much for all the contributions. Please if you remember anything you could have said during the interview, you can see me anytime.

## Appendix 3c

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

#### Initial Questions for the Traditional Teachers

*The aim of this interview schedule is to investigate the factors that militate against the education and development of girls/women. Your responses are valuable to the completion of my thesis which is part of the PhD programme I am currently undertaking. You are therefore assured of confidentiality and anonymity for participating in this interview and none of your identities will be used anywhere or shared with anyone.*

**7. What in your opinion are the benefits of education?**

**Probe:** What are they? Are they visible in the community?

Do all school going children go to school (girls and boys)?

**Probe:** If not give reasons

Which children are likely to be affected by the reasons given?

Probe and Prompt why?

**8. What are traditional teachings?**

**Probe;** How are they taught to the girls?

What are the benefits of these teachings?

What are your roles as traditional Teachers? What are the consequences for those who do not live within the context of the traditional teachings?

**9. In your opinion what do you think influences the girls/women's inspiration for school?**

**Probe and prompt** for as many answers as possible

How do you think the identified factors influence the girls/women's inspiration for school?

Probe: Do the girls lack proper guidance, motivation or role models? How?

What can be done to improve this situation for the girls?

**10. What roles do you play in the education of the female child as Traditional Teachers?**

**Probe** for more answers

As Alangizi, do you work together with school teachers to teach the students?  
 Prompt and probe on how this is done. If not working together are there any reasons?  
 Probe if school could be used to reinforce the traditional teachings. If yes, how?  
 If no, what are the reasons?  
 Do the traditions conflict with education?  
 How?  
 What in your opinion could improve the education of girls?  
 Probe: How?

Thank you so much for all the contributions. Please if you remember anything you could have said during the interview, you can see me anytime.

## Appendix 3d

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

#### Initial Questions for the Chief and the Headmen

*The aim of this interview schedule is to investigate the factors that militate against the education and development of girls/women. Your responses are valuable to the completion of my thesis which is part of the PhD programme I am currently undertaking. You are therefore assured of confidentiality and anonymity for participating in this interview and none of your identities will be used anywhere or shared with anyone.*

#### **11. What in your opinion are the benefits of education?**

**Probe:** What are they? Are they visible in the community?

Do all school going children go to school (girls and boys)?

**Probe:** If not give reasons

Which children are likely to be affected by the reasons given above?

**Probe and Prompt** why?

#### **12. In your opinion what do you think influences the girls/women's inspiration for school?**

**Probe and prompt** for as many answers as possible

Why do they think the identified factors influence the girls/women's inspiration for school

**Probe:** Do the girls lack proper guidance, motivation or role models?

What can be done to improve this situation for the girls?

**13. What roles do you play in the education of the female child as fathers?**

**Probe:** Are there any factors that may hinder your role?

Give reasons

**14. What are your opinions about the cultural traditions?**

**Prompt** for more answers.

What are the roles of cultural traditions in the community?

Do the traditions conflict with education?

How?

Thank you so much for all the contributions. Please if you remember anything you could have said during the interview, you can see me anytime.

**Appendix 3e**

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

**Initial Questions for the Teachers**

*The aim of this interview schedule is to investigate the factors that militate against the education and development of girls/women. Your responses are valuable to the completion of my thesis which is part of the PhD programme I am currently undertaking. You are therefore assured of confidentiality and anonymity for participating in this interview and none of your identities will be used anywhere or shared with anyone.*

**15. As teachers you have a responsibility of educating both the female and male students. In your opinion what are the factors that affect the education of girls in this community?**

**Probe:** What are they?

**Probe and Prompt:** How do they affect the girls?

Do the girls lack guidance, and role models?



What suggestions could change negative attitude of the girls, women, men and others regarding school?

How could the education of girls be improved? What should be done?

Can schools be used to reinforce the traditional teachings?

If yes, how? If no, Give reasons

**16. What are your views about the traditions that specifically concern women?**

**Probe and prompt:** What is the role of these traditions in the life of the girls?

Do you as teachers work together with the traditional teachers?

