

## DECLARATION

I, **SIMWINGA JOSEPHINE MAYAKA** do hereby declare that this piece of work is my own, and that all the work of other persons has been duly acknowledged, and that this work has not been previously presented at this University and indeed any other University for similar purposes.

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**APPROVAL**

This dissertation of SIMWINGA JOSEPHINE MAYAKA is approved as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master in Gender Studies by the University of Zambia.

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## ABSTRACT

HIV and AIDS is having a widespread impact on many parts of African society Zambia inclusive. Zambia, in southern Africa, has one of the world's most devastating HIV and AIDS epidemics. More than one in every seven adults in the country is living with HIV and life expectancy has fallen to just 39 years. In 2009, nearly 83,000 adults were newly infected with HIV, which is about 200 new infections each day (UNAIDS 2008). In sub-Saharan Africa, the UNAIDS (2006) reports that around 59% of those living with HIV are females. This is attributed to the legal, social and economic disadvantage faced by women in most societies. The purpose of this study was therefore to determine the possibility of using initiation ceremonies as entry points in the fight against HIV and AIDS.

The sample consisted of two groups of subjects. The first group comprised women who initiate girls (banacimbusa/Alangizi) and the second group was made up of girls/women who had undergone initiation rites in the recent five years. There were 100 respondents, 50 of whom were initiators or women who were involved in the initiation rites and the other 50 were women or girls who had gone through initiation.

Purposeful sampling was initially used to identify girls and women (initiators and the initiates) who had experienced initiation. Then snowball sampling was used to identify other participants with similar characteristics to the first group. Data was collected from the initiators and the initiated girls using two different questionnaires (see appendix I and II). Structured, semi structured and open ended interviews were used in order to cater for the diversity of participants. The researcher also spent time with the girls and women under study during initiation ceremonies and made observations of what was taught in initiation rites. Secondary data was collected from library materials such as text books, reports including journals on initiation ceremonies in traditional societies and even modern social set up.

The results showed that initiation ceremonies are widely practiced in Zambia and they are used predominantly to teach about sex and sexuality to girls attaining puberty and young women about to enter marriage. Little or no information on HIV and AIDS is given during initiation rites. However there is a lot of potential for such messages to be passed on to the initiates because the curriculum of initiation rites can easily be adapted to include awareness and HIV prevention.

There is a lot of potential inherent in initiation ceremonies and rites that can be tapped in the awareness campaign on HIV and AIDS. Initiation rites contain elements that can be used to empower and liberate women especially with regard to HIV and AIDS. They are the tools for acquisition, learning of habit, based on harmony with the spouse, parents, in-laws, and older people in general and mastering of conflict resolution mechanisms. Initiation rites equip maturing individuals with a vast body of special attributes that a woman is supposed to know and deal with through out her life. Therefore they can be adapted and should be incorporated in awareness and prevention programs for HIV and AIDS.

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated in loving memory of my late father Charles Amon Mayaka and late special friends Mostie Kalabo and Dr. Isaac Malasha who inspired me to study this topic.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINATION OF TERMS**

**AIDS** - Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

**ALANGIZI** -refers to Traditional counselors

**HIV** - Human Immunodeficiency Virus

**INITIATION** -This is a process of learning about and entering into a new social status.

**MOOYE**- A girl who is being initiated (Tonga).

**NGO** – Non Governmental Organization

**NOVICE** - refers to a girl who is trained to become a woman or the girl who is being initiated, for example a mooye is a novice.

**RITUAL**- A set of fixed actions performed regularly as part of an initiation ceremony.

**YWCA** – Young Women Christian Association

**ZNTCA** – Zambia National Traditional Counselor’s Association

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 General**

This Chapter introduces the investigation into ways of how initiation ceremonies for girls and young women could be used as tools of HIV and AIDS prevention. It briefly focuses on the HIV situation in Zambia and presents the government's preventive efforts. This chapter also introduces the topic at hand the role initiation ceremonies can play in the fight against HIV and AIDS. Thereafter, the chapter presents the problem under investigation, the rationale, the aim and objectives of the study as well as the specific questions that the study sought to answer. The chapter also gives a brief description of the study methodology which is discussed in detail in Chapter Three. The next part of the chapter outlines of some of the limitations of the study and defines the terms of operation. This is followed by a conclusion which summarizes the issues dealt with in the chapter.

#### **1.1 Background**

HIV and AIDS are having widespread impact on many parts of African society Zambia inclusive. In southern Africa, Zambia has one of the world's most devastating HIV and AIDS epidemics. More than one in every seven adults in the country is living with HIV and life expectancy at birth has fallen to just 42 years (UNAIDS 2008). In 2009, nearly 83,000 adults were newly infected with HIV, which is about 200 new infections each day (Ibid).

Some of the major effects of the AIDS epidemic include an increase in the number of orphans who in most cases turn into urban street kids. AIDS is also erasing decades of progress made in extending life expectancy in that millions of adults are dying from the

epidemic while they are still young, or in early middle age. In other cases, people have to provide AIDS care at home for sick relatives, reducing their capacity to earn money for their families. Many of those dying from AIDS have surviving partners who are themselves infected and in need of care.

There is growing feminization of HIV and AIDS in that HIV has taken a gender dimension. This is evidenced by the figures of women infected compared to men (UNAIDS 2008). In many parts of Africa, as elsewhere in the world, the AIDS epidemic is aggravated by social and economic inequalities between men and women. Women and girls commonly face discrimination in terms of access to education, employment, credit, health care, land and inheritance (Ibid). These factors can all put women in a position where they are particularly vulnerable to HIV infection. In sub-Saharan Africa, UNAIDS (2006) reports that around 59% of those living with HIV are females. The report adds that the legal, social and economic disadvantage faced by women in most societies greatly increases their vulnerability. The report concludes that information to protect women against these disadvantages is cardinal and this should be done using any means of education available.

The increase in the pandemic has also been linked to the breakdown of family patterns, gender relations, traditions, moral values and behavioral patterns, caused by a shift of people from rural to urban environments (Baylies: 2000). This is further supported by Richards (1956:137), who explains that there is a very obvious break down of the old family organization and marriage institutions wherever migratory labour occurs.

In the fight against HIV, prevention is the key and specific interest lies in the change of behavior which is governed by attitude and levels of knowledge. Special concern and analysis of culture must be given high priority in the HIV prevention program if the fight against the pandemic has to be comprehensive. This is important because sexual practices and behavior are culturally imposed in some societies (Gregson, 1994). This imposition of sexual practices is mainly done through initiation ceremonies.

African female initiation ceremonies are rites of passage for girls entering womanhood, and in the olden days were usually a public announcement of the girls' eligibility for marriage. According to a CSO (2006) report on gender violence, initiation ceremonies could be understood as transition ceremonies, involved in passing from one state or status to another. They usually symbolize transition from childhood to adulthood. The ceremonies involve giving special instructions to the person being initiated.

According to Baylies (2000), initiation rites have educational purposes. A very large number of rites do indeed contain periods of instruction and/or tests of competence for the initiate, and this fact certainly lends support to the idea that the purpose of these ceremonies is educational. Further, Brown (1963:23) agrees that during the initiation ceremonies, the girls being initiated are taught issues that are important in life. These lessons are seen to help in development and prevention of certain diseases like sexually transmitted infections. For example a girl who is being initiated is taught how to ensure personal hygiene during her menstrual periods and how to live healthy during pregnancies. In line with this, Rasing (2001:137) states that girls are taught how to take care of the period materials and are

warned that it is dangerous for others to see them. These lessons can help in the prevention of diseases that are caused by lack of hygiene and those spread through contaminated body fluids such as blood.

Tuupainen (1968), states that initiation rites for girls are one of the most important though oldest practices in most ceremonies. In it, sex becomes socialized and sacralised. The rite has proved to be much more viable, although it has undergone modification under modern influence (Europeanization). It is celebrated in various forms but the message in most cases is uniform and that is to teach about sexuality. Despite the influence of colonial power and Christianity, initiation rites are still performed today (Rasing, 1995). This shows that despite the rites being old, people still see them to be very important.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Most of women and girls become vulnerable to infection when they become sexually active and when they get married because they lack the power to negotiate for safe sexual practices. Many ethnic groups in Zambia practice initiation ceremonies for girls and young women who have reached puberty and are about to get married and many girls learn about sex through traditional initiation ceremonies. Since the use of initiation ceremonies for girls and young women has remained an integral practice in the Zambian society, substantial research has been carried out on this subject, however very little (if any) research has been conducted to determine if initiation ceremonies for girls/women can be used as entry points in the fight against HIV and AIDS. The intention of this study was to determine the

possibility of using initiation ceremonies to teach young women and girls' ways in which they can use to protect themselves from, and minimize the transmission and spread of HIV and AIDS. The problem under investigation, therefore, is we do not know whether or not initiation ceremonies can be used as an entry point in the fight against HIV and AIDS. Stated as a question the problem is: Can initiation ceremonies for girls and young women be used as an entry point to pass on prevention messages for HIV and AIDS?

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study is to determine the possibility of using initiation ceremonies as entry points in the fight against HIV and AIDS.

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

#### **1.4.1 General Objective**

The general objective of this study is to examine the possibility of using initiation ceremonies as an entry point in the prevention of HIV and AIDS in Zambia.

#### **1.4.2 Specific Objectives**

The following are the specific objectives of the study:

- To assess if HIV and AIDS information is taught in initiation ceremonies.
- To establish the participants views on existing content in initiation ceremonies
- To determine participants views on how HIV and AIDS information can be incorporated in initiation ceremonies.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

1. What are initiation ceremonies and how can they be used as an entry point in the prevention of HIV and AIDS
2. What are participants' views on the existing content in initiation ceremonies?
3. How can HIV and AIDS information be incorporated in initiation ceremonies?

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

Globally, where studies have been carried out on initiation ceremonies, the focus has mainly been on HIV transmission, minimal attention has been paid to the potential that initiation ceremonies can play in prevention. Generally in the Zambian society the significance of initiation ceremonies as method of passing on cultural information is acknowledged and appreciated, the specific roles performed by initiation ceremonies in the fight against HIV has not yet been systematically investigated and documented. While there is substantial literature on initiation ceremonies for girls and women getting into marriage, rarely are studies conducted to simultaneously explore ways of using initiation ceremonies for girls as avenues for HIV and AIDS prevention. It was expected that the present study would yield valuable information in society and provide some insight of how initiation ceremonies can be tapped into, to convey messages on HIV prevention to girls and women in Zambia.

It is hoped that gender activists, health specialists, policy makers, educationists and other development workers will benefit from findings of this study and develop more responsive

programs targeting initiation ceremonies as avenues of reducing the impact of HIV and AIDS on women and girls. The study also hopes to offer to the scholarly world information on the initiation ceremonies and HIV and AIDS prevention in the context of the Zambian society as well as to contribute new knowledge concerning the phenomenon of cultural prevention in Africa and the world at large.

### **1.7 Limitations of the study**

The study is confined to female initiates only because it was not possible for the researcher to access male initiates due to inadequate finances. It is hoped that another research will be conducted to look at this. In this regard, the findings are to be interpreted within the confines of female initiation rites.

