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# **Perspectives on Sex Education in Relation to Sexual Health of Teenagers in Zambia**

Master's thesis in childhood studies

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## **DEDICATION**

To my beloved husband and children for enduring the pain of my absence.

To my parents for the love and care throughout my life.

In loving memory of my late sister Linda Simalimbu.



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## **ABSTRACT**

This research explores the perspectives on sex education in relation to sexual health of teenagers in Zambia. The research aimed at exploring the perspectives of various stakeholders (teenagers, parents, teachers, pastors and traditional counsellors) on the role of sex education to promote the sexual health of young people in Zambia. The study is guided by the theoretical perspectives of the sociology of childhood, which consider childhood as a social construct and children as social actors capable of constructing their own social lives and the lives of those around them. The rights based approach is also employed focusing on the protection rights, right to health and participation rights. The ecological system theory is also part of the study to explore how the interactions and relationships of different environments can affect the teaching of sex education.

The study used qualitative research methods drawing 43 participants from Ndola district of Zambia. Methods used were body maps with 12 teenagers, focus group discussions with 32 teenagers and semi structured interviews with 12 teenagers, 4 parents, 2 teachers, 2 pastors and 2 traditional counsellors. Un structured observation was used as an accompaniment to all the three methods used in the study to capture the body language and culture behaviour exhibited by participants during data collection period.

The study revealed that mothers or female guardians are more involved in sex education than fathers who are constrained with productive work and the culture aspect, which does not allow men to discuss sexual matters with especially their daughters as it was considered taboo. Other sources of information on sexuality for teenagers were the media, friends and school where they got more information, as the one from parents was more of the negative part of sex with emphasise on the effects of premarital sex such as pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. Findings show that society was not comfortable with information coming from friends and the media as it might not give accurate information, thus they were more comfortable with the school to take up sex education. School was seen as a better place to capture a lot of teenagers, offer evidence based and correct harmful sexual practises such as the use of herbs by women to tighten vaginas and having multiple sexual partners as a way of gaining experience by men. However due to the influence of Christianity schools have put more emphasis on abstinence as the only way to avoid pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. On the other hand, tradition encourages boys to practise premarital sex to gain experience but both Christianity and tradition does not allow the use of contraceptives making it hard for the school and society to provide contraceptives to the young people. Non-availability of contraceptives has disadvantaged young people who are sexually active putting their sexual health at risk. These findings have important implications for policy makers to try to implement measures on the teaching of sex education that will cater for needs of the young people including those who are already sexually active to try to improve the sexual health of teenagers in Zambia.





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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

ABC	Abstinence, Be faithful, Condoms
ABY	Abstinence Behaviour Change, Youth
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CSO	Central Statistical Office
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DSTV	Digital Satellite Television
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ILO	International Labour Organisation
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
UNCRC	United Nations Convection on the Rights of the Child
WHO	World Health Organisation



# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

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### **1.1 Initial Interest**

When I was a teenager, I realised that my parents did not take time to talk about any sex related issues to me. I do not recall talking about issues of sexuality even with my own mother. However, I was privileged to take Home Economics as a subject in school and we had sexuality topics in one of the components named mother craft. In this component, we were taught topics like male and female reproductive systems, puberty, menstruation, fertilization and pregnancy. After gaining knowledge in mother craft, my interest in sex education grew and prompted me to take a step further by pursuing a diploma in Home Economics. Among the major components I specialised in was health education, which had some topics from sex education. I later started teaching in a girl's school and I noticed that teenagers had many questions about sexuality but were not free to discuss them with their parents. Most schools also did not offer sex education as subject. At the moment some sex education topics have been integrated in some subjects which are not compulsory to all the pupils. I therefore took interest to explore the views of the young people, parents and other key stakeholders in the community to try to find out their perspectives on sex education in relation to sexual health of teenagers in Zambia.

### **1.2 Brief Back Ground to the Study**

There is a significant need for information by the young people on sex and sexual health and this could only be provided by sex education. Sex education is a lifelong learning about sex, sexuality, emotions, relationships and sexual health (Walker\*, 2004). It involves acquiring information which helps to increase knowledge, clarify values, increase communication, develop skills and form positive beliefs and attitudes towards sexuality (Kirana, Nakopoulou, Akrita, & Papaharitou, 2007; Walker\*, 2004).

Therefore, the knowledge, social skills, attitudes and values are important dimensions of sex education to help the young people to foster self awareness, self esteem, a sense of moral responsibility and skills to deal with unwanted sexual experiences (Walker\*, 2004). In this way, sex education may seem on one hand as a means of tackling current public health issues

such as teenage pregnancies, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections and on the other hand contributing more positively to sexual health (Walker\*, 2004). In addition, both the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the report from the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development emphasises on the importance of sexual healthy as a key factor to overall mental and physical well-being in both children and adults (Shtarkshall, Santelli, & Hirsch, 2007).

Before the introduction of Christianity as the major religion in Zambia by the missionaries, sex education was taught through the Traditional African Society and initiation ceremonies. under the Traditional African Society, sex education was done by parents or family members who passed on morals to the young people by acting as role models of good behaviour (Adeyinka & Ndwapi, 2002). With the coming of the missionaries, this type of education continued and the teaching was based on the Bible as the authority and foundation of good behaviour. Since then, with the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation most of the parents teach morals to young people based on what is written in the Bible (Adeyinka & Ndwapi, 2002).

Apart from the teaching of morals through the Traditional African Society, the Zambian culture taught sex education through initiation ceremonies. Initiation ceremonies were conducted when one attained puberty to prepare boys and girls for marriage. The major content of the initiation ceremonies was to teach the young people how to look after husbands and wives. However, With the coming of missionaries and their aim of Christianising civilising the African people, initiation ceremonies were abolished as they were considered pagan and immoral (Rasing, 2004). Society also saw the need to postpone the teaching of looking after husbands and wives to pre marriage counselling, as the content was not suitable for young people who had just attained puberty as they were still in school and not ready for marriage yet. In the past the content came at the right time since the young people would get married immediately after attaining puberty.

Today there has been a contradiction between the Christian way of teaching sex education and the traditional way in some areas. While Christianity prohibits premarital sex in both boys and girls putting, emphasise on abstinence as the solution to avoid pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and abortions. The Zambian traditional emphasises abstinence to only girls through the value of virginity but expects boys to be sexually experienced before marriage. This has encouraged most of the boys to engage in premarital sex to as a way of

gaining experience (Gupta, 2000). Society expects boys to engage in premarital sex but access to the contraceptives such as condoms to the young people is not easy putting their sexual health and that of their sexual partners at a risk.

Formally, the teaching of sex education in schools was introduced in the mid 1990s due to the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Zambia (Rasing, 2003). Topics in sex education are integrated and taught in subjects like Social Studies, Biology, Home Economics and Environmental Science which are part of the school curriculum in all schools from grade five (Rasing, 2003). The Anti AIDS clubs that comprise a limited number of the young people who join voluntarily cover some of the other topics and the club is in existence in almost all the schools in Zambia. The main emphasis of the lessons are to encourage the young people to abstain from premarital sex as a way of protecting themselves from HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Despite the emphasis on the effects of negative sexual activity outcomes, young people still find it hard to abstain from sex. In view of this, the government realised the Abstinence approach was not doing much in sexual related problems in the young people. This led to the government to introduce a comprehensive sexuality education. The framework for the comprehensive sexuality education was prepared and published in 2013 and in June 2015. The teaching was implemented on the Copperbelt province as a pilot project before spreading it to other parts of the country (Ministry of Education, 2013). The ministry of education anticipate comprehensive sexuality education would address the needs of the young people including those who are already sexually active. Despite this development, the government has not paid much attention on the interplay between the influences of Christianity and Zambian tradition on sex education on the one hand and on the other how sex education in schools help to promote sexual health of teenagers is not explored by research.

This thesis therefore, aims at exploring the young people's perspectives, parents and teachers views on the teaching of sex education in relation to sexual health of teenagers of Zambia. In addition, I will discuss how the Zambian tradition and Christianity teach and influence the teaching of sex education in schools. The knowledge generated will help government to come up with policies that will improve the teaching of sex education in schools, address the individual sexual needs of the young people, and promote their sexual health.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Sex Education aims at promoting sexual health by reducing potentially negative outcomes from sexual behaviours such as abortion, pregnancies, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. This can be achieved by providing individuals with the necessary information, skills, values and beliefs that help them build their self-esteem and make decisions concerning their sexual health. Historically, the teaching of sex education in Zambia was undertaken through initiation ceremonies, which were conducted when the young people attained puberty. However, with the coming of missionaries and the introduction of modern education, initiation ceremonies were banned as they were considered pagan, immoral and primitive (L. Warenius et al., 2007). After this development, sex education was left to individual families and it became a responsibility of the grandparents. This slowly disappeared due to urbanisation in that most of the modern families stayed in the urban areas while the grandparents were in the rural areas far away from their grand children (Rasing, 2003). This led to the parents to take up this responsibility as they were left with no choice. This been a new development some parents find it hard to discuss sexual matters with their children due to that during their teenage stage their parents did not discuss issues of sexuality and schools did not do that either.

Despite the widely recognised importance of sex education in the promotion of sexual health, the current teaching of sex education in Zambia with more emphasis on HIV/AIDS might not cater for young people's needs. In most cases, the information given is more on dangers and high risks and provide an authoritarian list of “do's and don'ts” and in some cases teachers even use fear to motivate young people to adopt sexually safe behaviours (Kelly, 2000). This study therefore, is important in that it will generate ideas from young people as key informants, parents, teachers and other community key stakeholders. This will help the government to put in place measures that will address the realities that will improve the teaching of sex education in relation to sexual health of teenagers in Zambia.

### **1.4 Aim of the Study**

This study explores the perspectives of various stakeholders (i.e. teenagers, parents, teachers, pastors and traditional counsellors) on the role of sex education to promote sexual health of young people in Zambia. Through qualitative methods, the research discusses perspectives on the teaching of sex education in relation to sexual health of teenagers in Zambia.

## **1.5 Research Objectives**

- To find out the source of information on sexuality for teenagers
- Explore the perspectives of teenagers on the teaching of sex education in schools
- Explore the parents and teachers views on the teaching of sex education in schools
- To examine how the Zambian tradition teaches sex education to teenagers and how it might influence sex education in schools
- To explore how Christianity teaches sexuality to teenagers and how it might influence sex education in schools.

## **1.6 Research Questions**

- What is the source of information for teenagers on sex education?
- What are the perspectives of teenagers on the teaching of sex education in schools?
- What are the views of parents and teachers on the teaching of sex education in schools?
- How does the Zambian tradition teach and influence the teaching of sex education to teenagers?
- How does Christianity teach and influence the teaching of sex education to teenagers in Zambia?

## **1.7 Structure of the Thesis**

This thesis is organised in eight chapters with each chapter giving a brief introduction of what will be discussed at the beginning and a summary for each chapter at the end. Chapter one provides the initial interest, brief background on sex education, statement of the problem, research aim, objectives and research questions of the study. Chapter two discusses the background to the research context by discussing demography, political history, economic status and the history of sex education and education in general. Chapter three discusses the research methodology by highlighting the field experiences, methods and techniques used, ethical considerations, challenges faced and how data analysis was planned. In chapter four, I discuss the theoretical approaches of the sociology of childhood, the rights based approach, ecological system theory and later discuss, culture, gender and public health approaches in relation to sex education in Zambia. Chapter five presents the analysis and findings from the perspectives of young people, parents and teachers. In chapter six, I present the analysis and

discussion on how Christianity and the Zambian tradition teach and influence sex education in schools. Chapter seven presents the analysis and discussion on how school can promote sexual health and lastly chapter eight discusses the major findings, conclusion and recommendations.



## CHAPTER TWO

### RESEARCH CONTEXT

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#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter describes demographic, economic and political background of Zambia in general and Copperbelt province then Ndola district as a research context. Finally, it discusses the teaching of sex education before the coming of missionaries, during the time of missionaries and after independence to date and the education of Zambia in general.

#### 2.2 Geographical Location of Zambia

Figure 1. Map of Zambia Showing Provinces and Neighbouring Countries



<http://www.mapsofworld.com/zambia/zambia-political-map.html> (Retrieved, 1/10/2015).

Zambia is a landlocked country in the south central Africa. It lies between latitudes 80 and 180 south and longitudes 22 and 33 degrees east. The country covers an area of 752 614 km with maximum length of 1 206 km and maximum width of 815 km. It is boarded by eight

neighbouring countries namely Malawi to the east, Angola to the west, Democratic Republic of Congo to the north, Tanzania to the north east, Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe to the south. It is divided into ten provinces namely; Lusaka, Western, Southern, Northern, Eastern, North-western, Central, Copper belt, Luapula, Muchinga provinces and these are further divided into 103 district

### **2.3 Demography**

The census conducted in 2010 of population and housing captured the total population of 13 046 508, of these females constituted 6 652 053 (51%) and male 6 394 455(49%)(Central Statistical Office, 2012).The distribution of the population shows that 5 068 234 people (39%) live in the urban area and 7 978 274(61%) live in the rural areas (Central Statistical Office, 2012).The total population is divided into 73 ethnic groups that share similar and different cultural values and practises (central Statistics Office, 2012).

### **2.4 Brief Political History**

What is Zambia today was known as Northern Rhodesia, the Khoisan originally inhabited it and later the Bantu speaking people occupied it. In 1889, Zambia was first colonised by the British South African Company (B.S.A co) and later in 1924, the British colonial office took over the territory from B. S. A co (Ihonvbere, 1996). In 1953, Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) joined Nyasaland (Malawi) to form the Central African Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland which was later dissolved in 1963 (Central Statistical Office (COS) [Zambia], 2014). On 24<sup>th</sup> October 1964, Zambia gained political independence and adopted a multiparty system of government. The country became a one-party state in 1972 and later in 1991; it again adopted a multiparty system of government (ibid).

### **2.5 Economic Status of Zambia**

The Zambian economy at independence had been one of the most buoyant in Africa. In the first decade of the political independence, the economy was relatively stable because of a balanced external trading account based on copper export providing 90 percent of foreign exchange earnings and 53% of the government investment in health, education and transportation (Ihonvbere, 1996). However, in 1975, the economy of Zambia faced a crisis due to the world decline in the price of copper (Masaiti & Chita, 2014). The next 15 years saw negligible Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth, high rates of unemployment and

increasing inability of the state to finance basic health, sanitation and education services for its citizens (Masaiti & Chita, 2014). In an attempt to address, the declining economy Zambia adopted the structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1991 with the intentions of stabilising and restructuring the economy. Some of the measures taken by the Zambian government were the liberalization of the economy, removal of government subsidies and price controls. These measures brought about the rise in food and transport prices, introduction of school and medical fees and an employment increased (Logie & Woodroffe, 1993). These measures had a negative impact on education and health as some could not afford the fees. Instead it led to an increase in government borrowing and the accumulation of payment arrears on foreign debt (Ihonvbere, 1996).

## **2.6 The Copper belt Province as a Research Context**

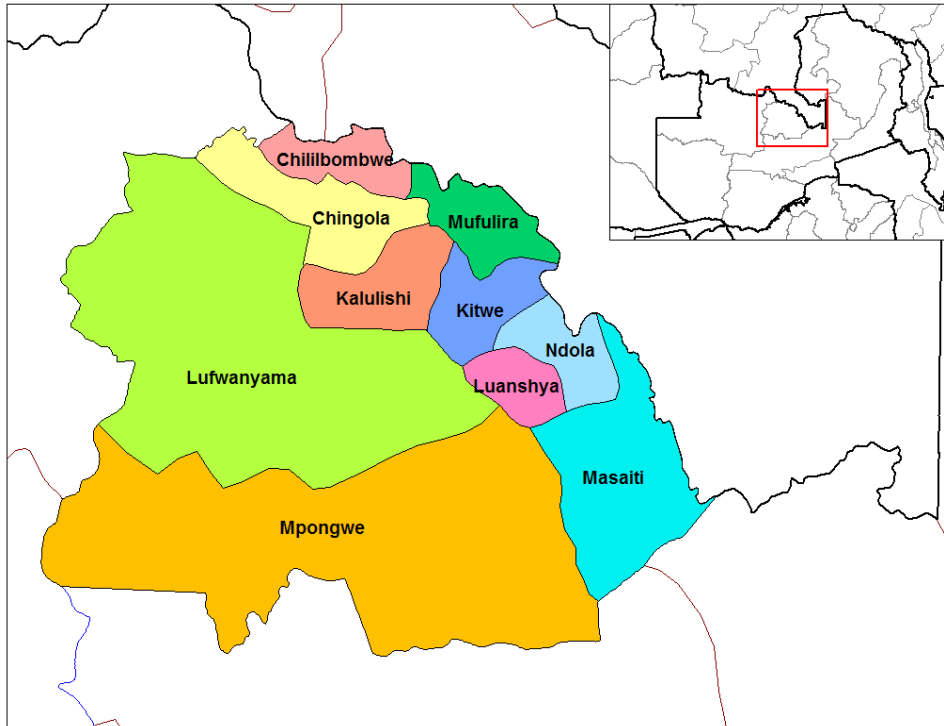
The Copperbelt province is both a geological region in central Africa where copper and associated metals such as the highly valued cobalt are found in abundance, and the name of a Zambian province where most of the country's copper is mined (Hampwaye & Rogerson, 2010; Potts, 2005). The geographical region is shared between Zambia and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) a deliberate boundary demarcation that was created to ensure that both the Belgians in DRC and the British in Zambia shared the copper pie during the "scramble for Africa" (ibid). During the colonial period, following the development of commercial copper mining and its associated industrial activities, mining towns sprang up all along the Copperbelt (Ferguson, 1999; Hampwaye & Rogerson, 2010). This made European colonists to settle in the new towns in numbers; while natives came by the thousands to seek work in the mines and other new industries (Ferguson, 1999). Therefore, mining transformed the Copperbelt province from a bush area to a dynamic urban and industrial region (Hampwaye & Rogerson, 2010).

With the above explanation of the historical background, to date the province has remained highly urbanised even with the closure of most industries. The province is made up of a total of 10 districts 7 of which are urban namely Chililabombwe, Chingola, Mufulira, Kalulushi, Kitwe, Luanshya and only 3 are rural namely Lufwanyama, Mpongwe and Masaiti. Ndola is the provincial capital of the Copperbelt province.

The predominant economic activity in the rural areas of Copperbelt province is subsistence agriculture, in most cases, the people just grow food for home consumption but at times depending on the surplus, some produce are sold to raise money (Kalaba, 2007). Other

economic activities practised by people on the Copperbelt are fishing, hunting, fruit and mushroom trade, bee-keeping, beer brewing, live stock sales especially local chickens and charcoal selling (Kalaba, 2007).

Figure 2. Map of the Copper belt Province Showing Districts



<https://www.google.com/search?q=map+of+copperbelt+province+zambia&biw> (Retrieved, 1/10/2015).

## 2.7 Brief Description of Ndola

Ndola was established as one of the Zambia's leading industrial centres between the 1960s and 1970s. From a small centre, the town rapidly grew as a result of expansion and growth of businesses covering many sectors of the economy among them were manufacturing, mining, chemicals, textiles, construction, agriculture and forestry and many others (Hampwaye & Rogerson, 2010). With these other industries around the economic base of Ndola was not very dependent on copper mining. However, the economy declined due to effects of the structural Adjustment Programme, which led to a closure of some 75% of existing formal sector plants, high unemployment, and retrenchment of staff in Ndola (Hampwaye & Rogerson, 2010). In order to respond to the declining economy most of the people in the

urban areas started practising urban agriculture for domestic consumption as a way of improving the food security (Hampwaye & Rogerson, 2010).

## **2.8 Sex Education before the Coming of Missionaries**

Traditionally, the teaching of sex education was done in two phases, the first was among children themselves through play and it took place before the young people attained puberty and the second phase took place when the young people attained puberty and this was done through initiation ceremonies. In rural areas and some urban areas around the age of five or six boys would start exploring the girl's bodies by imitating heterosexual behaviour of adults. The play would start in the evenings as the children got together with big and small boys and girls in their neighbourhood (Simpson, 2009). The older ones would suggest that they make shelters and after the shelters were made the older ones would then chose their wives in a play form and they would then pretending to be sleeping while the young ones were made to watch over by giving them the role of cocks and dogs (Simpson, 2009). These young ones would then watch the older boys lay on top of the girls. From early age boys understood that, they were required to assent the active role while girls took the passive role by lying below. Often boys and girls did not take off their clothes and so there was no penetration involved (Simpson, 2009). The young ones stopped getting the role of cock and dog when they grew older and would assign the young ones to do so. This went on from generation to generation.