How? If working together.

Why? If not working together.

Do you think there are conflicts between formal education and the traditional teachings?

What are they?

What roles can you play as teachers to minimize this?

Thank you so much for all the contributions. Please if you remember anything you could have liked to say during the interview, you can see me anytime.

**Field Notes**

**Date; 05/08/07**

**Time; 2pm**

**Location; Village 3 (observed field notes)**

**CUT; (Acronym for cultural Traditions)**

**Recorded by; C. Mushibwe**

**Note; the researchers comments are captured in () and C is me, RA is my research Assistant**

**Notes**

I visited Grace. I was told she was not feeling very well. I found her sat on the mat knitting. Her daughter of 8 years old was about to go to school. The mother asked her to hurry up, wash the dishes, and cook the nshima (staple food made out of maize meal) before she goes. The girl went into the kitchen and started to cook. The mother kept on calling her out to get something for her or to remove something. ‘Get me two more balls of wool before you go, you can get them now before you forget. Make sure the nshima is cooked, don’t make it hard. Your father doesn’t like hard nshima. No one will cook for him if he refuses to eat,’ she reminds the girl over and over again.

A neighbour saw us and came over to greet me. As she passed by the kitchen, she sees the girl cooking nshima. Looking at the mother she goes, ‘You see this girl knows how to cook nshima now. You don’t teach a child by shouting at her. Look at her, she is cooking very well. Just continue teaching her nicely.’ The mother was laughing looking very pleased she said, ‘I know, it is just that she keeps on making mistakes. So she is rushing to go to school instead of taking her time to cook nicely. She will find school waiting. Where will they go?’ The girl emerged from the

kitchen sweating and smelling smoke. She serves the dishes and rushes through her meal. A friend is waiting for her insisting that they were late and would be punished.

The mother shouts at her friend, 'let her finish her food. You can help her wash the dishes quickly before you go to school.' The friend makes a face refusing to help. I look at the time, it is 10. 40. I volunteer to wash the dishes and ask the girls to go to school. 'What will this girl learn from school?' the mother answers me. I could see that the girl was very tired and happy that I offered to help. So she quickly put the dish down without looking at her mother, she picked up her books in a plastic bag and run towards her friend. They run to school. The girls were very late for school. Her class started at 10am. More work will be waiting for her. I am not even so sure the mother is ill). The mother does not look pleased at all. I clean the dishes, clean around for her and with her neighbour drew water for her. Later she escorted me very pleased.

## Field Notes

**Date; 01/07/07**

**Time; 3pm. hrs**

**Location; Village 1 (observed field notes)**

**CUT; (Acronym For Cultural Traditions)**

**Recorded by; C. Mushibwe**

**Note; the researchers comments are captured in () and C is me RA is Research Assistant**

### Notes

Gone back to see Aggie with my RA and we find the husband sitting under the mango tree. He is with his two sons making small brooms. The boys are about 4 and 6 years old. He has not changed his clothes from the drinking of the other day. I sit down to greet him. His sons come over to where I sat and knelt down to greet me. I was about to enquire about Aggie when I saw her coming back from the bush, a big bundle of wood on her head, followed by her daughters. Her daughters aged 8 and 10 have equally big bundles of wood on their heads. They had gone to collect firewood.

I help her get the big bundle of firewood off her head and help her daughter as well. 'You are well come Anya Phiri,' mwatandala uli? She greets me. Natandala makola.' We sit down near the small kitchen. The youngest son came and said that the father would like to have water to bath. He was going out. 'I have to draw water for his bath,' Aggie said with urgency. She turned to us and told us that she had to go and collect water for his bath. We can go together. So we took containers, joined her and off to the well we went. She called out to her eldest daughter to add more wood to the fire and get it ready for her. We literally ran to the well. Within 10 minutes we

were back. With a lot of fire the water was ready in no time. She knelt down before him to ask him to go and bath. He did not answer but after about 3 minutes he stood up and headed for the bathroom. We help her cook dinner and left.