Due to the secret nature of what is taught in initiation ceremonies, it is not everyone who is allowed to witness the actual rites performances. This is for fear that information can be diverged to people who have not undergone initiation ceremonies and since there is no proof that one has undergone initiation ceremonies in their lives, it is not easy for one to gain their confidence except when the tutors feel fit for one to observe their rites. After assuring them they allowed the researcher on condition that there would be no tape recording or photographing. This posed a big challenge to the researcher as she was not allowed to use a tape recorder to record her observations in the rites. However, the researcher took notes on everything that was done and said as a way of recording the observations as a way of enhancing the research findings.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 General**

Chapter two provides information on related studies conducted on initiation ceremonies. It begins by outlining some studies done on initiation ceremonies in other parts of the world before proceeding to look at other related studies done in Africa and in Zambia. The present chapter presents an account of studies which have been done elsewhere but are related to initiation ceremonies and relevant to the current study in order to enrich the present investigation, provide justification and put it within the context of those similar studies. By reviewing relevant literature the study also learns what aspects of the area of interest have already been done, where, when and with whom they were done and what findings were made. This chapter also alerts the researcher about what is already known, provides ideas about existing knowledge gaps in order to avoid repetition and helps in clearly defining the boundaries of the investigation

#### **2.1 Initiation Rites**

Nearly every culture in the world ritualizes the important milestones throughout their life. Birth, marriage and death are typically marked by special ceremonies. The final passage from childhood to adulthood also features prominently among various ethnic groups worldwide. Wele (1993:33) states that in any given group of people within society there are certain patterns and ways of behavior which transcend themselves in form of art, music or folk lore stories.

In Africa, initiation ceremonies are rooted in deep, conservative traditions. African life revolves around the family and therefore female African initiation ceremonies tend to focus heavily on the preparation of young girls to be good wives and excellent mothers. Female African initiation ceremonies provide instructions to females on what society will expect of them as adults. In most cultures, the initiation ceremony is something a young girl eagerly looks forward to, prepares for and honorably takes part. The girl is encouraged to leave behind her jaunty, carefree childhood ways and adopt the stature of a woman full of dignity and grace. Jere (2009) stresses the importance of initiation rites; he writes that initiation rites help guide the person from one stage in life into the next stage of one's life and development. He stresses the fact that the rites are critical to an individual and community development. He further states that a rite is a fundamental act performed according to prescribed social rules and customs.

Due to their education potential, initiation rites and rites of passage can be employed to transmit responsible sexual behavior to girls and young women. Jere (ibid) reiterates that these initiation ceremonies might not be perfect in the fight against HIV but they could provide a viable example in the modern world of how to solve social problems and give an individual the societal support to discover and fulfill their life and unique contribution. He also describes that African societies systematically initiate boys and girls and that the young initiates are taught ways of adult hood including rules and taboos of society, moral instruction and social responsibility.

## **2.2 Cultural considerations in HIV and AIDS prevention programs**

As the HIV and AIDS scourge continues to cause havoc within Southern Africa, voices are growing for serious consideration of a cultural approach to the prevention and awareness of the infection. It is a well known fact that in any discussion of HIV and behavior in Africa, the centrality of culture cannot be ignored. In a rapid assessment of programs targeting adolescents and youths conducted in Malawi, Zambia, Uganda, and Kenya it was revealed that there was consensus among communication scholars and researchers that culture is a significant factor in communication of HIV prevention information and behavior, in spite of the variation in the views on what cultural values are and how they influence attitude and behaviors (Malewezi, 2000).

A cultural approach to HIV and AIDS entails tackling the problem from a position of values, norms, traditions and other cultural institutions as platforms to discuss and communicate information about the virus and the disease. Baylies (2000), points out that communication is integral to a cultural system in that cultural values, beliefs, knowledge are conveyed through symbols and language. This cultural approach seeks to exploit and make use of every action of tradition, beliefs and value systems for ethical and practical reasons. It also mobilizes cultural resources including, knowledge, and modes of economic and social organization, creativity and self-confidence. Borofsky (1983) explains that certain aspects of culture are pertinent in any deliberation on communication on HIV and behavior. The basic consideration in HIV prevention *visa-a-vis* initiation ceremonies according to Borofsky (*ibid*), is the fact that culture constitutes the very matrix within

which people formulate their ideas, within which they carry out their activities. This means that culture controls almost every aspect of an individual's life including how that individual acts or behaves.

Furthermore an individual's concept and expression of sexuality is deeply entwined in the social norms of the society. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of what cultural dynamics are at play in regard to behavior surrounding sexuality, human relationships and how this impacts on the prevention and spread of HIV is a necessity. The way people acquire knowledge is dictated to some extent by cultural norms. Thus with this in mind initiation ceremonies being one of the most popularly practiced way of transmitting cultural norms by most ethnic groups in Zambia can be tapped to focus on the manner in which new and critical knowledge on HIV prevention can be introduced within this cultural system to generate a debate and possibly force a community to re-think their approach towards issues regarding sexuality and human relationships that foster the prevention and spread of the HIV infection. Nevertheless not all cultural practices and institutions contribute to the rise of the epidemic.

An important mode of transmitting cultural norms and beliefs from one generation to another are initiation ceremonies and rites of passage. Raising (1995) considers these ceremonies important because they are targeted at members of the society who are transcending from childhood to adulthood. The initiation ceremonies therefore have the potential to shape the lives and behaviors of the young adults. This implies that initiation ceremonies have the power to influence and impart desired behaviors to young Zambians

since most of the ethnic groups practice initiation ceremonies especially for girls who have reached puberty and women. Richards (1956) points out that initiation ceremony play an important role in imparting knowledge to the young girls and women of their future roles as wives and mothers. Consequently, issues of sex and sexuality are prominent in the messages that are given during this period. Nearly every woman getting into marriage is counseled by traditional counselors who are either found in the community or church. Sometimes girls stop school and get married they still go through traditional counseling through an initiation rite hence it is important to empower the counselors in these ceremonies with information on HIV and AIDS if these unfortunate girls have to know the dangers of HIV including prevention and the skill of negotiating for safe sex in their marriages.

HIV prevention is critical in the fight against HIV and AIDS. In the absence of a cure, every available potential mode of prevention of HIV and AIDS infection or re-infection should be explored. The key word is prevention. As such, the mass mobilization of every sector of society remains the only weapon. In Zambia today, traditional initiators have been left out in AIDS awareness campaigns, in spite of them being the most important avenues of transmitting traditional information on sexuality from one generation to the next. Most Zambian women pass through initiation rites at one stage in their lives. Therefore, leaders of initiation ceremonies who are traditional counselors (*Alangizi in Nyanja or Banacimbusa in Bemba*) should be actively involved in the fight against HIV and AIDS. Through them cultural practices that put girls and women at risk of contracting

the HIV virus can be corrected. Women face particularly big risks of contracting the HIV virus on account of certain cultural practices that emphasize female subservience to men.

HIV and AIDS prevention measures should aim at targeting women and girls who are more vulnerable to contracting HIV and AIDS. Integration of HIV information into initiation rites is, however, a challenge that needs to be addressed by the Zambian government and every sector fighting the pandemic. Initiation can offer an important avenue; it has great potential to contribute to the fight against HIV and AIDS infection. It is important to impart correct and current information on HIV and AIDS prevention to girls as early as possible before they engage in sexual activities that expose them to contracting the virus and before getting married. Most women become vulnerable to infection when they get married since they lack the power to say no to sex despite them knowing that their husbands have HIV and AIDS. Through initiation rites, knowledge on how women can protect themselves from getting infected can be infused into the messages taught. Traditional counselors are important traditional leaders in the society. According to Rasing (2001:136), the *Nacimbusa* had a high status and authority; they belonged to the original inhabitants of the land and were knowledgeable concerning territorial rites.

Initiation ceremonies are important areas where little HIV and AIDS work has been done (Malewezi: 2000). Educating women and girls on HIV and AIDS and its prevention is probably the beginning of solving many of the HIV and AIDS related problems the women face today. Looking at the gender dimension of the AIDS pandemic there is great need to

explore any available mode that target women and one such mode is initiation rites.

### **2.3 Studies on Initiation Ceremonies in Zambia**

In Zambia, All the 73 ethnic groups have their own way of handling girls and young women attaining puberty and those being married off. These initiation ceremonies have different names in different ethnic groups, for example in Tonga the initiation ceremony is known as *Nkolola*, in Bemba it is known as *Icisungu*, the *Luvale* call it *Wali*, Sikenge in Lozi, *Namwali* in Nsenga and in *Kaonde* it is called *Cisungu* (Kangende 1998:22).

Richards (1956: 122) in her research among the Bemba of Northern Province of Zambia gives a detailed description of an initiation rite in a village. She observed that initiation rites for girls set a basis for adult life. It symbolically means passage from childhood to adult hood. The girls' initiation, *Cisungu*, has the explicit purpose of changing a girl into a woman by transforming her in the course of the experience. This marks a very important phase in a girl's life, and Richards (ibid: 127) adds that the significance of this rite is that the social values expressed and maintained by the ritual are far more important than the change of status of the initiated. Rasing (2001: 126) adds that girls' initiation rites are dominant kinship rites concerned with socialization and gender identity. They mark the transition from childhood to womanhood. She further explains that the transition comprises a variety of rituals accompanying the crossing of boundaries, changes in time and social status. Initiation rites usually go with biological changes, for girls often the on set of menstruation or growing of breasts.

Rasing (2001:128) states that ‘the rite consists of three parts: the first takes place in the bush; the second is performed in the house; and the third part is in the yard near the house...’ These stages show the structure of initiation rites and the educational value attached to them. Rasing (ibid: 136) further refers to these stages as seclusion, segregation or coming out, signifying the importance of the rites. Analyzing the meaning of initiation rites and ceremonies is not easy because they have various representations; however for the purpose of this study, emphasis is placed on the social obligations and the secret language of married life.

Initiation ceremonies are full of rituals which are full of symbolic meaning and have instructional or education value. An example of such a ceremony is the ‘Cisungu’ practiced by the Bemba of Northern province. Richards (ibid) explains that the explicit purpose of the Cisungu is to transform a girl into a woman when she attains puberty. Emphasis is placed on marriage and a woman’s responsibility. Some prominent elements of this ritual are the teaching of the initiate to maintain cleanliness when she is menstruating. For instance the initiate is told not to come in contact with fire and to stay away from children and from any sexual activity during this period. Rasing (ibid) explains that the initiate is informed that she should wear red beads or put a red cloth on the bed to inform the husband or sexual partner that she is having her periods. This in effect empowers the woman to decide when to have intercourse. Another notable ritual relevant to this study is the picking of the stone and placing it in the leaves of the Musuku tree by the initiate,

which symbolizes marriage. The meaning is that marriage should be strong like a stone and a woman should keep her husband and not let him sleep with other women. It is important to mention that there are a lot of other rituals practiced during initiation ceremonies, the ones mentioned here are only a very small part and are meant to show the instructional and educative value of initiation rites.

Among the Bemba speaking people, married life is considered as the only possible existence for a man and a woman. Sexual intercourse is considered necessary to the well-being and pleasure to which every person is entitled. Rasing (1996), explains that the Bemba looks at parenthood as the basis of social status, men are usually divided into groups as married and unmarried. Married women are given status according to their children. Those women who are past child-bearing have certain ritual privileges and duties based on this act. Girls according to Richards (1940) are also divided into those who have reached puberty and those below that age.

The Bemba-speaking clan view procreation as an important aspect of the psychological and social adjustment of children into adults. They treat sexual intercourse in marriage as being the most treasured asset. According to Richards (ibid) sexual intercourse within a marriage is believed to have spiritual force and can be used for the benefit of the community if performed in the right manner. The marital relationship is thought to be subjected to special dangers and therefore it is protected by specific taboos. It is believed that sex can be dangerous unless it is surrounded by certain rituals; sexual intercourse can

produce physical illness or disaster unless the necessary precautions are taken. Therefore it is necessary to teach and empower these young men and women about these dangers and this can be done through initiation ceremonies.

The cisungu is an integral part of the marriage ceremony and Richard (1956) points out that these ceremonies serve roughly four functions; these can be summarized as legal, magic, moral teaching and social linking. From the time of the cisungu ceremony the bridegroom acquires legal rights over the bride and accepts legal obligations. She does the same to him and both sets of duties are ritually expressed. The bridegroom makes a payment to the girl's people at the time of the cisungu and also to the mistress of the ceremonies. His people contribute to the marriage feast and those at the initiation ceremony itself. These payments, according to Richards, give the man legal rights over the sex life of the girl.