The second phase was that of teaching of sex education through initiation ceremonies, which followed a concentrated course of instructions given to each age group on reaching puberty. At the initiation schools transition from childhood to manhood or womanhood was marked by tests of physical endurance instruction in traditional hygiene and sexual behaviour, and the responsibilities as well as the rights of married life. In some tribes the ceremony included the act of circumcision for boys such as in the North Western province of Zambia (Snelson, 1974).

## **2.9 Sex Education during Missionary Time**

With the coming of the missionaries, initiation ceremonies were abolished, as they were considered immoral. Some missionary societies did not only aim at serving man's souls by teaching Christianity but were at pain to improve man's physical and social well being as well, hence the introduction of Domestic Science (Snelson, 1974). Therefore, some aspects of sex education were taught in Domestic Science now Home Economics where mostly hygiene

was taught to women and girls. Later formal schools were opened up and along with other academic subjects Domestic Science was offered and topics related to sex education such as puberty, pregnancy, reproduction, child development were taught (ibid). Traditionally after initiation ceremonies were abolished the teaching of sex education in most families became a responsibility of grandparents, aunts and uncles (Rasing, 2003).

## **2.10 The Teaching of Sex Education after Independence**

After independence, the teaching of sex education continued to be taught in domestic science and later subjects such as environmental science and biology had some topics such as reproduction related to sex education taught. In the early 1990s the ministry of education introduced the teaching of sex education as an integration in science subjects, civic education, social studies and religious education under the life skills and in extra-curricular activities such as clubs (Education, 1996).

Over the decade the government realised that the country was faced with the problem of HIV/AIDS and it was realised that education should contribute to a solution by empowering people to claim their rights and to make informed choices (Carmody, 2004). This led to an introduction of the teaching of sex education with its main emphasis on HIV/AIDS in subjects like social studies, biology, home economics and environmental science, which became part of the school curriculum under the school health program (ibid). The school health program includes the following topics: love sex and abstinence; reproductive health; sexually transmitted infections; understanding HIV and AIDS for grade 7. Working together safely; children's rights; growing up; and understanding gender for grade 8. Sexual feelings and behaviour; about pregnancy; transmitted infections; understanding HIV and AIDS and coping well with life for grade 9 (Siziya, Muula, Kazembe, & Rudatsikira, 2008).

From the topics outlined above it was observed that the education started late in grade 7 and that it emphasised more on sexual behaviour which at times might not lead to healthy teenage behaviours. For this reason in 2015, the ministry of education took a step forward to try to improve the teaching of sex education by introducing the comprehensive approach. Comprehensive sex education approach will not only deal with behaviour change but equip teenagers with values, skills, attitudes and self efficacy (Ecker & Kirby, 2009). This will help to deal with practical sexual problems teenagers might face and improve on communication with their parents and other stakeholders on sexual related issues (ibid). Currently copper belt

province was selected as a piloting province and teachers underwent training on how effective reproductive health can be taught from grade 5 to 12 (Education, 2013).

## **2.11 Education System of Zambia**

Before the coming of missionaries in Zambia, a system of education apart from sex education had existed under traditional or tribal education. This type of education varied from one tribal society to another depending on the environment and customs but many elements were similar to all the tribes (Snelson, 1974). The young people were taught practical skills that were relevant to each type of environment in order to sustain their lives. This type of education was gendered in that boys and girls had separate practical skills to learn. The boys would accompany their fathers or elder brothers on hunting expeditions into the bush where they learnt how to set traps, to follow the spoor of game and shoot animals using arrows (Snelson, 1974). Apart from hunting boys also learnt the names and uses of herbs, flowers, fruits and trees while in the bush. Children also learnt the art of fishing, chopping trees, making huts, canoes, mats, ropes, drums and baskets (Snelson, 1974). Girls spent much of their time with their mothers, grandmothers and aunts and from an early age to learn skills which would be required of them as wives and mothers in future (Snelson, 1974). They learnt how to sweep, wash plates, draw water, pound maize or grind millet into flour, cooking, child minding later and they learnt how to make porridge and how to brew beer (Snelson, 1974).

From the above outlined skills, traditional education covered areas of food security, nutrition, public health and nurturing care of the younger children which have powerful implications for quality of life in all societies and greater attractions in the design of the education curriculum (Serpell & Adamson-Holley, 2015). Apart from practical skills, the idea of working as families or communities in traditional education with the home as a learning centre encouraged the young people to co-operate with other people, offered participation in life activities and opportunities to discover technical knowledge accumulated by society (Banda, 2008; Serpell & Adamson-Holley, 2015). African education therefore, was a lifelong process of learning that could not be separated from the rest of life's activities with the purpose of empowering the individual to be an active member of the community and to excel within the participatory context of the community (Achola, 1990).

With the coming of the missionaries, the focus of education moved away from the tribal but due to the influence of the local people on practical skills the missionaries had to introduce sewing, cooking, hygiene, wood work and agriculture in the schools in order to

maintain harmony (Allen, 2010). However, there was a drastic change at independence when Zambia in common with other ex-British colonies or dependencies, inherited a school curriculum that was in many respects irrelevant to the pressing needs of the country. The contents of most school subjects were heavily academic with little practical content (Achola, 1990). Upon realising that academic education was not able to address the issue of uplifting the quality of life for Zambians, in 1975, the president issued a decree directing all educational institutions to combine education with productive work (Achola, 1990). The paramount aims were to foster in pupils and students, respect and love for manual work and to make educational institutions self supporting in food provisions (Achola, 1990). After this declaration, pupils were involved in cleaning their classrooms and surroundings and worked on school gardens. At times, pupils were assigned to work on people's fields and the people would pay the school but this did not go well with the children's rights advocates who condemned it (ibid).

Despite the education sector coming up with a number of policies to address the issue, the current education system has continued to pave the way into university by attracting the most able students, and subsequently offering the best rewards in terms of social standing (prestige) and material rewards (Avoseh, 2001). The emphasis is on the acquisition of certificates than the acquisition of knowledge and skills for personal and community benefits (Avoseh, 2001). In other words this type of education has failed to prepare the young people to be productive citizens as it lacks young people's involvement in realities and occupational skills so as to discover technical knowledge accumulated by society (Achola, 1990; Serpell & Adamson-Holley, 2015).

Currently, the Zambian education system consists of pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary education. Most of the children start their pre-school education at the age of 3 and this type of education is mostly run by the private sector and the churches though recently the government has started offering it in rural areas to help the poor and this lasts 2 to 3 years. The primary education lasts for 7 years (grades 1 to 7), after which the pupils have to sit for exams to get to junior secondary school (grades 8 and 9) and sit for national Exams again to get to senior secondary school (grades 10 to 12) (Siziya et al., 2008). After the grade, 12 national exams the young people can go to any tertiary institutions of their choice depending on their performance.



## **2.12 Summary**

In this chapter, I discussed the demographic, political and economic status of Zambia and later gave brief background information on the Copperbelt province and Ndola district as a research context. I also discussed the teaching of sex education between boys and girls through play and initiation ceremonies and the missionary way of teaching sex education. Finally, I discussed the current teaching of sex education in schools general education in Zambia from the traditional way of teaching with emphasis on practical skills to the current academic type of education.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

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#### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, I will discuss the methodological approach of my study. I will discuss the importance of using qualitative approach to answer my research topic and further justify the methods I used to explore the perspectives on sex education in relation to sexual health of teenagers in Zambia. This chapter will also discuss how I gained access to the research site and the participants, how I established relationships, sampling procedure and recruitment of participants. The chapter will further discuss ethical procedures, which were put in place when researching with the teenagers such as informed consent, confidentiality, privacy, power relations and reciprocity and how I negotiated them. Finally, I will explore my role as a researcher and reflect upon the challenges I faced during the research.

#### **3.2 Qualitative Methodology**

This study employed a qualitative approach for collecting data. Qualitative research is a collection of methodological approaches to studying the social world in which activities are studied in their natural setting (Davies, 2000). In qualitative research, one seeks to understand ways in which people from different social and culture backgrounds, and of different situations, make sense of the world in which they live in, give meaning to it, establish relationships within that world and, thereby , construct social reality (Davies, 2000; Hemming, 2008).

In order to understand human beings richly textured experiences and reflections about their experiences, multiple methods could be useful (Jackson, Drummond, & Camara, 2007). The use of multiple methods in a qualitative research help one to explore new dimensions of experiences in social life, collect complex yet complementary data, takes into account multiple perspectives of many actors in a situation and help offset the weakness of one method by the strengths of the other (Abebe, 2009; Cook & Hess, 2007; Mason, 2006). In addition there are obvious attractions in using multiple methods when attempting to understand children's worlds in that they help to capture a broader and deeper range of children's perspectives and experiences than using one method (Darbyshire, MacDougall, &

Schiller, 2005) . This research is underpinned by the above argument and employs different methods of obtaining data from the field.

### **3.3 Selection of the Field Site (Access to the Field)**

My research was conducted in Ndola district, the provincial city of the Copper belt province. The choice of my research site was based on the fact that I know the city well and am familiar with the local language since I have worked in that town for many years . Prior to my travel to the research site, I made arrangements with the key gatekeeper the head teacher of one of the schools where I was well known. I sent an email attaching the introductory letter from the Norwegian Centre for Child Research (NOSEB) asking if I could be allowed to conduct my research and at the same time do voluntary teaching in Food and Nutrition in one of the classes and the head teacher granted permission for my research and teaching. I decided to do voluntary teaching to this class so that it would be easier for me to get access to the participants as the age group I wanted were in that class. Access to the research site and participants was quick for this school since I was familiar with the research context and might have already gained trust with the gate keepers, children and parents (Alderson & Morrow, 2011; Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001).

Upon arrival in Zambia, I reported to the school where I had already made arrangement and started my voluntary teaching. Since this was a girls' school, I decided to make arrangements with another school where I could get boys. I started by making an appointment with the head teacher by phone but later went to see him and gave him my introductory letter and research proposal to read. Following that, he granted permission and assigned one male teacher to help me in making appointments with the pupils. I noticed that even when I was an outsider in that school access was quick because I provided the head teacher with the required information on my topic and ethical standards I was going to apply throughout my research period in that school (Orb et al., 2001).

I was privileged to attend a workshop meant to sensitise parents on the importance of their role in the teaching of sex education in one of the schools. During my research period, the government was undertaking a pilot project on sex education in Ndola and so the schools held workshops to educate the parents. I managed to chat with some parents after which I got their phone numbers and after some time I managed to make appointments for my Interviews with two parents (1 male and 1 female). I was also privileged to attend a traditional marriage ceremony known as “matebeto” by accompanying one of my friends who was invited. It was

during that function that I met the two traditional counsellors who had come for the wedding as well. After introducing myself, I explained my research topic and later made appointments for my interviews with them. Access to the other categories of participants was done by making appointments through the phone calls and emails.

### **3.4 Building Rapport**

After getting access to the participants in the two schools, I started building rapport by having informal dialogues. I used to chat with the girls I was teaching during break time and the boys and girls in the other school I would chat with them after school by taking short walks with them as they were going home. Informal dialogues might be of great help because as one interacts with the participants opportunities to establish friendship and building confidence are created (Abebe, 2009). I established relationships with other research participants by chatting on phone and through emails.

### **3.5 Sample Selection**

The first step in any research project is deciding whom to study and determining how to obtain a representative sample (Hutz & Koller, 1999, p. 59). Sampling refers to the method criteria and procedures used to select subjects for study (Lunsford & Lunsford, 1995, p. 106). Selection of research participants is important and in most cases it depends on the methods to be used and the research questions that these participants are expected to answer and what kind of setting. Therefore, in order to explore the views, ideas, knowledge and experiences from teenagers as my key informants, parents, teachers, pastors and traditional counsellors on sex education in relation to sexual health of teenagers in Zambia. I decided to carry out my research in Ndola District and used purposive sampling to select my participants.

Purposive sampling strategies are designed to enhance understanding of selected individuals or groups' experiences(s) or for developing theories and concepts (Advice, 2000, p. 264). In purposive sampling, the researcher actively selects participants believed to have considerable knowledge and understanding of the research topic based on the researchers experience and judgement (Ennew et al, 2009; Guarte & Barrios, 2006; Marshall, 1996). In view of this, I selected my participants based on the knowledge I had on the topic and the research site.

### 3.6 Recruitment of Research Participants

Recruiting participants for research involves providing information to the potential participants and generating their interest in the proposed study (Patel, Doku, & Tennakoon, 2003). It is for this reason that after identifying my participants, I provided them with information on my research topic and ethical procedures to be considered when collecting data. I drew up a sample of 43 participants. After drawing my sample, I spent some time trying to find strategies of maintaining my participants. I achieved this by building relationships through informal dialogues with the participants to encourage their continuing participation in the research (Patel et al., 2003).

Table 1. Summary of research sample and methods used for each category of participants

Sample	Number of Participants			Research Method
	Method	Male	Female	
Young people	32	6	26	Focus group discussions
Young people	12	6	6	Body maps
Young people	12	6	6	Interviews
Parents	4	2	2	Interviews
Teachers	2	1	1	Interviews
Pastors	2	2	-	Interviews
Traditional counsellors	2	1	1	Interviews
	<b>Total</b>		<b>43</b>	

Source: Field Data, Ndola Zambia; June-September 2015

During the recruitment process, I ended up having more girls than boys due to the fact that in the school where I wanted boys they ended up recruiting girls again instead of just boys and in the other school all the girls in that class were willing to participate. I have outlined this challenge under the heading challenges faced.

### **3.7 Methods of Data Collection**

Methods refers to the tools ; techniques or procedures used to generate data (Jackson et al., 2007). I decided to use 3 methods for the young people in that a combination of techniques can enable the data –generation process to be fun and interesting for participants as well as effective in generating useful and relevant data (Punch, 2002). In view of this, I decided to use visual maps to try to engage my teenage participants in some kind of play with their peers while trying to find a way of letting them open up and discuss sexual issues that might seem embarrassing. I then used focus group discussions to encourage the teenage participants to interact and build on each other’s comments and ideas (Jayasekara, 2012). Later I conducted individual interviews to explore views from teenagers, parents, teachers, traditional counsellors, pastors. During all the methods observation was also done to record and interpret non verbal communication (such as body language, voice intonation) and probe initial participants responses while exploring views, values, ideas and experiences on the teaching of sex education in schools and its importance in promoting health (Walsham, 2006).

#### **3.7.1 Observation**

Observation is a researcher centred process of gathering information by watching people, places, events, activities (Ennew et al, 2009). Observation may be unstructured in which observation takes place every day at all times, wherever a researcher may be. Observation can also be structured in which observations are repeated and activities counted and patterns noted by watching what happens at specific times of the day or night with different groups and activities and at a variety of places (Ennew et al, 2009). For my research, I mainly used unstructured observation for all categories of my participants. Observation in my case was not a method I chose to stand on its own in my methods for data collection but it was used as a continuous accompaniment to the three research methods I used (Ennew et al, 2009). For example, using observation, I was able to tell that in the girls school when I conducted the first focus group the girls were not free to answer the questions at first. As some looked down while others started biting their fingers when I asked them to tell me how they came to know about sexuality and what information they got from those sources. In the Zambian culture when someone looks down or bites their finger during a discussion, it might be a sign that one is shy. In this way, observation helped me to understand and interpret the culture behaviour (Mulhall, 2003). I was able to understand what looking down or biting ones finger

nails after being asked a question means because I was familiar with the cultural norms of that area.

Observation also helped me to overcome this challenge of girls looking down, I knew that asking such a question in a group would also make some shy pupils not to talk as they were not only afraid of me but their friends too as they could not trust every one with their information. I realised that when I asked the same question during individual interviews the same participants who were shy in a focus group discussion were now free. Unstructured observation are especially useful during the early stages of research to develop research questions that can be explored later using other methods (Ennew et al, 2009). This was similar to my situation in the challenge outlined above, though I did not change the question after the girls faced down in a focus ground discussion I was able to probe more using the individual interviews in order to get the responses.

Another example was that of the first focus group with the boys in a co education school where we sat behind the unfinished ablution block. I noticed that the boys were turning their heads from side to side. The interpretation of such to me was that the boys were not comfortable with the place though they suggested it. The boys were not comfortable with the noise that was coming from inside the ablution block and turning their heads from side to side was a way of looking around to see who was approaching near where we were seated. Upon noticing this, I asked them if they were comfortable with the place and they suggested that there was need to change the place. The next meeting was held in a different place. Through observation, one can be aware if the physical environment has an influence on the participants during a data collection processes (Mulhall, 2003). Turning their heads from time to time was a sign that the place was not conducive.

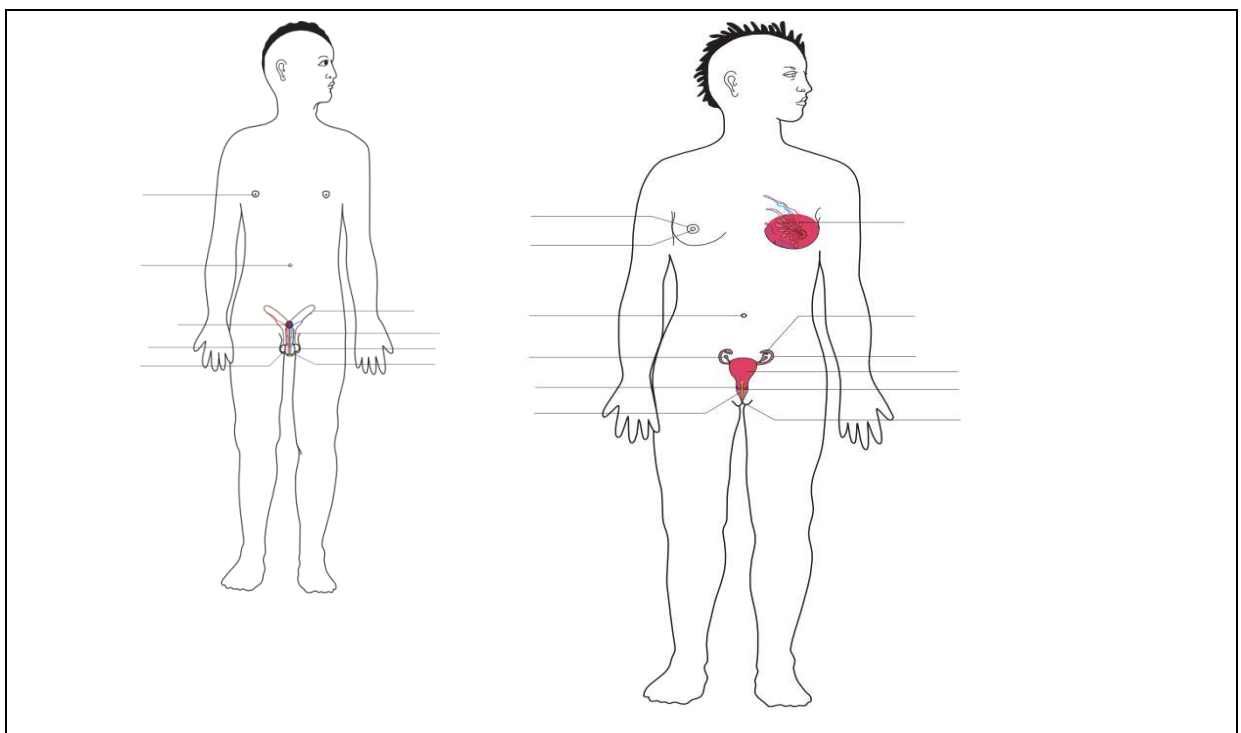
### **3.7.2 Visual Body Maps**

A visual body map is an interactive, fun and interesting educational tool that can be used to explore children's understanding the human body (Ennew, 2009). This method is useful in the teaching of sex education in that it gives access to the unspoken and helps build opportunities for dialogue in order to address issues under study properly (South African centre for Social Science Research, 2015). Before going to the field, I wanted my teenage participants to use body maps. This is a method where children of the same sex are put in a group and one person lie down then they draw the outline of the body, label and discuss the parts of the body especially the reproductive system since sex education is more connected to



it. After visiting the co-education school I realised that there was no space for the teenagers to carry out such activities since all the classes were been used for lessons throughout. My other fear was that the use of a participant's body out line drawn from the same group in the presence of others might make the participant uncomfortable during a discussion on the body as some pupils might even start teasing each other. For the above reasons I decided to use visual maps from the internet, which I downloaded, I then put the participants in groups (one group for 6 boys and another for 6 girls) and these participants discussed and labelled both the female and male reproductive system.