## TRANSCRIBED SCRIPT

### FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW WITH TEACHERS

DATE; 13/09/07

INTERVIEWER; Christine Mushibwe

INTERVIEWEE; Teachers (6) 3 male and 3 female, There are 12 teachers all together inclusive of the deputy and the head teachers. Two have gone back to college and the other three were taking care of classes in the absence of those in the focus group interview. C is me and respondents are known by a false name (The men being; Ganizani, Khodowe and Kalinkhu. The women being; Julie, Edisa, Grace)

### INSTRUCTIONS:

The brackets [ ] will be used for any interjections, overlaps and the paralinguistic aspects such as pauses (P) and any information about intonation.

Emphasis will be captured in capital letters

### INTRODUCTIONS

I am collecting information that will help me establish whether cultural traditions affect the education of girls among the Tumbuka speaking people. I would like to assure you of total confidentiality and anonymity and assure you that your name and what ever you are going to say will not be mentioned to anyone. If you want to stop during the course of the interview, you are free to. Please some questions may be explicit. Although I will value the answers to the questions, if you don't want to answer them it is fine. I have a recorder and I intend to record the interview but I would like your permission to do so. [All the teachers agree;] 'Enya' (Yes)

- C. As school teachers I am sure you are aware of the many benefits of education. I would however want to go straight to the issue at hand. That is the education of girls. What do you think are the factors that are affecting the education of girls in this village?

*Ganizani; I am not going to beat about the bush, madam the main problem in this village is that girls are coached on issues concerning marriage in the initiation ceremonies. They prepare the girl child for marriage instead of telling them the importance of school. The other thing is the roles for the girl at home emphasize marriage, how a real woman should be like. Others can say something.*

*Khodowe; That is true. You know the locality here places a lot of emphasis on EARLY marriage for the girls; there is a prestige of marriage or wealth. It seems like there are few girls around and as already said they are at home doing the household*

chores. Then madam, girls are withdrawn from school to be married off by parents. Imagine that. Parents in our locality give the girl second priority for school. First priority is given to the boy because the girl brings in the wealth in terms of money or cows and the boy later uses that to marry. There is a girl and many others VERY intelligent indeed who has been eloped into marriage. We have talked to the parent but they don't understand because of the belief and customs of this locality. Parents even say that it is a waste of money to educate a girl. It is better to educate a boy. All this affect the education of girls seriously. [Shakes his head] Others can agree with me it is bad.

Mmm [others agreeing with him]

To continue madam, before others come in, there is this thing called PAGE and AFRICARE which have tried to sensitize parents but still the locals have continued with these practices. They are difficult to stop and needs a lot of work. So, what have I said? It is the traditional beliefs, customs and norms that are affecting the girl child because here they claim that the girl is mainly for marriage not education. I have finished. (He said looking at others and sat back)

**Julie;** I think Mr Khodowe has said it all. Those are the main factors others could be there but the ones mentioned are dangerous especially the CISUNGU ceremony.

**C. What types of traditions are taught at the ceremony? We are of the view that girls are taught hygienic practices not being coached about marriage.**

**Edisa;** Madam, I don't agree with that. There is a tug of war in this village between a teacher and the woman in the village. They do come to inform us at times about the girl who has come of age. So we liaise with them that they should just teach the girl about hygienic practices not the other things because the girl is at school and we also request that they don't exclude the girl. But [raising her hands in anger] they do the exact opposite. They confine the girl. I my self, I one day disguised myself as a village woman and no one recognized me. I sat in the initiation ceremony and witnessed these women teaching the girl about everything a woman needs to know about marriage. They were beating drums, shouting at the girl you know making her do most of these things imagine shaving a man. I was upset. I could not stay; I got up and called one of the alangizi outside and cautioned her saying, 'what did we agree upon when you came to school?' Ha, she said, 'this is our tradition, we need to do this. We are supposed to do it without fail otherwise we will be in for it from our husbands and the aunties of the girl. You are just a teacher you have no right to control us and our tradition.' [Laughingi] I had no words, verbally they will claim that they don't do these things but these things are still being practiced and performed. The same things affect the girl and therefore there is a conflict between school and the traditions.