The cisungu ceremony also appears to have magic functions. It contains elements that can be described as magic of growth, magic of fertility and magic of beauty or of purification. When the Bemba mother makes her girl jump over a hoop of pliable branches standing from three to four feet high at the end of the cisungu this is done to make the child grow. There are many symbols used throughout the ceremony for example, a mock imitation of fish catching with a leaf trap since fish bear many children at a time and pictures of fishes painted on the walls of the initiation hut, a serpent of clay on the floor of the hut; the ritual of lighting of fire by the father's sister who exerts special influence over the fertility of a

young girl and can curse her with barrenness. There is also an intimate connection in the symbolism between the fertility of the woman and the fertility of the plants she sows and reaps.

Richards (1956) explains that the Bemba women describe the function of the cisungu as teaching the girl what they should know. The cisungu is supposed to impress on the girls marriage and civic morals rather than any technical skills. Most important they are taught to respect their seniors by means of constant singing of songs in their honor, offering them ritual objects in order of precedence, and suffering all sorts of teasing penalties abuse without murmuring. Marriage morality is further impressed on the initiates at the time of the teasing. The girl who has been too free with men is shouted at and tormented, she is made to wear round her neck a round ball of painted clay stuck with spikes which prick into her as she dances.

The fourth function of ceremonies is social linking. Apart from its lessons, the cisungu ceremony initiates the girl into the rank of young married women and makes her one of a local company of women very carefully graded according to precedence. The characteristic of the cisungu can therefore be considered from three points; the richness and complexity of the ritual, the importance of the magic element especially of the magic of fertility in matrilineal community where children are said to belong to the woman and not the man and the hierarchical order of grouping of the women that is based on it

Work by UNFPA (2005) collaborates with that done by Rasing (2001). The UNFPA also looks at initiation as an institution that teaches girls how to deal with personal and household responsibilities. For this reason, certain foods believed to affect fertility are prohibited and the tutor teaches the girl the importance of good sexual intercourse in marriage and how this should be done. The initiation ceremonies are rooted in traditions. For African females, ceremonies marking their entry into the realm of adults are also a public announcement to the community that she is ready to take up responsibilities as an adult African woman. African life revolves around the family and therefore African female initiation ceremonies tend to focus heavily on the preparation of young girls to be good wives and excellent mothers. During the initiation period, most girls who are having their periods for the first time have not indulged in sexual intercourse which is the most common source of infection for most people. As such it is a very critical period to introduce HIV and AIDS prevention strategies in their lessons.

Research by Rasing (Ibid) has discovered that initiation rites are similar from one ethnic group to another with few differences across cultures. During the initiation, norms and values concerning gender, production and reproduction as well as cosmological ideas are passed on. Values, norms and behaviors taught to girls are similar in most Zambian societies. A study by UNFPA (2005) carried out in North Western Province revealed that initiation ceremonies occur in all sites to varying degrees. In Solwezi, among the Kaonde there were two different ceremonies, one for young girls when they reach puberty (Kisungu), and the second for those about to get married. In that study it was suggested

that initiation ceremonies for girls would be improved if changes were made to the initiation 'curriculum' to reflect modern awareness on sexual reproductive health. Rasing (ibid) also explains that initiation rites have everything to do with gender issues and that most women are very much aware of gender issues. It is this fact that makes the initiation ceremony a possible way to pass on information about HIV and AIDS.

A lot of research has been conducted on initiation ceremonies in many parts of the world including Zambia. Many researches show that initiation ceremonies have positive and negative impact on the fight against HIV and AIDS. Rasing (1995), for example argues that the high rates of teenage pregnancy in many modern societies are attributed to lack of initiation rites. Young girls who do not undergo initiation ceremonies do not know how to face the world and so they end up being prey to the vices in society. It is assumed that initiation rites may help prevent girls from participating in sexual relationships which can lead to pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases particularly, HIV and AIDS.

However, other studies seem to have different observations, they point out that other values taught to women have adverse effects on their lives. For example, research conducted by Mbozi (1998) raised concerns about the values inculcated into a woman with regard to sex and sexuality during the sex ritual. It is believed that the emphasis on submissiveness of women to men and sexual satisfaction partly accounts for the disempowerment of women. During the initiation ceremonies women or girls are socialized to believe that women should do everything possible to make men happy at the

expense of their own happiness. In this way a woman is educated to see herself as a sex object. The later fail to negotiate for safe sex in order to please the husband. Men also control use of protection and are not likely to agree to wives using condoms. This means it is difficult, or impossible for women to protect themselves from the risk of HIV infection.

Rasing (1995) however argues that although initiation rites contain elements one could call oppressive, there are many elements, not immediately apparent that can be used to empower and liberate women especially with regard to HIV and AIDS. Rasing states that initiation rites are the tools for acquisition, learning of habit, based on harmony with the spouse, parents, in-laws, older people in general and mastering of conflict resolution mechanisms. Rasing further argues that initiation rites teach proper attitudes towards girls' gender role and help passing on knowledge and values such as harmony between husband and wife, based on sexual interdependency and harmony between young and old people. Rasing (2001) further notes that initiation rites equip maturing individuals with a vast body of special attributes that a woman is supposed to know and deal with through out her life. It is this stage that equips a woman for life's responsibilities.

Malewezi (2000) also agrees with Rasing's argument. A study he conducted in Malawi revealed that social practices are emerging among the youths that can adversely influence the spread of HIV and AIDS. He points out that those girls who previously went through practices like initiation ceremonies were well behaved. Because in most of these ceremonies girls were taught not to engage in sex before marriage as such young girls

came to know about sex and practiced it at the time they were getting married as virginity was highly emphasized during the teachings. It is therefore argued that if cultural practices like initiation ceremonies are encouraged, they could play an important complementary role in preventing the spread of HIV. Another UNESCO/UNAIDS RESEARCH (1999) report argued that a number of organizations working on HIV and AIDS consider issues of culture as very important to complement other preventive measures and care of HIV and AIDS.

A study carried out by Pillai et al (1993), revealed that 46% of girls in Zambia reported having learnt about sex through traditional initiation ceremonies. Nonetheless traditional counselors and initiation rites have been left out of HIV and AIDS campaigns in spite of them being the most important avenue of transmitting traditional information. In Zambia, HIV and AIDS is mostly spread through heterosexual intercourse. Therefore initiation ceremonies can be used to further prevent HIV infection as young girls are taught sexual issues while being prepared for marriage. Palka (1992) stated that most Zambian parents shun discussing sex matters with their children. This implies that the socially and culturally approved source of information about sex matters for a girl will be from women who conduct initiation ceremonies, mainly in initiation rites and also from grandmothers, aunts and teachers. Initiation rites provide a powerful tool for women to educate these young girls about HIV prevention.

If behavior is to be changed therefore, young people must be the highest priority target group. It is often said that Zambia's youth offer the nation a "window of hope" – the hope of an AIDS-free future. In recognition of the fact that adult sexual habits are developed largely during adolescent, this period of time should be targeted for intense HIV education and behavioral modification. Nearly half of all Zambians are between 5 and 14 years old; relatively few of these young people have HIV; and they are all eager to learn about issues of HIV and AIDS prevention (Zambian Ministry of Health 2005:7). Effective education therefore has the power to change attitudes and behavior for life and this should be through effective communication strategies within programs that will support and facilitate positive behavioral change. Leaders of initiation ceremonies who are traditional counselors (*Alangizi in Nyanja or Banacimbusa in Bemba*) should be actively involved in the fight against HIV and AIDS. Through them cultural practices that put girls and women at risk of contracting the HIV can be corrected.

#### **2.4 Summary of the Reviewed Literature**

The literature reviewed has shown that there is a lot of potential inherent in initiation ceremonies and rites that can be tapped in the awareness campaign on HIV and AIDS. Due to their education potential, initiation ceremonies can be employed to transmit responsible sexual behavior to girls and young women. These initiation ceremonies might not be perfect in the fight against HIV but they could provide a viable source of knowledge in this modern world of how to solve social problems and give an individual the societal support

in the fight against HIV and AIDS.

The literature further indicates that many researches show that initiation ceremonies have both positive and negative impact on the fight against HIV and AIDS. However initiation rites contain elements that are not immediately apparent that can be used to empower and liberate women especially with regard to HIV and AIDS. They are the tools for acquisition, learning of habit, based on harmony with the spouse, parents, in-laws, and older people in general and mastering of conflict resolution mechanisms. The literature also showed that initiation rites teach proper attitudes with regards to girls' gender role and help passing on knowledge and values such as harmony between husband and wife, based on sexual interdependency and harmony between young and old people.

In conclusion it can be said that initiation rites equip maturing individuals with a vast body of special attributes that a woman is supposed to know and deal with through out her life. Therefore they can be adapted and be incorporated in awareness and prevention programs for HIV and AIDS.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 General**

The previous chapter provided information on literature relevant to the current investigation. It first presented an account of studies conducted elsewhere in the world then proceeded to look at studies done in Africa and finally those in Zambia. That was done in order to enrich the present investigation, provide justification and put it within the context of those similar studies whose focus was also on initiation ceremonies for females.

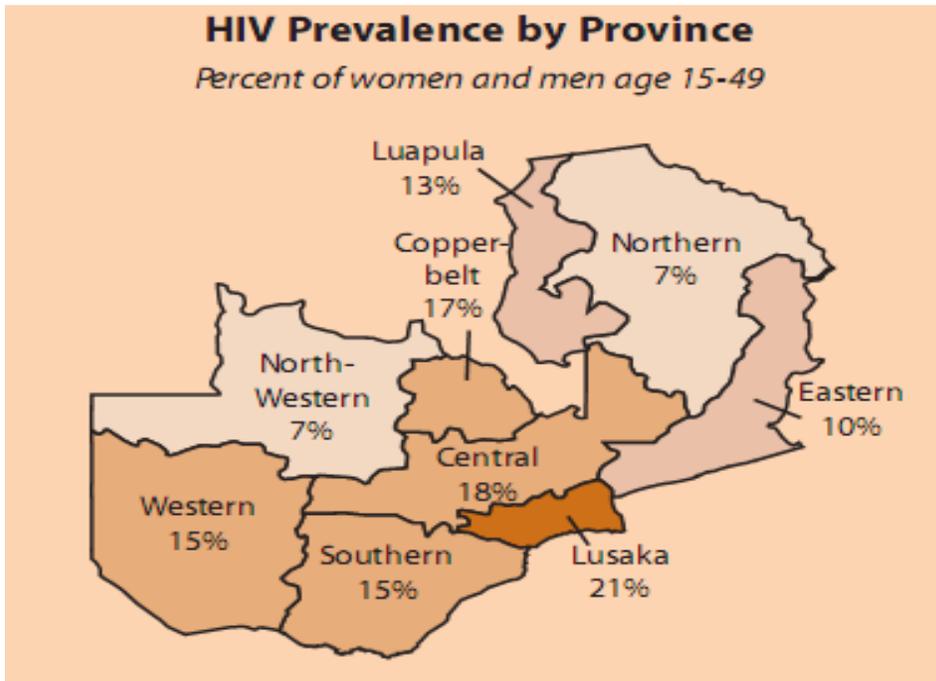
This chapter describes, in detail, how the study was undertaken. It describes the population, the sample, the criteria for recruiting participants, the methods used for data collection and how the data was analysed. It also describes the procedure used in the pilot study.

#### **3.1 Major Characteristics of the Study Area**

Lusaka Province is the smallest of all the nine provinces in Zambia in terms of geographical size. But it has the highest population density of all the provinces which stands at approximately 65.0 people per kilometer squared. It has only four districts and two of them are considered as rural districts. Within the province the highest population concentration is in Lusaka district which is also the administrative capital of the entire country (CSO, 2008). It is difficult to see the real indigenous traditions of this province because it has a lot of people from other parts of the country and outside of the country.