Figure 3. Male and Female Reproductive System



Source: <http://www.cssr.uct.ac.za/asru/outreach/visualbodymaps> (Retrieved on 18/06/2015)

This method was used to find out what participants knew about the reproductive system and sources of sex information. The young people found it fun and as they worked in groups, it made even the shy ones to open up and was able to discuss issues that seemed embarrassing. It also further opened up discussions in sex education on topics that followed in focus group discussions and individual interviews.

### 3.7.3 Focus Group Discussion

A focus group discussion is a formal, facilitated conversation of 6 to 8 participants with the same characteristics, for example gender, age or education on a specific topic preselected by

the researcher (Frith, 2000; Morgan, 1996). The aim of the focus group is to generate views, explore personal experiences, knowledge, attitudes and beliefs in more depth on the topic under discussions from several participants at once (Frith, 2000; Hill, 1997; Morgan, 1996).

The key to obtain rich data in a focus group discussion is the interaction between participants. During a focus group discussion the researcher encourages participants to talk to each other, asking questions and commenting on each other's experiences (Kitzinger, 1995). In this way interaction between participants might help highlight the participants' language, attitudes and priorities; encourage a wide range of communication; help to identify group norms; provide insights to social processes and encourage open discussions about topics that might seem embarrassing such as sexuality (o'kane, 2008). I noticed that when one started talking and opened up then the rest were free to contribute but at the begging of the discussion, everyone was quiet. In addition, the presence of peers alters the power imbalance compared with adult- child interaction as children will be free to challenge and prompt one another, and so clarify, extend and amplify one another's ideas and responses in that when one child is talking other children have thinking time (Jayasekara, 2012; o'kane, 2008). This might give children confidence to communicate or resist influence and make the information different from that collected in individual interviews even when the same participants are involved (o'kane, 2008). Therefore, interaction between participants will not only bring out views on what participants think but also how they think and why they think that way (Kitzinger, 1995).

In order to cut down some challenges in dealing with interaction between my participants, I decided to conduct three focus group discussions (two for girls and one for boys). The first focus group discussion took place in the girls' school with 15 participants where as two of the focus group discussions happened in the other co-education school with six participants for the girls group and another 6 for the boys for each group. Initially I was supposed to conduct only two focus group discussions (one for girls and one for boys) but due to communication breakdown, the person in charge in the co-education school gave informed consent forms to both girls and boys instead of giving only boys as I already had girls from the girls school. I decided not to turn the children away but instead opted to use them in the focus group discussions. I would have combined the girls with their fellow girls in another school, as it would have been helpful to have a diverse group to maximise exploration of different perspectives within a group setting. This could not work out for me because the girls in the co-education school were in grade 11 while the ones in a girls' school were in grade 12. In

addition, the girls were from different settings governed by different rules one being a mission school while the others from a government school. I realised that combining them would limit interaction as participants in the less powerful situation might indicate agreement with their more powerful colleagues and this might suppress an emerging group view (Jayasekara, 2012). For instance, (Kitzinger) noted that:

*Friends and colleagues can relate each other's comments to incidents in their shared daily lives. They may challenge each other on contradictions between what they profess to believe and how they actually behave (Kitzinger, 1995, p. 311).*

I started my focus group discussions with the six boys. Due to limited space in that school we sat outside in a circle behind the ablution block under construction. I introduced myself again, briefly talked about the topic then informed my participants that I would record the discussion so that I could transcribe afterwards. I also assured them that confidentiality would be observed and as such, the information shared would be kept between them and me only. The discussion lasted for 80 minutes and to my surprise, the boys were very free with me and able to discuss the topic freely. Before meeting the group, I thought the boys would not open up to talk about sexuality since it was my first time to talk about such a topic to a group of boys.

I moved on to the girls school where I had a big group with 15 girls. I could not break the group because the participants wanted to be together so I respected their wish and followed what they wanted. We sat in one of the biggest rooms in the home economics department far away from all rooms in a big circle. The big circle helped me to see everyone and I was able to do my observation during the discussion. I expected the girls to be very free with me since they knew me close to 5 years; however, they were a bit shy at the beginning but later became free and opened up after a few girls had talked. Due to the big number in that group, we spent 2 hours in the discussion but did not manage to discuss the last part in the focus group discussion guide. I then met them again on another day and finished the last part and the discussion, which lasted for 1 hour. The last focus group discussion to be conducted was with the girls in the co-education school. This time we agreed to change the place of meeting from behind the ablution block to sitting under a tree near the wall fence as we experienced some noise from the ablution block when I conducted the focus group discussion for boys. We managed to finish the discussion in 1 hour and the girls just like the boys in that school were free and open enough to answer the questions under discussion. At the end of the

research, I again conducted the focus group discussions with the same groups in the same way as at the beginning of the research. This was done to verify or consolidate the views or experiences that were generated during the research (Hill, 1997).

#### **3.7.4 Interviews**

Interviews are among the most familiar strategies for collecting information in which participants respond to questions asked by the researcher (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Seidman, 2013). Interviews are said to be conversations with a purpose as they are used by the researcher to understand the lived experiences of the participants and the meaning they make of that experience (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Ennew, 2009). To achieve this it is important to understand that the research interview is not a conversation between equal partners. This is due to the fact that the researcher is in control by introducing the topic of the interview and making critical follows up on the subject's answers to the questions (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). During interviews, I decided to use semi structured interviews as they consist of several key questions that help to define the areas to be explored but also allows the interviewer to phrase the questions, and ask in any order as long as the themes are covered (Ennew, 2009; Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). In this way it provides participants on what to talk about giving them greater control over the direction of the conversation and allows them to tell their story in their own way (Ennew, 2009; Gill et al., 2008). This helps in minimising the power imbalance between the researcher and the participants.

As a way of establishing relationship with the participants before conducting individual interviews I started by involving the children in some kind of play while exploring their sources of information on sexuality through the use of visual maps. I then continued by using the focus group discussions to try and find out what questions to ask and what words to use in the individual interviews while at the same time identifying the knowledge, ideas, values, beliefs and attitudes of the group on the research topic (Ennew, 2009).

After establishing the relationship I made individual appointments with the teenagers as school was about to close and started the interviews. In the girls school I used the same room I had used for focus group discussion. However, for boys we shifted from behind the ablution block to under the tree near the wall fence as suggested by the participants. Though carrying out interviews under the tree with other pupils seeing the participants at least other pupils

could not come near, disturb or listen to the conversations made once they saw us seated under the tree. It is important to consider relationships and interactions in particular places noting that participants might feel uncomfortable speaking freely about some issues in places where other people might over hear the conversation (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). As for the pastors, parents, traditional counsellors and the official from the ministry of education, I interviewed them in offices at their work places and some at their homes with no other people around.

The use of interviews as a key method involved all my research participant categories and enabled me to collect data on views, values and experiences of 12 teenagers (6 boys and 6 girls), 4 parents with teenage children (2 male and 2 female), 2 teachers who teach teenagers (1 male and 1 female). In addition, I was interviewed 2 pastors, 2 traditional counsellors (1 male and 1 female) to get views on the teaching of sex education and how it can help promote sexual health and wellbeing. I had no problems with most of the participants, as almost all except one parent were able to speak English and the local language, which I speak and understand well. I used English when asking questions and only used the local language when emphasizing or making the questions clear to the participants when they had problems with understanding them in English. In turn, they were also using the local language occasionally when trying to make their views and ideas clear.

With the one parent who was unable to speak or understand English and had problems with speaking the local language for that area I asked one of my friends who spoke the same language like that parent to accompany me so that she could translate for me. It was quite a challenge to translate certain words like “sex” in the local language.

### **3.8 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical issues are present in any kind of research .Ethics provide the basics for conducting research(Corbin & Morse, 2003). In other ways ethics in research are guidelines and principles that are set with a view to respect, protect participants, researchers and their institutions by minimising harm, assure trust, ensure research integrity (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012). Some of the ethical procedures put in place for this research are informed consent, confidentiality, privacy, power differentials and reciprocity.

### 3.8.1 Informed Consent

When doing research it is always important to obtain consent from the participants and this can be written, oral, or in some cases granted by virtue of participation (Binik, Mah, & Kiesler, 1999). When children are involved in the research, informed consent should be obtained from either parents or caretakers to the children and children themselves. The researcher should first provide the overall purpose of the research and the main features of the design, as well as of any possible risks and benefits from participation in the research project (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Orb et al., 2001). Informed consent further involves obtaining the voluntary participation of the people involved and informing them of their right to withdraw from the study at any time (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). For this reason, parents or care takers should be made to understand that they should not force their children to take part in the research and the researcher should also respect the parents decision if they refuse to allow their children to participate in the research (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). These principles respect people's capacities to make decisions and are meant to avoid exploiting the relationship between the gatekeepers, the researcher and the participants (Flewitt\*, 2005).

Considering the above statements, I decided to seek written consent and participation in the research required both the parents or caretakers and the pupils to sign the forms. I prepared them in such a way that, the first page was meant for parents to sign and the second page for young people. In the girl's school, I gave the consent forms to all the 20 girls in the class as everyone was willing to participate and both the girls and their parents signed them all. I had a good turnout in the girl's school because all the parents to the girls already knew me so they had no doubts in allowing their daughters to participate in the research. Signing of consent forms was not new to the parents in the girl's school as they were used to sign for their children when they had to participate in any event such as sports or educational tours.

In the co-education school where I only needed boys as I already had girls, I left 16 informed consent forms in an envelope with instructions written on top with the secretary to the head teacher to give him, as he was not available due to the meeting they had in the school. Unfortunately, there was communication breakdown and instead of giving only boys, 10 forms were given to girls and six to boys. From those children who had the forms I received six signed forms from girls and three from boys. Since I needed six boys, three more boys were recruited from the same class and they had to sign the consent forms also. The issue of

having another set of girls in another school became a challenge to me but later I decided not to turn away the girls but use them in the focus group discussions.

In the co education school, such arrangements were not always used, Young people were just told what to do by the teachers without the consent of parents at times. I did not want to compromise with the ethical standards I had put across and I wanted my participants to get a uniform treatment hence the use of written consent forms for both schools. I made sure only those who had signed the consent forms participated in the study.

### **3.8.2 Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is a promise or contract to respect participants by not discussing information shared or revealed with other people except under agreed upon conditions (Glosoff & Pate Jr, 2002). In view of this, the researcher should make sure data collected is not shared with an authorised individuals and storage measures must be taken to avoid any one to get access to the information (Binik et al., 1999; Glosoff & Pate Jr, 2002). The researcher should make sure that if any people are going to have access to the information then the participants must be informed (ibid).

In order to ensure confidentiality during my research I made sure I used pseudo names for my participants so that no one will be able to identify them. I bought a new phone specifically for the research and a big memory card to accommodate all records of interviews and I used a password so that no one can get access to the data that I stored in the laptop. I also locked my laptop where I kept the transcribed data and made sure it was always kept in my bedroom in a bag. I also made sure I avoided sitting in the staffroom so that other teachers could not ask me on the responses children are giving to my questions and only arrived in the school 10 minutes before my lessons and left immediately after teaching. I also made sure I interviewed teachers in another school and not from the two schools where I had teenage participants. I also did not use participant's parents but used other parents. I also avoided mentioning the two schools in my report where the research was conducted.

### **3.8.3 Privacy**

Privacy is a way individuals, groups or institutions control or limit access to the information about them to others by deciding who might have access to information they chose to share

(Glosoff & Pate Jr, 2002; Social, 2001). To ensure privacy, it is important to conduct interviews in places where there would be no interference from other people.

I had no problems with privacy in the girls' school as I was given a room where I used to conduct my interviews in the Home Economics department. The department is only accessible to 3 home economics teachers and only pupils who do home economics. Pupils were only allowed to use the room when they had a lesson and not any other time. I conducted my interviews when the room was not used for lessons. However, I had challenges in the other school, as there were no free rooms or free spaces outside where the interviews could be conducted so the only option was conducting interviews under a tree near the wall fence of the school. I tried to overcome this challenge by making my participants to face the wall fence so that other pupils would only see their backs from afar making it difficult to know which pupils were taking part in the research. With teachers, parents, traditional counsellors and pastors, privacy was ensured as interviews were carried out in the offices or at home with no other person around except for the researcher and the participant.

### **3.8.4 Power Relations**

The Zambian culture values demand that children respect elders and in most cases children should show respect by answering positively when they are speaking to elders or keep quiet and listen when elders are speaking (Desai & Potter, 2006). This might affect the research results, as children might not be able to express themselves freely but answer positively to please the researcher and also to show respect. To try to minimise power differences especially in the school where I was well known and having volunteered to teach I told the administrators to introduce me as a researcher even when they knew me as a teacher. I held informal dialogues with my participants and made sure I did not conduct any exams or give and mark tests but left that responsibility to their subject teacher. Furthermore, I avoided formal dressing and made sure I went in the school only on days I was either teaching or conducting interviews and immediately I finished I could knock off. When dealing with other adult participants I followed the dress code for each category so as to fit in such as in a skirt and not trousers when interviewing the pastor from the traditional church and in "chitenge" outfit (Zambian traditional wear) when interviewing the traditional counsellors.



### 3.8.5 Reciprocity

Reciprocity means compensating the research participants with service and/ or material and/ or monetary payments to offset their time and labour especially if they are involved in income generating activities to raise money for their families (Abebe, 2009; Binns, 2006). To try to avoid high expectations from my participants and compromise my research findings I told my participants that participation in the research did not attract any payments. However, in Zambia it is always a train to compensate people in any way for their time. It is for this reason that I prepared a surprise meal at the end of the research for the teenage participants as my key informants. I decided to make it a surprise and doing it at the end of the study as doing it at the beginning or during the data collection period might have been seen as attracting children to participate in the research or give positive answers to please me (van Blerk, 2006). To close the data collection period a simple meal was prepared to show appreciation to the teenage participants.

Figure 4. Pictures of food for the meal held during the close of data collection



Source: Field Data in Ndola, Zambia on 21<sup>st</sup> of September 2015.

### 3.9 My Role as a Researcher/ Voluntary Teacher

From the beginning of my research process I made sure, I was identified as a researcher. To start with when I reported to the grant- aided school where I was to do my data collection and at the same time do voluntary teaching, I told the head teacher to introduce me as a

researcher. However, she was hesitant at first, but after explaining to her that though, I was a teacher by profession I went to that school as a researcher. When the announcement was made to every pupil in the school, I noticed that pupils still gave me the respect and addressed me the same way they did to other teachers. In order to make a difference from other teachers and to maintain my role as a researcher, I decided to avoid formal dressing. I also engaged myself in informal dialogues by chatting with pupils even non-participants at break time and their free time and at times attended their club meetings and listened to their discussions just like an ordinary person.

The second step I took in order to maintain the role of the researcher was to make sure that I followed all the ethical procedures in both schools uniformly without taking things for granted in the school where I was known. I made sure I avoided the school stamp on the informed consent in the grant-aided school, as it was a requirement for teachers to put a stamp on any letters sent to parents through the school. I did this to avoid parents being compelled to sign since they had high respect for the administration. When it came to making appointments for interviews and the venue, I did not impose but allowed the participants to make their choices and I followed what they wanted. An example is that of one participant in the girl's school who was not comfortable with the room we were using, I gave her a chance to choose the room of her choice. Above all, I always emphasised to my participants that participation was voluntary and even when they had signed the informed consent forms they were free to withdraw any time they felt like without giving reasons.

Despite putting across all the above measures, there are times when separation of the two roles that of a teacher and a researcher was stressful because as a researcher I had to listen to the participants demands while as a teacher before the research I was used to being in charge (Orb et al., 2001). However, I felt honoured in that though I was a researcher, the school appreciated my offer to do voluntary teaching and I was perceived as another pair of hands who could help in teaching despite my busy schedule (Orb et al., 2001). Despite this, I always reminded myself my role as a researcher and always made sure the relevance of ethical principles as a guide to my research study (ibid). Therefore, I made sure that I did not give assignments or tests to the class I was teaching and left that to their subject teacher.

### **3.10 My Role as an Insider/Outsider Researcher**

As it is the case with most researchers, I began data collection process with the assumption that I would have no problems in getting information from the participants in the school

where I once worked as a teacher (Merriam et al., 2001). I must say I considered myself an insider in this school because I was doing my research in a place where I used to work before doing my studies. Since I was an insider, I had no problems of getting access and gaining trust from the head teacher, parents and the young people as my key informants (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). The challenge came when I conducted my first focus group discussion, I realised that when I asked the participants to tell me the kind of information they got from the sources of sexuality they mentioned. All the girls looked down when this question was asked until after a moment one of them started speaking that is when they rest started opening up one by one. For some opening up was when I conducted individual interviews. Alderson and Morrow (2011), states that insiders at times face problems in getting information from the participants, as they might not be free to share information as they feel the researcher might be investigating them. In addition, the young people may have been more fearful of the possible consequences of disclosing sensitive information during a discussion to a local researcher or an insider than to an outsider (Skovdal & Abebe, 2012). In line with the mentioned scholars, I realised that since sexuality was a sensitive topic, the young people were not free at first because they feared that I might judge them as being already sexually active when they gave a lot of information.

This proved true in that when I went to the other school where I was not known or where I was an outsider, I did not face any challenges as the young people in that school participated freely and were comfortable with all the themes under discussion. At times the participants might be free to share information and personal problems honestly to the outsider because they are aware that the researcher is not part of that institution but is just there for research (Alderson & Morrow, 2011). In this way, the outsider might gain rich data than the insider.

One thing I liked on being an insider in the school where I was known during my research period was that I was able make appointments directly with my participants without going through any other person. After giving the head the research proposal and getting the informed consent signed, I was given the mandate to deal directing with my participants. This made my data collection process fast because I was able to come out with a time schedule for the interviews and where one participant was committed, we would easily swap with one who was free. This was not the case in the other school where I was an outsider as I was given a male teacher to help me with making appointments for the participants and in instances when he was busy then I would cancel the appointments. I always relied on him to find my participants in case they changed the room as I was not familiar with the place and been an

outsider I respected the rules of the school by not walking into any class anyhow as I was not a teacher in that school.

### **3.11 Data Analysis and Interpretation**

Data analysis and interpretation was an ongoing process throughout the research. It started when I got to the field as I took notes right from the first day I reported at my research context. During interviews and focus group discussions, I used an audio recorder and later transcribed the data without editing. I then developed themes based on the data collected in line with the reach questions broken down through the interview guides. For the focus group, I drafted a table and wrote responses under each theme from both boys and girls. Lastly, I picked up the prominent and suitable themes and used them to analyse and interpret the data collected.

### **3.12 Challenges Faced in the Field**

The first challenge I faced was that of having more participants than I anticipated. As I earlier indicated in my discussion, I had a group of six girls in the school where I got the boys due to communication breakdown in that the person who gave informed consent forms ended up giving both boys and girls instead of just boys. That meant I had to adjust my schedule in order to accommodate the girls as well. Secondly I had a bit of a challenge with two boys who after making appointments for individual interviews were not coming to school for 4 weeks due to the fact that they did not pay the school fees. I finally managed to interview them mid of September when school reopened.

I also faced a challenge with space in a co-education school. The classes were all occupied at all times in that when the morning session knocks off then the afternoon session would start immediately. During the first focus group as earlier stated, we sat behind the ablution block under construction but we noticed that there was noise from pupils who were sitting inside the building and it was disturbing the discussing. We then decided to change the venue and conducted all the other discussions that followed under the tree near the wall fence .Though other children and teachers were able to see us at least they would not come near because they knew that something was going on.