[Edisa continuing] Allow me to continue madam; another good example is of a girl who claimed she could not finish school because of poverty. These teachers [pointing at Mr Khodowe and Mr Nganizani] and MYSELF, we bought uniform, shoes and paid her school fees. The head teacher bought her books. She was in grade 8. But this girl went all the same and was married. Imagine after we spent our money helping her. I was annoyed and followed her at her

husband's house to register my disappointment. She was honest and said 'I am sorry madam; I know the importance of school like you told me. But I had a lot of pressure from the women in the village. When I was at school with you I would be ok but when I got home the women locked me in the house saying [bokuphalila vici bala ba sambizi. Ibo mbo tengwa] what is that teacher telling you. She is married. What she does at night you don't know. She is just deceiving you. So I was divided. The women pinched me for trusting you the teacher and said my mothers' marriage would come to an end'. So you see how difficult it is for the girls. They are under a lot of pressure from the traditional teachers and as teachers how many hours do we stay with them. Very few, so we lose them. [Others are laughing] You are laughing [She asks the rest with a serious voice] I get upset with the issue of girls. The girl I am talking about was worth 3 cows. I will stop here but I don't stop when I begin talking about the girl child. (Looking so upset)

**Julie;** Let me continue while the madam recovers from her emotions [everybody laughs] Anyway, a lack of role model is another problem we have here. The girls in this village are not exposed to the world like the others in town. If tours could be arranged to take them to big towns like Lusaka these girls could see what the other girls are capable of doing. Further still we have few retirees who come to settle down here. They are not a big force to bring change to the many people around here. Civilization is behind. We need help. Even parent need these same tours especially those who are difficult so that they can see what is going on. They need to see how their friends value the education of their children and how they struggle to keep them in school. The parents here like referring back to what happened along time ago. Change is difficult for people with such a mind set. They need to change we are in a changing world.

**C. You know the alangizi insist that the teachings don't include lessons on marriage. But what are your views about the traditions that concern women?**

**Edisa;** [Raising her voice]. That is just verbal madam don't believe that. Already as I am talking a grade 8 girl has been married off. So they are telling lies. You can ask these teachers. And the traditions, they target women to make them obey the men. This has robbed women from doing what they want.

**C. Anything Grace?**

**Grace;** Yes madam, It seems that some girls reach puberty very early. Round about 8, 9, 10 years old. When this happens, the girls just want to marry, because of what they are taught in the house.

**C. Edisa you earlier mentioned about conflict between school and the traditions. What are they?**

**Edisa;** Ya, they are there. We cant help these girls to the best of our ability as Teachers. What the girls are taught is not in support of schooling. The girls are told not to listen to teachers. Like Grace said girls reach puberty early here and all they want is to marry

**C. What do others say?**

**Kalinkhu;** That is true. School is not respected or valued here, the traditions are.



*What they are taught is valued.*

**C. To what extent?**

**Kalinkhu;** *Stopping school altogether. Yes, so many girls are withdrawn because as far as the parents are concerned, they are ready to marry*

**C. Could there be some sought of practice that could cause the girls to reach puberty early?**

**Grace;** [Laughing]. *Probably early sex before puberty because the girls mature early.*

**Kalinkhu;** *I think the catalyst is the practice of pulling the labia minora. You know as they play about pulling them the girl definitely stimulates themselves. This tendency makes the girls think they are ready for marriage when they get what they call the right size. [Waving his hand in the air] What ever anyway the girls think they are capable of sexually handling men.*

**C. The alangizi insist that this practice is important for every girl. The men are equally aware of the importance of the labia. I have been made to believe it's a custom and the girls are only told of the purpose at marriage not at puberty.**

**Edisa;** *Not to cut you short madam, those are lies. The alangizi are capable of a lot of things. They tell the girls. Why do they insist that the girl is ready for marriage? They check them and when they are satisfied they think the girl is ready for marriage.*