Most of the inhabitants of this province are working in the informal sector, and for those residing in the rural parts are predominantly peasant farmers. In the urban areas the population that is employed in the civil service by the government is the largest. Then the private sector has the second largest number of employments and the rest of the employed (CSO, 2008). There is a huge amount of the workers working in the informal sector, self-employed and they are mostly in selling food stuffs on the markets and roadsides. The traders are involved in buying mostly vegetables from the rural part of the province and sale them to the urban areas for a profit (Reardon and Dave, 2003). A lot of the residents in the urban area of the province are earning a living this way. There is also another group of individuals that are trading in imported and locally produced groceries. These are slightly better off than those trading in fresh vegetables and doing piece work in the affluent residential areas.

Lusaka Province has always had the highest prevalence rates of HIV and AIDS in the country, even if it is reducing still it remains the highest. This can be attributed to its diverse culture and highest economic activities in the country, (Kapungwe, 2003).



Source; Zambia Demographic Health Survey, 2010

### 3.2 Study Population

Data was collected from women and girls who had gone through initiation ceremonies starting from 2005 and after. In addition women who were involved in initiating girls who had come of age were also included. Such a sample is appropriate for this study because this group is most vulnerable to the effects of HIV and AIDS.

### 3.3 Design

This was an exploratory study seeking to explore possibilities of using initiation ceremonies as educational tools to teach young women and girls about HIV and AIDS prevention.

### **3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Procedure**

There were two groups of subjects. The first group comprised women who initiated girls (*banacimbusa/Alangizi*) and the second group was made up of girls/women who had undergone initiation rites in the recent five yrs.

The study involved 100 respondents, 50 of whom were initiators or women who were involved in the initiation rites and the other 50 were women who had gone through initiation. One of the initiators is a member of the Zambia National Traditional Counselors Association (ZNTCA) which was formed in 1997 and registered with the Registrar of Society in Zambia. The main objectives of the organization are to provide counseling on family planning, HIV and AIDS, STDs and other related diseases to married couples, youths, men and women country wide and to maintain traditional culture which preserves good morals and norms of society. The other 50 respondents were girls and women who had experienced initiation rites.

### **3.5 Sampling Techniques**

Purposive sampling was initially used to identify girls and women (initiators and the initiates) who had experienced initiation. Then snowball sampling was used to identify other participants with similar characteristics to the first group.

### **3.6 Data collection procedure**

Data was collected from the initiators and the initiated girls using two different questionnaires (see appendix I and II). During data collection, structured, semi structured and open ended interviews were used in order to cater for the diversity of participants. However, the interview schedule was featured most prominently. The decision to select the instrument was arrived at after carefully considering the advantages and disadvantages and the population size for each category. The researcher spent time with the girls and women under study during initiation ceremonies and made observations of what was taught in initiation rites though not recorded as for those rites that the researcher attended the participants had requested that no tape recordings, filming or pictures should be taken. An interview schedule was used to help obtain information from the women. The researcher took notes to record what was taught and said. The researcher conducted interviews with each of the informants to reduce on chances of non response.

The advantage of the interview schedules was that the respondents expressed their views freely. Interview schedules also help the respondents to be interviewed at their convenient time, and not under pressure.

Secondary data was collected from library materials such as text books, reports including journals on initiation ceremonies in traditional societies and even modern social set up.

### **3.7 Pilot Study**

Data collection was preceded by a pilot study among 10 initiated women to test the usefulness of the questionnaire. This greatly assisted the researcher in examining clarity and validity of the instruments. Changes were effected to the instrument as a result of the exercise.

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

Both qualitative and quantitative research techniques were used in the data analysis for the two categories of respondents. Quantitative techniques were used to analyze closed ended questions in the questionnaire. Qualitative analysis involved comparing responses which were given by various respondents and then stating the common responses.

Descriptive statistics, using SPSS for windows, were used to analyze quantitative data. Qualitative data were categorized and interpreted in terms of common themes expressed in the discussion about initiation ceremonies. Specific information related to individual women and girls views about initiation rites was structured in terms of common patterns.

After data was collected it was assembled and coded according to the groups in the study. It should be noted that data analysis actually began as early as at the data collection stage as questionnaires were brought back, they were immediately sorted out. The objectives and research questions were used at this stage to classify data in such a way that the objectives would be addressed and questions answered. All the questions in the questionnaire which

related to one objective were further categorized to make it easier to record the findings. Statements and phrases which were in line with the objectives were formulated to serve as subheadings under which data would be recorded and classified. Basing on the findings, data were quantified using numbers which were finally presented as percentages using graphs, tables and charts.

Information from the case study was also categorized using subheadings. Since the researcher was an active participant who had personal interactions with participants under study, observations were made and noted down. These observations included a deeper understanding of some of the beliefs and personal views of participants. Introspection was also used to some extent. Those and other findings were written and presented in both table and narrative form. A full report is presented in Chapter Four.

### **3.9 Ethical Issues**

Participants took part in the study willingly. Prior to participation, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study. Ethical issues were taken care of by explaining to participants the purpose of the study and that the information gathered from them would be kept in confidence and their anonymity would be maintained in that no direct statement they made would be revealed or attributed to them as having said that. The researcher also promised to respect the participant's wishes.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.0 General**

The previous chapter presented the methodological aspects of the investigations by focusing on the research procedures and techniques that the investigation adopted in the current study so as to provide satisfactory answers to the questions raised in chapter one. It also built on the introduction to the methodology presented in Chapter One by giving details of the study area, sample size, sampling techniques employed and pilot study. The present chapter presents the results of the study. The results obtained for each of the objectives and their corresponding questions that were investigated are presented separately. The findings presented in the study were based on the interviews with the participants conducted by the researcher.

As presented in Chapter One, the study sought to find answers to the following questions:

1. What are initiation ceremonies and how can they be used as an entry point in the prevention of HIV and AIDS?
2. What are participants' views on the existing content in initiation ceremonies?
3. How can HIV and AIDS information be incorporated in initiation ceremonies?

The above listed questions were investigated introspectively and by the utilization of 100 informants who were selected from initiators and initiates to give the required and appropriate information. Semi structured interviews were conducted with each of the

informants which was later analysed. Observations of what was said and done was by use of note taking to ascertain if HIV messages were taught in these initiation rites.

#### 4.1 Marital status and level of education

Respondents were asked about their marital status and level of education. Since the study was conducted in an urban setting the researcher wanted to find out whether someone's level of education affected their perception of and attitude towards initiation ceremonies. This piece of information is summarised in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Education background of the respondents**

Education	Initiators/trainers		Initiated women	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
No education	4	8	1	2
Lower primary	20	40	7	14
Upper primary	16	32	10	20
Junior secondary	9	18	15	30
Senior secondary	-	-	2	4
College	1	2	13	26
University	-	-	2	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 above indicates that 18 percent of the initiators had attained junior secondary and 30 percent of the initiated women had attained junior secondary education. This implies that most of the respondents had only gone up to grade nine level of education. Only a limited number of initiators (Banacimbusa) had any tertiary education while 26 percent of

the initiated had attained tertiary or college education. The results therefore showed that the majority of the initiators had limited or no education.

#### 4.2 Reason for undergoing Initiation Ceremonies

Respondents were also asked why they had been initiated. Their responses are recorded in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Respondents’ responses on why they became initiated**

	Initiators		Initiated women	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
I was forced	2	4%	9	18%
I was interested	9	18%	9	18%
Because it is our tradition	39	78%	32	64%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

The findings in Table 2 show that more than 78% of the respondents from the initiators category said that they became initiated because it was tradition while 64% of the respondents from the initiated women’s category felt the same. The results indicate that the decision to undergo initiation is voluntary for the majority of women who had gone through it.

### 4.3 Value of Initiation Ceremonies to the Community.

The respondents were asked whether the values learnt during initiation ceremonies for girls were important to the community. The responses are shown in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Respondents' responses on whether values learnt are important to community**

	Initiators/trainers	
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	50	100
No	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

The findings in Table 3 indicate that all the respondents from the initiators' category felt that values learnt during initiation ceremonies were important to communities. A respondent from the Alangizi Association of Zambia said that values learnt during the initiation ceremonies were extremely important to the community in that they helped to uphold morality in the communities.

### 4.4 Curriculum

The respondents were also asked whether they had a curriculum which they followed during the initiation ceremony. The responses are summarized in Table 4 below.

**Table 4: Respondents' responses on whether they had a curriculum which they followed during initiation ceremony**

	Initiators/trainers		Initiated women	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	35	70	45	90
No	15	30	5	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Findings in Table 4 above show that 90% of the respondents from the initiated women's category said that they had a curriculum which they followed during initiation ceremonies and 70% of the respondents from initiators' category said they had a curriculum. Further findings showed that the initiators did not have a written curriculum but had specific teachings which they taught during initiation ceremonies.

#### **4.5 Content of the Initiation rites**

Further, the respondents were asked on what was included in the initiation rites. Their responses are presented in Table 5 below.

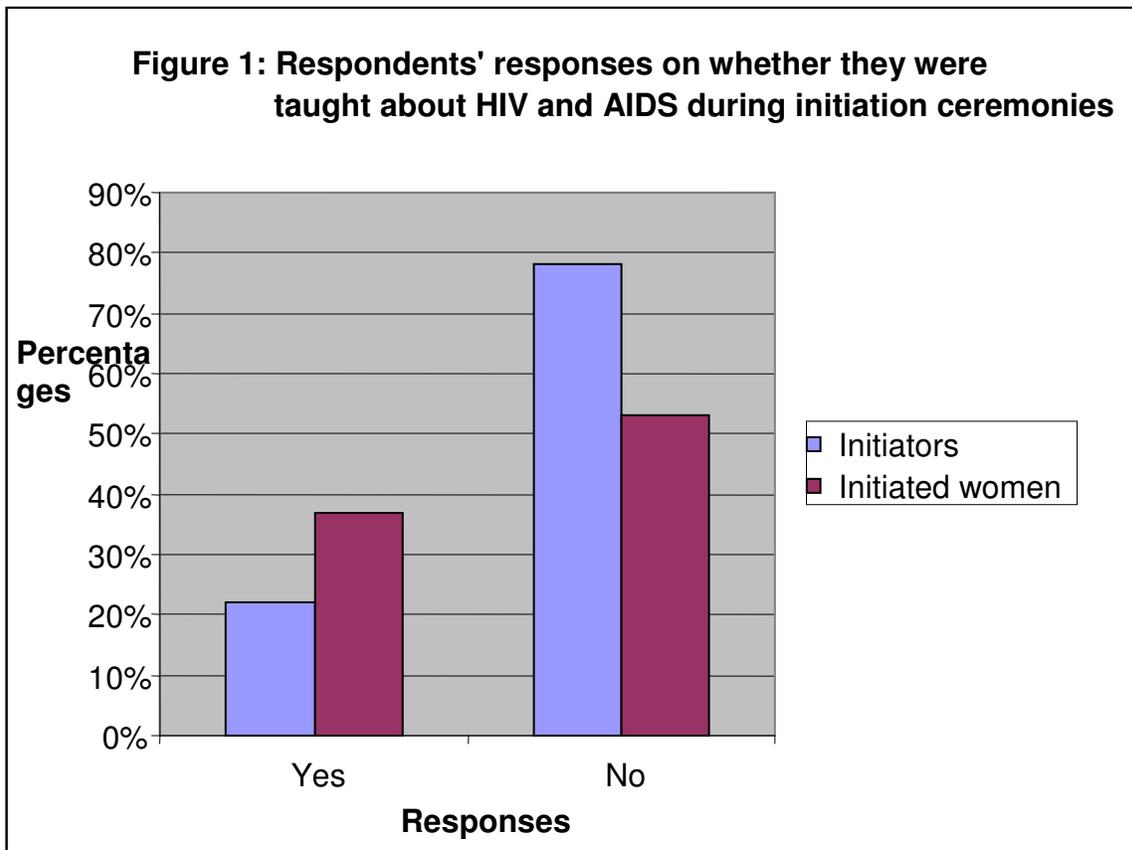
**Table 5: Respondents' responses on the contents of the initiation rite**

	Initiators/trainers		Initiated women	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
How to respect the husbands	47	94	39	78
Hygiene	3	6	9	18
How to look after homes	-	-	1	2
How to respect elders	-	-	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Findings in Table 5 show that 94% of the respondents from the initiators category said that girls were taught how to respect their husbands during initiation ceremonies and 78% of the respondents from the initiated women's category said the same.