### **3.13 Summary**

This chapter gave an outline of how the use of multiple methods complemented each other in generating information for the study. I also discussed how different categories of participants were recruited highlighting how I ended up having more participants and how I solved the issue without the young people getting affected. I discussed ethical procedures that were put in place during data collection and how I managed to negotiate challenges that arose. Finally, I explained my role as a researcher / voluntary teacher and my role as an insider in one school and an outsider in another.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

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#### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss the theoretical perspectives that influenced my study on sex education. I will start by giving a brief explanation on the sociology of childhood with a focus of social actor and social construction and agency in relation to my study. I will also discuss the rights based approach highlighting the protection right, the right to health and participation as a means of promoting sexual health through the teaching of sex education. The ecological system theory will also be discussed in relations to sex education. Lastly, I will discuss the gender aspect, culture and public health approaches in relation sex education.

#### 4.2 The Sociology of Childhood

The sociology of childhood emerged as a critic to the dominant discourses of child development and socialization theories that have its roots in psychology and sociology (Prout & James, 1997). These dominate theories of socialisation and child development viewed children as immature, passive subjects and human becoming (James & Prout, 2015). On the other hand the sociology of childhood places an emphasis on children as active agents in the creation of meaning through their interactions with adults and other children (Prout, 2011).

To design effective curriculum or programs to address the teaching of sex education in schools in relation to sexual health of teenagers in Zambia, planners must consider the different individual needs of the young people. This could be achieved by involving the young people, as they are active participants in matters that affect them. This will help the stakeholders to come up with the right information, skills and identify counselling techniques that will benefit the young people (Hughes & McCauley, 1998).

##### 4.2.1 Childhood as Socially Constructed

*“The definition by many geographers and other social scientists reflects the 1989 UN Convention on the rights of the child, which defines childhood as the period up to 18 years of age. However, while this implies that children are defined by their chronological age, a collection of studies encompassed by ‘the new social studies of*

*childhood' has highlighted the complex and contested nature of the term child. This work has highlighted how childhood is socially constructed, and as such is historically and culturally specific rather than reflecting any biologically essentialist reality"* (Smith & Ansell, 2009, p. 58).

The social construction approach is also against importing realities of one culture or society to the other. childhood has different meanings, and children have different roles and undertake different activities in different historical periods and in different cultures (Morrow, 2011). In addition It is important to note that even in the same society with the same culture, the meaning of childhood might still change with time (Prout & James, 1997). Due to the above reasons, researchers should not only study the child but also consider the context (that is the interpersonal, cultural, historical and political) that produces the child (Burman, 2007). Therefore, there is need to respect the dignity and self worth of all children and understand their lives from their own viewpoints without judgement (Morrow, 2011).

I decided to use this approach in my study in that before coming up with the curriculum for sex education, it is important to consider the needs, cultural values and traditions of each particular society. Information that might be right in one society might not be right in the other or might be unacceptable or contradict with the norms and values of the given society (Merriam, 2002). Therefore, when sex education is culturally specific and tailored to the unique issues and needs of the targeted community, it is more likely to lead to positive outcomes (BeatriceBean'E, Bockting, Rosser, Miner, & Coleman, 2002). In this way, effectiveness is enhanced because culturally specific interventions are more likely to attract targeted participants, as they would find the information more relevant, understandable, interesting and believable (ibid).

#### **4.2.2 Children as Social Actors**

The children's rights agenda and new paradigm within social sciences have increased our understanding of the child as a competent social actors (Sinclair, 2004). Children's rights can only be exercised if the children or young people can freely express their views and opinions and have their interests and needs considered (Shaw, 2009). Childhood and children's social relationships and cultures are worthy of study in their own right; and not just in respect to their social construction by adults (James & Prout, 2015). Children must be seen as actively involved in the construction of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and of



the societies in which they live (James & Prout, 2015). In other words children are seen to act in the social world and to participate in ongoing social life and are centrally involved in the construction of their own childhoods through their negotiations with the adult world and among themselves (Alanen, 2005). In this way children are no longer regarded as simply the passive subjects of structural determination (James & Prout, 2015).

In an effort to explore the teaching of sex education in relation to sexual health of teenagers in Zambia, it is important to recognise that young people have the right to be consulted and to be heard when designing and delivering sex education programs (Darbyshire et al., 2005). This will help children get the right information and skills that will motivate them to take pleasure and pride in their developing bodies as they mature (Chilman, 1990). In this way, young people will then be encouraged to communicate honestly and openly with people, they have a close relationship with such as parents, teachers, peers and other community members (ibid).

#### **4.2.3 Agency**

The discovery of children as agents is relatively recent in the social studies of childhood and has been identified as a foundational to learning, development and well being outcomes (Mashford-Scott & Church, 2011). As discussed above in the social actor perspective, children learn and develop through active interaction with others and participate in their environments. At the same time the United Nations on the rights of the child (UNCRC, United Nations, 1989), the first legally-binding document to afford children with the same comprehensive human and citizenship rights as adults, positions children as entitled to autonomy, and to fully participate, and influence matters that concern them (ibid). Young people can only be seen as social actors and exercise their right to participation through agency.

*Agency is understood as an individual's own capacities, competences, and activities through which they navigate the context and positions of their life worlds, fulfilling many economic, social, and cultural expectations, while simultaneously charting individual/collective choices and possibilities for their daily and future lives (Klocker, Robson, & Bell, 2007, p. 135)*

In the sub-Saharan and Zambia in particular children's rights to agency has received a steady increase in other fields but is often missing in discussions surrounding their own sexuality (Egan & Hawkes, 2009). From the data, collected agency in sexual matters for the young people in the context of Zambia has been affected by gender, age, culture and religion (Haydon, 2002). According to the Zambian traditions, it is considered taboo for male parents to discuss sexuality with their daughters and the messages that come from mothers or female parents are in terms of warnings making it hard for the young people to participate fully. Religions or Christian values too make it hard for the young people to access certain services such as those of legal abortion as society considers it sin. I decided to use the concept of agency in my study to try to find out how the young people express agency despite the hindrances listed above.

### **4.3 Rights Based Approach**

The formally agreed standards of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) include provision rights, protection rights and participation right (Morrow, 2011). Whilst all three of the UNCRC 'P's are important, the one that is having a significant influence on conceptions of children's role in social and political life, relates to participation (Morrow, 2011). Rights are important in reconstructing children's position in society from that of passive dependants or recipients of adult socialization to that of active subjects and citizens (Clark, Kjørholt, & Moss, 2005; o'kane, 2008). For the purpose of this, study, I will maintain the right to protection and participation and talk about the right to health as provided in the provision rights. The three will be discussed in relation to their role in the teaching of sex education in relation to sexual health of teenagers in Zambia.

#### **4.3.1 Protection Rights**

Protection rights are meant to safeguard children from discrimination, exploitation and physical and sexual abuse. In line this, the constitution of Zambia provides penalties from a minimum of 15 years with hard labour to life imprisonment to victims of incest, rape and child defilement as a way of protecting children and young people (African child policy forum 2012). However, sometimes a number of such cases are kept as a secret or are settled within families and remain unreported to the relevant authorities especially if close family members are involved (UNICEF., 2006). In this case, children or young people affected by such cases remain disadvantaged. As a way of taking preventive measures or minimising

such cases, the teaching of sex education to teenagers in schools becomes evitable. Sex education might help protect the young people against discrimination and sexual abuse in that the knowledge gained will lead to informed decision making, delayed sexual intercourse, responsible inter personal behaviour and self protection strategies (Goldman, 2008). If the young people are empowered with skills on sexuality, they will be able to find ways of protecting themselves such as reporting the rape victims to the relevant authority for further investigations and treatment.

#### **4.3.2 Right to Health**

Provision rights are rights to a standard family life, access to parental care, health, education and social security. For the purpose of this study, I will consider looking at the right to health and education in particular sex education and sexual health. Everyone has the right to sexuality education. The education of any one is incomplete unless one understands human sexuality (Goldman & Bradley, 2001). In addition, the provision of sex education makes young people to understand their bodies; improve their self esteem; develop better relationships, personal and social skills; form positive beliefs, values and attitudes about sexuality (Goldman & Bradley, 2001; Shtarkshall et al., 2007; Walker\*, 2004). In this way, the teaching of sex education will help promote sexual health of teenagers. As discussed in the chapter one both the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the report from 1994 International Conference on Population and Development emphasize the importance of healthy sexual development to overall mental and physical well being (Shtarkshall et al., 2007, p. 116).

#### **4.3.3 Participation Rights**

Article 12 of the UNCRC deals specifically with children's participation rights that requires children who are capable of forming views to be consulted or given chance to express themselves on matters that affect them (Alderson, 2000; Morrow, 2011). As a way of promoting the freedom to participation to children and young people, the Zambian education system encourages participation in schools through areas such as child health, HIV/AIDS And environment (Chiwela, 2010). On the other hand, the culture attitude makes children's participation problematic as children are expected to remain silent in the presence of adults (Chiwela, 2010). Adults too might feel uncomfortable with the child who expresses an opinion (Chiwela, 2010) (ibid). The silence especially in sexuality matters make young

people have difficulties in disclosing or seeking help for reproductive health needs(L. U. Warenius et al., 2006).

In order to overcome this culture attitude children should be given chance to express themselves on matters that affect them starting from within their families, schools and then the wider society (Lansdown, 2005). In addition, adults should be willing to listen and take into account the views of young people when making decisions and coming up with any programmes for them (Lansdown, 2005). Allowing young people to express their views or participation in the teaching of sex education is vital because it enhances their confidence, self-esteem, provides opportunities for developing a sense of autonomy and independence (ibid).

#### **4.4 The Ecological System Theory**

Urie Bronfenbrenner developed the Ecological System Theory after noting that much of the developmental research involved studying children under artificial experimental conditions such as studying children in the laboratory (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Ceci, 2006; Lerner, 2001). He stressed that research should focus on how individual children develop through interactions with the environment representative of their actual world (Lerner, 2001). He encouraged researchers to consider studying children in their homes, schools and play grounds rather than in the laboratory (Lerner, 2001). Therefore, Ecological theory states that development is the product of an individual's interactions with his or her immediate environment and the larger social systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1986 as stated in Ji, 2007, p. 5).

The environments that make up the ecological system theory are microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem. For the purpose of this study, I will consider using the four environments the micro, meso, exo and macro. The table gives an over view of the four environments which will be followed by a brief discussion on how it is applicable to the teaching of sex education in relation to sexual health of teenagers in Zambia.

Table 2. Outline of Bronfenbrenner ecological levels

<b>Ecological Level</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Example</b>
Microsystem	This level refers to the immediate environment in which a person is operating, it is a dynamic system in which a person is affected and in turn affects the environment	Parents, family, peer Group, neighbourhood
Mesosystem	This level refers to the interaction of two or more micro system environments	Interactions among home, school, peers, neighbourhood
Exosystem	This level refers to aspects of the environment in which an individual is not directly involved, which is external to his or her experience, but nonetheless affects him or her	Parents work place, economic status of the community, parents marriage
Macrosystem	This level refers to a larger cultural values and expectations in which the other systems functions	Values, laws, Resources, customs of A particular culture

Source (Rosa & Tudge, 2013)

The table above has summarised the environments and examples of what constitutes each environment of the ecological system theory. The micro system is an environment where the person spends a good deal of time engaging in activities of interactions (Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield, & Karnik, 2009). The second environment is the meso, which is created by interrelations when a person spends time in more than one micro system. The third environment is the exosystem, which is an environment, which affects the person indirectly. An example is that when the mother has been particularly stressed at work and, as a result she behaves more irritably than usual with her son or daughter when she gets home (Tudge et al.,

2009). The mothers work is an exosystem to the child as he or she spends no time there but it has indirect influence on him or her through the mother (Tudge et al., 2009). The fourth and final environment in relation for this study is the Macro which has influence on the person through the values, beliefs and life course it provides to the other three environments for them to function accordingly (Rosa & Tudge, 2013).

Traditionally, the teaching of sex education in Zambia is not a responsibility of the parents alone. Parents do not discuss all topics to address the needs of the teenagers and teenagers too fail to ask or engage in discussions with their parents for fear of being considered already sexually active. In most cases, the young people turn to friends and the media for more information. Apart from the media and friends, the church and school are also important sources of sexuality information for the young people. The main aim for the use of the ecological theory in my study is to see if there is an interaction, relationship and any influence of the environments in the teaching of sex education as a promotion of sexual health in the teenagers of Zambia.

#### **4.5 Public Health Approaches to School Based Sex Education in Zambia**

The public health approaches that have been implemented in the Zambian schools are the Abstinence approach, the Peer education approach and currently the Comprehensive sexuality education is under pilot with Copper belt province for a start.

##### **4.5.1 Abstinence Programs**

In Zambia, under abstinence programs was the “Abstinence, Behaviour Change, Youth” approach (ABY) HIV prevention programmes have focused on behaviour change since 1990s, using “ABC” as a shorthand for protective behaviours: Abstinence, Be faithful, Condoms (Gordon & Mwale, 2006). The ABC approach was difficult to put into effect when it came to condoms as Christianity does not encourage the use of condoms but puts more emphasis on abstinence. The use of condoms was regarded as contributing to young people engaging in sex before marriage. Traditionally men were allowed to have multiple partners so the issue of been faithful could not be practical. This resulted in the emergency of the ABY approach to stress more on abstinence and condoms only addressed with young people who are already sexually active (ibid).

#### **4.5.2 Peer Education Approach**

Peer education is the teaching or sharing of information, values and behaviours by members of similar age, status, background or interest (Mason-Jones, Flisher, & Mathews, 2011; Tolli, 2012). Peer education programs have mostly been used for work with young people based on the assumption that the person's peer group has strong influence on the way she or he behaves (Tolli, 2012). Peer educators act as credible sources of social information and at the same time serve to create and reinforce alternative pro-social norms and behaviour patterns (Perry, Kelder, & Komro, 1993).

This approach could be of use in the teaching of sex education in that young people tend to talk with their peers about most subjects including sensitive issues such as reproductive health and HIV/AIDS than they would do with their parents and teachers (Tolli, 2012). In this way the approach, assist young people to develop the knowledge, attitudes and the skills that are necessary for positive behaviour change (Mason-Jones et al., 2011). In addition, the approach promotes positive life skills such as communication and allows the participation (Tolli, 2012). Peer education, therefore, is not only an approach to disseminate health education messages but also a way to improve the involvement of young people in decisions about the planning and delivery of health education services or programs (Aggleton & Campbell, 2000). This could include the likelihood that services would be delivered in a way that meets and contribute to the development of an environment where young people feel they have the opportunity for meaningful participation in affairs that affect their lives (ibid).

On the other hand, peer education is not easy to establish and sustain. Providing peer educators with sufficient factual information to become experts in health related problems is probably impractical and would take up too much of their educational time (Mellanby, Rees, & Tripp, 2000). For this reason, other stakeholders like the parents and other people in the community should help to deliver sexual information to the young people.

#### **4.5.3 Comprehensive Sex Education Approach**

In response to the current sexual needs of the young people and the effects of the HIV/AIDS on the people of Zambia. The ministry of education introduced comprehensive sex education, which has sexuality topics integrated in different subjects. The topics are covered in environmental science, biology, religious education, civic education, home economics or

home management. The development of this approach was prompted by the data from research indicating an increase in the school dropout due to pregnancy. A curriculum scan, which tried to investigate the cause of pregnancies in young people, reviewed gaps in knowledge on sexuality education among the young people (Ministry of Education, 2013). The comprehensive sex education approach was seen to have the capacity to address the problems of information gaps by helping young people to gain knowledge, skills and positive attitudes and values, which would help them in addressing challenges concerning their sexuality (Ministry of Education, 2013). Among the new topics that will be emphasised on were gender equality in relation to sexuality and the benefits of using contraceptives.

#### **4.6 Culture Perspectives on Sexuality**

Culture can be defined as “*shared, socially learned knowledge and patterns of behaviour*” (Peoples & Bailey, 2012 as cited by (Agocha, Asencio, & Decena, 2014, p. 183). In other words, culture can be understood as a set of guidelines that influence individual and group, behaviours, beliefs, ideas, systems, practises, fields of knowledge; dynamic and shifting; and intersected by many other social dimensions, including those of age, gender, class, and sexuality (Agocha et al., 2014). In view of the above, culture provides a significant framework for understanding sexuality in that the values, beliefs and behaviours associated with sexuality of individuals also reveal a great deal about the larger beliefs and values of the society they inhabit or from which they originate (Agocha et al., 2014).

In Zambia, culture and social values promote male supremacy and sexual potency into the younger generation. In terms of sexuality, men or boys lead and control sexual relations and girls or women partners are supposed to comply (Gausset, 2001). A number of sexual practises seem to support boys and not women or girls. One of the examples is the aspect of society to allow boys to have multiple sexual partners where as in a case of girls such an act would make them lose their dignity and respect in the community (Varga, 2003). There is even a saying, which states, “*A man’s infidelity can never break a home,*” so girls can tolerate unfaithfulness because it is culturally acceptable (Nshindano & Maharaj, 2008). In most cases, girls were willing to turn a blind eye on men’s infidelity as long as they get what they want especially the girls who need financial assistance (ibid). In terms of sexuality the Zambian culture tend to favour men and this creates gender inequality. I decided to use the concept of culture in my study to try to find out how it affects the teaching of sex education in relation to sexual health of teenagers in Zambia.



## **4.7 Gender and Sexuality**

*Gender refers to the widely shared expectations and norms within a society about appropriate male and female behaviour, characteristics, and roles. A social and cultural construct differentiates women from men and defines the ways in which women and men interact with each other. Gender is a culture-specific construct –there are significant differences in what women and men can or cannot do in one culture as compared to another (Gupta, 2000, p. 1).*

It should be noted that the term gender does not replace the term sex. Sex according to the International Labour Office (ILO, 2000) refers to exclusively to biological differences between men and women that exist in all countries around the world (Ikolo, 2010). Unlike sex, gender roles are manmade and are not fixed but determined by social and cultural values that can be changed by education, government policies and media images (ibid). On the other hand, Sexuality is distinct from gender yet intimately linked to it. Sexuality is the social construction of biological drive; an individual's sexuality is defined by whom one has sex with, in what ways, why, under what circumstances, and with what outcomes (Gupta, 2000). In most cases an individual's sexuality is influenced by one's gender, age, economic status and ethnicity (ibid).

Gender is perhaps one of the most crucial factors contributing to vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases in Zambia. In terms of sexuality, the dominant gender constructions promote gender inequality and men or boys are treated superior while girls or women are taught to be submissive and to please men and defer to male authority. This has resulted in girls and women to be poorly informed about reproduction and sex while men are often expected to be sexually experienced. This un unequal power relations has contributed to women's/ girl's failure to negotiate for safer sex and has rendered them to been exposed to sexual violence, rape and sexual abuse (Warenus et al., 2006). The other aspect is that of the Zambian tradition, which demands girls to remain virgins until marriage might encourage older men to seek out young girls for sex hence putting their sexual health at a risk.

## **4.8 Summary**

In this chapter, I presented theoretical perspectives that formed my study. I started by highlighting how the sociology of childhood emerged as a critique to theories that had roots in psychology and sociology. From the sociology of childhood, I gave an overview of the

social actor and social construction in line with agency in relation to sex education of teenagers. I then looked at the rights based approach, giving an overview on the protection rights, right to health and participation rights. I also gave a highlight on ecological system theory in line with how different environments relate and interact in the teaching of sex education. Finally, I gave an overview of public health approaches, cultural aspect and gender aspect in relation to the teaching of sex education.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION 1

#### PERSPECTIVES OF YOUNG PEOPLE/PARENTS AND TEACHERS ON THE TEACHING OF SEX EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

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##### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I shall present young people's perspectives, views of parents and teachers on the teaching of sex education to teenagers in Zambia. The focus of the chapter is to highlight the sources of information on sexuality and the teaching of sex education in schools. I will start by discussing the sources of sexuality information for young people in Zambia by presenting the most prominent sources based on the research findings. I will also present views of participants on how they want sex education to be taught in school by looking at who should teach sex education, the methods to use and what topics should be covered to cater for the needs of the teenagers.

##### 5.2 Sources of Sexuality Information for Young People in Zambia

Based on the findings from the teenage participants as key informants, the most prominent sources of sexuality were the parents with mothers or female guardians seen to be more involved. Other sources were the media, friends and school.