**Khalinkhu;** *I insist that this practice of pulling the labia is a bad stimulant because as they pull they stimulate themselves the hormones are prematurely activated and it's possible to mature early hence desiring for marriage. The girls even think they are ready to handle a man, you see? I hear the alangizi say the long labias differentiate a girl from a woman. So for a girl to be a woman she should have the long labia. [Everyone is laughing] Women! [he remarks]*

**C. Women, mm mm women**

**C. Khalinkhu that topic needs another researcher. Am sure the truth would be found. Anyway, if the labia are extended to satisfy a man (P) am going to be explicit (P) what do the men say here because you are married. Are the extended labia of value to you? [Everyone is laughing]**

**Edisa;** *the men are told madam that a real woman has long labia and if they don't see that on their wives they report back to their grandmothers. Women undergo painful fast means to grow them big. [Everyone is still laughing]*

**C. The men I am waiting.**

**Khalinkhu;** [Shyly with a lowered voice]. *Mine has. [Quickly raises his voice] Hey don't tell her she will kill me [laughing and the rest join in while saying no] Any way I have told her I don't need them. She knows I have told her.*

**Ganizani;** *My wife is here (she is a teacher and was present) I was told by the older men that they are important and that was one thing I looked for when I got married. [Looking at the wife who was looking down] But I don't think they are as important as they claim them to be. I like them anyway because they are there stuck with her. [Laughing and the rest laugh]*

**Khodowe;** *Well I have nothing to hide my friends have declared their assets. (Jokes about them laughing) I have them also not on me of course (laughs and others join in, teasing him that he had long labia) well, MY WIFE has them for me so I was told. I like them. She did them for me, hey guys what can we do. [Everybody is laughing]. At least, yes she looks different from small girls. They make her look like a woman. Came on guys, it is true isn't it?*

**C. Women, what do you think?**

**Julie;** *Madam the truth of the matter here is that when the girls become of age they are put in the house, what they are taught in the house is also responsible for the girls not continuing with school because when they come out of the house and come to class they remain quite. They will not raise their hand up even if they know the answer, they will not answer if they are talked to, and they will not look at the teacher especially the men. Am I cheating?*  
*[All answer together] It's true.*

**Julie;** *[She continues] Yes, the girl will not even ask any question in class. She suddenly becomes passive because she is under instructions and threats. The some girls become big headed and rude claiming that they are now matured and are capable of sexually handling male teachers. They don't even listen to the teachers. They have this air around them. You know what I mean? They want to practice what they are taught. This is ruining our girls. What they are taught in confinement! If they are taught in the right way emphasising school the majority of them would see the value of school. It is sad.*

**C. Are there any visible features that are applied on the girl to make it evident to the boys that the girl has become of age?**

**Grace;** *Yes the girls are shaved that is the whole head. One experience I have had was with a grade 6 class. This girl just came back from the initiation ceremony. The boys were shouting dende [cooked relish] When I insisted I wanted to share the joke the boys explained that the shaven girl had just come out of initiation and had been shaven so she was ready to be eaten by boys or men; sexual intercourse. I looked at the girl she was looking down. That girl did not continue to come to school. She stopped because the boys did not stop teasing her.*

**Edisa;** *Further still after any girl has repeated her menstruation from the first; she is thinly shaved with razor blade just after her forehead. That is a symbol that she is now she is completely clean free and ready for marriage or sex and free from any diseases associated with menstruation. You know I have talked to some alangizi about these things and even parents to let them know the effect they have on the girls. But you know what male parents have approached me saying "why are you*

*concerned about my daughters education as if I had her with you, you have your own daughters to take care of. That girl is my child and I have rights over her.”*

**C; What you have said is interesting, but why do the parent think you are contributing to the reasons why the girls are not getting educated?**

**Khalinkhu;** *You know the women in this village are funny. They can say anything. If one teacher impregnated a pupil then all of us have. This place is just difficult.*