#### 4.6 Initiation ceremony curriculum and HIV information

The respondents were also asked whether their curriculum included the teachings on HIV and AIDS. Their responses are recorded in Figure 1 below.



The findings in Figure 1 illustrate that 78% of the initiators said that HIV and AIDS information was not being taught during initiation ceremonies. One respondent from the Alangizi Association of Zambia said that HIV and AIDS information was taught to the

women during their initiation ceremonies. Further findings showed that 53% of respondents from the initiated women’s category said that they had not been taught on HIV and AIDS during their initiation ceremonies.

#### **4.7 HIV information taught during initiation rites**

The respondents were asked what was taught concerning HIV and AIDS to novices during the initiation ceremonies for those few whose tutors talked about HIV and AIDS in their ceremonies. Table 6 below summarises the respondents’ responses on this item.

**Table 6: Respondents’ responses on what they were taught about HIV and AIDS during initiation ceremonies**

	Initiators		Initiated women	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Abstinence	5	10%	8	16%
Stick to one sexual partner	6	12%	11	22%
No HIV messages taught	39	78%	26	52%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

The findings in Table 6 above show that a bigger percentage of respondents- 78% initiators and 52% of initiated girls and women revealed that no HIV messages were taught during initiation ceremonies. Only a small percentage talked about being faithful to their sexual partners (husbands) and abstinence from sex before marriage to the girls who had come of age.

#### 4.8 Incorporation of HIV information

The researcher also wanted to know whether there was enough time during the initiation ceremony to teach the novice about HIV and AIDS. The information gathered on this item is presented in Table 7 below.

**Table 7: Respondents' responses on whether there was enough time for incorporation of information about HIV and AIDS during initiation ceremony**

	Initiators/trainers		Initiated women	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	6	12	15	30
No	44	88	35	70
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Findings in Table 7 above show that 88% and 70% of respondents from the initiators' and initiated women's category respectively thought that the duration of an initiation ceremony for girls who have come of age was not enough to give information to a novice on issues of HIV.

#### 4.9 Teachings on HIV in initiation rites

Further the respondents were asked whether they would like the initiators to include the teaching of risks and preventions of HIV and AIDS to the girls/women during initiation ceremonies. The responses are presented in Figure 2 below.

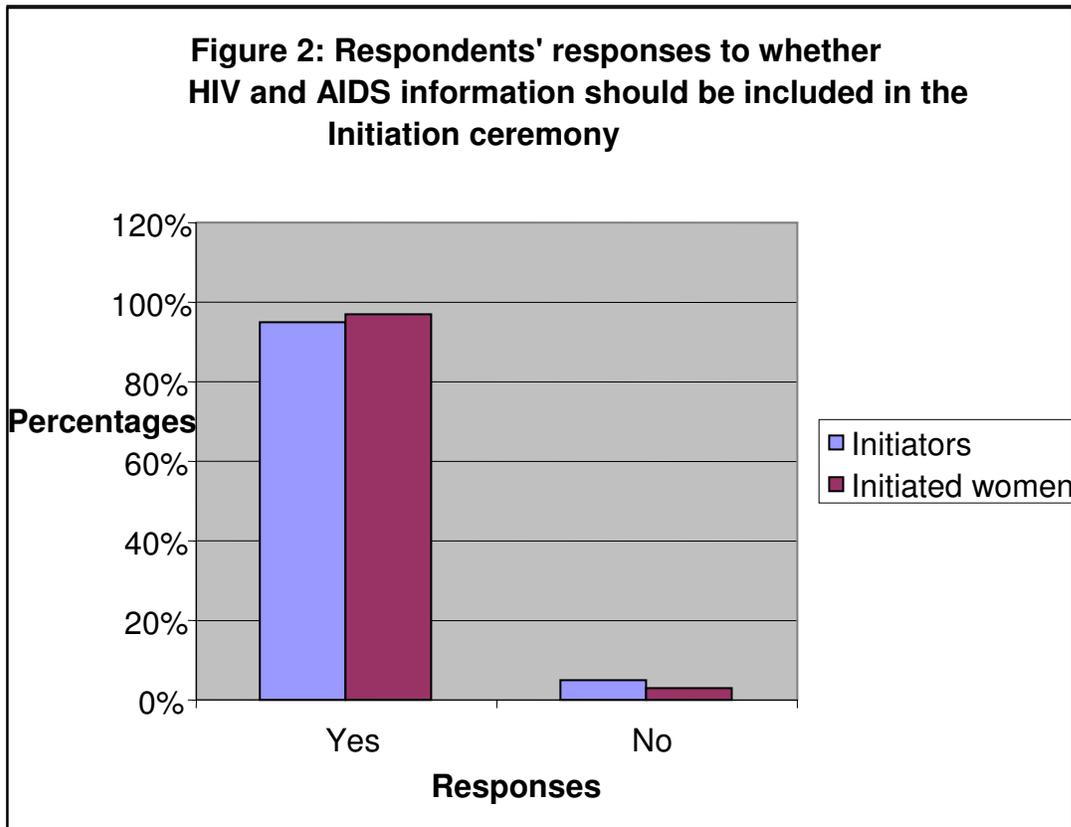
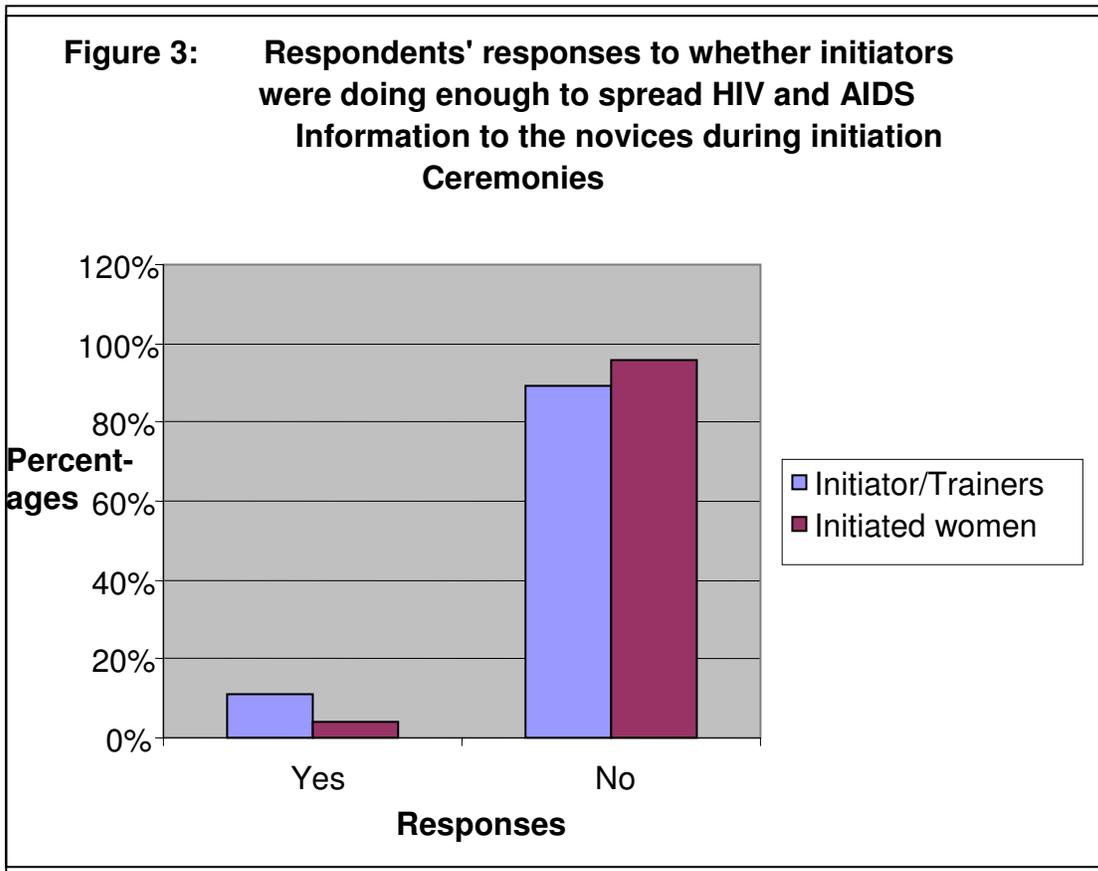


Figure 2 above shows that more than three quarters of the respondents from both categories thought it was important to teach about HIV and AIDS to the novices during initiation ceremonies.

**4.10 Contribution of initiation rites to HIV prevention.**

The respondents were asked whether initiators were doing enough to spread HIV and AIDS information to the novices. The responses are given in Figure 3 below.

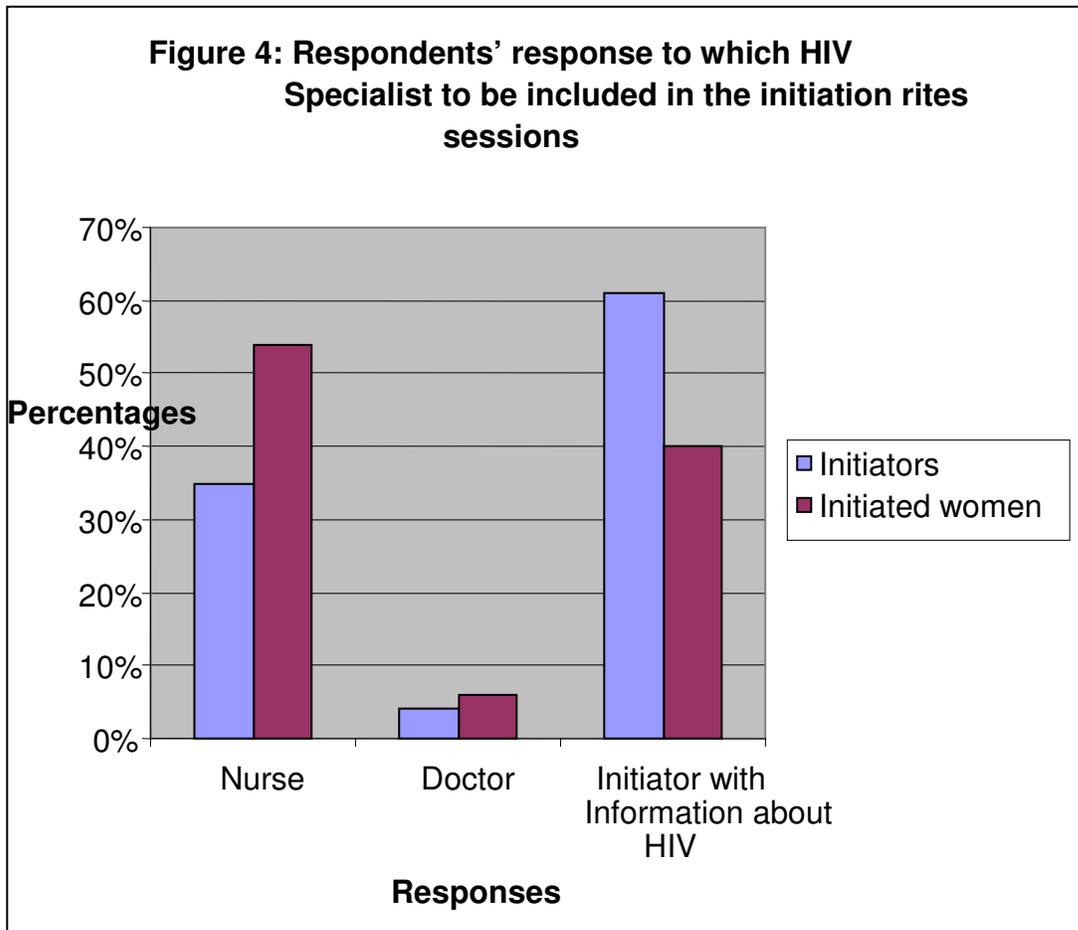


Findings in Figure 3 above show that only 4% of the respondents from the initiated women category said that the initiators were doing enough to spread the HIV and AIDS information to the girls during initiation. From the initiators' category, only 11% of the respondents thought they were doing enough to spread HIV and AIDS information during initiation.