###### 5.2.1 Parents/Guardians

According to the data collected from focus group discussions and individual interviews, one of the key sources of information on sexuality for most of the girls (aged between 14 and 18) who took part in the research were their mothers or their female guardians. Some girls said their mothers started discussing issues of sexuality at the age of six while some waited until the girls' attained puberty, which happened from the age of 12 to 14 in most of the girls. All the girls said their mothers talked to them when they attained puberty. Below are some of the messages that came from mothers and female guardians upon attaining puberty to the girls:

*My mother told me it was sin to have sex if one is not married (Joy/F/17)*

*My mother told me to make sure I do not have sex with any man. She said that now that I have attained puberty I could get pregnant (Mina/F/18)*

*My elder sister who keeps me told me if I have sex with a man, I might get HIV/AIDS (Choli/F/ 17)*

As observed from the expressions above, mothers or female guardians warned the teenage girls against engaging in premarital sex as it was considered a sin and might lead to teenage pregnancies and infection from sexually transmitted diseases. Under these conversations mothers or female guardians covered three topics and these were premarital sex and its effects, teenage pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases especially HIV/AIDS. Two more topics have been seen to be reflected in the expressions above when dangers of avoiding sex until marriage or for fear of getting sexually transmitted diseases then parents were also talking about virginity and abstinence. Apart from the topics mentioned, girls in both the individual interviews and focus group discussions said that menstruation was also discussed, as it was the main emphasis when girls attained puberty.

Coming to boys the data collected showed that most of them received instruction of sexuality from their mothers/female guardians and very few from their fathers. Boys said in most cases mothers told them to avoid sexual relations ships as it can lead to unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. In most cases, not much is discussed with the boys as culturally boys are expected to be self-reliant and learn to discover things on their own. This led to some to getting information through the media and school.

From the discussion above one may argue that the content of the information on parent-teenage conversations was delivered to the young people in terms of warnings. In addition, the information seemed to focus more on the negative outcomes of sexual intercourse and sexuality and less on what young people should know so that they completely understand how they are growing and developing sexually (DiIorio, Kelley, & Hockenberry-Eaton, 1999; Lesch & Kruger, 2005). In most cases, such messages left the young people without interactional space where they could freely ask more questions on other topics in relation to sexuality (Lesch & Kruger, 2005). The young people in the conversations below expressed lack of interaction between parents and young people:

*We feel our parents do not give much information on the topics covered but we just keep quiet and pretend all is well (Suzi/M/18)*

*We are unable to ask questions on the topics covered because we fear our parents might think we are already sexually active (Chawa/F/16)*

*We are not allowed to talk back when older people are speaking so we stay quiet and just listen (Jade/f/17)*

From the above quotes, one would argue that the young people and their parents do not have a relationship that could create a more collaborative and democratic context for conversations about potential solutions to try and address complex challenges that young people face in their sexual lives (Egan & Hawkes, 2009). One of the reasons to the lack of an open relationship between parents and their children was that traditionally, in the Zambian context when parents or someone elderly is speaking, the young people are expected to remain quiet. The young people felt that the idea of keeping quiet when elders are speaking was not good because the young people would not be able to establish a relationship with their parents, which would promote openness.

The culture of keeping quiet when elders are speaking has led to the young people to remain with unresolved questions on sexuality. One of the girls complained that parents need to understand that time has changed in that the sexual experience which parents went through is not what their children are going through now. The parent's method of giving warnings might have worked in their time because there was not much exposure on sexuality from other sources but now things have changed and the young people are able to access sexual information from sources like the media, peers and school. The girls complaint above is an example of the findings of Berthelsen and Brownlee (2005) who observed that sexuality is socially constructed so it is bound to change with place and time.

The silence between parents and children and the discussion on sexuality, which only address the negative part of it, has led to young people in Zambia to avoid talking to their parents about sexuality. The young people keep their sexual desires, sexual feelings and sexual behaviour as a secret. In this way, the sexual agency for the teenagers has been limited. The silence also makes it hard for the young people to exercise their right to participation in matters that affect them.

From the information that came from the interviews and focus group, discussions review that parents also covered aspects of sexual abuse. Some of the expressions talked about were:

*When I turned 12 years, my mother told me if I had question concerning sex I should only ask her or my sisters and not any man, not even my dad (Choli/F/17)*

*My aunt told me to be careful with any man trying to get close especially if they want to touch the breasts or kiss you (Jade/F/17)*

From the quotes above the girls were warned to stay away from men and to be careful as to where they get information on sexuality. Girls were told not to trust any man be it relatives or not especially if they get so close or want to play with their bodies. There have been reports on the *Zambian Media* of older men targeting younger girls who are assumed to be virgins and HIV/AIDS negative by having unprotected sex with them based on the myth that sleeping with a virgin will cure AIDS (Fleischman, 2002). The female parents emphasised the idea of not allowing their daughters not to get information from fathers and any male guardians and relatives. One of the parents during the interview said:

*I prefer to address sexual matters myself because girls should keep a distance from fathers and any male relatives to avoid sexual abuse. You cannot trust anyone these days prevention is better (female parent/38)*

The above expression confirms that most female parents have decided to take up the role of sex education to try to protect their children from sexual abuse. They were not comfortable with their daughters discussing sexual matters even with their own fathers due to an increase in sexual abuse cases in the *Zambian society*.

To find out why the female parents concentrated more on the teenage girls than boys when giving information on sex education. The parents responses and findings from previous research show that teenage girls experience direct reproductive consequences of unprotected sexual intercourse such as pregnancy (DiIorio et al., 1999). In addition, girls and young women are at risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases because of their social and economic dependency on men. Most of the old men with money take advantage of this and give money to the teenage girls in exchange for sexual favours. Traditional way of male dominance makes women to fail to negotiate for safer sex.

When participants were asked why they opted for other sources of information on sexuality when they already got it from the parents. Both boys and girls said that the information on sexuality from their parents was in terms of warnings. The young people said they had many questions on sexuality but were not free to ask their parents because most of them did not have a relationship with their parents, which encourages discussion. In view of this, the young people got more information on sexuality from the media, friends and school.

### 5.2.2 Media

The media serves as another source of sex education. Many types of media influence sexuality, including television, movies, newspapers=magazines, popular music, and, most recently, the internet (Sprecher, Harris, & Meyers, 2008, p. 18). From the findings sexuality information on the part of media was through books, television and phones

Books were among the sources of sexuality information to the teenagers. Most of the participants had read books on sexuality especially magazines. Most magazines had other attractive topics and pictures to attract the intention of the readers. Apart from information on sexuality, they contained pictures of fashion and popular music stars, which most teenagers in Zambia were interested in. Others were made into one story for the whole book while others contained a number of topics on sexuality. One boy shared how the book helped him get information on sexuality.

*When I realised that I was not free to ask my parents questions on sexuality I decided to buy a book entitled “Youth and Sex”. The book was very educative to me (Joe/M/18)*

The above expression is a positive way of how media can be useful in giving information to teenagers. The teenage boy said the book covered many useful topics on sexuality for teenagers. Among the topics that were in this book were Sex and the Modern World, God and Sex and Warning! Sex can seriously Damage your Health and many others. Joe said that, from the book he learnt the importance waiting to have sex at the right time that is when he got married. Another boy said he read a book entitled “No Longer a Hero”. He said the book was talking about a young male teacher who tried to be faithful by abstaining from premarital sex. After pressure from friends and school girls who enticed him by sitting carelessly in class with their thighs and pants showing. Other girls wrote love notes and put them in their exercise books where the work to be marked was written. Some visited him in the name of helping with house chores while having other intentions. The teacher tried to be strong but the pressure was too much that he later gave up and ended up having sex with so many pupils.

In the girls, school every month they were privileged to read a simple magazine called “Speak Out”, published by the Catholic Church and sold, to almost every girl at a cheaper price. All girls in this school find it interesting, they read it, and since it is sold on credit, they manage to get and pay when they have money. The magazine contain real life stories of

effects of premarital sex, abortions and motivating stories on how some young people have managed to abstain and stayed healthy despite pressure from friends or economic hardships. The magazine is made attractive by putting pictures and profiles of favourite musicians and some academic work. The education in this magazine is based on the moral aspect since the school is run based on Christianity foundations. It tries to promote Christian values on sexuality like that of abstinence until one gets married.

The teenagers also accessed sexuality information through the phones. Most of the parents buy cell phones for their children to make communication easy and to help the young people to use the internet for research when doing their school work especially home work. Some parents talked to said that at times it was challenging to help young people with homework as years have passed since they left school and some things are new. The only way they could help was to buy phones, as phones were cheaper to subscribe for internet than laptops or computers. Currently in Zambia, there is an affordable fixed subscription fee for internet connection on black berry phones. One needs to pay just once and can use the internet 24 hours for the whole month. Unfortunately, some young people have started using phones for sharing and forwarding of sexually suggestive nude or nearly nude images to their friends and lovers (Lenhart, 2009). The young people said some also downloaded sex videos from the internet and some even had relationships with people they have never met on the internet and could send nude photos to each other. The old people such as elder men and women who wanted sexual relationships with the young people send pornography to the young people as a way of enticing them into having sex. Most of these interactions happen in the homes or as the young people visit their friends. Such practices are rare in schools as carrying or using phones is not allowed in most of the Zambian schools. In most cases, once one is caught carrying a phone in school the school authority confiscates it and will never give it back to the owner.

Young people also at times accidentally come across sex videos on their elder siblings or other relative's phones. Some boys and girls narrated how they ended up finding sex videos on their elder siblings and relative's phones when they wanted to use the internet for schoolwork at times when their subscription had expired. They said they did not have the intention to watch the sex videos but when they found them, it was tempting to watch even when they tried to resist



Television was also another source of information on sexuality for teenagers. The young people who took part in the research said they all watch television from both the local stations of Zambia and the famous Digital Satellite Television (DSTV) run by a South African company. From the local stations, most of them got sex related messages from a series of episodes that are aired a few minutes before the main news known as “Love Games”. Love games are series of episodes sponsored by the United State to try to deliver messages on HIV/AIDS awareness. From Love Games the young people said they got messages of how having multiple partners can bring about the spread of HIV/AIDS and the importance of using condoms. From DStv they watched a number love movies that were South African based and most of them from Europe and Asia. From these movies, they learnt about other cultures love relationships. One of the traditional counsellors (F/55) expressed concern that watching different cultures love relationships can be beneficial to the young people so that they learn how other cultures respect women and how they negotiate for safer sex, which was not the case with most Zambian men. She said on the other hand some issues such as cohabiting seen in western movies contradict with the Christian values and the Zambian society was against it. Watching movies would make the young ones to try to copy such behaviour. Such is an example that sexuality is socially constructed, what might be accepted in one society might not be accepted in another.

From the television, no films showing the actual sexual intercourse were watched by the participants. Most of them ended on the kissing part. Findings show that girls liked watching love films than boys. One of the reasons was that they wanted to learn how to be romantic and try it out on their boyfriends and in most cases girls spent more time indoors.

### **5.2.3 Friends**

Peers are another important source of information of sexuality. As teenagers try to make sense of the meaning of sexuality, they often turn to their friends. In most cases their friends who are in romantic relationships, a dating partner also is likely to be a source of sex information (Sprecher et al., 2008). To find out what the teenagers discuss with their friends. The responses I got from some of the girls were:

*We talk about our experiences with boyfriends (Chali/F/18)*

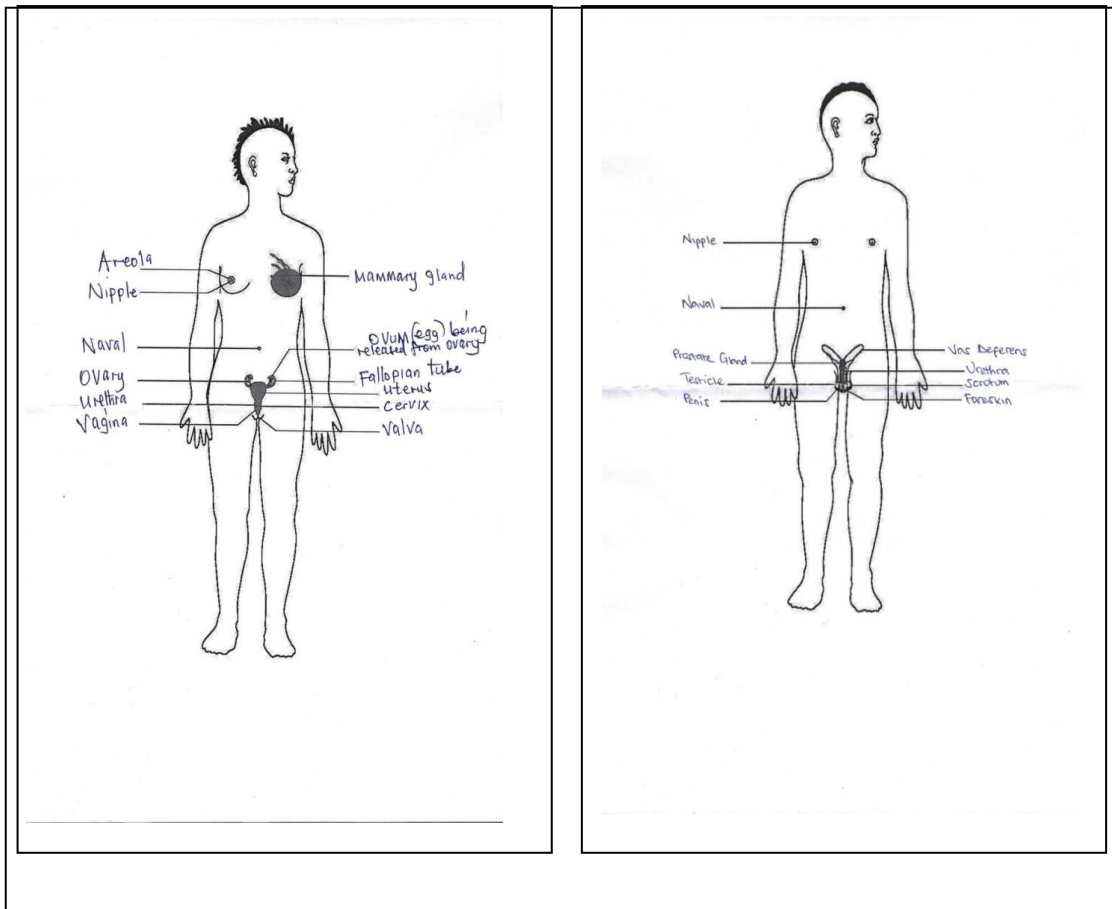
*We talk about everything about sex because friends are more open (Jade/F/17)*

Teenagers find it easy to discuss all aspects of sexuality with their friends because they are in the same age group and so they understand each other. At times, parents are too restrictive; as they would want to impose the way, they were handled in their teenage time to be the same with their children. Life experiences keep changing after a period meaning sexuality is socially constructed. The other observation was that what parents discussed with young people was not what they talked about with friends. Take for example the talk on their experiences with their boyfriends; such could not be talked about with parents in the Zambian context. According to the Zambian traditions the parents were not supposed to know the girlfriend or boyfriend to their daughter or son, the only person to be introduced to the parents was a person they intend to marry and can only be introduced when the person is ready for marriage.

#### **5.2.4 School**

All participants acknowledged that they had some form of sex education from subjects like Biology where they learnt about reproduction; in religious education, they covered topics like sex differences and for some girls in the girls' school who were taking Home economics as a subject covered topics like puberty, female reproductive system, menstruation, fertilization and pregnancy. All the participants who took part in the research covered reproduction and fertilization in Environmental Science during their junior secondary school and the same topics again in Biology at senior secondary school level for some of them as the subject was optional. The information got through science was too biological in nature with its emphasis on reproduction and did not provide adequate time to think about emotions, relationships and dilemmas of sexuality (Blake, 2013). However, the information learnt in biology and environmental science made the participants to find it easy to label the female and male reproductive system during the visual map method. The teenagers worked in groups and one pupil from each group volunteered to label the diagrams. The diagrams show the work done by boys and girls. Boys labelled the female diagram while girls labelled the male. This was done to try to let the young gain more knowledge of the parts of the opposite sex.

Figure 5. Labelled female and male reproductive organs



Source: Field Data, Ndola Zambia; June-August 2015

Apart from learning sexuality through subjects, the school provided sex education in other ways such as through school assemblies, which cater for themes that might not be covered in science or biology. First, the young people find it interesting since the information is through poems and plays. The language used is also straight forward as it comes from people of their age group. From the assemblies they got messages on sexually transmitted diseases especially HIV/AIDS and teenage pregnancies. The young people also learnt how to make choices and negation skills from these messages. From the Assembly presentations, young people are seen as social actors since they come up with the presentations and are able to express themselves freely.

Young people also learnt from each other through interactions with their friends. The young people spend most of their time in school and so they have most of their friends in school and they spent much of their time with these friends. The details of what is discussed have been discussed above on friends as sources of sex education.

### **5.3 Sex education as a subject in School**

The current teaching of sex education in most schools in Zambia is the integration of topics of sex education in other subjects like environmental science, biology, religious education, civic education and home economics. To find out the views of the research participants I asked how they want sex education to be taught in school. Some of the responses were:

*I would prefer separate lessons for sex education and not the topics covered in other subjects (Kwena /M/17)*

*There are many subjects on the timetable and if we had to address the needs of our pupils on sex education, we need to create time outside any subject (Teacher/F/45)*

The above responses and many others from the young people or pupils and teachers were that they wanted the subject to have the title of Sex Education and be allocated time on its own so that it addresses the many sexual questions teenagers have. They said the integration of sex education topics with other subjects would make teachers not to cover all the topics because they would be rushing through, as they have to finish the syllabus before the onset of examinations. Previous findings on a similar question in some Zambian schools done by Bwalya (2012) also found corresponding responses from teachers and head teachers from a number of schools. Some of the findings were that most of the subjects in which sex education was integrated except for environmental science were not compulsory to all pupils. Time allocated for each subject was limited to cover the necessary information so at times teachers tend to leave out the sexuality part, as no questions from that part might be included in the examinations. The young people, pastors, traditional counsellors, teachers and parents who took part in the research emphasised that the subject should stand alone and be compulsory so that every pupil could benefit.

#### **5.3.1 Suggested Methods to use in the Teaching of Sex Education in School**

The participants wanted to have more participation in the lessons to be conducted in sex education so that they do not only learn from the teacher but from each other as well. Some of the suggestions for methods were:

*We should have class or group discussions for each topic so that we share our experiences (shani/M/17)*

*For some topics, we want to be on our own and not with boys (Mina/F/18)*

*We want to have some combined discussions with boys on certain topics so that they tell us their experiences (Chawa/f/16)*

The above were some of the findings on what methods of teaching for sex education were suitable to cater for the young people's needs. The teenagers wanted to have more discussions on each topic so that they could share experiences and ideas as they interacted with their friends. They said they were free to share experiences and to have discussions among themselves as they were in the same age range. Some of them said they were also for the idea of watching real life movies done on certain topics so that they get the realities and experiences of people not only from Zambia but from other societies as well.

Others also said songs and drama too could be used for messages like relating to the opposite sex and sexually transmitted diseases. The young people said the language used in drama would be simple and straight forward as it was coming from their fellow students. The teachers also suggested that the use of edutainment made the young people to come together and when coming up with plays still young people would be sharing their experiences and ideas. The teachers also said edutainment make the young people to be more attentive than using other methods. Teachers added that it was a way of reaching out to a number of students at a go. Parents suggested that schools can help give the young people by planning with them to come up with themes to be covered in order to deliver messages that will help address the current sexual needs of teenagers.