**Ganizani;** *this is very true madam. As teachers we have been told a lot of things just because we want to help. You know as a man I am not supposed to be standing alone along the road with a girl. Imagine I meet one of the pupils and I stop to talk to her. If I AM found, NEWS THAT WILL GO ROUND WOULD BE THAT I WAS FOUND IN AN ACT WITH HER. [Everyone laughs]. Anyway poverty is another factor we have not mentioned. It is an important factor that can't be omitted.*

**C. Yes you are right but my concern with this factor is why should poverty affect the girl? If parents are poor then both children boy and girl are affected. Both should not get educated.**

**Ganizani;** *You are right. If there is poverty both sexes should be affected. But you know for the girl parents think she will get married, she is a waste of money but the boy can get educated. The boy has more hope than the girl. It is like an issue of probably.*

**Edisa;** *Marriage is valued here. They wait for the girls' puberty like vultures to bell them from poverty. So if she can bring in 2 cows they will let her marry. And when they have the cows in the kraal they even say' don't spoil our child with school' and yet some parent even use the money for drinking beer while their daughters are suffering in these marriages (shakes her head in anger). More than that, the girls feel getting married will serve them from the poverty at their parent's home.*

**C; What could be done to improve the education of girls?**

**Khodowe;** *So much, stop the initiation ceremony altogether. If the initiation has to continue in the name of culture remove all the teachings that affect the education of girls. These are emphasis on marriage, preparing the girl for marriage, shaving the girls. Ah that is advertising the girl*

**Edisa;** *Yes stop all the initiation ceremonies. That is what I can say.*

**Ghanizani;** *Punishment. You know the government likes talking, that is the problem. The parents who marry school going children should be arrested and given stiff punishment. Surely something is supposed to be done.*

**Grace;** *The traditional attitude will take along time to change, I suggest sensitization and on a continuous basis not for only a year no. For years even 10 years to completely help this mindset to be erased. The idea of glorifying marriage inspires*

*the girls and sex is seen as the most important thing and so the girls rush into marriage.*

**C. Is their companionship or even love in these marriages?**

*Julie; The girls are married as sex objects and for the production of children. They have no powers at all; mere workers and the men end up marrying a second wife. Some of the girls even wish they had continued with school. It is sad because some of these girls are intelligent. Really intelligent.*

**C. There is a court nearby. Is it used for such cases as early marriages for school going children? Or are you aware of the law that does not allow anyone marrying a child below the age of 18?**

*Ganizani; There is madam but we have been warned her by parents sternly. 'if the child is yours go ahead and take the case to court. Don't say I did not warn you.' So we have not done that. Even the chief is aware of these threats.*

*Khodowe; We have a human rights club here were the girls and even the boys are told about these issues and laws they need to know. But you know the girl is in two worlds. School is one world and the home and village is another world. The home and village seems to have the most power over the girl. She will hear and accept what she is told there as it is practical and she sees it. But here, we have little time with the girl. Most of the things we tell them don't look real; no role models, so it is not practical. Your presence in the school for this one month is important. Some are already talking about wanting to drive a car because they have never seen a woman driving they are so excited. So please while collecting your information sensitizes them on the importance of school.*

**C Thank you. I will do my best and would really be happy if I am able to motivate even one girl. I think I can leave you to go back to class. Thank you for the information and please remember we are all bound to confidentiality. We don't share what we have heard in here. Unless if anyone has a question or want to say anything.**

*Julie; Yes madam, I have. We forgot to mention that there is also another cultural problem that the girls learn during the initiation ceremony. It is about their relationship with the father. It ends right when a girl enters the house. Afterwards she is not allowed to talk to the father, be found standing about in his presence and there is no touching or eating with him. So there is no relationship between the father and daughter. The aunt, the sister to the father has more powers over her. So even if the girl wanted books, she would have to send another small child to the father.*

**C. Thank you Julie that is a good point. Thank you all. I am around for some time in the school. If you need to talk about anything in relation to what we have discussed, feel free to approach me.**

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## **'Alangizi': Victim relives counselling nightmare**

BY CHANSA MULALAMI

EIGHTEEN-year old Sharon Mwanjelika's tears seem to have dried, yet the cold memory of her torture last week may linger on forever. Graphic scenes of her blotched thighs as displayed on ZNBC news last Wednesday stirred public emotion to such an extent that the issue just won't die.