#### **4.11 Inclusion of HIV specialists in the initiation rites and modification of curriculum**

Further, the respondents were asked whether there was room for improvement in the dissemination of HIV and AIDS information through initiation ceremonies. All the

respondents from both categories said that there was room for improvement and all the respondents thought that there was need to include an HIV and AIDS specialist in their initiation rites. In addition respondents were asked which HIV specialist they preferred to be included in the initiation rites. The responses are presented in Figure 4 below.



The findings in Figure 4 show that 54% of the respondents from the initiated women's category claimed that nurses were preferred to be included in the initiation rites as HIV specialists. On the other hand 61% of the respondents from the initiators' category said initiators if properly trained should be able to handle the sessions.

The researcher was also interested in examining whether there were teachings during initiation ceremony which the respondents thought should be modified in relation to the teachings about HIV and AIDS. From the initiated women's category, 23% claimed that the teaching about sexuality during marriage should not be taught to girls who had come of age. Fourteen (14%) percent of respondents from the initiators' category also claimed the same. The respondents argued that teaching young girls who had come of age on how to take care of a man during sex encouraged them to practice what they had been taught during initiation ceremony. This, according to the respondents, led to early marriages and increased the spread of HIV and AIDS.

#### **4.12 Persons to be involved in the modification of the curriculum**

The study was also interested in examining what respondents thought about who should be involved in the modification of the initiation ceremony curriculum. Table 8 below presents a summary of the responses.

**Table 8: Responses on who should be actively involved in modification of the curriculum**

	Initiators/trainers		Initiated women	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Government	2	4	9	18
Initiators	39	78	32	64
Person being initiated	3	6	2	4
Community	6	12	7	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Findings in Table 8 above show that 78% of the respondents from the initiators category, and 64% from the initiated women's category indicated that the initiators were the ones who were supposed to be actively involved in the modification of the initiation ceremonies' curriculum, so that they could include messages on HIV and AIDS as imparted to them by the specialist.

#### 4.13 Value of Initiation Ceremonies to a woman's life.

The researcher was also interested in knowing what initiated women thought about the value of initiation ceremonies. The responses are presented in Table 9 below.

**Table 9: Respondents' views on value of initiation ceremonies**

	Initiators/trainer		Initiated women	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	35	70	45	90
No	15	30	5	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

The findings in Table 9 above show that 70% of the respondents from the initiators category indicated that women who were not initiated were different from those who had undergone an initiation ceremony and 90% of the respondents from the initiated women's category indicated the same. This shows that initiation ceremony changes the perceptions of those who experienced them. The other perception is that initiated girls/women felt they were now different and they were going to act and behave differently.

#### 4.14 Initiation Ceremonies and influence on behavior

Respondents were asked whether the initiation ceremonies for women/girls changed their behavior. Their responses are shown in Table 10 below.

**Table 10: Respondents' responses to whether initiation ceremonies changed their behavior**

	Initiators/trainers		Initiated women	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	34	68	44	88
No	16	32	6	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Findings in Table 10 above show that 68% and 88% of the respondents from initiators' and initiated women's categories respectively indicated that initiation ceremonies for girls who had come of age changed their behavior. This change manifests in improved behavior and change of attitude towards life issues as a result of knowledge acquired from initiation rites.

#### 4.15 Values on sexuality

The researcher asked the respondents from both categories whether the values on sexuality and marriage taught during initiation ceremony should continue being taught to girls who had come of age. The responses are summarized in Table 11 below.

**Table 11: Respondents' responses to whether to continue teaching the values on sexuality**

	Initiators/trainers		Initiated women	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	44	88	35	70
No	6	12	15	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Findings in Table 11 above show that 88% and 70% of the respondents from initiators' and initiated women's categories respectively indicated that the values on sexuality and marriage should continue being taught to the girls during initiation ceremonies when they became of age. This shows that initiated women and initiators saw values of sexuality and marriage taught during initiation ceremonies as important in society.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **5.0 General**

The previous chapter provided the findings which were presented using graphs and tabular charts. The present chapter presents the results of the study as elicited from the data collected and review of the related literature. The results obtained for each of the objectives and their corresponding questions that were investigated are presented separately. The discussion is arranged according the research objectives and questions as set out in chapter one of the report. The findings presented in the study were based on the interviews with the participants conducted by the researcher, the researcher also took notes to record what saw and heard.

The aim of this study was to determine the possibility of using initiation ceremonies as an entry point in the fight against HIV and AIDS. As such the study sought to find answers to the following objectives in narrative form:

- To assess if HIV and AIDS information is taught in initiation ceremonies.
- To establish the participants views on existing content in initiation ceremonies
- To determine participants views on how HIV and AIDS information can be incorporated in initiation ceremonies.

## **5.1 HIV and AIDS information in Initiation Ceremonies**

### **5.1.1 Educational Background**

The results showed that the majority of the initiators had limited or no education. From these findings it can be argued that it is important to improve the education status of women as education will empower these women and reduce on their vulnerability to HIV infection. From these findings it can be said that in order to use initiation ceremonies in the fight against HIV & AIDS there is need to teach the initiators how to read and write. This finding also suggests that even those with low education have a platform where they can be educated on HIV in these initiation ceremonies. If the initiators have knowledge then even the uneducated that pass through initiation ceremonies can have an avenue to access that information.

The advantage of having initiators who can read and write is that it can help the initiators to get information on HIV and AIDS from books and other written documents hence increasing the sources of information on HIV for the initiators and the initiated women. During an interview with the chairperson for the *Alangizi* Association of Zambia, she pointed out that one of the challenges that *Alangizi* faced with acquisition of HIV information is literacy as most of her members country wide lacked basic education. She stated that there was need for the initiators to be taught how to read and write. If the initiator is not able to read and write, then it would be necessary to incorporate someone who was able to do so in the ceremonies to translate HIV messages during the rites. Currently, most of them did not find it critical as information passed on during the

initiation rite is orally based and nothing is written down. But much of the HIV information is written hence the need for the initiators to be of average literacy. Therefore, HIV and AIDS information can have a lot of impact on women who experience initiation ceremonies if it is included in the teaching of the initiators.

### **5.1.2 HIV and AIDS Information taught during Initiation Ceremonies**

Messages taught were evaluated in terms of whether they incorporated any HIV prevention information. Findings from the study have shown that most of the initiators did not teach about HIV and AIDS to the novices. The Findings further show that even if some initiators included the information of HIV and AIDS, this was done indirectly. For example, during observation the researcher noted that women/girls who were initiated were just told that it was important to abstain from sex before marriage and be faithful to their husbands when in marriage. These findings show there is room for the initiators to give more information about HIV and AIDS in their teaching during initiation ceremonies.

## **5.2. Participants' views on the content of Initiation Ceremonies**

### **5.2.1 Reason for Undergoing Initiation**

The findings of the study indicated that the decision to undergo initiation is voluntary for the majority of women who had gone through it. More than 60 percent of the respondents indicated that they had gone through initiation because it was there custom or tradition. This assertion seems to agree with Rasing's (1996) observation, she explains that women

performed initiation rites mainly because it is a requirement in their culture and most of them felt that these rites were good for girls in order for them to learn good manners and not to socialize with boys. This is best summarized by one respondent who commented that “initiation ceremonies are the best way to teach, because it is the way it has always been done.” Initiation for women is their way to feel strong, to transcend from child to adult, to have self-reliance and is a good preparation for marriage. Many women claimed that a marriage will be successful only when a woman has been initiated and that divorces were due to the fact that the young woman did not pass through initiation rites.

Since initiation rites and ceremonies are a process of socialization and have to do with social construction of womanhood, they are perfect tools to use to inform and empower women in the fight against HIV and AIDS.

### **5.2.2 Importance of Initiation ceremonies to the Community**

The findings indicate that all the respondents felt that values learnt during initiation ceremonies were important to communities. A respondent from the Alangizi Association of Zambia said that values learnt during the initiation ceremonies were extremely important to the community in that they helped to uphold morality in the communities. The fight against HIV requires community participation and effort. Since initiation ceremonies are a community activity and have community approval they present an effective way through which awareness and prevention messages can be passed to the younger members of each community.

### **5.2.3 Curriculum of Initiation Ceremonies**

Findings indicate that some kind of curriculum is followed during initiation ceremonies. Further findings showed that the initiators did not have a written curriculum but had specific teaching which they taught during the initiation ceremonies. The researcher made certain observations concerning the curriculum in that every session had specific messages with related songs and dance performances which the initiates had to practice and master. It was clear to the researcher that the tutors had different skills and what was observed is that the same message was said in different ways while meaning the same thing. The lesson learnt here was there was need for a standardized curriculum if HIV prevention messages have to be included. HIV issues need correct facts otherwise important messages would be misrepresented. The existence of a curriculum is important so that its contents can be examined to see if it has any HIV and AIDS information. If not then the necessary information would be included. Hence there is need to help *banachimbusa/alangizi* to develop a curriculum if they have to standardize messages on HIV prevention and update them whenever there are new developments.

### **5.2.4 Contents of the Initiation Ceremonies**

According to the findings in Table 5 it appears that initiation rites help create a good relationship between husband and wife. This helps to build trust and respect in marriages which consequently helps to reduce infidelity and the spread of HIV and AIDS. Some prominent elements of initiation ceremonies according to Richards (1956) are the teaching

of the initiate to maintain cleanliness when she is menstruating. For instance the initiate is told not to come in contact with fire and to stay away from children and from any sexual activity during this period. This teaching can be enriched and used in the fight against HIV and AIDS if it includes issues of proper disposal of contaminated sanitary pads and clothes used during menstruation. At this stage the dangers of sharing needles and razor blades can be incorporated. Rasing (1976) explains that the initiate is informed that she should wear red beads or put a red cloth on the bed to inform the husband or sexual partner that she is having her periods. This in effect empowers the woman to decide when to have sexual intercourse. It is important to mention that there are a lot of other rituals practiced during initiation ceremonies, the ones mentioned here are only a very small part and are meant to show the instructional and educative value initiation rites possess.

The initiated women are also taught how to respect their husbands and the elderly people. They are taught how to dress. It is believed that there are certain clothes that a woman is not supposed to wear. For example a woman is not allowed to wear a pair of trousers, short dresses, short skirts or any cloth that expose their thighs. These are assumed to be provocative by certain sections of society. One of the prominent features observed by the researcher was role plays on different aspects of life including how girls and women are suppose to dress and behave towards adults in society. For example, the tutors demonstrated that a girl or woman should wear a chitenge or long dress when sweeping to avoid body exposure. The belief is that short dressing entices men and some would end up being raped. This can contribute to the spread of HIV.