### **5.3.2 Who should teach Sex Education in School**

Teenagers that took part in the research were not for a view of having all teachers involved in the teaching of sex education. One of them had to say:

*We need teachers who will only teach sex education for each given class (Chesu/M/17)*

The expression above was not only a view for Chesu, but also most of the teenagers wanted a teacher who would only teach sex education for each given class. They said if they had the same teacher for sex education and another subject it would at times disturb them. During the focus group discussion, one of the girls said:

*At times during sex education you might have shared personal or sensitive information and if that teacher came to teach another subject you might start thinking of what you shared and this might affect your performance in that subject (Sonny/F/18)*

From the expressions above, young people wanted a teacher who would only teach sex education for a given class. The teacher might teach other subjects in other classes where he or she was not teaching sex education. The young people also said they wanted teachers who would keep secrets especially on personal information the pupils share with them. They said some teachers always share information, which is supposed to be confidential with their fellow teachers in the staff room. Teachers, pastors and parents also were for the view that the school should identify teachers who are capable and let them be trained so that they are equipped with skills not only to teach sex education but how to help and attend to issues of sexuality that teenagers might face. Findings review that participants were not happy with the current situation where every teacher is expected to teach topics that are integrated in various subjects. This was not good enough as some teachers are shy to teach sex education and might skip certain topics. One of the parents said that just as they have specialised teachers for each subject they expect the same for sex education if pupils were to benefit. In addition, the parents wanted teachers who are within the school to be trained to teach the young people, as they know the young people well. These findings were similar to that of Ecker and Kirby (2009) in their article which stated the use of teachers who are part of the school system is an advantage to the young people because they would have already established relationships with the learners and were well known by the parents and the community. The young people suggested that at times other people could be called upon to teach certain topics in sex education in the school. In view of this, some of the young people said:

*If a pastor came to address us from school, it would be different from the preaching he or she does at church (Joy/F/17)*

*During preaching, you cannot ask question but if he came at school, you get a chance to ask questions (Shani/M/17)*

The teenagers said pastors could also be called upon to teach sex education. They said when pastors come in the school they are addressing people in the same age range and so it would be easy for them to ask questions away from their parents and in another environment not the church where they are expected to be holy. During focus group discussions the young people agreed that they wanted to have people from the health sector, peer educators, selected

parents from the community especially couples to teach and address issues which the young people might be facing but might not ask their parents so as to get information from all key stake holders in the community. The use of expert such as medical personnel people in sexuality education would be an opportunity for young people with personal issues concerning sexuality to get help from the community based reproductive health services (Ecker & Kirby, 2009).

### 5.3.3 Topics to Be Covered

During focus group discussions and interviews different categories of participants, suggested topics they wanted the school to cover and I put the topics in the table below.

Table 3. Summary of Suggested Topics the Participants want the School to Teach.

<b>Category of participants</b>	<b>Suggested Topics to be Taught</b>
Teenagers	Puberty, pregnancy, disadvantages of abortion, effects of premarital sex, contraceptives, menstruation, dating, defilement and sexual abuse
Parents	Puberty, hygiene, menstruation, pregnancy, contraceptives, effects of premarital sex, effects of abortion, abstinence, defilement and sexual abuse, value of virginity
Teachers	Puberty, hygiene, menstruation, pregnancy, contraceptives, circumcision, effects of abortion, abstinence, defilement and sexual abuse, abstinence
Pastors	Puberty, hygiene, sexually transmitted diseases, Value of virginity, dating, effects of premarital sex, abstinence, effects of masturbation, defilement and sexual abuse
Traditional Counsellors	Puberty, hygiene, sexually transmitted diseases, value of virginity, contraceptives, abstinence, defilement and sexual abuse, effects of premarital sex

Source: Field Data, Ndola Zambia; June-September 2015

From the suggested topics in the table above, defilement and sexual abuse as a topic to be taught was a concern of all research categories of research participants who took part in the study. This was because of the current realities of having more young people getting defiled

or raped and some reports have been on the media as disused at the beginning of the chapter. All research participants also suggested effects of premarital as it was seen as the root cause of most of the sexual problems in teenagers. Premarital sex brought about teenage pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and abortions.

The other topic that was also a concern for all participants except the church was contraceptives as parents, teachers, traditional counsellors were for a view that teenagers needed accurate and detailed information so that they make decisions weather to use contraceptives or not. The teenagers also were interested in knowing the advantages, disadvantages and side effects of each type of contraceptives.

#### **5.4 Summary**

In this chapter, I presented the findings on sources of sexuality information for teenagers and almost all got some information from their mothers or female guardians. The culture aspect of keeping quiet when elders are speaking made young people to turn to other sources such as media, friends and school was seen as the source, which could correct the information, which might be misleading, or from the media and friend. School was also important in breaking the silence about sexuality by encouraging the young people to express themselves freely and put across their needs and concerns. Findings also review that almost all stake holders who took part in the research were for the view that sex education should be taught as a subject called sex education with teachers trained and specialise in the teaching of sex education.



## CHAPTER SIX

### ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION 11

#### THE TEACHING AND INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY/ ZAMBIAN TRADITION ON SEX EDUCATION

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##### **6.1 Introduction**

In this chapter the analysis and the discussion is based on how Christianity and the Zambian traditions teach sex education to the young people. The chapter also presents how Christianity and the Zambian tradition might influence the teaching of sex education in schools and its effects in relation to sexual health of teenagers. For the sake of this chapter, Christianity in some instances will be referred to as the church.

##### **6.2 How Christianity Teaches Sex Education**

In the Traditional African Society, morals were passed on from parents to the children. Parents and other adults were models of good behaviour and a common method of teaching morality to the African child as discussed in the introduction chapter. The teaching was done by giving direct instructions whereby elders taught young people what to do or corrected them when they went wrong (Adeyinka & Ndwapi, 2002). The Christian religions had and still have a great impact on the traditional moral education of the Zambian society and other African societies (Adeyinka & Ndwapi, 2002). The acceptance of the Christian religion in Zambia was accompanied by the adoption of the Bible as an authority on moral education. The Bible contains the laws and duties of generations of believers in the “Ten Commandments” in the Old Testament (Exodus 20:1-17). Parents and churches base their teachings of sexuality on what is written in the Bible and expect schools to go in line with expectations of the values of Christianity (Adeyinka & Ndwapi, 2002).

To try to get an overview of how sex education is taught by the church, I interviewed pastors from both the Pentecostal church and the traditional church. Both pastors agreed that they teach sex education to the young people in church starting from the age of 11. Before the young people turned 11 years of age, the parents and the school are expected to take care of the teaching of sex education. From the pastors interviewed and from the young people, the first topics to be covered were general body hygiene paying more attention to the private parts especially during menstruation for girls. The topic is taught by separating the boys from

the girls to enable especially the girls to feel free to express themselves. These young people are also educated on signs of abuse and the value of virginity and abstinence from sex before marriage. They are also taught how to relate with the opposite sex without becoming sexual partners and this topic is taught by combining boys and girls so that they can have the same information. The pastors also said that at a later stage dating as a topic is also taught to the young people.

### **6.2.1 How to Start Teaching Sexuality to Children**

One of the pastors said it was the duty of parents to start the teaching of sex education as soon as children started asking questions such as “*why am I different from that one.*” The other pastor was of the opinion that parents should take interest in watching children’s programs such as Cartoons, since some of these programs may contain sexual scenes such as kissing. After that, the parents can try to find out more from the children how much they know and take it up from there. Kissing in the Zambian context is not done in public so most children do not get a chance of seeing their parents or older siblings kissing.

Apart from that, the parents can also try to find out from the children what they learn from school every day. The children will then share their experiences and the parents can reinforce what their children learnt in school. In case they encounter any contradictions especially the culture aspect on sexuality then the parents can talk to the teachers so that children get the same information and not contradicting what is taught at home and school.

### **6.2.2 The Teaching of Sex Education in School as proposed by the Church**

To find out how the church want sex education to be taught in schools, I interviewed two pastors and one of the pastors said:

*As a Christian nation, all topics related to reproduction should be taught with Christian emphasis (Pastor/M/45)*

Since the declaration of Zambia as ‘Christian nation in 1991, the Government is expected to be governed by the righteous principles of the word of God (Simuchimba, 2001). In addition, though other religions are in existence three quarters of the people in the country are Christians. Christianity therefore, has more influence on the political, economic, and in education and health aspects than other religions. From the Christian point of view, the church is important to offer guidance on what type of topics could be covered in schools.

In most of the Zambian schools, the classes begin by offering prayers in the morning before any lessons commence. This way the young people are reminded of the values and beliefs that in whatever they are to do they should put God first. As for the teaching of sex education, the church plays a role in what the teachers, parents, the learners believe in, and this has encouraged teachers to teach most of the topics without contradicting the values of Christianity. The pastors said the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation meant the teaching of sex education should be in line with what is written in the Bible on sexuality. The churches said schools should put more emphasis on the effects of premarital sex as it was seen as a major basis of most of the teenage sexual problems such as sexually transmitted diseases, teenage pregnancies and abortions.

### 6.3 The Church Stand on Premarital Sex

The pastors, teachers, traditional counsellors and parents all agreed that schools should put an emphasis on premarital sex because it was the root cause of sexual problems in teenagers. Premarital sex was the cause of sexually transmitted diseases, teenage pregnancies and illegal abortion in some young people.

#### 6.3.1 Views on the Causes of Premarital Sex from Teenagers

Teenagers gave a number of reasons as to why they young people engaged in premarital sex despite knowing its consequences. The responses are put in the table below

Table 4. The Table below Shows Reasons why Teenagers Engage in Premarital Sex

<b>Girls</b>	<b>Boys</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To prove their love for their boyfriends</li> <li>- For fear of losing their boyfriends</li> <li>- As a source income</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- For experience</li> <li>- To prove that they are men</li> <li>- Due to peer pressure</li> <li>- For popularity</li> </ul>
<b>Both Girls and Boys</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Due to the influence of alcohol</li> <li>- To practice what they watch in love movies</li> <li>- For fun</li> </ul>	

Source: Field Data, Ndola Zambia; June-August 2015

Boys said they engaged in sex for experience because in the Zambian culture boys were expected to be knowledgeable and good at sex (Walker\*, 2004). Boys had to engage into premarital sex as a way of learning and gaining experience. Learning about sexuality for boys was through their own initiative, as parents did not spend much time on sex education with them. The trend did not end in teenage hood, it went on even when men were about to get married. Not much was taught to men during pre marriage counselling as compared to women who undergo detailed marriage counselling. Boys also engaged themselves in premarital sex due to peer pressure which influences them to have girl friends. Traditionally boys are supposed to have girl friends to prove that they are real men. Those who did not have any sexual relationships and the virgins were laughed at. This prompts the boys to engage in premarital sex even when they did not intend to do so. Having sexual partners make the boys to be seen as “real men” and for some the more sexual partners they have the more they become popular. While traditionally the men are supposed to get experience through having sexual partners, Christianity encourages boys and girls to be friends without involving in any sexual act. Pastors interviewed said young people could be friends with the opposite sex and if they loved each other, they should wait for the right time to have sex. Under Christian values, abstinence was for both boys and girls and one of the chapters quoted from the Bible was 1Corinthians 6:18-19.

Some girls engage in premarital sex to prove that they love their boyfriends, as they are afraid of losing them to other girls who are willing to have sex with them without much struggle. From the focus group discussions results, show that boys show their love to girls by giving them presents on special occasions such as on their birthdays or as a surprise on any other days. Girls were sure that when they received presents it meant the boy friend loved them. The boys on the other hand assert they give presents at times to the girls to make it easier for girls to give in when they need to have sex with them. However, some do it out of love but for some boys presents do not mean love at all.

Some girls engage in premarital sex as a source of income because they were coming from poor families including some orphans and street girls who need this money for their school fees and other basic needs. Other girls wanted money because they wanted to live a fancy life of acquiring expensive clothes, phones and other luxury commodities. In most cases, the girls who needed money had to date older men, as they were the ones with money. In such arrangements, girls did not mind if the older men were married or not, what was important for them was the money they get from them and not how many partners they dated. Some boys

also date older women as a source of income though such kind of arrangements involved more girls than boys. The reason behind this was that traditionally in Zambia men proposed to girls and so it was difficult for even older women to propose to the young boys. Men also were required to initiate the sex in the relationship while women were supposed to be passive and leave everything to men.

Both boys and girls who took part in the study pointed out that sometimes they engaged in premarital sex due to the influence of alcohol (beer). Some boys and girls became excited when they get drunk and end up having sex with their boyfriends or girlfriends or whoever was available. Some boys take alcohol to gain courage to have sex with their girl friends, as they were shy to initiate sexual intercourse if they did not take alcohol. In the case of girls, some were given alcohol by their boyfriends who could not convince them to have sex in a sober state and so they had to make them drunk so that they take advantage of them. However, both girls and boys said that sometimes they just wanted to practise what they watched in sex movies and it was like part of fun on their side.

#### **6.4 Effects of Premarital Sex Due to Lack of Access to Contraceptives**

Teachers reported that premarital sex brought about sexually transmitted diseases and teenage pregnancy in young people due to non-availability of condoms or/and contraceptives. The reason given was that it was difficult for young people to access condoms and other contraceptives as such services were not available and accessible to the young people who were not married (Warenius et al., 2006). Most of the shops or pharmacists were also not willing to sell condoms and contraceptives to the young people. Selling condoms and contraceptives to young people was against the values and morals of most people in the Zambian community who expected young people to abstain from sex until they get married.

Initially, the government and/ or non-governmental organisations were supposed to provide condoms and other contraceptives in schools to sexually active young people as a way of reducing teenage pregnancies and to lessen the number of sexually transmitted diseases (L. U. Warenius et al., 2006). This could not work out as parents and other people in the society opposed to this arrangement because of their values as they expected young people to abstain from premarital sex as it considered sin. They also said it would promote sex initiation in teenagers at an early age. Parents maintained that the only way to avoid pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases was for teenagers to abstain from sex until they get married.

Schools then could to implement this programme of giving contraceptives to the young people for fear of contradicting the wish of parents and society as their reasoning was based on Christian values, which do not allow premarital sex as it is considered sin to engage in sex before marriage (Agha, Hutchinson, & Kusanthan, 2006).

#### **6.4.1 Unsafe or Illegal Abortion among Teenagers in Zambia**

Unsafe abortion has been defined by the World Health Organisation (2004) as a procedure for termination an unintended pregnancy either carried out by the person lacking the necessary skills or in an environment that does not conform to minimal medical standards, or both (Dahlbäck et al., 2010, p. 248). In order to find out the views from my teenage participants, I asked them a question as to “*what made young girls to abort their pregnancies?*” The responses given were:

*They fear the embarrassment they may cause to their parents as premarital sex is a sin (Leya/F/17)*

*They would want to continue with school without disturbance from the\baby (Sapi/F/16)*

*Some discover that their boyfriends refuse to take responsibility of the pregnancy because they are not ready to be fathers yet or are do not have any financial means to support the baby (Chesu/ M/17)*

*For fear of been punished by parents and some churches (Kwena/M/17)*

From the teenager’s responses above, findings review that teenagers engaged in abortion due to different reasons. The response from Leya (F/17) of causing embarrassment was as a result of the culture and religious teaching in Zambia which strongly prescribed sexual abstinence until marriage (Dahlbäck et al., 2010). Any sexual act before marriage was considered as a sin and parents felt embarrassed when their daughter became pregnant as society would think of them as having failed to teach their children what is expected of them. The connection of premarital sex to illegal abortion in this situation was that some young girls who engaged in premarital sex became pregnant. Once they discovered they were pregnant, they resorted to abort the pregnancy before their parents or guardians knew about it. Some girls aborted for fear of been punished by parents who at times chased them from home by either taking them to the grandparents in the village. Traditionally for some tribes in Zambia, once a girl gets

pregnant then the man who has impregnated her has to marry the girl even when the man was not ready to marry. Some churches also punished the young people involved once the girl became pregnant by deregistering both the man and woman and would not allow them to take part in any church activities. Pregnancy acted as proof for premarital sex and since it was considered as a sin and it called for punishment so that it would deter others from engaging in such acts.

The other reason given was that girls would want to continue with school without any disruptions from their babies. Zambia introduced a policy known as re-entry policy to allow girls who became pregnant to go back to school after giving birth but the policy did not apply in the girls' school. The girls' school is governed by Christian values and so any girl who gets pregnant is not allowed to continue in that school as that will encourage more girls to become pregnant. This means girls who become pregnant will have to find another school to continue with their education. This might not be easy as the subject combination might be very different with the new school. The young people in the government schools found it easy to go back to school but they faced challenges both at school and at home. In some schools, some pupils faced criticisms from their fellow pupils and this affected them emotionally. At times, their school attendance is affected in case the baby is sick or if they do not have where to leave the baby. At home, they have to deal with the expenses of finding someone to babysit and buying the formula for the baby to feed on while they are away attending school. With the above reasons, some girls opt to abort instead of facing such consequences of pregnancy.

Findings also review that some girls were forced to abort if the man responsible was not ready to take responsibility of the pregnancy because some men were too young to be fathers or have no financial means to cater for the Child's needs. Men also fear the penalty fees charged by the girl's parents once they get to know the person who has impregnated their daughter. Traditionally in Zambia when a man or boy impregnates a girl, he is charged towards what they called "damage fees." The amount to be paid is more if the man is the one who has broken the girl's virginity. Damage fees are more than a person who is marrying in a normal way would pay because it means the woman has lost her value by losing her virginity. This makes some boys who would not afford to meet the demands to force their girlfriends to abort before the parents get to know about it. In most cases once, the man responsible says he could not take responsibility girls go ahead and terminate the pregnancy even when they have the capacity to raise the child by themselves. One of the causes to such a decision was

triggered by the social-culturally constructed values and gender imbalances, which have for too long given men to be superior and girls to be passive in sexual matters (Dahlbäck et al., 2010). In this, situation girls depended on what man or the boy responsible said and could not make decisions on their own. Having got the view as to why teenagers aborted and moved further and asked why they opted for unsafe or illegal abortion instead of the legal one. One of the boys gave this response:

*I do not think the health workers will agree to do an abortion if one is not sick*  
(Suzi/M/18)

Zambia has one of the most liberal abortion laws in the Sub-Saharan Africa; abortion has been legal for health and social economic reasons since 1972 (Bradley, Sikazwe, & Healy, 1991, p. 391). Several factors however, explain the limited access to legal abortion. The Abortion Act specifies that abortion must be performed in a hospital and that three physicians, including a specialist, must sign the consent form (Koster-Oyekan, 1998, p. 1303). In addition,

*The Zambian constitution protects the right to life of an unborn child by virtue of Article 12(2). The Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1975 specifies the rigid conditions under which termination of pregnancy is permitted by law. Medical practitioners must recommend abortion in the light that continued pregnancy would risk the woman's life or threaten her physical or mental health, or there is evidence that the child would be born seriously handicapped* (Webb, 2000, p. 186).

Apart from the conditions laid down for legal abortion to take place, the government has faced resistance from the parents, church and other community stake holders to effect legal abortion . Christianity has pointed out that though abortion has become legal in Zambia under certain conditions, it can never be morally justified (Komakoma, 2003). The church has insisted that aborting the unborn child was the same as committing murder as the child had life, they quote the Bible verse on the Ten Commandments found Exodus 20:13, which says, “do not commit murder.” Based on Christian values most of the health workers opposed to conduct abortion on teenagers due to their religion and ethical reasons (Warenius et al., 2006). The non-availability of condoms and contraceptives to teenagers, difficulties in accessing legal abortion services and the resistance from parents, health workers and the church towards abortion has led to teenagers to go for illegal abortion in secrecy. The above reasons have reviewed why Suzi in the quote above said. Indeed though legal abortion was allowed in Zambia, it was difficult for young people to access the services.



## **6.5 The Church Stand on Contraceptives**

The church does not support the use of contraceptives by young people. Thus Zambia having been declared a Christian nation with its governance based on Christian values, made it hard for schools to teach and encourage the use of contraceptives by young people. Most of the people in the community opposed the teaching of contraceptives to teenagers stating that allowing the young people to use contraceptives or giving more knowledge would make teenagers to engage in premarital sex at an early age. Previous findings by Komakoma (2003) justified why the church opposed the use of contraceptives by young people. According to the church contraception and abortion were linked in a way in that while abortion was the killing of the unborn child, contraception was the prevention of conception but in cases where contraception failed there were high chances of temptation to abort the unwanted pregnancy. However, when asked if it was right for young people to use condoms. One of the pastors had this to say:

*If all goes to worse let the young people who are sexually active and cannot do without sex use condoms so that they only remain with the sin of fornication but they are protected from sexually transmitted diseases especially HIV/AIDS (Pastor/M/46)*

Due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic which has affected almost every one hence the saying “*if you are not infected you are affected.*”The church has not been left out because it has a responsibility to take care of the sick and later orphans and the widows left behind by HIV/AIDS victims. The expression above does not mean that the church supports the use of condoms but it implies that if some of the young people have completely failed to abstain then let them use condoms to help reduce on sexually transmitted diseases especially HIV/AIDS.