If it had been a rapist or a robber, public reaction could have been less intense, perhaps.

But the fact that Sharon suffered at the hands of two "Alangizi" or traditional marriage counsellors, was a tale too horrid to bear. According to her, the ordeal began last week on Friday, January 31, when she was woken up around 06.00hrs by a woman she fondly called "mbuya" (grandmother), Jennifer Machina.

Machina, whom Sharon had come to know through neighbourhood interaction, told her that her husband Mwiya had ordered that she be taken to Alangizi for counselling.

Prior to this, Mwiya had made numerous attempts to chase Sharon from their home so that he could marry a "well mannered and cultured" woman from the village.

Sharon, however, had constantly refused to leave because she felt her husband was acting under the influence of his mother who did not like her. Upon arrival at the house of the two self-confessed Alangizi in Mtendere, Sharon was ordered to sit on the cold kitchen floor. One of the two "counsellors"-both in their late 50s- sent her child to go and fetch Sharon's mother-in-law, Roni Mukonde. While waiting for Mukonde, the two Alangizi ordered Sharon to strip naked and lie down flat.

As soon as Mukonde arrived, she was asked by the two "counsellors" to explain how Sharon was being disrespectful to her husband and relatives. "My mother-in-law replied that I never gave her food and I used to shout at her in front of her son. I was not given chance to explain," Sharon said. Mukonde and Machina then gave the two Alangizi K5,000 and a string of red beads respectively so that they could begin their "counselling session". No sooner had that been done than Sharon's nightmare began. "The two Alangizi began to pinch my thighs so hard that I screamed like never before in my life," Sharon told the Times yesterday.

At close range, the sores are charcoal-black dots that have literally covered her once brown glossy thighs. With a blank, distant stare, she went on to narrate how the two Alangizi went on to pluck out her pubic hair while she cried and pleaded for mercy to no avail. "I struggled to get free but they over-powered and threatened to do more harm if I continued to resist.

"One of them said 'your mother and father are long dead and are eating dust. Nobody can help you.' All the while, my mother-in-law was laughing." After that the Alangizi took her pubic hair and put in the same plate where they had put the money and beads. They then took a bowl of fine salt and started rubbing it into her wounds, making her cry out the more. It was a painful episode.

"After that, they poured hot water on the wounds and then ordered me to kneel and start licking the soles of my mother-in law's feet. As if that were not enough, the "Alangizi" sent for Machina's daughter Eva and asked her to bring a razor blade so they could cut off Sharon's hair. On second thought, however, they changed their minds and asked her to get up and they wrapped a chitenge around her waist and asked her to go to the living room and sleep. According to Sharon, the torturous ordeal lasted from around 06.00hrs to 15.00hrs when she fell asleep. After about two hours, she was again woken up so that she could talk to her husband Mwiya who had just arrived. She was asked to put on her shorts so that he could see what they had done to "counsel" her. According to Sharon, her husband looked shocked and surprised because he had no idea how extreme Alangizi counselling was. He was asked to pay K120,000 so that he could take his wife home but he said he only had K60,000 which they accepted. He left immediately, leaving Sharon behind since she could not walk properly after the torture and feared public ridicule. When dusk had set, the two Alangizi and Machina ordered Sharon to take them to her home so that she could cook for them. When she declined, they threatened that they would do to her face what they had done to her thighs; she had no choice but to comply. After they had eaten a meal of nshima and eggs, they sternly warned her not to disclose what had happened to any of her relatives. But the following day, Sharon mustered the courage to go to her aunt's place within Kalingalinga where she narrated her ordeal. Her aunt, Faneli Mulilwa, quickly reported the matter to Kalingalinga police who arrested the two Alangizi and the "grandmother" who have since been released on bail. Police spokesperson Brenda Muntemba confirmed the arrest and subsequent bail out of the two, pending trial in the next few days. Ms Muntemba appealed to victims of such crimes to report to the Victim Support Unit (VSU) so that they could receive help. "There are probably many more such victims who are still not coming out in the open. In Sharon's case, her aunt did a good thing that others should emulate." Ms Muntemba conceded that VSO cases were rather peculiar but that should not be a deterrent to them seeking help. She added that police were doing everything possible through VSU to sensitise the community on their human rights. "We're continuing with our radio broadcasts in vernacular targeting widows and orphans especially," she said. Meanwhile, Permanent Human Rights Commission (PHRC) has taken a firm stance on the matter saying it will deal firmly with abusive traditions and customs. And the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) has strongly condemned the violence inflicted on Sharon saying it was a barbaric act which should not be condoned. YWCA senior regional co-ordinator Lucy Masiye Lungu said the incident was an outright violation of human rights which could not be left unsettled. "What happened to Sharon was traumatic and she needs all the support she can get," she said. Ms Lungu, however, cautioned the media to be sensitive in the way they approached the matter given the impact it had had on Sharon. "As much as we appreciate the coverage the media have given the story, they must be sensitive in the way they handle it. "Sharon should be given enough time to stabilise so that she may receive counselling," Ms Lungu said.