Initiated women are also taught how to satisfy their husbands sexually. They are taught how to handle their future husbands during sexual intercourse. This was because a woman traditionally was supposed to perform certain acts in bed during sex with the husbands which are believed to help in satisfying their husbands. During these rites the researcher observed a lot of use of models to emphasize on important points including demonstration of erotic dances by the tutors. Similarly to this in HIV prevention teachings use of models is commonly used for example when demonstrating condom use. Related to this the initiators could include dangers of certain practices concerning sex and care of children such as the practice of dry sex that increases the risk of contracting the virus through cuts that can result from dry sexual intercourse. During these rites women can be taught skills of negotiating for safe sex such as use of condoms.

This is in line with the research conducted by Kapungwe in 2003. In his article he states that Female initiation rites, however, remain to be the main institution of sex education. In initiation rites, the novice is given knowledge about sexuality. Yet, there is no information given about HIV and AIDS. He also highlighted the fact that initiators themselves lacked knowledge on HIV and AIDS.

These findings show that there is room to include more information on HIV and AIDS in the teachings during the initiation ceremonies. Critical issues to be included should include HIV mode of transmission, prevention strategies such as abstinence, faithfulness to one

sexual partner or condom use, voluntary counseling and testing, prevention of mother to child transmission through testing of pregnant mothers and more importantly, seeking treatment if one contracts the virus.

The results showed that little or no information regarding HIV and AIDS is given during initiation ceremonies. However from the literature reviewed and interviews from the respondents, it was discovered that the curriculum of initiation ceremonies contains elements that can be used to sensitize the initiates on the dangers of HIV and AIDS.

### **5.3 How HIV and AIDS information can be incorporated in Initiation Ceremonies**

#### **5.3.1 Duration of Initiation Ceremonies**

Findings show that most respondents indicated that time was not enough to teach needed information about HIV and AIDS to the girls during initiation ceremonies. Therefore, for HIV and AIDS to be incorporated in the curriculum there is need to extend the duration for initiation rites of course taking into consideration that the girls' school days are not disturbed. The observation revealed that most girls coming of age are school going hence in most times cannot be secluded for long periods. After discussions with the *alangizi* most of them agreed that if the curriculum was modified to include more of HIV information than sexuality then it was possible. While those getting into marriage most of these young women were career women or students, time was also a hindrance. The researcher observed that most of these women were attending lessons for less than a month some even for a week because most of them said they worked late or busy preparing for the wedding

and kitchen parties. The traditional counselors felt the time was too short for them to comprehensively cover the entire process as such they rushed through the rites. This may indicate that for initiation ceremonies to be used as an entry point in the fight against HIV and AIDs there is need to extend the period for initiation ceremonies at least a minimal of three weeks. This can help give ample time to the initiators to teach HIV information to the novice and further incorporate who are well vested in HIV issues to answer questions that the *alangizi* is not able to tackle.

### **5.3.2 Specialist to be included in the Initiation Ceremonies**

The findings further show that respondents had different views on which HIV and AIDS specialists should be involved in the teaching of HIV and AIDS information to the girls during initiation ceremonies. For example, the majority (54%) of initiated women said that nurses were the right people and majority of the initiators felt that initiators were the right people to teach issues of HIV and AIDS. The researcher observed that most worked preferred female nurses because they felt this was a woman's domain. However the message that came out was that there was need to include a specialist. Therefore, there is need to find a way of involving an HIV and AIDS specialist in the initiation ceremonies but it should be in a way that does not violate the position of the initiators as leaders of the ceremonies. In other words initiators should remain custodians of the initiation rites.

### **5.3.3 Initiation Ceremonies as an entry point to HIV and AIDS Prevention**

These finding show that some women experience initiation ceremonies at one point. The researcher during her experience observed that most ethnic groups practiced initiation

ceremonies. What was observed in these ceremonies was that though in different languages the message was the same, for example the Bemba speaking and the Nsenga speaking the rituals have similar characteristics, except that the Bemba speaking people made clay models called *imbusa* to illustrate most of their messages. The researcher observed that one tutor could teach women or girls from several different ethnic groups. When asked they responded that messages are similar. Initiation ceremonies therefore, can be used to teach information to the women. This however, should be done in a way that does not violate traditions. For example, since most respondents expressed willingness to include the HIV and AIDS information in their curriculum this is an indication that it is possible to use these initiation ceremonies for women in the fight against HIV and AIDS. This can be done by giving information on HIV and AIDS to the initiators who in return will relay the information to the women and girl been initiated.

Cultural considerations in HIV prevention are important. Traditional dances performed during initiation ceremonies can be used to convey AIDS messages. Special attention should be given to women, who are traditionally are the initiators in initiation ceremonies because of their influence on the girls and women in the community. However, of late there is a significant attempt to integrate traditional and cultural aspects in HIV and related program. One proposal of using cultural systems of communication is that the YWCA Zambia has been seeking ways of effectively integrating the *alangizi* who are transmitters of culture with facilitating the rites of passage. The program officers are discussing the use

of traditional clay models to teach initiates on their anatomy and to teach sexuality in relation to HIV.

The second example of a program that is concerned with initiation ceremonies is the Cervical Cancer Prevention Program of Zambia. This is a program that screens women to detect for early pre-cancer cells of the cervix, which is the number one cancer killer of women in Zambia. The virus that causes the cancer is Human Papilloma virus; it is related to the virus that causes HIV. With the coming in of Anti-retro drugs, HIV positive women will live longer and if exposed to the Human Papilloma virus which sexually transmitted can develop cervical cancer and if not detected early is fatal. Hence women are encouraged to go for screening.

The program is using alangizi in the community and churches to disseminate information on the dangers of cervical cancer and need for screening. It has secured funds for training of these traditional counselors. In the same way HIV prevention program can borrow from these efforts.

The findings further revealed that most respondents said that traditional initiation ceremonies for girls/women had the ability to change the behavior of women. The respondents were asked what changes took place when a girl had undergone an initiation ceremony. Some respondents claimed that initiated girls showed respect to the elders in their societies unlike girls who were not initiated. Other respondents said that initiated

women took care of their homes and husbands properly. These respondents argued that initiated women were faithful and submissive to their husband. This, they argued, helped to reduce infidelity in society. They also said that initiated women treated their in-laws with respect. Further, some respondents said that since girls were told to abstain from sex before marriage, this helped to reduce diseases and early marriage.

From the research findings, it is clear that initiation ceremonies for girls and women can be used as an entry point in the fight against HIV and AIDS. However, the findings show that though initiation ceremonies have the potential to be used as a tool in the fight against HIV and AIDS, the initiators do not use the ceremonies to teach the women and girls during initiation. The study also shows that initiators and initiated women were all willing to include HIV and AIDS information in their initiation curriculum.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has dealt with the interpretation of the research findings. Data presentation has been done under sub-headings derived from the objectives stated in Chapter One and those used in the preceding chapter. Each objective has been explored separately

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.0 General**

The previous chapter presented research findings on the analysis of initiation ceremonies for women and girls as an entry point to HIV prevention in Lusaka urban as extracted from the data. This exercise was carried out in order to give answers to the research questions raised in chapter one of the study. The study gave a comprehensive report on the initiation rites and HIV prevention and participant's views on the roles played by initiation ceremonies in the domain of HIV and the role of initiation ceremonies in society also establishing whether or not initiation ceremonies can be used in the fight against HIV and AIDS. In this chapter a summary of the study is given. Conclusions drawn from the investigation are also outlined. In addition, recommendations, based on the findings of the study are given.

The purpose of the present study was to establish whether initiation ceremonies for girls and women can be used as an entry to HIV prevention. Based on the findings reported in the previous chapter, the present chapter seeks to provide answers to this question by summarizing and explaining the roles initiation ceremonies play in inculcating norms and values to individuals. The very fact that Initiation ceremonies have existed for a long time as schools and modes of transmission of information from generation to generation it gives

them an advantage as tools for HIV prevention and provides answers to the investigated questions. Furthermore, the chapter draws conclusions and presents some recommendations on the importance of initiation ceremonies and areas requiring further research.

## **6.1 Summary**

The study examined the possibility of using initiation ceremonies as an entry point in the fight against HIV and AIDS. The results of this study shows that initiation ceremonies for girls have existed in society for as long as people have existed, they also been highly regarded as the most important cultural institution in terms of being tools for information transmission and upholding tradition at all times. The results of the study confirmed that initiation ceremonies for girls and women can be used an entry point to HIV prevention. From the semi structured interviews the researcher had with the informants, it is evident that initiation ceremonies are emphasized in most ethnic groups as a way of preparing women for adult life. They are still popular and widely practiced regardless of which ever ethnic group one comes from. Therefore, in it important that modern society taps into this important resource in the fight against HIV infection.

## **6.2. Uniqueness of the Study**

According to the available literature, several studies that have conducted that addressed different aspects of Initiation ceremonies have been carried out in Zambia and else where.

Brown, Judith K. 1963, who looked at a Cross Cultural Study of Female Initiation Rites, Malewezi, F. (2000) in a study called Traditional practices and their effects on girls in Malawi; a particular focus on initiation ceremonies, Rasing, T. (2001). The Bush Burnt and the Stones Remain: Female Initiation rites in urban.

The major difference between earlier studies and the current one lies in its special focus on initiation ceremonies for women and girls in particular as an entry point to HIV prevention. The researcher above all wanted to understand what is really going on in initiation ceremonies so as to find ways of cooperating HIV information in these rites. The other important point is that the researcher being a woman her self spent time with the women and girls and also participated in these rituals there by observing the rituals and got an in-depth understanding of the messages taught and actual demonstrations taking note and examining of what was taught and what was not. This is important because the researcher had first hand information from the participants and observation of the rituals.

The other point specific to this study is the selection of Lusaka peri-urban as a study area. Lusaka has the following variables; the High HIV prevalence rates, diversity of ethnic groups with different cultural practices, including the mixture of populations with different education back ground. These factors give the research finding a rich knowledge contribution to the field of HIV prevention. Further more, the diversity of these characteristics contributed to diverse views from a cross section of women.

In short this study made specific contribution to the area of HIV and AIDS prevention by focusing on institutions that have existed in tradition societies for a long time. Sometimes the explorations of the researcher will take them into nooks and crannies that people would prefer remain unexplored because people feel uncomfortable revealing certain information. This study went beneath that to try and explore what goes on in these ceremonies.

More important still, in this study, the sample selected and data collection tools were tailored to answer the objectives specific to this study.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

#### **6.3.0 General**

The present study was successful in its own right but not exhaustive because it has certainly not taken into account all the aspects that need to be covered under this area. Considering the findings and conclusions drawn, therefore, the study makes certain recommendations for further research. The recommendations are in the areas that the study deems important to provide information in this area.

#### **6.3.1 Recommendations for Further Research**

For a better understanding of the Initiation ceremonies and HIV prevention, there is need to explore this subject further. The recommendations made are:

Since the study was confined to women in Lusaka urban, a larger study that would include boys and men in elsewhere, should be carried out in order to come up with more meaningful gender balance.

The present investigation targeted girls/young women and alangizi (tutors), it is recommended that similar studies which will investigate views of the medical personnel as proposed by the women.

Similar research should be conducted among women living in rural communities in order to enrich the knowledge of the findings since the present study was done in an urban setup.

In view of the fact that initiation ceremonies are widely practiced and most women go through them as evidenced in the study it is recommended there is need to educate initiators on HIV and AIDS who in turn will pass the information to the girls and women they initiate. This will help in the fight against HIV infection. Below is a suggested curriculum as a way of integrating HIV prevention messages into initiation ceremony messages.

### **6.3.2 Proposed syllabus on the Integration of HIV messages into existing curriculum**

In conclusion the general question that the study was trying to answer was that: Is it possible or not for initiation ceremonies to be used as an entry point to HIV prevention. If so what aspects can be tapped into?

According to the research findings and the researcher's conclusion, yes indeed initiation ceremonies can be used as an entry point for HIV prevention. This is evidenced by the following characteristics and attributes inherent in initiation ceremonies.