### **6.5.1 Views of Parents on Contraceptives**

The parents and teachers also do not support the use of contraceptives by young people, as doing so would be like allowing the young people to engage in premarital sex. The general view that came from parents was that the environment was different from the western world where young people were allowed to use contraceptives. The parents said the relationships of young people in the western World were based on love and in most cases; they had one sexual partner at a time. In the Zambian context, traditionally men were allowed to have many sexual partners, allowing the use of other contraceptives apart from the condoms

would put young people at a risk because they will be forced to engage in sex without protection knowing they will not get pregnant. Parents added that this would mean more would be infected with HIV/AIDS hence putting their sexual health at a risk. The teachers and parents said they were Christians and so they did not promote sex before marriage. However, they said the young people should be given a chance to learn about contraceptives so that they get the right information.

*I think the school can find the right people to teach the young ones on the side effects of using contraceptives at their age because if we do not tell them the truth then they will get it from their friends or the media (female parent/42)*

The views of the parents were that the young people should be given the right information from the experts through the school to help teach teenagers on advantages and disadvantages of each method of contraceptives. Findings review that parents were for a view that information was important so that the young people are aware of the dangers of using certain contraceptives at their age. In addition, one of the teachers said information on contraceptives was needed to help the young people to avoid getting wrong or inaccurate information from their peers or media. The teachers said lack of information had led teenagers to use certain contraceptives in a wrong way and were worried that if the matter was not addressed it could affect the health of the young people.

Teachers gave an example of how recently they have observed and overheard teenagers talking about how they have used the after sex contraceptives. Teachers said they have noticed that young people abuse the after sex contraception due to lack of information on it. This type of contraception was of high dosage and was not supposed to be taken on an everyday basis but it was administered on someone who has been raped to avoid pregnancy.

### **6.5.2 Views of Young People on Contraceptives**

When I asked young people if they knew anything about the after sex conceptive, some of them said they knew about it from their sisters, cousins and friends and others were using contraceptives but they were not aware of any side effects. The young people were requesting the school to consider educating them on contraceptives so that they do not abuse the use of certain types of contraceptives.

On the issue of condoms, the teenagers agreed that it was hard for the young people to get condoms both from the health centres or the shops just like the teachers said in the earlier

discussion above. The other problem was that the use of condoms brought in issues on mistrust in the teenage relationships. Similarly, Gausset (2001) in his study on AIDS and Cultural Practices in Africa :the case study of the Tonga (Zambia) reviewed that the use of condoms were associated with casual sex, and therefore with a lack of trust or with suspicion between the two partners. In most cases when someone proposes the use of condoms then both partners would be uncomfortable as it meant the partner is unfaithful or infected (ibid). Therefore, not using condoms during sexual intercourse by young people meant trust, love and that one was not a Victim of sexually transmitted diseases.

From the above findings, it has been observed that the community did not accept the use of contraceptives in young people as it was like promoting premarital sex, which was against the values of most people in the Zambian society. Condoms also were just allowed due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic but still society received it with mixed feelings. The young people too had reservations for using condoms in their sexual relationships as it brought in issues of suspicions between partners.

## **6.6 How the Zambian Tradition Teach and Influence Sex Education**

Traditionally before the coming of the missionaries, teaching of sex education in most parts of Zambia in the young ones was through play as explained in the second chapter. Boys and girls made shelters and took roles of husbands and wives and the boys lay on top of girls with their clothes on. In this act, there was no penetration but the laying on top by boys made them to resume the active role while the girls under position made them passive. When the young people attained puberty, initiation ceremonies took over the teaching of sex education in almost all girls and boys in the North-western part of Zambia. The other parts of the country did not conduct initiation ceremonies for boys but only did so for girls only. Initiation ceremonies used to cover sexuality topics like hygiene of their private parts especially for girls during menstruation period. In addition the major area which was taught was how to take care of a husband or wife sexually. In the past, such information was evitable when one attained puberty because girls used to get married as early as 14 years of age which meant just after attaining puberty then one would get married. Now such information is not needed at puberty because the young people would still be in school and do not get married early as it was in the past as already discussed in Chapter two.

In view of this the Zambian society reconsidered to conduct sexual lessons when the young people were about to get married. The current sex education before the wedding ceremony is

done for both young men and women though the period for women is longer as compared to men. For now, the teaching of sex education to teenagers has become a responsibility of parents or guardians. All the girls I interviewed did not undergo any form of initiation but were just taught the hygiene during menstruation and how to dispose off used sanitary towels both at home and in home economics.

One of the culture customs, which has continued to date in most of the Zambian women, is the labia elongation. Before girls attain puberty, they are showed how to pull their labia using some herbs or saliva to make them longer. During the olden days, young girls would be teamed up in groups by some older siblings, cousins or friends in the neighbourhood and visited the bush where they got some traditional herbs, burnt them, added Vaseline and used it to pull their labia. Now girls in Ndola and other urban towns find it hard to get access to any bush as people have built houses almost on any free land. This has resulted in them buying the herbs from the local markets where women from the rural areas come to sell the herbs to be used in urban areas. Those who cannot buy can use saliva to do the pulling. Parents do not talk about this practise and the girls are educated about it by grandparents, aunties, friends or the mother can arrange for a talk with elder women in the neighbourhood secretly without their children knowing. Traditionally girls are taught that the only way to become a “ real woman” was to have their labia pulled as a preparation for sexual pressure with their male partners (Martínez Pérez, Mubanga, Tomás Aznar, & Bagnol, 2015).

This act has gone on in both urban and rural areas though the current generation is hard to convince to do the pulling before they get married. Girls might dodge this practice but during marriage counselling the traditional counsellors will have to check the girls genitals and see if they have done the pulling to a required length usually it was 1.5 to 2 inches in the past but now they recommend they can be a bit shorter than 1.5 inches (Martínez Pérez et al., 2015). During the checking if the pulling was not done the traditional counsellors will prepare the herbs and give the pride to be to do rapid pulling and the labia must be ready to the required length before the wedding day.

One of the factors that motivated the girls to do the pulling is the working in organised groups who visit the bush in secrecy. Some girls also do the pulling because of the fear that the traditional counsellors might use pegs to pull during the pre marriage counselling, as this could be more painful and for fear of embarrassing their families that they were not raised well traditionally. Some girls did the labia pulling for fear of been teased by both their friends

and sexual partners. Girls also feared that if they did not have elongated labia their sexual partners might leave them for those who had done so. Asked if the practise was worth continuing the parents said since it had no serious health risks it should be allowed to continue, as it was in general perceived as a beneficial tradition. This makes Zambian women to be more accepted by their sexual partners, relatives and in the community (Martínez Pérez et al., 2015). It is important to note that parents do not speak of the topic of elongation to their children, as traditionally it was not accepted. Therefore, the girls got such information from their grandparents, aunts, cousins, elder sisters and friends. In this way the teaching of sex, traditionally involved other family members, neighbours and friends. The school has no say on this issue as the society has accepted it and that they do not want to contradict with the values of the Zambian tradition as it had no health risks.

Other than the traditional teaching of sex, education discussed above the Zambian culture had some influence on certain values in the Zambian society. Some of the areas which tradition has dominated in relation to sex education are male dominance, the value of virginity especially in girls and the relations between men and women or boys and girls

### **6.6.1 Male Dominance**

In Zambia, male dominance in all aspects of life is rooted in cultural and social values; these cultural and social values continue to promote male supremacy and male potency into younger generation (Elisabeth et al., 2003, p. 50). Girls are taught to be submissive and are expected to be loyal to men at an early age. Some Zambian men quote as a justification of their control over women the Bible verse which says, “Woman should submit to her husband” (Colossians 3:18) whilst the husband has to love his wife (Colossians 3:19). Now love is much more difficult to measure than obedience or submissiveness. As a result, men control their women and justify their actions based on Christianity (Kambarami, 2006). In addition, the issue of paying pride price (lobola) or damage fees charged when a man impregnates a girl/woman before marriage gives men all rights while women are stripped of freedom and rights (Kambarami, 2006). The case becomes worse if the man paid more money as some men use their money to control women. This breeds inequality and widens the gap between men and women, thereby placing women in a subordinate position (ibid). This does not only apply to those who are married but even in the boy-girl sexual relationships. Traditionally boys are supposed to be active and make decisions in their sexual relations such as when to have sex whether to use a condom or not while women remain

passive. Most of the boys I interviewed said boys used their powers and supremacy to have sex with the girls even when they did not love them while girls gave in because they were scared of losing the man. Some of the men gave presents to girls to get sexual favours as discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Some girls thought receiving presents meant love while at times men gave presents without any commitment to love but just to have sex.

From the discussion above male supremacy was difficult to end in the Zambian society in that though the school emphasised gender equality especially in terms of sexual relationships in reality it was not practical as when young people went back to their homes they still observed how married people relate and men were highly respected than women. The Christian values and traditional values were contradicting each other because even the Christian men who were supposed to preach equality as the Bible said “*everyone was equal in the eyes of God*” were still suppressing women in their homes.

### **6.6.2 The Value of Virginity for Girls**

Both the Zambian traditions and Christianity value virginity. While the church emphasise virginity in both girls and boys the traditional part is more concerned with the girls. Girls are encouraged to remain virgins until they get married. The parents too feel honoured when marring off a virgin daughter, as the bride price for a virgin girl or young woman is higher than that of a non-virgin. Though at times it is hard to tell if the girl is still a virgin so in most cases parents assume their daughter is a virgin if she does not have a child outside marriage. The value of virginity is another way of discouraging girls from engaging in premarital sex.

The traditional counsellors’ emphasis is similar to the topic on effects on premarital sex put across by mothers or female guardians to most of the girls as discussed in the previous chapter. The emphasis was put on girls than boys because girls carried the direct consequences of premarital sex such as pregnancies, which in some cases might lead to illegal abortion. I asked the girls if it was beneficial to remain a virgin until marriage. Most of the girls said, “*Virginity is dignity.*” The girls said in most cases the boys who propose love to them are not even in love, once they had sex with them they can even leave. The boys also start suspecting that maybe the girl has been having sex with other boys and this created mistrust and brought many problems in their relationship. Some of the girls who had lost their virginity before getting married faced problems future when they got married in that husbands would not trust them.

### 6.6.3 Relationship with the Opposite Sex

Traditionally in the Zambian society, a boy and girl can never be friends apart from being lovers. This belief has made most young people to keep a distance from the opposite sex. In terms of sexuality, the boys and girls do not get to know each other well before they engage in sex making men to take advantage of the girls. One boy and girl narrated how their parents reacted when they saw them with the opposite sex:

*I had a male family friend and when my dad came to know about it he told me to end the friendship before I found myself having sex with him. He asked me if I already had sex with the boy (Mwaba /F/16).*

*One day my mother was coming from work when she met me walking hand in hand with a girl who was just my friend. I came to know her when she became my dance partner at my sister's wedding. Right there my mother warned the two of us that we were too young for a sexual relationship, if there was anything going on we should stop (John M/17).*

The two quotes above review that parents did not approve of the young people having friends with the opposite sex without engaging in sexual activities. When children are young parents, do not mind if they played with the opposite sex as they were considered innocent and could not engage in any sexual activities. This was observed at the beginning of the chapter when the children would make shelters together and played imitating to be husband and wife. Parents did not stop them from doing such. However, when they attained puberty they were told to stay away from the opposite sex, as they may be tempted to engage in sex as when someone reaches puberty they start developing sexual feelings towards the opposite sex.

Teachers said the relationships affected the teaching of sex education because young people are not free with each other as they were not friends even when they were in the same class. This made teachers to separate boys from girls when teaching certain topics such as menstruation so that the girls are not shy. On the other hand, teachers and pastors were for the view that combining boys and girls during lessons were going to help to do away with some traditional beliefs especially on male dominance. This would encourage the young people to develop relationships that would let both girls and boys respect each other and participate fully in matters that affect them regardless of their sex. Teachers emphasised that, this would help girls learn to speak freely and not take away the passive role and in turn be able to learn

negotiation skills and make their own decisions on matters that concern the sexual health rather than depending on men all the time to take an active role.

## **6.8 Summary**

In this chapter, I presented the teaching of morals by parents and its connection to the Christian teaching using the Bible as the authority. I went on to discuss the teaching and influence of Christianity on sex education and findings review that Christianity wanted the schools to put more emphasis on premarital sex as it was seen as the root cause of teenage pregnancies, sexuality transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies at times led to illegal abortions. The findings review that Christianity was against the teaching and use of contraceptives by young people. I also discussed the findings on how tradition teaches and influence the teaching of sex education. From the tradition aspect, virginity for girls was highly valued in the Zambian society and girls who get married while virgins make their parents proud and the bride price is high when one is a virgin. Finally, I discussed how male dominance has affected sexuality.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION 111

#### TEACHING OF SEX EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS AS A PROMOTION OF SEXUAL HEALTH IN TEENAGERS

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##### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the findings on ways in which school can help improve sexual health in the teenagers of Zambia. It gives an overview of all participants' views on the importance of the school in the teaching of sex education. It highlights how school can have an opportunity of reaching out to many young people at a goal and how it can help do away with some harmful culture practises that could risk the health of teenagers.

##### **7.2 School as a Place Where Teenagers Spend More Time**

School was seen as a better place in the teaching of sex education as the young people spent more time in the school. It was observed that most young people spend more time at school. One of the pastors had this to say:

*School is the best place where sexuality education started by parents or/and church can be emphasised because most of the young people and spend more time at school than they do at home or church (pastor 55)*

In the two schools where data was collected, the school schedule starts from 7 hours to 16 hours from Monday to Thursday except Friday when it goes up to 14 hrs. After that, most of the pupils proceed for extra lessons as they were either in the final grade or in a year to the final grade. This made most of them to spend less time at home and besides when they reached home; they were supposed to do their individual studying especially the participants in the girls' school who were preparing for their final examinations. This meant that the young people only had nights to spend at home except for school holidays. In a year, the pupils spent 9 months in school and 3 months as holiday but even during holidays, some of the young people still went for extra lessons at school. Coming to the time spent at church, only about 2 to 4 hours was spent at church over the weekend and some young people did not attend church on a weekly basis as it was not mandatory compared to the school where failure to attend for no reason would result in punishment.

### 7.3 School as a Place to Reach Large Numbers of Teenagers

The school is an ideal environment to promote sexual health through the teaching of sex education as it offers a place to reach large numbers of the young people on regular basis from diverse social backgrounds in ways that are replicable and sustainable (Ecker & Kirby, 2009; Kirby, Laris, & Rolleri, 2005). The young people come with diverse values and beliefs on sexuality from families, peers and media. schools have a strong advantage of being able to assess students existing knowledge and understanding from a position of neutral expertise and to adapt their provision in the light of emerging needs (Halstead & Reiss, 2003). Once the young people's needs are known then they will be dealt with accordingly. Apart from reaching out to a large number of teenagers on a regular basis school was seen as a place where the girls and boys would have a chance to discuss some sexual matters together. The girls who took part in the research said it would be a chance to hear what boys think especially on issues of dating and sexual relationships. This way the young people are able to share their practical experiences and ideas on sexuality.

Meeting young people at regular basis would give chance for the teachers and the young people to establish good relations and later win their trust. This would make the young people to open up and share their personal problems on sexuality. One of the participants said:

*I personally, am free with my teachers than my parents. Am free to ask any questions and even share personal information on sexuality with some teachers, which I cannot do with my parents or my pastor (joy/F/17)*

The above quotation gives an overview that when teenagers develop a close relationship they are able to share information on sexual matters that affect them. One of the key factors to this is that school should act as non-judgemental environment. Teachers are able to recognise that young people like adults engage in risky behaviours, they need to understand the potential consequences of their actions in non-judgemental environments like the school (Haydon, 2002). All they need is to be given information about relevant preventive health care and the school can arrange for counselling or could arrange for health personnel to help the affected teenagers (ibid). In view of this currently in Zambia, pregnant girls are no longer expelled from school as it was in the past when pregnant girls would be expelled. Girls are allowed to learn while pregnant and they are given leave when they give birth and later continue with their school when they are ready. The young people also said they are able to share their

personal sexual problems with friends in the school, as they do not judge them but at times provided them with practical solutions as some were speaking from experience.

The young people said as observed in previous chapters that at times sharing their concerns, problems or asking a lot questions from parents made parents think they were sexually active and so for fear of this, they withheld their problems or questions and either shared them with friends and teachers. They also had reservation on sharing their sexual problems with pastors at church for fear of been deregistered. An example is that of the Seventh Day Adventists who withdraw membership of the people found guilty of premarital sex (Agha et al., 2006). They also deregistered anyone found pregnant outside of marriage from the congregation and are not allowed to take part in any religious activities such as partaking of holy communion (ibid).

#### **7.4 School as an Environment to Give the Right Information on Sexuality**

Teachers in the school are trained and equipped with skills to handle pupils and win their trust so that they open up and share their views. Some of the views that came from the teenagers were:

*Our parents tell us that if we have sex with men we will become pregnant or contract a sexually transmitted disease but they do not give more details (Chawa/F/16)*

*My mother told me that if I have sex with a girl I might make her pregnant or she might infect me with AIDS (Kwena/M/17)*

The school was in a better position to offer sex education which would not only warn the young people about the bad consequences of relationships between boys and girls that were related to disease and pregnancy without a hint on anything good that could come emanate from such relationships (Pattman & Chege, 2003). Previous research observed that such scare tactics to steer young people away from sex could delay in the first sexual intercourse but might work for a limited time but did not facilitate self-reflexivity and internal locus of control regarding one's own sexuality (Lesch & Kruger, 2005). Teachers said it was better to equip the young people with facts and skills on sexuality that would promote health for a lifetime than giving information that was only applicable for a short time.

In addition, pastor's views reflect that the young people should be taught how to be friendly to the opposite sex not as sexual partners but as friends. The teaching of sex education should

offer them ways of avoiding premarital sex and remain faithful until they were ready to get married. Similarly to the findings of (Bwalya, 2012), from the Christian point of view teenagers are taught that sexuality is not merely biological but must be an integral part of love by which a man and woman commit themselves totally to one another till death. This calls for respect of the other person's body and not to be used as a sexual object (ibid). Once the young people learn to respect each other they will respect the views of each other and men will not use force to have sex with the girls. This development will reduce the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases, sex then will no longer be seen as bringing pain instead of happiness especially on the side of girls as they suffered the direct consequences of premarital sex such as pregnancy (Rasing, 2003).

School was seen as having personnel trained to handle topics like contraceptives. The parents said it was challenging to go through the information on contraceptives because some parents did not have detailed information on it. Their concern was for the young people to be given the advantages and disadvantages so that they would get the right information. They said the topic was not supposed to be discussed for fear that the young ones would be tempted to start using contraceptives as they believed they were not good for young people. Parents expressed concern that if young people were denied the information on contraceptives they would still try to find the information elsewhere such as on the internet, which might not be accurate as discussed in the previous chapters. The teachers said though the church and parents were against the use of contraceptive, condoms would be very useful to minimise infections from sexually transmitted diseases in young people who were already sexually active. However, one of the pastors said young people who were already sexually active should be helped with accessing condoms so that at least they remained protected from sexually transmitted diseases though committing the sin of fornication. He said the duty of the church was to take part in caring for all human beings by not only providing spiritual education but also to take into consideration the health of the people in the church regardless of their sins committed, gender and age.

Apart from the school just giving the right information to the young people, teachers are trained with skills and are aware of information to give each age and what to hold back. One of the advantages in schools is that the classes comprise of young people who usually have the same age range with minimal difference at times. Parents may express the desire to talk about sexuality issues to their children but might struggle with what or how to discuss sexual issues for each age. From the previous discussions, most parents could only talk to the girls

when they attained puberty, which was too late at times for some young people as they might be already sexually active. For sex education programs to be effective in relation to sexual health, it is important that information was conveyed to the young people before they become sexually active and begin to be exposed to sexual and reproductive health risks (Bankole, Biddlecom, Guiella, Singh, & Zulu, 2007). The teachers gave examples of how sexual abuse and defilement cases have been on the increase in Zambia. They said if the young people were taught the signs of abuse when they are still young and were told which authority to report to when they are abused some of the cases would have been avoided, as the adults would be scared that the young people would expose them. Many cases that happen within families go unreported for fear of embarrassment especially those involving close relatives such as fathers, cousins or brothers.

## **7.5 School as a Better Place to Correct Harmful Sexual Practises**

The school is a better place to talk about certain culture practises that are harmful and can cause health risks to the young people. Some of the cultural practices like use of herbs to dry vaginas, penis enlargement by men and having multiple partners were putting the young people at a risk.