While Ms Lungu's sentiments hold much water, it is perhaps the gravity of the incident that has evoked national emotion, media notwithstanding, into prompt reaction.

As a nation that has for long up-held moral and cultural values, Zambians are incensed that a respectable association such as Alangizi has to be implicated in such a bizarre act.

It smears mud on all institutions that call themselves custodians of the nation's customs and traditions.

Country-wide the question resounding is: Can the blind lead the blind ? Is there any more need to seek guidance when marriage is on the collapse?

Amid the speculation and confusion, the Alangizi National Association of Zambia (ANAZ) has dissociated itself from the three accused saying they were not registered and should be dealt with by the law.

With all these indignant resolves in the air, young Sharon is still recoiling from the nightmare of the lifetime.

Ironically, she says she still loves her husband Mwiya despite what she had just gone through.

"I still love him and want to stay married to him. He just acted on the influence from his mother," she says unfeelingly.

Could love be stronger than death after all?

<http://www.times.co.zm/news/viewnews.cgi?category=8&id=1044652446>

## Participant Identification Code

Code	Meaning	Pseudonyms
WFG	Women Focus Group Village	<b>V1:</b> Enelesi, Tionge, Eleni, Tasila, Susan, Beauty, Mwizilachi, Vulachi, Betty and Enala. <b>V2:</b> Maria, Site, Monica, Zondiwe, Jenny, Aggie and Joy. <b>V3:</b> Temwani, Khumbu, Fumbani, Suzyo, Taonga, Tiza and Mwenecho.
FIW	Follow-up Interview Women	<b>V1:</b> Vulachi <b>V2:</b> Zondiwe <b>V3:</b> Mwenecho
KIWR	Key Informant Woman	<b>V1:</b> Mwizilachi, <b>V2:</b> Aggie, <b>V3:</b> Temwani
KITTR	Key Informant Traditional Teacher	Tione
FGSG	Focus Group School Girl	Mikiwe, Temwachi, Elina, Likiwe, Chimwemwe, Dalitso, and Muzo
FISG	Follow-up Interview School Girl	Temwachi
KISG	Key Informant School Girl	Dalitso
SIYM	Single Interview Young Mother	Lucy and Misozi
FGT	Focus Group Teacher	Edisa, Grace, Julie, Khodowe, Kalinkhu and Ganizani
KITR	Key Informant Teacher Respondent	Edisa
FGH	Focus Group Headman	<b>V1:</b> Nkhumbatuwemi, <b>V2:</b> Chilinda, <b>V3:</b> Zanninge
SIR	Single Interview Respondent:	Head teacher The chief: Nkhosi
FN	Field Notes	
Key: V = Village		