The study revealed that no information on HIV and AIDS is taught during initiation rites. However, it was noted that initiation rites contain elements that can be used to empower and liberate women especially with regard to HIV and AIDS. It is worth noting that traditionally initiation ceremonies have been and are still regarded as tools for acquisition, learning of habits, based on harmony with the spouse, parents, in-laws, and older people in general and mastering of conflict resolution mechanisms. Initiation rites equip maturing individuals with a vast body of special attributes that a woman is supposed to know and deal with throughout her life. Therefore they can be adapted and should be incorporated in awareness and prevention programs for HIV and AIDS.

To start with it was observed that in both messages issues of sexuality feature prominently hence it is very possible that messages can be integrated.

The most important messages in initiation ceremonies are messages of abstinence before marriage and upholding virginity as a virtue that is upheld by tradition in order for a woman to be highly valued when time comes for one to enter marriage. The researcher observed that for example the key message in initiation rites is virginity; It is a well known fact that virginity is advocated for by both initiation ceremonies and HIV prevention

messages though for different reasons. Traditionally virginity is valued for it is believed that a virgin has more value in terms of marriage. To enrich this point, the message can include further information on the importance of virginity and the messages abstinence before marriage as way of reducing chances of contracting HIV before marriage.

Related to this is the emphasis on the issue of the importance of faithfulness and the importance of sticking to one sexual partner. Though the researcher observed that women were taught that a woman should not compete with a man on issues of infidelity, as such its like tradition in a way allowed a man to flirt. The researcher proposes that what should be encouraged is the messages on importance of sticking to one sexual partner and though these teachings the women should be alerted on the dangers and risks of contracting HIV if people engage in one sexual partner.

In relation to the purpose of the current study, the findings seemed to suggest that initiation ceremonies can be used in the transmission of HIV prevention messages. The researcher proposes that since initiation ceremonies are widely practiced including in urban as evidenced in this research in Lusaka initiation ceremonies are very prominent with large numbers of women having gone through them. In this way, they are sort of promoted there by helping maintain and preserve this institution which has stood the taste of time. This fact confirms the fact that initiation ceremonies are indeed popular and can be used as an entry point to HIV prevention.

Messages that can be enhanced in the fight against HIV prevention include teachings on hygiene to the initiate to maintain cleanliness during menstruation and the importance of shaving. It was observed during initiation rites that the banachibusas or tutors demonstrated the skill of how the girl is suppose to look after her self during menstruation time and the actual shaving including shaving of the husband for those getting into marriage. The issue of abstinence from sexual activity during this period was also emphasized giving reasons that it would affect the husband or partner negatively in that it will affect their sexual potence. This teaching can be enriched and used in the fight against HIV and AIDS this can be improved by including issues of proper disposal of contaminated sanitary pads and clothes used during menstruation. At this stage the dangers of sharing needles and razor blades can be incorporated.

The initiated women are also taught how to dress, respect their husbands and the elderly people. Proper dressing was emphasized for instance, women tutors demonstrated in role plays showing the accepted way of dressing for a woman in these rites. The explanation given was that girls need to respect their bodies. Exposure of body parts was taboo. It is believed that there are certain clothes that a woman is not supposed to wear. For example a woman is not allowed to wear a pair of trousers, short dresses, short skirts or any cloth that expose their thighs. Similarly, in HIV prevention messages such messages under debate as it is believed that such dressing is assumed to be provocative by certain sections of society. In that they entice men to rape women. This can perpetuate infidelity in the communities and contribute to the spread of HIV.

The researcher also observed that initiates are taught how to satisfy their husbands sexually by using several skills including dancing. They are taught how to handle their future husbands during sexual intercourse. This was because a woman traditionally was supposed to perform certain acts in bed during sex with the husbands which are believed to help in satisfying their husbands. As a way of integrating HIV messages initiators could include messages on the dangers of certain practices concerning sex and care of children such as the practice of dry sex that increases the risk of contracting the virus through cuts that can result from dry sexual intercourse. During these rites women can be taught skills of negotiating for safe sex such as use of condoms in HIV positive couples. In the earlier studies in initiation ceremonies and HIV it is highlighted that initiators lacked knowledge on HIV and AIDS.

In this study finding it show that there is room to include more information on HIV and AIDS in the teachings during the initiation ceremonies. Critical issues to be included should include HIV mode of transmission, prevention strategies such as abstinence, faithfulness to one sexual partner or condom use, voluntary counseling and testing, prevention of mother to child transmission through testing of pregnant mothers and more importantly, seeking treatment if one contracts the virus.

The results showed that little or no information regarding HIV and AIDS is given during initiation ceremonies. However from the literature reviewed and interviews from the

respondents, it was discovered that the curriculum of initiation ceremonies contains elements that can be enhanced to sensitize the initiates on the dangers of HIV and AIDS.

During this discussion it is indeed true that initiation ceremonies can be used as an entry point to the HIV prevention. The critical component is by enhancing the teachings through integrating HIV prevention messages in the messages taught during initiation rites as suggested in the discussion section and conclusion sections. However it is worth noting that similar messages already exist and are used in the girl's and women's initiation rites except that the language is indirect, this can be improved upon by giving direct messages based on facts.

It is further recommended that there is need to modify the curriculum to change elements that might entice young girls to practice sex before marriage by teachings that centre on sexual performances, For example, the teaching of young girls on how to handle men during sex encourages them to practice this before marriage.

In order to integrate the existing messages in initiation ceremonies with HIV prevention messages it is necessary that at the time when a women is being given lessons on sexuality such as shaving of husband. At this stage basic facts on HIV transmission should be included such as the dangers of using the same razor blade because if one is infected with HIV they would infect the other.

At this point the other piece of information that can be integrated is information on the mode of transmission of HIV, prevention strategies, need for voluntary counseling and testing, treatment options for those infected not forgetting equipping these women with skills on negotiating for safe sex in marriages especially for those being prepared for marriage.

In the absence of a cure it is important that Government and all NGOs dealing with HIV prevention recognize the important role that traditional counselors play in transmitting of traditional information from generation to generation and as such uses them for this important cause. They should be helped with funds for training and holding workshops to train their members in HIV prevention.

There is also need for more research to be conducted in the area of HIV positive couples and condom use including the effects of women insisting on condom use in these couples.

In conclusion, this chapter has presented in summary form the main conclusions that may be drawn from the findings in this study. It has attempted to show the uniqueness of the study by pointing out ways in which it differs from previous similar studies conducted in Zambia and Africa as a whole. It has also presented recommendations for further study made by the present investigation

## **6.4 Conclusion**

There is a lot of potential inherent in initiation ceremonies and rites that can be tapped into in the awareness campaign on HIV and AIDS. Due to their education potential, initiation rites and rites of passage can be employed to disseminate information about responsible sexual behavior to girls and young women. These initiation ceremonies might not be perfect in the fight against HIV but they could provide a viable example in the modern world of how to solve social problems and give an individual the societal support to discover and fulfill their life and unique contribution. This is possible if messages about HIV and AIDS are integrated into initiation ceremonies.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I: Interview guide for the initiators/trainer (Alangizi)

1. What is your marital status?
2. What is the level of education you have attained?
3. Are initiation ceremonies for girls who have come of age or women getting into marriage compulsory in your society?  
Yes ..... No .....
4. What do you think about the importance of values on sexuality and marriage learnt during the initiation ceremonies?
5. Do you have a curriculum that you follow during the initiation rites?  
Yes ..... No .....
6. If yes to question 5 above, what is contained in the curriculum?
7. Does your curriculum include information about HIV and AIDS?  
Yes ..... No .....
8. If yes to question 7, what information on HIV and AIDS do you teach to a novice?
9. If your answer is no, to question 7, would you like to include HIV messages during your initiation sessions?  
Yes..... No....

10. Do you think the time for initiation ceremony is enough to teach the girls issues on HIV and AIDS?  
Yes ..... No .....
11. Who do you think should be actively involved in the modification of the curriculum?
12. Are initiation ceremonies doing enough to spread HIV and AIDS prevention information in the community? Explain your answer..
13. Do you think there is room to put more information on HIV and AIDS messages in the rites?  
Yes.... No.....
14. Would you like to include an HIV specialist in your initiation rites?  
Yes..... No.....
15. If yes to question 14, who do you prefer to be involved?

**End of interview. Thank you**

## **APPENDIX II: Interview guide for the initiated girls/women**

1. What is your marital status?
2. What is your level of education?
3. When did you become initiated?
4. Are initiation ceremonies for girls who have come of age compulsory in your community?  
Yes..... No.....
5. Are values learnt during initiation ceremony important to the community?  
Yes..... No.....
6. Do you have a curriculum that you follow during the initiation rites?  
Yes..... No.....
7. If yes to question 6 above, what is contained in the curriculum?
8. Were you given information on the risk of HIV and AIDS during the initiation ceremony?  
Yes..... No.....
9. If yes to question 8, what information on HIV and AIDS were you taught?

10. If your answer is no to question 8, would you like to include HIV messages during your initiation sessions?  
Yes..... No.....
11. Do you think that during of initiation ceremony there is enough to teach the issues on HIV and AIDS?  
Yes.... No.....
12. Who do you think should be actively involved in the modification of the curriculum?
13. Would you like an HIV specialist in to be included in initiation rites?  
Yes..... No.....
14. If yes to question 13 above, who would you prefer to be involved?
15. Are the initiators doing much to spread the HIV and AIDS information to the novices during initiation rites?  
Yes..... No.....
16. Do you think there is room for increased HIV and AIDS messages taught in the rites?  
Yes..... No.....

**End of interview. Thank you.**

## **APPENDIX III: SYLLABUS**

### **1. TOPIC-Initiation Ceremonies for girls as an entry point to HIV and AIDS prevention.**

#### **1.1 Objective**

The general objective is to integrate prevention messages on sexually transmitted diseases, HIV and AIDS into the initiation ceremony general curriculum.

#### **1.2. Content**

Below is the general curriculum for initiation ceremonies as an entry point for HIV prevention

##### 1.2.1 Description of initiation ceremonies

##### 1.2.2 The roles of initiation ceremonies in society

##### 1.2.3 Importance of hygiene

- General cleanliness i.e. bathing
- Sanitary hygiene during menstruation including disposal of soiled towels
- Risks of contaminated body fluids such as blood in transmission of HIV infection
- Shaving of pubic parts, highlight the risk of sharing sharp objects in the transmission of HIV infection.

##### 1.2.4 Importance of Virginitv

- How to keep ones virginitv
- Consequences of breaking virginitv
  1. Pregnancy which brings shame to the family
  2. Risk of contracting HIV and AIDS

#### 1.2.5 Importance of abstinence and being faithful to partners in marriage

- Promotes faithfulness for married couples
- Reduces chances of contracting HIV infection through having un protected sex with infected persons

#### 1.2.6 Loyalty to the family and husband

- Loyalty to the husband but emphasize on assertiveness- power to say no to sex before marriage or to demand protected sex to avoid the risk of contracting the virus

#### 1.2.7 Importance of Hard work

- This is to promote financial independence to avoid temptation of taking up prostitution as a career as this exposes one to HIV infection.

### **2.0 HIV Prevention messages**

- Definition HIV and AIDS

-Describe ways of transmission i.e. having un protected penetrative sex with an HIV infected person, sharing razor blades, needles, getting in contact with infected body fluids if one has a cut.

-Describe risk factors i.e. having more than one sexual partner, sex before marriage

-Describe ways of prevention i.e. abstinence, use of condoms, sticking to one sexual partner, voluntary counseling and test so that one knows their status

### **3.0 Method of teaching**

- oral lessons

-Demonstrations, songs and dances and sketches

-Informed guest tutors on specialist topics ie HIV topics but should be one who has passed through initiation ceremony who is both educated and trained in HIV counselling

#### 1.4 **References**

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