### **7.5.1 The Use of Herbs to Dry the Vagina**

One of the traditional counsellors expressed concern during the interview that there was need for schools to educate the teenagers on the consequences of the use of herbs by women to dry and tighten their vaginas. This practice was very common among some women and girls in the Zambian society and it was done in order to provide sex that is more pleasurable to men (Fleischman, 2002). Traditionally there is a belief that if a woman had a moist vagina before intercourse it meant she just had sexual intercourse with another man; it was therefore associated with “loose” behaviour (Gausset, 2001). In some African countries women insert herbs in their vagina to make it dry and tighten while in Zambia other than the ones they insert they also have products taken by mouth (Levin, 2005). The herbs taken by mouth are taken through adding them in the tea or porridge and they are commercially available at most of the local markets making it easy to access them throughout the country (ibid).

The traditional counsellors expressed concern over such practices and were for a view that schools should educate the young people on the dangers of such practises. The information was needed so that the young people would make informed decisions weather to use them or

not even when they grow up. It was important such topics are taught to both the boys and girls as such practises by women are done in secrecy without men knowing.

When the teenage girls were asked if they were aware of the use of herbs to tighten the vagina, they said they obtained such ideas from friends, elder sisters, aunties and cousins and sometimes they saw their mothers taking porridge with herbs in them. They said the school also did not address such a topic in any subjects, which had sexuality education. In addition, the teenagers said they also found the herbs at local markets and women who sell them do not ask of the age of the person who is buying so they take it as normal.

### **7.5.2 Boys/Men Having Multiple Sexual Partners**

The Zambian culture supports the belief that men should have variety and multiple sexual partners (Gupta, 2000). Though in the discussions above girls had the right to refuse having sex if they did not want, sometimes circumstances force them not to do so. Some girls come from poor families or are orphans and the only way they can get financial support is engaging in sex. Such girls are unable to refuse sex regardless of the number of sexual partners the partner might have or his non-willingness to use condoms (Fleischman, 2002). In certain cases even girls who were not vulnerable in any way accepted the belief of men having multiple sexual partners as normal as it was accepted by the society they lived in and never seemed to mind. This culture belief has put both boys and girls at a risk because if one of the partners is infected with the sexually transmitted disease then all the other partners will be infected. Young people are more at risk of being infected as it was discussed above that it was hard for them to obtain condoms. This culture belief put men at a greater risk as at times they failed to satisfy their multiple partners sexually so they resorted to acts like enlarging their manhood to try to improve their sexual performance.

### **7.5.3 Penis Enlargement**

Recently there has been a tendency for men to use herbs to enlarge their manhood in order to satisfy the partners or to be seen as real men. In Zambia, traditional doctors who are involved in giving people the herbs to enlarge their manhood advertise their herbs in the local newspapers. The traditional counsellors condemned this act and said though there was no scientific proof if these herbs worked. Schools would do better to explain to the young people the disadvantages of such acts. They said once these young men get used to such they will become addicted and will always want to use them all the time. At times, such actions make

men to be too sexually active which was not good for their health, as they will over work themselves.

Based on the above findings, one would argue that the teaching of sex education in Zambia involves many stakeholders. The parents cannot manage alone they turn to the school and the school does not teach certain cultural practices such as labia elongation. Though culture has influence on certain topics, it was depends on the school to correct those that are harmful.

The above summary of participants' views on how sex education can promote sexual health in teenagers is a clear indication that sex education can provide young people with age-appropriate, culturally relevant and scientifically accurate information (Ecker & Kirby, 2009). It includes structured opportunities for young people to explore their attitudes and values, and to practise the skills they will need to be able to make informed decisions about their sexual lives (Ecker & Kirby, 2009, p. 2). In addition, sex education should promote teenage dialogue about sexual values with parents, and in religious, cultural and social organisations (Shtarkshall et al., 2007).

## **7.6 Summary**

In this chapter, I presented the advantages of the school in taking up the teaching of sex education. In general, the chapter highlighted how the school can reach out to many pupils as they spent their time in school than home. The chapter also highlighted how school can help teach subjects, which the parents are not able to give detailed information. The chapter also highlighted the role of the school to end harmful traditional practices such as tightening of the vagina, penis enlargement.





## CHAPTER EIGHT

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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#### 8.1 Introduction

This chapter gives an outline of the main findings of the research that was done to explore the perspectives of sex education in relation to sexual health of teenagers in Zambia. The research was an attempt to explore the views of teenagers, parents and teachers and the influence of Christianity and Zambian tradition on the teaching of sex education in schools and its relation to sexual health of teenagers of Zambia. The following section briefly summaries the key findings of the research.

#### 8.2 Sexuality Information for Teenagers

In Zambia, sex education is not a simple subject, which the young people could engage in with their parents. The findings review that mothers / female guardians were more involved in the teaching of sex education to the young people at home than fathers/ male guardians. Non-involvement of fathers/ male guardians was due to that traditionally, it was considered taboo for men to engage in discussions on sexuality with their daughters especially when the girls reached puberty. The other reason was that fathers or men were responsible for productive activities outside the home while women are expected to be responsible for reproductive and productive activities within the home (Gupta, 2000).

Findings review that in most cases the sexual information that came from mothers was delivered to the young ones in form of warnings and this led to young people to avoid asking questions or engaging in discussions. Asking many questions made parents think the young people were already sexually active. Findings also show that parents concentrated more on the girls than boys reasons been that girls suffered direct premarital sex consequences such as teenage pregnancies and illegal abortion. In addition, the girls were more vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases due to older men taking advantage of them to offer money for sexual favours and the current increase in sexual abuse cases involving both strangers and close family members. From the parents, topics such as puberty, teenage pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and signs of sexual abuse were taught. Because of the reasons above, most young people found friends and the media as alternative sources for more information on sexuality. Teenagers found friends and the media to be non-judgemental as

they were free to access any information on sexuality. School was another source for information on sexuality and it is discussed in detail in the paragraph that follows.

### **8.3 Sex Education in School**

One of the research questions in the study was to find out the views of teenagers, parents and teachers on the teaching of sex education in schools. Findings review that teenagers, parents and teachers were not comfortable with the current teaching of sex education through integration of sexuality topics in other subjects, as this did not benefit all teenagers in the school. Some of the reasons given by the participants were that not much time would be spent on sex related topics, as they were not examined so some teachers rushed through, skipped some sexuality topics, and concentrated on other topics that were examinable (Hilton, 2001). The other reason was that some teachers lacked interest and were not comfortable to handle certain sexual topics. Furthermore, subjects which had sex education topics such as biology, civic education, religious education and home economics were not compulsory subjects which could be taken by all the pupils, this meant only a few pupils benefited. For these reasons the teenagers, teachers and parents were for a view that sex education should be compulsory so that every pupil benefit and that it should be given its own time allocation and be a subject on its own called sex education.

Findings also reveal that in order for sex education to be effective teachers for sex education should be trained and if possible, they should only teach sex education and not other subjects for each given class. The reason behind was that this was a way of avoiding young people who might have shared personal sexual information during a sex education lesson to feel uncomfortable when they meet the same teacher in another subject as this could affect their performance in school. Once trained teachers would not only teach but also offer counselling to the young people who needs help to handle their sexual problems such as sexual abuse cases. The sexual abuse cases by both among close family members and strangers with virgin girls been the target were currently on the increase in Zambia due to the traditional belief that if the HIV/AIDS infected men slept with a virgin they would be cured from the disease (Rasing, 2003). Apart from the teaching and counselling from teachers, pupils should be more involved in the lessons. This can be achieved by allowing more discussions in small groups so that the young people share personal sexual information among themselves.

From the findings outlined above one can argue that the key to delivering and teaching comprehensive sex education was good communication between the young people and adults

such as parents and teachers and among themselves. This will encourage the right to participation by the young people while the counselling part will be promoting the right to protection especially from sexual abuse.

#### **8.4 Sex Education in Schools as a Promotion of Sexual Health of Teenagers**

Findings review that schools had better opportunities to promote sexual health in so many ways. To start with, teachers could use the opportunity of having the pupils for longer hours in school than home or church. Young people might not attend church on a weekly basis, as missing church was not questionable as it was the case with school where attendance was monitored. Churches might not run sexuality topics often as they had other programmes to attend to within the limited time. Due to limited time and sometimes a big number in the church, pastors could not manage to attend to individual personal problems of the young people in the church. Apart from limited time at church young people at times were not free to share personal problems to do with sexuality, as they feared that the pastors would judge them for committing sin.

Secondly, the school might continue with what the parents had started teaching the young ones as parents might find some topics challenging especially when young people were getting older. The example given was that of contraceptives, which needed detailed and expert information on the different types of contraceptives. This would be better handled in schools in that teachers who are trained in sex education have more information to cover contraceptives. Schools also had the capacity to call upon experts from the health department to offer expert information when teachers felt their information was not adequate. Still on contraceptives, parents found it hard to discuss condoms and they considered it as embarrassing to talk about them to their children.

School was the right place to correct certain harmful cultural practices. The findings review that most of the Zambian traditions promoted male supremacy. School could correct this by promoting gender equality so that the girls can also have a say in sexual matters which will enable them negotiate for safer sex. The school could also correct the harmful cultural practices done by men or boys such as penis enlargement in view of satisfying sexual partners and having multiple sexual partners in the view of gaining experience. The other harmful practice was the use of herbs by women to tighten their vaginas to remain like virgins, as a way of pleasing men was common. The other aspect is the current practise of HIV/AIDS infected men sleeping with virgin girls in the belief of being cured from the

disease. Findings show that the school can correct such practices that given evidence based information on sexuality through the comprehensive sex approach.

### **8.5 Influence of Christianity and Zambian Cultural Traditions on the Teaching of Sex in Schools**

One of the research questions was to find out how Christianity and Zambian traditions influence the teaching of sex education in schools. Findings indicate that on some topics both Christianity and the Zambian traditions had similar influence to some extent while on others it was different. One of the topics, which were similar, was the issue of contraceptives, both Christianity and Zambian tradition did not encourage the use of contraceptives to the young people as doing so was said to encourage teenagers to engage in premarital sex. This has made it difficult for schools to teach young people on contraceptives. This issue of contraceptives has not only ended up at school level but has involved the community in that the health sector does not encourage giving contraceptives to the young people so they do not offer such services to the Zambian teenagers (Warenus et al., 2006). In addition, the pharmaceuticals and shops are also not willing to sell contraceptives such as condoms to the young people.

The findings also review that both Christianity and Zambian tradition put emphasis on the importance virginity or abstinence from premarital sex until marriage as a way of protecting the young people from sexually transmitted diseases, avoid pregnancy and engaging in illegal abortions. The difference however, is that tradition put more emphasis on the girls to remain virgins while boys encouraged to engage in sex as a way of experience and sex was considered a need for boys or men while Christianity emphasised virginity for both boys and girls. The contradiction is that while the Zambian tradition allows boys to engage in sex, society does not allow them to access condoms to protect them from sexually transmitted diseases. Traditionally the issue of virginity is gendered and has more value to the girls as friends tease boys who are virgins and society look down on men who are sexually inexperienced.

### **8.6 Conclusion**

In Zambia, the teaching of sex education has concentrated much on HIV/AIDS and has put more emphasis on abstinence as a key to sexual health. In a way the teaching of sex education has only been beneficial to the teenagers who are not sexually active leaving out those who

are already sexually active. In most cases, even services like the provision of contraceptives such as condoms are not easily available to the young people who are sexually active due to moral and culture values that consider giving contraceptives to teenagers would encourage them to engage in sex. On the other hand though abstinence has been highly emphasised, traditionally this has only been for girls who are expected to remain virgins until marriage while society expected boys to be sexually knowledgeable and experienced before marriage. This expectation for boys has led some to have multiple sexual partners in a view of gaining experience. Therefore, school has been identified as the only environment to create harmony by providing sex education that will provide evidence based information, appropriate for each age, address harmful traditional sexual practices and gender inequalities in sexual issues using the relationships established between teachers and pupils as the young people spend more time in school than home. Creation of such an environment will call for trained teachers in sex education who will not only teach but offer counselling to those who will be in need of it. School also can invite other people like health personnel and key community people such as pastors and traditional counsellors who can help deliver expert information aimed at addressing the sexual needs and find solutions to some of sexual problems faced by young people.

## **8.7 Recommendations**

In order for the teaching of sex education in schools help improve the sexual health of teenagers in Zambia; the following policy and content recommendations are important

### **8.7.1 Policy Recommendations**

- Government should make sure that the teachers who are intended to teach sex education are trained so that they are aware of how to handle the teenager's individual needs in sexuality.
- Government should involve the young people in the planning of the curriculum for sex education so that they get to know the needs of the young people in issues concerning sex education.
- Schools should introduce compulsory sex education classes from the age of seven so that the children or young people get the facts before they become sexually active

### **8.7.2 Content Recommendations**

- Schools should sensitise the community to do away with culture practises that put the young people at a high risk of contracting sexual transmitted diseases.
- Schools should emphasise the importance of gender equality in the teaching of sex education to the young people so that they grow up to respect each other and do away with the culture of male dominance in issues of sexuality.

### **8.8 Further Study**

The aim of this study was to explore the perspectives of various stage holders on the role of sex education to promote sexual health of teenagers in Zambia. As the findings indicate, certain aspects were beyond the focus of this study and would need further investigation. The studies should be on:

- Involvement of male parents in the teaching of sex education
- Explore culture practices that affect the health of teenagers

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1: Informed Consent**

#### **Teenagers Informed Consent Form**

My name is Brenda Simalimbu, a student in childhood studies at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) where am learning about the welfare of children.

I would like to learn from you on what you think the teaching of sex education in relation to sexual health of teenagers in Zambia through asking you questions. Some questions will be discussed and others will be answered in groups (Focus group discussions) while others will be asked individually on a one to one discussion (interviews).

You do not need to tell me anything you do not want me to know and when am asking questions you can tell me when to stop at any time you feel like you do not want to continue or when you are not comfortable with the question I have asked. In all the questions am going to ask you there are no wrong or right answers because you know better than I do.

I promise that everything you will tell me or say will remain between us and I urge you to also do the same. Your participation in this study is free, you will not be paid or receive anything in return because am doing this work for academic purpose.

No penalty will be given for refusal to participate and even after signing the form, you are free to stop at any time you feel like you cannot continue. If you wish to take part in the study, please sign this form

**Signature .....**

**Signature of the Researcher .....**

#### **Informed Consent Form for Parents/Guardian**

#### **Project Title: Perspectives on Sex Education in Relation to Sexual Health of Teenagers in Zambia**

My name is Brenda Simalimbu, a student in childhood studies at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) where am learning about the welfare of children.

This study will take approximately 3 months. During this time, teenagers will participate in focus group and individual one to one interviews. The aim of my study is to generate

information and explore how the teaching of sex education can help promote sexual health of teenagers in Zambia.

There are no known risks associated with this study and I guarantee the privacy and confidentiality of the teenagers throughout this study. No teenagers' identity will be revealed in any publications resulting from this study to ensure that the child's right to privacy is respected.

There are no immediate benefits for teenager's participation in this study. However, this study can be of help to create awareness to the government through the curriculum development centre on the importance of sex education in the promotion of teenage sexual health.

Participation is voluntary, therefore, with your permission and the teenager's willingness, your child is free to participate in the study but can still withdraw at a time when she or he wish to discontinue without stating the reasons. The teenagers has the right not to answer questions she or he is not comfortable with and can ask me to stop asking questions when he or she feels I cannot continue asking questions. Refusal to participate will not result in any penalty.

Please sign this form to acknowledge that you have read and understood the conditions and that you agree to allow your child to participate in this study.

**Signature of the parent/guardian.....**

**Signature of the researcher.....**

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Interview Guide/Focus Group Discussion for Children (Teenagers)**

**Thank you for your support and sparing your precious time to try to answer these questions on the perspectives on sex education in relation to sexual health of teenagers in Zambia.**

#### **General Information**

Age

Gender

Your position in the family

Number of boys in the family

Number of girls in the family

Parent's occupation

Tribe/Province of your origin or parent's origin

#### **Sources of Information on Sexuality**

- How did you learn about sexuality?
- What information did you get from those sources?
- Do you discuss sexual matters with your parents? If yes what issues? If no why not?
- Which aspect of sexuality is easy to talk about? With whom and why?

#### **Perspectives of Children on the Teaching of Sex Education in Schools**

- Why do people have sexual intercourse?
- What topics in relation to reproductive health are taught in school? In which subjects are these covered?
- What kind of topics do you want to be taught in sex education?
- Why do you want to be taught those topics?
- What kind of topics should not be taught and why?
- How do you want sex education to be taught in schools?
- Who should teach sex education in schools?
- What do they do when one attains puberty in your tribe?

## **Sex Education as a Promotion of Sexual Health in Teenagers**

- What do you think are the dangers of getting pregnant when one is still young?
- How can teenagers avoid pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases?
- What are the dangers of abortion in teenagers?
- How can the teaching of sex education help teenagers to stay healthy?

**Thank you for your responses and time spent during the interview.**

## **Interview Guide for Parents/ Teachers**

**Thank you for your support and sparing your precious time to try to answer these questions on perspectives on sex education in relation to sexual health of teenagers in Zambia.**

### **General Information**

Age

Gender

Occupation

Tribe

Province of origin

Number of children (just for parents)

Number of boys

Number of girls

Birth order and ages for your children

### **Views of Parents on the Teaching of Sex Education in Schools**

- Do you talk about sex with your children/ pupils?
- Do you perform any traditional ceremonies when children attain puberty? If yes or no give reasons.
- Are you able to discuss sexual matters with both boy and girl children and why?
- What do you think is the right time to talk about sexuality to children?
- Who is the right person to teach sex education to the teenagers or children?
- Do you think it is right for schools to offer sex education and why?
- Can the teaching of sex education at an early age encourage teenagers to have sex?

- Why do you think sex education is important?
- What topics do you want the children to be taught and why?
- Which topics do you think children should not be taught and why?

### **Sex Education as a Promotion of Sexual Health in Teenagers**

- What help can be offered to teenagers to avoid teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases?
- How can the teaching of sex Education in schools promote sexual health in teenagers?

**Thank you for your responses and time spent during the interview.**

### **Interview Guide for Pastors/ Traditional Counsellors**

**Thank you for your support and sparing your precious time to try and answer these questions on the perspectives on sex education in relation to sexual health of teenagers in Zambia.**

### **General Information**

Age

Gender

### **How Sex Education is Taught to Teenagers**

- Do you talk about sex with the teenagers?
- What do you discuss with them?
- What do you think is the right time to talk about sexuality to children?
- Who is the right person to teach sex education to the teenagers or children?

### **How Christianity/Zambian Traditions Influence the Teaching of Sex Education in Schools**

- When does discussion about sex education start?
- Is there any ceremony, what does the practice involve? Is it still there? If not why?
- What topics do you want the children to be taught and why?
- Which topics do you think children should not be taught and why?
- When can sex education be taught in schools?

- How should sex education be taught in schools?
- Can the teaching of sex education in schools encourage teenagers to have sex?
- What measures have you put in place to help the teaching of sex education in schools

### **Sex Education as a Promotion of Sexual Health in Teenagers**

- What help can be offered to teenagers to avoid teenage pregnancies?
- How can the teaching of sex Education in schools promote sexual health in teenagers?

**Thank you for your responses and time spent during the interview.**

## Appendix 3: Letter of Introduction

To whom it may concern

Our consultant:  
Rannveig Singaas  
Senior Executive Officer  
Telephone no.: +4773596357  
E-mail: rannveig.singaas@svt.ntnu.no

Dated:  
2015-04-22

Our ref.:

Your letter dated:

Your ref.:

### LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

We hereby confirm that Brenda Simalimbu, born 10 June 1974, is a student in the programme *Master of Philosophy in Childhood Studies* at Norwegian Centre for Child Research, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway. She will undertake her fieldwork and data collection from June 10<sup>th</sup> to September 25<sup>th</sup> 2015, on the topic:

*How Can the Teaching of Sex Education in Schools Promote  
Sexual Health and Well being of Children in Zambia?*

We would be grateful for any assistance given to her during this process. This includes granting interviews, assisting her in making appointments, handing out materials and making information accessible to her. We ensure that the information collected is treated confidentially, and that the fieldwork bears no costs on the institutions and persons visited.

Yours sincerely,


  
Tatek Abebe

Associate Professor and Supervisor



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Rannveig Singaas  
Senior Executive Officer

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